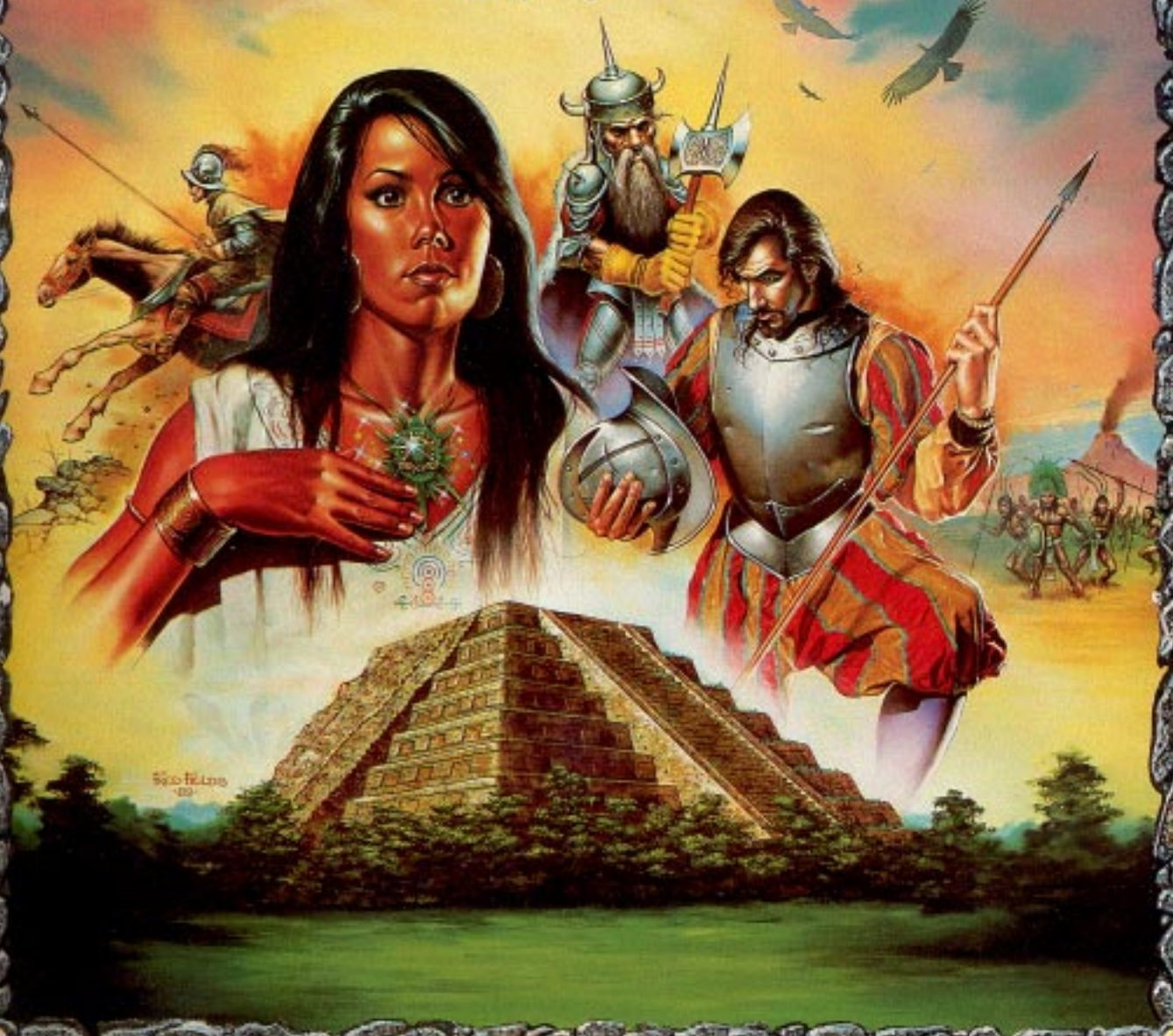


Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS

MAZTICA
Campaign Set



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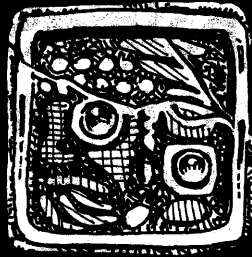
A JOURNEY TO THE TRUE WORLD

A Guide for the Adventurer



Ken Fink

Ken Fink



Faithful children of the god, go!
Leave this place in the halls of your past,
For a future ordained by Zaltec awaits.

Take your children by the hand, priest!
Lead them south toward the valley of your future,
Where mighty destiny calls.

Now my children claim the world, all!
From their island in the sun they send their armies,
To gain the final glory for their god.



FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Maztica Campaign Set

A Journey to the True World

by Douglas Niles

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Introduction to Maztica

Welcome to a land of vast beauty and fierce savagery; a land of magnificent opportunities . . . and dark menaces. It is truly a New World, only now cast open before the adventurer's footsteps.

At least, it is new to those adventurers who hail from the Sword Coast, and other known regions of the Forgotten Realms. But for some, it is the land they have always known, the place of their heritage and ancestry—and now, the place of their very uncertain future.

Maztica is a land of varying cultures, with unique treasures and magics. It is strangely vulnerable to the powers of the Old World, yet it is resilient as well. It bends without breaking to the pressures exerted upon it, and in so doing it combines the strongest features of its native cultures with the strongest aspects of the invaders.

Journey there now, as creatures and cultures come together to make a new place—a land that all types of adventurers can call their own.

Time Frame of the True World

The land of Maztica, introduced in the Maztica trilogy of FORGOTTEN REALMS® novels, undergoes convulsive forces in the telling of those tales—forces that change the world, for good or for ill, in many significant directions.

Therefore, the choice of timing is very significant regarding the setting of the game. This, the Maztica gaming environment, must be placed in a specific moment in history, for if the land were to be

described in many different periods, the detail on each would be insufficient for gaming purposes.

Therefore, the bulk of the information here deals with the True World after its most cataclysmic moments, when the future pattern of the place has been established. Yet it is still a land in the early stages of its development, where the influences of mighty figures—perhaps, player character figures—will go far to shape the type of place that it becomes.

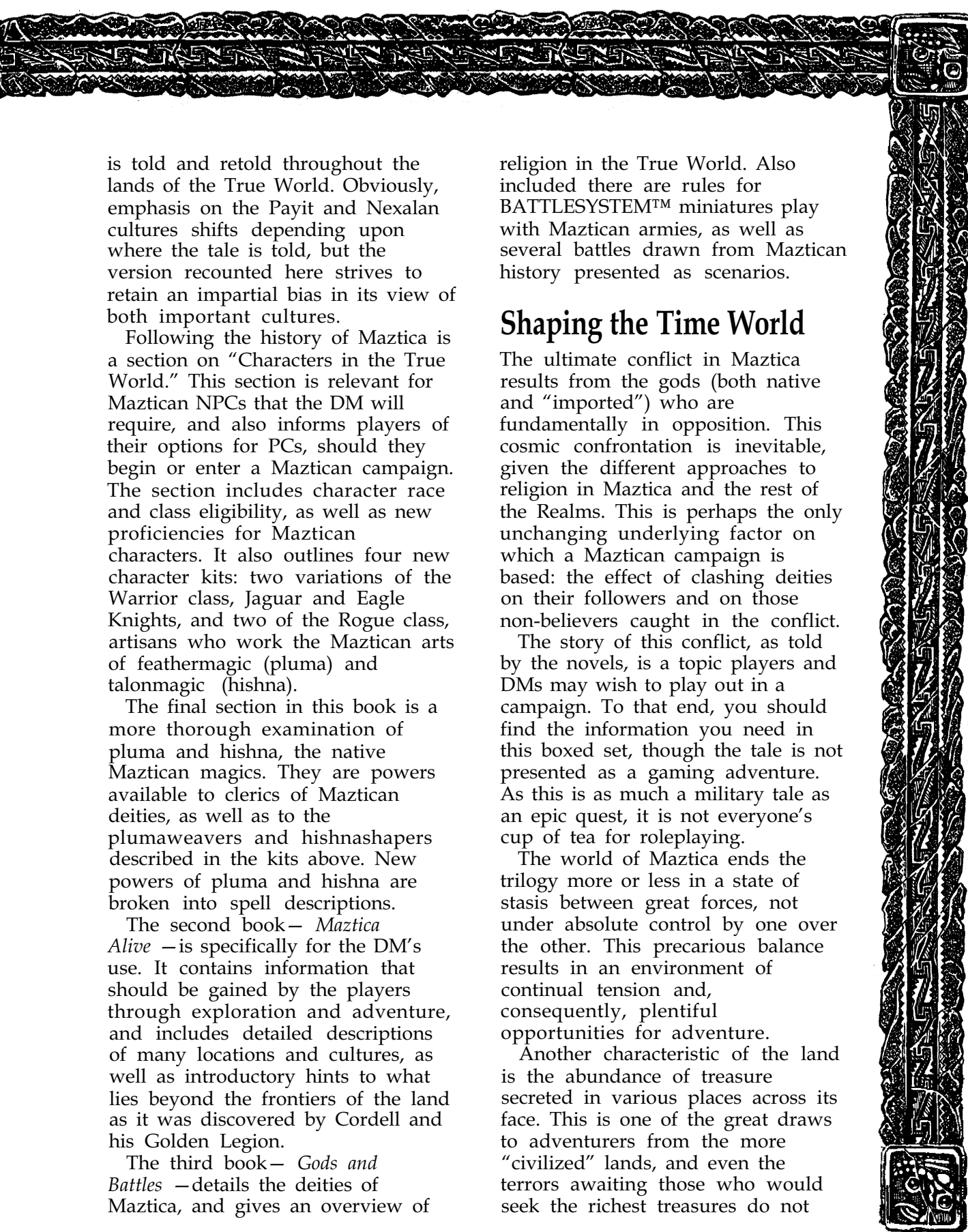
Campaigns may be set before this time, especially if DMs wish to recreate the tale of the invasion and near conquest of Maztica. Flayer characters who participate in the initial discovery of the True World can exert significant influence as to the nature of these first contacts.

Alternatively, as a place of no iron or steel—no crossbows, wheels or ships—and no horses, Maztica can create a new source of challenges for adventure. The pre-discovery period of Maztica can be a complete gaming environment in its own right.

The Uses of These Books

This book —*A Journey to the True World*—is designed for players and DMs alike. It presents information that is common knowledge to inhabitants of Maztica, and easily accessible to its visitors.

The first, and extensive, portion of the book is the history of Maztica. This is a simplified version of a thousand different legends, though the closer to the present it gets, the more historically accurate it becomes. In one form or another, it



is told and retold throughout the lands of the True World. Obviously, emphasis on the Payit and Nexalan cultures shifts depending upon where the tale is told, but the version recounted here strives to retain an impartial bias in its view of both important cultures.

Following the history of Maztica is a section on "Characters in the True World." This section is relevant for Maztican NPCs that the DM will require, and also informs players of their options for PCs, should they begin or enter a Maztican campaign. The section includes character race and class eligibility, as well as new proficiencies for Maztican characters. It also outlines four new character kits: two variations of the Warrior class, Jaguar and Eagle Knights, and two of the Rogue class, artisans who work the Maztican arts of feathermagic (pluma) and talonmagic (hishna).

The final section in this book is a more thorough examination of pluma and hishna, the native Maztican magics. They are powers available to clerics of Maztican deities, as well as to the plumaweavers and hishnapapers described in the kits above. New powers of pluma and hishna are broken into spell descriptions.

The second book— *Maztica Alive* —is specifically for the DM's use. It contains information that should be gained by the players through exploration and adventure, and includes detailed descriptions of many locations and cultures, as well as introductory hints to what lies beyond the frontiers of the land as it was discovered by Cordell and his Golden Legion.

The third book— *Gods and Battles* —details the deities of Maztica, and gives an overview of

religion in the True World. Also included there are rules for BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures play with Maztican armies, as well as several battles drawn from Maztican history presented as scenarios.

Shaping the Time World

The ultimate conflict in Maztica results from the gods (both native and "imported") who are fundamentally in opposition. This cosmic confrontation is inevitable, given the different approaches to religion in Maztica and the rest of the Realms. This is perhaps the only unchanging underlying factor on which a Maztican campaign is based: the effect of clashing deities on their followers and on those non-believers caught in the conflict.

The story of this conflict, as told by the novels, is a topic players and DMs may wish to play out in a campaign. To that end, you should find the information you need in this boxed set, though the tale is not presented as a gaming adventure. As this is as much a military tale as an epic quest, it is not everyone's cup of tea for roleplaying.

The world of Maztica ends the trilogy more or less in a state of stasis between great forces, not under absolute control by one over the other. This precarious balance results in an environment of continual tension and, consequently, plentiful opportunities for adventure.

Another characteristic of the land is the abundance of treasure secreted in various places across its face. This is one of the great draws to adventurers from the more "civilized" lands, and even the terrors awaiting those who would seek the richest treasures do not



daunt these determined questors.

However, a mountain of treasure in Maztica does not become, instantly, a fortune in the Forgotten Realms. A long and perilous route lies before he who would transport such a trove to the markets of Calimshan, Amn, or Waterdeep.

This route in itself provides employment and adventuring opportunities for mercenaries, pirates, sailors, and thieves.

The connections between Maztica and the Elder Kingdoms remain tenuous, though laden with potential. The shaping of your campaign can determine whether these bonds are developed with lasting strength, or are severed by the forces of chaotic opportunism.

Sources of Information

The tale of the initial clashes between Mazticans and the outside world, as well as the eventual union of those humans to face the broader threat of deepest evil, is told in the Forgotten Realms Maztica trilogy: *Ironhelm*, *Viperhand*, and *Feathered Dragon*, by Douglas Niles.

Maztica is (obviously) a land founded upon the pre-Columbian cultures of Mexico, especially the Mayan and Aztec cultures. As a gaming environment, it postulates (fantastically of course) what might have happened if the native cultures had not been so totally conquered and overwhelmed by the invaders.

Many good sources on these folk exist. Inspiring stories about the Mayans and Aztecs, as well as examples of their art, architecture, and mythology, can be easily located in libraries and bookstores. A few, in particular:

Conquest of Mexico by Bernal Diaz de Castillo (gripping story written by a conquistador)

Mexican and Central American Mythology by Irene Nicholson (many interesting tales)

The Aztec: Man and Tribe by Victor W. Von Hagen (thorough, quick read)

The World of the Maya by Victor W. Von Hagen

Aztecs of Mexico by George C. Vaillant (very thorough)

The Conquistadores by Terence Wise (an Osprey book; excellent color plates by Angus McBride)

The Ancient Kingdoms of Mexico by Nigel Davies (good overview of all pre-columbian cultures)

The Cities of Ancient Mexico by Jeremy A. Sabloff (particularly good detail about the cities themselves)

Aztec Warfare by Ross Hassig (the definitive work on the topic; includes detailed history)

In addition, *National Geographic* magazine has presented numerous splendid articles on this part of the world during the last decades.



History of Maztica

The tale of Maztica's origins, at least as created and impacted by its human settlers, is a story that has been recorded and preserved through many generations. Naturally, the further back the tale, the more legend veils the history.

Basically, however, the story of the True World is divided into three ages: the Immortal Era, the Golden Age of Payit, and the Dawn of Nexal. The commencement of the fourth (as yet unnamed) period is recent, for the end of Nexal can be pinpointed specifically upon the Night of Wailing. The overall course of the new age is undetermined, so objective examination and historical categorization remain the task of future chroniclers.

The Immortal Era

Maztica was a land created by and for the gods, and for a long time only the gods lived here. The father of all the gods was Kukul, and their mother was the True World itself. Eldest of the Sons, and most honored, was Qotal, the Feathered Dragon. Next in line, violent and powerful, was Zaltec, the Bloody Hand.

Then came the other brothers: Tezca and Azul (also called Calor), the twins of Fire and Water; and Plutoq, sturdy master of Stone. But Kukul and Maztica were not content with sons, and they gave birth to daughters as well: Kiltzi, goddess of growth and nourishment; and her younger sisters Watil, goddess of plants, and Nula, she who watched over animals. Their creatures and their verdancy spread across the world, and Maztica became a place of life.

The gods lived and played, and grew bored. They desired new toys, and from this desire, humans were created. The ultimate toys of the gods, they were to take their places upon the world. But humans proved difficult to create, and the gods became increasingly annoyed.

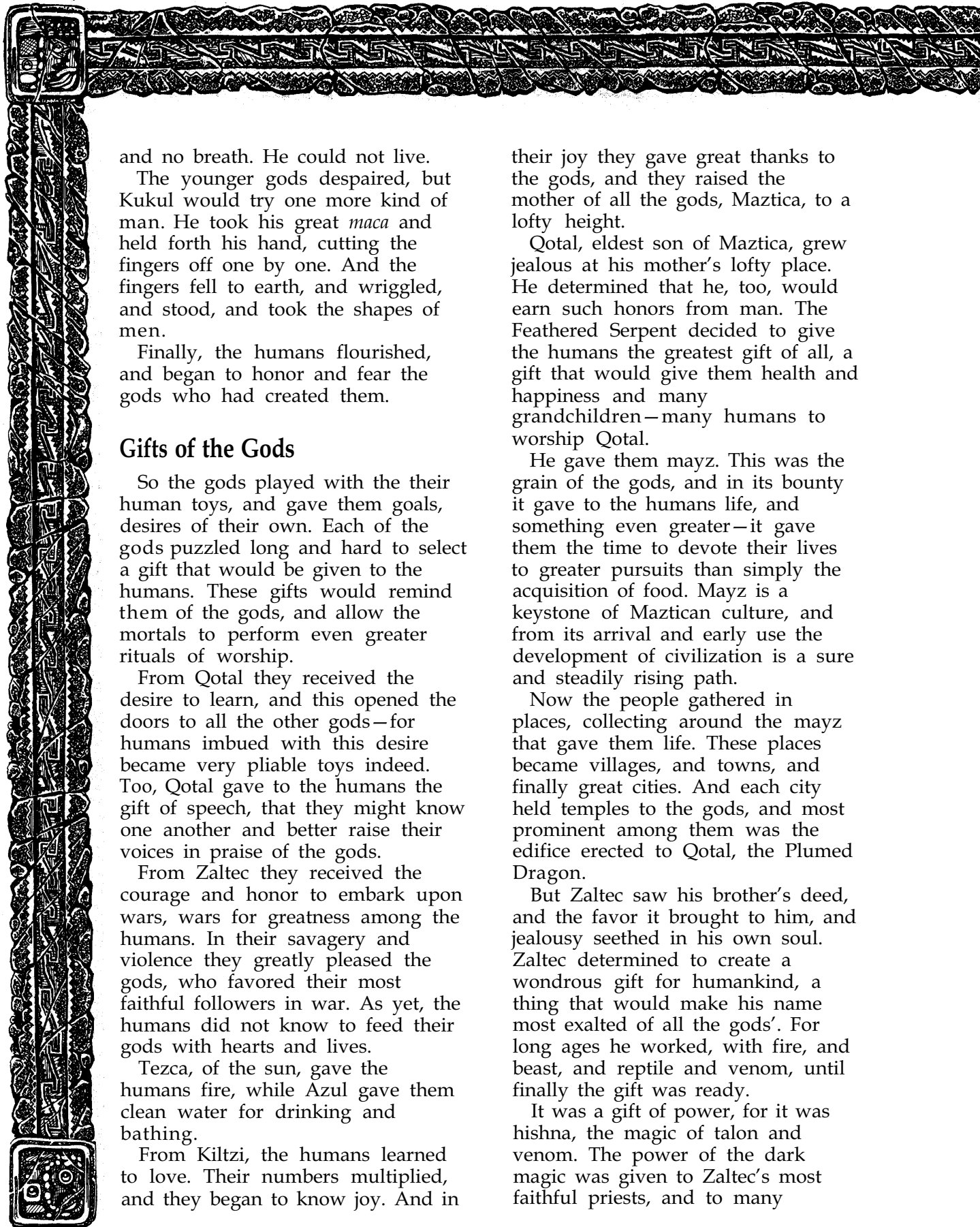
First, the gods made humans by scooping the thick mud of the riverbottom, and then forming clay into the images of men. But they placed these images back into the water, and the river washed their features away. The men of clay struggled and writhed on the world, but they could not stand. Finally, the men of clay disappeared in the water.

Next, the gods took the limbs of stout trees, and hacked the wooden features into the shapes of men. They placed the men of wood into the water, and they floated. When they came forth from the stream, their features remained intact. The gods were pleased, for the men of wood seemed superior to their early cousins.

Then the lightning of a towering storm struck the world. Violent crashes and explosions shook the body of Maztica, and crackling explosions of the storm's rage echoed across the land. The men of wood caught fire, burning away before the eyes of the gods.

So the gods made a man of gold, and he was very beautiful. The gods gathered around to look at him, and they were very pleased. They waited for the man to praise the gods who had made him.

But they waited long, and the man made no move, no sound. The man of gold failed, for he had no heart



and no breath. He could not live.

The younger gods despaired, but Kukul would try one more kind of man. He took his great *maca* and held forth his hand, cutting the fingers off one by one. And the fingers fell to earth, and wriggled, and stood, and took the shapes of men.

Finally, the humans flourished, and began to honor and fear the gods who had created them.

Gifts of the Gods

So the gods played with their human toys, and gave them goals, desires of their own. Each of the gods puzzled long and hard to select a gift that would be given to the humans. These gifts would remind them of the gods, and allow the mortals to perform even greater rituals of worship.

From Qotal they received the desire to learn, and this opened the doors to all the other gods—for humans imbued with this desire became very pliable toys indeed. Too, Qotal gave to the humans the gift of speech, that they might know one another and better raise their voices in praise of the gods.

From Zaltec they received the courage and honor to embark upon wars, wars for greatness among the humans. In their savagery and violence they greatly pleased the gods, who favored their most faithful followers in war. As yet, the humans did not know to feed their gods with hearts and lives.

Tezca, of the sun, gave the humans fire, while Azul gave them clean water for drinking and bathing.

From Kiltzi, the humans learned to love. Their numbers multiplied, and they began to know joy. And in

their joy they gave great thanks to the gods, and they raised the mother of all the gods, Maztica, to a lofty height.

Qotal, eldest son of Maztica, grew jealous at his mother's lofty place. He determined that he, too, would earn such honors from man. The Feathered Serpent decided to give the humans the greatest gift of all, a gift that would give them health and happiness and many grandchildren—many humans to worship Qotal.

He gave them *mayz*. This was the grain of the gods, and in its bounty it gave to the humans life, and something even greater—it gave them the time to devote their lives to greater pursuits than simply the acquisition of food. *Mayz* is a keystone of Maztican culture, and from its arrival and early use the development of civilization is a sure and steadily rising path.

Now the people gathered in places, collecting around the *mayz* that gave them life. These places became villages, and towns, and finally great cities. And each city held temples to the gods, and most prominent among them was the edifice erected to Qotal, the Plumed Dragon.

But Zaltec saw his brother's deed, and the favor it brought to him, and jealousy seethed in his own soul. Zaltec determined to create a wondrous gift for humankind, a thing that would make his name most exalted of all the gods'. For long ages he worked, with fire, and beast, and reptile and venom, until finally the gift was ready.

It was a gift of power, for it was *hishna*, the magic of talon and venom. The power of the dark magic was given to Zaltec's most faithful priests, and to many

powerful warriors who labored in his name. They became the Jaguar Knights, and the power of hishna gives them the might to change shape. Increasing in power, the Jaguars became masters of the night, and Zaltec's name was whispered in fear . . . and awe.

But the power of hishna was an angry power, and would not be constrained. Soon the humans began to fight with great savagery, and wars swept the land. Armies spurred by murderous fanaticism, buttressed by dark hishnapowers, and armed with fearsome weapons spread outward. All the cities

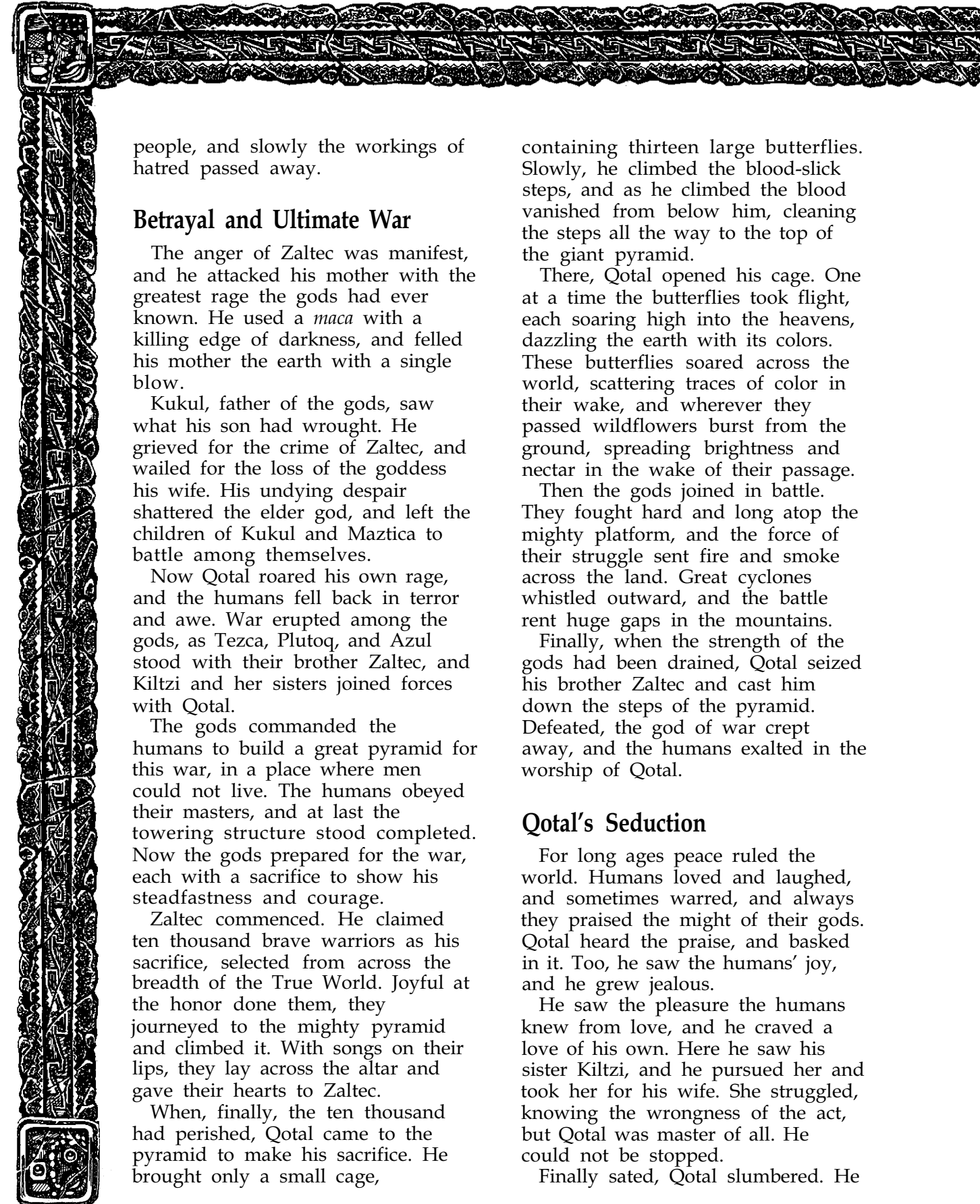
spewed forth their warriors, and a killing tide swept across the land.

Qotal saw his brother's gift, and watched humanity suffer under its power. He could not create a gift to match it, for his influence lay over insubstantial things.

But his mother, Maztica the True World, saw his distress. She, too, loathed the spreading of hatred across the land. She knew that Qotal would stem this tide, yet he lacked the power.

And so Maztica gave to her son Qotal the magic of pluma. The Plumed One spread the gentle power of feathermagic among the





people, and slowly the workings of hatred passed away.

Betrayal and Ultimate War

The anger of Zaltec was manifest, and he attacked his mother with the greatest rage the gods had ever known. He used a *maca* with a killing edge of darkness, and felled his mother the earth with a single blow.

Kukul, father of the gods, saw what his son had wrought. He grieved for the crime of Zaltec, and wailed for the loss of the goddess his wife. His undying despair shattered the elder god, and left the children of Kukul and Maztica to battle among themselves.

Now Qotal roared his own rage, and the humans fell back in terror and awe. War erupted among the gods, as Tezca, Plutoq, and Azul stood with their brother Zaltec, and Kiltzi and her sisters joined forces with Qotal.

The gods commanded the humans to build a great pyramid for this war, in a place where men could not live. The humans obeyed their masters, and at last the towering structure stood completed. Now the gods prepared for the war, each with a sacrifice to show his steadfastness and courage.

Zaltec commenced. He claimed ten thousand brave warriors as his sacrifice, selected from across the breadth of the True World. Joyful at the honor done them, they journeyed to the mighty pyramid and climbed it. With songs on their lips, they lay across the altar and gave their hearts to Zaltec.

When, finally, the ten thousand had perished, Qotal came to the pyramid to make his sacrifice. He brought only a small cage,

containing thirteen large butterflies. Slowly, he climbed the blood-slick steps, and as he climbed the blood vanished from below him, cleaning the steps all the way to the top of the giant pyramid.

There, Qotal opened his cage. One at a time the butterflies took flight, each soaring high into the heavens, dazzling the earth with its colors. These butterflies soared across the world, scattering traces of color in their wake, and wherever they passed wildflowers burst from the ground, spreading brightness and nectar in the wake of their passage.

Then the gods joined in battle. They fought hard and long atop the mighty platform, and the force of their struggle sent fire and smoke across the land. Great cyclones whistled outward, and the battle rent huge gaps in the mountains.

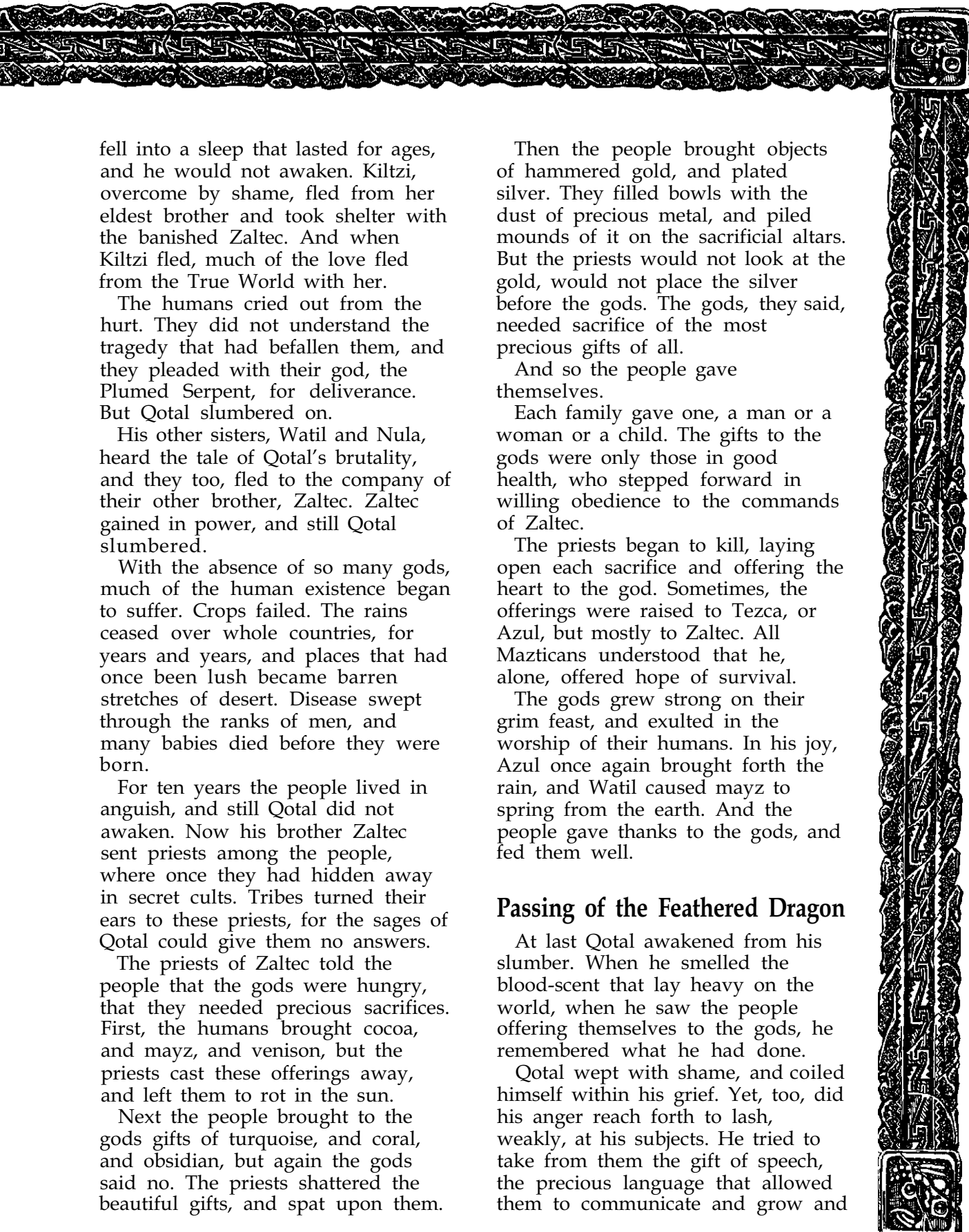
Finally, when the strength of the gods had been drained, Qotal seized his brother Zaltec and cast him down the steps of the pyramid. Defeated, the god of war crept away, and the humans exalted in the worship of Qotal.

Qotal's Seduction

For long ages peace ruled the world. Humans loved and laughed, and sometimes warred, and always they praised the might of their gods. Qotal heard the praise, and basked in it. Too, he saw the humans' joy, and he grew jealous.

He saw the pleasure the humans knew from love, and he craved a love of his own. Here he saw his sister Kiltzi, and he pursued her and took her for his wife. She struggled, knowing the wrongness of the act, but Qotal was master of all. He could not be stopped.

Finally sated, Qotal slumbered. He



fell into a sleep that lasted for ages, and he would not awaken. Kiltzi, overcome by shame, fled from her eldest brother and took shelter with the banished Zaltec. And when Kiltzi fled, much of the love fled from the True World with her.

The humans cried out from the hurt. They did not understand the tragedy that had befallen them, and they pleaded with their god, the Plumed Serpent, for deliverance. But Qotal slumbered on.

His other sisters, Watil and Nula, heard the tale of Qotal's brutality, and they too, fled to the company of their other brother, Zaltec. Zaltec gained in power, and still Qotal slumbered.

With the absence of so many gods, much of the human existence began to suffer. Crops failed. The rains ceased over whole countries, for years and years, and places that had once been lush became barren stretches of desert. Disease swept through the ranks of men, and many babies died before they were born.

For ten years the people lived in anguish, and still Qotal did not awaken. Now his brother Zaltec sent priests among the people, where once they had hidden away in secret cults. Tribes turned their ears to these priests, for the sages of Qotal could give them no answers.

The priests of Zaltec told the people that the gods were hungry, that they needed precious sacrifices. First, the humans brought cocoa, and mayz, and venison, but the priests cast these offerings away, and left them to rot in the sun.

Next the people brought to the gods gifts of turquoise, and coral, and obsidian, but again the gods said no. The priests shattered the beautiful gifts, and spat upon them.

Then the people brought objects of hammered gold, and plated silver. They filled bowls with the dust of precious metal, and piled mounds of it on the sacrificial altars. But the priests would not look at the gold, would not place the silver before the gods. The gods, they said, needed sacrifice of the most precious gifts of all.

And so the people gave themselves.

Each family gave one, a man or a woman or a child. The gifts to the gods were only those in good health, who stepped forward in willing obedience to the commands of Zaltec.

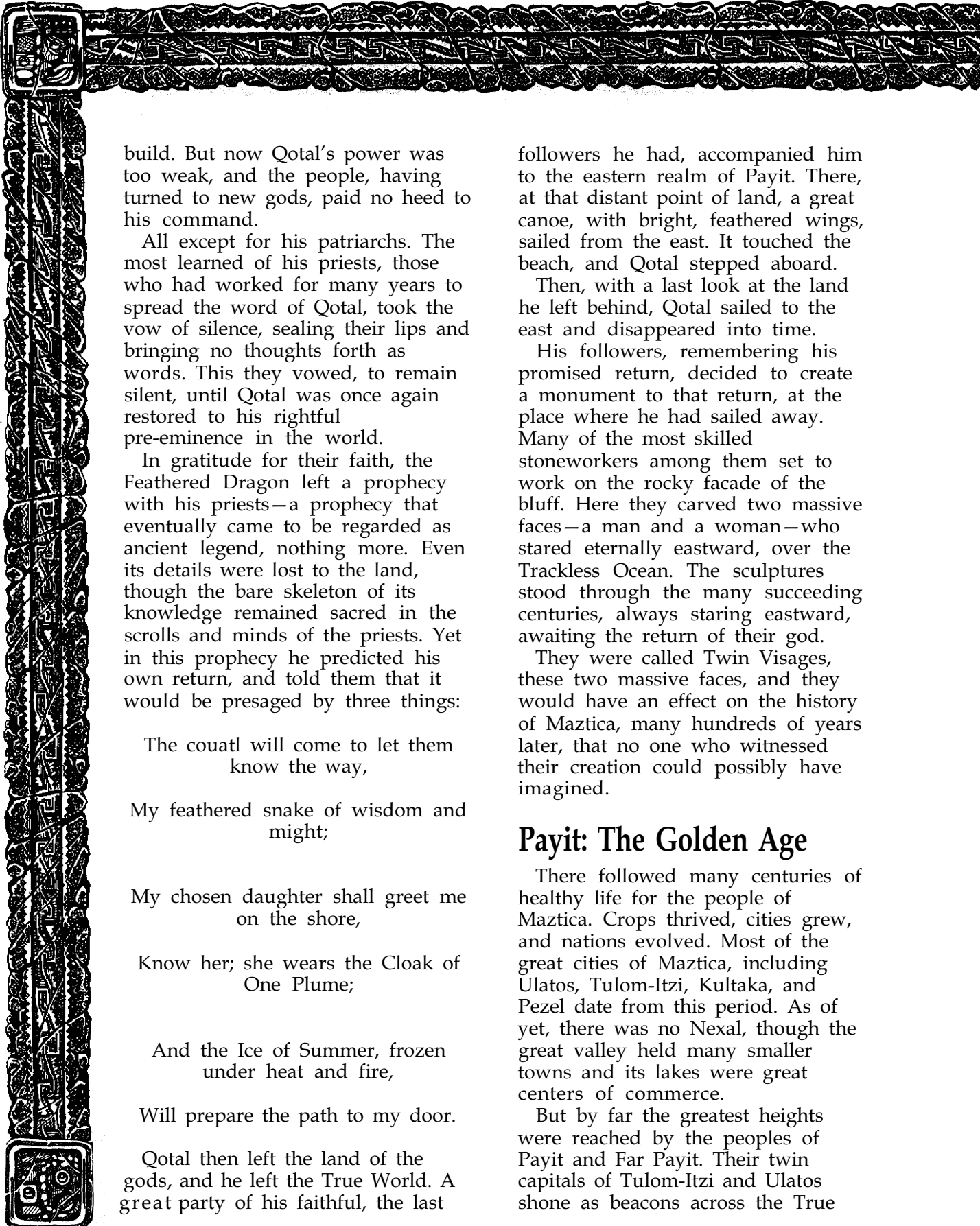
The priests began to kill, laying open each sacrifice and offering the heart to the god. Sometimes, the offerings were raised to Tezca, or Azul, but mostly to Zaltec. All Mazticans understood that he, alone, offered hope of survival.

The gods grew strong on their grim feast, and exulted in the worship of their humans. In his joy, Azul once again brought forth the rain, and Watil caused mayz to spring from the earth. And the people gave thanks to the gods, and fed them well.

Passing of the Feathered Dragon

At last Qotal awakened from his slumber. When he smelled the blood-scent that lay heavy on the world, when he saw the people offering themselves to the gods, he remembered what he had done.

Qotal wept with shame, and coiled himself within his grief. Yet, too, did his anger reach forth to lash, weakly, at his subjects. He tried to take from them the gift of speech, the precious language that allowed them to communicate and grow and



build. But now Qotal's power was too weak, and the people, having turned to new gods, paid no heed to his command.

All except for his patriarchs. The most learned of his priests, those who had worked for many years to spread the word of Qotal, took the vow of silence, sealing their lips and bringing no thoughts forth as words. This they vowed, to remain silent, until Qotal was once again restored to his rightful pre-eminence in the world.

In gratitude for their faith, the Feathered Dragon left a prophecy with his priests—a prophecy that eventually came to be regarded as ancient legend, nothing more. Even its details were lost to the land, though the bare skeleton of its knowledge remained sacred in the scrolls and minds of the priests. Yet in this prophecy he predicted his own return, and told them that it would be presaged by three things:

The couatl will come to let them
know the way,

My feathered snake of wisdom and
might;

My chosen daughter shall greet me
on the shore,

Know her; she wears the Cloak of
One Plume;

And the Ice of Summer, frozen
under heat and fire,

Will prepare the path to my door.

Qotal then left the land of the gods, and he left the True World. A great party of his faithful, the last

followers he had, accompanied him to the eastern realm of Payit. There, at that distant point of land, a great canoe, with bright, feathered wings, sailed from the east. It touched the beach, and Qotal stepped aboard.

Then, with a last look at the land he left behind, Qotal sailed to the east and disappeared into time.

His followers, remembering his promised return, decided to create a monument to that return, at the place where he had sailed away. Many of the most skilled stoneworkers among them set to work on the rocky facade of the bluff. Here they carved two massive faces—a man and a woman—who stared eternally eastward, over the Trackless Ocean. The sculptures stood through the many succeeding centuries, always staring eastward, awaiting the return of their god.

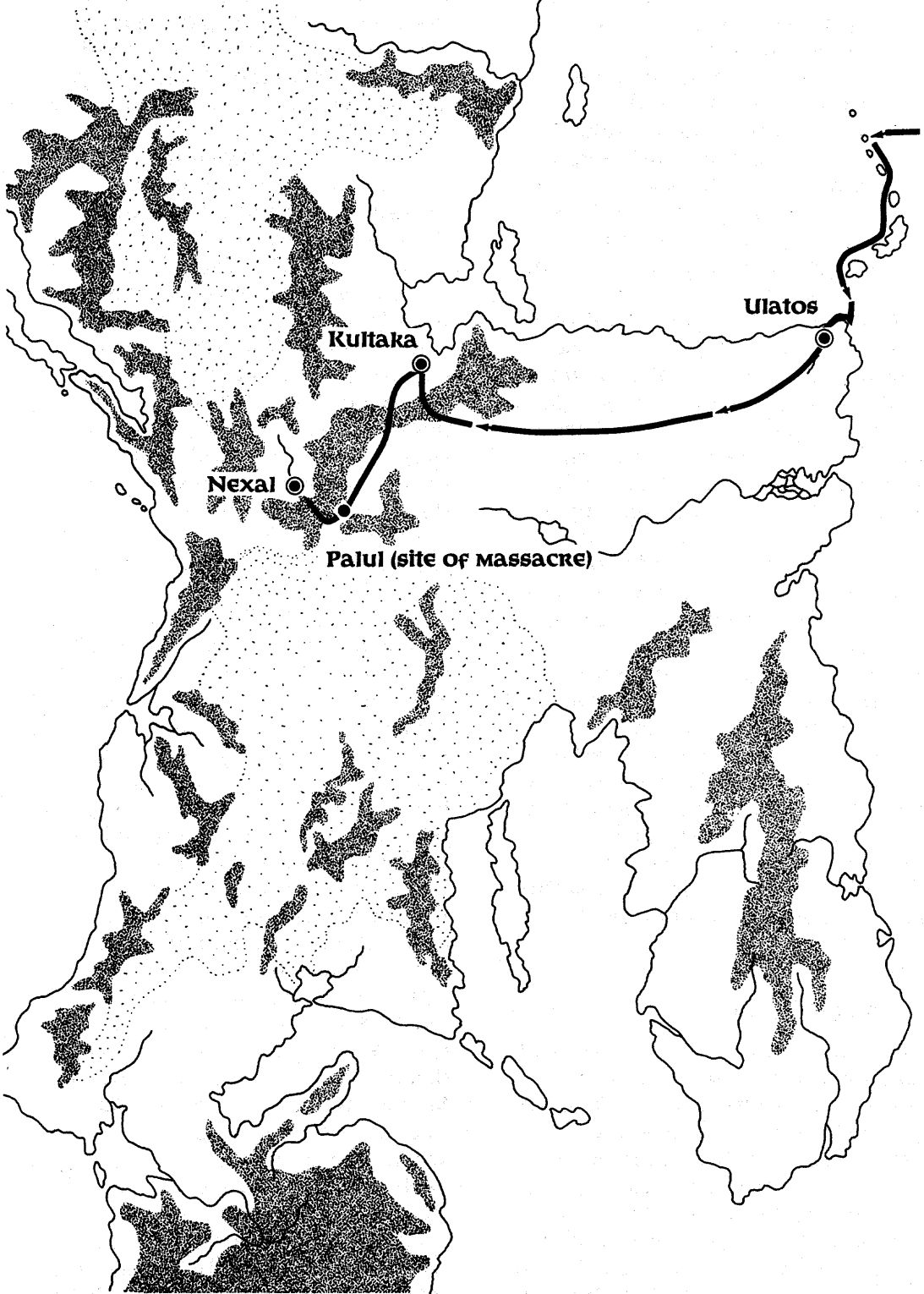
They were called Twin Visages, these two massive faces, and they would have an effect on the history of Maztica, many hundreds of years later, that no one who witnessed their creation could possibly have imagined.

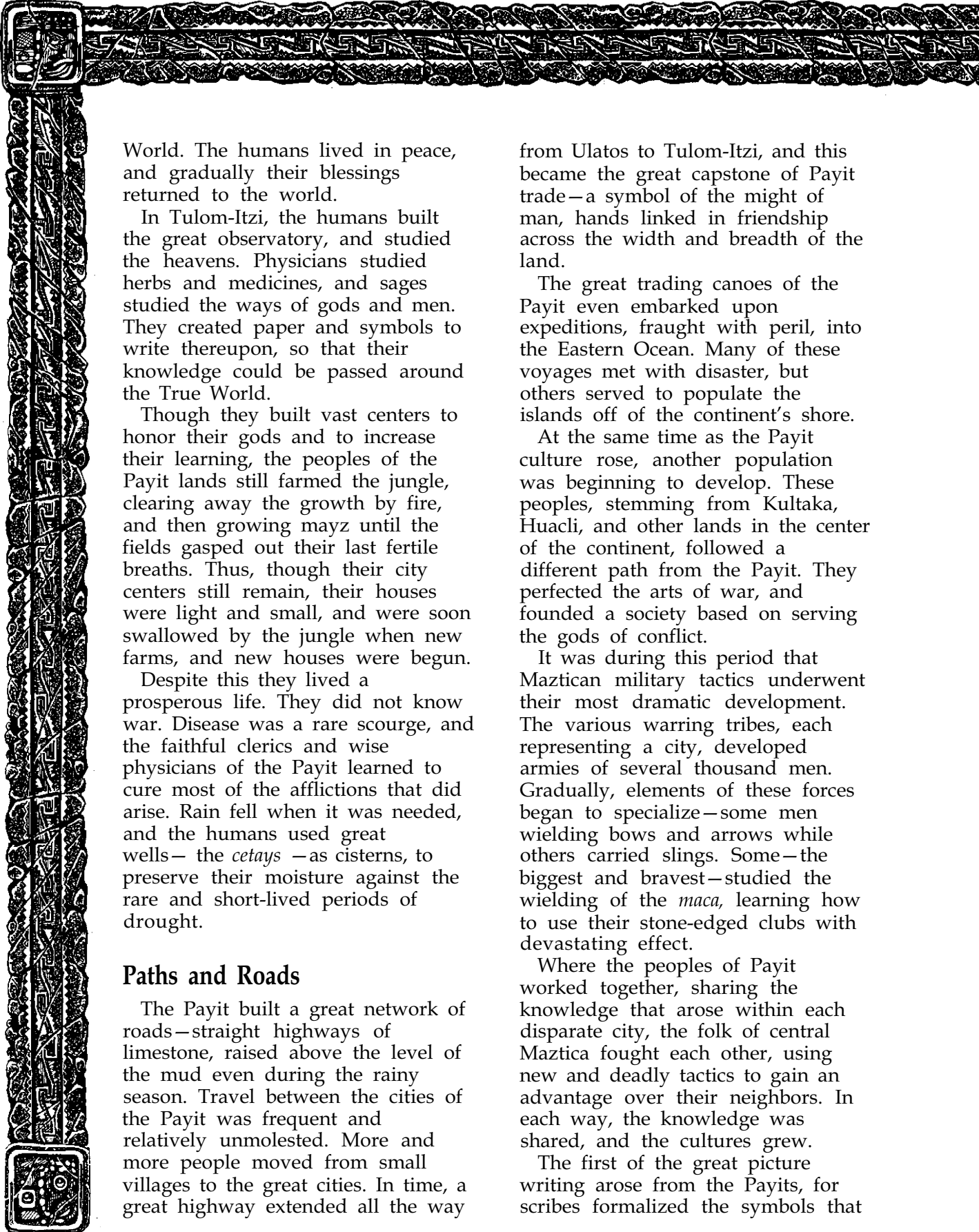
Payit: The Golden Age

There followed many centuries of healthy life for the people of Maztica. Crops thrived, cities grew, and nations evolved. Most of the great cities of Maztica, including Ulatos, Tulom-Itzi, Kultaka, and Pezel date from this period. As of yet, there was no Nexal, though the great valley held many smaller towns and its lakes were great centers of commerce.

But by far the greatest heights were reached by the peoples of Payit and Far Payit. Their twin capitals of Tulom-Itzi and Ulatos shone as beacons across the True

Cordell's March to Nexal





World. The humans lived in peace, and gradually their blessings returned to the world.

In Tulom-Itzi, the humans built the great observatory, and studied the heavens. Physicians studied herbs and medicines, and sages studied the ways of gods and men. They created paper and symbols to write thereupon, so that their knowledge could be passed around the True World.

Though they built vast centers to honor their gods and to increase their learning, the peoples of the Payit lands still farmed the jungle, clearing away the growth by fire, and then growing mayz until the fields gasped out their last fertile breaths. Thus, though their city centers still remain, their houses were light and small, and were soon swallowed by the jungle when new farms, and new houses were begun.

Despite this they lived a prosperous life. They did not know war. Disease was a rare scourge, and the faithful clerics and wise physicians of the Payit learned to cure most of the afflictions that did arise. Rain fell when it was needed, and the humans used great wells—the *cetays*—as cisterns, to preserve their moisture against the rare and short-lived periods of drought.

Paths and Roads

The Payit built a great network of roads—straight highways of limestone, raised above the level of the mud even during the rainy season. Travel between the cities of the Payit was frequent and relatively unmolested. More and more people moved from small villages to the great cities. In time, a great highway extended all the way

from Ulatos to Tulom-Itzi, and this became the great capstone of Payit trade—a symbol of the might of man, hands linked in friendship across the width and breadth of the land.

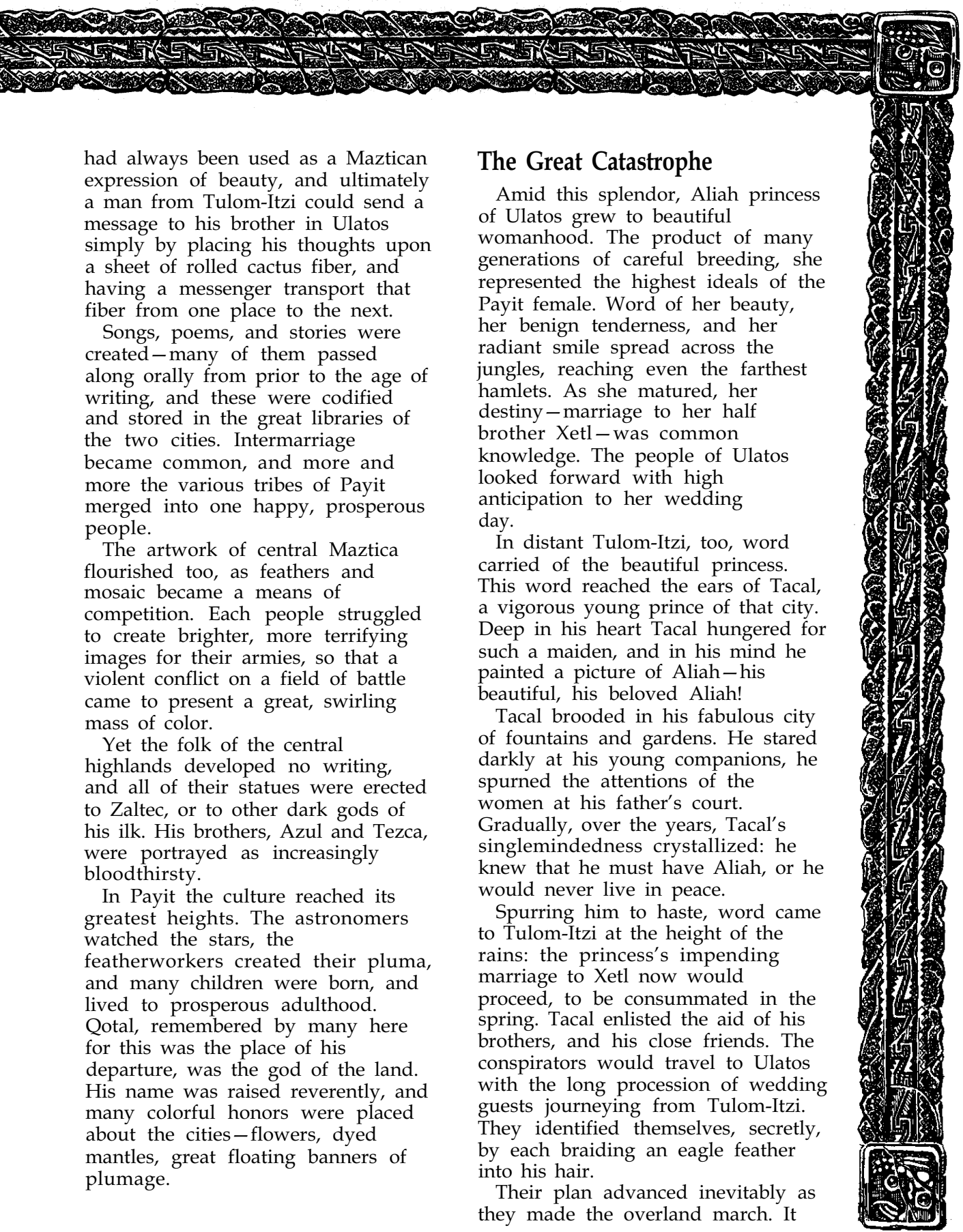
The great trading canoes of the Payit even embarked upon expeditions, fraught with peril, into the Eastern Ocean. Many of these voyages met with disaster, but others served to populate the islands off of the continent's shore.

At the same time as the Payit culture rose, another population was beginning to develop. These peoples, stemming from Kultaka, Huacli, and other lands in the center of the continent, followed a different path from the Payit. They perfected the arts of war, and founded a society based on serving the gods of conflict.

It was during this period that Maztican military tactics underwent their most dramatic development. The various warring tribes, each representing a city, developed armies of several thousand men. Gradually, elements of these forces began to specialize—some men wielding bows and arrows while others carried slings. Some—the biggest and bravest—studied the wielding of the *maca*, learning how to use their stone-edged clubs with devastating effect.

Where the peoples of Payit worked together, sharing the knowledge that arose within each disparate city, the folk of central Maztica fought each other, using new and deadly tactics to gain an advantage over their neighbors. In each way, the knowledge was shared, and the cultures grew.

The first of the great picture writing arose from the Payits, for scribes formalized the symbols that



had always been used as a Maztican expression of beauty, and ultimately a man from Tulom-Itzi could send a message to his brother in Ulatos simply by placing his thoughts upon a sheet of rolled cactus fiber, and having a messenger transport that fiber from one place to the next.

Songs, poems, and stories were created—many of them passed along orally from prior to the age of writing, and these were codified and stored in the great libraries of the two cities. Intermarriage became common, and more and more the various tribes of Payit merged into one happy, prosperous people.

The artwork of central Maztica flourished too, as feathers and mosaic became a means of competition. Each people struggled to create brighter, more terrifying images for their armies, so that a violent conflict on a field of battle came to present a great, swirling mass of color.

Yet the folk of the central highlands developed no writing, and all of their statues were erected to Zaltec, or to other dark gods of his ilk. His brothers, Azul and Tezca, were portrayed as increasingly bloodthirsty.

In Payit the culture reached its greatest heights. The astronomers watched the stars, the featherworkers created their pluma, and many children were born, and lived to prosperous adulthood. Qotal, remembered by many here for this was the place of his departure, was the god of the land. His name was raised reverently, and many colorful honors were placed about the cities—flowers, dyed mantles, great floating banners of plumage.

The Great Catastrophe

Amid this splendor, Aliah princess of Ulatos grew to beautiful womanhood. The product of many generations of careful breeding, she represented the highest ideals of the Payit female. Word of her beauty, her benign tenderness, and her radiant smile spread across the jungles, reaching even the farthest hamlets. As she matured, her destiny—marriage to her half brother Xetl—was common knowledge. The people of Ulatos looked forward with high anticipation to her wedding day.

In distant Tulom-Itzi, too, word carried of the beautiful princess. This word reached the ears of Tacal, a vigorous young prince of that city. Deep in his heart Tacal hungered for such a maiden, and in his mind he painted a picture of Aliah—his beautiful, his beloved Aliah!

Tacal brooded in his fabulous city of fountains and gardens. He stared darkly at his young companions, he spurned the attentions of the women at his father's court. Gradually, over the years, Tacal's singlemindedness crystallized: he knew that he must have Aliah, or he would never live in peace.

Spurring him to haste, word came to Tulom-Itzi at the height of the rains: the princess's impending marriage to Xetl now would proceed, to be consummated in the spring. Tacal enlisted the aid of his brothers, and his close friends. The conspirators would travel to Ulatos with the long procession of wedding guests journeying from Tulom-Itzi. They identified themselves, secretly, by each braiding an eagle feather into his hair.

Their plan advanced inevitably as they made the overland march. It



remained undiscovered by the elder Itzaes, and too by their hosts, the masters of Ulatos. The young men attended feasts and dances, they worshipped all the gods of Payit—but Qotal, of course, most of all—and they touched their eagle feathers in private acknowledgement of their intent.

But the princess Aliah remained in seclusion for the week of celebration, and the conspirators of Tulom-Itza could not discover her. The abduction, they decided, must wait until the wedding.

That event occurred on the auspicious day selected by the astronomers for such a solemn ceremony. The wandering stars of both Ulatos and Tulom-Itzi were prominent in the morning sky. When the bride appeared at the crest of the vast, stonewalled courtyard, a gasp rippled through the crowd. Never before, the people realized in awe, had Aliah's beauty been fully revealed.

She wore a gown of pure white feathers, with sandals of glistening seashells. A cape, cascading parrot feathers of blue, green, and red, floated easily in the air behind her. Her thick black hair flowed past her shoulders, emblazoned with a



dozen bright flowers and a circlet of pure gold.

At this moment, Tacal and his companions struck. They sprang to the platform where Aliah and her attendants stood before the crowd. Slaying the warriors there, Tacal's accomplices fought their way through the palace. He followed, holding tightly to the screaming Aliah's wrist. The desperate band fought its way free, toward the green fields beyond the sprawling city.

But all the warriors of Ulatos pursued them, and surrounded them. When they saw who it was who had betrayed them, the men of Ulatos set upon the rest of the guests from Tulom-Itzi —those who had had no knowledge of the plot.

Seeing his plan thwarted, his people murdered, Tacal succumbed to a terrible rage. His men fought and died, one after the other, until only he remained, still holding the terrified Aliah. He saw on the palace wall his parents and other nobles of Tulom-Itzi pushed to their deaths, in retribution for the attack.

In his blindness, he struck Aliah with his *maca*, cutting off her head. In the next instant, a hundred Payit arrows punctured him, and he died atop her headless corpse.

With these deaths died the Golden Age of the Payit. For reasons that are not quite understood, the peoples left their grand cities in the years following the tragedy, returning to their small villages in the forest, or dying away altogether. People still lived in Ulatos, and in Tulom-Itzi, but not in the numbers they once had. Whether it was disease, or a continuation of the strife—or simply an overwhelming shame—that drove these prosperous people from their cities cannot be told for certain.

Scrolls moldered in abandoned libraries. Elegant structures of stonework felt the insistent prying of expanding roots, prying vines. Many of the cities of the Payit, abandoned entirely by their inhabitants, vanished into the jungle. Pyramids crumbled and plants took hold, scratching and scrambling up the sides to form the shapeless mounds that can be found in many places throughout the jungled lands.

And as the Payit culture waned, its beauty and serenity fading like mist into the enclaving jungle, another peoples—less intelligent and thoughtful than the Payit, perhaps, but diverse and active and violent—began to flourish.

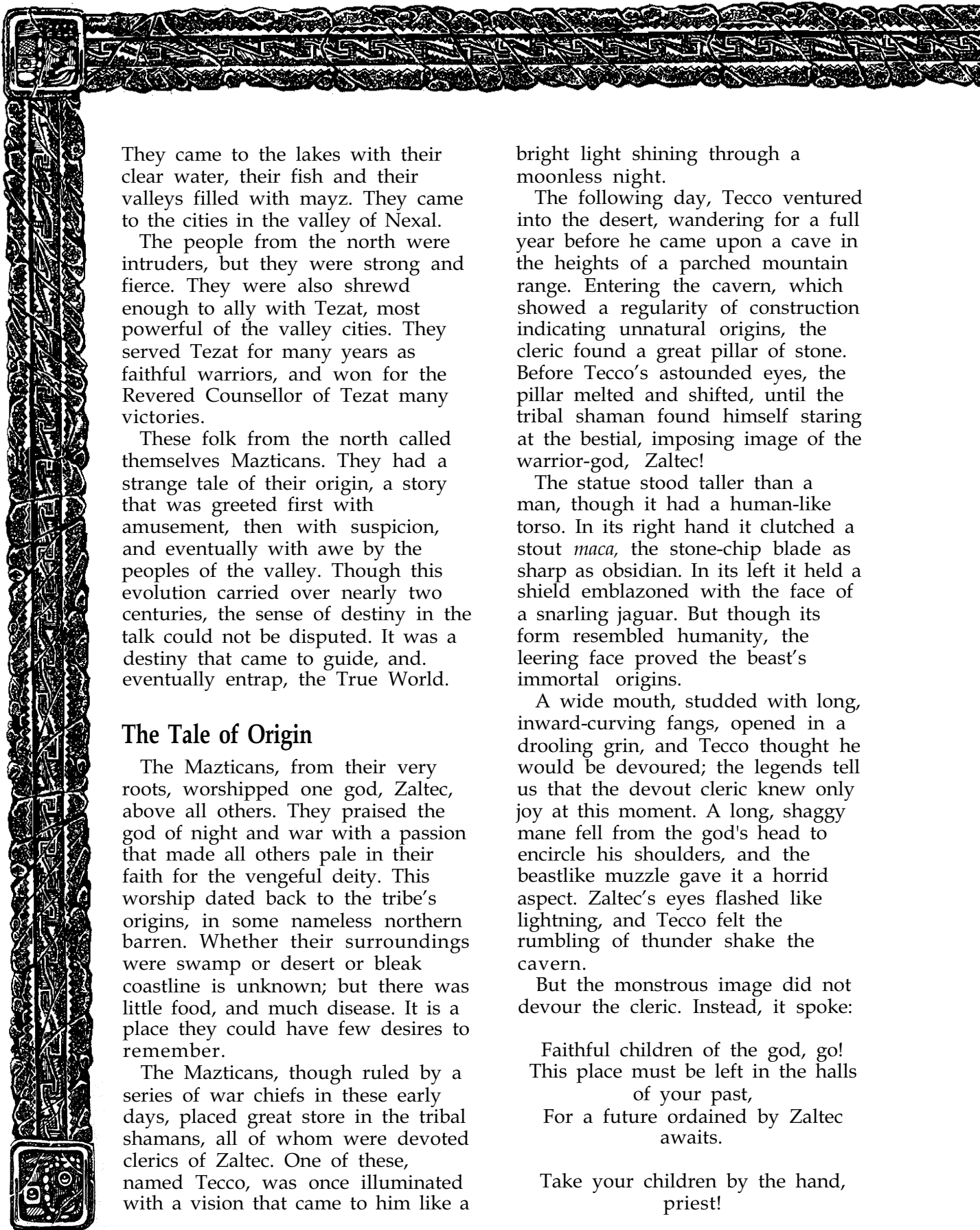
In the central lands of Maztica, the great lakes below the smoking mountain had become a center of warlike nations. Each was represented by a great city, in or near the valley—Cordotl, Tezat, Azatl, Zokil, and many more. They fought each other for the pure joy of combat, and for the greater glory of their lord. The key to their lives was just that—they fought each other.

And while they fought, from the north came the newcomers—a ragged, dusty tribe from the desert lands. It had little ancestry to recommend it, tracing roots most obviously to a group of the Dog People.

Yet this ragged, motley collection of men and women was destined to become the grand master of the True World.

The Rise of Nexal

They came from the north, the ragged people without a home, wandering through the bleak dry lands for no one knew how long.



They came to the lakes with their clear water, their fish and their valleys filled with mayz. They came to the cities in the valley of Nexal.

The people from the north were intruders, but they were strong and fierce. They were also shrewd enough to ally with Tezat, most powerful of the valley cities. They served Tezat for many years as faithful warriors, and won for the Revered Counsellor of Tezat many victories.

These folk from the north called themselves Mazticans. They had a strange tale of their origin, a story that was greeted first with amusement, then with suspicion, and eventually with awe by the peoples of the valley. Though this evolution carried over nearly two centuries, the sense of destiny in the talk could not be disputed. It was a destiny that came to guide, and, eventually entrap, the True World.

The Tale of Origin

The Mazticans, from their very roots, worshipped one god, Zaltec, above all others. They praised the god of night and war with a passion that made all others pale in their faith for the vengeful deity. This worship dated back to the tribe's origins, in some nameless northern barren. Whether their surroundings were swamp or desert or bleak coastline is unknown; but there was little food, and much disease. It is a place they could have few desires to remember.

The Mazticans, though ruled by a series of war chiefs in these early days, placed great store in the tribal shamans, all of whom were devoted clerics of Zaltec. One of these, named Tecco, was once illuminated with a vision that came to him like a

bright light shining through a moonless night.

The following day, Tecco ventured into the desert, wandering for a full year before he came upon a cave in the heights of a parched mountain range. Entering the cavern, which showed a regularity of construction indicating unnatural origins, the cleric found a great pillar of stone. Before Tecco's astounded eyes, the pillar melted and shifted, until the tribal shaman found himself staring at the bestial, imposing image of the warrior-god, Zaltec!

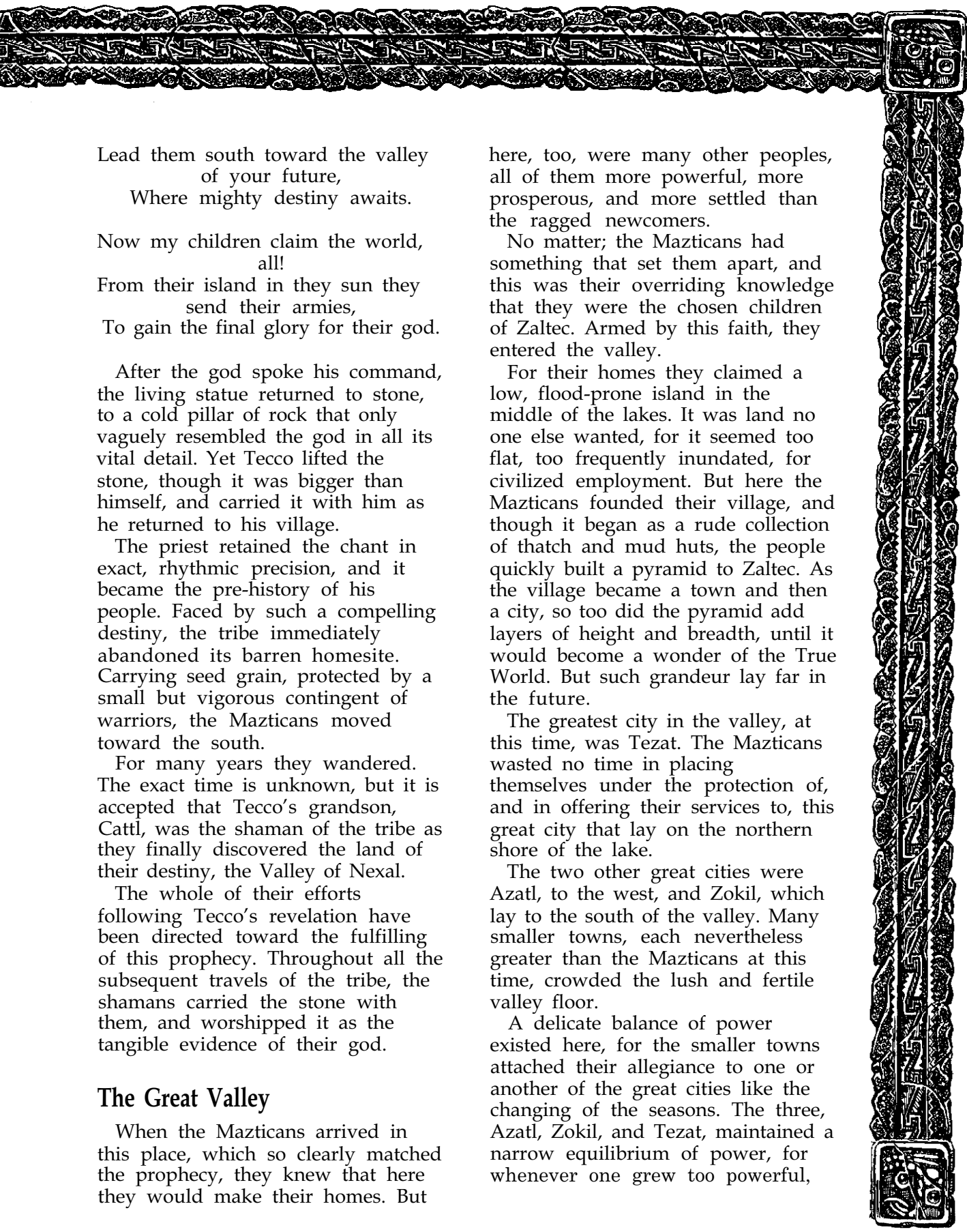
The statue stood taller than a man, though it had a human-like torso. In its right hand it clutched a stout *maca*, the stone-chip blade as sharp as obsidian. In its left it held a shield emblazoned with the face of a snarling jaguar. But though its form resembled humanity, the leering face proved the beast's immortal origins.

A wide mouth, studded with long, inward-curving fangs, opened in a drooling grin, and Tecco thought he would be devoured; the legends tell us that the devout cleric knew only joy at this moment. A long, shaggy mane fell from the god's head to encircle his shoulders, and the beastlike muzzle gave it a horrid aspect. Zaltec's eyes flashed like lightning, and Tecco felt the rumbling of thunder shake the cavern.

But the monstrous image did not devour the cleric. Instead, it spoke:

Faithful children of the god, go!
This place must be left in the halls
of your past,
For a future ordained by Zaltec
awaits.

Take your children by the hand,
priest!



Lead them south toward the valley
of your future,
Where mighty destiny awaits.

Now my children claim the world,
all!
From their island in the sun they
send their armies,
To gain the final glory for their god.

After the god spoke his command,
the living statue returned to stone,
to a cold pillar of rock that only
vaguely resembled the god in all its
vital detail. Yet Tecco lifted the
stone, though it was bigger than
himself, and carried it with him as
he returned to his village.

The priest retained the chant in
exact, rhythmic precision, and it
became the pre-history of his
people. Faced by such a compelling
destiny, the tribe immediately
abandoned its barren homesite.
Carrying seed grain, protected by a
small but vigorous contingent of
warriors, the Mazticans moved
toward the south.

For many years they wandered.
The exact time is unknown, but it is
accepted that Tecco's grandson,
Cattl, was the shaman of the tribe as
they finally discovered the land of
their destiny, the Valley of Nexal.

The whole of their efforts
following Tecco's revelation have
been directed toward the fulfilling
of this prophecy. Throughout all the
subsequent travels of the tribe, the
shamans carried the stone with
them, and worshipped it as the
tangible evidence of their god.

The Great Valley

When the Mazticans arrived in
this place, which so clearly matched
the prophecy, they knew that here
they would make their homes. But

here, too, were many other peoples,
all of them more powerful, more
prosperous, and more settled than
the ragged newcomers.

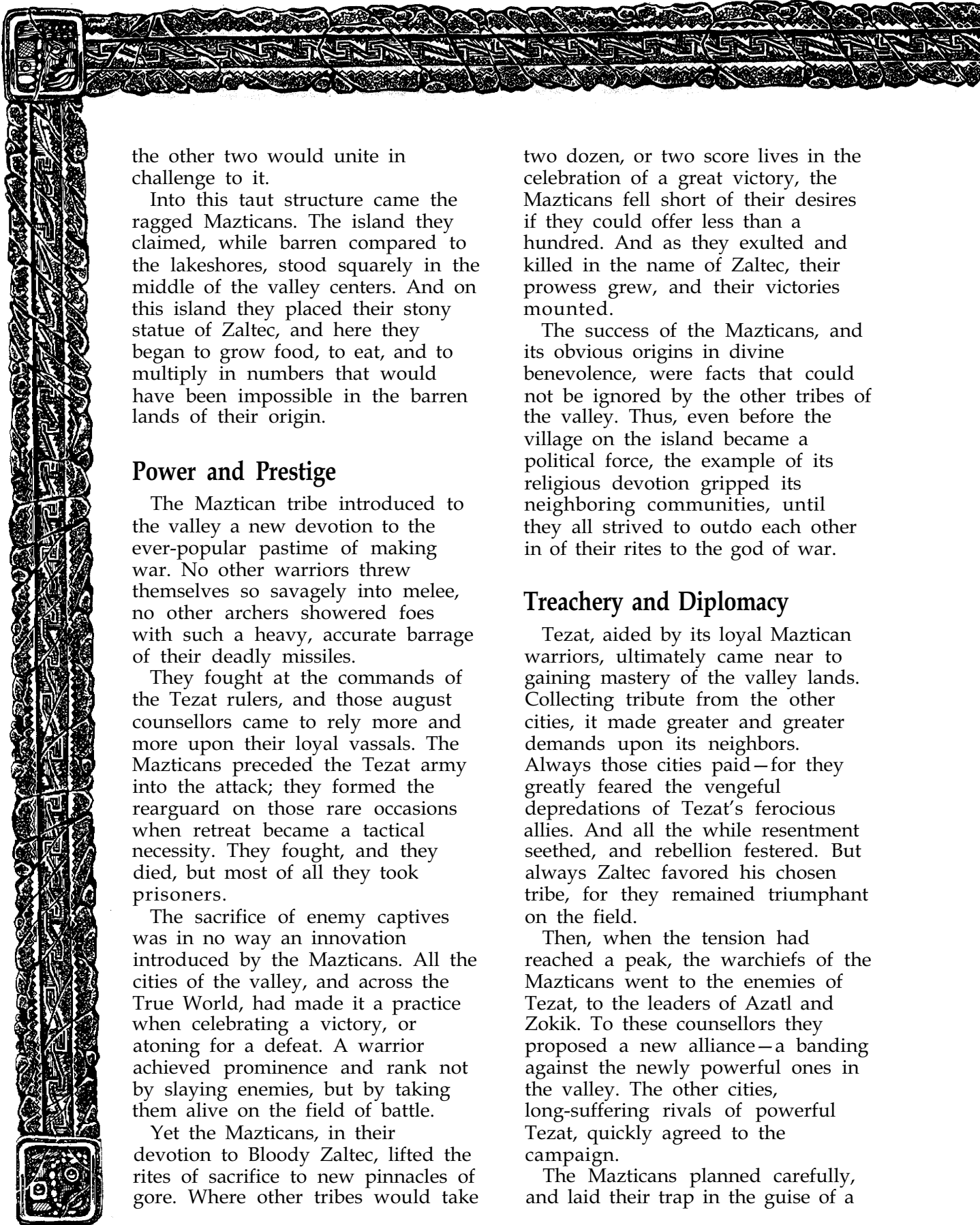
No matter; the Mazticans had
something that set them apart, and
this was their overriding knowledge
that they were the chosen children
of Zaltec. Armed by this faith, they
entered the valley.

For their homes they claimed a
low, flood-prone island in the
middle of the lakes. It was land no
one else wanted, for it seemed too
flat, too frequently inundated, for
civilized employment. But here the
Mazticans founded their village, and
though it began as a rude collection
of thatch and mud huts, the people
quickly built a pyramid to Zaltec. As
the village became a town and then
a city, so too did the pyramid add
layers of height and breadth, until it
would become a wonder of the True
World. But such grandeur lay far in
the future.

The greatest city in the valley, at
this time, was Tezat. The Mazticans
wasted no time in placing
themselves under the protection of,
and in offering their services to, this
great city that lay on the northern
shore of the lake.

The two other great cities were
Azatl, to the west, and Zokil, which
lay to the south of the valley. Many
smaller towns, each nevertheless
greater than the Mazticans at this
time, crowded the lush and fertile
valley floor.

A delicate balance of power
existed here, for the smaller towns
attached their allegiance to one or
another of the great cities like the
changing of the seasons. The three,
Azatl, Zokil, and Tezat, maintained a
narrow equilibrium of power, for
whenever one grew too powerful,



the other two would unite in challenge to it.

Into this taut structure came the ragged Mazticans. The island they claimed, while barren compared to the lakeshores, stood squarely in the middle of the valley centers. And on this island they placed their stony statue of Zaltec, and here they began to grow food, to eat, and to multiply in numbers that would have been impossible in the barren lands of their origin.

Power and Prestige

The Maztican tribe introduced to the valley a new devotion to the ever-popular pastime of making war. No other warriors threw themselves so savagely into melee, no other archers showered foes with such a heavy, accurate barrage of their deadly missiles.

They fought at the commands of the Tezat rulers, and those august counsellors came to rely more and more upon their loyal vassals. The Mazticans preceded the Tezat army into the attack; they formed the rearguard on those rare occasions when retreat became a tactical necessity. They fought, and they died, but most of all they took prisoners.

The sacrifice of enemy captives was in no way an innovation introduced by the Mazticans. All the cities of the valley, and across the True World, had made it a practice when celebrating a victory, or atoning for a defeat. A warrior achieved prominence and rank not by slaying enemies, but by taking them alive on the field of battle.

Yet the Mazticans, in their devotion to Bloody Zaltec, lifted the rites of sacrifice to new pinnacles of gore. Where other tribes would take

two dozen, or two score lives in the celebration of a great victory, the Mazticans fell short of their desires if they could offer less than a hundred. And as they exulted and killed in the name of Zaltec, their prowess grew, and their victories mounted.

The success of the Mazticans, and its obvious origins in divine benevolence, were facts that could not be ignored by the other tribes of the valley. Thus, even before the village on the island became a political force, the example of its religious devotion gripped its neighboring communities, until they all strived to outdo each other in of their rites to the god of war.

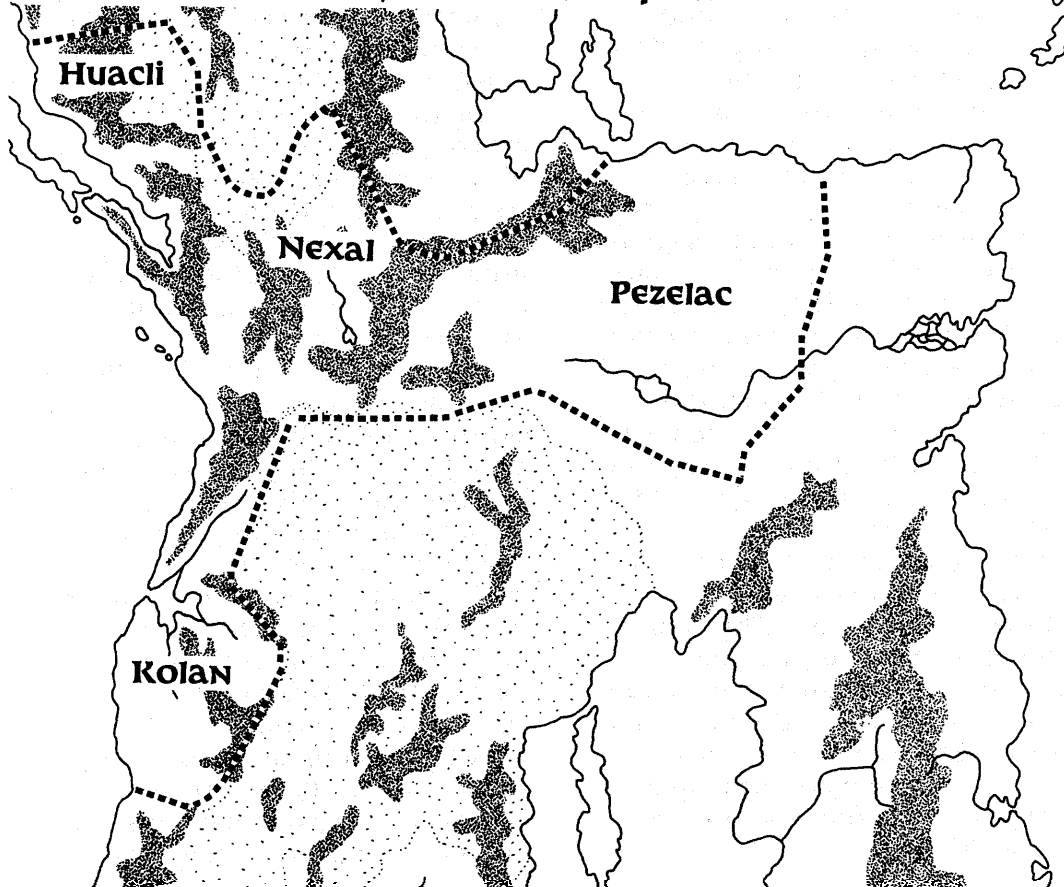
Treachery and Diplomacy

Tezat, aided by its loyal Maztican warriors, ultimately came near to gaining mastery of the valley lands. Collecting tribute from the other cities, it made greater and greater demands upon its neighbors. Always those cities paid—for they greatly feared the vengeful depredations of Tezat's ferocious allies. And all the while resentment seethed, and rebellion festered. But always Zaltec favored his chosen tribe, for they remained triumphant on the field.

Then, when the tension had reached a peak, the warchiefs of the Mazticans went to the enemies of Tezat, to the leaders of Azatl and Zokik. To these counsellors they proposed a new alliance—a banding against the newly powerful ones in the valley. The other cities, long-suffering rivals of powerful Tezat, quickly agreed to the campaign.

The Mazticans planned carefully, and laid their trap in the guise of a

Maximum Extent of Nexalan Empire



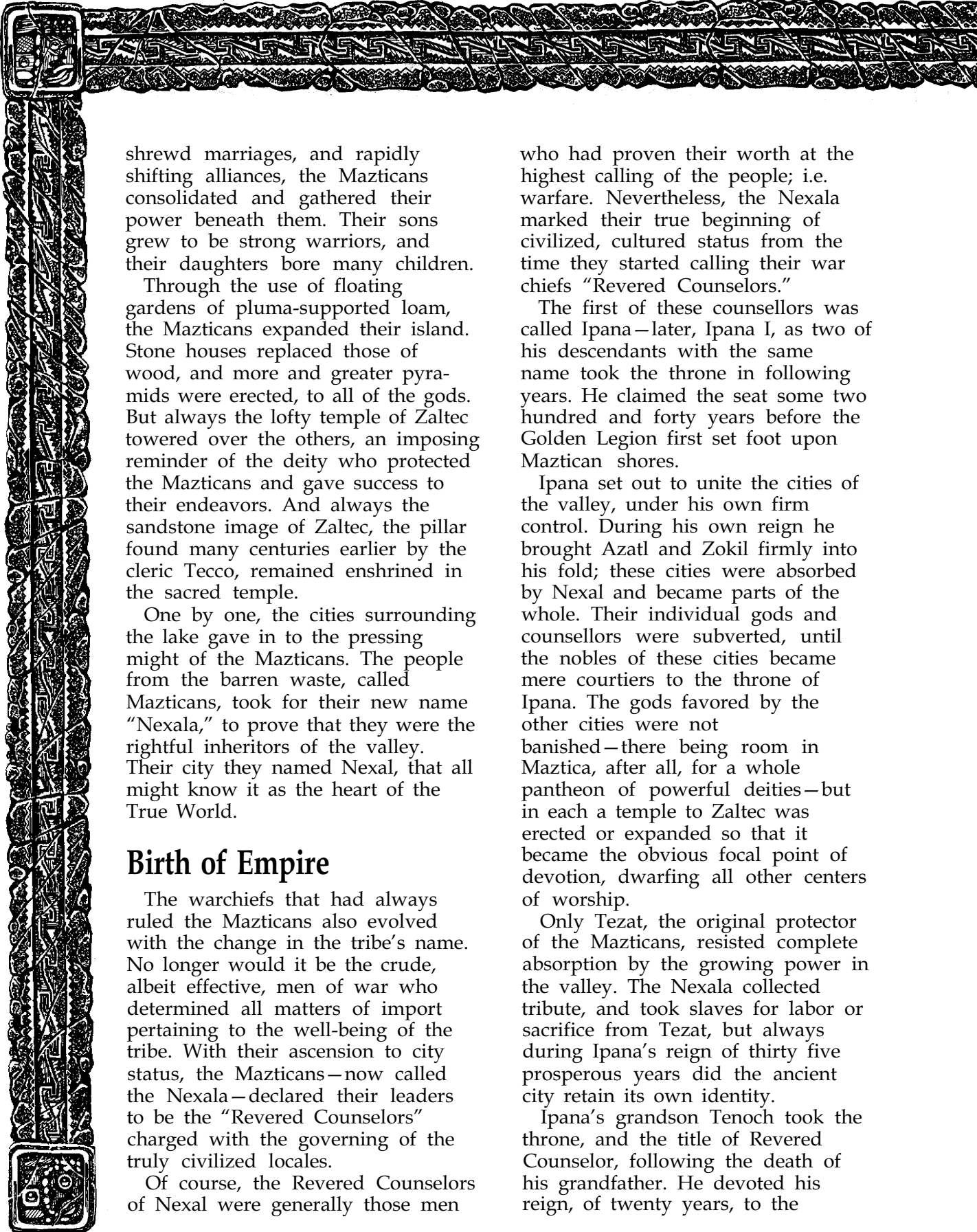
great battle with the rival cities. As the Tezat army advanced, secure in the protection of its Maztican allies along its exposed flank, those same allies turned and commenced the attack.

Led by the Mazticans, the other armies surged forward and laid waste to the mighty Tezats. The once powerful army fell back to its own city, but even here they could not hold. The Mazticans formed the vanguard of the attack, pushing their way to the heart of the city and climbing the sacred pyramid of Tezat—an altar to the sun god, Tezca. The battle ended as the

victorious Mazticans set the temple to flame.

Great was the feasting, and gory were the offerings to Zaltec, after this brief and savage campaign. Leaders and most valorous fighters in the battle, the Mazticans claimed the bulk of the treasure. They carried many slaves, and many more sacrificial captives, back to their island. With this influx, the town truly became a city.

As a result of their change of allegiance, the Mazticans found themselves in a newly gained position of leadership in the valley. With threats, and diplomacy, and



shrewd marriages, and rapidly shifting alliances, the Mazticans consolidated and gathered their power beneath them. Their sons grew to be strong warriors, and their daughters bore many children.

Through the use of floating gardens of pluma-supported loam, the Mazticans expanded their island. Stone houses replaced those of wood, and more and greater pyramids were erected, to all of the gods. But always the lofty temple of Zaltec towered over the others, an imposing reminder of the deity who protected the Mazticans and gave success to their endeavors. And always the sandstone image of Zaltec, the pillar found many centuries earlier by the cleric Tecco, remained enshrined in the sacred temple.

One by one, the cities surrounding the lake gave in to the pressing might of the Mazticans. The people from the barren waste, called Mazticans, took for their new name "Nexala," to prove that they were the rightful inheritors of the valley. Their city they named Nexal, that all might know it as the heart of the True World.

Birth of Empire

The warchiefs that had always ruled the Mazticans also evolved with the change in the tribe's name. No longer would it be the crude, albeit effective, men of war who determined all matters of import pertaining to the well-being of the tribe. With their ascension to city status, the Mazticans—now called the Nexala—declared their leaders to be the "Revered Counselors" charged with the governing of the truly civilized locales.

Of course, the Revered Counselors of Nexal were generally those men

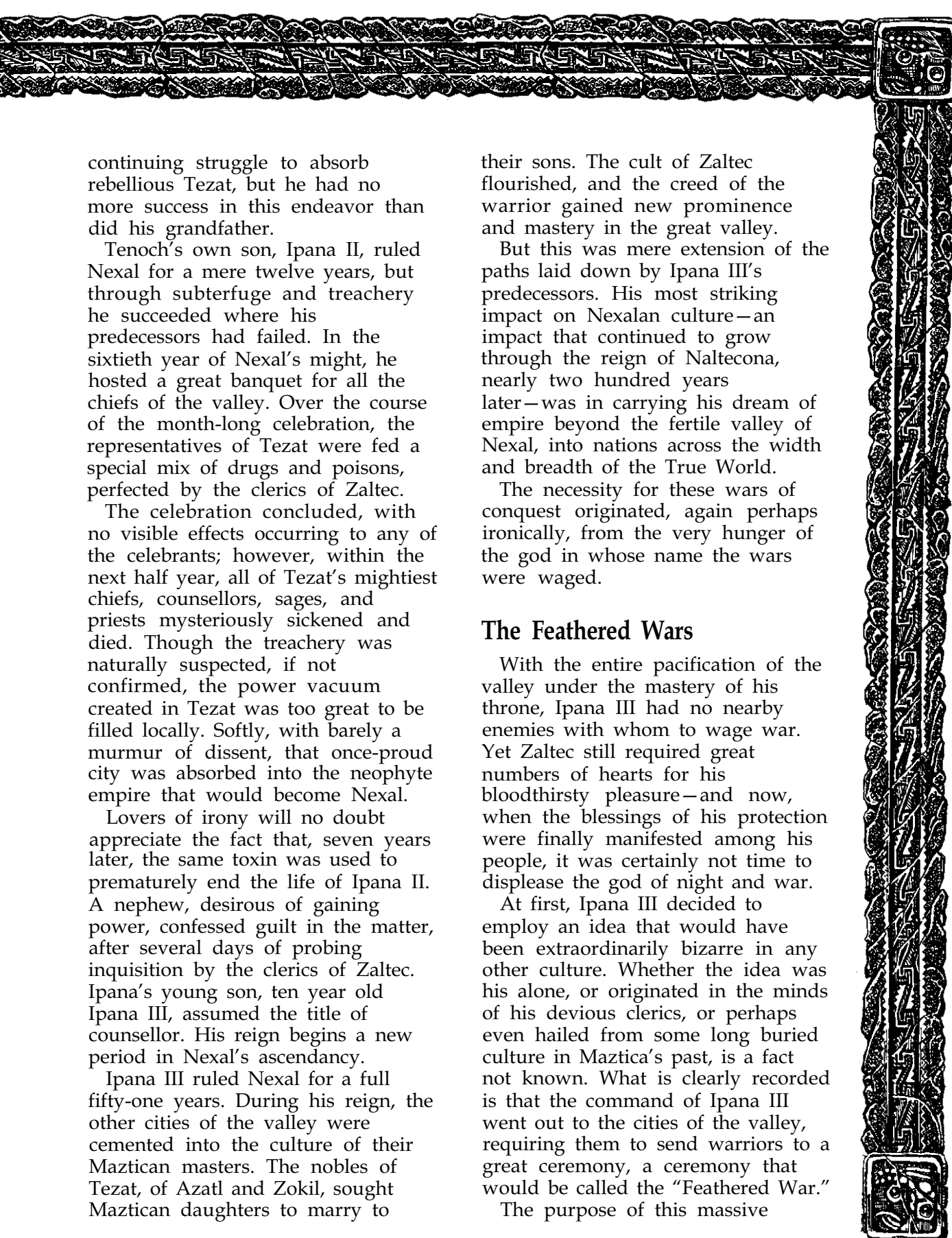
who had proven their worth at the highest calling of the people; i.e. warfare. Nevertheless, the Nexala marked their true beginning of civilized, cultured status from the time they started calling their war chiefs "Revered Counselors."

The first of these counsellors was called Ipana—later, Ipana I, as two of his descendants with the same name took the throne in following years. He claimed the seat some two hundred and forty years before the Golden Legion first set foot upon Maztican shores.

Ipana set out to unite the cities of the valley, under his own firm control. During his own reign he brought Azatl and Zokil firmly into his fold; these cities were absorbed by Nexal and became parts of the whole. Their individual gods and counsellors were subverted, until the nobles of these cities became mere courtiers to the throne of Ipana. The gods favored by the other cities were not banished—there being room in Maztica, after all, for a whole pantheon of powerful deities—but in each a temple to Zaltec was erected or expanded so that it became the obvious focal point of devotion, dwarfing all other centers of worship.

Only Tezat, the original protector of the Mazticans, resisted complete absorption by the growing power in the valley. The Nexala collected tribute, and took slaves for labor or sacrifice from Tezat, but always during Ipana's reign of thirty five prosperous years did the ancient city retain its own identity.

Ipana's grandson Tenoch took the throne, and the title of Revered Counselor, following the death of his grandfather. He devoted his reign, of twenty years, to the



continuing struggle to absorb rebellious Tezat, but he had no more success in this endeavor than did his grandfather.

Tenoch's own son, Ipana II, ruled Nexal for a mere twelve years, but through subterfuge and treachery he succeeded where his predecessors had failed. In the sixtieth year of Nexal's might, he hosted a great banquet for all the chiefs of the valley. Over the course of the month-long celebration, the representatives of Tezat were fed a special mix of drugs and poisons, perfected by the clerics of Zaltec.

The celebration concluded, with no visible effects occurring to any of the celebrants; however, within the next half year, all of Tezat's mightiest chiefs, counsellors, sages, and priests mysteriously sickened and died. Though the treachery was naturally suspected, if not confirmed, the power vacuum created in Tezat was too great to be filled locally. Softly, with barely a murmur of dissent, that once-proud city was absorbed into the neophyte empire that would become Nexal.

Lovers of irony will no doubt appreciate the fact that, seven years later, the same toxin was used to prematurely end the life of Ipana II. A nephew, desirous of gaining power, confessed guilt in the matter, after several days of probing inquisition by the clerics of Zaltec. Ipana's young son, ten year old Ipana III, assumed the title of counsellor. His reign begins a new period in Nexal's ascendancy.

Ipana III ruled Nexal for a full fifty-one years. During his reign, the other cities of the valley were cemented into the culture of their Maztican masters. The nobles of Tezat, of Azatl and Zokil, sought Maztican daughters to marry to

their sons. The cult of Zaltec flourished, and the creed of the warrior gained new prominence and mastery in the great valley.

But this was mere extension of the paths laid down by Ipana III's predecessors. His most striking impact on Nexalan culture—an impact that continued to grow through the reign of Naltecona, nearly two hundred years later—was in carrying his dream of empire beyond the fertile valley of Nexal, into nations across the width and breadth of the True World.

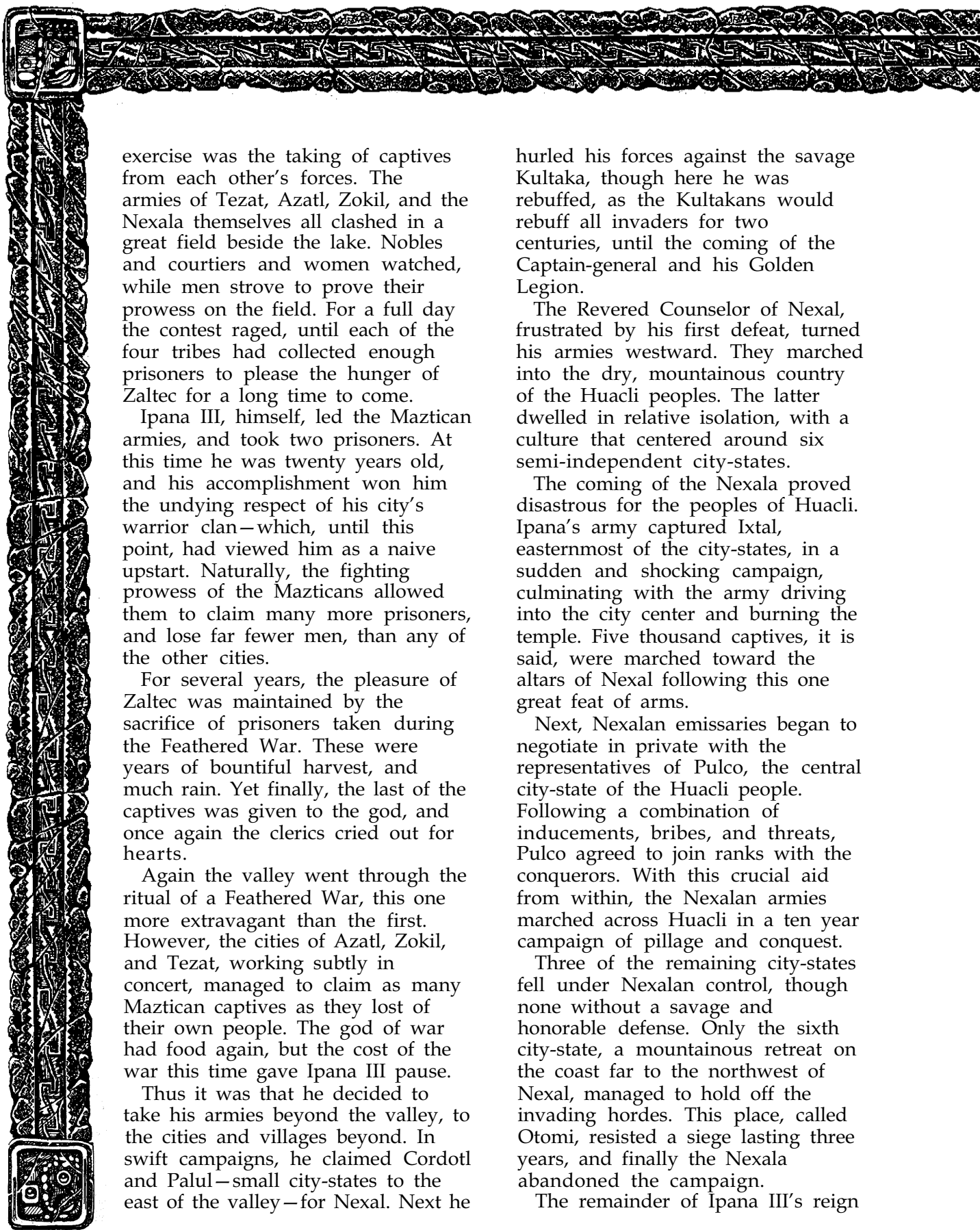
The necessity for these wars of conquest originated, again perhaps ironically, from the very hunger of the god in whose name the wars were waged.

The Feathered Wars

With the entire pacification of the valley under the mastery of his throne, Ipana III had no nearby enemies with whom to wage war. Yet Zaltec still required great numbers of hearts for his bloodthirsty pleasure—and now, when the blessings of his protection were finally manifested among his people, it was certainly not time to displease the god of night and war.

At first, Ipana III decided to employ an idea that would have been extraordinarily bizarre in any other culture. Whether the idea was his alone, or originated in the minds of his devious clerics, or perhaps even hailed from some long buried culture in Maztica's past, is a fact not known. What is clearly recorded is that the command of Ipana III went out to the cities of the valley, requiring them to send warriors to a great ceremony, a ceremony that would be called the "Feathered War."

The purpose of this massive



exercise was the taking of captives from each other's forces. The armies of Tezat, Azatl, Zokil, and the Nexala themselves all clashed in a great field beside the lake. Nobles and courtiers and women watched, while men strove to prove their prowess on the field. For a full day the contest raged, until each of the four tribes had collected enough prisoners to please the hunger of Zaltec for a long time to come.

Ipana III, himself, led the Maztican armies, and took two prisoners. At this time he was twenty years old, and his accomplishment won him the undying respect of his city's warrior clan—which, until this point, had viewed him as a naive upstart. Naturally, the fighting prowess of the Mazticans allowed them to claim many more prisoners, and lose far fewer men, than any of the other cities.

For several years, the pleasure of Zaltec was maintained by the sacrifice of prisoners taken during the Feathered War. These were years of bountiful harvest, and much rain. Yet finally, the last of the captives was given to the god, and once again the clerics cried out for hearts.

Again the valley went through the ritual of a Feathered War, this one more extravagant than the first. However, the cities of Azatl, Zokil, and Tezat, working subtly in concert, managed to claim as many Maztican captives as they lost of their own people. The god of war had food again, but the cost of the war this time gave Ipana III pause.

Thus it was that he decided to take his armies beyond the valley, to the cities and villages beyond. In swift campaigns, he claimed Cordotl and Palul—small city-states to the east of the valley—for Nexal. Next he

hurled his forces against the savage Kultaka, though here he was rebuffed, as the Kultakans would rebuff all invaders for two centuries, until the coming of the Captain-general and his Golden Legion.

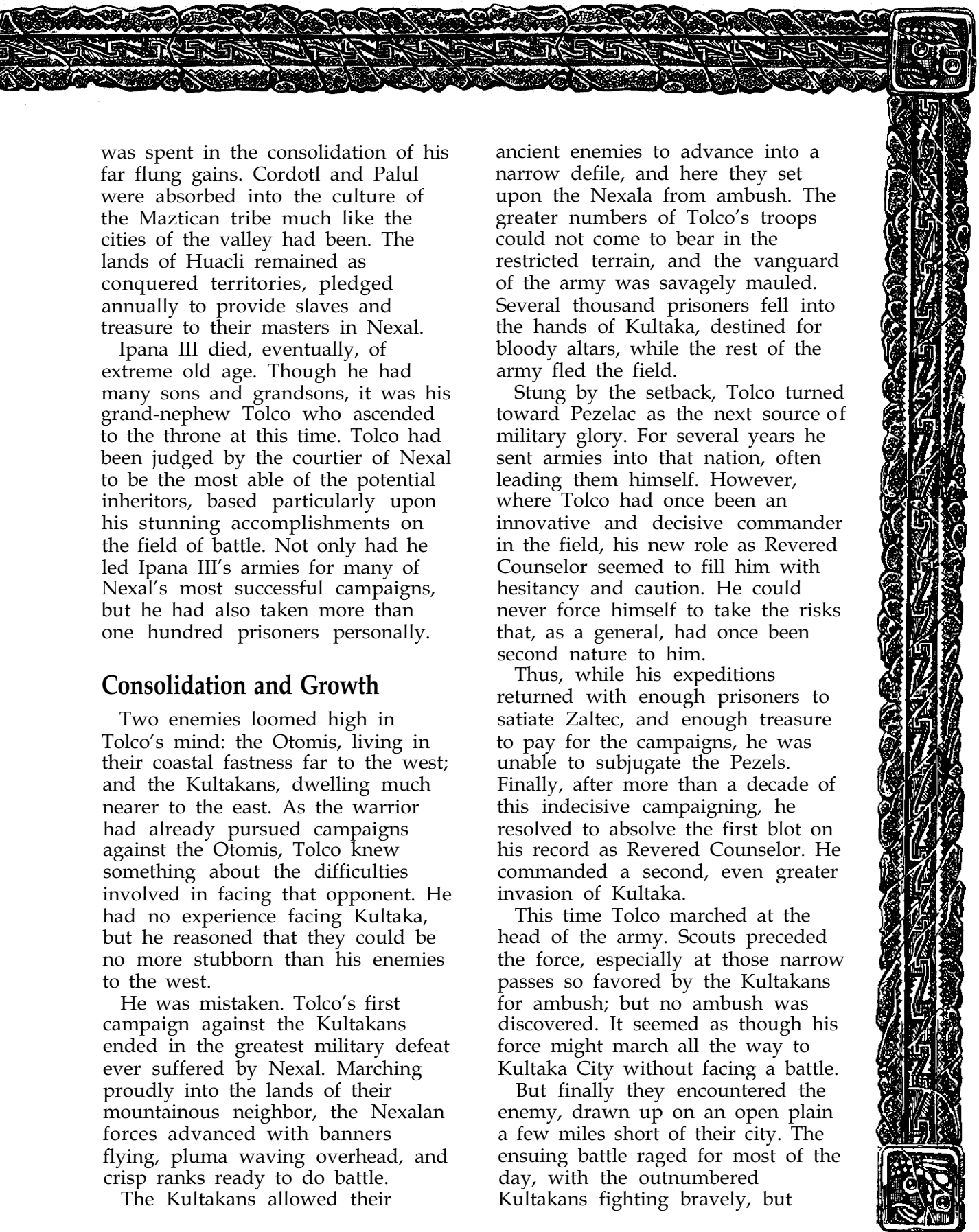
The Revered Counselor of Nexal, frustrated by his first defeat, turned his armies westward. They marched into the dry, mountainous country of the Huacli peoples. The latter dwelled in relative isolation, with a culture that centered around six semi-independent city-states.

The coming of the Nexala proved disastrous for the peoples of Huacli. Ipana's army captured Ixtal, easternmost of the city-states, in a sudden and shocking campaign, culminating with the army driving into the city center and burning the temple. Five thousand captives, it is said, were marched toward the altars of Nexal following this one great feat of arms.

Next, Nexalan emissaries began to negotiate in private with the representatives of Pulco, the central city-state of the Huacli people. Following a combination of inducements, bribes, and threats, Pulco agreed to join ranks with the conquerors. With this crucial aid from within, the Nexalan armies marched across Huacli in a ten year campaign of pillage and conquest.

Three of the remaining city-states fell under Nexalan control, though none without a savage and honorable defense. Only the sixth city-state, a mountainous retreat on the coast far to the northwest of Nexal, managed to hold off the invading hordes. This place, called Otomi, resisted a siege lasting three years, and finally the Nexala abandoned the campaign.

The remainder of Ipana III's reign



was spent in the consolidation of his far flung gains. Cordotl and Palul were absorbed into the culture of the Maztican tribe much like the cities of the valley had been. The lands of Huacli remained as conquered territories, pledged annually to provide slaves and treasure to their masters in Nexal.

Ipana III died, eventually, of extreme old age. Though he had many sons and grandsons, it was his grand-nephew Tolco who ascended to the throne at this time. Tolco had been judged by the courtier of Nexal to be the most able of the potential inheritors, based particularly upon his stunning accomplishments on the field of battle. Not only had he led Ipana III's armies for many of Nexal's most successful campaigns, but he had also taken more than one hundred prisoners personally.

Consolidation and Growth

Two enemies loomed high in Tolco's mind: the Otomis, living in their coastal fastness far to the west; and the Kultakans, dwelling much nearer to the east. As the warrior had already pursued campaigns against the Otomis, Tolco knew something about the difficulties involved in facing that opponent. He had no experience facing Kultaka, but he reasoned that they could be no more stubborn than his enemies to the west.

He was mistaken. Tolco's first campaign against the Kultakans ended in the greatest military defeat ever suffered by Nexal. Marching proudly into the lands of their mountainous neighbor, the Nexalan forces advanced with banners flying, pluma waving overhead, and crisp ranks ready to do battle.

The Kultakans allowed their

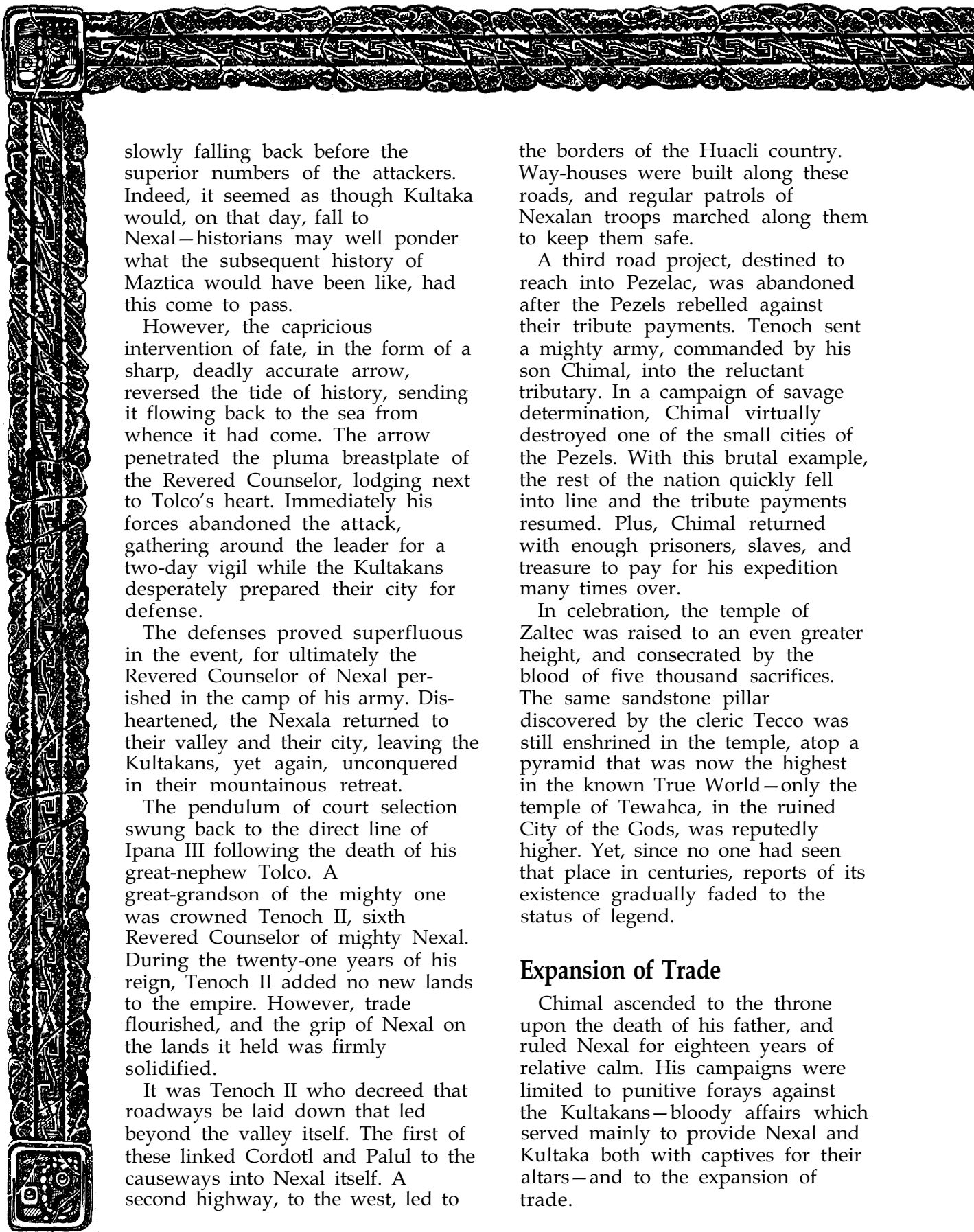
ancient enemies to advance into a narrow defile, and here they set upon the Nexala from ambush. The greater numbers of Tolco's troops could not come to bear in the restricted terrain, and the vanguard of the army was savagely mauled. Several thousand prisoners fell into the hands of Kultaka, destined for bloody altars, while the rest of the army fled the field.

Stung by the setback, Tolco turned toward Pezelac as the next source of military glory. For several years he sent armies into that nation, often leading them himself. However, where Tolco had once been an innovative and decisive commander in the field, his new role as Revered Counselor seemed to fill him with hesitancy and caution. He could never force himself to take the risks that, as a general, had once been second nature to him.

Thus, while his expeditions returned with enough prisoners to satiate Zaltec, and enough treasure to pay for the campaigns, he was unable to subjugate the Pezels. Finally, after more than a decade of this indecisive campaigning, he resolved to absolve the first blot on his record as Revered Counselor. He commanded a second, even greater invasion of Kultaka.

This time Tolco marched at the head of the army. Scouts preceded the force, especially at those narrow passes so favored by the Kultakans for ambush; but no ambush was discovered. It seemed as though his force might march all the way to Kultaka City without facing a battle.

But finally they encountered the enemy, drawn up on an open plain a few miles short of their city. The ensuing battle raged for most of the day, with the outnumbered Kultakans fighting bravely, but



slowly falling back before the superior numbers of the attackers. Indeed, it seemed as though Kultaka would, on that day, fall to Nexal—historians may well ponder what the subsequent history of Maztica would have been like, had this come to pass.

However, the capricious intervention of fate, in the form of a sharp, deadly accurate arrow, reversed the tide of history, sending it flowing back to the sea from whence it had come. The arrow penetrated the pluma breastplate of the Revered Counselor, lodging next to Tolco's heart. Immediately his forces abandoned the attack, gathering around the leader for a two-day vigil while the Kultakans desperately prepared their city for defense.

The defenses proved superfluous in the event, for ultimately the Revered Counselor of Nexal perished in the camp of his army. Disheartened, the Nexala returned to their valley and their city, leaving the Kultakans, yet again, unconquered in their mountainous retreat.

The pendulum of court selection swung back to the direct line of Ipana III following the death of his great-nephew Tolco. A great-grandson of the mighty one was crowned Tenoch II, sixth Revered Counselor of mighty Nexal. During the twenty-one years of his reign, Tenoch II added no new lands to the empire. However, trade flourished, and the grip of Nexal on the lands it held was firmly solidified.

It was Tenoch II who decreed that roadways be laid down that led beyond the valley itself. The first of these linked Cordotl and Palul to the causeways into Nexal itself. A second highway, to the west, led to

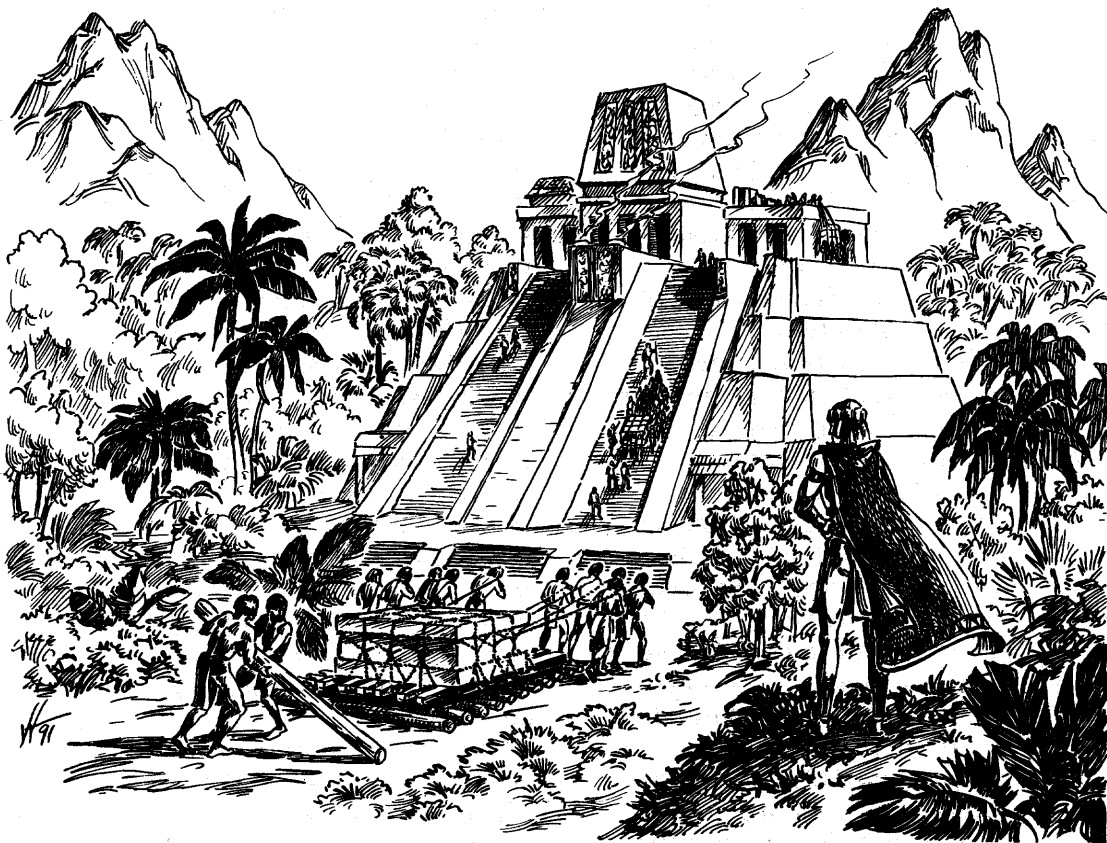
the borders of the Huacli country. Way-houses were built along these roads, and regular patrols of Nexalan troops marched along them to keep them safe.

A third road project, destined to reach into Pezelac, was abandoned after the Pezels rebelled against their tribute payments. Tenoch sent a mighty army, commanded by his son Chimal, into the reluctant tributary. In a campaign of savage determination, Chimal virtually destroyed one of the small cities of the Pezels. With this brutal example, the rest of the nation quickly fell into line and the tribute payments resumed. Plus, Chimal returned with enough prisoners, slaves, and treasure to pay for his expedition many times over.

In celebration, the temple of Zaltec was raised to an even greater height, and consecrated by the blood of five thousand sacrifices. The same sandstone pillar discovered by the cleric Tecco was still enshrined in the temple, atop a pyramid that was now the highest in the known True World—only the temple of Tewahca, in the ruined City of the Gods, was reputedly higher. Yet, since no one had seen that place in centuries, reports of its existence gradually faded to the status of legend.

Expansion of Trade

Chimal ascended to the throne upon the death of his father, and ruled Nexal for eighteen years of relative calm. His campaigns were limited to punitive forays against the Kultakans—bloody affairs which served mainly to provide Nexal and Kultaka both with captives for their altars—and to the expansion of trade.

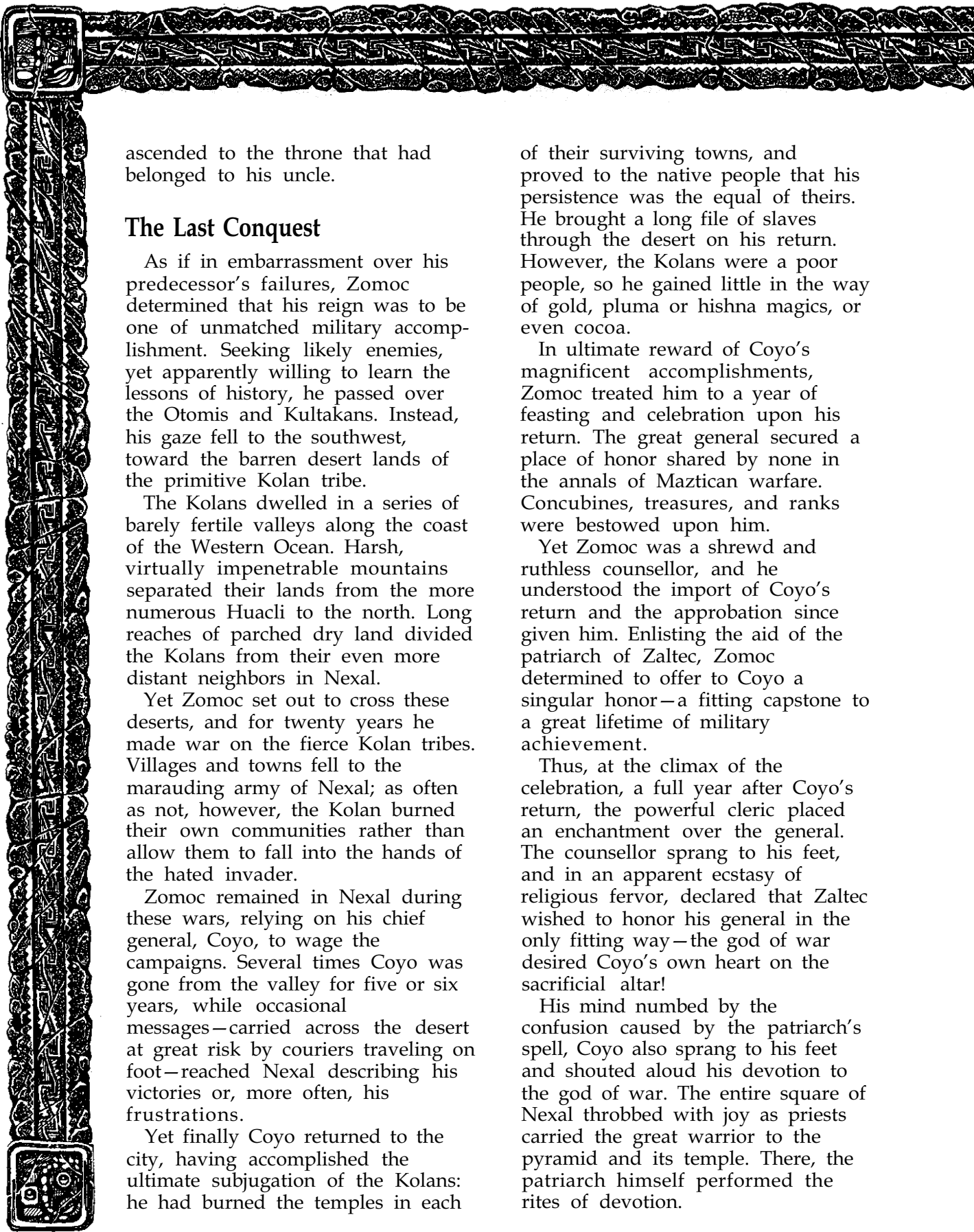


It is the latter area where Chimal made his most significant advances. Not only were all the Pezelac cities incorporated into the trading network of Nexal, but some of his most venturesome merchants even journeyed as far as the jungles of Payit. For the first time, communication between the Payit capital of Ulatos and the city at the heart of the True World became a regular, if not frequent, occurrence.

Chimal also opened negotiations and established limited trading arrangements with the recalcitrant Huacli city of Otomi. These people, in their remote and protected

locale, were tremendously suspicious of foreigners, and it is a tribute to the wisdom of patience of Chimal's merchants that they were allowed to enter and leave the place alive.

Chimal's place on the throne was taken by his own son Totep, but this reign lasted a mere six years. A weak and vacillating ruler, Totep seemed more interested in maintaining a palace full of willing concubines than in governing his nation. His untimely death, it is rumored, was caused by poison administered by his own military leaders. One of these, Zomoc,



ascended to the throne that had belonged to his uncle.

The Last Conquest

As if in embarrassment over his predecessor's failures, Zomoc determined that his reign was to be one of unmatched military accomplishment. Seeking likely enemies, yet apparently willing to learn the lessons of history, he passed over the Otomis and Kultakans. Instead, his gaze fell to the southwest, toward the barren desert lands of the primitive Kolan tribe.

The Kolans dwelled in a series of barely fertile valleys along the coast of the Western Ocean. Harsh, virtually impenetrable mountains separated their lands from the more numerous Huacli to the north. Long reaches of parched dry land divided the Kolans from their even more distant neighbors in Nexal.

Yet Zomoc set out to cross these deserts, and for twenty years he made war on the fierce Kolan tribes. Villages and towns fell to the marauding army of Nexal; as often as not, however, the Kolan burned their own communities rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the hated invader.

Zomoc remained in Nexal during these wars, relying on his chief general, Coyo, to wage the campaigns. Several times Coyo was gone from the valley for five or six years, while occasional messages—carried across the desert at great risk by couriers traveling on foot—reached Nexal describing his victories or, more often, his frustrations.

Yet finally Coyo returned to the city, having accomplished the ultimate subjugation of the Kolans: he had burned the temples in each

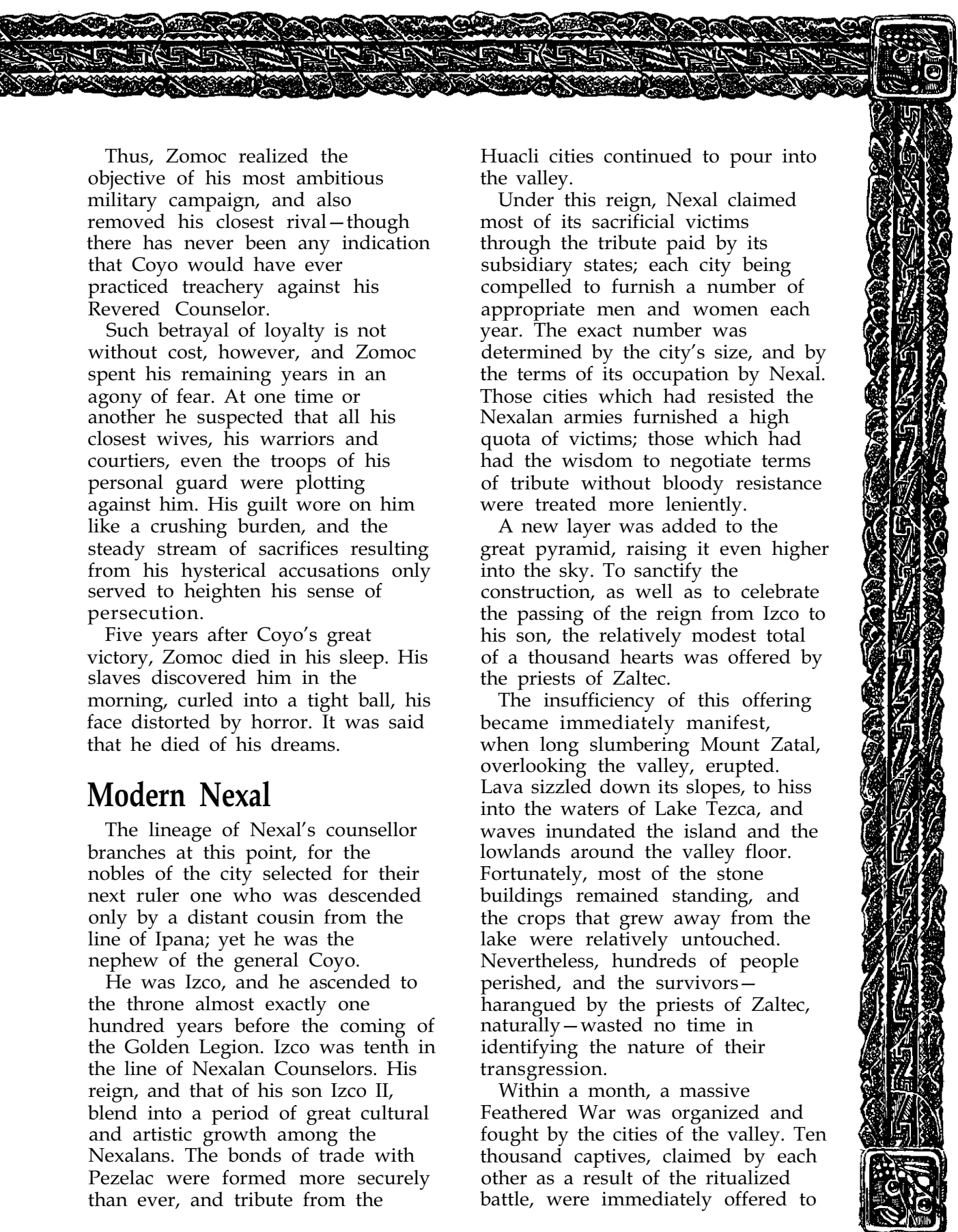
of their surviving towns, and proved to the native people that his persistence was the equal of theirs. He brought a long file of slaves through the desert on his return. However, the Kolans were a poor people, so he gained little in the way of gold, pluma or hishna magics, or even cocoa.

In ultimate reward of Coyo's magnificent accomplishments, Zomoc treated him to a year of feasting and celebration upon his return. The great general secured a place of honor shared by none in the annals of Maztican warfare. Concubines, treasures, and ranks were bestowed upon him.

Yet Zomoc was a shrewd and ruthless counsellor, and he understood the import of Coyo's return and the approbation since given him. Enlisting the aid of the patriarch of Zaltec, Zomoc determined to offer to Coyo a singular honor—a fitting capstone to a great lifetime of military achievement.

Thus, at the climax of the celebration, a full year after Coyo's return, the powerful cleric placed an enchantment over the general. The counsellor sprang to his feet, and in an apparent ecstasy of religious fervor, declared that Zaltec wished to honor his general in the only fitting way—the god of war desired Coyo's own heart on the sacrificial altar!

His mind numbed by the confusion caused by the patriarch's spell, Coyo also sprang to his feet and shouted aloud his devotion to the god of war. The entire square of Nexal throbbed with joy as priests carried the great warrior to the pyramid and its temple. There, the patriarch himself performed the rites of devotion.



Thus, Zomoc realized the objective of his most ambitious military campaign, and also removed his closest rival—though there has never been any indication that Coyo would have ever practiced treachery against his Revered Counselor.

Such betrayal of loyalty is not without cost, however, and Zomoc spent his remaining years in an agony of fear. At one time or another he suspected that all his closest wives, his warriors and courtiers, even the troops of his personal guard were plotting against him. His guilt wore on him like a crushing burden, and the steady stream of sacrifices resulting from his hysterical accusations only served to heighten his sense of persecution.

Five years after Coyo's great victory, Zomoc died in his sleep. His slaves discovered him in the morning, curled into a tight ball, his face distorted by horror. It was said that he died of his dreams.

Modern Nexal

The lineage of Nexal's counsellor branches at this point, for the nobles of the city selected for their next ruler one who was descended only by a distant cousin from the line of Ipana; yet he was the nephew of the general Coyo.

He was Izco, and he ascended to the throne almost exactly one hundred years before the coming of the Golden Legion. Izco was tenth in the line of Nexalan Counselors. His reign, and that of his son Izco II, blend into a period of great cultural and artistic growth among the Nexalans. The bonds of trade with Pezelac were formed more securely than ever, and tribute from the

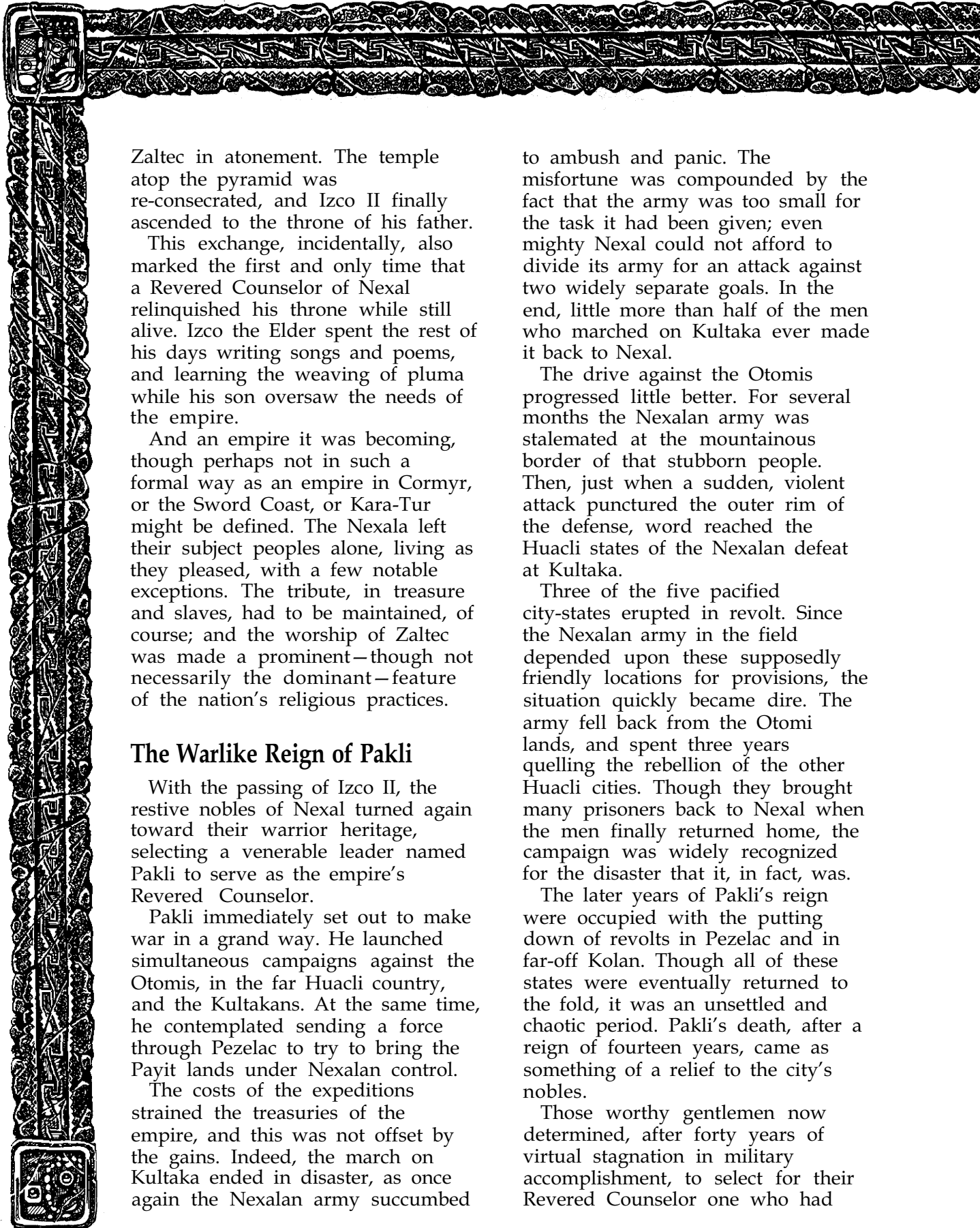
Huacli cities continued to pour into the valley.

Under this reign, Nexal claimed most of its sacrificial victims through the tribute paid by its subsidiary states; each city being compelled to furnish a number of appropriate men and women each year. The exact number was determined by the city's size, and by the terms of its occupation by Nexal. Those cities which had resisted the Nexalan armies furnished a high quota of victims; those which had had the wisdom to negotiate terms of tribute without bloody resistance were treated more leniently.

A new layer was added to the great pyramid, raising it even higher into the sky. To sanctify the construction, as well as to celebrate the passing of the reign from Izco to his son, the relatively modest total of a thousand hearts was offered by the priests of Zaltec.

The insufficiency of this offering became immediately manifest, when long slumbering Mount Zatal, overlooking the valley, erupted. Lava sizzled down its slopes, to hiss into the waters of Lake Tezca, and waves inundated the island and the lowlands around the valley floor. Fortunately, most of the stone buildings remained standing, and the crops that grew away from the lake were relatively untouched. Nevertheless, hundreds of people perished, and the survivors—harangued by the priests of Zaltec, naturally—wasted no time in identifying the nature of their transgression.

Within a month, a massive Feathered War was organized and fought by the cities of the valley. Ten thousand captives, claimed by each other as a result of the ritualized battle, were immediately offered to



Zaltec in atonement. The temple atop the pyramid was re-consecrated, and Izco II finally ascended to the throne of his father.

This exchange, incidentally, also marked the first and only time that a Revered Counselor of Nexal relinquished his throne while still alive. Izco the Elder spent the rest of his days writing songs and poems, and learning the weaving of pluma while his son oversaw the needs of the empire.

And an empire it was becoming, though perhaps not in such a formal way as an empire in Cormyr, or the Sword Coast, or Kara-Tur might be defined. The Nexala left their subject peoples alone, living as they pleased, with a few notable exceptions. The tribute, in treasure and slaves, had to be maintained, of course; and the worship of Zaltec was made a prominent—though not necessarily the dominant—feature of the nation's religious practices.

The Warlike Reign of Pakli

With the passing of Izco II, the restive nobles of Nexal turned again toward their warrior heritage, selecting a venerable leader named Pakli to serve as the empire's Revered Counselor.

Pakli immediately set out to make war in a grand way. He launched simultaneous campaigns against the Otomis, in the far Huacli country, and the Kultakans. At the same time, he contemplated sending a force through Pezelac to try to bring the Payit lands under Nexalan control.

The costs of the expeditions strained the treasuries of the empire, and this was not offset by the gains. Indeed, the march on Kultaka ended in disaster, as once again the Nexalan army succumbed

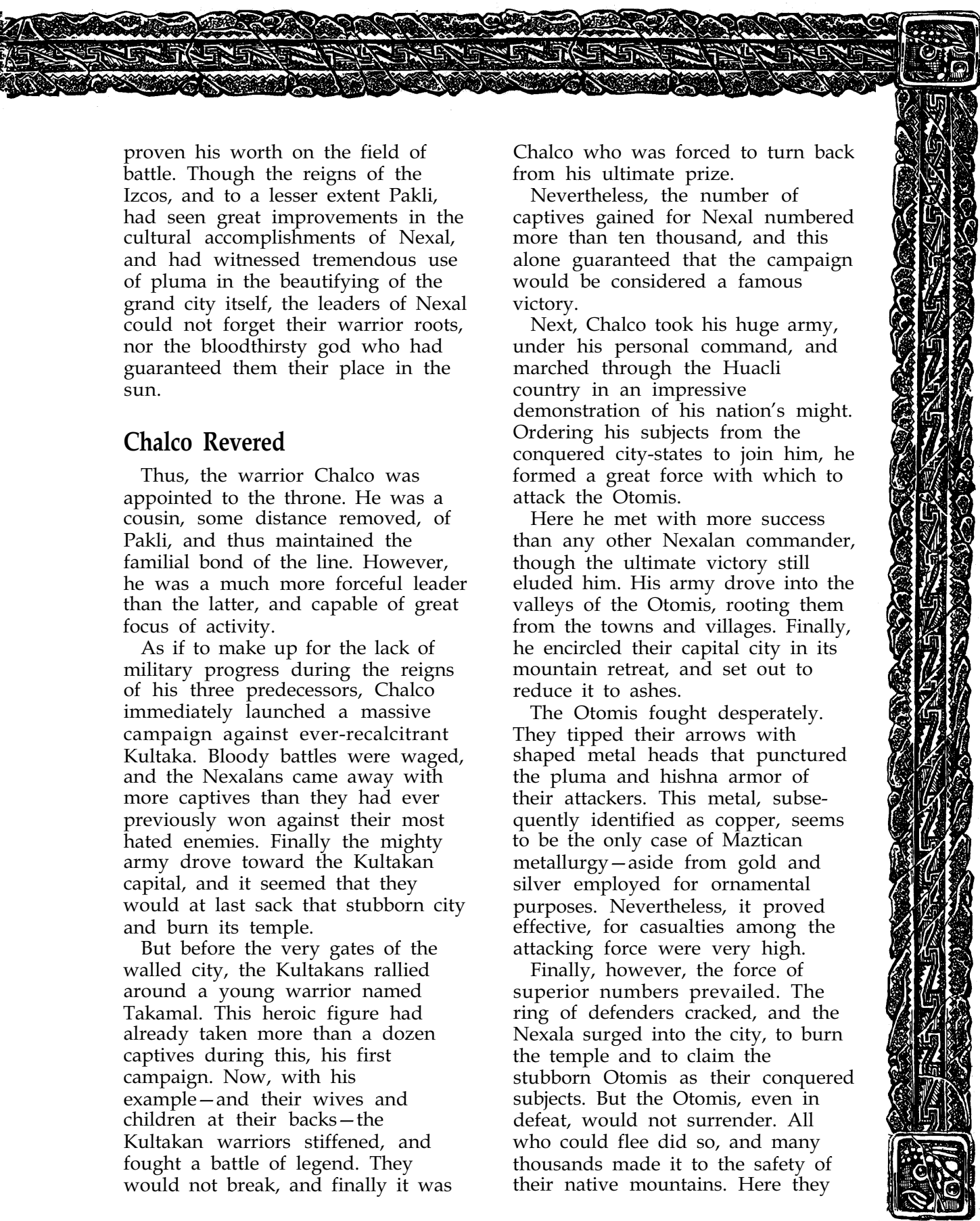
to ambush and panic. The misfortune was compounded by the fact that the army was too small for the task it had been given; even mighty Nexal could not afford to divide its army for an attack against two widely separate goals. In the end, little more than half of the men who marched on Kultaka ever made it back to Nexal.

The drive against the Otomis progressed little better. For several months the Nexalan army was stalemated at the mountainous border of that stubborn people. Then, just when a sudden, violent attack punctured the outer rim of the defense, word reached the Huacli states of the Nexalan defeat at Kultaka.

Three of the five pacified city-states erupted in revolt. Since the Nexalan army in the field depended upon these supposedly friendly locations for provisions, the situation quickly became dire. The army fell back from the Otomi lands, and spent three years quelling the rebellion of the other Huacli cities. Though they brought many prisoners back to Nexal when the men finally returned home, the campaign was widely recognized for the disaster that it, in fact, was.

The later years of Pakli's reign were occupied with the putting down of revolts in Pezelac and in far-off Kolan. Though all of these states were eventually returned to the fold, it was an unsettled and chaotic period. Pakli's death, after a reign of fourteen years, came as something of a relief to the city's nobles.

Those worthy gentlemen now determined, after forty years of virtual stagnation in military accomplishment, to select for their Revered Counselor one who had



proven his worth on the field of battle. Though the reigns of the Izcós, and to a lesser extent Pakli, had seen great improvements in the cultural accomplishments of Nexal, and had witnessed tremendous use of pluma in the beautifying of the grand city itself, the leaders of Nexal could not forget their warrior roots, nor the bloodthirsty god who had guaranteed them their place in the sun.

Chalco Revered

Thus, the warrior Chalco was appointed to the throne. He was a cousin, some distance removed, of Pakli, and thus maintained the familial bond of the line. However, he was a much more forceful leader than the latter, and capable of great focus of activity.

As if to make up for the lack of military progress during the reigns of his three predecessors, Chalco immediately launched a massive campaign against ever-recalcitrant Kultaka. Bloody battles were waged, and the Nexalans came away with more captives than they had ever previously won against their most hated enemies. Finally the mighty army drove toward the Kultakan capital, and it seemed that they would at last sack that stubborn city and burn its temple.

But before the very gates of the walled city, the Kultakans rallied around a young warrior named Takamal. This heroic figure had already taken more than a dozen captives during this, his first campaign. Now, with his example—and their wives and children at their backs—the Kultakan warriors stiffened, and fought a battle of legend. They would not break, and finally it was

Chalco who was forced to turn back from his ultimate prize.


Nevertheless, the number of captives gained for Nexal numbered more than ten thousand, and this alone guaranteed that the campaign would be considered a famous victory.

Next, Chalco took his huge army, under his personal command, and marched through the Huacli country in an impressive demonstration of his nation's might. Ordering his subjects from the conquered city-states to join him, he formed a great force with which to attack the Otomis.

Here he met with more success than any other Nexalan commander, though the ultimate victory still eluded him. His army drove into the valleys of the Otomis, rooting them from the towns and villages. Finally, he encircled their capital city in its mountain retreat, and set out to reduce it to ashes.

The Otomis fought desperately. They tipped their arrows with shaped metal heads that punctured the pluma and hishna armor of their attackers. This metal, subsequently identified as copper, seems to be the only case of Maztican metallurgy—aside from gold and silver employed for ornamental purposes. Nevertheless, it proved effective, for casualties among the attacking force were very high.

Finally, however, the force of superior numbers prevailed. The ring of defenders cracked, and the Nexala surged into the city, to burn the temple and to claim the stubborn Otomis as their conquered subjects. But the Otomis, even in defeat, would not surrender. All who could flee did so, and many thousands made it to the safety of their native mountains. Here they



lived for years, until Chalco tired of the long wait and abandoned the valley. With the departure of the invaders, the Otomis moved back into their city and rebuilt it even grander than it had been before.

Chalco's reign was also distinguished by several events of a spiritual nature. For one thing, this counsellor bid his traders to journey in search of the original home of the Maztican tribe, and especially the unnatural caverns where, according to ancient legend, the cleric Tecco had discovered the pillar of stone that had come to life as the spirit of Zaltec.

Upon each merchant's return to Nexal, but especially those who had journeyed to the northern fringes of the Huacli country, or into the wild lands of the Dog People, he was carefully questioned by the Revered Counselor. Had he heard tales of the ancient barrenland? Was there any sign of a massive, unnatural cavern? But always these questions provided only more questions, never the answers Chalco sought.

And as often as not, the missions were fraught with peril for the traders. The nomadic Dog People successfully evaded all attempts to subject them to Nexal; with no cities and temples to defend, and the whole of the harsh northern desert as their home, the Dog People could observe, harass, and outdistance any army sent from the valley into the harsh and unforgiving clime. Even traders, known often to function as spies for the throne, were not welcomed.

Second, and equally fruitless, Chalco sent many expeditions into the House of Tezca to seek out the City of the Gods, legendary Tewahca. None of these was successful, and indeed many of the exploring

parties never even emerged from that waterless waste. There was never a shortage of volunteers, however, for the work had the blessings of the cult of Zaltec.

Chalco reigned for twenty-six prosperous years, and upon his death it could be said that the empire was in its strongest shape ever. The last ten years of his rule saw virtually no rebellion among the subject people, even requiring the occasional Feathered War to make sure that a steady supply of captives remained ready for the ever-hungry god.

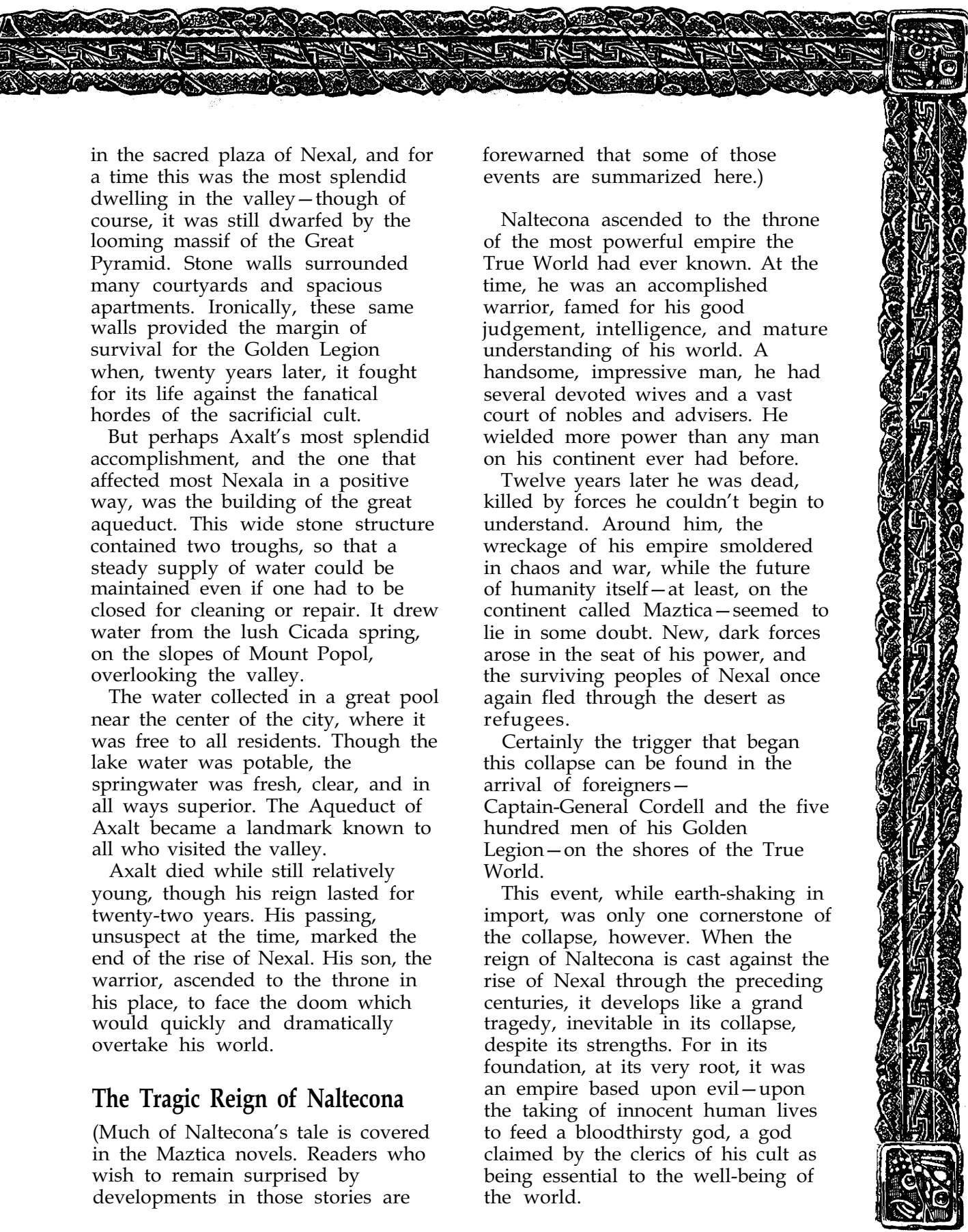
Peak of Empire

Chalco was succeeded by a grandson, Axalt, who—like his ancestor Ipana III, two centuries earlier—ascended to the throne as a mere youth. Nevertheless, Axalt's keen instincts, his ready wit, and his quick grasp of his lessons convinced his teachers and the nobles of the city that in this young man they had a uniquely qualified individual.

Axalt's reign was distinguished by frequent forays against the Kultakans, though none succeeded as well as Chalco's first attack against the stubborn neighboring nation. During this time, the war chief Takamal, Revered Counselor of Kultaka, demonstrated his full abilities, constantly outfoxing the larger armies sent by Nexal.

Axalt's most able general in these forays proved to be his son, Naltecona. When this shrewd leader led the army, they were still not able to breach the hard Kultakan defenses; yet the troops showed greater toughness in adversity. Never once did Naltecona's army leave the field in a rout.

A great palace was built for Axalt



in the sacred plaza of Nexal, and for a time this was the most splendid dwelling in the valley—though of course, it was still dwarfed by the looming massif of the Great Pyramid. Stone walls surrounded many courtyards and spacious apartments. Ironically, these same walls provided the margin of survival for the Golden Legion when, twenty years later, it fought for its life against the fanatical hordes of the sacrificial cult.

But perhaps Axalt's most splendid accomplishment, and the one that affected most Nexala in a positive way, was the building of the great aqueduct. This wide stone structure contained two troughs, so that a steady supply of water could be maintained even if one had to be closed for cleaning or repair. It drew water from the lush Cicada spring, on the slopes of Mount Popol, overlooking the valley.

The water collected in a great pool near the center of the city, where it was free to all residents. Though the lake water was potable, the springwater was fresh, clear, and in all ways superior. The Aqueduct of Axalt became a landmark known to all who visited the valley.

Axalt died while still relatively young, though his reign lasted for twenty-two years. His passing, unsuspect at the time, marked the end of the rise of Nexal. His son, the warrior, ascended to the throne in his place, to face the doom which would quickly and dramatically overtake his world.

The Tragic Reign of Naltecona

(Much of Naltecona's tale is covered in the Maztica novels. Readers who wish to remain surprised by developments in those stories are

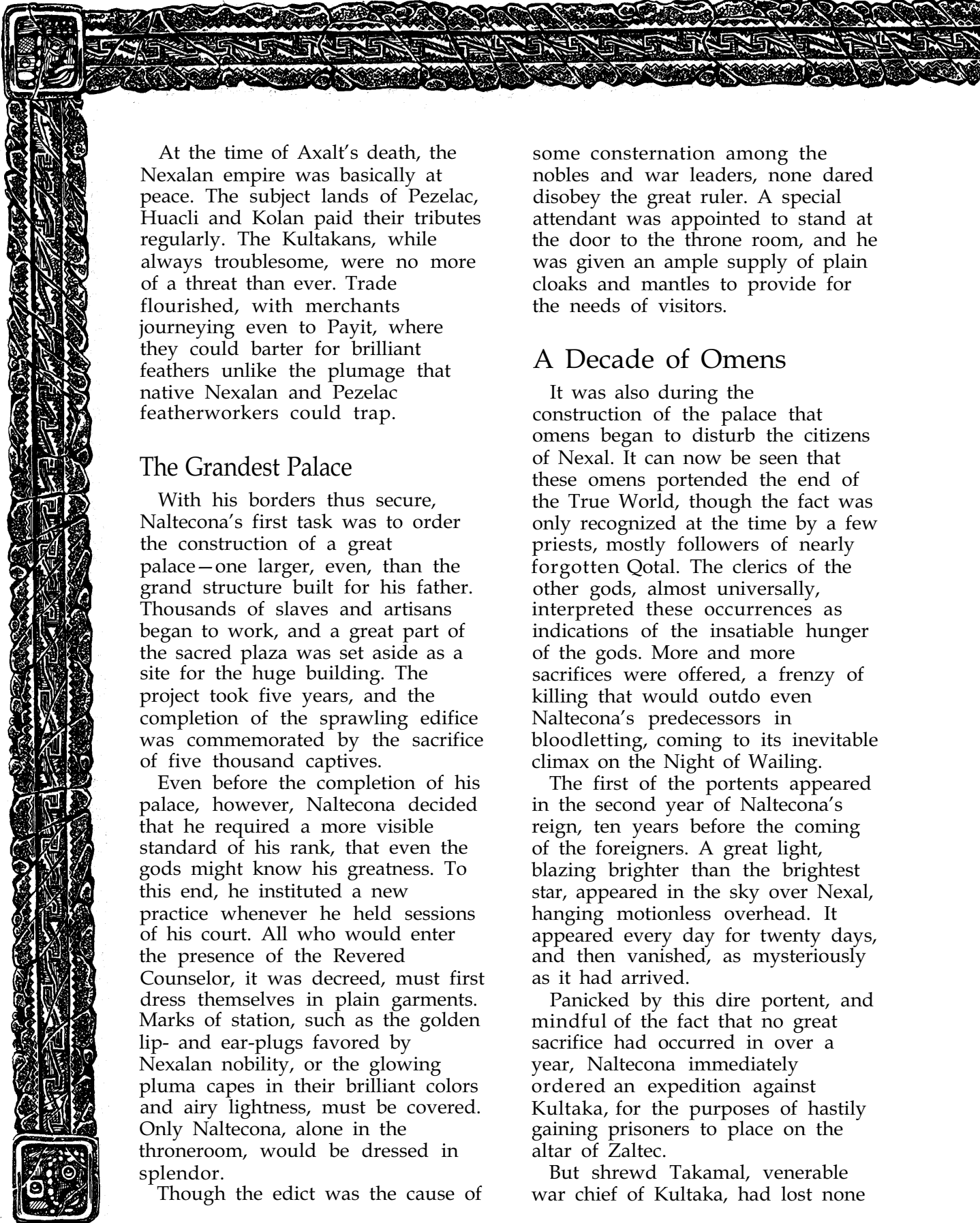
forewarned that some of those events are summarized here.)

Naltecona ascended to the throne of the most powerful empire the True World had ever known. At the time, he was an accomplished warrior, famed for his good judgement, intelligence, and mature understanding of his world. A handsome, impressive man, he had several devoted wives and a vast court of nobles and advisers. He wielded more power than any man on his continent ever had before.

Twelve years later he was dead, killed by forces he couldn't begin to understand. Around him, the wreckage of his empire smoldered in chaos and war, while the future of humanity itself—at least, on the continent called Maztica—seemed to lie in some doubt. New, dark forces arose in the seat of his power, and the surviving peoples of Nexal once again fled through the desert as refugees.

Certainly the trigger that began this collapse can be found in the arrival of foreigners—Captain-General Cordell and the five hundred men of his Golden Legion—on the shores of the True World.

This event, while earth-shaking in import, was only one cornerstone of the collapse, however. When the reign of Naltecona is cast against the rise of Nexal through the preceding centuries, it develops like a grand tragedy, inevitable in its collapse, despite its strengths. For in its foundation, at its very root, it was an empire based upon evil—upon the taking of innocent human lives to feed a bloodthirsty god, a god claimed by the clerics of his cult as being essential to the well-being of the world.



At the time of Axalt's death, the Nexalan empire was basically at peace. The subject lands of Pezelac, Huacli and Kolan paid their tributes regularly. The Kultakans, while always troublesome, were no more of a threat than ever. Trade flourished, with merchants journeying even to Payit, where they could barter for brilliant feathers unlike the plumage that native Nexalan and Pezelac featherworkers could trap.

The Grandest Palace

With his borders thus secure, Naltecona's first task was to order the construction of a great palace—one larger, even, than the grand structure built for his father. Thousands of slaves and artisans began to work, and a great part of the sacred plaza was set aside as a site for the huge building. The project took five years, and the completion of the sprawling edifice was commemorated by the sacrifice of five thousand captives.

Even before the completion of his palace, however, Naltecona decided that he required a more visible standard of his rank, that even the gods might know his greatness. To this end, he instituted a new practice whenever he held sessions of his court. All who would enter the presence of the Revered Counselor, it was decreed, must first dress themselves in plain garments. Marks of station, such as the golden lip- and ear-plugs favored by Nexalan nobility, or the glowing pluma capes in their brilliant colors and airy lightness, must be covered. Only Naltecona, alone in the throneroom, would be dressed in splendor.

Though the edict was the cause of

some consternation among the nobles and war leaders, none dared disobey the great ruler. A special attendant was appointed to stand at the door to the throne room, and he was given an ample supply of plain cloaks and mantles to provide for the needs of visitors.

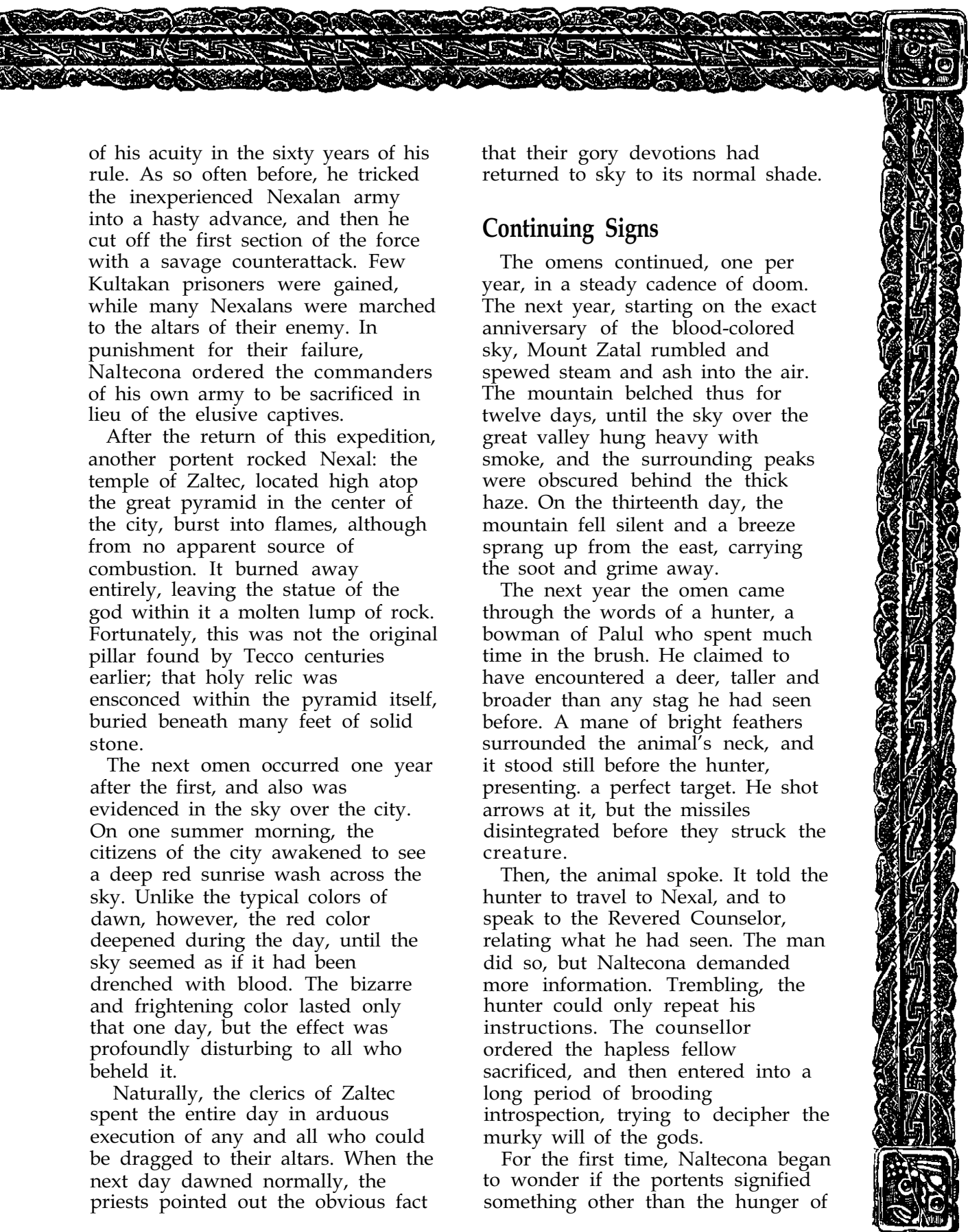
A Decade of Omens

It was also during the construction of the palace that omens began to disturb the citizens of Nexal. It can now be seen that these omens portended the end of the True World, though the fact was only recognized at the time by a few priests, mostly followers of nearly forgotten Qotal. The clerics of the other gods, almost universally, interpreted these occurrences as indications of the insatiable hunger of the gods. More and more sacrifices were offered, a frenzy of killing that would outdo even Naltecona's predecessors in bloodletting, coming to its inevitable climax on the Night of Wailing.

The first of the portents appeared in the second year of Naltecona's reign, ten years before the coming of the foreigners. A great light, blazing brighter than the brightest star, appeared in the sky over Nexal, hanging motionless overhead. It appeared every day for twenty days, and then vanished, as mysteriously as it had arrived.

Panicked by this dire portent, and mindful of the fact that no great sacrifice had occurred in over a year, Naltecona immediately ordered an expedition against Kultaka, for the purposes of hastily gaining prisoners to place on the altar of Zaltec.

But shrewd Takamal, venerable war chief of Kultaka, had lost none



of his acuity in the sixty years of his rule. As so often before, he tricked the inexperienced Nexalan army into a hasty advance, and then he cut off the first section of the force with a savage counterattack. Few Kultakan prisoners were gained, while many Nexalans were marched to the altars of their enemy. In punishment for their failure, Naltecona ordered the commanders of his own army to be sacrificed in lieu of the elusive captives.

After the return of this expedition, another portent rocked Nexal: the temple of Zaltec, located high atop the great pyramid in the center of the city, burst into flames, although from no apparent source of combustion. It burned away entirely, leaving the statue of the god within it a molten lump of rock. Fortunately, this was not the original pillar found by Tecco centuries earlier; that holy relic was ensconced within the pyramid itself, buried beneath many feet of solid stone.

The next omen occurred one year after the first, and also was evidenced in the sky over the city. On one summer morning, the citizens of the city awakened to see a deep red sunrise wash across the sky. Unlike the typical colors of dawn, however, the red color deepened during the day, until the sky seemed as if it had been drenched with blood. The bizarre and frightening color lasted only that one day, but the effect was profoundly disturbing to all who beheld it.

Naturally, the clerics of Zaltec spent the entire day in arduous execution of any and all who could be dragged to their altars. When the next day dawned normally, the priests pointed out the obvious fact

that their gory devotions had returned to sky to its normal shade.

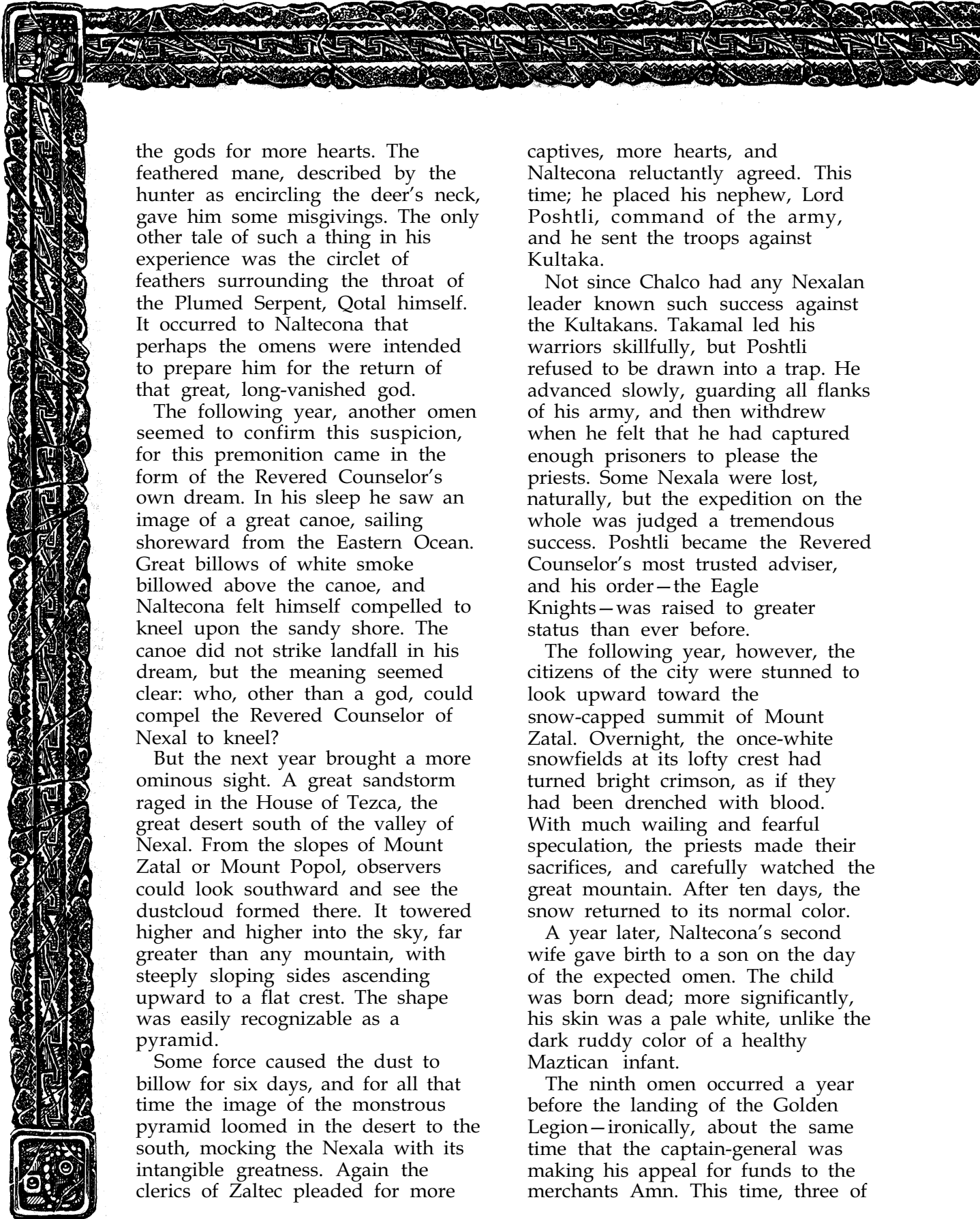
Continuing Signs

The omens continued, one per year, in a steady cadence of doom. The next year, starting on the exact anniversary of the blood-colored sky, Mount Zatal rumbled and spewed steam and ash into the air. The mountain belched thus for twelve days, until the sky over the great valley hung heavy with smoke, and the surrounding peaks were obscured behind the thick haze. On the thirteenth day, the mountain fell silent and a breeze sprang up from the east, carrying the soot and grime away.

The next year the omen came through the words of a hunter, a Bowman of Palul who spent much time in the brush. He claimed to have encountered a deer, taller and broader than any stag he had seen before. A mane of bright feathers surrounded the animal's neck, and it stood still before the hunter, presenting a perfect target. He shot arrows at it, but the missiles disintegrated before they struck the creature.

Then, the animal spoke. It told the hunter to travel to Nexal, and to speak to the Revered Counselor, relating what he had seen. The man did so, but Naltecona demanded more information. Trembling, the hunter could only repeat his instructions. The counsellor ordered the hapless fellow sacrificed, and then entered into a long period of brooding introspection, trying to decipher the murky will of the gods.

For the first time, Naltecona began to wonder if the portents signified something other than the hunger of



the gods for more hearts. The feathered mane, described by the hunter as encircling the deer's neck, gave him some misgivings. The only other tale of such a thing in his experience was the circlet of feathers surrounding the throat of the Plumed Serpent, Qotal himself. It occurred to Naltecona that perhaps the omens were intended to prepare him for the return of that great, long-vanished god.

The following year, another omen seemed to confirm this suspicion, for this premonition came in the form of the Revered Counselor's own dream. In his sleep he saw an image of a great canoe, sailing shoreward from the Eastern Ocean. Great billows of white smoke billowed above the canoe, and Naltecona felt himself compelled to kneel upon the sandy shore. The canoe did not strike landfall in his dream, but the meaning seemed clear: who, other than a god, could compel the Revered Counselor of Nexal to kneel?

But the next year brought a more ominous sight. A great sandstorm raged in the House of Tezca, the great desert south of the valley of Nexal. From the slopes of Mount Zatal or Mount Popol, observers could look southward and see the dustcloud formed there. It towered higher and higher into the sky, far greater than any mountain, with steeply sloping sides ascending upward to a flat crest. The shape was easily recognizable as a pyramid.

Some force caused the dust to billow for six days, and for all that time the image of the monstrous pyramid loomed in the desert to the south, mocking the Nexala with its intangible greatness. Again the clerics of Zaltec pleaded for more

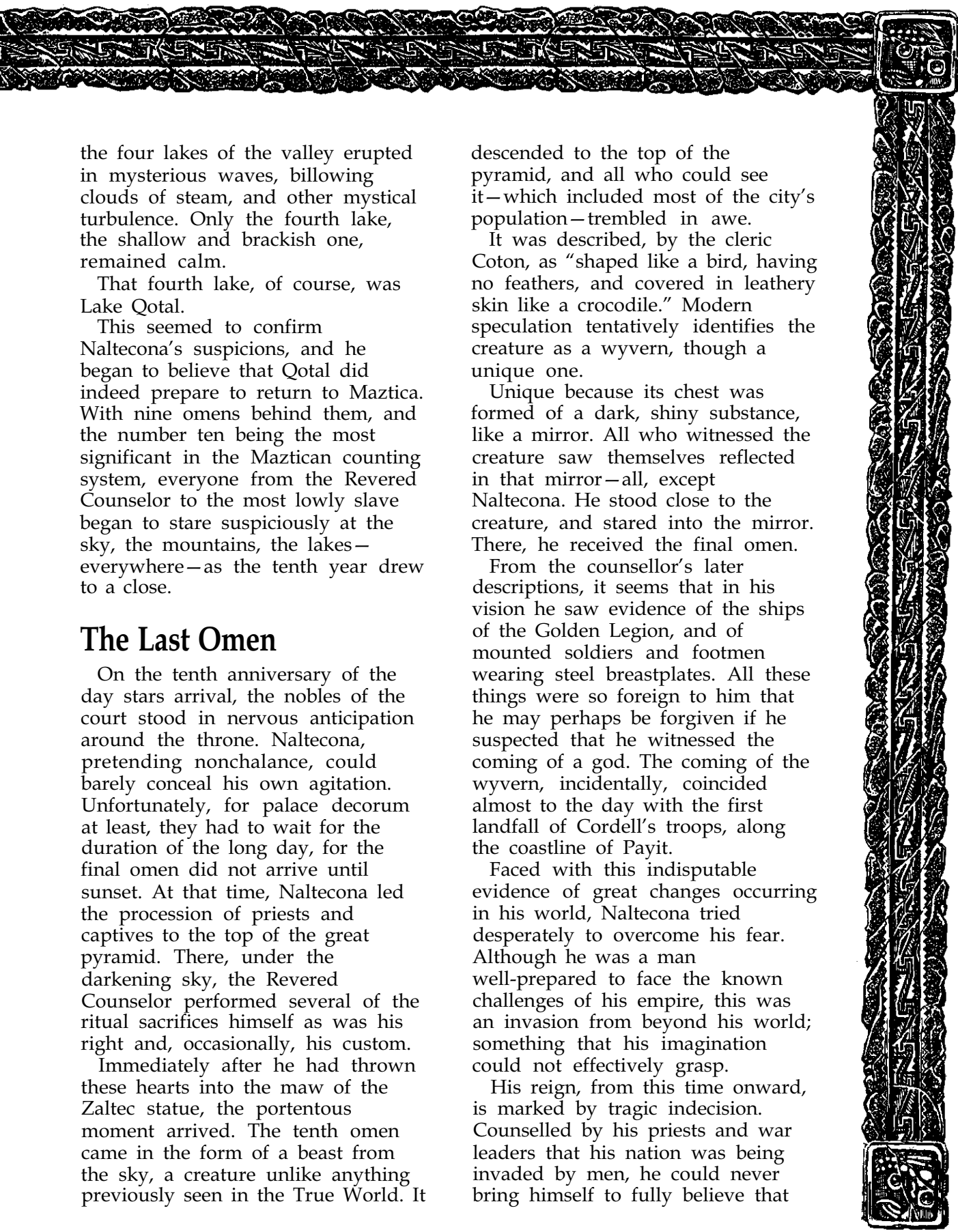
captives, more hearts, and Naltecona reluctantly agreed. This time; he placed his nephew, Lord Poshtli, command of the army, and he sent the troops against Kultaka.

Not since Chalco had any Nexalan leader known such success against the Kultakans. Takamal led his warriors skillfully, but Poshtli refused to be drawn into a trap. He advanced slowly, guarding all flanks of his army, and then withdrew when he felt that he had captured enough prisoners to please the priests. Some Nexala were lost, naturally, but the expedition on the whole was judged a tremendous success. Poshtli became the Revered Counselor's most trusted adviser, and his order—the Eagle Knights—was raised to greater status than ever before.

The following year, however, the citizens of the city were stunned to look upward toward the snow-capped summit of Mount Zatal. Overnight, the once-white snowfields at its lofty crest had turned bright crimson, as if they had been drenched with blood. With much wailing and fearful speculation, the priests made their sacrifices, and carefully watched the great mountain. After ten days, the snow returned to its normal color.

A year later, Naltecona's second wife gave birth to a son on the day of the expected omen. The child was born dead; more significantly, his skin was a pale white, unlike the dark ruddy color of a healthy Maztican infant.

The ninth omen occurred a year before the landing of the Golden Legion—ironically, about the same time that the captain-general was making his appeal for funds to the merchants Amn. This time, three of



the four lakes of the valley erupted in mysterious waves, billowing clouds of steam, and other mystical turbulence. Only the fourth lake, the shallow and brackish one, remained calm.

That fourth lake, of course, was Lake Qotal.

This seemed to confirm Naltecona's suspicions, and he began to believe that Qotal did indeed prepare to return to Maztica. With nine omens behind them, and the number ten being the most significant in the Maztican counting system, everyone from the Revered Counselor to the most lowly slave began to stare suspiciously at the sky, the mountains, the lakes—everywhere—as the tenth year drew to a close.

The Last Omen

On the tenth anniversary of the day stars arrival, the nobles of the court stood in nervous anticipation around the throne. Naltecona, pretending nonchalance, could barely conceal his own agitation. Unfortunately, for palace decorum at least, they had to wait for the duration of the long day, for the final omen did not arrive until sunset. At that time, Naltecona led the procession of priests and captives to the top of the great pyramid. There, under the darkening sky, the Revered Counselor performed several of the ritual sacrifices himself as was his right and, occasionally, his custom.

Immediately after he had thrown these hearts into the maw of the Zaltec statue, the portentous moment arrived. The tenth omen came in the form of a beast from the sky, a creature unlike anything previously seen in the True World. It

descended to the top of the pyramid, and all who could see it—which included most of the city's population—trembled in awe.

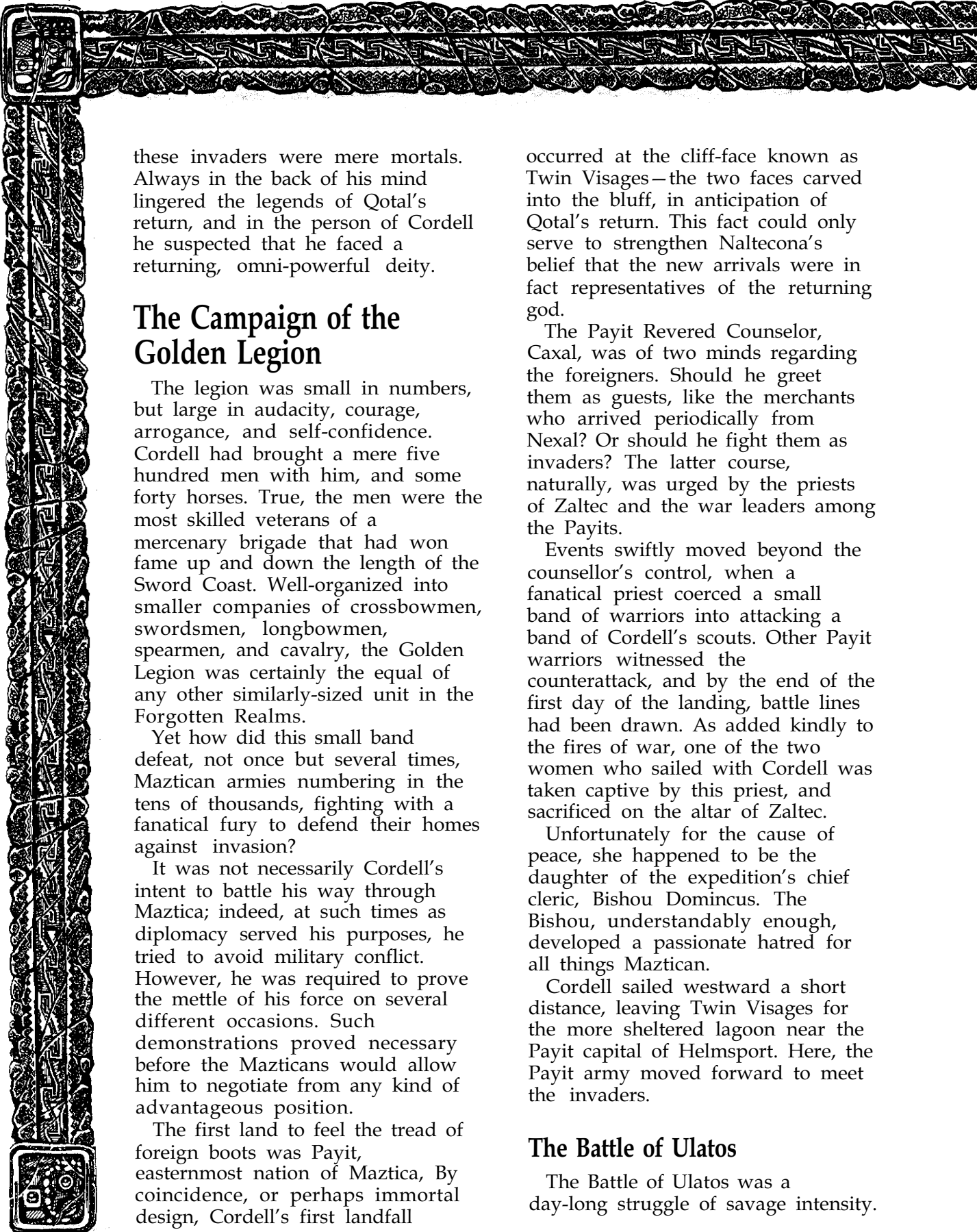
It was described, by the cleric Coton, as "shaped like a bird, having no feathers, and covered in leathery skin like a crocodile." Modern speculation tentatively identifies the creature as a wyvern, though a unique one.

Unique because its chest was formed of a dark, shiny substance, like a mirror. All who witnessed the creature saw themselves reflected in that mirror—all, except Naltecona. He stood close to the creature, and stared into the mirror. There, he received the final omen.

From the counsellor's later descriptions, it seems that in his vision he saw evidence of the ships of the Golden Legion, and of mounted soldiers and footmen wearing steel breastplates. All these things were so foreign to him that he may perhaps be forgiven if he suspected that he witnessed the coming of a god. The coming of the wyvern, incidentally, coincided almost to the day with the first landfall of Cordell's troops, along the coastline of Payit.

Faced with this indisputable evidence of great changes occurring in his world, Naltecona tried desperately to overcome his fear. Although he was a man well-prepared to face the known challenges of his empire, this was an invasion from beyond his world; something that his imagination could not effectively grasp.

His reign, from this time onward, is marked by tragic indecision. Counselling by his priests and war leaders that his nation was being invaded by men, he could never bring himself to fully believe that



these invaders were mere mortals. Always in the back of his mind lingered the legends of Qotal's return, and in the person of Cordell he suspected that he faced a returning, omni-powerful deity.

The Campaign of the Golden Legion

The legion was small in numbers, but large in audacity, courage, arrogance, and self-confidence. Cordell had brought a mere five hundred men with him, and some forty horses. True, the men were the most skilled veterans of a mercenary brigade that had won fame up and down the length of the Sword Coast. Well-organized into smaller companies of crossbowmen, swordsmen, longbowmen, spearmen, and cavalry, the Golden Legion was certainly the equal of any other similarly-sized unit in the Forgotten Realms.

Yet how did this small band defeat, not once but several times, Maztican armies numbering in the tens of thousands, fighting with a fanatical fury to defend their homes against invasion?

It was not necessarily Cordell's intent to battle his way through Maztica; indeed, at such times as diplomacy served his purposes, he tried to avoid military conflict. However, he was required to prove the mettle of his force on several different occasions. Such demonstrations proved necessary before the Mazticans would allow him to negotiate from any kind of advantageous position.

The first land to feel the tread of foreign boots was Payit, easternmost nation of Maztica. By coincidence, or perhaps immortal design, Cordell's first landfall

occurred at the cliff-face known as Twin Visages—the two faces carved into the bluff, in anticipation of Qotal's return. This fact could only serve to strengthen Naltecona's belief that the new arrivals were in fact representatives of the returning god.

The Payit Revered Counselor, Caxal, was of two minds regarding the foreigners. Should he greet them as guests, like the merchants who arrived periodically from Nexal? Or should he fight them as invaders? The latter course, naturally, was urged by the priests of Zaltec and the war leaders among the Payits.

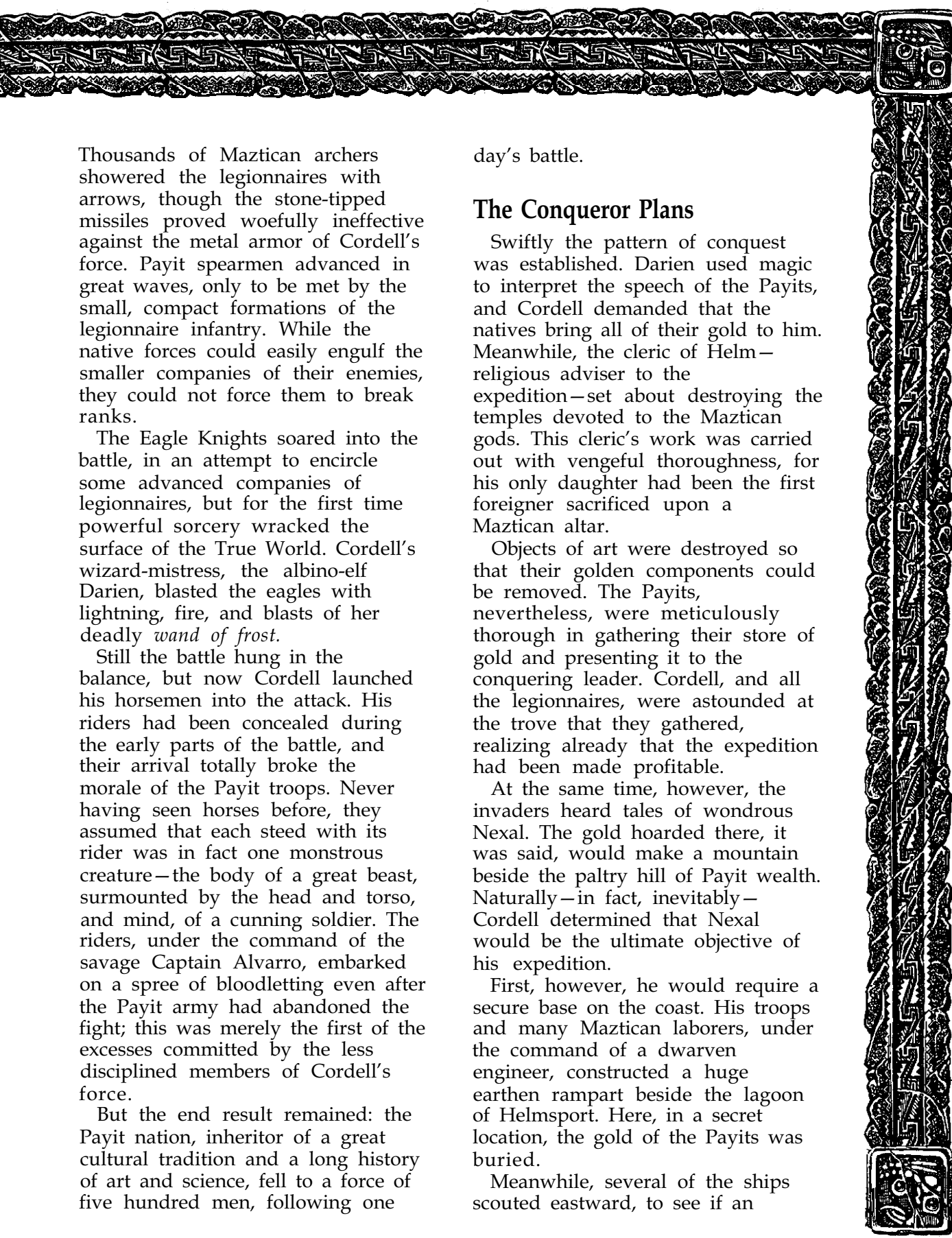
Events swiftly moved beyond the counsellor's control, when a fanatical priest coerced a small band of warriors into attacking a band of Cordell's scouts. Other Payit warriors witnessed the counterattack, and by the end of the first day of the landing, battle lines had been drawn. As added kindly to the fires of war, one of the two women who sailed with Cordell was taken captive by this priest, and sacrificed on the altar of Zaltec.

Unfortunately for the cause of peace, she happened to be the daughter of the expedition's chief cleric, Bishou Domincus. The Bishou, understandably enough, developed a passionate hatred for all things Maztican.

Cordell sailed westward a short distance, leaving Twin Visages for the more sheltered lagoon near the Payit capital of Helmsport. Here, the Payit army moved forward to meet the invaders.

The Battle of Ulatos

The Battle of Ulatos was a day-long struggle of savage intensity.



Thousands of Maztican archers showered the legionnaires with arrows, though the stone-tipped missiles proved woefully ineffective against the metal armor of Cordell's force. Payit spearmen advanced in great waves, only to be met by the small, compact formations of the legionnaire infantry. While the native forces could easily engulf the smaller companies of their enemies, they could not force them to break ranks.

The Eagle Knights soared into the battle, in an attempt to encircle some advanced companies of legionnaires, but for the first time powerful sorcery wracked the surface of the True World. Cordell's wizard-mistress, the albino-elf Darien, blasted the eagles with lightning, fire, and blasts of her deadly *wand of frost*.

Still the battle hung in the balance, but now Cordell launched his horsemen into the attack. His riders had been concealed during the early parts of the battle, and their arrival totally broke the morale of the Payit troops. Never having seen horses before, they assumed that each steed with its rider was in fact one monstrous creature—the body of a great beast, surmounted by the head and torso, and mind, of a cunning soldier. The riders, under the command of the savage Captain Alvarro, embarked on a spree of bloodletting even after the Payit army had abandoned the fight; this was merely the first of the excesses committed by the less disciplined members of Cordell's force.

But the end result remained: the Payit nation, inheritor of a great cultural tradition and a long history of art and science, fell to a force of five hundred men, following one

day's battle.

The Conqueror Plans

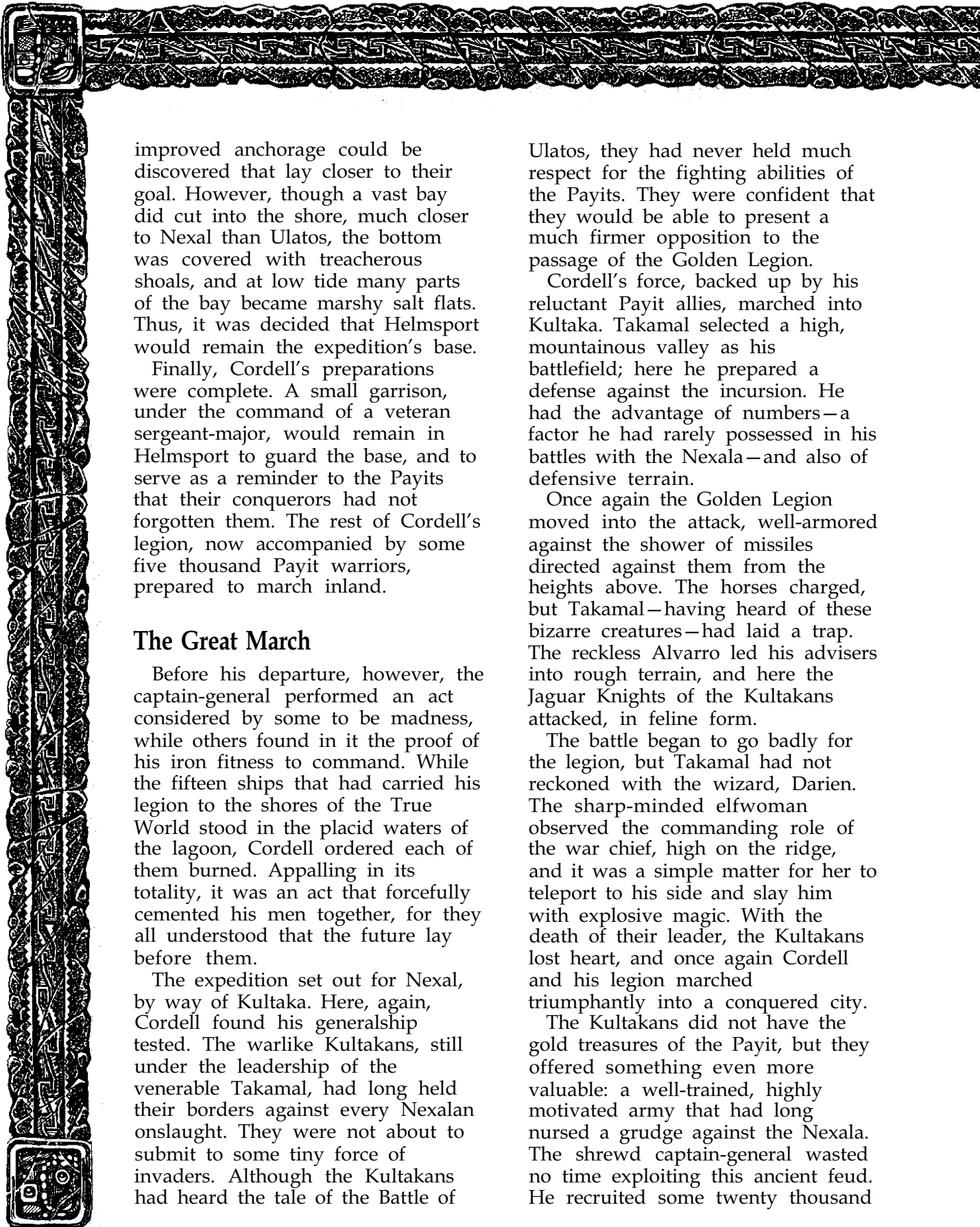
Swiftly the pattern of conquest was established. Darien used magic to interpret the speech of the Payits, and Cordell demanded that the natives bring all of their gold to him. Meanwhile, the cleric of Helm—religious adviser to the expedition—set about destroying the temples devoted to the Maztican gods. This cleric's work was carried out with vengeful thoroughness, for his only daughter had been the first foreigner sacrificed upon a Maztican altar.

Objects of art were destroyed so that their golden components could be removed. The Payits, nevertheless, were meticulously thorough in gathering their store of gold and presenting it to the conquering leader. Cordell, and all the legionnaires, were astounded at the trove that they gathered, realizing already that the expedition had been made profitable.

At the same time, however, the invaders heard tales of wondrous Nexal. The gold hoarded there, it was said, would make a mountain beside the paltry hill of Payit wealth. Naturally—in fact, inevitably—Cordell determined that Nexal would be the ultimate objective of his expedition.

First, however, he would require a secure base on the coast. His troops and many Maztican laborers, under the command of a dwarven engineer, constructed a huge earthen rampart beside the lagoon of Helmsport. Here, in a secret location, the gold of the Payits was buried.

Meanwhile, several of the ships scouted eastward, to see if an



improved anchorage could be discovered that lay closer to their goal. However, though a vast bay did cut into the shore, much closer to Nexal than Ulatos, the bottom was covered with treacherous shoals, and at low tide many parts of the bay became marshy salt flats. Thus, it was decided that Helmsport would remain the expedition's base.

Finally, Cordell's preparations were complete. A small garrison, under the command of a veteran sergeant-major, would remain in Helmsport to guard the base, and to serve as a reminder to the Payits that their conquerors had not forgotten them. The rest of Cordell's legion, now accompanied by some five thousand Payit warriors, prepared to march inland.

The Great March

Before his departure, however, the captain-general performed an act considered by some to be madness, while others found in it the proof of his iron fitness to command. While the fifteen ships that had carried his legion to the shores of the True World stood in the placid waters of the lagoon, Cordell ordered each of them burned. Appalling in its totality, it was an act that forcefully cemented his men together, for they all understood that the future lay before them.

The expedition set out for Nexal, by way of Kultaka. Here, again, Cordell found his generalship tested. The warlike Kultakans, still under the leadership of the venerable Takamal, had long held their borders against every Nexalan onslaught. They were not about to submit to some tiny force of invaders. Although the Kultakans had heard the tale of the Battle of

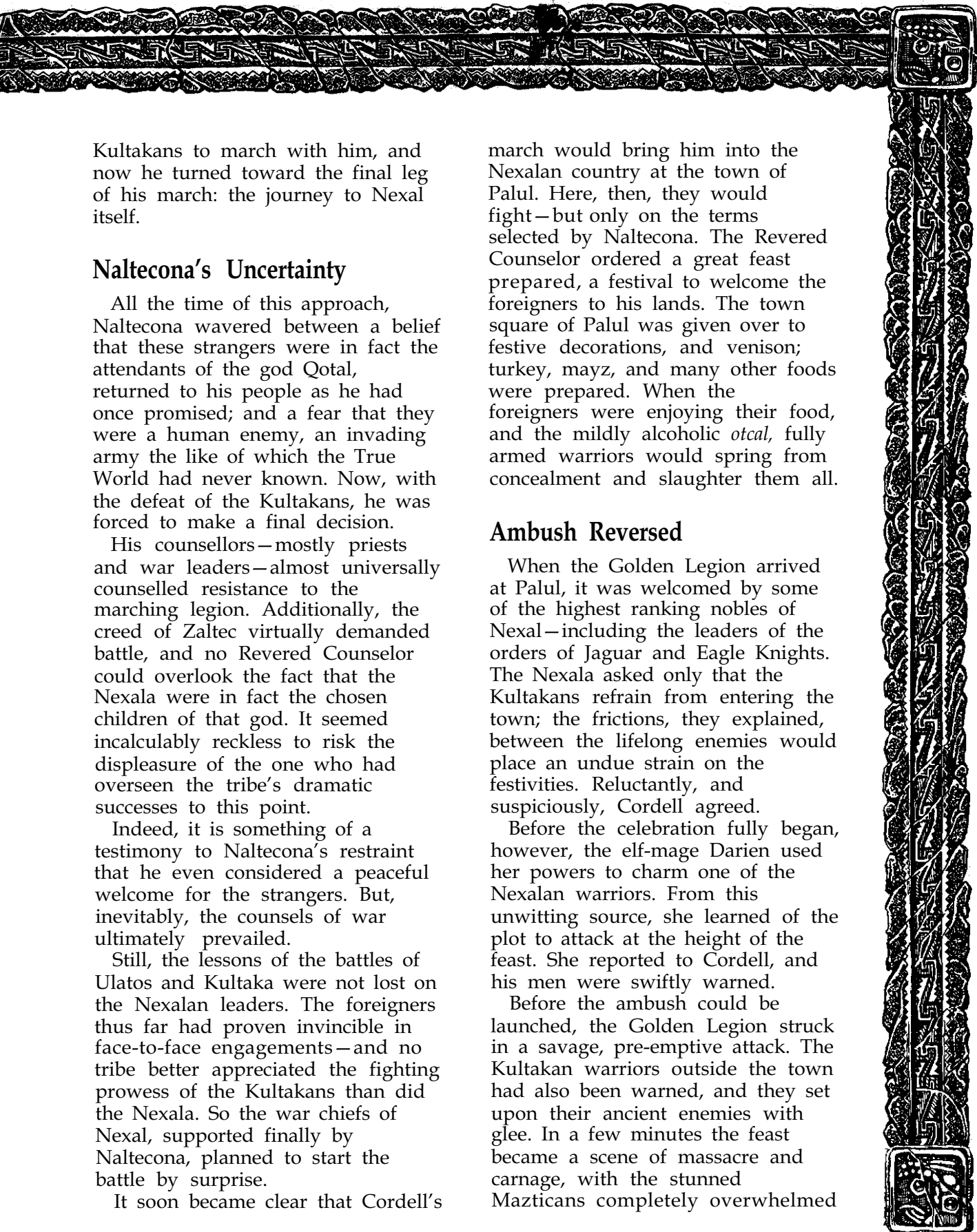
Ulatos, they had never held much respect for the fighting abilities of the Payits. They were confident that they would be able to present a much firmer opposition to the passage of the Golden Legion.

Cordell's force, backed up by his reluctant Payit allies, marched into Kultaka. Takamal selected a high, mountainous valley as his battlefield; here he prepared a defense against the incursion. He had the advantage of numbers—a factor he had rarely possessed in his battles with the Nexala—and also of defensive terrain.

Once again the Golden Legion moved into the attack, well-armed against the shower of missiles directed against them from the heights above. The horses charged, but Takamal—having heard of these bizarre creatures—had laid a trap. The reckless Alvarro led his advisers into rough terrain, and here the Jaguar Knights of the Kultakans attacked, in feline form.

The battle began to go badly for the legion, but Takamal had not reckoned with the wizard, Darien. The sharp-minded elfwoman observed the commanding role of the war chief, high on the ridge, and it was a simple matter for her to teleport to his side and slay him with explosive magic. With the death of their leader, the Kultakans lost heart, and once again Cordell and his legion marched triumphantly into a conquered city.

The Kultakans did not have the gold treasures of the Payit, but they offered something even more valuable: a well-trained, highly motivated army that had long nursed a grudge against the Nexala. The shrewd captain-general wasted no time exploiting this ancient feud. He recruited some twenty thousand



Kultakans to march with him, and now he turned toward the final leg of his march: the journey to Nexal itself.

Naltecona's Uncertainty

All the time of this approach, Naltecona wavered between a belief that these strangers were in fact the attendants of the god Qotal, returned to his people as he had once promised; and a fear that they were a human enemy, an invading army the like of which the True World had never known. Now, with the defeat of the Kultakans, he was forced to make a final decision.

His counsellors—mostly priests and war leaders—almost universally counselled resistance to the marching legion. Additionally, the creed of Zaltec virtually demanded battle, and no Revered Counselor could overlook the fact that the Nexala were in fact the chosen children of that god. It seemed incalculably reckless to risk the displeasure of the one who had overseen the tribe's dramatic successes to this point.

Indeed, it is something of a testimony to Naltecona's restraint that he even considered a peaceful welcome for the strangers. But, inevitably, the counsels of war ultimately prevailed.

Still, the lessons of the battles of Ulatos and Kultaka were not lost on the Nexalan leaders. The foreigners thus far had proven invincible in face-to-face engagements—and no tribe better appreciated the fighting prowess of the Kultakans than did the Nexala. So the war chiefs of Nexal, supported finally by Naltecona, planned to start the battle by surprise.

It soon became clear that Cordell's

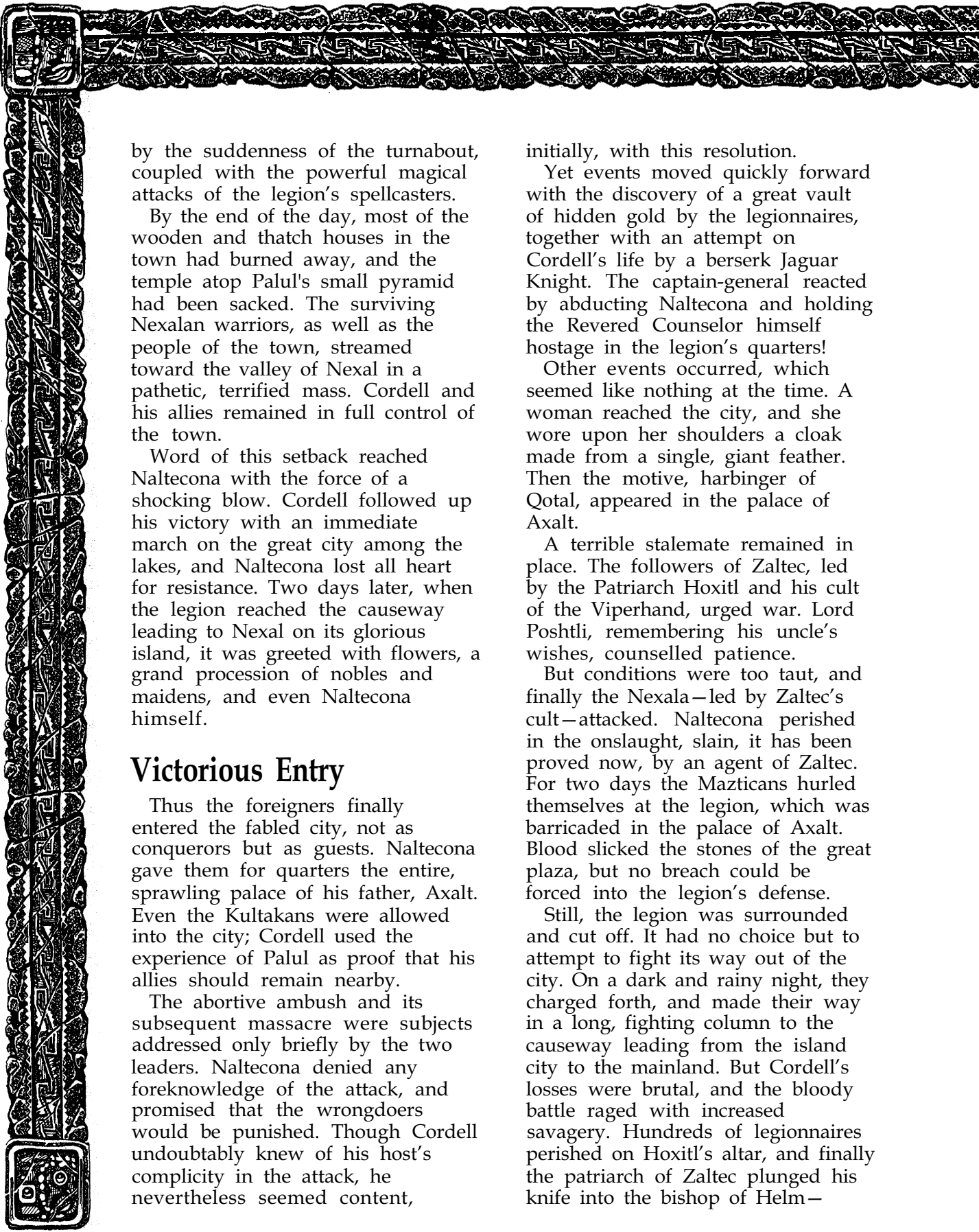
march would bring him into the Nexalan country at the town of Palul. Here, then, they would fight—but only on the terms selected by Naltecona. The Revered Counselor ordered a great feast prepared, a festival to welcome the foreigners to his lands. The town square of Palul was given over to festive decorations, and venison; turkey, mayz, and many other foods were prepared. When the foreigners were enjoying their food, and the mildly alcoholic *otcal*, fully armed warriors would spring from concealment and slaughter them all.

Ambush Reversed

When the Golden Legion arrived at Palul, it was welcomed by some of the highest ranking nobles of Nexal—including the leaders of the orders of Jaguar and Eagle Knights. The Nexala asked only that the Kultakans refrain from entering the town; the frictions, they explained, between the lifelong enemies would place an undue strain on the festivities. Reluctantly, and suspiciously, Cordell agreed.

Before the celebration fully began, however, the elf-mage Darien used her powers to charm one of the Nexalan warriors. From this unwitting source, she learned of the plot to attack at the height of the feast. She reported to Cordell, and his men were swiftly warned.

Before the ambush could be launched, the Golden Legion struck in a savage, pre-emptive attack. The Kultakan warriors outside the town had also been warned, and they set upon their ancient enemies with glee. In a few minutes the feast became a scene of massacre and carnage, with the stunned Mazticans completely overwhelmed



by the suddenness of the turnabout, coupled with the powerful magical attacks of the legion's spellcasters.

By the end of the day, most of the wooden and thatch houses in the town had burned away, and the temple atop Palul's small pyramid had been sacked. The surviving Nexalan warriors, as well as the people of the town, streamed toward the valley of Nexal in a pathetic, terrified mass. Cordell and his allies remained in full control of the town.

Word of this setback reached Naltecona with the force of a shocking blow. Cordell followed up his victory with an immediate march on the great city among the lakes, and Naltecona lost all heart for resistance. Two days later, when the legion reached the causeway leading to Nexal on its glorious island, it was greeted with flowers, a grand procession of nobles and maidens, and even Naltecona himself.

Victorious Entry

Thus the foreigners finally entered the fabled city, not as conquerors but as guests. Naltecona gave them for quarters the entire, sprawling palace of his father, Axalt. Even the Kultakans were allowed into the city; Cordell used the experience of Palul as proof that his allies should remain nearby.

The abortive ambush and its subsequent massacre were subjects addressed only briefly by the two leaders. Naltecona denied any foreknowledge of the attack, and promised that the wrongdoers would be punished. Though Cordell undoubtedly knew of his host's complicity in the attack, he nevertheless seemed content,

initially, with this resolution.

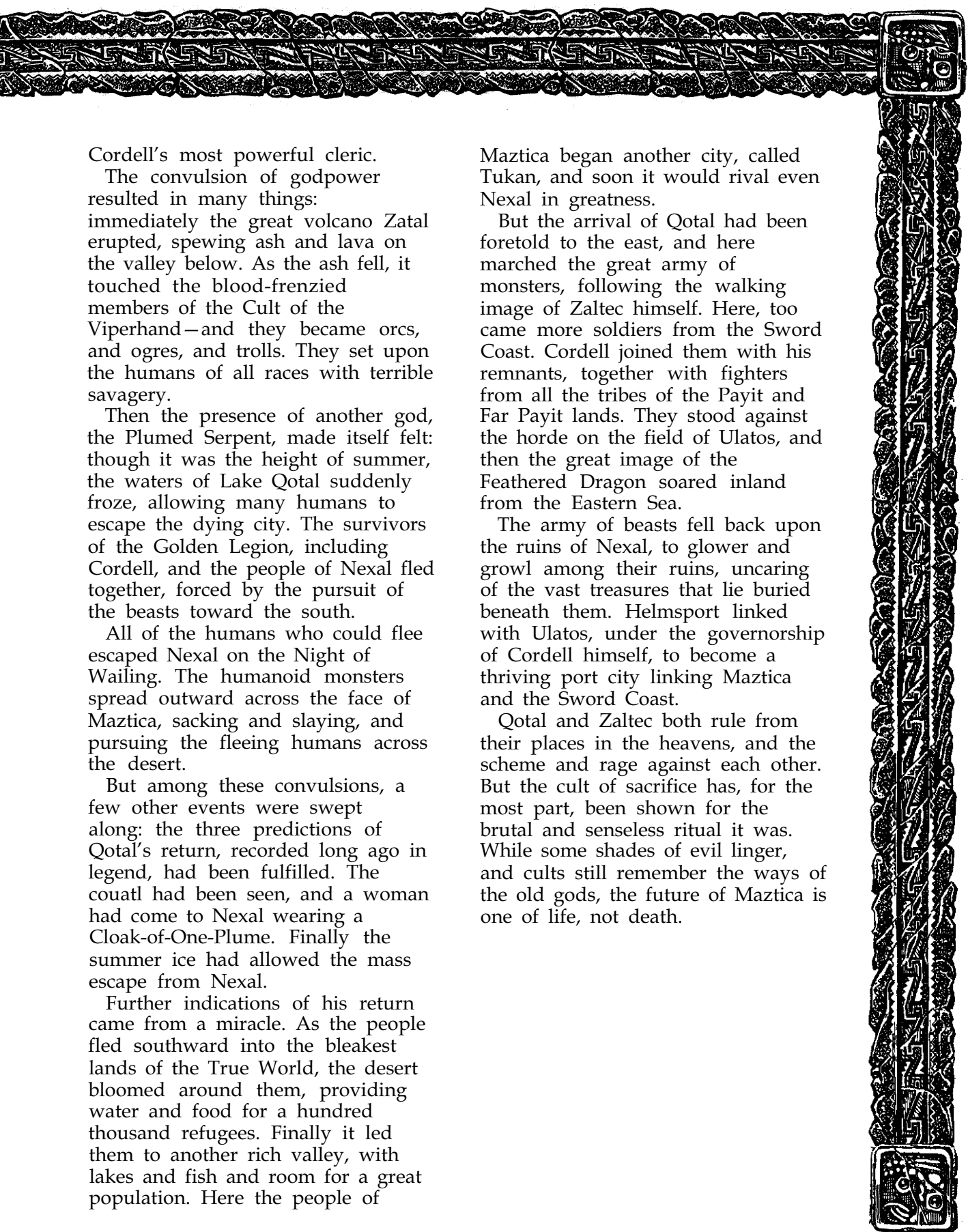
Yet events moved quickly forward with the discovery of a great vault of hidden gold by the legionnaires, together with an attempt on Cordell's life by a berserk Jaguar Knight. The captain-general reacted by abducting Naltecona and holding the Revered Counselor himself hostage in the legion's quarters!

Other events occurred, which seemed like nothing at the time. A woman reached the city, and she wore upon her shoulders a cloak made from a single, giant feather. Then the motive, harbinger of Qotal, appeared in the palace of Axalt.

A terrible stalemate remained in place. The followers of Zaltec, led by the Patriarch Hoxitl and his cult of the Viperhand, urged war. Lord Poshtli, remembering his uncle's wishes, counselled patience.

But conditions were too taut, and finally the Nexala—led by Zaltec's cult—attacked. Naltecona perished in the onslaught, slain, it has been proved now, by an agent of Zaltec. For two days the Mazticans hurled themselves at the legion, which was barricaded in the palace of Axalt. Blood slicked the stones of the great plaza, but no breach could be forced into the legion's defense.

Still, the legion was surrounded and cut off. It had no choice but to attempt to fight its way out of the city. On a dark and rainy night, they charged forth, and made their way in a long, fighting column to the causeway leading from the island city to the mainland. But Cordell's losses were brutal, and the bloody battle raged with increased savagery. Hundreds of legionnaires perished on Hoxitl's altar, and finally the patriarch of Zaltec plunged his knife into the bishop of Helm—



Cordell's most powerful cleric.

The convulsion of godpower resulted in many things: immediately the great volcano Zatal erupted, spewing ash and lava on the valley below. As the ash fell, it touched the blood-frenzied members of the Cult of the Viperhand—and they became orcs, and ogres, and trolls. They set upon the humans of all races with terrible savagery.

Then the presence of another god, the Plumed Serpent, made itself felt: though it was the height of summer, the waters of Lake Qotal suddenly froze, allowing many humans to escape the dying city. The survivors of the Golden Legion, including Cordell, and the people of Nexal fled together, forced by the pursuit of the beasts toward the south.

All of the humans who could flee escaped Nexal on the Night of Wailing. The humanoid monsters spread outward across the face of Maztica, sacking and slaying, and pursuing the fleeing humans across the desert.

But among these convulsions, a few other events were swept along: the three predictions of Qotal's return, recorded long ago in legend, had been fulfilled. The couatl had been seen, and a woman had come to Nexal wearing a Cloak-of-One-Plume. Finally the summer ice had allowed the mass escape from Nexal.

Further indications of his return came from a miracle. As the people fled southward into the bleakest lands of the True World, the desert bloomed around them, providing water and food for a hundred thousand refugees. Finally it led them to another rich valley, with lakes and fish and room for a great population. Here the people of

Maztica began another city, called Tukan, and soon it would rival even Nexal in greatness.

But the arrival of Qotal had been foretold to the east, and here marched the great army of monsters, following the walking image of Zaltec himself. Here, too came more soldiers from the Sword Coast. Cordell joined them with his remnants, together with fighters from all the tribes of the Payit and Far Payit lands. They stood against the horde on the field of Ulatos, and then the great image of the Feathered Dragon soared inland from the Eastern Sea.

The army of beasts fell back upon the ruins of Nexal, to glower and growl among their ruins, uncaring of the vast treasures that lie buried beneath them. Helmsport linked with Ulatos, under the governorship of Cordell himself, to become a thriving port city linking Maztica and the Sword Coast.

Qotal and Zaltec both rule from their places in the heavens, and the scheme and rage against each other. But the cult of sacrifice has, for the most part, been shown for the brutal and senseless ritual it was. While some shades of evil linger, and cults still remember the ways of the old gods, the future of Maztica is one of life, not death.



Maztican Characters

Maztican characters, both player and NPC, can be created in many varieties. They offer some significant differences from characters found in other parts of the Realms. While the emphasis here is on Maztican characters in Maztica, these player characters are as free to leave the True World as others are to reach it.

The level of technology available in Maztica, of course, is generally much lower than in other parts of the Realms. However, a character's adversaries will usually be similarly armed, and too, for many players the enjoyment of roleplaying does not necessarily arise from having the biggest, sharpest sword. The opportunity to adventure in a truly different cultural setting, with powers and perils all its own, can more than make up for the lack of a metal blade.

New proficiencies are introduced in this section, and these will be available to characters from specific backgrounds. Also note that a great number of standard proficiencies are *not* available here—it's hard to learn how to ride a horse, for example, if you've never seen one!

Specific cultural backgrounds and nations are also discussed here, to try and give potential player characters a general idea of their origins. More details on specific nations are available in the *Maztica Alive* book for the DM. He will undoubtedly share these details with specific PCs; however, a player

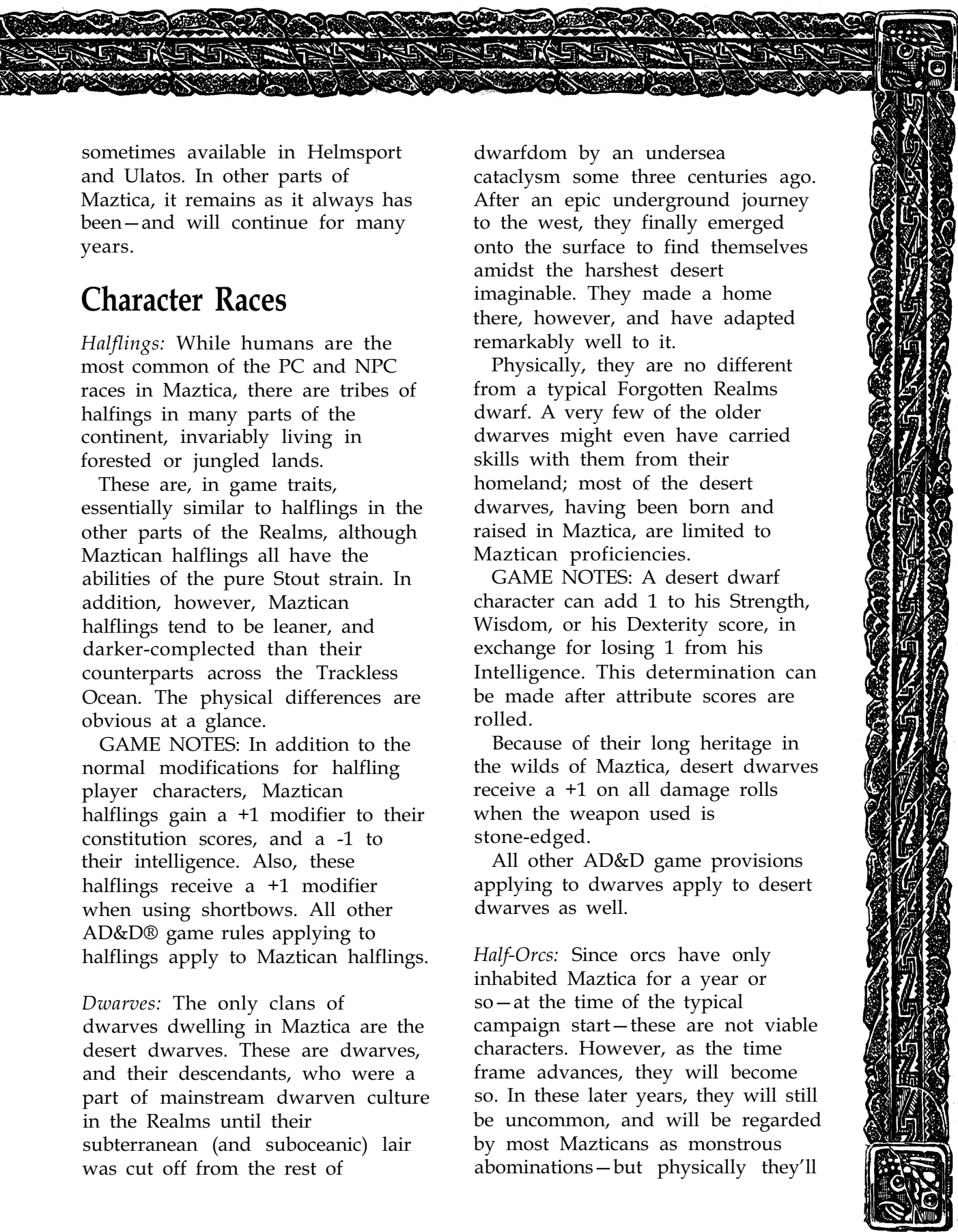
from Payit cannot be expected to know much about the Dog People of the northern deserts.

Consequently, the player's book is limited to a general overview of each locale.

As to cultural origins, these include some specific attribute modifiers, to reflect the strengths and weaknesses of a particular tribal stock. While these distinctions among humans would not generally result in modifiers between the folk in, say, Calimshan and Moonshae, the differences are more extreme in Maztica. Also, the lack of technological and western cultural embellishments (such as armor, crossbows, horses, etc.) places a slightly higher value on the actual physical capabilities of the human body itself.

Character "kits"—subclasses of standard character classes—are available for four uniquely Maztican characters: Jaguar and Eagle Knights, Plumaweavers, and Hishnashapers.

Maztican equipment is substituted for a great part of the standard campaigning material. Here, of course, the location within the True World—and the time frame of the campaign—are important. Within a year after the coming of Cordell, a blacksmith shop had been established in Helmsport. Weapons, livestock, and even raw metal had begun to arrive from the Sword Coast. Though the cost of such exotic items is tremendous, they are



sometimes available in Helmsport and Ulatos. In other parts of Maztica, it remains as it always has been—and will continue for many years.

Character Races

Halflings: While humans are the most common of the PC and NPC races in Maztica, there are tribes of halflings in many parts of the continent, invariably living in forested or jungled lands.

These are, in game traits, essentially similar to halflings in the other parts of the Realms, although Maztican halflings all have the abilities of the pure Stout strain. In addition, however, Maztican halflings tend to be leaner, and darker-complected than their counterparts across the Trackless Ocean. The physical differences are obvious at a glance.

GAME NOTES: In addition to the normal modifications for halfling player characters, Maztican halflings gain a +1 modifier to their constitution scores, and a -1 to their intelligence. Also, these halflings receive a +1 modifier when using shortbows. All other AD&D® game rules applying to halflings apply to Maztican halflings.

Dwarves: The only clans of dwarves dwelling in Maztica are the desert dwarves. These are dwarves, and their descendants, who were a part of mainstream dwarven culture in the Realms until their subterranean (and suboceanic) lair was cut off from the rest of

dwarfdom by an undersea cataclysm some three centuries ago. After an epic underground journey to the west, they finally emerged onto the surface to find themselves amidst the harshest desert imaginable. They made a home there, however, and have adapted remarkably well to it.

Physically, they are no different from a typical Forgotten Realms dwarf. A very few of the older dwarves might even have carried skills with them from their homeland; most of the desert dwarves, having been born and raised in Maztica, are limited to Maztican proficiencies.

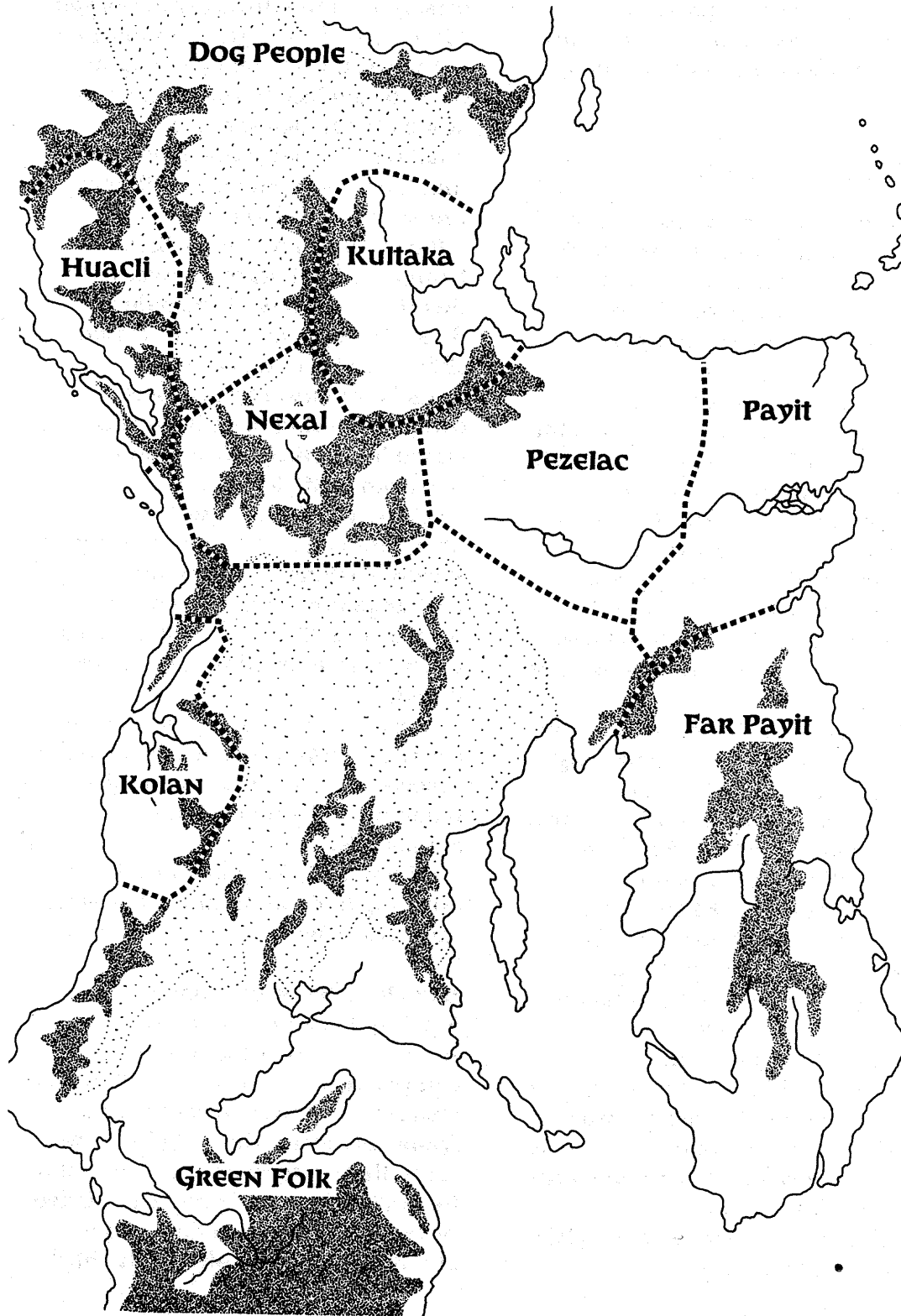
GAME NOTES: A desert dwarf character can add 1 to his Strength, Wisdom, or his Dexterity score, in exchange for losing 1 from his Intelligence. This determination can be made after attribute scores are rolled.

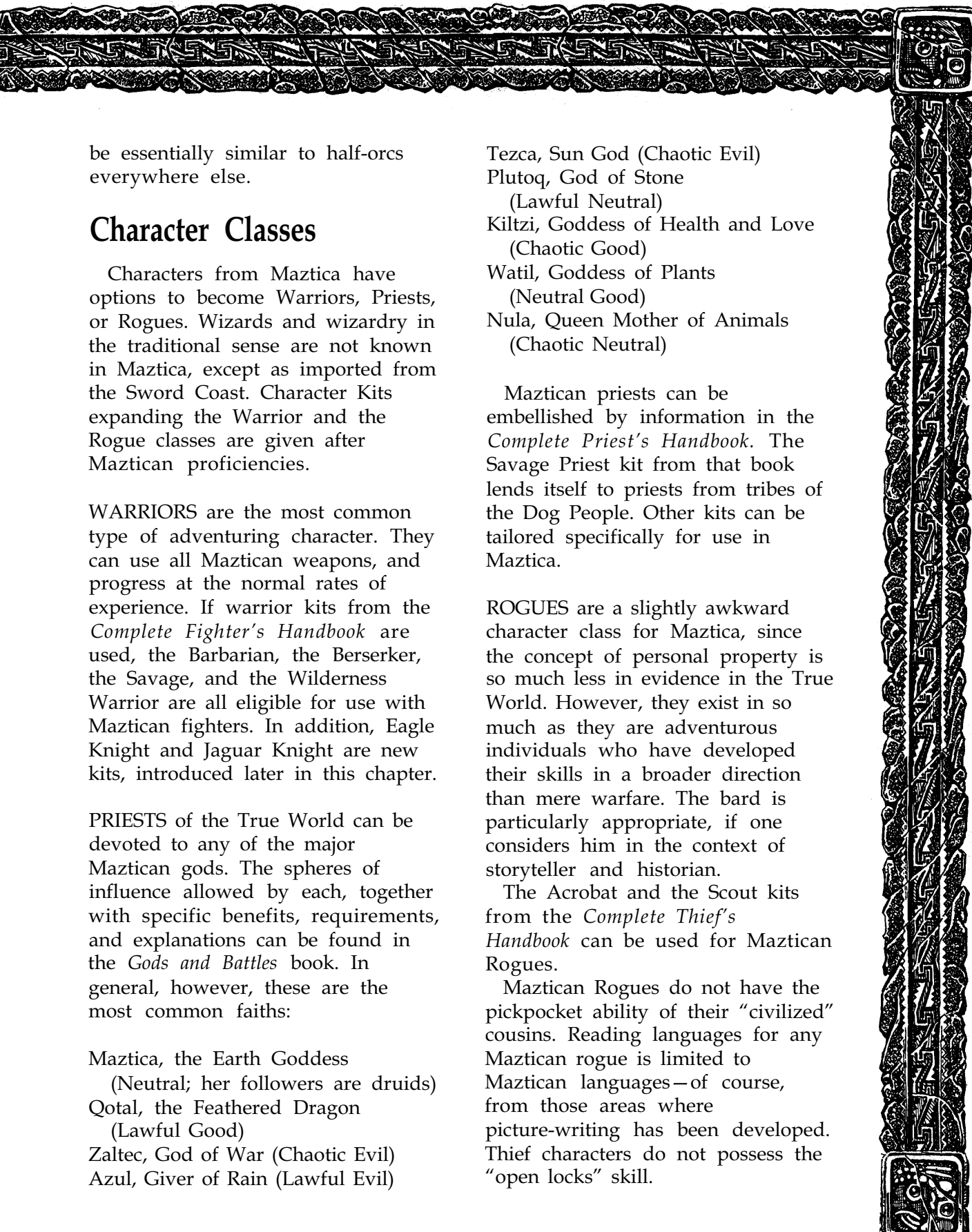
Because of their long heritage in the wilds of Maztica, desert dwarves receive a +1 on all damage rolls when the weapon used is stone-edged.

All other AD&D game provisions applying to dwarves apply to desert dwarves as well.

Half-Orcs: Since orcs have only inhabited Maztica for a year or so—at the time of the typical campaign start—these are not viable characters. However, as the time frame advances, they will become so. In these later years, they will still be uncommon, and will be regarded by most Mazticans as monstrous abominations—but physically they'll

Approximate Regional Borders





be essentially similar to half-orcs everywhere else.

Character Classes

Characters from Maztica have options to become Warriors, Priests, or Rogues. Wizards and wizardry in the traditional sense are not known in Maztica, except as imported from the Sword Coast. Character Kits expanding the Warrior and the Rogue classes are given after Maztican proficiencies.

WARRIORS are the most common type of adventuring character. They can use all Maztican weapons, and progress at the normal rates of experience. If warrior kits from the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* are used, the Barbarian, the Berserker, the Savage, and the Wilderness Warrior are all eligible for use with Maztican fighters. In addition, Eagle Knight and Jaguar Knight are new kits, introduced later in this chapter.

PRIESTS of the True World can be devoted to any of the major Maztican gods. The spheres of influence allowed by each, together with specific benefits, requirements, and explanations can be found in the *Gods and Battles* book. In general, however, these are the most common faiths:

Maztica, the Earth Goddess
(Neutral; her followers are druids)
Qotal, the Feathered Dragon
(Lawful Good)
Zaltec, God of War (Chaotic Evil)
Azul, Giver of Rain (Lawful Evil)

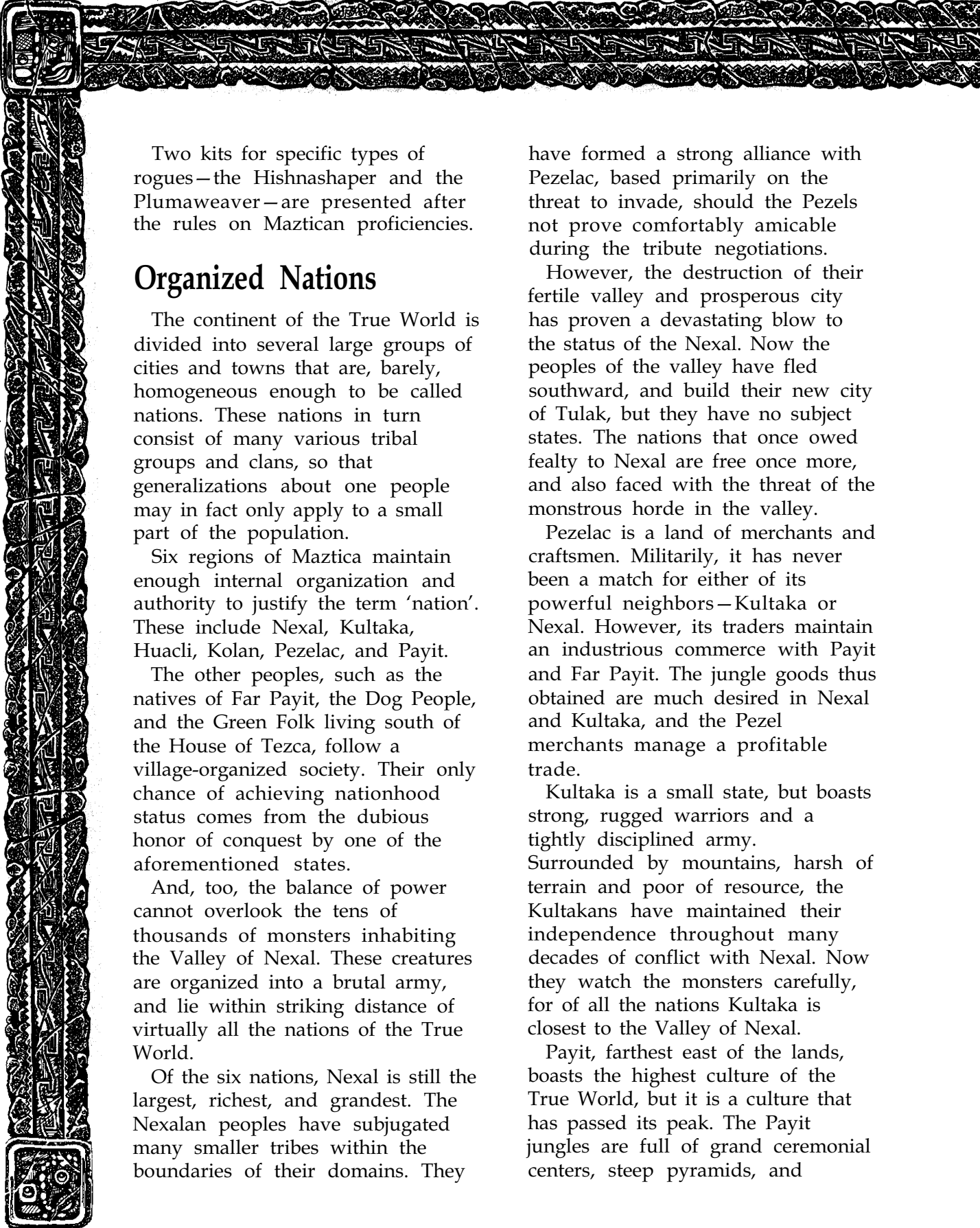
Tezca, Sun God (Chaotic Evil)
Plutoq, God of Stone
(Lawful Neutral)
Kiltzi, Goddess of Health and Love
(Chaotic Good)
Watil, Goddess of Plants
(Neutral Good)
Nula, Queen Mother of Animals
(Chaotic Neutral)

Maztican priests can be embellished by information in the *Complete Priest's Handbook*. The Savage Priest kit from that book lends itself to priests from tribes of the Dog People. Other kits can be tailored specifically for use in Maztica.

ROGUES are a slightly awkward character class for Maztica, since the concept of personal property is so much less in evidence in the True World. However, they exist in so much as they are adventurous individuals who have developed their skills in a broader direction than mere warfare. The bard is particularly appropriate, if one considers him in the context of storyteller and historian.

The Acrobat and the Scout kits from the *Complete Thief's Handbook* can be used for Maztican Rogues.

Maztican Rogues do not have the pickpocket ability of their "civilized" cousins. Reading languages for any Maztican rogue is limited to Maztican languages—of course, from those areas where picture-writing has been developed. Thief characters do not possess the "open locks" skill.



Two kits for specific types of rogues—the Hishnashaper and the Plumaweaver—are presented after the rules on Maztican proficiencies.

Organized Nations

The continent of the True World is divided into several large groups of cities and towns that are, barely, homogeneous enough to be called nations. These nations in turn consist of many various tribal groups and clans, so that generalizations about one people may in fact only apply to a small part of the population.

Six regions of Maztica maintain enough internal organization and authority to justify the term 'nation'. These include Nexal, Kultaka, Huacli, Kolan, Pezelac, and Payit.

The other peoples, such as the natives of Far Payit, the Dog People, and the Green Folk living south of the House of Tezca, follow a village-organized society. Their only chance of achieving nationhood status comes from the dubious honor of conquest by one of the aforementioned states.

And, too, the balance of power cannot overlook the tens of thousands of monsters inhabiting the Valley of Nexal. These creatures are organized into a brutal army, and lie within striking distance of virtually all the nations of the True World.

Of the six nations, Nexal is still the largest, richest, and grandest. The Nexalan peoples have subjugated many smaller tribes within the boundaries of their domains. They

have formed a strong alliance with Pezelac, based primarily on the threat to invade, should the Pezels not prove comfortably amicable during the tribute negotiations.

However, the destruction of their fertile valley and prosperous city has proven a devastating blow to the status of the Nexal. Now the peoples of the valley have fled southward, and build their new city of Tulak, but they have no subject states. The nations that once owed fealty to Nexal are free once more, and also faced with the threat of the monstrous horde in the valley.

Pezelac is a land of merchants and craftsmen. Militarily, it has never been a match for either of its powerful neighbors—Kultaka or Nexal. However, its traders maintain an industrious commerce with Payit and Far Payit. The jungle goods thus obtained are much desired in Nexal and Kultaka, and the Pezel merchants manage a profitable trade.

Kultaka is a small state, but boasts strong, rugged warriors and a tightly disciplined army. Surrounded by mountains, harsh of terrain and poor of resource, the Kultakans have maintained their independence throughout many decades of conflict with Nexal. Now they watch the monsters carefully, for of all the nations Kultaka is closest to the Valley of Nexal.

Payit, farthest east of the lands, boasts the highest culture of the True World, but it is a culture that has passed its peak. The Payit jungles are full of grand ceremonial centers, steep pyramids, and



wondrous temples. But now many of these have been abandoned, and the jungle does not leave abandoned structures long intact.

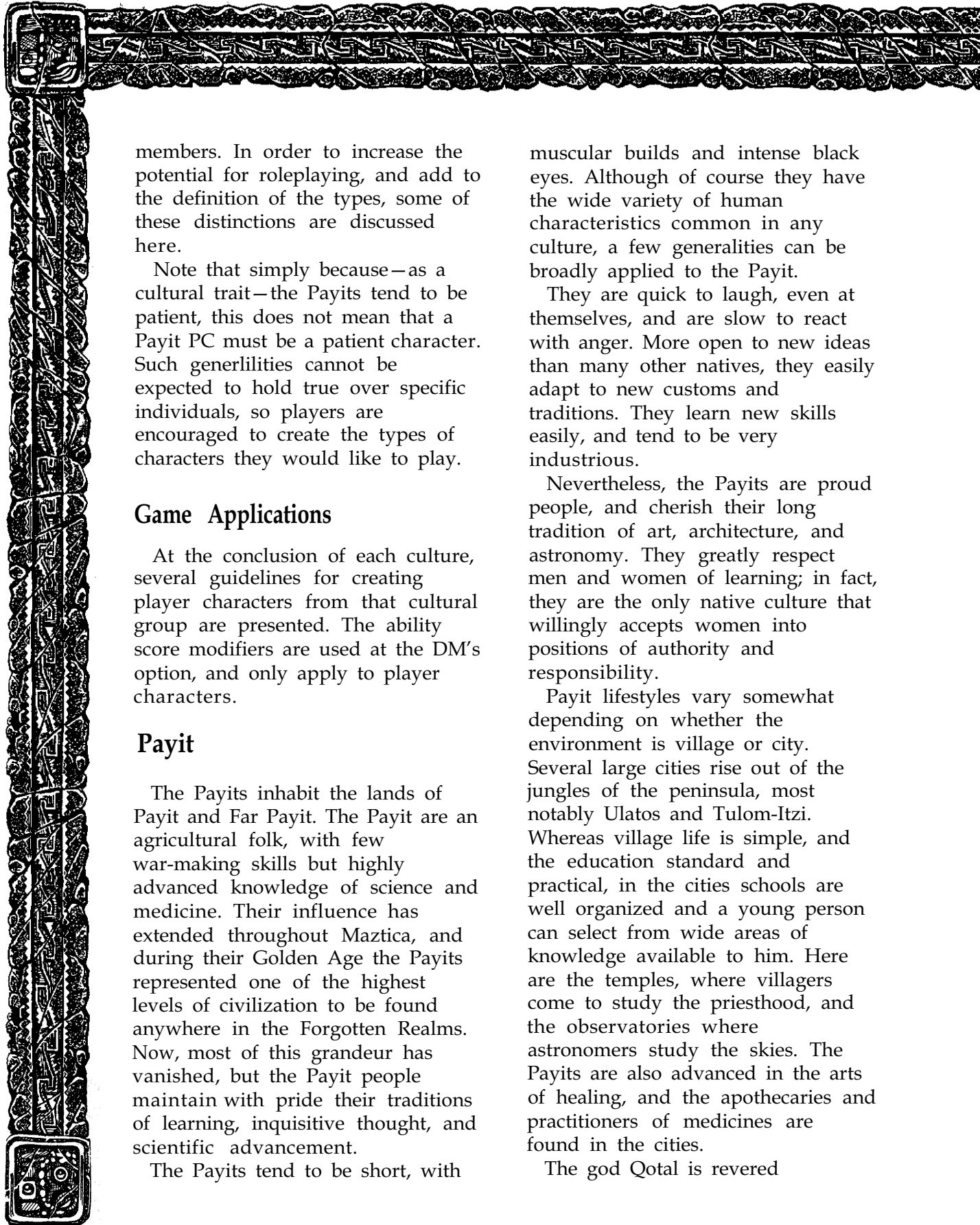
Still, there are many folk living in Payit, and they are happy and industrious for the most part. They live in the jungles, around their great centers, and perhaps they do not mourn for the world that is past. Now, too, Payit has become the crossroads for trade with the Sword Coast. The changes this will work are too numerous to imagine.

Peoples of Maztica

Basic Cultural Groups

The overall groups of humans who have settled Maztica fall into four basic types: the Payit peoples, of the eastern peninsula; the Mazticans themselves, as typified by the Nexala; the Green Folk of the low jungles; and the North Ones, often referred to as the Dog People.

Each of these cultural groups has certain traits that distinguish its



members. In order to increase the potential for roleplaying, and add to the definition of the types, some of these distinctions are discussed here.

Note that simply because—as a cultural trait—the Payits tend to be patient, this does not mean that a Payit PC must be a patient character. Such generalities cannot be expected to hold true over specific individuals, so players are encouraged to create the types of characters they would like to play.

Game Applications

At the conclusion of each culture, several guidelines for creating player characters from that cultural group are presented. The ability score modifiers are used at the DM's option, and only apply to player characters.

Payit

The Payits inhabit the lands of Payit and Far Payit. The Payit are an agricultural folk, with few war-making skills but highly advanced knowledge of science and medicine. Their influence has extended throughout Maztica, and during their Golden Age the Payits represented one of the highest levels of civilization to be found anywhere in the Forgotten Realms. Now, most of this grandeur has vanished, but the Payit people maintain with pride their traditions of learning, inquisitive thought, and scientific advancement.

The Payits tend to be short, with

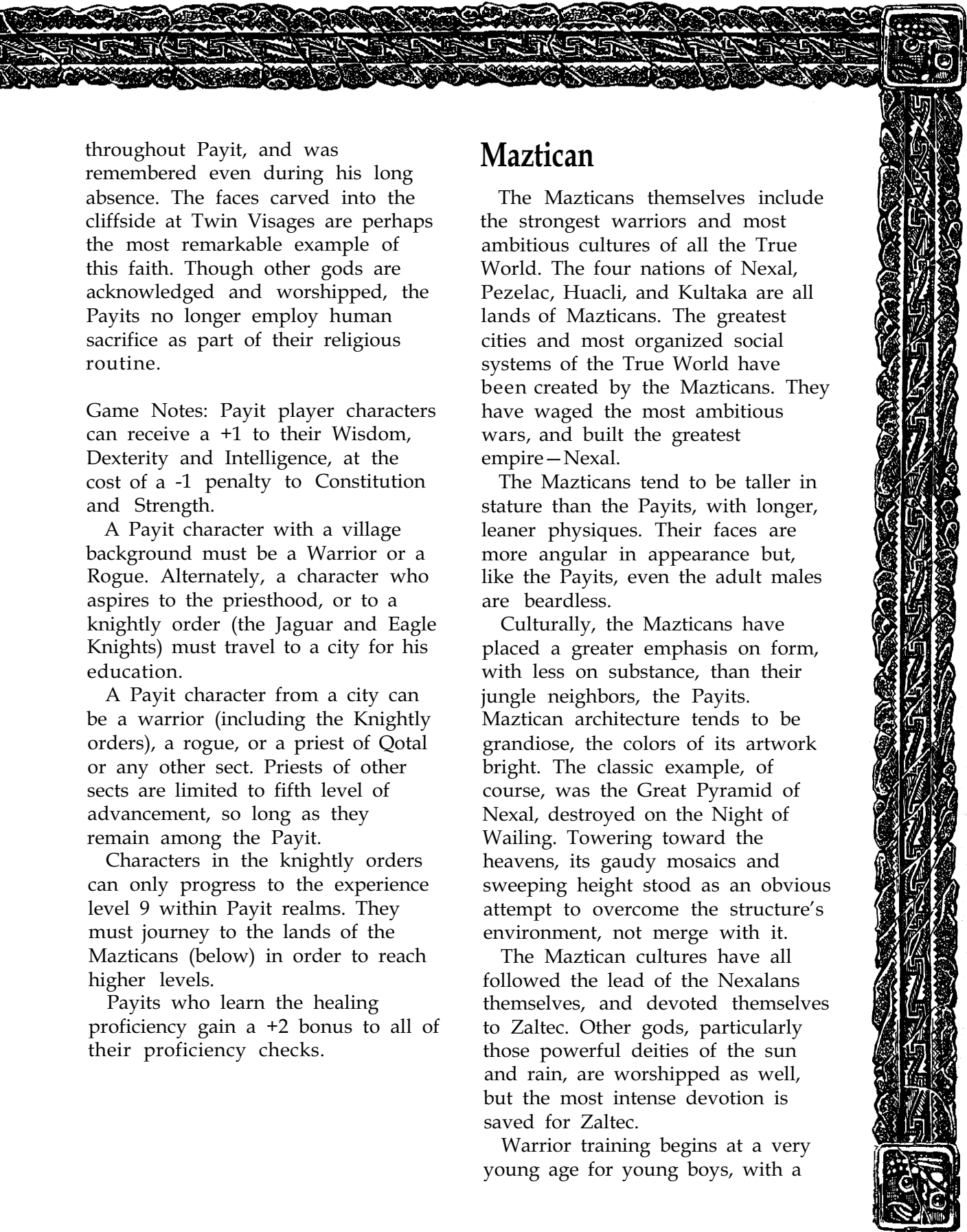
muscular builds and intense black eyes. Although of course they have the wide variety of human characteristics common in any culture, a few generalities can be broadly applied to the Payit.

They are quick to laugh, even at themselves, and are slow to react with anger. More open to new ideas than many other natives, they easily adapt to new customs and traditions. They learn new skills easily, and tend to be very industrious.

Nevertheless, the Payits are proud people, and cherish their long tradition of art, architecture, and astronomy. They greatly respect men and women of learning; in fact, they are the only native culture that willingly accepts women into positions of authority and responsibility.

Payit lifestyles vary somewhat depending on whether the environment is village or city. Several large cities rise out of the jungles of the peninsula, most notably Ulatos and Tulom-Itzi. Whereas village life is simple, and the education standard and practical, in the cities schools are well organized and a young person can select from wide areas of knowledge available to him. Here are the temples, where villagers come to study the priesthood, and the observatories where astronomers study the skies. The Payits are also advanced in the arts of healing, and the apothecaries and practitioners of medicines are found in the cities.

The god Qotal is revered



throughout Payit, and was remembered even during his long absence. The faces carved into the cliffside at Twin Visages are perhaps the most remarkable example of this faith. Though other gods are acknowledged and worshipped, the Payits no longer employ human sacrifice as part of their religious routine.

Game Notes: Payit player characters can receive a +1 to their Wisdom, Dexterity and Intelligence, at the cost of a -1 penalty to Constitution and Strength.

A Payit character with a village background must be a Warrior or a Rogue. Alternately, a character who aspires to the priesthood, or to a knightly order (the Jaguar and Eagle Knights) must travel to a city for his education.

A Payit character from a city can be a warrior (including the Knightly orders), a rogue, or a priest of Qotal or any other sect. Priests of other sects are limited to fifth level of advancement, so long as they remain among the Payit.

Characters in the knightly orders can only progress to the experience level 9 within Payit realms. They must journey to the lands of the Mazticans (below) in order to reach higher levels.

Payits who learn the healing proficiency gain a +2 bonus to all of their proficiency checks.

Maztican

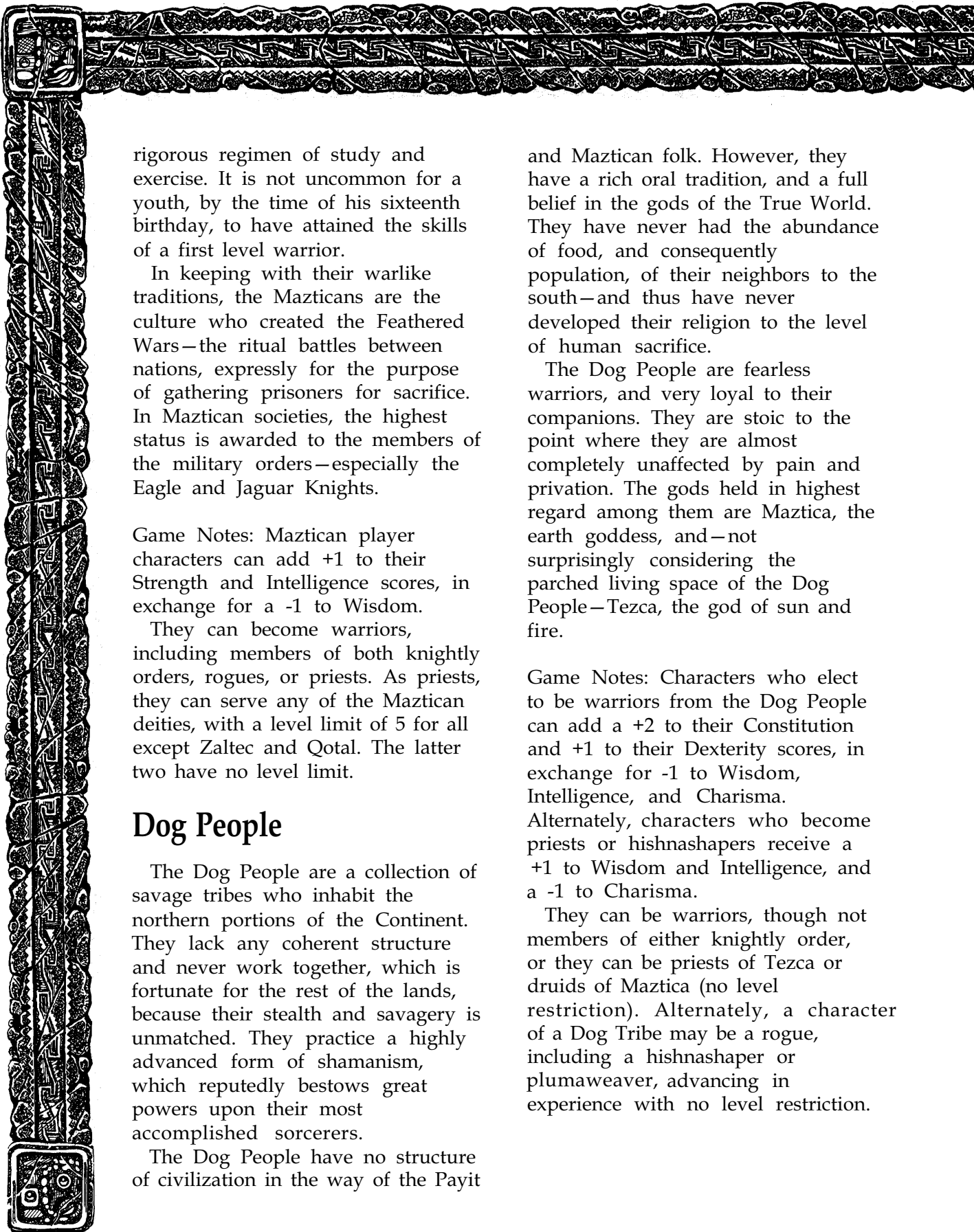
The Mazticans themselves include the strongest warriors and most ambitious cultures of all the True World. The four nations of Nexal, Pezelac, Huacli, and Kultaka are all lands of Mazticans. The greatest cities and most organized social systems of the True World have been created by the Mazticans. They have waged the most ambitious wars, and built the greatest empire—Nexal.

The Mazticans tend to be taller in stature than the Payits, with longer, leaner physiques. Their faces are more angular in appearance but, like the Payits, even the adult males are beardless.

Culturally, the Mazticans have placed a greater emphasis on form, with less on substance, than their jungle neighbors, the Payits. Maztican architecture tends to be grandiose, the colors of its artwork bright. The classic example, of course, was the Great Pyramid of Nexal, destroyed on the Night of Wailing. Towering toward the heavens, its gaudy mosaics and sweeping height stood as an obvious attempt to overcome the structure's environment, not merge with it.

The Maztican cultures have all followed the lead of the Nexalans themselves, and devoted themselves to Zaltec. Other gods, particularly those powerful deities of the sun and rain, are worshipped as well, but the most intense devotion is saved for Zaltec.

Warrior training begins at a very young age for young boys, with a



rigorous regimen of study and exercise. It is not uncommon for a youth, by the time of his sixteenth birthday, to have attained the skills of a first level warrior.

In keeping with their warlike traditions, the Mazticans are the culture who created the Feathered Wars—the ritual battles between nations, expressly for the purpose of gathering prisoners for sacrifice. In Maztican societies, the highest status is awarded to the members of the military orders—especially the Eagle and Jaguar Knights.

Game Notes: Maztican player characters can add +1 to their Strength and Intelligence scores, in exchange for a -1 to Wisdom.

They can become warriors, including members of both knightly orders, rogues, or priests. As priests, they can serve any of the Maztican deities, with a level limit of 5 for all except Zaltec and Qotal. The latter two have no level limit.

Dog People

The Dog People are a collection of savage tribes who inhabit the northern portions of the Continent. They lack any coherent structure and never work together, which is fortunate for the rest of the lands, because their stealth and savagery is unmatched. They practice a highly advanced form of shamanism, which reputedly bestows great powers upon their most accomplished sorcerers.

The Dog People have no structure of civilization in the way of the Payit

and Maztican folk. However, they have a rich oral tradition, and a full belief in the gods of the True World. They have never had the abundance of food, and consequently population, of their neighbors to the south—and thus have never developed their religion to the level of human sacrifice.

The Dog People are fearless warriors, and very loyal to their companions. They are stoic to the point where they are almost completely unaffected by pain and privation. The gods held in highest regard among them are Maztica, the earth goddess, and—not surprisingly considering the parched living space of the Dog People—Tezca, the god of sun and fire.

Game Notes: Characters who elect to be warriors from the Dog People can add a +2 to their Constitution and +1 to their Dexterity scores, in exchange for -1 to Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma.

Alternately, characters who become priests or hishnashapers receive a +1 to Wisdom and Intelligence, and a -1 to Charisma.

They can be warriors, though not members of either knightly order, or they can be priests of Tezca or druids of Maztica (no level restriction). Alternately, a character of a Dog Tribe may be a rogue, including a hishnashaper or plumaweaver, advancing in experience with no level restriction.



Green Folk

Like the Dog People, the tribesmen who live among the southern jungles of the True World dwell in groups of villages, with no central government or large cities. The exception to this is the nation of Kolan, along the western coast of the continent—there, some of the cultural traits of the Maztican peoples have blended with the racial heritage of the Green Folk.

The Green Folk resemble the Payit in stature. They protect their privacy savagely, and few who venture into their forests ever return.

They are skilled with the use of kurari poison, and are excellent archers. They worship the gods of nature, and though they do not practice human sacrifice as a religious ritual, they rarely let prisoners live for long—except in the case of a captive who demonstrates some unusual capability or can provide a strong reason for being allowed to live.

Game Notes: Characters of the Green Folk receive a +1 to their Dexterity Scores, in exchange for a -1 penalty to Strength. They gain a +1 to hit when using a bow and arrow.

They can be warriors, rogues, or priests. Priests can serve Watil, Nula, Maztica, or Qotal, advancing to the ninth level of experience in any class, even while they remain among their own people.

Proficiencies

Converting Standard Proficiencies

The following Proficiencies from the Players Handbook are available to characters from Maztica. If no notes are listed, all normal procedures apply; otherwise, the details list the modifications made to the proficiency when used for a Maztican character.

Agriculture: This includes a knowledge of tending, growing and storing mayz, beans, peppers, cocoa, and other natural Maztican crops. Also known are the tending and butchering of turkeys and other fowls.

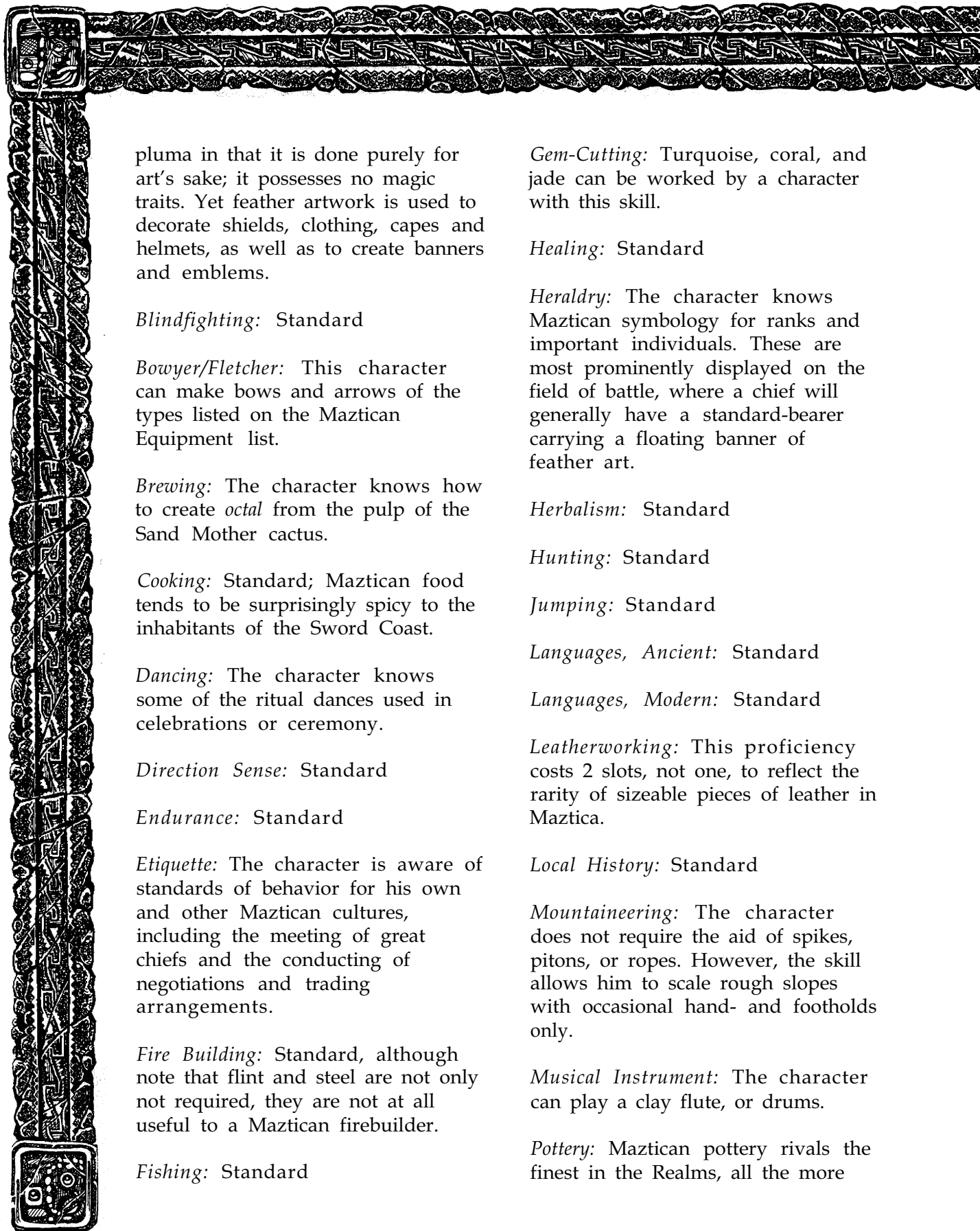
Animal Lore: Standard

Animal Training: Types of Maztican animals that can be trained include parrots and macaws, falcons and eagles, jaguars, and monkeys.

Armorer: The character can make the types of armor listed on the Maztican equipment list.

Artistic Ability: This works the same as it does across the sea. Sculpture is the predominant form of Maztican artwork. Though painting and drawing are known, they have not been developed to the quality known in other parts of the realms.

However, Maztica is also the home of a unique form of art—the feather painting. This is different from



pluma in that it is done purely for art's sake; it possesses no magic traits. Yet feather artwork is used to decorate shields, clothing, capes and helmets, as well as to create banners and emblems.

Blindfighting: Standard

Bowyer/Fletcher: This character can make bows and arrows of the types listed on the Maztican Equipment list.

Brewing: The character knows how to create *octal* from the pulp of the Sand Mother cactus.

Cooking: Standard; Maztican food tends to be surprisingly spicy to the inhabitants of the Sword Coast.

Dancing: The character knows some of the ritual dances used in celebrations or ceremony.

Direction Sense: Standard

Endurance: Standard

Etiquette: The character is aware of standards of behavior for his own and other Maztican cultures, including the meeting of great chiefs and the conducting of negotiations and trading arrangements.

Fire Building: Standard, although note that flint and steel are not only not required, they are not at all useful to a Maztican firebuilder.

Fishing: Standard

Gem-Cutting: Turquoise, coral, and jade can be worked by a character with this skill.

Healing: Standard

Heraldry: The character knows Maztican symbology for ranks and important individuals. These are most prominently displayed on the field of battle, where a chief will generally have a standard-bearer carrying a floating banner of feather art.

Herbalism: Standard

Hunting: Standard

Jumping: Standard

Languages, Ancient: Standard

Languages, Modern: Standard

Leatherworking: This proficiency costs 2 slots, not one, to reflect the rarity of sizeable pieces of leather in Maztica.

Local History: Standard

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

Musical Instrument: The character can play a clay flute, or drums.

Pottery: Maztican pottery rivals the finest in the Realms, all the more

amazing in that no potter's wheel is used. *Reading/Writing:* The Maztican writing is based on stylized pictures, and generally cannot be used to convey specific words. General concepts, intents, and requirements can be portrayed by a character with this skill.

Religion: Standard

Rope Use: Standard

Running: Standard

Set Snares: Standard

Stonemasonry: Stoneworking in Maztica is a considerably different task than it is across the Trackless Sea. The most obvious differences are the lack of metal tools to hammer, chisel, or saw; and the lack of wheels and beasts of burden to move the blocks to the site.

Nevertheless, the works etched in stone upon the face of the True World are some of the grandest anywhere in the Realms. Nexal, at its height, rivaled any city of the Sword Coast with the height of its monuments and the stunning grandeur of its massive sculptures. Even its ruins will last longer than many a city still standing.

The time required to erect a section of wall is twice that for the standard proficiency: in a day a Maztican mason can erect a wall one foot thick, five feet high, and five feet long. He can oversee up to a hundred unskilled quarry workers.

Survival: Survival skills for Maztica can be learned for two terrain types: jungle and desert. These categories include mountainous areas as well as flatlands, as long as the slopes are verdant or parched.

Swimming: Standard

Packing: Standard

Weather Sense: Standard

Weaving: Standard

Maztican Proficiencies

The following proficiencies can be learned by characters originating from the True World.

Table I. Maztican Proficiencies

Proficiency	# of Relevant Slots Spent	Relavant Ability	Check Modifier
Adobe	1	Strength	0
Astronomy	2	Intelligence	0
Ball Game	1	Special	0
Canoe-making	1	Wisdom	+2
Canoeing	1	Dexterity	0
Floating			
Agriculture	2	Strength	0
Gold			
Casting	1	Intelligence	-1
Mosaic	1	Wisdom	0
Obsidian			
Working	2	Intelligence	-1

* See "The Ball Game" farther back in this book for an explanation of this special proficiency.

Adobe: The character is skilled at making a plaster of mud, with



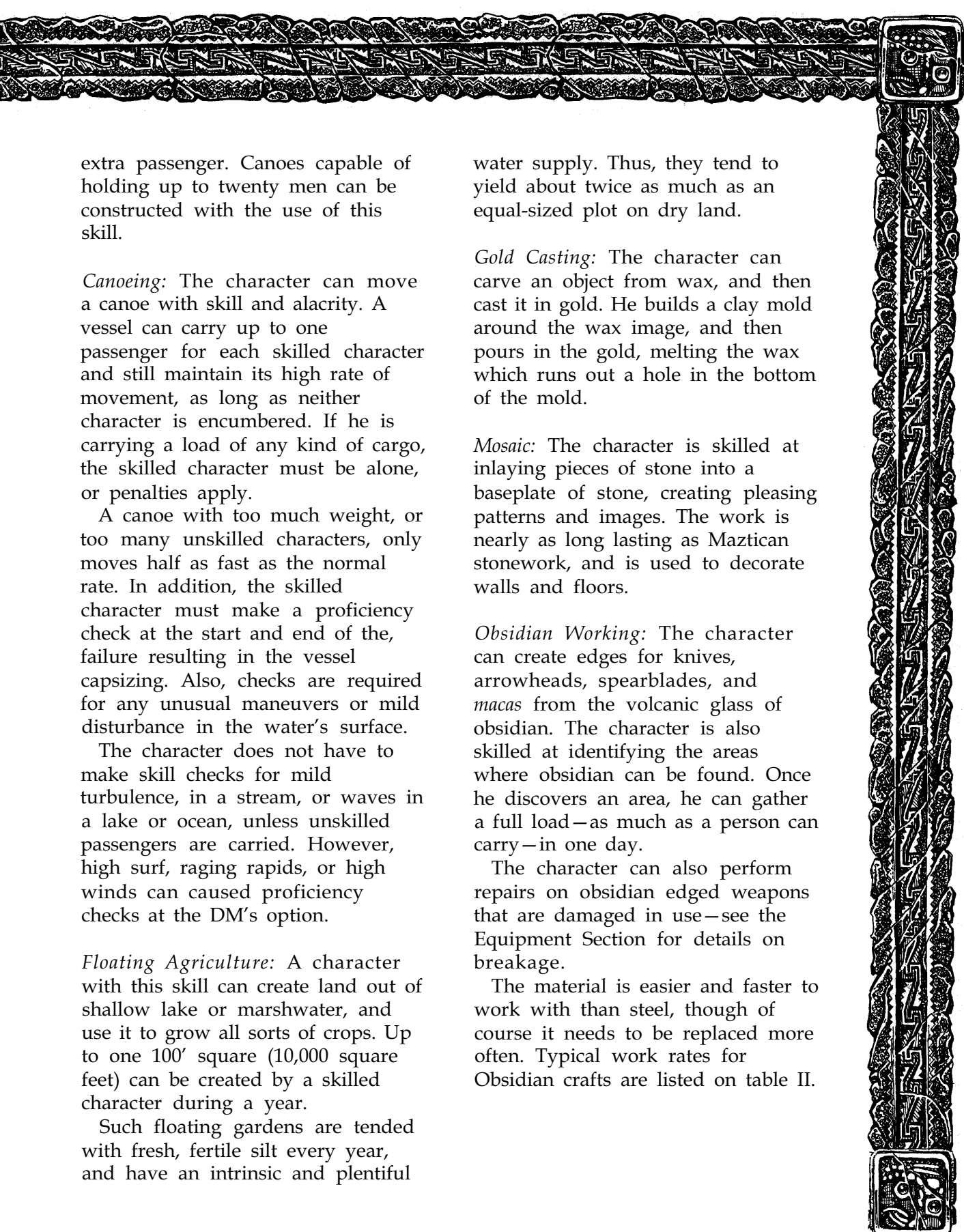
which he can build strong walls and overhanging roofs. A skilled character can build a section of wall twenty feet long by five feet high in one day.

Astronomy: This skill is available to characters from Payit or Far Payit. The character is very familiar with the night sky, and the changes it undergoes during the passage of time. It allows the character to anticipate cosmic events such as eclipses, comets, solstices,

equinoxes, the rising and position of the planets and stars.

Canoe Making: The character can build dugout canoes from logs. It requires two weeks to make a canoe that will hold two people, and the character must make a proficiency check to determine success at the conclusion of the process. Failure means a canoe that floats, but is not exceptionally stable or fast.

Larger canoes require approximately one extra week per



extra passenger. Canoes capable of holding up to twenty men can be constructed with the use of this skill.

Canoeing: The character can move a canoe with skill and alacrity. A vessel can carry up to one passenger for each skilled character and still maintain its high rate of movement, as long as neither character is encumbered. If he is carrying a load of any kind of cargo, the skilled character must be alone, or penalties apply.

A canoe with too much weight, or too many unskilled characters, only moves half as fast as the normal rate. In addition, the skilled character must make a proficiency check at the start and end of the, failure resulting in the vessel capsizing. Also, checks are required for any unusual maneuvers or mild disturbance in the water's surface.

The character does not have to make skill checks for mild turbulence, in a stream, or waves in a lake or ocean, unless unskilled passengers are carried. However, high surf, raging rapids, or high winds can caused proficiency checks at the DM's option.

Floating Agriculture: A character with this skill can create land out of shallow lake or marshwater, and use it to grow all sorts of crops. Up to one 100' square (10,000 square feet) can be created by a skilled character during a year.

Such floating gardens are tended with fresh, fertile silt every year, and have an intrinsic and plentiful

water supply. Thus, they tend to yield about twice as much as an equal-sized plot on dry land.

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

Mosaic: The character is skilled at inlaying pieces of stone into a baseplate of stone, creating pleasing patterns and images. The work is nearly as long lasting as Maztican stonework, and is used to decorate walls and floors.

Obsidian Working: The character can create edges for knives, arrowheads, spearblades, and *macas* from the volcanic glass of obsidian. The character is also skilled at identifying the areas where obsidian can be found. Once he discovers an area, he can gather a full load—as much as a person can carry—in one day.

The character can also perform repairs on obsidian edged weapons that are damaged in use—see the Equipment Section for details on breakage.

The material is easier and faster to work with than steel, though of course it needs to be replaced more often. Typical work rates for Obsidian crafts are listed on table II.

Table II: Maztican Weapon Work Time and Obsidian Requirements

Weapon	Work Time	Fraction of a load/item
Arrowhead	1-4 per hour	1/1000
<i>Maca</i>	10 days	5%
Spearhead	1 day	2%
Knife	20 days	5%
Repair Item	1-6 hours	1%

Character Kits

The general character classes of the AD&D® game do not cover every eventuality of Maztican character creation. The following four types—Jaguar and Eagle Knights, and specialists in pluma and hishna—are each presented as kits.

They are not new character classes. The first two are types of fighters, the second pair types of rogues. Yet with the modifications listed and described here, they can become unique characters typical of a campaign set in the True World.

Terms

Each kit contains the following information:

DESCRIPTION: This section tells what the character class is like, in general appearance, manner of dress, and cultural background. It will also list any requirements needed by a character who wants to employ this kit.

ROLE: This category describes the role of the character in the society as a whole.

WEAPON PROFICIENCIES: The weapon proficiencies are most significant with the two Knight types, but all of the character kits include a description of weapon proficiencies needed or earned by the character.

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

EQUIPMENT: There are special types of equipment required for each of the character kits; these items are listed and explained in this section.

SPECIAL BENEFITS: Each of the kits confers one or more special benefits upon characters who choose that character type; these are listed here.


SPECIAL HINDRANCES: As with benefits, each kit requires some things of the character that may occasionally seem like disadvantages.

RACES: The predominant race for each character kit is assumed to be human, but in cases where other races are allowed to achieve it, they are listed here.

Choosing a Kit

A character cannot enter one of these orders as a first level neophyte—both the knightly orders and the magical artisanships, require experience and knowledge to employ.

Consequently, a character need



not announce his intention to enter one of these categories until he has earned enough experience points to achieve the third level of experience. At this point, he must declare for one of these types, if he intends to pursue that calling.

Eagle Knight

Description: This is the ultimate order of Knighthood in Maztica—the most elite class of warrior, with its officers all members of the nobility.

A character aspiring to Eagle Knighthood must have the following minimum attribute scores: Strength 14, Dexterity 13, Wisdom 13.

The lodges of the Eagle Knights are located in all of the major cities of Maztica. These are the locations where young aspirants can go to apply to the order. They will receive training here, and have the opportunity to serve as apprentices in battle, being taught by veteran warriors.

For the first six levels of experience, Eagle Knights are not entitled to wear the robes of their order; they serve as Eagle Warriors, and fight in battle alongside the regular warriors—though often, the Eagle Warriors will be used as subcommanders.

Role: The Eagles are captains of hundred- and thousand-men regiments of the armies of Nexal and many other nations. In addition, they serve as scouts for those armies, and as teachers and tutors of young men who aspire to be warriors.

All Eagle Knights who reach experience level 10 become nobles of the city in which they serve.

Weapon Proficiencies: Eagle Knights can learn any weapon. They must be proficient in the use of the bow and arrow, the spear (and the spear-caster) and the *maca*.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Eagle Warriors must acquire, before they reach the seventh level of experience, the following non-weapon proficiencies: Animal Lore, Direction Sense, Dancing, and Weather Sense.

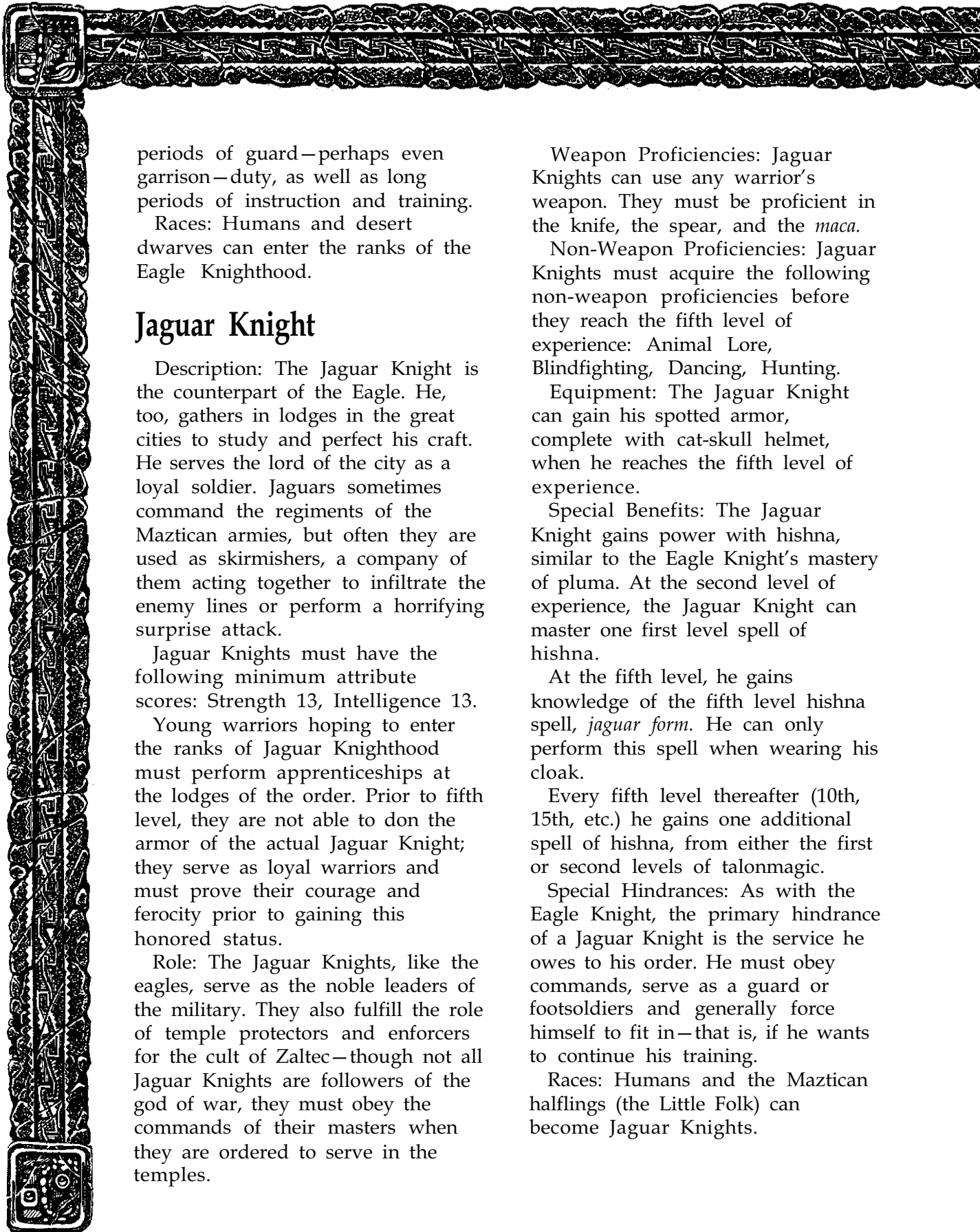
Equipment: The Eagle Knight must have a *maca*, a bow and arrows, and—after he reaches the seventh level—an Eagle cloak, with full helmet and feathered mantle.

Special Benefits: The Eagle Knight gains some limited powers of pluma as he progresses in his studies. When he reaches the second level of ability (as a Warrior), he can learn one first level spell of pluma. When he reaches the fourth level, he can choose an additional first or second level spell of pluma.

At seventh level of ability, the Eagle Knight receives the 5th level pluma spell, *eagle form*. He can only perform the spell when wearing his cloak.

Every fifth level gained, starting with the tenth, awards him one more first or second level spell of pluma.

Special Hindrances: The primary hindrance of the Eagle Warrior is his duty to his lodge, which owes allegiances to the Revered Counselor or overall ruler of the city in which it is located. This involves



periods of guard—perhaps even garrison—duty, as well as long periods of instruction and training.

Races: Humans and desert dwarves can enter the ranks of the Eagle Knighthood.

Jaguar Knight

Description: The Jaguar Knight is the counterpart of the Eagle. He, too, gathers in lodges in the great cities to study and perfect his craft. He serves the lord of the city as a loyal soldier. Jaguars sometimes command the regiments of the Maztican armies, but often they are used as skirmishers, a company of them acting together to infiltrate the enemy lines or perform a horrifying surprise attack.

Jaguar Knights must have the following minimum attribute scores: Strength 13, Intelligence 13.

Young warriors hoping to enter the ranks of Jaguar Knighthood must perform apprenticeships at the lodges of the order. Prior to fifth level, they are not able to don the armor of the actual Jaguar Knight; they serve as loyal warriors and must prove their courage and ferocity prior to gaining this honored status.

Role: The Jaguar Knights, like the eagles, serve as the noble leaders of the military. They also fulfill the role of temple protectors and enforcers for the cult of Zaltec—though not all Jaguar Knights are followers of the god of war, they must obey the commands of their masters when they are ordered to serve in the temples.

Weapon Proficiencies: Jaguar Knights can use any warrior's weapon. They must be proficient in the knife, the spear, and the *maca*.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Jaguar Knights must acquire the following non-weapon proficiencies before they reach the fifth level of experience: Animal Lore, Blindfighting, Dancing, Hunting.

Equipment: The Jaguar Knight can gain his spotted armor, complete with cat-skull helmet, when he reaches the fifth level of experience.

Special Benefits: The Jaguar Knight gains power with *hishna*, similar to the Eagle Knight's mastery of *pluma*. At the second level of experience, the Jaguar Knight can master one first level spell of *hishna*.

At the fifth level, he gains knowledge of the fifth level *hishna* spell, *jaguar form*. He can only perform this spell when wearing his cloak.

Every fifth level thereafter (10th, 15th, etc.) he gains one additional spell of *hishna*, from either the first or second levels of *talonmagic*.

Special Hindrances: As with the Eagle Knight, the primary hindrance of a Jaguar Knight is the service he owes to his order. He must obey commands, serve as a guard or footsoldiers and generally force himself to fit in—that is, if he wants to continue his training.

Races: Humans and the Maztican halflings (the Little Folk) can become Jaguar Knights.



Artisans of Maztican Magic:

Plumaweavers and Hishnashapers

Though these kits are nominally parts of the rogue class, they represent a rather different mindset than that of the thief, in particular. They are rogues, and not wizards, because their training requires them to participate in their world, experiencing and learning things about the environment in a way that makes them considerably more broader-based characters than the typical magic user with his nose buried in a spellbook.

Too, the spells of pluma and hishna available are not so numerous, nor so potent, as are the spells of the wizard class. The artisan needs additional skills to fall back upon in order to survive in a campaign.

The rogue tables provide the information for both of these character types for THACO, Experience Points and Level Advancement, and Saving Throws.

In addition to the descriptions given for each kit, Maztican magic-workers gain the use of spells. These are awarded magically and automatically. When cast, they can be remastered through meditation and contemplation. The time to relearn a spell is one hour per level of the spell, plus the casting time (which, in many cases, is significant).

Artisans of Maztican magic earn spells according to the following table:

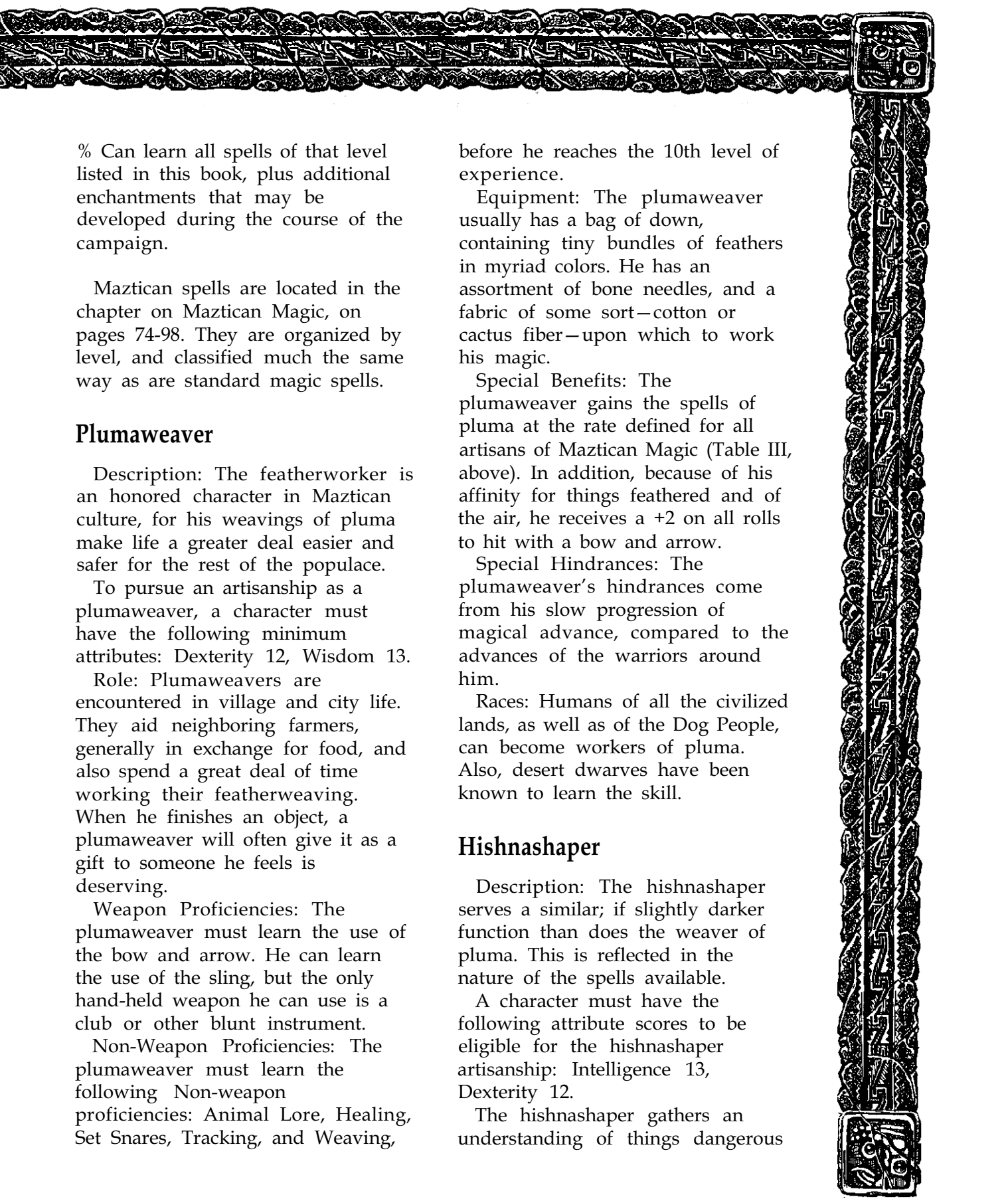
NOTE: This same table applies to priests who gain access to the spheres of pluma or hishna through their god. Such priests cannot learn 5th level spells of Maztican magic, however.

Table III: Maztican Magic Spell Progression

Artisan Level	1	2	3	4*	5 **
1	—	—	—	—	—
2	1	—	—	—	—
3	2	—	—	—	—
4	2	1	—	—	—
5	3	1	—	—	—
6	3	2	—	—	—
7	3	2	1	—	—
8	4	3	1	—	—
9	4	3	2	—	—
10	4	3	2	1	—
11	5	4	2	1	—
12	6	4	3	1	—
13	%	4	3	2	—
14	%	4	3	2	1
15	%	5	3	%	1
16	%	%	4	%	1
17	%	%	%	%	1
18	%	%	%	%	2
19	%	%	%	%	%

* Usable by artisans with a Dexterity or Wisdom score of 15 or greater.

** Usable only by artisans with Wisdom *and* Dexterity scores of 15 or greater.



% Can learn all spells of that level listed in this book, plus additional enchantments that may be developed during the course of the campaign.

Maztican spells are located in the chapter on Maztican Magic, on pages 74-98. They are organized by level, and classified much the same way as are standard magic spells.

Plumaweaver

Description: The featherworker is an honored character in Maztican culture, for his weavings of pluma make life a greater deal easier and safer for the rest of the populace.

To pursue an artisanship as a plumaweaver, a character must have the following minimum attributes: Dexterity 12, Wisdom 13.

Role: Plumaweavers are encountered in village and city life. They aid neighboring farmers, generally in exchange for food, and also spend a great deal of time working their featherweaving. When he finishes an object, a plumaweaver will often give it as a gift to someone he feels is deserving.

Weapon Proficiencies: The plumaweaver must learn the use of the bow and arrow. He can learn the use of the sling, but the only hand-held weapon he can use is a club or other blunt instrument.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: The plumaweaver must learn the following Non-weapon proficiencies: Animal Lore, Healing, Set Snares, Tracking, and Weaving,

before he reaches the 10th level of experience.

Equipment: The plumaweaver usually has a bag of down, containing tiny bundles of feathers in myriad colors. He has an assortment of bone needles, and a fabric of some sort—cotton or cactus fiber—upon which to work his magic.

Special Benefits: The plumaweaver gains the spells of pluma at the rate defined for all artisans of Maztican Magic (Table III, above). In addition, because of his affinity for things feathered and of the air, he receives a +2 on all rolls to hit with a bow and arrow.

Special Hindrances: The plumaweaver's hindrances come from his slow progression of magical advance, compared to the advances of the warriors around him.

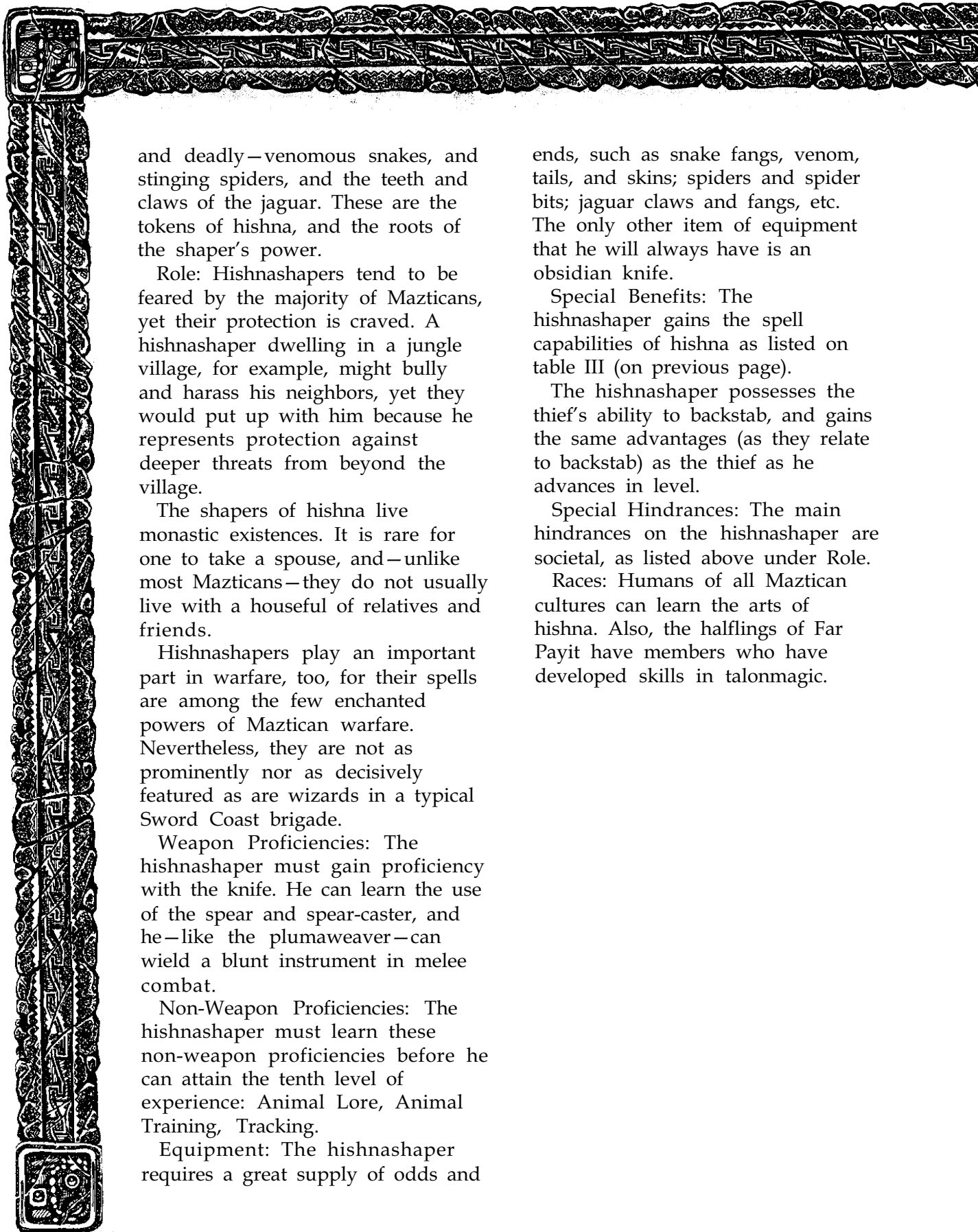
Races: Humans of all the civilized lands, as well as of the Dog People, can become workers of pluma. Also, desert dwarves have been known to learn the skill.

Hishnashaper

Description: The hishnashaper serves a similar, if slightly darker function than does the weaver of pluma. This is reflected in the nature of the spells available.

A character must have the following attribute scores to be eligible for the hishnashaper artisanship: Intelligence 13, Dexterity 12.

The hishnashaper gathers an understanding of things dangerous



and deadly—venomous snakes, and stinging spiders, and the teeth and claws of the jaguar. These are the tokens of hishna, and the roots of the shaper's power.

Role: Hishnashapers tend to be feared by the majority of Mazticans, yet their protection is craved. A hishnashaper dwelling in a jungle village, for example, might bully and harass his neighbors, yet they would put up with him because he represents protection against deeper threats from beyond the village.

The shapers of hishna live monastic existences. It is rare for one to take a spouse, and—unlike most Mazticans—they do not usually live with a houseful of relatives and friends.

Hishnashapers play an important part in warfare, too, for their spells are among the few enchanted powers of Maztican warfare. Nevertheless, they are not as prominently nor as decisively featured as are wizards in a typical Sword Coast brigade.

Weapon Proficiencies: The hishnashaper must gain proficiency with the knife. He can learn the use of the spear and spear-caster, and he—like the plumaweaver—can wield a blunt instrument in melee combat.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: The hishnashaper must learn these non-weapon proficiencies before he can attain the tenth level of experience: Animal Lore, Animal Training, Tracking.

Equipment: The hishnashaper requires a great supply of odds and

ends, such as snake fangs, venom, tails, and skins; spiders and spider bits; jaguar claws and fangs, etc. The only other item of equipment that he will always have is an obsidian knife.

Special Benefits: The hishnashaper gains the spell capabilities of hishna as listed on table III (on previous page).

The hishnashaper possesses the thief's ability to backstab, and gains the same advantages (as they relate to backstab) as the thief as he advances in level.

Special Hindrances: The main hindrances on the hishnashaper are societal, as listed above under Role.

Races: Humans of all Maztican cultures can learn the arts of hishna. Also, the halflings of Far Payit have members who have developed skills in talonmagic.



The Ball Game

Because the ball game is so pervasive in Maztican society, it is a proficiency that can be learned by any native player character. Because the rules require a bit of explanation, and the proficiency cannot be compared to any "regular" one known in the Forgotten Realms, it is presented here in its own section.

The ball game proficiency requires a character to use two slots. There is no modifier. The required attributes are Strength, Dexterity, and Wisdom. A character's proficiency in the ball game is equal to the lowest of these three. When a half-proficiency check is called for, divide the lowest of the three by 2 and round up.

For every four levels of experience a player character earns, he or she can add one additional slot to this proficiency. Effectively, this raises the character's proficiency check roll by 1; however, it does not raise the original attribute!

Why is the ball game so important? More than merely a sport, it gives its players a measure of status, it is seen as a means of resolving disputes, and at times takes on the pomp of a religious rite. Teams may comprise individuals chosen for their prowess or entire villages out to settle a grievance of some kind (stolen mayz, stolen women, stolen men...).

The game is usually played on a court, open-ended, with a hard playing surface of packed dirt. Fifteen feet up on either side wall, at the midway point of the court, is a vertical ring set into the wall itself. The object of the ball game is to knock a hard rubber ball through

the hoop of the opposing team or across the opposing team's goal line. Rules vary from region to region, but the object remains the same.

At each end of the court is a goal, defended by one team. A single defender stands before the goal line, while his two to five teammates stand near the middle of the court.

The ball is moved by hitting it with the knee, elbow, hip, shoulder, or head—not the hands nor the feet. A team wins a game by scoring three goals; a match consists of three games. A game can also be won, instantly, if a player knocks the ball through one of the hoops in the wall. This is a matter of great status for the successful player.

A player is selected from each team to attempt to gain control of the ball, allowing that player's team the chance to take a shot. The ball is returned to play this way at the start of each match, and after each point.

If at any time during the game a player successfully puts the ball through the hoop, the game will pause as pandemonium breaks out among the spectators. This shot is a historical event, and it instantly wins the current game in progress. The player who makes the shot will have his name and description spread all over the city and beyond.

For complete rules on the ball game, see the "Ball Game" section in "Maztica Alive!"



Economy and Equipment

The Maztican culture is not driven by economics or technology to the extent that is common in other parts of the Realms. A basic system of value and exchange exists, but its interpretation can be extremely flexible.

Bartering and sharing of food, shelter, and goods is common—a traveler may well be invited to spend the night in the home of a sympathetic villager, partaking of food and companionship as one of the family. The accumulation of wealth in the hands of one person or clan is unknown; families gain influence and power by displaying wisdom, courage, and leadership.

The typical Maztican family is self sufficient, producing for itself the food, clothing, shelter, and equipment that it needs. Families tend to include members of multiple generations and numerous in-laws, often dwelling in a single house of just a few rooms. Each member contributes to the well-being of the whole family, and a multitude of skills will be present.

Certain skills allow an individual to attain high status in the society, though not in the general sense of becoming wealthy. These are individuals who are proficient in a more elite skill—to fill a need of the society's for things greater than mere sustenance. Pottery, pluma and hishna, weapon-making, stonecarving, mosaic and goldcasting, warriorhood (including the knightly orders) and stonecraft all allow a character to more than support his own needs.

An individual with such a

sought-after skills will often live in a spacious house, with gardens, patios, and large, airy rooms, and often will invite family members, fellow warriors, or friends to join him in residence.

Also, characters who become proficient at other, more mundane tasks, such as abode-plastering, hunting, or weaving, may have many opportunities to barter those skills to others in exchange for food, shelter, or whatever else is deemed valuable.

System of Exchange

The basic "coin" of the land is the cocoa bean. Its value varies depending upon rarity and need, but for purposes of the game it can be considered the rough equivalent of the copper piece.

This value is consistent for both sides of the Trackless Sea—the introduction of the bitter Maztican chocolate to the Sword Coast has been an unqualified success from an economic and culinary point of view. However, cocoa beans on the Sword Coast will generally have to be sold to a spice dealer for their equivalent in coinage—they are not accepted in use by most merchants and vendors.

Other forms of "money" are also employed in Maztica. The degree of need and value for each varies, and DMs can employ a great deal of latitude in this regard. The values on table IV are typical and standard. However, certain items—particularly gold, copper,

jade, coral and turquoise—lose a great deal of value among villagers. Generally, they are only regarded as useful by the traders at the marketplaces of the cities.

TABLE IV: Items Of Value

Commodity Name	Maztican Value (cocoa beans)	Realms Value (gold pieces)
Cocoa Bean	1	1/100
Ear of Mayz	1	1/100
Copper Blade	10	1/10
Coral Bud	50	1/2
Jade (uncut stone)	100-1000	1-10
Quill of Gold Dust	500	5 gp
Turquoise (uncut)	1000-10,000	10-100

Definitions:

A cocoa bean is a small, brown nugget that can be ground into a flavoring. It is the most commonly used currency across the True world, and is abbreviated “cb”.

A copper blade is a pressed sheet of copper, hammered flat and long shape somewhat similar to a knife blade, though it has no use as weapon. It equal to 10 cp. in weight. Each has a small hole near the end, and they can be strung on a twine to create a conveniently carried necklace.

Coral buds are common along coastlines, and only achieve their value in inland parts of the True

world. Each is about the size of a child’s fist.

Jade and turquoise are materials much valued by Maztican carvers and artisans. The size of the stones varies from pebble to fist-sized. Their value, after craftsmanship, can go up considerably in a city environment.

A quill of gold dust is the hollowed feather of a bird, nearly a foot long. It is filled with powdered gold and sealed with a wax plug at the end. It is another widely used commercial agent, though with a much higher value than the cocoa bean; a quill of gold dust is abbreviated “gq”.

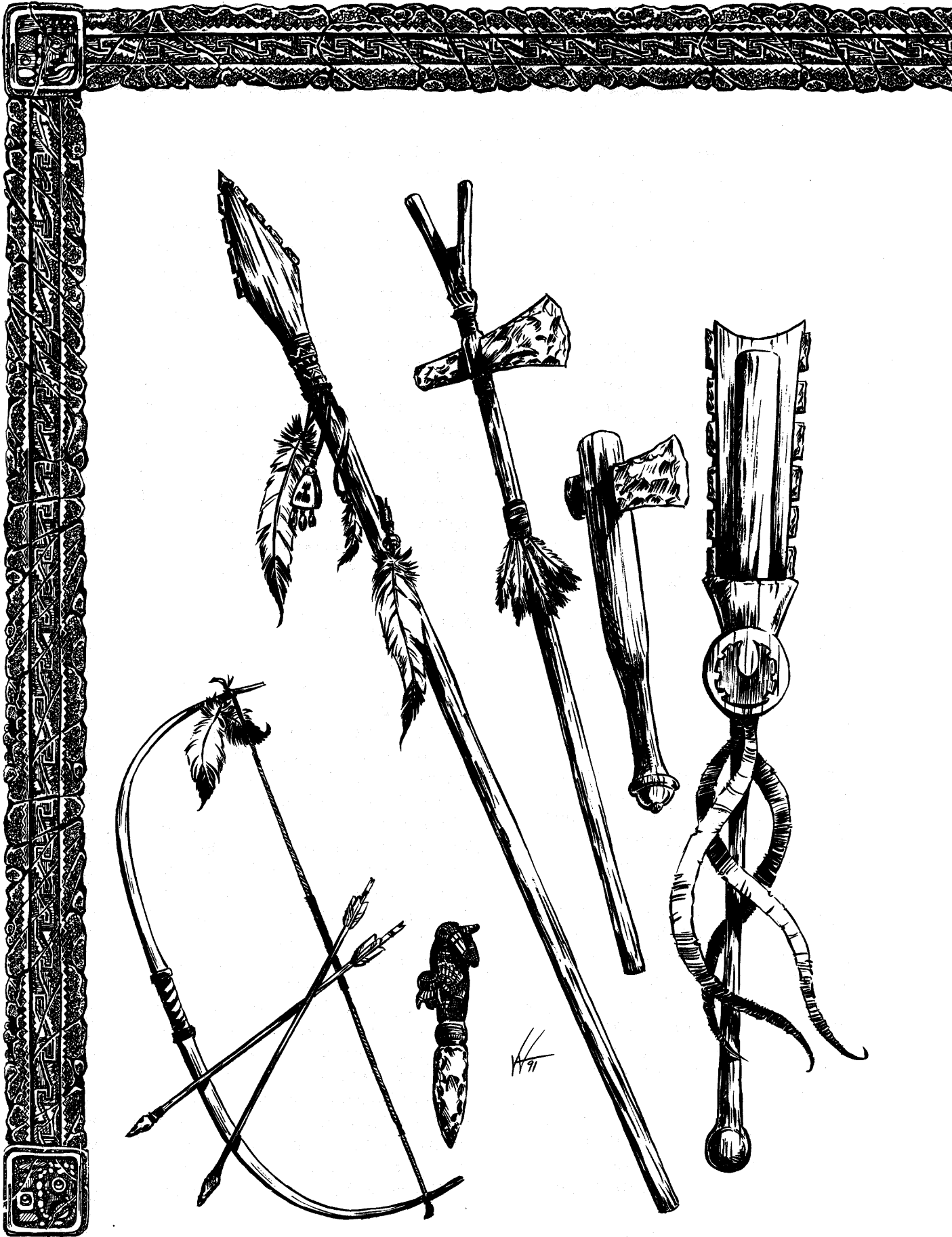
Owning Land

The use of land in Maztica is generally a matter of inheritance and tradition, backed up by a willingness to defend the ancestral plot of land. In villages, the use of a given field, or plot of marsh or forest, is generally passed to the oldest son—or daughter, if there are no sons, or the sons are judged unfit. Extra siblings either marry someone with rights to land, or live with the extended family if there is room.

Alternately, these are the characters who travel to the cities in search of a skill or trade. Many of them become warriors, for every city maintains a garrison of veteran fighters in constant readiness.

And of course there is a new outlook on land ownership in those areas that have fallen under the rule of the foreigners—primarily, that is, in Ulatos and the surrounding areas





of Payit. Here Cordell and his captains have divided up the lands into huge estates, and also provided workable plots of land for all of their soldiers. Generally, the Mazticans who originally worked these lands continue to do so—under the feudal lordship of the foreigners. This unfair and unsatisfactory system has already begun to breed discontent.

Equipment

The Maztican equipment list is considerably shorter than that for the rest of the realms. Items from the Sword Coast, of course, can be imported to Maztica—and some, in fact, can be purchased in Ulatos. This list, however, reflects things that are totally Maztican in origin.

Table V: Equipment

Clothing

Item	Cost
Tunic, plain	100 cb
Mantle, plain	250 cb
Moccasins	150 cb
Sandals	100 cb
Tunic, feathered	10 gq
Mantle, ornate	4 gq
Headdress	20 gq
Ornaments (lip plugs, earrings, bracelets, etc.)	10-1000 gq

Food and Lodging

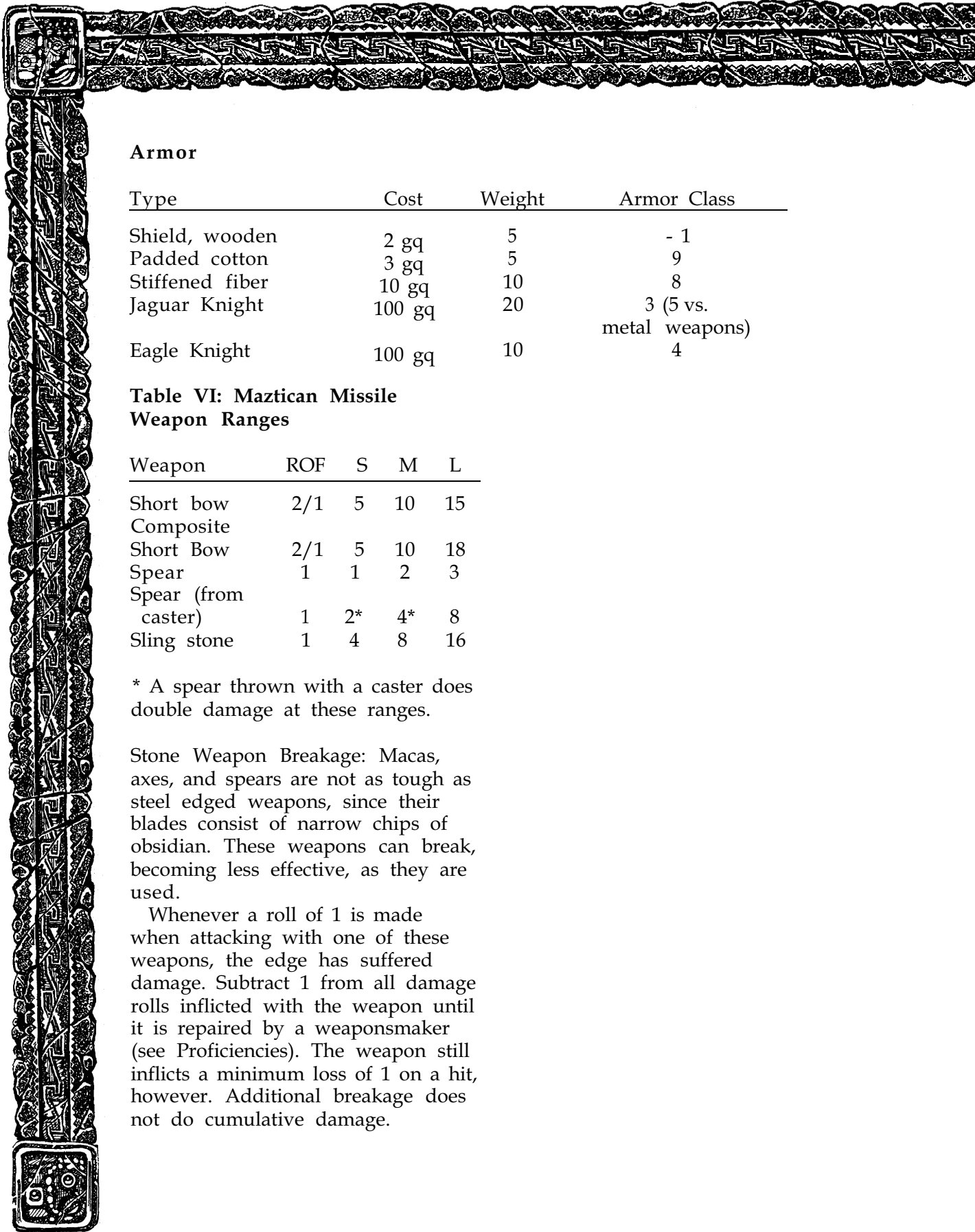
Item	Cost
Meal (mayzcakes and beans)	10 cb
Octal (cup)	20 cb
Meat	100 cb
Sleeping mat, indoor	15 cb

Miscellaneous Equipment

Item	Cost
Blanket	300 cb
Canoe	20 gq
Jar/bowl	200 cb
Waterskin	200 cb

Weapons

Item	Cost	Weight	Size	Type	Speed		
					Factor	S-M	L
Axe	12 gq	5	M	S	7	1d8	1d8
Short Bow	4 gq	2	M	P	7	1d6	1d6
Composite Short Bow	10 gq	2	M	P	6	1d6	1d6
Club	3	M	B	4	1d6	1d3	
Knife, obsidian	1 gq	1	S	P/S	2	1d8	1d2
Maca	25 gq	6	M	S	5	1d8	1d6
Spear	1 gq	4	M	P	5	1d6	1d8
Spear caster	10 gq	3	M	—	9	—	—
Sling	100 cb	1	S	—	6		
Sling Stone	—	½	S	B	—	1d4	1d4



Armor

Type	Cost	Weight	Armor Class
Shield, wooden	2 gq	5	- 1
Padded cotton	3 gq	5	9
Stiffened fiber	10 gq	10	8
Jaguar Knight	100 gq	20	3 (5 vs. metal weapons)
Eagle Knight	100 gq	10	4

**Table VI: Maztican Missile
Weapon Ranges**

Weapon	ROF	S	M	L
Short bow	2/1	5	10	15
Composite Short Bow	2/1	5	10	18
Spear	1	1	2	3
Spear (from caster)	1	2*	4*	8
Sling stone	1	4	8	16

* A spear thrown with a caster does double damage at these ranges.

Stone Weapon Breakage: Macas, axes, and spears are not as tough as steel edged weapons, since their blades consist of narrow chips of obsidian. These weapons can break, becoming less effective, as they are used.

Whenever a roll of 1 is made when attacking with one of these weapons, the edge has suffered damage. Subtract 1 from all damage rolls inflicted with the weapon until it is repaired by a weaponsmaker (see Proficiencies). The weapon still inflicts a minimum loss of 1 on a hit, however. Additional breakage does not do cumulative damage.



Maztican Magic

The two forms of magic are the characteristic powers of Maztica. Although very different from each other, each has its roots in the natural aspects of the True World—things of light and life and air, in the case of *pluma*: things of sharpness and scale and venom, for *hishna*.

Neither type can be categorized purely in the magic sense of the rest of the Forgotten Realms, for they are neither purely sorcerous, nor purely clerical, in nature. True, the priests of Maztica can gain powers of *hishna* or *pluma*, and each draws its primary symbol from a god—Zaltec and Qotal, respectively. There are no true magic users in Maztican society, yet the practice of these forms reaches its highest levels in the works of artisans, not priests.

The spells of Maztican magic resemble some of the powers of typical mages and clerics, yet there are many differences. For one thing, the casting times tend to be longer with Maztican magic. Material components are more important—indeed, they are often the basis for the spell itself rather than mere focusing objects.

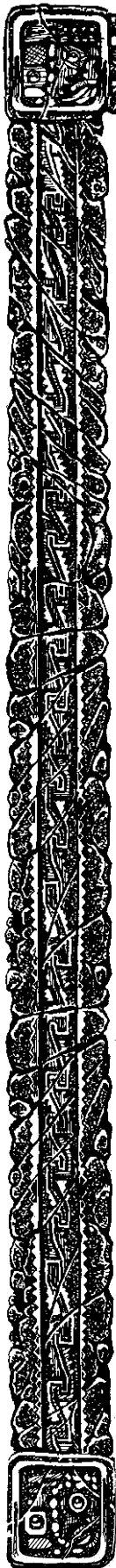
The casting of a Maztican magic spell more often involves a ritual than a quick gesture or command. The effects can be more subtle, but at the same time more profound.

A true master of either art achieves the level where he can

create essential components, called talismans. Unlike normal spells, the highest level of both *pluma* and *hishna* is the 5th level spell. Clerics of neither faith are able to master these spells—only artisans, who work the magic alone, can master the fifth level. Although warriors who achieve the status of Eagle or Jaguar Knighthood gain the use of the fifth level eagle form or *jaguar form* spell and additional, albeit limited, spell usage, they are not masters of *pluma* or *hishna* in the same sense as an artisan.

A master artisan will try to create one ultimate *talisman* during his life. Those who truly succeed have contributed a great artifact to Maztican history—the *pluma* litter that carried the Revered Counsellor through Nexal was one such; so was the caldron of the Deepfyre. Incidentally, both artifacts, so far as is known, vanished during the Night of Wailing.

Characters can gain a mastery of a Maztican magic through a priesthood serving a Maztican god, or through the proficiency of either *hishna* or *pluma*. Only characters who learn the skill through the proficiency can gain the ultimate (5th) level of mastery. Priests, however, often have other abilities open to them, since they will be able to learn spells from several different spheres of influence.



Limits

Maztican magic is not as extensive, nor as dominating, as the sorcery of a powerful wizard. Instead it offers unique powers, tuned to the world around it, and is not intended for (nor is it capable of) mastering that environment.

Several unique limits apply to the use of pluma and hishna. Priests with access to a minor sphere of either type can employ 1st and 2nd level powers (not 3rd, as in the other spheres). Clerics with access to a major sphere of pluma or hishna can use 1st-4th level spells. The highest powers of Maztican magic are 5th level, and these can only be employed by artisans (see Character Kits).

Talismans

These are the magical items of the True World, and in many senses can mimic the effects of

those of the rest of the Realms. However, Maztican *talismans* tend to be more rare, and also more unique, than some other lands.

Each, whether pluma or hishna, is a work of art and symmetry, as well as power. An artisan will always make certain that any item of power he makes will be marked with his characteristic sign.

Items of power are described specifically under the Fifth Level Spells for pluma and hishna. More types than those listed are certainly possible, and the DM or artisan player characters may wish to develop some of their own.

Though they are specifically created by the forces of one or the other Maztican magic type, *talismans* are not necessarily limited in usage to characters proficient in the appropriate area. Many *talismans* are like other magical items in that they can be used by whoever wields one properly, or who knows the proper command word.

Pluma, Hishna, and the Realms

Spells of pluma and hishna interact with other AD&D® game powers just as does normal magic. It can be taken beyond the bounds of, Maztica, and functions normally—as long as the DM of the campaign in question wants it to work that way!

Use the Saving Throw Vs. Spells column for all saving throws against Maztican magic, including

saves against the effects of talismans.

Pluma and Hishna Spells, by Level

Pluma	Hishna
Level 1	Level 1
Arrowflight	Cat Charm
Bird Charm I	Disguise
Cool	Huntsman's Call
Elevate I	Protection
Featherweaving	Snake Charm
Spearflight	Talonblade
Stoneflight	
Warmth	
Level 2	Level 2
Bafflement	Ambush
Breathsense	Heartsense
Fisher's Luck	Hypnosis
Guardian	Scrollsee
Light	Scalesnare
Level 3	Level 3
Blossom	Darkness
Elevate II	Drought
Water	
Summoning	Net
Windrider	Pestilence
Level 4	Level 4
Bird Charm II	Cursed Image
Magic Resistance	Fire
Water Move	Sending
Level 5	Level 5
Create Talisman	Create Talisman
Eagle Form	Jaguar Form





Pluma: Feathermagic

Pluma has its roots in the power of the Feathered Dragon, Qotal. It is the lighter of the two magics, and the more beneficial to those with peaceful pursuits.

Symbols

The primary symbol of pluma is the feather—the brighter and more vivid the color, the better. Macaws, parrots, and hummingbirds are all trapped for their plumage, which is necessary for the working of any kind of feathermagic.

Other symbols of pluma include flowers, butterflies, dragonflies, and birds themselves—in particular, hummingbirds and eagles. The primary enchanted image of pluma is the mystical creature, the couatl.

Spell Descriptions

Spell descriptions of pluma enchantments match the format and definitions in the AD&D® *Player's Handbook* (2nd Edition).

First Level Spells

Arrowflight

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 turns/level
Casting Time: 1-6 rounds
Area of Effect: 3 archers/level
Saving Throw: None

This enchantment can be cast onto one or more archers. For the duration of the spell, the range of the archers is doubled for short, medium, and long ranges. In addition, the arrows inflict +1 hp of damage for each successful hit. It cannot be used to augment any other type of missile weapon, including spears, slings, or crossbows.

The material component for the spell is a bit of downfeather, trimmed into the shape of an arrow's fletching.

Bird Charm I

Range: 100 yards/level
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 week/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 3 birds/level
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows a caster to summon up to three small birds for each level of the caster. These can include birds up to parrot size—indeed, parrots and hummingbirds are the most favored targets, as they make no saving throw against the spell's effects.

Birds summoned via the spell will understand the rudimentary commands of the caster, and (if a parrot) will even be able to repeat up to three-word messages.

The material component of the spell is a small, coral whistle which the caster must carve himself. The process takes several days, and requires an unusually large piece of coral.

Cool

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 4 hours/level

Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: 1 individual/level

Saving Throw: None

The spell allows a character to feel comfortable in conditions that would otherwise debilitate and even injure him, such as desert heat. It can be useful to those making arduous treks across such terrain.

If actual fire or heat damage would be inflicted—including magical fires, lava, and the like—the character receives a -1 hp damage per die, regardless of the dice rolled.

The material component for the spell is a bit of duck down.

Elevate I

Range: 10 yards/level

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 item

Saving Throw: None

The *elevate* spells allow the character to cause an object of pluma to float into the air. This, the most basic, will cause a work of featherweaving to float upward at 1' per round. It can lift an object of up to 1 pound/level of the caster in weight. The caster can move it towards or away from him, or cause gentle side to side

movement, at no more than 10' round of movement.

Featherweaving

Range: 0

Components: S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: Special

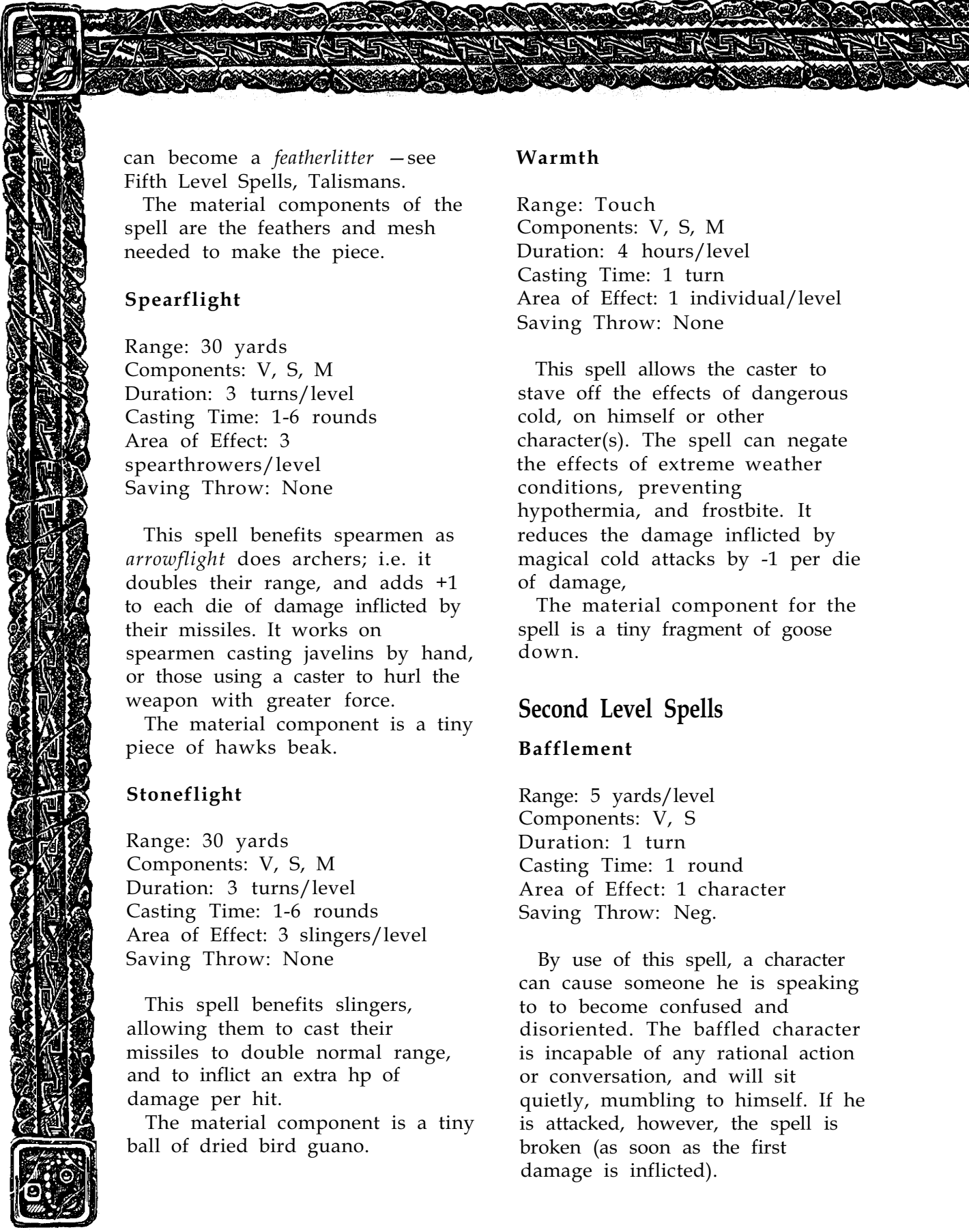
Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

The *featherweaving* spell is a harmonious exercise, strongly Maztican in character. The character must sit quietly, in peaceful surroundings. He works bits of down into a fine mesh of cotton or maguey fiber, and slowly creates a tapestry of brilliant featherwork. The weaving may be worked into an abstract design, a symbolized image—such as the symbols depicted on pages 22-32 in Book Three, *Gods and Battles*—or a realistic image.

The weaving is a relaxing, mentally healthful activity. For every hour that the character spends concentrating on the spell, he can recover 1 hit point of damage. He also weaves approximately one square inch of his ultimate creation during an hour.

The weaving must be completed before the character advances to the next level of ability. A first level character must weave a piece 1 square foot in size; at second level, 2 sq. ft, and so on. A character of 5th level who weaves a pattern can create an item 5' x 5' or larger; a truly large weaving



can become a *featherlitter* —see Fifth Level Spells, Talismans.

The material components of the spell are the feathers and mesh needed to make the piece.

Spearflight

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 turns/level
Casting Time: 1-6 rounds
Area of Effect: 3
spearthrowers/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell benefits spearmen as *arrowflight* does archers; i.e. it doubles their range, and adds +1 to each die of damage inflicted by their missiles. It works on spearmen casting javelins by hand, or those using a caster to hurl the weapon with greater force.

The material component is a tiny piece of hawk's beak.

Stoneflight

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 turns/level
Casting Time: 1-6 rounds
Area of Effect: 3 slingers/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell benefits slingers, allowing them to cast their missiles to double normal range, and to inflict an extra hp of damage per hit.

The material component is a tiny ball of dried bird guano.

Warmth

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 4 hours/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 1 individual/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to stave off the effects of dangerous cold, on himself or other character(s). The spell can negate the effects of extreme weather conditions, preventing hypothermia, and frostbite. It reduces the damage inflicted by magical cold attacks by -1 per die of damage,

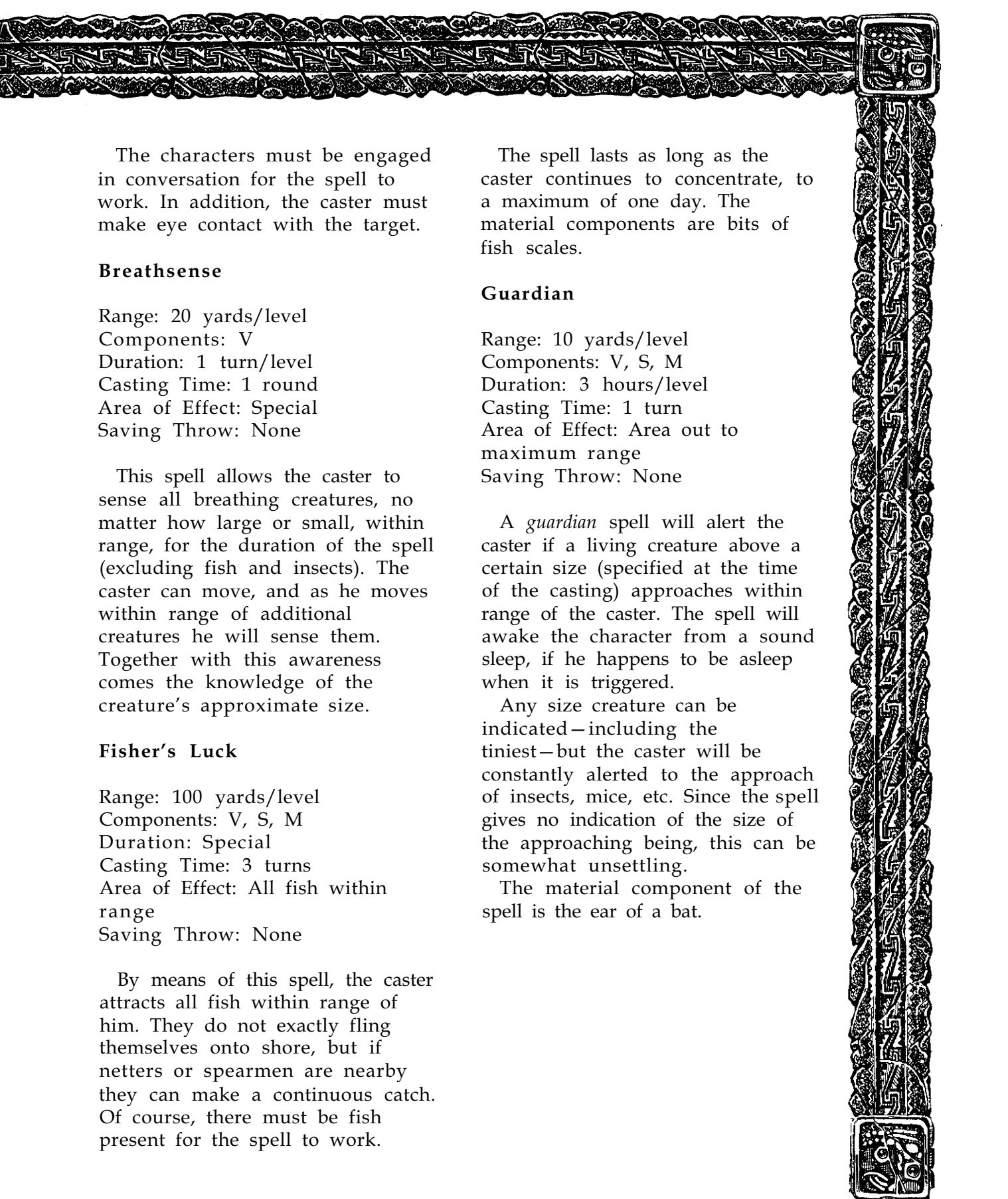
The material component for the spell is a tiny fragment of goose down.

Second Level Spells

Bafflement

Range: 5 yards/level
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 character
Saving Throw: Neg.

By use of this spell, a character can cause someone he is speaking to to become confused and disoriented. The baffled character is incapable of any rational action or conversation, and will sit quietly, mumbling to himself. If he is attacked, however, the spell is broken (as soon as the first damage is inflicted).



The characters must be engaged in conversation for the spell to work. In addition, the caster must make eye contact with the target.

Breathsense

Range: 20 yards/level
Components: V
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to sense all breathing creatures, no matter how large or small, within range, for the duration of the spell (excluding fish and insects). The caster can move, and as he moves within range of additional creatures he will sense them. Together with this awareness comes the knowledge of the creature's approximate size.

Fisher's Luck

Range: 100 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 3 turns
Area of Effect: All fish within range
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the caster attracts all fish within range of him. They do not exactly fling themselves onto shore, but if netters or spearmen are nearby they can make a continuous catch. Of course, there must be fish present for the spell to work.

The spell lasts as long as the caster continues to concentrate, to a maximum of one day. The material components are bits of fish scales.

Guardian

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 hours/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Area out to maximum range
Saving Throw: None

A *guardian* spell will alert the caster if a living creature above a certain size (specified at the time of the casting) approaches within range of the caster. The spell will awake the character from a sound sleep, if he happens to be asleep when it is triggered.

Any size creature can be indicated—including the tiniest—but the caster will be constantly alerted to the approach of insects, mice, etc. Since the spell gives no indication of the size of the approaching being, this can be somewhat unsettling.

The material component of the spell is the ear of a bat.



Light

Range: 60 yards
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 20-foot radius globe
Saving Throw: Special

The spell is identical to the magic-user spell *light*.

Third Level Spells

Blossom

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 day
Area of Effect: 100 yard square/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell requires a full day of concentration on the part of the caster, and must be performed in the center of the area to be affected. The area immediately becomes more verdant and fertile than it was before—if it was dry, the soil grows moist; if it was fetid swampland, the water drains away to reveal fresh loam.

The improvement is a matter of degree—a truly terrible drought cannot be overridden by this spell alone, though it might in combination with *water summoning*.

The effects last until the end of the current growing season. The material components of the spell

are an ear of mayz and a skin of water (about a gallon).

Elevate II

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 item
Saving Throw: None

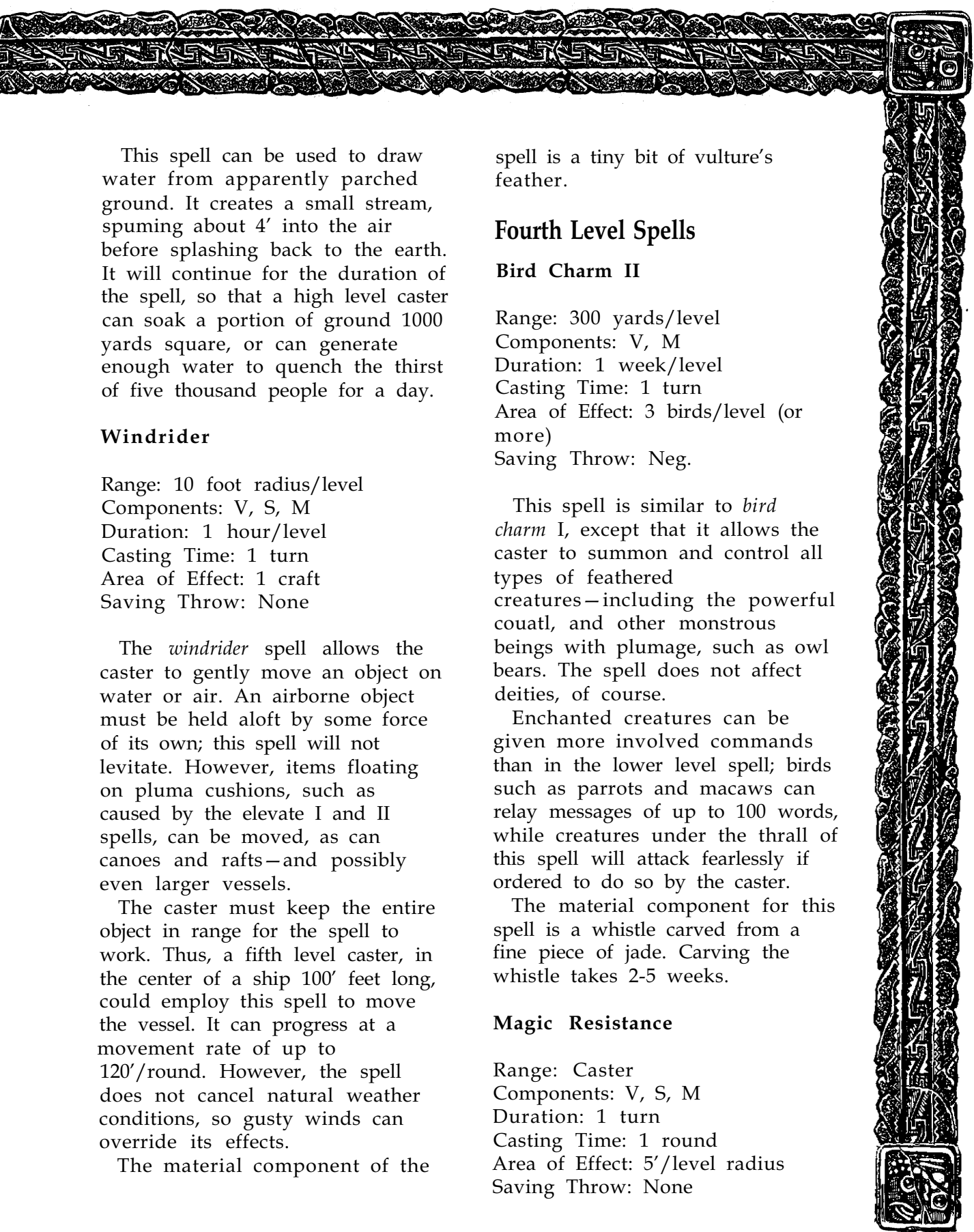
This, the more powerful of the elevate spells, is a much more powerful enchantment. It is capable of lifting a litter of feathers into the air, and a considerable amount of weight with it. The item to be elevated must be a *blanket of featherweaving*. (See "Plumalitter under "Talismans of Pluma").

The caster can lift an amount of weight on the featherweaving equal to his level times 20 pounds; eg. a fifteenth level cleric could elevate 300 pounds on the floating litter.

The item can be raised at up to 10' per round, and can move horizontally at 120' per round. It can move into the face of moderate winds, but a truly severe storm will easily overcome it.

Water Summoning

Range: 0
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None



This spell can be used to draw water from apparently parched ground. It creates a small stream, spuming about 4' into the air before splashing back to the earth. It will continue for the duration of the spell, so that a high level caster can soak a portion of ground 1000 yards square, or can generate enough water to quench the thirst of five thousand people for a day.

Windrider

Range: 10 foot radius/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 1 craft
Saving Throw: None

The *windrider* spell allows the caster to gently move an object on water or air. An airborne object must be held aloft by some force of its own; this spell will not levitate. However, items floating on pluma cushions, such as caused by the elevate I and II spells, can be moved, as can canoes and rafts—and possibly even larger vessels.

The caster must keep the entire object in range for the spell to work. Thus, a fifth level caster, in the center of a ship 100' feet long, could employ this spell to move the vessel. It can progress at a movement rate of up to 120'/round. However, the spell does not cancel natural weather conditions, so gusty winds can override its effects.

The material component of the

spell is a tiny bit of vulture's feather.

Fourth Level Spells

Bird Charm II

Range: 300 yards/level
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 week/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 3 birds/level (or more)
Saving Throw: Neg.

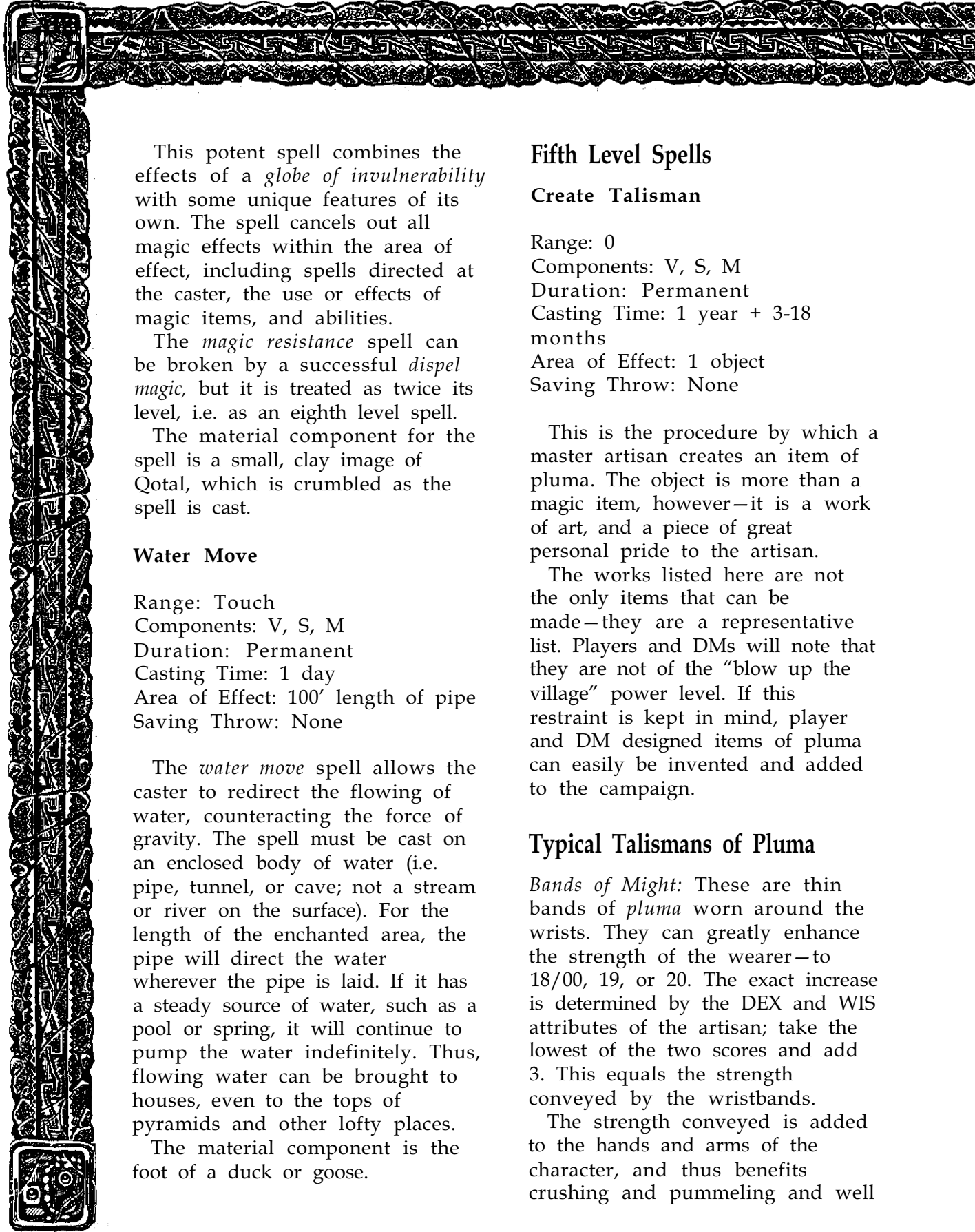
This spell is similar to *bird charm I*, except that it allows the caster to summon and control all types of feathered creatures—including the powerful couatl, and other monstrous beings with plumage, such as owl bears. The spell does not affect deities, of course.

Enchanted creatures can be given more involved commands than in the lower level spell; birds such as parrots and macaws can relay messages of up to 100 words, while creatures under the thrall of this spell will attack fearlessly if ordered to do so by the caster.

The material component for this spell is a whistle carved from a fine piece of jade. Carving the whistle takes 2-5 weeks.

Magic Resistance

Range: Caster
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 5'/level radius
Saving Throw: None



This potent spell combines the effects of a *globe of invulnerability* with some unique features of its own. The spell cancels out all magic effects within the area of effect, including spells directed at the caster, the use or effects of magic items, and abilities.

The *magic resistance* spell can be broken by a successful *dispel magic*, but it is treated as twice its level, i.e. as an eighth level spell.

The material component for the spell is a small, clay image of Qotal, which is crumbled as the spell is cast.

Water Move

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 day
Area of Effect: 100' length of pipe
Saving Throw: None

The *water move* spell allows the caster to redirect the flowing of water, counteracting the force of gravity. The spell must be cast on an enclosed body of water (i.e. pipe, tunnel, or cave; not a stream or river on the surface). For the length of the enchanted area, the pipe will direct the water wherever the pipe is laid. If it has a steady source of water, such as a pool or spring, it will continue to pump the water indefinitely. Thus, flowing water can be brought to houses, even to the tops of pyramids and other lofty places.

The material component is the foot of a duck or goose.

Fifth Level Spells

Create Talisman

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 year + 3-18 months
Area of Effect: 1 object
Saving Throw: None

This is the procedure by which a master artisan creates an item of *pluma*. The object is more than a magic item, however—it is a work of art, and a piece of great personal pride to the artisan.

The works listed here are not the only items that can be made—they are a representative list. Players and DMs will note that they are not of the “blow up the village” power level. If this restraint is kept in mind, player and DM designed items of *pluma* can easily be invented and added to the campaign.

Typical Talismans of Pluma

Bands of Might: These are thin bands of *pluma* worn around the wrists. They can greatly enhance the strength of the wearer—to 18/00, 19, or 20. The exact increase is determined by the DEX and WIS attributes of the artisan; take the lowest of the two scores and add 3. This equals the strength conveyed by the wristbands.

The strength conveyed is added to the hands and arms of the character, and thus benefits crushing and pummeling and well

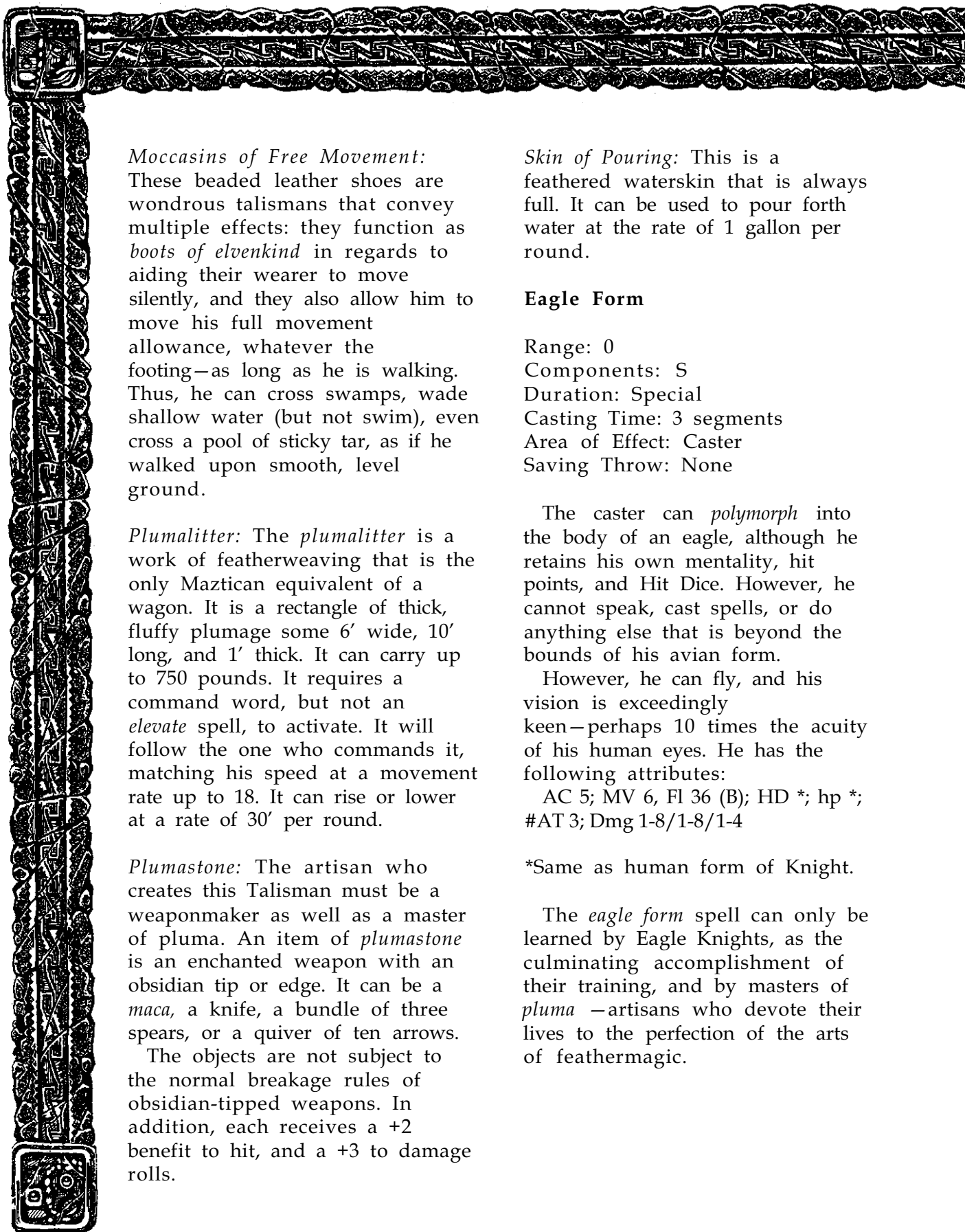


as weapon-wielding power. It does not allow the casting of boulders, such as is gained with a *girdle of giant strength*.

Effects of Bands of Might

Strength Rating	Bonuses to Hit	Damage	Open Doors
18/00	+3	+6	none
19	+3	+7	16(8)
20	+3	+8	17(10)
21	+4	+9	17(12)
22	+4	+10	18(14)

Feathertoken: This is a powerful charm of magic resistance and protection. It conveys a bonus of +3 to the AC of the wearer, and has an inherent magic resistance of 90%. The area of protection extends for 10' from the wearer. In addition, the *feathertoken* can effect a *featherfall* spell once per day. The spell can benefit the wearer of the token, and anyone touching that person.



Moccasins of Free Movement:

These beaded leather shoes are wondrous talismans that convey multiple effects: they function as *boots of elvenkind* in regards to aiding their wearer to move silently, and they also allow him to move his full movement allowance, whatever the footing—as long as he is walking. Thus, he can cross swamps, wade shallow water (but not swim), even cross a pool of sticky tar, as if he walked upon smooth, level ground.

Plumalitter: The *plumalitter* is a work of featherweaving that is the only Maztican equivalent of a wagon. It is a rectangle of thick, fluffy plumage some 6' wide, 10' long, and 1' thick. It can carry up to 750 pounds. It requires a command word, but not an *elevate* spell, to activate. It will follow the one who commands it, matching his speed at a movement rate up to 18. It can rise or lower at a rate of 30' per round.

Plumastone: The artisan who creates this Talisman must be a weaponmaker as well as a master of pluma. An item of *plumastone* is an enchanted weapon with an obsidian tip or edge. It can be a *maca*, a knife, a bundle of three spears, or a quiver of ten arrows.

The objects are not subject to the normal breakage rules of obsidian-tipped weapons. In addition, each receives a +2 benefit to hit, and a +3 to damage rolls.

Skin of Pouring: This is a feathered waterskin that is always full. It can be used to pour forth water at the rate of 1 gallon per round.

Eagle Form

Range: 0

Components: S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 3 segments

Area of Effect: Caster

Saving Throw: None

The caster can *polymorph* into the body of an eagle, although he retains his own mentality, hit points, and Hit Dice. However, he cannot speak, cast spells, or do anything else that is beyond the bounds of his avian form.

However, he can fly, and his vision is exceedingly keen—perhaps 10 times the acuity of his human eyes. He has the following attributes:

AC 5; MV 6, Fl 36 (B); HD *; hp *; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-4

*Same as human form of Knight.

The *eagle form* spell can only be learned by Eagle Knights, as the culminating accomplishment of their training, and by masters of *pluma*—artisans who devote their lives to the perfection of the arts of feathermagic.



Hishna: Talonmagic

Hishna has its roots in the power of Zaltec, the god of war. It is more forceful and violent than pluma, yet it, too, draws its strength from the natural forces of the True World.

Symbols

The primary symbol of hishna is the beastlike image of Zaltec himself, depicted upon statues beside his gory altars, and in relief and mosaic along the walls of his temples.

Another common symbol of this potent force is the jaguar. Snakes, alligators, fire lizards, and vultures are other common symbols of hishna. The primary monstrous image of hishna is the Jaguar Lord.

First Level Spells

Cat Charm

Range: 20 yards/level
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 week/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 Feline
Saving Throw: Special

This spell allows the caster to charm a jaguar, ocelot, or other feline creature. Unlike the *bird charm* spells of pluma, however, it will not summon the creature to be charmed. The feline must be visible to the caster, and within range, for the spell to take effect.

The charmed cat will understand the rudimentary commands of the caster, and will perform simple tasks—guarding or fighting, or accompanying the caster. If the cat is sent somewhere without the caster—to carry a message lashed around its neck, for example—the cat makes a saving throw vs. charm every day that its is separated from the caster. If the roll succeeds, the spell is broken.

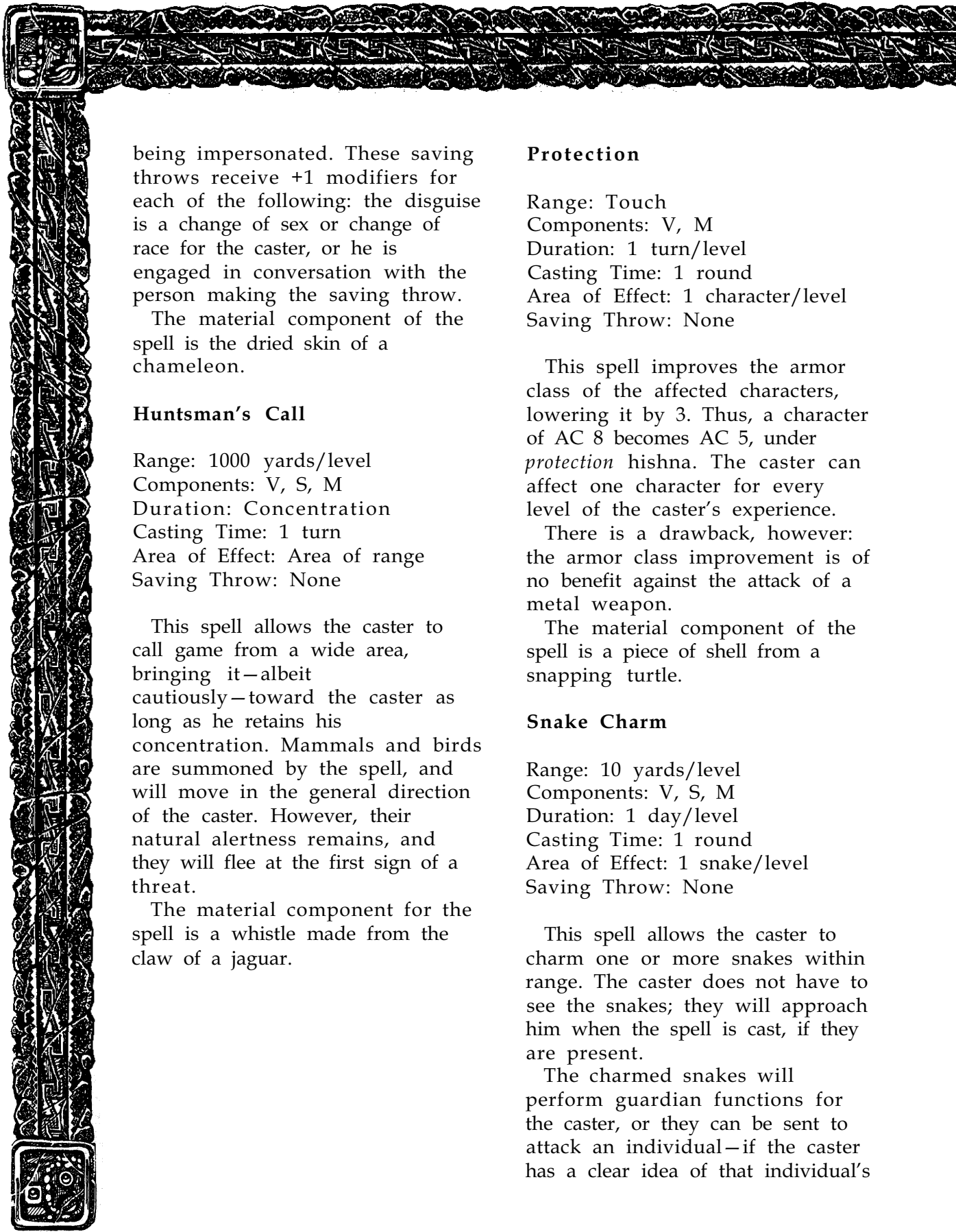
Disguise

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: Special

This spell allows the caster to conceal his general appearance. It cannot be cast upon another. It conveys no language capability, and cannot dramatically alter the size of the individual.

The spell allows one disguise, per casting. If the caster specifies a general individual, of the same race and sex as himself, he will be unrecognizable by anyone he meets—he simply looks like someone they have never seen before.

If the caster attempts to create a specific individual's appearance, however, those he encounters will be entitled to a saving throw vs. illusion to detect the difference—but only if they are acquainted with the individual



being impersonated. These saving throws receive +1 modifiers for each of the following: the disguise is a change of sex or change of race for the caster, or he is engaged in conversation with the person making the saving throw.

The material component of the spell is the dried skin of a chameleon.

Huntsman's Call

Range: 1000 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Concentration
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Area of range
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to call game from a wide area, bringing it—albeit cautiously—toward the caster as long as he retains his concentration. Mammals and birds are summoned by the spell, and will move in the general direction of the caster. However, their natural alertness remains, and they will flee at the first sign of a threat.

The material component for the spell is a whistle made from the claw of a jaguar.

Protection

Range: Touch
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 character/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell improves the armor class of the affected characters, lowering it by 3. Thus, a character of AC 8 becomes AC 5, under *protection* hishna. The caster can affect one character for every level of the caster's experience.

There is a drawback, however: the armor class improvement is of no benefit against the attack of a metal weapon.

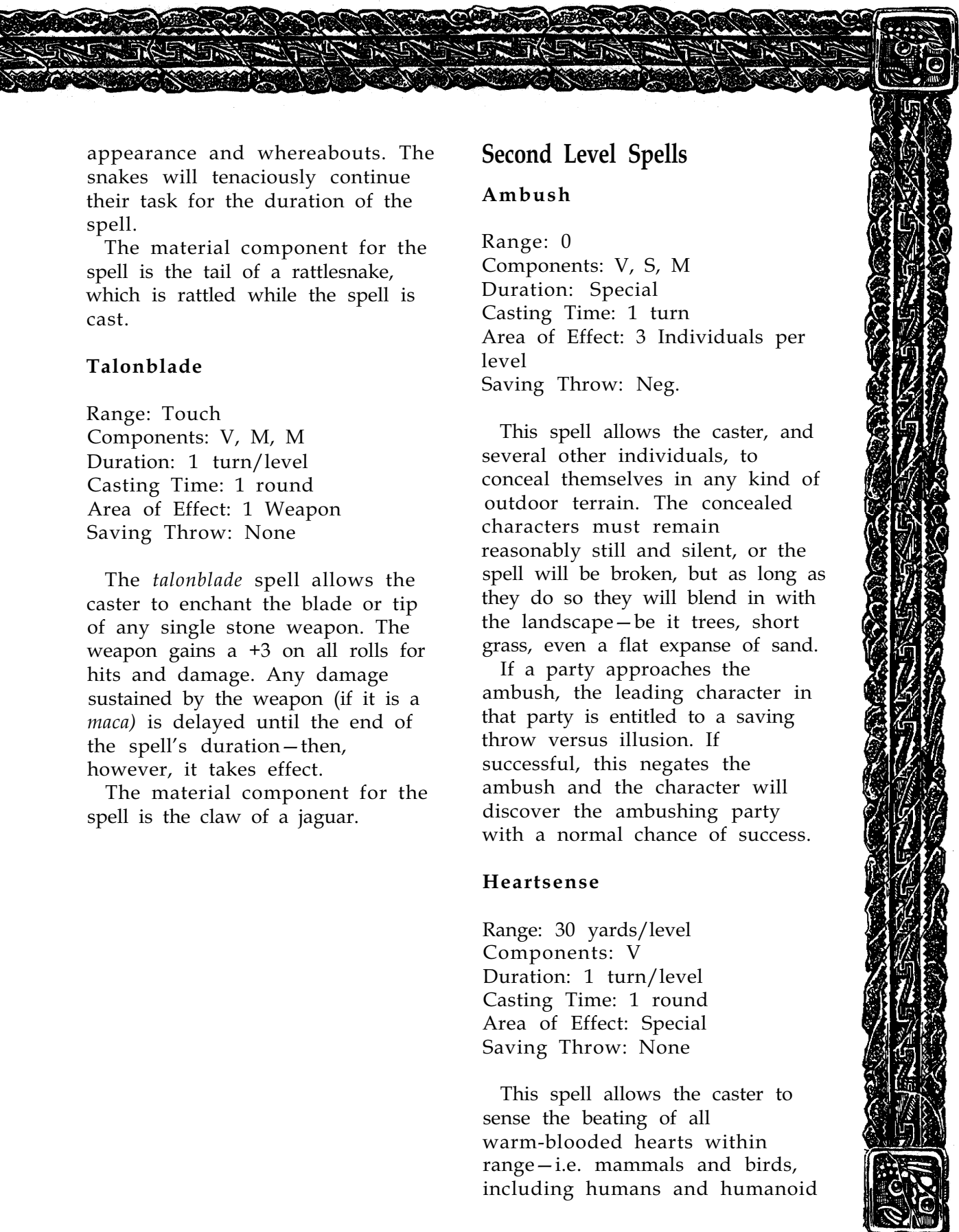
The material component of the spell is a piece of shell from a snapping turtle.

Snake Charm

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 snake/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to charm one or more snakes within range. The caster does not have to see the snakes; they will approach him when the spell is cast, if they are present.

The charmed snakes will perform guardian functions for the caster, or they can be sent to attack an individual—if the caster has a clear idea of that individual's



appearance and whereabouts. The snakes will tenaciously continue their task for the duration of the spell.

The material component for the spell is the tail of a rattlesnake, which is rattled while the spell is cast.

Talonblade

Range: Touch

Components: V, M, M

Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 Weapon

Saving Throw: None

The *talonblade* spell allows the caster to enchant the blade or tip of any single stone weapon. The weapon gains a +3 on all rolls for hits and damage. Any damage sustained by the weapon (if it is a *maca*) is delayed until the end of the spell's duration—then, however, it takes effect.

The material component for the spell is the claw of a jaguar.

Second Level Spells

Ambush

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1 turn

Area of Effect: 3 Individuals per level

Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows the caster, and several other individuals, to conceal themselves in any kind of outdoor terrain. The concealed characters must remain reasonably still and silent, or the spell will be broken, but as long as they do so they will blend in with the landscape—be it trees, short grass, even a flat expanse of sand.

If a party approaches the ambush, the leading character in that party is entitled to a saving throw versus illusion. If successful, this negates the ambush and the character will discover the ambushing party with a normal chance of success.

Heartsense

Range: 30 yards/level

Components: V

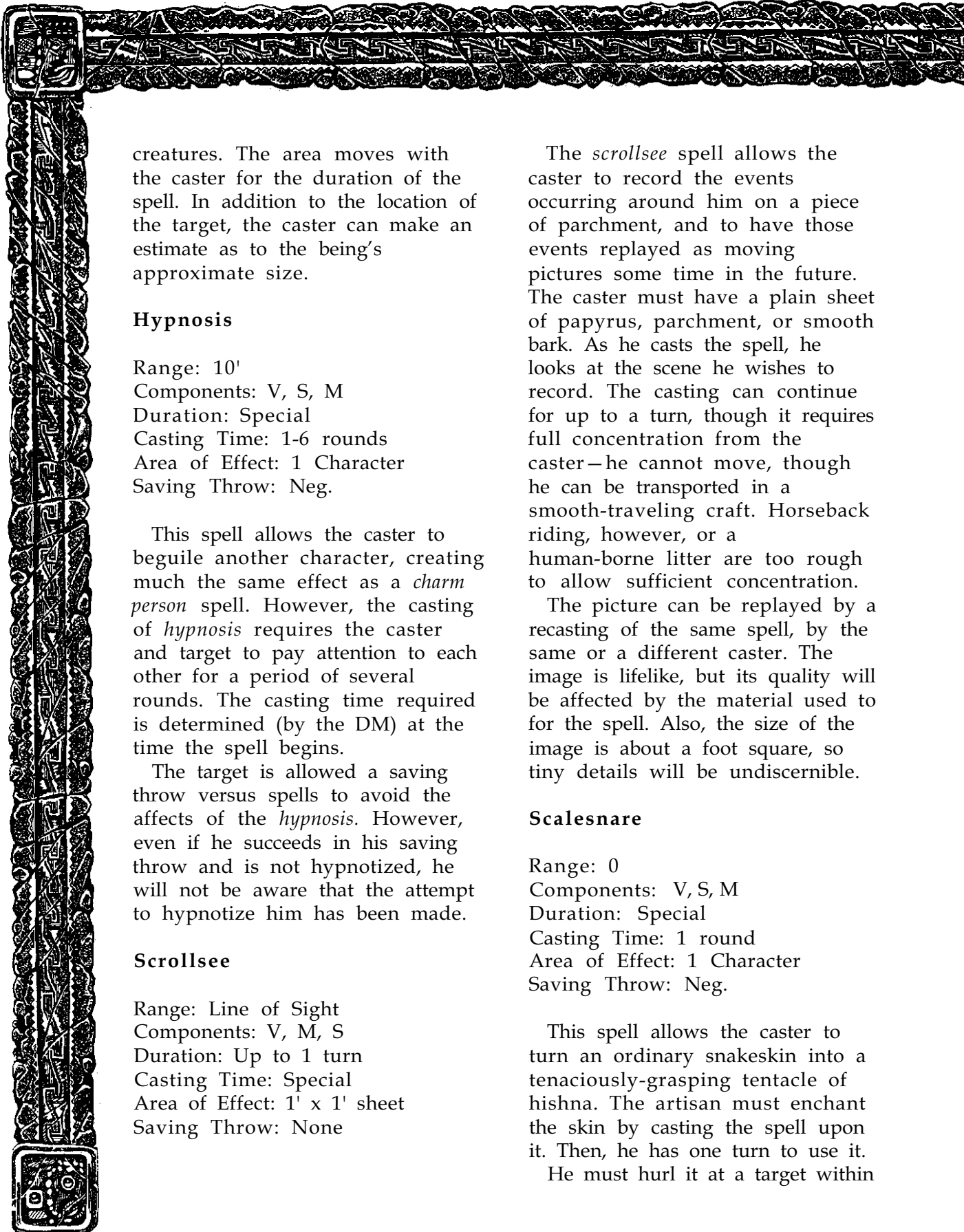
Duration: 1 turn/level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the caster to sense the beating of all warm-blooded hearts within range—i.e. mammals and birds, including humans and humanoid



creatures. The area moves with the caster for the duration of the spell. In addition to the location of the target, the caster can make an estimate as to the being's approximate size.

Hypnosis

Range: 10'
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1-6 rounds
Area of Effect: 1 Character
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows the caster to beguile another character, creating much the same effect as a *charm person* spell. However, the casting of *hypnosis* requires the caster and target to pay attention to each other for a period of several rounds. The casting time required is determined (by the DM) at the time the spell begins.

The target is allowed a saving throw versus spells to avoid the affects of the *hypnosis*. However, even if he succeeds in his saving throw and is not hypnotized, he will not be aware that the attempt to hypnotize him has been made.

Scrollsee

Range: Line of Sight
Components: V, M, S
Duration: Up to 1 turn
Casting Time: Special
Area of Effect: 1' x 1' sheet
Saving Throw: None

The *scrollsee* spell allows the caster to record the events occurring around him on a piece of parchment, and to have those events replayed as moving pictures some time in the future. The caster must have a plain sheet of papyrus, parchment, or smooth bark. As he casts the spell, he looks at the scene he wishes to record. The casting can continue for up to a turn, though it requires full concentration from the caster—he cannot move, though he can be transported in a smooth-traveling craft. Horseback riding, however, or a human-borne litter are too rough to allow sufficient concentration.

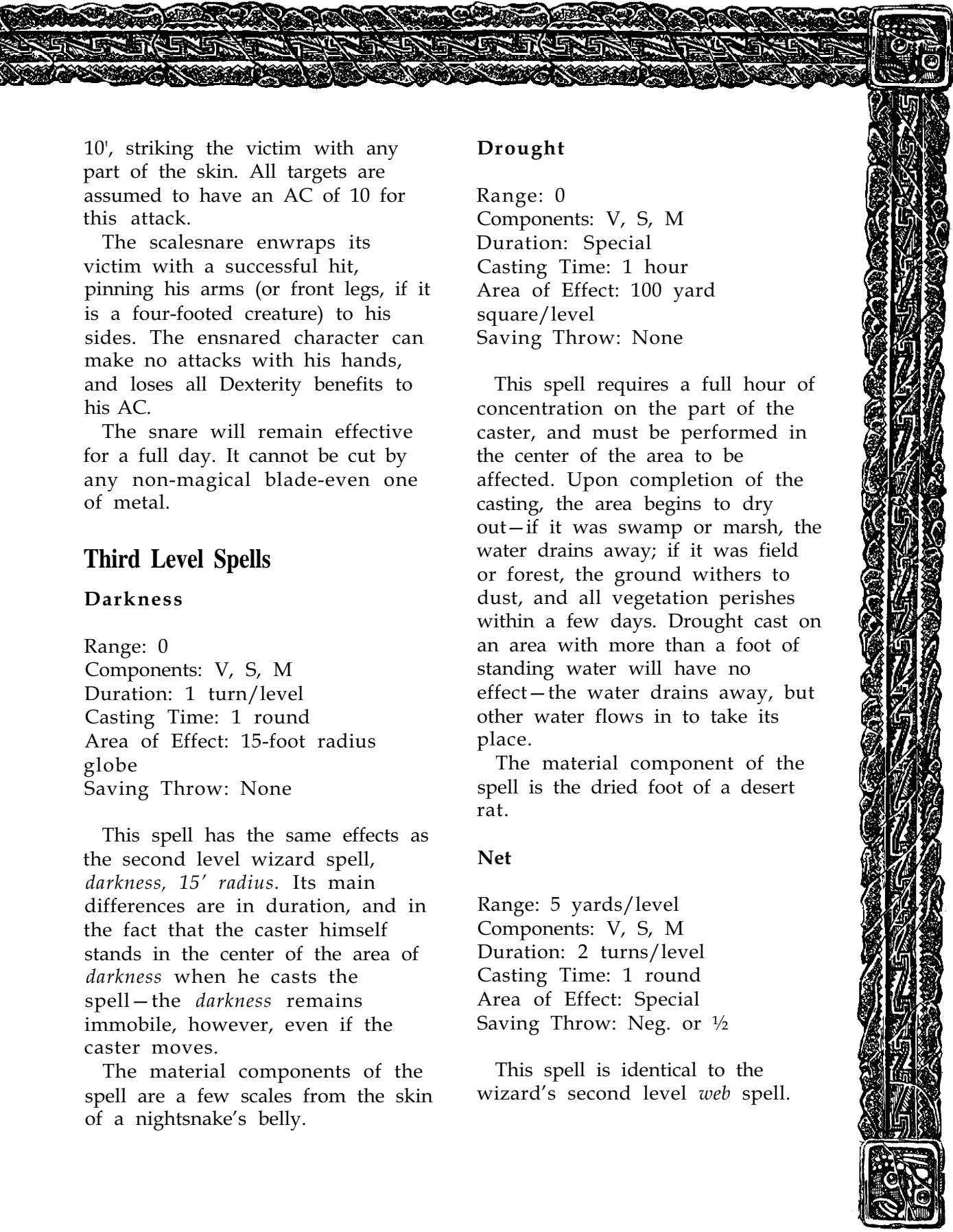
The picture can be replayed by a recasting of the same spell, by the same or a different caster. The image is lifelike, but its quality will be affected by the material used to for the spell. Also, the size of the image is about a foot square, so tiny details will be undiscernible.

Scalesnare

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 1 Character
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell allows the caster to turn an ordinary snakeskin into a tenaciously-grasping tentacle of *hishna*. The artisan must enchant the skin by casting the spell upon it. Then, he has one turn to use it.

He must hurl it at a target within



10', striking the victim with any part of the skin. All targets are assumed to have an AC of 10 for this attack.

The scalesnare enwraps its victim with a successful hit, pinning his arms (or front legs, if it is a four-footed creature) to his sides. The ensnared character can make no attacks with his hands, and loses all Dexterity benefits to his AC.

The snare will remain effective for a full day. It cannot be cut by any non-magical blade—even one of metal.

Third Level Spells

Darkness

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 15-foot radius globe
Saving Throw: None

This spell has the same effects as the second level wizard spell, *darkness*, 15' radius. Its main differences are in duration, and in the fact that the caster himself stands in the center of the area of *darkness* when he casts the spell—the *darkness* remains immobile, however, even if the caster moves.

The material components of the spell are a few scales from the skin of a nightsnake's belly.

Drought

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 hour
Area of Effect: 100 yard square/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell requires a full hour of concentration on the part of the caster, and must be performed in the center of the area to be affected. Upon completion of the casting, the area begins to dry out—if it was swamp or marsh, the water drains away; if it was field or forest, the ground withers to dust, and all vegetation perishes within a few days. Drought cast on an area with more than a foot of standing water will have no effect—the water drains away, but other water flows in to take its place.

The material component of the spell is the dried foot of a desert rat.

Net

Range: 5 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 turns/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Neg. or ½

This spell is identical to the wizard's second level *web* spell.



Pestilence

Range: 60 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 day/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 100 yards
square/level
Saving Throw: None

The *pestilence* spell creates a mild form of insect plague, nowhere near as frightful as the fifth level priest spell, but far more long-lasting. The *pestilence* spell summons crawling insects, such as ants, roaches, weevils, caterpillars, and other types of bugs. These creatures will infest the area of effect, devouring plant life and driving animals away. After one day, the area will be picked clean, but the creatures remain for the full duration of the spell.

Creatures within the area of *pestilence* sustain one hit point of damage per turn (or fraction of a turn) within the area, from the bites and stings of the creatures. The *pestilence* cannot be moved once it is cast.

The material component for the spell is a bit of spider's venom and the husk of a dead june bug.

Fourth Level Spells

Fire

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2-7 rounds
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 3' x 3' square or 1
creature/level
Saving Throw: Special

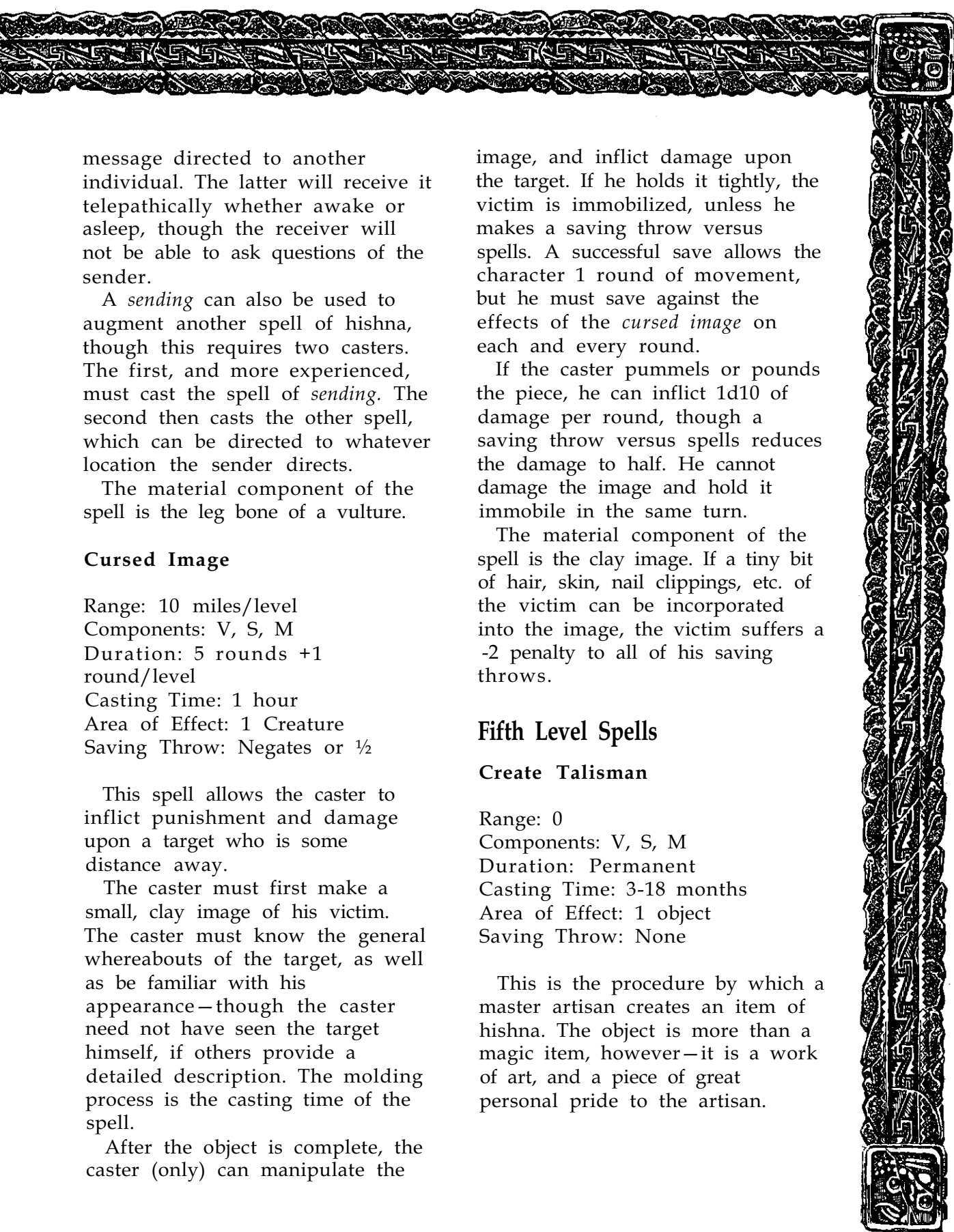
This spell allows the caster to ignite virtually any object, for the duration of the spell. If the object is flammable, it will remain burning after the spell expires. The *fire* is non-magical in intensity.

A creature within the area of effect suffers 2d6 hit points of damage per round. The spell will burn off hair, and burnable clothing, during the three rounds of its effectiveness. A successful saving throw versus spells reduces damage by half; the victim can check each round until he makes a successful roll, or the spell's duration expires.

Sending

Range: 25 miles/level
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 3 turns
Area of Effect: 1 Character or
creature
Saving Throw: Special

The *sending* spell can be used to convey the power of *hishna* a great distance away. Its most common employment is to send a



message directed to another individual. The latter will receive it telepathically whether awake or asleep, though the receiver will not be able to ask questions of the sender.

A *sending* can also be used to augment another spell of hishna, though this requires two casters. The first, and more experienced, must cast the spell of *sending*. The second then casts the other spell, which can be directed to whatever location the sender directs.

The material component of the spell is the leg bone of a vulture.

Cursed Image

Range: 10 miles/level

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 5 rounds +1 round/level

Casting Time: 1 hour

Area of Effect: 1 Creature

Saving Throw: Negates or ½

This spell allows the caster to inflict punishment and damage upon a target who is some distance away.

The caster must first make a small, clay image of his victim. The caster must know the general whereabouts of the target, as well as be familiar with his appearance—though the caster need not have seen the target himself, if others provide a detailed description. The molding process is the casting time of the spell.

After the object is complete, the caster (only) can manipulate the

image, and inflict damage upon the target. If he holds it tightly, the victim is immobilized, unless he makes a saving throw versus spells. A successful save allows the character 1 round of movement, but he must save against the effects of the *cursed image* on each and every round.

If the caster pummels or pounds the piece, he can inflict 1d10 of damage per round, though a saving throw versus spells reduces the damage to half. He cannot damage the image and hold it immobile in the same turn.

The material component of the spell is the clay image. If a tiny bit of hair, skin, nail clippings, etc. of the victim can be incorporated into the image, the victim suffers a -2 penalty to all of his saving throws.

Fifth Level Spells

Create Talisman

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 3-18 months

Area of Effect: 1 object

Saving Throw: None

This is the procedure by which a master artisan creates an item of hishna. The object is more than a magic item, however—it is a work of art, and a piece of great personal pride to the artisan.

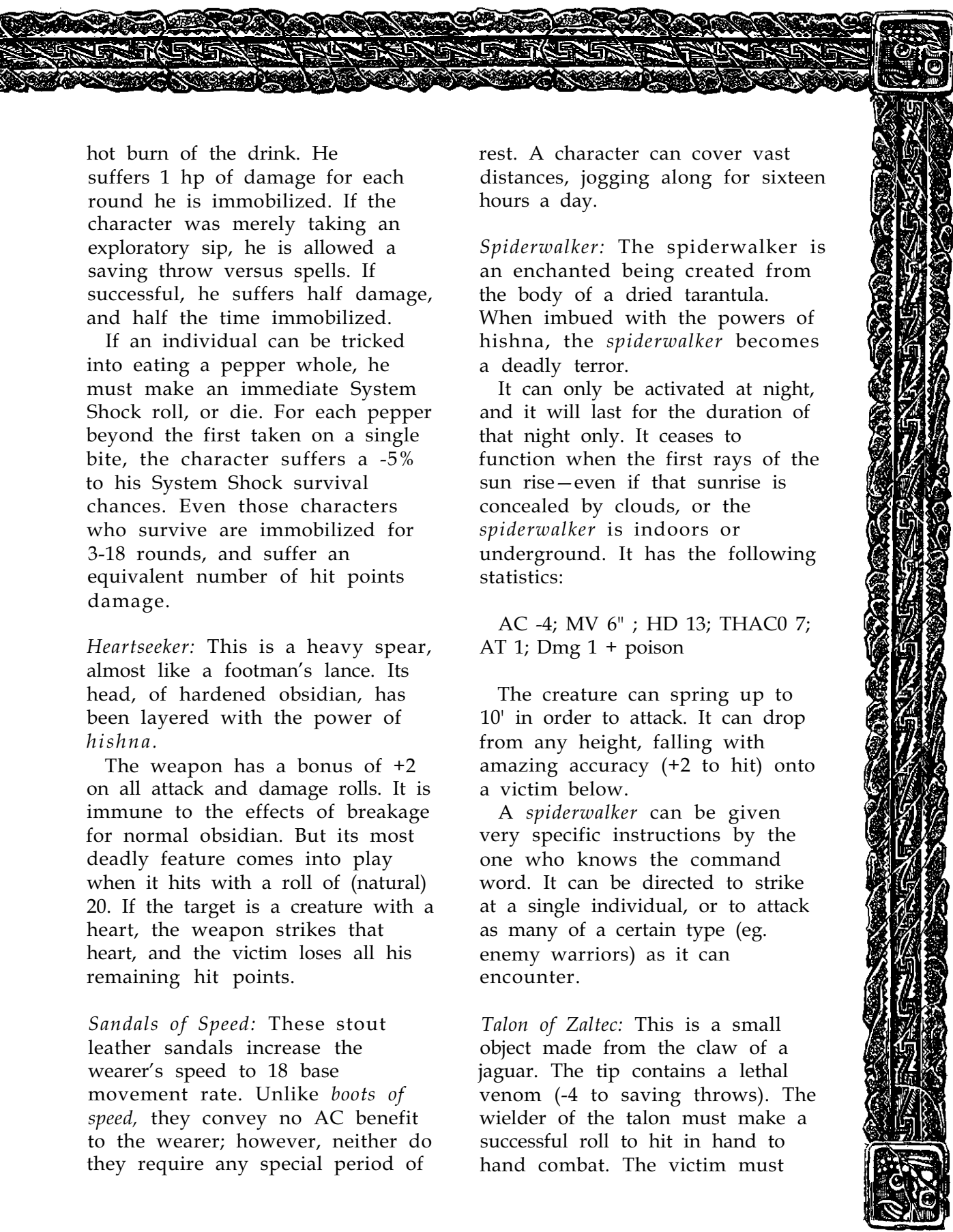


Typical Talismans of Hishna

As with the items of pluma, the works listed here are not the only items that can be made—they are a representative list. Even though these tend to be more deadly, and more combat-oriented than pluma Talismans, players and DMs will still note that they are not of the “blow up the village” power level. If this restraint is kept in mind, player and DM designed items of hishna can easily be invented and added to the campaign.

Fire Peppers: This enchantment creates 4-80 (4d20) tiny round objects that can be used for a variety of purposes. Each is bright red, the size of a small pebble. They can be used to immobilize (or worse) unsuspecting victims.

When dissolved in up to a gallon of drinkable liquid, a fire pepper will create an odorless threat. When someone takes a drink of the liquid, he is immediately immobilized for 2-12 rounds, gasping and choking and writhing on the ground in pain from the



hot burn of the drink. He suffers 1 hp of damage for each round he is immobilized. If the character was merely taking an exploratory sip, he is allowed a saving throw versus spells. If successful, he suffers half damage, and half the time immobilized.

If an individual can be tricked into eating a pepper whole, he must make an immediate System Shock roll, or die. For each pepper beyond the first taken on a single bite, the character suffers a -5% to his System Shock survival chances. Even those characters who survive are immobilized for 3-18 rounds, and suffer an equivalent number of hit points damage.

Heartseeker: This is a heavy spear, almost like a footman's lance. Its head, of hardened obsidian, has been layered with the power of *hishna*.

The weapon has a bonus of +2 on all attack and damage rolls. It is immune to the effects of breakage for normal obsidian. But its most deadly feature comes into play when it hits with a roll of (natural) 20. If the target is a creature with a heart, the weapon strikes that heart, and the victim loses all his remaining hit points.

Sandals of Speed: These stout leather sandals increase the wearer's speed to 18 base movement rate. Unlike *boots of speed*, they convey no AC benefit to the wearer; however, neither do they require any special period of

rest. A character can cover vast distances, jogging along for sixteen hours a day.

Spiderwalker: The spiderwalker is an enchanted being created from the body of a dried tarantula. When imbued with the powers of *hishna*, the *spiderwalker* becomes a deadly terror.

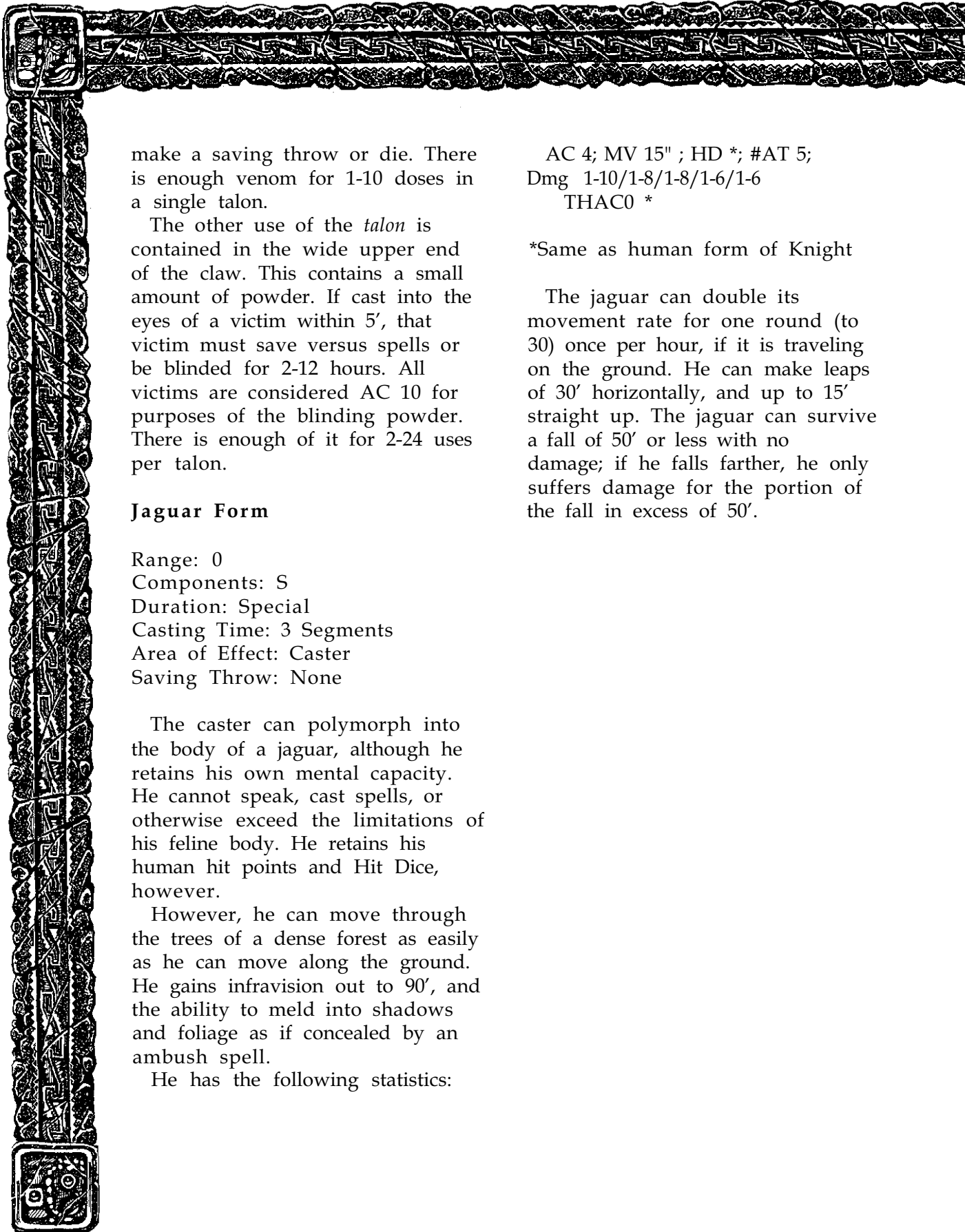
It can only be activated at night, and it will last for the duration of that night only. It ceases to function when the first rays of the sun rise—even if that sunrise is concealed by clouds, or the *spiderwalker* is indoors or underground. It has the following statistics:

AC -4; MV 6" ; HD 13; THAC0 7; AT 1; Dmg 1 + poison

The creature can spring up to 10' in order to attack. It can drop from any height, falling with amazing accuracy (+2 to hit) onto a victim below.

A *spiderwalker* can be given very specific instructions by the one who knows the command word. It can be directed to strike at a single individual, or to attack as many of a certain type (eg. enemy warriors) as it can encounter.

Talon of Zaltec: This is a small object made from the claw of a jaguar. The tip contains a lethal venom (-4 to saving throws). The wielder of the talon must make a successful roll to hit in hand to hand combat. The victim must



make a saving throw or die. There is enough venom for 1-10 doses in a single talon.

The other use of the *talon* is contained in the wide upper end of the claw. This contains a small amount of powder. If cast into the eyes of a victim within 5', that victim must save versus spells or be blinded for 2-12 hours. All victims are considered AC 10 for purposes of the blinding powder. There is enough of it for 2-24 uses per talon.

Jaguar Form

Range: 0
Components: S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 3 Segments
Area of Effect: Caster
Saving Throw: None

The caster can polymorph into the body of a jaguar, although he retains his own mental capacity. He cannot speak, cast spells, or otherwise exceed the limitations of his feline body. He retains his human hit points and Hit Dice, however.

However, he can move through the trees of a dense forest as easily as he can move along the ground. He gains infravision out to 90', and the ability to meld into shadows and foliage as if concealed by an ambush spell.

He has the following statistics:

AC 4; MV 15" ; HD *; #AT 5;
Dmg 1-10/1-8/1-8/1-6/1-6
THAC0 *

*Same as human form of Knight

The jaguar can double its movement rate for one round (to 30) once per hour, if it is traveling on the ground. He can make leaps of 30' horizontally, and up to 15' straight up. The jaguar can survive a fall of 50' or less with no damage; if he falls farther, he only suffers damage for the portion of the fall in excess of 50'.



Calendars

The Mazticans use a very accurate calendar developed by an ancient people and perfected by the Payit, it is now used by peoples throughout the continent. With it, astronomers can predict events of importance, such as eclipses. There are actually three calendars: the *kala kinob*, or "count of days"; the solar calendar, *tun* or *xipalli*; and the *zolkin* or *tonalpalli*, a divinatory calendar. *Xipalli* and *tonalpalli* are Nexalan terms, while the others are Payit. In the Payit tongue, a day is a *kin*, 20 days a *unal*, one year a *tun*, 20 years a *katun*, and 400 years a *baktun*. For a plural term, add *-ob* to the end.

The long count records how much time has passed since the beginning of the universe, according to Payit scholars. At the date of Cordell's landing, exactly 13 *baktunob* (5200 *tunob*) had passed. Both 52 and 13 are significant numbers in Maztican lore, so great changes were expected at such a conjunction. At such times, the universe could be destroyed, or gods could be born or die.

Table VII is a representational chart of the *Tonalpalli*, the Maztican 260-day predictive calendar. Read the numbers downward in each column, paired with the name at right, thus: 1 Acatl, 2 Jaguar, 3 Cautli, etc., to 13 Pija at the end. The common translation of each name is given. The omen column shows the direction associated with each day-name, and whether its influence is good, evil, or neutral (shown in parentheses).

Each day-number also has an influence. The numbers 1, 7, 11, and 13 are good, while 3, 4, 9, 10, and 12 are bad. The others are

neutral. Thus, any *tonalpalli* day has a double influence: 1 Acatl is good-good, 2 Jaguar is neutral-bad, and 3 Cautli is bad-good. These values plus the day-name are used as general predictives.

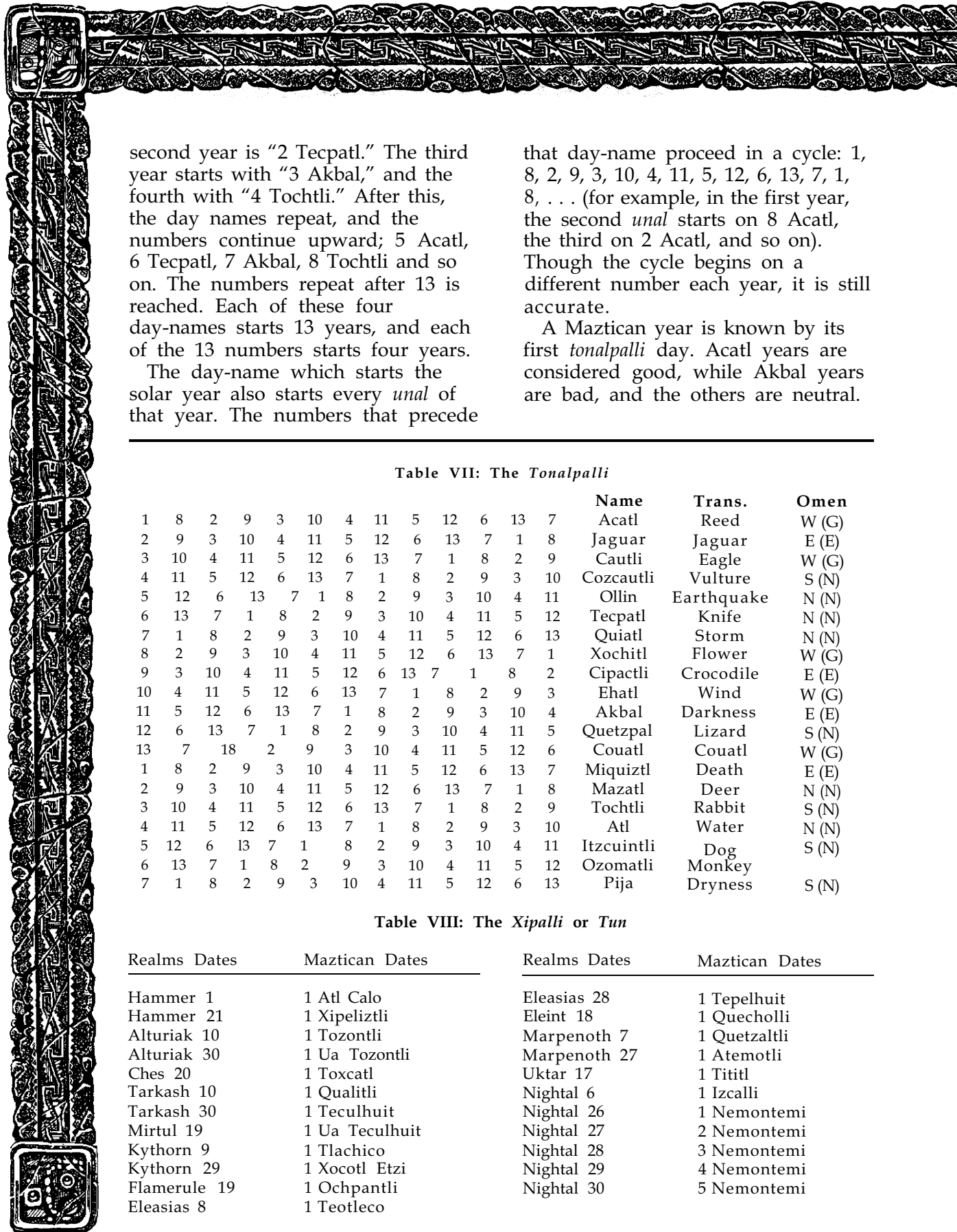
Table VIII shows the first date in each *unal* of the Maztican *xipalli*, paired with the date commonly used in Faerun. Both calendars start on the same day, which approximates the winter solstice.

After the 18 *unalob* come the five *nemontemi* days. Mazticans consider these days very unlucky and rarely undertake new activities while they last.

The divinatory *tonalpalli* is used alongside the *xipalli*. Together they form a 52-year cycle or "calendar round." The first day of the cycle is "1 Atl Calo 1 Acatl," a combination of numbers and names that does not repeat for 52 years. The last day of the cycle is "5 Nemontemi 13 Pija." Though the Mazticans know the calendar is 365.25 days long, they do not use leap-day as other peoples do (it would throw off the 52-year cycle). Table VIII therefore becomes inaccurate midway through the fourth year of a cycle, because of the Realmsian leap-day, Shieldmeet.

At the end of the 52-year calendar round, there are 13 leap-days "left over." At that time, there is a festival of 13 days with which Maztica "catches up" with the rest of the Realms. These days have no names, only numbers. The people of Maztica consider them safe, because the gods cannot find days without names.

As mentioned, the first *tonalpalli* day of a 52-year round is "1 Acatl." The first *tonalpalli* day of a cycle's



second year is "2 Tecpatl." The third year starts with "3 Akbal," and the fourth with "4 Tochtli." After this, the day names repeat, and the numbers continue upward; 5 Acatl, 6 Tecpatl, 7 Akbal, 8 Tochtli and so on. The numbers repeat after 13 is reached. Each of these four day-names starts 13 years, and each of the 13 numbers starts four years.

The day-name which starts the solar year also starts every *unal* of that year. The numbers that precede

that day-name proceed in a cycle: 1, 8, 2, 9, 3, 10, 4, 11, 5, 12, 6, 13, 7, 1, 8, . . . (for example, in the first year, the second *unal* starts on 8 Acatl, the third on 2 Acatl, and so on). Though the cycle begins on a different number each year, it is still accurate.

A Maztican year is known by its first *tonalpalli* day. Acatl years are considered good, while Akbal years are bad, and the others are neutral.

Table VII: The *Tonalpalli*

																Name	Trans.	Omen
1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7			Acatl	Reed	W (G)	
2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8			Jaguar	Jaguar	E (E)	
3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9			Cautli	Eagle	W (G)	
4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10			Cozcautli	Vulture	S (N)	
5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11			Ollin	Earthquake	N (N)	
6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12			Tecpatl	Knife	N (N)	
7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13			Quiatl	Storm	N (N)	
8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1			Xochitl	Flower	W (G)	
9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2			Cipactli	Crocodile	E (E)	
10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3			Ehatl	Wind	W (G)	
11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4			Akbal	Darkness	E (E)	
12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5			Quetzpal	Lizard	S (N)	
13	7	18	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6				Couatl	Couatl	W (G)	
1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7			Miquiztl	Death	E (E)	
2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8			Mazatl	Deer	N (N)	
3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9			Tochtli	Rabbit	S (N)	
4	11	5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10			Atl	Water	N (N)	
5	12	6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11			Itzcuintli	Dog	S (N)	
6	13	7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12			Ozomatli	Monkey		
7	1	8	2	9	3	10	4	11	5	12	6	13			Pija	Dryness	S (N)	

Table VIII: The *Xipalli* or *Tun*

Realms	Dates	Maztican Dates	Realms	Dates	Maztican Dates
Hammer	1	1 Atl Calo	Eleasias	28	1 Tepelhuit
Hammer	21	1 Xipeliztli	Eleint	18	1 Quecholli
Alturiak	10	1 Tozontli	Marpenoth	7	1 Quetzaltli
Alturiak	30	1 Ua Tozontli	Marpenoth	27	1 Atemotli
Ches	20	1 Toxcatl	Uktar	17	1 Tititl
Tarkash	10	1 Qualitli	Nightal	6	1 Izcalli
Tarkash	30	1 Teculhuit	Nightal	26	1 Nemontemi
Mirtul	19	1 Ua Teculhuit	Nightal	27	2 Nemontemi
Kythorn	9	1 Tlachico	Nightal	28	3 Nemontemi
Kythorn	29	1 Xocotl Etzi	Nightal	29	4 Nemontemi
Flamerule	19	1 Ochpantli	Nightal	30	5 Nemontemi
Eleasias	8	1 Teotleco			



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Against All Odds!



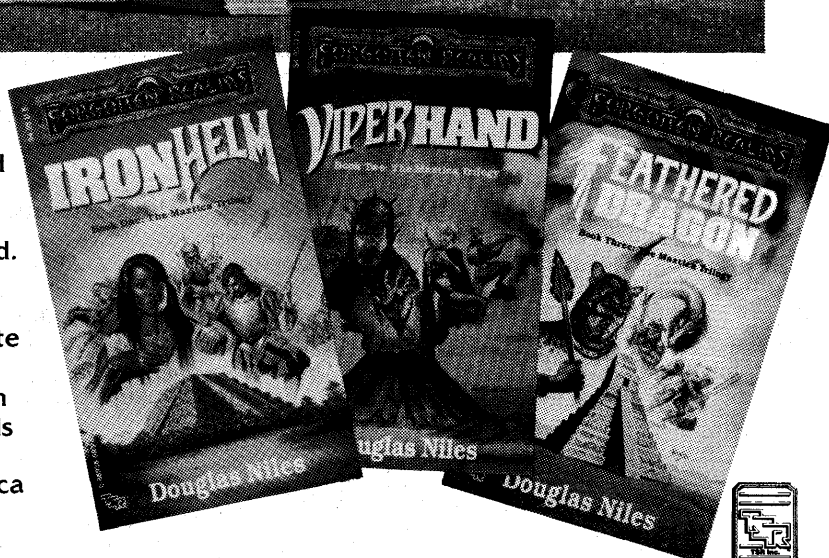
Maztica, a lush and exotic

continent filled with developed cultures and lavish treasures, is being changed by invading explorers and bloodthirsty gods.

Inevitably, catastrophes sweep across the land. Among the chaos, both Erix, the former slave girl, and Halloran, the legionnaire, manage to escape enemies on all sides — choosing separate destinies. Or so they think!

As the destruction of the True World looms on the horizon, Erix reveals a deep secret that holds the last hope for Maztica's survival.

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MAZTICA ALIVE!

A Guide for the Dungeon Master



Frostfells
-80-

Keith Frank

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Maztica
Campaign Set
Maztica Alive

by Douglas Niles

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MAZTICA ALIVE

The Dungeon Master's Book

This book contains adventuring details that allow a DM to create his or her own Maztican campaign. Included are general descriptions of the continent, and specific details about the various lands and peoples—beyond what might be general knowledge to the educated Maztican. Also presented are representative sailing routes from the Sword Coast, and a listing of possible hazards of such sea voyages. The city of Tulom-Itzi, one of the most wondrous of the True World, is described in near-complete detail.

If the PCs are Maztican, this book

tells you more about their homelands—you can share this information with the players from specific locations. As always, DM information is yours to do with as you please, using the parts you like, developing and detailing the parts that pique your interest, and ignoring whatever does not.

Finally, a few pages of appendices give you short encounters and ideas to begin adventures. Several new monsters make their debuts here as well. Also, a list of monsters that are known to exist in Maztica is provided, just to make sure the DM has a few tools at hand to challenge the adventuring PCs!



Land and Weather

Maztican Terrain Types

A variety of landscapes marks the surface of the True World, differentiated by their roughness, elevation, and the general amount of rainfall received. They are shown as distinct features on the map of Maztica enclosed with the game. For specific game details, use the following descriptions.

About Mountains

Mountain terrain is detailed in several different ways on the maps and in this chapter. First, its elevation is shown in three different levels: the low mountains, which are 2,000-10,000 feet above sea level; the *mountain crests*, representing heights from 10,000 on up to 15,000 feet; and *mountain summits*, which are heights above 15,000 feet. (The highest peak in Maztica, Mount Zatal, is nearly 19,000 feet above sea level.)

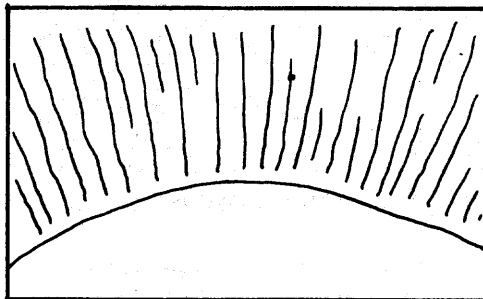
The low mountains are described in keeping with the surrounding terrain, be it desert or jungle, since this terrain extends up the sides of the range with most of the same characteristics as it has below. The *mountain summits* and *crests*, however, soar to such heights that their nature is determined more by altitude than by surrounding terrain. Thus, the description of a *mountain summit* applies whether the summit rises out of the desert or over lush, arable fields.

Mountain Movement (Optional Rule)

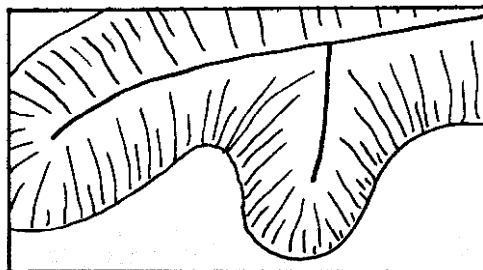
For simplicity's sake you can apply

the movement rates given for mountainous terrain. However, in reality, the direction traveled in the mountains makes a great deal of difference. Maztican mountains, in particular, tend to consist of many steep slopes around a backbone-like ridge. For a more detailed approach to mountain adventuring, apply to movement costs based on the configuration of the range itself. This configuration is easy to determine from the outline of the mountain range.

For example, take this mountain range:



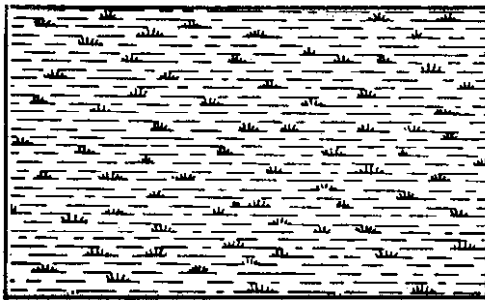
The overall outline indicates where the main ridges of the range jut into the lowlands. By picturing them, you can break mountain travel into following valleys and climbing over ridges—two dramatically different movement problems.



Anytime a party of characters moves toward the spine of the

range (that is, perpendicular to the edge and to the ridgeline) they are following a valley, and can move at the listed Movement cost for the range. During a day of movement in which they cross a ridgeline, however, they must pay double the movement cost (for at least 8 hours of travel). Also, if the characters attempt to move parallel to a ridge, or to the edge of the range, they must pay double the movement cost for all such movement.

Terrain Type Descriptions



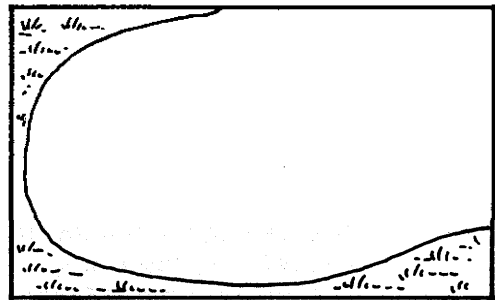
Marsh. Movement Cost: 8

These are festering regions of impenetrable swamp. Tangles of brush, many of which jab with long and wicked thorns, are intermixed with winding patches of open water and regions of quicksand and swamp grass. They tend to be ignored by the humans of Maztica. Consequently, they could shelter tribes of unnatural beasts that have yet to be discovered by human kind. Research and exploration have not proven anything specific, but this seems like prime habitat for lizard men and troglodytes.

Characters who spend a full day in the marsh suffer the chance of exposure to a horrible swamp disease. There is a 20% chance per day of exposure; however, once a character rolls a 96-100 on a disease

check, he is immune and need not check any longer. Characters who are exposed must roll saving throws versus poison in order to avoid the effects. Those who fail their saves are afflicted.

Afflicted characters suffer fevers and chills at the same time, and awful, debilitating intestinal difficulties. These symptoms persist for 2-12 days, and then the character must make a System Shock check for survival. If he passes, the fever breaks and he survives. If he fails, he dies.



Arable Land. Movement Cost: 1/2

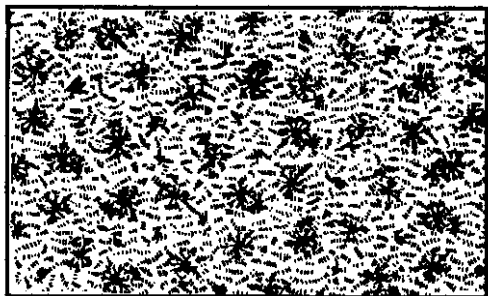
These lands are mostly devoted to fields of mayz, beans, peppers, cocoa, and other Maztican crops. Villages tend to dot these fields, and many well-worn paths connect each community to its neighbors. Even the smallest village has its pyramid, of at least 12 steps on a side.

The fields are often crisscrossed by irrigation ditches and ponds, for the people are adept at using their water efficiently. Stands of trees are not uncommon, and often they will surround and shelter the growing fields.

The clusters of homes tend to number 25-100 residences surrounding a wide central square. Usually the community will be dedicated to (and dependent upon) some nearby city-state for many goods and for its protection—few

villages, among the nations of Maztica, have their own marketplaces or permanent garrisons of warriors.

Almost all of the arable land will be used for growing crops. There is no native livestock in Maztica, save for the occasional fowl: turkeys, geese, and ducks.



Level Jungle. Movement Cost: 8

This is a forbidding environment that makes travel difficult, and contains several threats to the unwary trespasser. The jungles of Maztica are actually rain forests of tall trees, interwoven vines, thorny brush, and millions of brilliant flowers. The jungles are not quiet—always there is the drone of insects, the chattering of monkeys, and the cawing of the colorful birds. Occasionally the harsh bark of a jaguar will cut through the air, and for a few moments, then, the forest falls silent.

Like the swamplands, the jungles are too difficult to traverse for them to have been fully explored. The occasional village of humans or halflings lies hidden in the deepest reaches of the forest, but such settlements are few and far between and no adventuring party should count on being able to locate one for food, shelter, or any other reason. In the Payit jungles, the humans will be of Payit stock; in the southern Maztican jungles, they will

be the Green Folk.

Characters who spend a full day in the jungle suffer the chance of exposure to a horrible disease only slightly less debilitating than that contracted in swamps. The chance is a mere 10% per day of exposure, with a saving throw versus poison (no penalty) to see if the exposure can be ignored. Like the swamp disease, characters who roll 96-100 are forever immune; likewise, characters native to Maztican jungles do not have to check for disease.

Afflicted characters still suffer fevers and chills at the same time, and awful, debilitating intestinal difficulties. These symptoms persist for 2-8 days, and then the character must make a System Shock check for survival. If he passes, the fever breaks and he survives. If he fails, he dies.

In addition to encounters with human inhabitants, jungle terrain offers the threat of meeting a jaguar, or even a hakuna (dragonne). Also, as with the marsh, the remote state of many of the jungles leads to the possibility of other monstrous and humanoid races dwelling in the deepest, darkest regions.

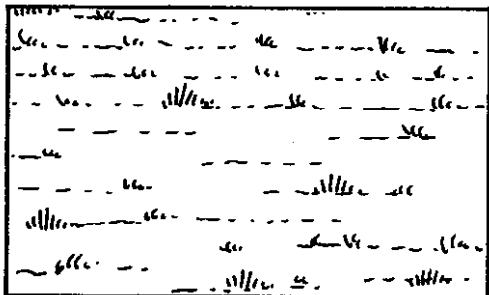


Mountainous Jungle. Movement Cost: 12

This is some of the nastiest terrain found anywhere in the Forgotten Realms, at least in terms of the

movement of humans and other characters. It is virtually uninhabited by humans and/or Little Folk; the only individuals living among these steep, thickly coated slopes range from eccentric to downright mad.

It offers the same chance of disease, and of dangerous encounters, as the level jungle. Characters who follow a pass marked on the map can move through this terrain at a rate of 8 instead of 12.



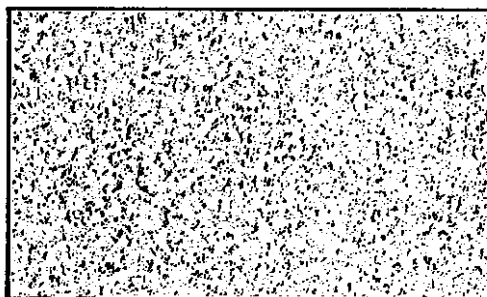
Brush/Savannah. Movement Cost: 2

This is the predominant Maztican landscape. It consists of intermixed clumps of vegetation (including some large tracts of woods) separated by equally large sections of grass or brush-covered clearing. Much of the arable land was originally brush and savannah, and has been converted through irrigation into the productive acreage that it is now.

A few villages of humans are scattered through these lands. Culturally, they will conform to the nearby national groups, in the populous central and southern regions of the land; in the north, the villages in the brush lands are inhabited by the Dog People. These villagers survive by clearing land and growing crops there for a few years, until drought or lack of fertility forces them to new fields.

Some snare birds, or hunt and fish, to sustain themselves.

Only rarely is a dangerous creature such as a jaguar or hakuna encountered in these lands—and then mostly in the savannahs near areas of jungle. Deer are not uncommon, and in the near future this country will provide the ideal habitat for the feral horses that will thrive in Maztica.



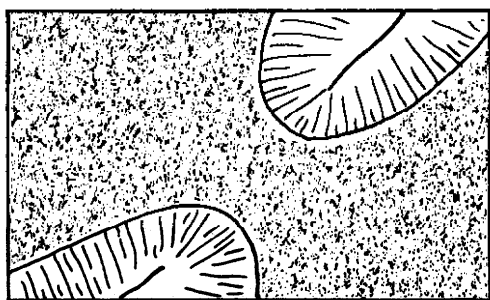
Level Desert. Movement Cost: 2

This bleak landscape is too barren to support any kind of permanent human habitation. Only the desert dwarves have been able to eke out an existence here, and they only in a few remote locations. Most of the desert is flat and featureless, though there are patches many miles across of pitted, jumbled boulder fields (MC: 10), and every now and then even the flat desert is crossed by a steep-sided gully that can range from a low ditch to a minor chasm some twenty feet deep. Even the steepest of these are not impassable obstacles, however—even an encumbered character can usually find a place where he can slide down one side and scramble up the other.

A warm-blooded character spending the night in the desert stands a 5% chance per night of attracting some nasty denizen such as a rattlesnake, poisonous lizard, or scorpion to the warmth of his bed.

Precautions, such as sleeping above the ground, keeping a watch, or employing magical wards or guardians can negate this possibility.

Giant scorpions and fire lizards are two threats known to inhabit the deepest desert reaches of Maztica. The House of Tezca is home to several bands of trolls, wandering about in search of prey.



Mountainous Desert. Movement Cost: 6

The first level of mountainous elevation in the desert is every bit as bleak and lifeless as the flat country stretching below. The primary difference is in the difficulty of movement.

Desert slopes tend to be crossed by gullies and ravines, and coated with gravel and dust. At the DM's discretion, characters may run the risk of sliding or slipping downward, suffering abrasions and other minor wounds.

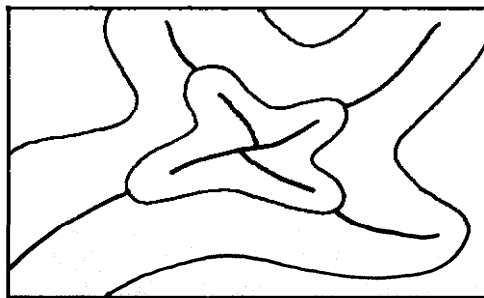
The same chance of nighttime encounters exists in the mountainous desert as in the lowland desert. Characters who move through a mountain range on a pass marked on the map can do so at a rate of 4 instead of 6.

Mountain Crests. Movement Cost: 10

These heights are the windswept backbones of Maztica herself, jutting 10,000 feet or more into the air. Because of this elevation, they are not distinguished by the low-level surrounding terrain—unlike the lower mountains, their sky-scraping altitude makes them similar across the face of Maztica.

They will tend to be dry, though in winter there is almost always some snow along the crests. On the lower slopes of these areas, near where the low mountains and the crests meet, bands of cedars—tough, gnarled trees that range from 10' to 40' in height—grow in scrubby patches of timber. Above these, the only plants are mosses, lichens, and low bushes and wildflowers.

The crests are uninhabited by humans and humanoids. Eagles and vultures lair here, as well as deer, mountain goats and sheep, and perhaps other creatures as well.



Mountain Summits. Movement Cost: 15

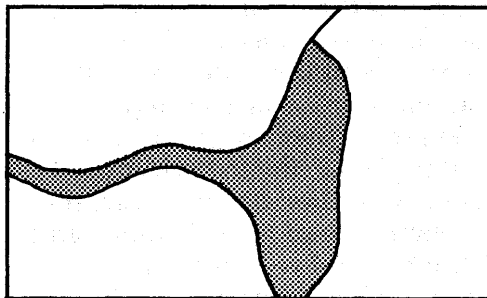
These heights, so far above the world below, are cold and snow covered throughout the year. The air is thin, which is one reason for the high movement cost; the other is the steepness and treacherous nature of the terrain.

Mountain summits are host to a

few hardy forms of life. Maztica has its yeti legends, and creatures resembling wyverns have been reported soaring in the distant heights.

Underwater Terrain

Maztica is fringed by crystal waters, teeming with life and varied in terrain. Also, several of the lands intelligent races dwell here, for the most part unsuspected by the humans who live ashore.

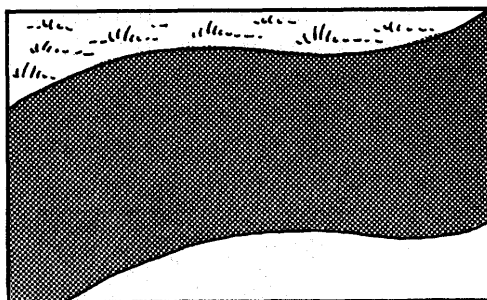


Shoal Waters.

These dangerous waters are deceptively beautiful. Outcrops of coral are visible everywhere, amid patches of smooth, white sand and leafy kelp. The waters are safe for most drafts of vessels at high tide; however, at low tide, a vessel larger than a canoe stands a 10% chance per hour of caving in its hull on the reefs. Alert lookouts (daytime only) and a slow rate of speed (1/3 or less of top speed) can each reduce this chance by 4%; there is still the 2% chance per hour, minimum, however.

A few of the reefs in shoal waters contain coral pure enough for artistic uses. This is often gathered and traded by enterprising coast-dwellers. The task is dangerous, however, as sharks, barracudas and rays are all present in the water.

Shoal waters tend to be avoided by the intelligent denizens of the deep—i.e. the merfolk and the sahuagin.



Coastal Shallows.

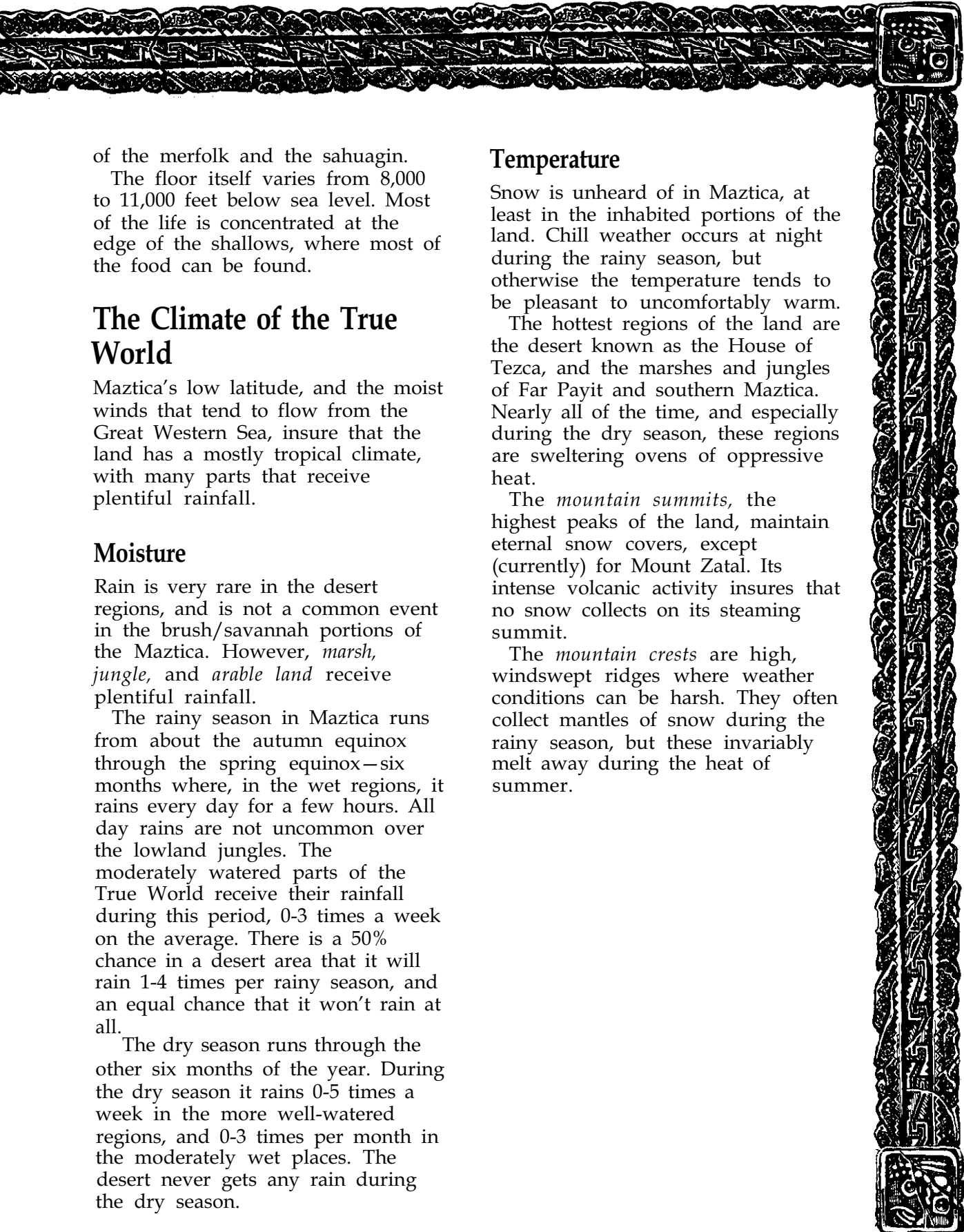
These are safe sailing waters, in that they are at least 12' deep, even at low tide. For the most part the coastal shallows represent waters less than 200' deep; right at the fringe of the ocean deep, however, the shallows drop away dramatically, plunging down undersea cliffs that plummet for many thousands of feet.

The coastal shallows are home to countless varieties of marine life. They are often used as hunting grounds by the sahuagin and merfolk, and the waters are deep enough to permit even the most monstrous ocean leviathan to swim here if it should choose to.



Ocean Deep.

The fringe of the deep represents the steep drop to the ocean floor. Also along these cliffs are the cities



of the merfolk and the sahuagin.

The floor itself varies from 8,000 to 11,000 feet below sea level. Most of the life is concentrated at the edge of the shallows, where most of the food can be found.

The Climate of the True World

Maztica's low latitude, and the moist winds that tend to flow from the Great Western Sea, insure that the land has a mostly tropical climate, with many parts that receive plentiful rainfall.

Moisture

Rain is very rare in the desert regions, and is not a common event in the brush/savannah portions of the Maztica. However, *marsh*, *jungle*, and *arable land* receive plentiful rainfall.

The rainy season in Maztica runs from about the autumn equinox through the spring equinox—six months where, in the wet regions, it rains every day for a few hours. All day rains are not uncommon over the lowland jungles. The moderately watered parts of the True World receive their rainfall during this period, 0-3 times a week on the average. There is a 50% chance in a desert area that it will rain 1-4 times per rainy season, and an equal chance that it won't rain at all.

The dry season runs through the other six months of the year. During the dry season it rains 0-5 times a week in the more well-watered regions, and 0-3 times per month in the moderately wet places. The desert never gets any rain during the dry season.

Temperature

Snow is unheard of in Maztica, at least in the inhabited portions of the land. Chill weather occurs at night during the rainy season, but otherwise the temperature tends to be pleasant to uncomfortably warm.

The hottest regions of the land are the desert known as the House of Tezca, and the marshes and jungles of Far Payit and southern Maztica. Nearly all of the time, and especially during the dry season, these regions are sweltering ovens of oppressive heat.

The *mountain summits*, the highest peaks of the land, maintain eternal snow covers, except (currently) for Mount Zatal. Its intense volcanic activity insures that no snow collects on its steaming summit.

The *mountain crests* are high, windswept ridges where weather conditions can be harsh. They often collect mantles of snow during the rainy season, but these invariably melt away during the heat of summer.



A Common Theme: The Ball Game

Before exploring the various regions and peoples of Maztica, the DM must become familiar with the one pervasive form of entertainment common to all human cultures of Maztica: the ball game. It is a contest and sport on the surface, but that is only the first level of its importance: it also serves as a religious ritual, means of solving disputes, and often the instrument of life and death for its players.

The game is played with a hard, round ball perhaps 6" in diameter, made from the congealed product of the rubber tree. Players attempt to move the ball into the face of the other team, without touching the ball with their hands. These rules run in common for all regions.

After that, however, the game takes on more specific twists and interpretations.

Court Rules

In the nations from Nexal eastward, including Far Payit, the game is played on an enclosed field, between two high, parallel walls. Every city has a court for the Ball Game. Midway down each wall is set a stone ring, about 15' above the flat, hard playing surface. At each end of the court is a goal, defended by one team. A single defender stands before the goal line, while his two-five teammates stand near the middle of the court.

The ball is moved by hitting it with the knee, elbow, hip, shoulder, or head—not the hands nor the feet. A team wins a game by scoring three goals; a match consists of three games. A game can also be won, instantly, if a player knocks

the ball through one of the hoops in the wall. This is a matter of great status for the successful player.

If the game is played between PCs and NPCs, proficiency checks can be used to determine the successes of each character. Miniatures can help keep track of relative positions on the field.

TO PUT THE BALL IN PLAY: A player is selected from each time to try and gain control of the ball, by making a proficiency check during the same round as the opponent fails a check. If both players pass (or fail) their checks, the struggle continues into the following round. When only one player succeeds, that player's team has the chance to take a shot.

The ball is returned to play this way at the start of each match, and after each point.

TO SHOOT at the opposing goal: A player must roll a $\frac{1}{2}$ proficiency check while the ball is on his side of the court, in order to take a shot at the opponent's goal. If he fails, he simply turns the ball over to the opponent; if he succeeds, the ball shoots toward the goal. It will score, unless it is blocked by an opposing player.

TO BLOCK a shot, a player must make a successful proficiency check. A team can try two times to block a successful shot; once at midfield, and once at the goal. If the player is playing in the middle of the field, he suffers a -2 penalty to his proficiency check; if he is playing at the goal, he gets a +1 bonus.



If the ball is blocked at either place, the blocking team can take a shot. If it is not blocked, a goal is scored by the other team, and the ball is returned to play (as above).

TO SHOOT at the ring on the wall: A player must make three successful proficiency checks—all at $\frac{1}{2}$ proficiency!—in order to accomplish this instant win.

First, the player must have the opportunity to shoot. Then, he must make a Wisdom check (against half his Wisdom score) in order to recognize the opportunity for a shot. If successful, he must make a Dexterity check (against half his Dexterity score) to aim the shot properly. If that is successful, he must make a Strength check (against half his Strength score) to send the ball through the ring with enough strength to carry it through.

If this shot is made, the game will pause as pandemonium breaks out among the spectators. This shot is a historical event, and it instantly wins the current game in progress. The player who makes the shot will have his name and description spread all over the city and beyond.



Open Rules

In the village cultures of northern and southern Maztica, as well as among the Huacli and Kolan peoples of the west coast, the ball game is played by different rules. Most significantly, it is played in the open, not on the enclosed courts of the cities. Also, kicking the ball is allowed, and in fact is the preferred method of moving the ball.

The field of play can be huge—indeed, some epic games are played between two villages with each defending goal being the respective village's square. Such marathon games can take three or four days to complete, and can involve fifty or more players per team. As a general provision, the ball cannot be moved between sunset and sunrise.

Such games require a little more free-form control by the DM, since they are so heavily influenced by terrain—and also, because they vary in rules so much from place to place. Games played over a huge area tend to end when the first goal is scored, while other games might go until one team scores as many as ten times.

In general, a player can move the ball along without making checks, as long as he has blockers to hold the opposing players at bay. Crossing of gullies and ravines can require proficiency checks, but generally these are not difficult obstacles (unless there are opposing players present!). A player can move the ball at his outdoor movement rate.

The game might start in the middle of the playing area, with the same entry into play as described for the court game. Some games—usually those that are part

of a regular rivalry—start with the team that lost the previous match taking the ball from their goal, and attempting to cross the playing area and deliver the ball into the opponent's goal.

However, a player must make a proficiency check if another player attempts to steal the ball from him. If the check succeeds, the opponent does not get a play at the ball; if the check fails, the two compete for the ball by each rolling checks until one succeeds and the other fails. The successful player can then begin to move the ball.

Certain players are left to guard the goal in the open game as well as the court game. Scoring requires a proficiency check when the player with the ball is within 20' of the goal; success means the ball is on target, and will score unless one defending goaltender can make a proficiency check to block the shot. Shots from farther than 20' are possible, but each additional 5' subtracts 1 from the character's proficiency rating.

See the Proficiency description for the Ball Game in *A Journey to the True World*, the player's book, for information on characters learning the skill.



REGIONS OF MAZTICA

The continent is broken into specifics here, with each nation or cultural and geographical location described in detail. Each population group living in the region is covered, with some information on the social structure, economy, and values (and valuables) of that group.

Descriptions also include some specific locations—major cities, great landmarks or ruins, and the arcane and unusual features of the land itself. A few typical encounters for each general region are provided, more to illustrate some possibilities than to provide the meat of an ongoing campaign.

Far Payit:

Cultural Root of the True World

Far Payit is not a dominant military force in the current history of Maztica, yet the splendor of this lands rich ancestry is apparent in its tall, ghostly cities and in the quiet determination and accomplishment of its surviving population.

When the peoples here reached their peak, they had very little competition from the rude villagers that composed the rest of Maztican population. They built grand cities, with tall, bright pyramids—far steeper and narrower than those of their Nexalan cousins.

The Far Payit lands are defined by jungle—they are the heavily forested regions occupying the peninsula east of the Sea of Azul. Some of the lands have been made arable, while others lie beneath disease-ridden swamps, or jut above the treetops as mountain crests. Nevertheless, Far Payit is defined by its forests—vast, countless miles of steaming,

leaf-shrouded semi-darkness. The jungle canopy is broken only occasionally by clearings, fields of mayz surrounding a few dozen huts of thatch, perhaps with a larger house of adobe or even a stone platform. Then the jungle begins again and flows for miles upon miles.

Then, with shocking suddenness, another irregularity appears: a green-cloaked mountain, precise in its four sides, juts from the forest floor. These sites are not at all uncommon throughout the jungle, and many have secrets lurking within them—hidden passages or concealed tombs and catacombs.

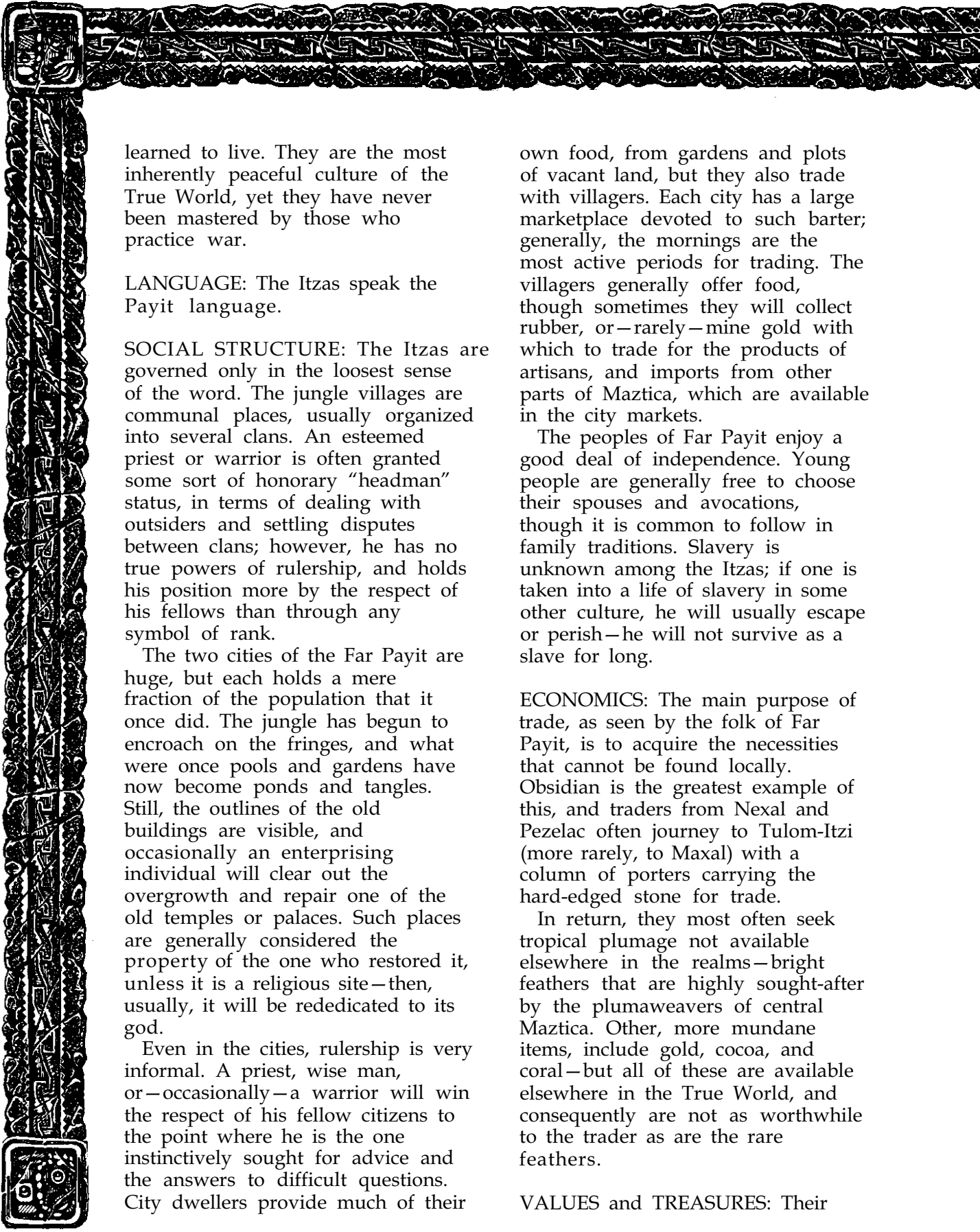
Even the arable land of the peninsula is more wooded than the typical Maztican farmland. Groves of coconuts, citrus fruit, mangoes, and other trees constitute much of the Far Payit cropland. The fruits are lush and plentiful, and the groves provide a forest canopy even over these tended plots of land.

Communities of humans and halflings can be found in Far Payit.

Human Population

Far Payit is host to a sizeable population of humans, including the two great cities of Tulom-Itzi and Maxal, and countless smaller towns and villages, mostly located around the arable regions of the peninsula. The name of the people themselves goes back to the roots of their greatest city, for they are known as the Itzas.

The Itzas have fallen far from their initial numbers, but not in the quality of their learning nor in the serenity with which they have



learned to live. They are the most inherently peaceful culture of the True World, yet they have never been mastered by those who practice war.

LANGUAGE: The Itzas speak the Payit language.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The Itzas are governed only in the loosest sense of the word. The jungle villages are communal places, usually organized into several clans. An esteemed priest or warrior is often granted some sort of honorary “headman” status, in terms of dealing with outsiders and settling disputes between clans; however, he has no true powers of rulership, and holds his position more by the respect of his fellows than through any symbol of rank.

The two cities of the Far Payit are huge, but each holds a mere fraction of the population that it once did. The jungle has begun to encroach on the fringes, and what were once pools and gardens have now become ponds and tangles. Still, the outlines of the old buildings are visible, and occasionally an enterprising individual will clear out the overgrowth and repair one of the old temples or palaces. Such places are generally considered the property of the one who restored it, unless it is a religious site—then, usually, it will be rededicated to its god.

Even in the cities, rulership is very informal. A priest, wise man, or—occasionally—a warrior will win the respect of his fellow citizens to the point where he is the one instinctively sought for advice and the answers to difficult questions. City dwellers provide much of their

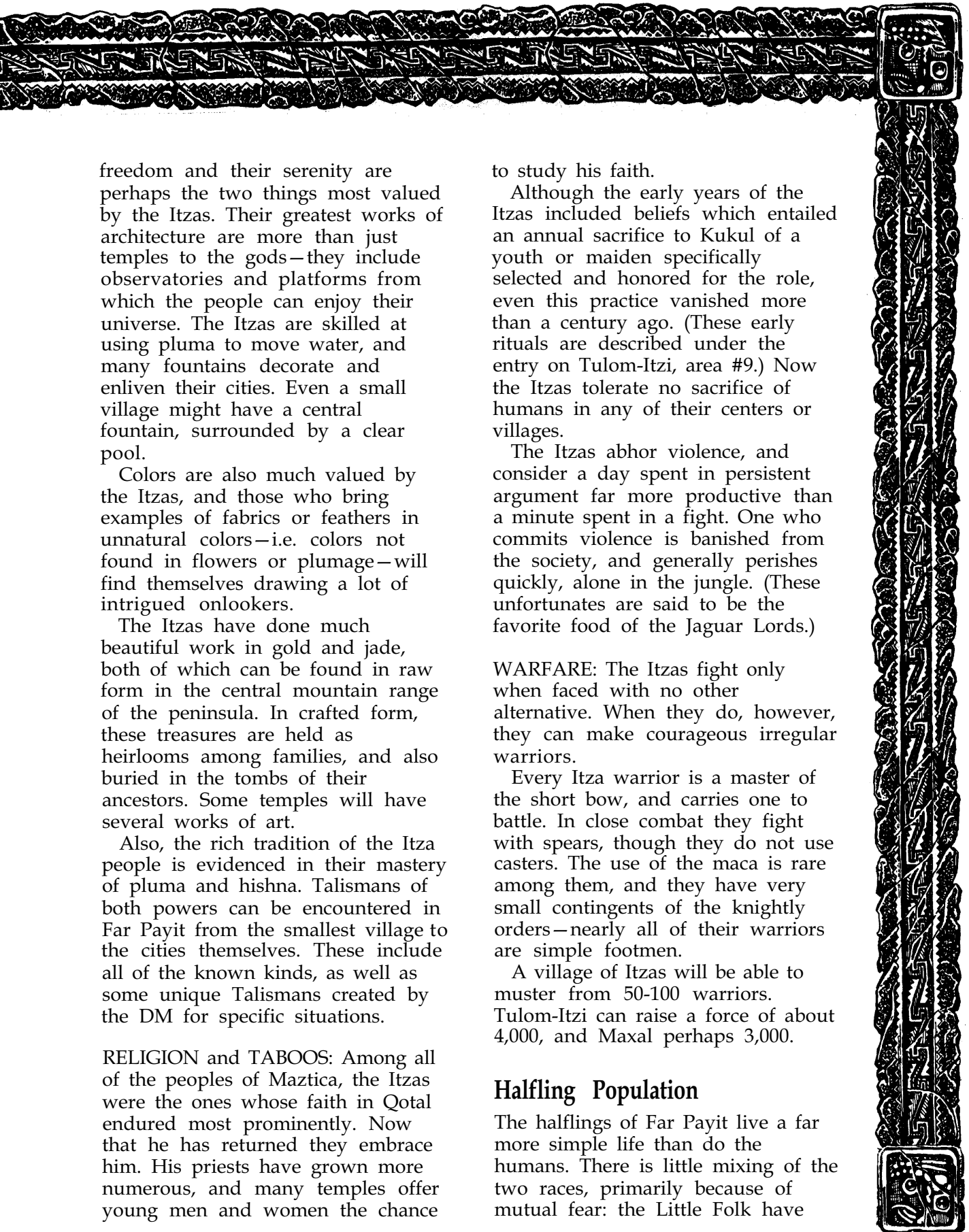
own food, from gardens and plots of vacant land, but they also trade with villagers. Each city has a large marketplace devoted to such barter; generally, the mornings are the most active periods for trading. The villagers generally offer food, though sometimes they will collect rubber, or—rarely—mine gold with which to trade for the products of artisans, and imports from other parts of Maztica, which are available in the city markets.

The peoples of Far Payit enjoy a good deal of independence. Young people are generally free to choose their spouses and avocations, though it is common to follow in family traditions. Slavery is unknown among the Itzas; if one is taken into a life of slavery in some other culture, he will usually escape or perish—he will not survive as a slave for long.

ECONOMICS: The main purpose of trade, as seen by the folk of Far Payit, is to acquire the necessities that cannot be found locally. Obsidian is the greatest example of this, and traders from Nexal and Pezelac often journey to Tulom-Itzi (more rarely, to Maxal) with a column of porters carrying the hard-edged stone for trade.

In return, they most often seek tropical plumage not available elsewhere in the realms—bright feathers that are highly sought-after by the plumaweavers of central Maztica. Other, more mundane items, include gold, cocoa, and coral—but all of these are available elsewhere in the True World, and consequently are not as worthwhile to the trader as are the rare feathers.

VALUES and TREASURES: Their



freedom and their serenity are perhaps the two things most valued by the Itzas. Their greatest works of architecture are more than just temples to the gods—they include observatories and platforms from which the people can enjoy their universe. The Itzas are skilled at using pluma to move water, and many fountains decorate and enliven their cities. Even a small village might have a central fountain, surrounded by a clear pool.

Colors are also much valued by the Itzas, and those who bring examples of fabrics or feathers in unnatural colors—i.e. colors not found in flowers or plumage—will find themselves drawing a lot of intrigued onlookers.

The Itzas have done much beautiful work in gold and jade, both of which can be found in raw form in the central mountain range of the peninsula. In crafted form, these treasures are held as heirlooms among families, and also buried in the tombs of their ancestors. Some temples will have several works of art.

Also, the rich tradition of the Itza people is evidenced in their mastery of pluma and hishna. Talismans of both powers can be encountered in Far Payit from the smallest village to the cities themselves. These include all of the known kinds, as well as some unique Talismans created by the DM for specific situations.

RELIGION and TABOOS: Among all of the peoples of Maztica, the Itzas were the ones whose faith in Qotal endured most prominently. Now that he has returned they embrace him. His priests have grown more numerous, and many temples offer young men and women the chance

to study his faith.

Although the early years of the Itzas included beliefs which entailed an annual sacrifice to Kukul of a youth or maiden specifically selected and honored for the role, even this practice vanished more than a century ago. (These early rituals are described under the entry on Tulom-Itzi, area #9.) Now the Itzas tolerate no sacrifice of humans in any of their centers or villages.

The Itzas abhor violence, and consider a day spent in persistent argument far more productive than a minute spent in a fight. One who commits violence is banished from the society, and generally perishes quickly, alone in the jungle. (These unfortunates are said to be the favorite food of the Jaguar Lords.)

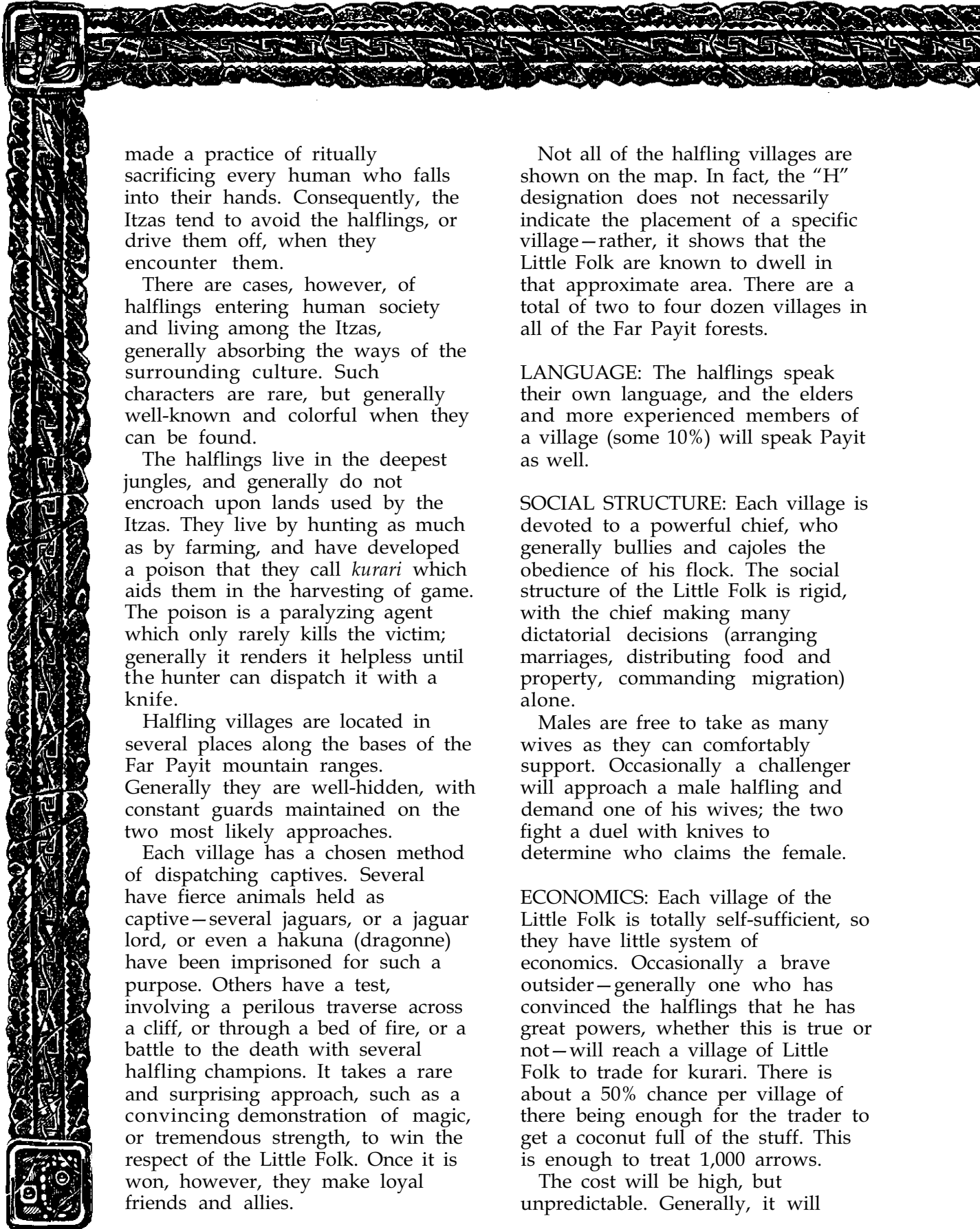
WARFARE: The Itzas fight only when faced with no other alternative. When they do, however, they can make courageous irregular warriors.

Every Itza warrior is a master of the short bow, and carries one to battle. In close combat they fight with spears, though they do not use casters. The use of the maca is rare among them, and they have very small contingents of the knightly orders—nearly all of their warriors are simple footmen.

A village of Itzas will be able to muster from 50-100 warriors. Tulom-Itzi can raise a force of about 4,000, and Maxal perhaps 3,000.

Halfling Population

The halflings of Far Payit live a far more simple life than do the humans. There is little mixing of the two races, primarily because of mutual fear: the Little Folk have



made a practice of ritually sacrificing every human who falls into their hands. Consequently, the Itzas tend to avoid the halflings, or drive them off, when they encounter them.

There are cases, however, of halflings entering human society and living among the Itzas, generally absorbing the ways of the surrounding culture. Such characters are rare, but generally well-known and colorful when they can be found.

The halflings live in the deepest jungles, and generally do not encroach upon lands used by the Itzas. They live by hunting as much as by farming, and have developed a poison that they call *kurari* which aids them in the harvesting of game. The poison is a paralyzing agent which only rarely kills the victim; generally it renders it helpless until the hunter can dispatch it with a knife.

Halfling villages are located in several places along the bases of the Far Payit mountain ranges. Generally they are well-hidden, with constant guards maintained on the two most likely approaches.

Each village has a chosen method of dispatching captives. Several have fierce animals held as captive—several jaguars, or a jaguar lord, or even a *hakuna* (dragonne) have been imprisoned for such a purpose. Others have a test, involving a perilous traverse across a cliff, or through a bed of fire, or a battle to the death with several halfling champions. It takes a rare and surprising approach, such as a convincing demonstration of magic, or tremendous strength, to win the respect of the Little Folk. Once it is won, however, they make loyal friends and allies.

Not all of the halfling villages are shown on the map. In fact, the “H” designation does not necessarily indicate the placement of a specific village—rather, it shows that the Little Folk are known to dwell in that approximate area. There are a total of two to four dozen villages in all of the Far Payit forests.

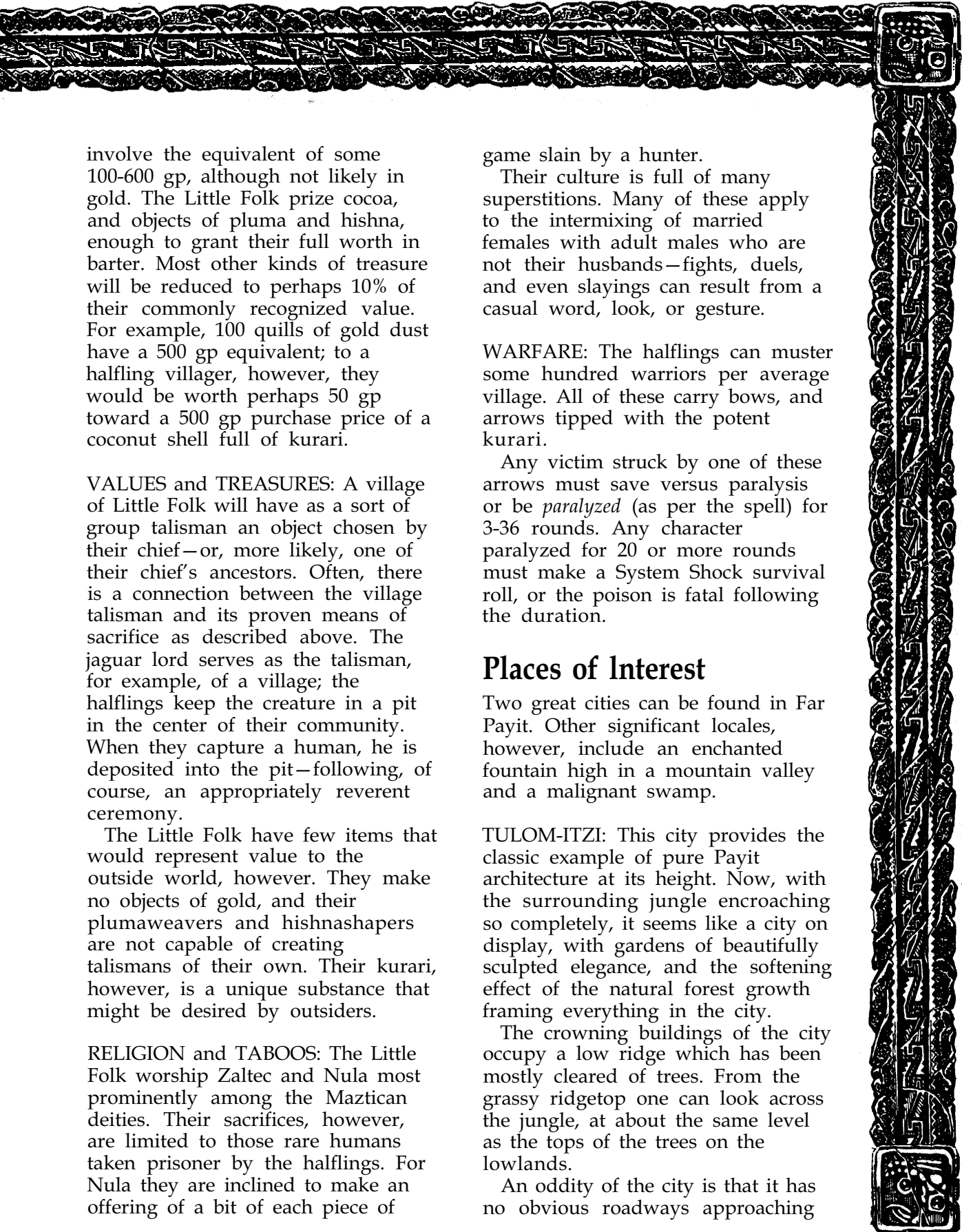
LANGUAGE: The halflings speak their own language, and the elders and more experienced members of a village (some 10%) will speak Payit as well.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: Each village is devoted to a powerful chief, who generally bullies and cajoles the obedience of his flock. The social structure of the Little Folk is rigid, with the chief making many dictatorial decisions (arranging marriages, distributing food and property, commanding migration) alone.

Males are free to take as many wives as they can comfortably support. Occasionally a challenger will approach a male halfling and demand one of his wives; the two fight a duel with knives to determine who claims the female.

ECONOMICS: Each village of the Little Folk is totally self-sufficient, so they have little system of economics. Occasionally a brave outsider—generally one who has convinced the halflings that he has great powers, whether this is true or not—will reach a village of Little Folk to trade for *kurari*. There is about a 50% chance per village of there being enough for the trader to get a coconut full of the stuff. This is enough to treat 1,000 arrows.

The cost will be high, but unpredictable. Generally, it will



involve the equivalent of some 100-600 gp, although not likely in gold. The Little Folk prize cocoa, and objects of pluma and hishna, enough to grant their full worth in barter. Most other kinds of treasure will be reduced to perhaps 10% of their commonly recognized value. For example, 100 quills of gold dust have a 500 gp equivalent; to a halfling villager, however, they would be worth perhaps 50 gp toward a 500 gp purchase price of a coconut shell full of kurari.

VALUES and TREASURES: A village of Little Folk will have as a sort of group talisman an object chosen by their chief—or, more likely, one of their chief's ancestors. Often, there is a connection between the village talisman and its proven means of sacrifice as described above. The jaguar lord serves as the talisman, for example, of a village; the halflings keep the creature in a pit in the center of their community. When they capture a human, he is deposited into the pit—following, of course, an appropriately reverent ceremony.

The Little Folk have few items that would represent value to the outside world, however. They make no objects of gold, and their plumaweavers and hishnashapers are not capable of creating talismans of their own. Their kurari, however, is a unique substance that might be desired by outsiders.

RELIGION and TABOOS: The Little Folk worship Zaltec and Nula most prominently among the Maztican deities. Their sacrifices, however, are limited to those rare humans taken prisoner by the halflings. For Nula they are inclined to make an offering of a bit of each piece of

game slain by a hunter.

Their culture is full of many superstitions. Many of these apply to the intermixing of married females with adult males who are not their husbands—fights, duels, and even slayings can result from a casual word, look, or gesture.

WARFARE: The halflings can muster some hundred warriors per average village. All of these carry bows, and arrows tipped with the potent kurari.

Any victim struck by one of these arrows must save versus paralysis or be *paralyzed* (as per the spell) for 3-36 rounds. Any character paralyzed for 20 or more rounds must make a System Shock survival roll, or the poison is fatal following the duration.

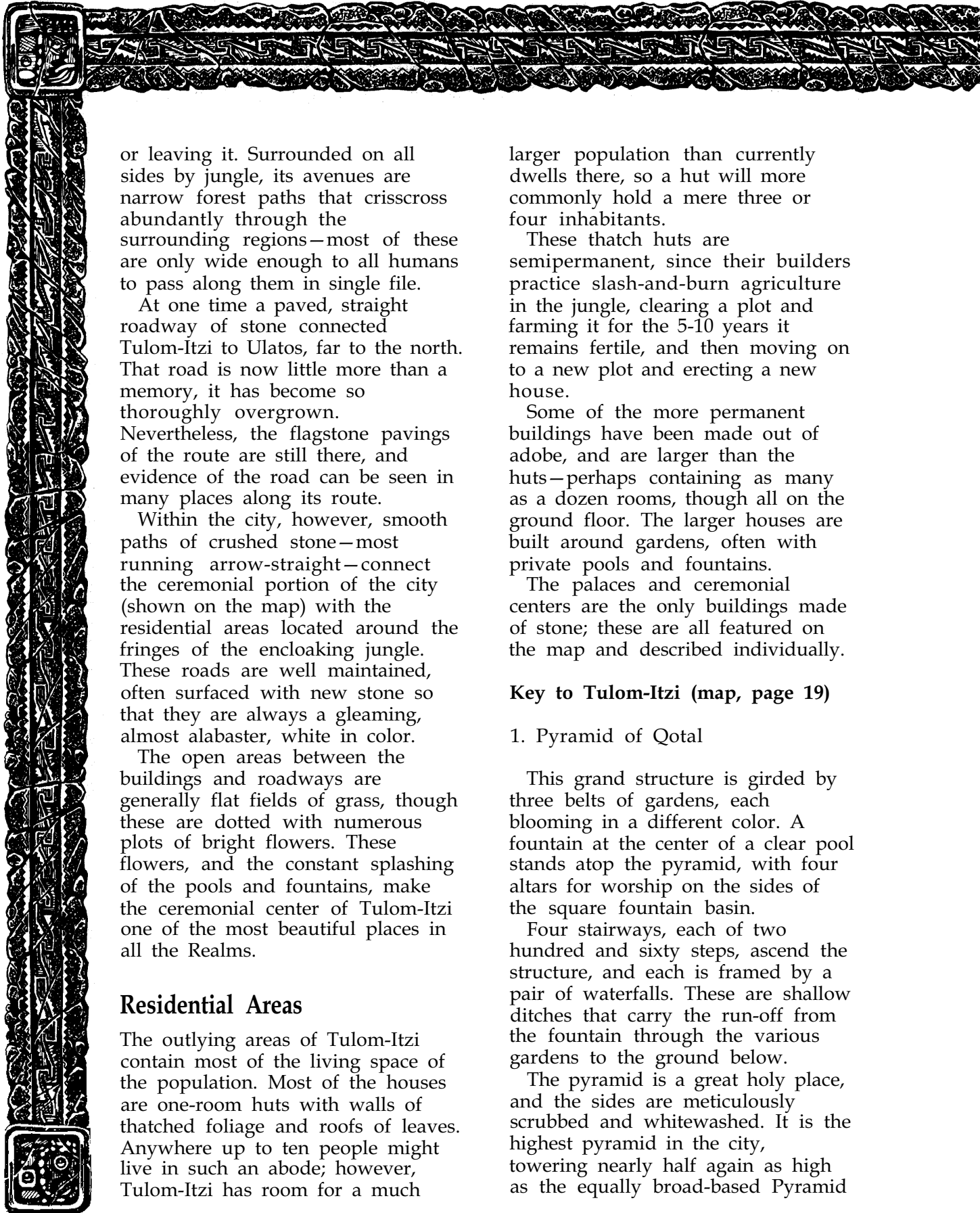
Places of Interest

Two great cities can be found in Far Payit. Other significant locales, however, include an enchanted fountain high in a mountain valley and a malignant swamp.

TULOM-ITZI: This city provides the classic example of pure Payit architecture at its height. Now, with the surrounding jungle encroaching so completely, it seems like a city on display, with gardens of beautifully sculpted elegance, and the softening effect of the natural forest growth framing everything in the city.

The crowning buildings of the city occupy a low ridge which has been mostly cleared of trees. From the grassy ridgetop one can look across the jungle, at about the same level as the tops of the trees on the lowlands.

An oddity of the city is that it has no obvious roadways approaching



or leaving it. Surrounded on all sides by jungle, its avenues are narrow forest paths that crisscross abundantly through the surrounding regions—most of these are only wide enough to all humans to pass along them in single file.

At one time a paved, straight roadway of stone connected Tulom-Itzi to Ulatos, far to the north. That road is now little more than a memory, it has become so thoroughly overgrown. Nevertheless, the flagstone pavings of the route are still there, and evidence of the road can be seen in many places along its route.

Within the city, however, smooth paths of crushed stone—most running arrow-straight—connect the ceremonial portion of the city (shown on the map) with the residential areas located around the fringes of the encloaking jungle. These roads are well maintained, often surfaced with new stone so that they are always a gleaming, almost alabaster, white in color.

The open areas between the buildings and roadways are generally flat fields of grass, though these are dotted with numerous plots of bright flowers. These flowers, and the constant splashing of the pools and fountains, make the ceremonial center of Tulom-Itzi one of the most beautiful places in all the Realms.

Residential Areas

The outlying areas of Tulom-Itzi contain most of the living space of the population. Most of the houses are one-room huts with walls of thatched foliage and roofs of leaves. Anywhere up to ten people might live in such an abode; however, Tulom-Itzi has room for a much

larger population than currently dwells there, so a hut will more commonly hold a mere three or four inhabitants.

These thatch huts are semipermanent, since their builders practice slash-and-burn agriculture in the jungle, clearing a plot and farming it for the 5-10 years it remains fertile, and then moving on to a new plot and erecting a new house.

Some of the more permanent buildings have been made out of adobe, and are larger than the huts—perhaps containing as many as a dozen rooms, though all on the ground floor. The larger houses are built around gardens, often with private pools and fountains.

The palaces and ceremonial centers are the only buildings made of stone; these are all featured on the map and described individually.

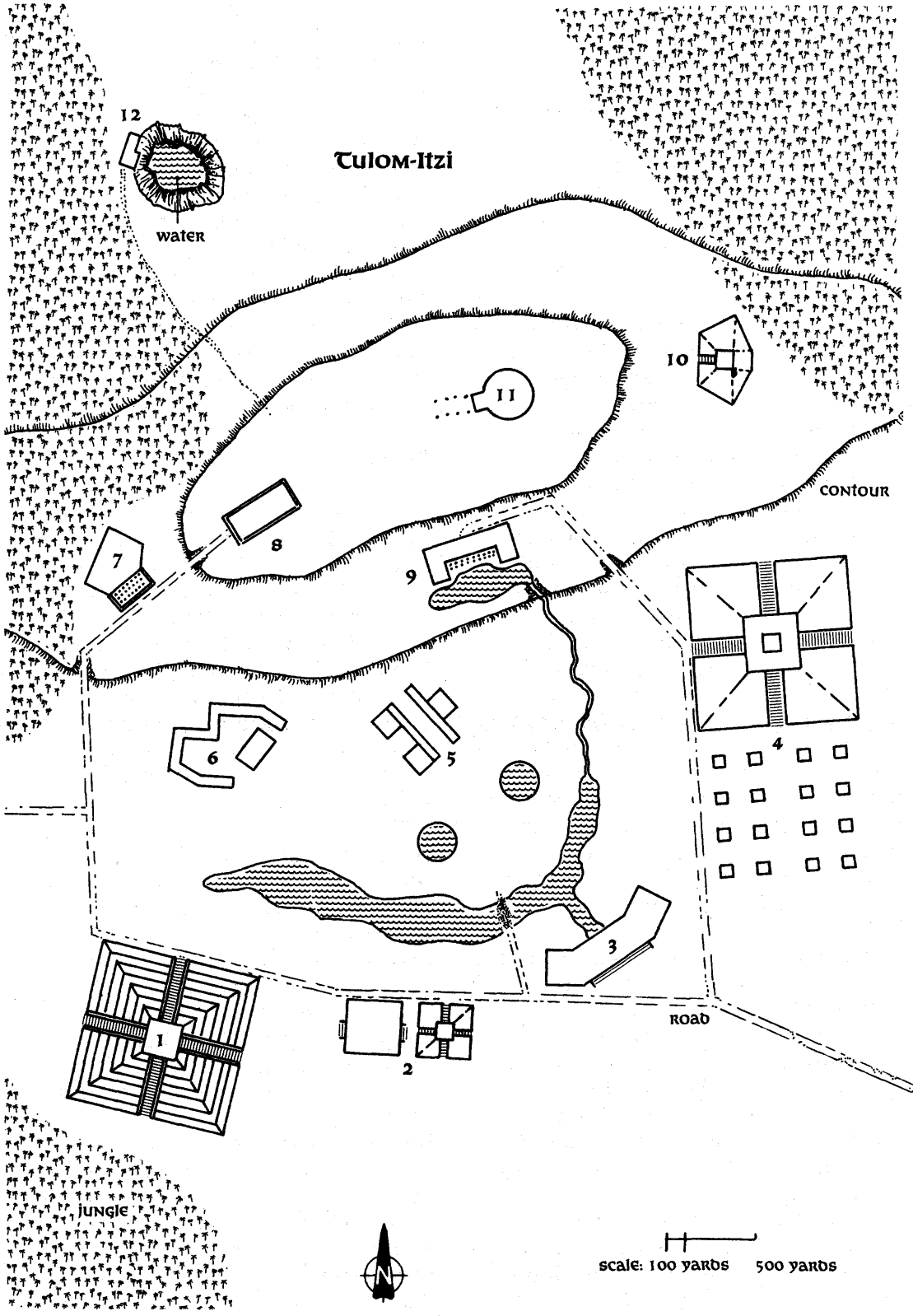
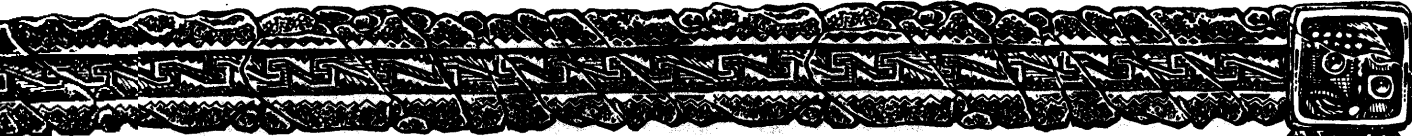
Key to Tulom-Itzi (map, page 19)

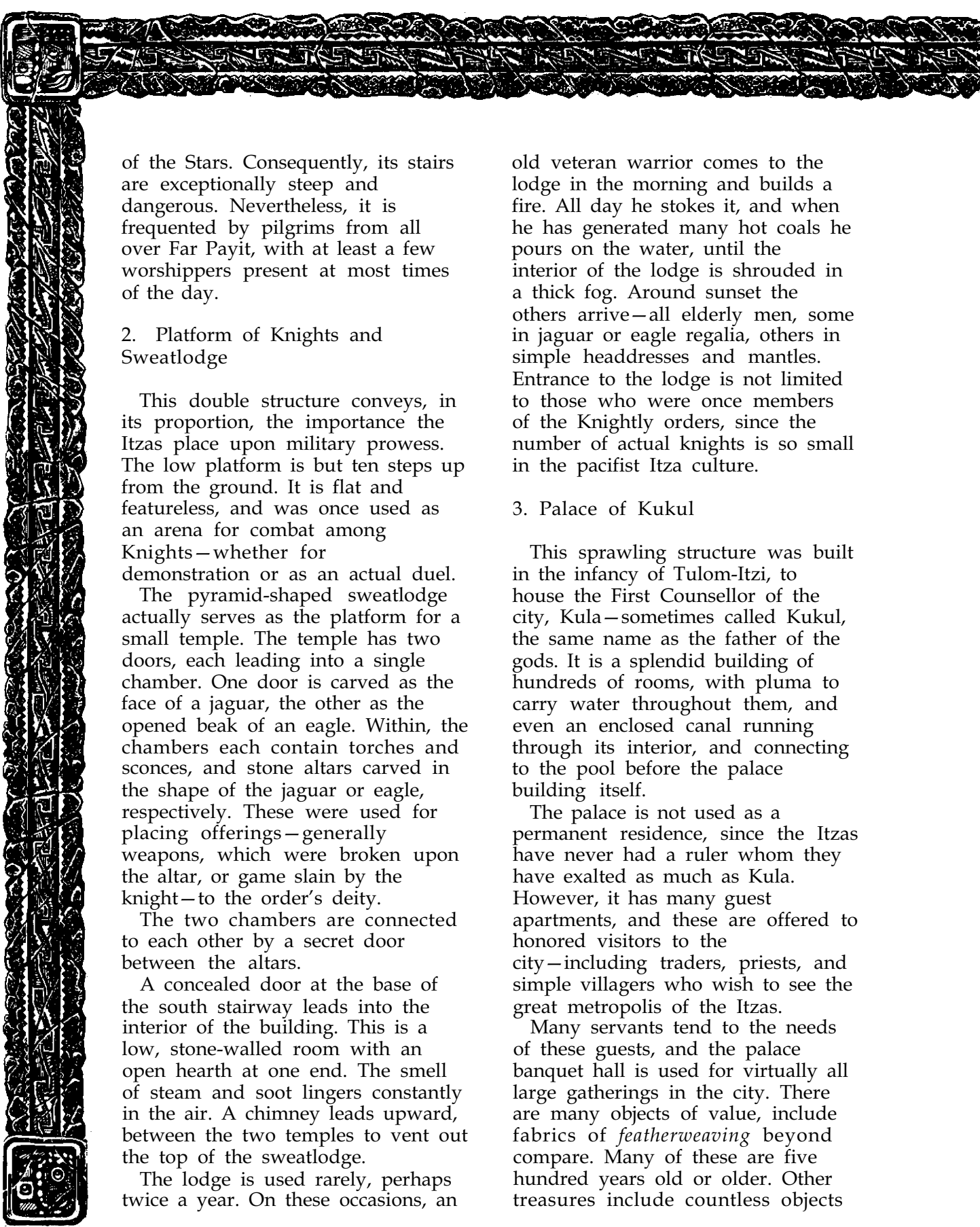
1. Pyramid of Qotal

This grand structure is girded by three belts of gardens, each blooming in a different color. A fountain at the center of a clear pool stands atop the pyramid, with four altars for worship on the sides of the square fountain basin.

Four stairways, each of two hundred and sixty steps, ascend the structure, and each is framed by a pair of waterfalls. These are shallow ditches that carry the run-off from the fountain through the various gardens to the ground below.

The pyramid is a great holy place, and the sides are meticulously scrubbed and whitewashed. It is the highest pyramid in the city, towering nearly half again as high as the equally broad-based Pyramid





of the Stars. Consequently, its stairs are exceptionally steep and dangerous. Nevertheless, it is frequented by pilgrims from all over Far Payit, with at least a few worshippers present at most times of the day.

2. Platform of Knights and Sweatlodge

This double structure conveys, in its proportion, the importance the Itzas place upon military prowess. The low platform is but ten steps up from the ground. It is flat and featureless, and was once used as an arena for combat among Knights—whether for demonstration or as an actual duel.

The pyramid-shaped sweatlodge actually serves as the platform for a small temple. The temple has two doors, each leading into a single chamber. One door is carved as the face of a jaguar, the other as the opened beak of an eagle. Within, the chambers each contain torches and sconces, and stone altars carved in the shape of the jaguar or eagle, respectively. These were used for placing offerings—generally weapons, which were broken upon the altar, or game slain by the knight—to the order's deity.

The two chambers are connected to each other by a secret door between the altars.

A concealed door at the base of the south stairway leads into the interior of the building. This is a low, stone-walled room with an open hearth at one end. The smell of steam and soot lingers constantly in the air. A chimney leads upward, between the two temples to vent out the top of the sweatlodge.

The lodge is used rarely, perhaps twice a year. On these occasions, an

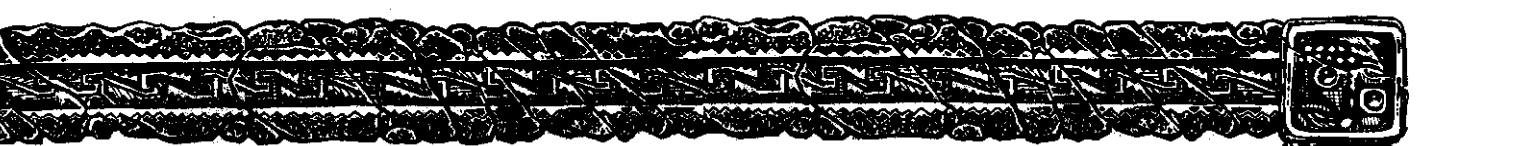
old veteran warrior comes to the lodge in the morning and builds a fire. All day he stokes it, and when he has generated many hot coals he pours on the water, until the interior of the lodge is shrouded in a thick fog. Around sunset the others arrive—all elderly men, some in jaguar or eagle regalia, others in simple headdresses and mantles. Entrance to the lodge is not limited to those who were once members of the Knightly orders, since the number of actual knights is so small in the pacifist Itza culture.

3. Palace of Kukul

This sprawling structure was built in the infancy of Tulom-Itzi, to house the First Counsellor of the city, Kula—sometimes called Kukul, the same name as the father of the gods. It is a splendid building of hundreds of rooms, with pluma to carry water throughout them, and even an enclosed canal running through its interior, and connecting to the pool before the palace building itself.

The palace is not used as a permanent residence, since the Itzas have never had a ruler whom they have exalted as much as Kula. However, it has many guest apartments, and these are offered to honored visitors to the city—including traders, priests, and simple villagers who wish to see the great metropolis of the Itzas.

Many servants tend to the needs of these guests, and the palace banquet hall is used for virtually all large gatherings in the city. There are many objects of value, include fabrics of *featherweaving* beyond compare. Many of these are five hundred years old or older. Other treasures include countless objects



of gold, ranging from small statues of gods to platters and bowls. The central treasure of the palace is a bust of Kula himself, cast from gold upon a base of turquoise. The statue's hair and eyes are of jade, and the object might be worth 500,000 gp or more on the Sword Coast. The objects of value are generally displayed in wall niches and on tables and platforms, although the bust of Kula sits upon a raised dais. However, the constant bustle of people moving through the palace rarely leaves one alone in a public room.

Indeed, the building does not seem like a place without a permanent occupancy. The palace and the grounds beyond are the center of social interaction for the whole city.

Those grounds include the huge pool, which hosts ducks, geese, flamingos, storks, ibises, and a host of other aquatic birds. It is well-stocked with fish, and every resident or guest of the city is entitled to take one fish per day—a task which takes a mere 1-20 minutes.

The circular pools contain powerful fountains—talismans of pluma that shoot streams of water more than fifty feet into the air. Each creates a thundering roar, and an attendant cloud of mist always trails to the downwind side.

Many shrubs, bushes, and gardens give the grounds of the palace a secure and cozy feel. One can walk here with a sense of solitude, though there may be others mere yards away. It is a place of peace and serenity to the Itzas.

The stream flowing into the pool is a pleasant and shallow body of water, about 1' deep and 10' across, with a smooth, gravelly bottom. It is

said that lovers who wade in the stream together are destined for a lifetime of happiness.

4. Pyramid of the Stars

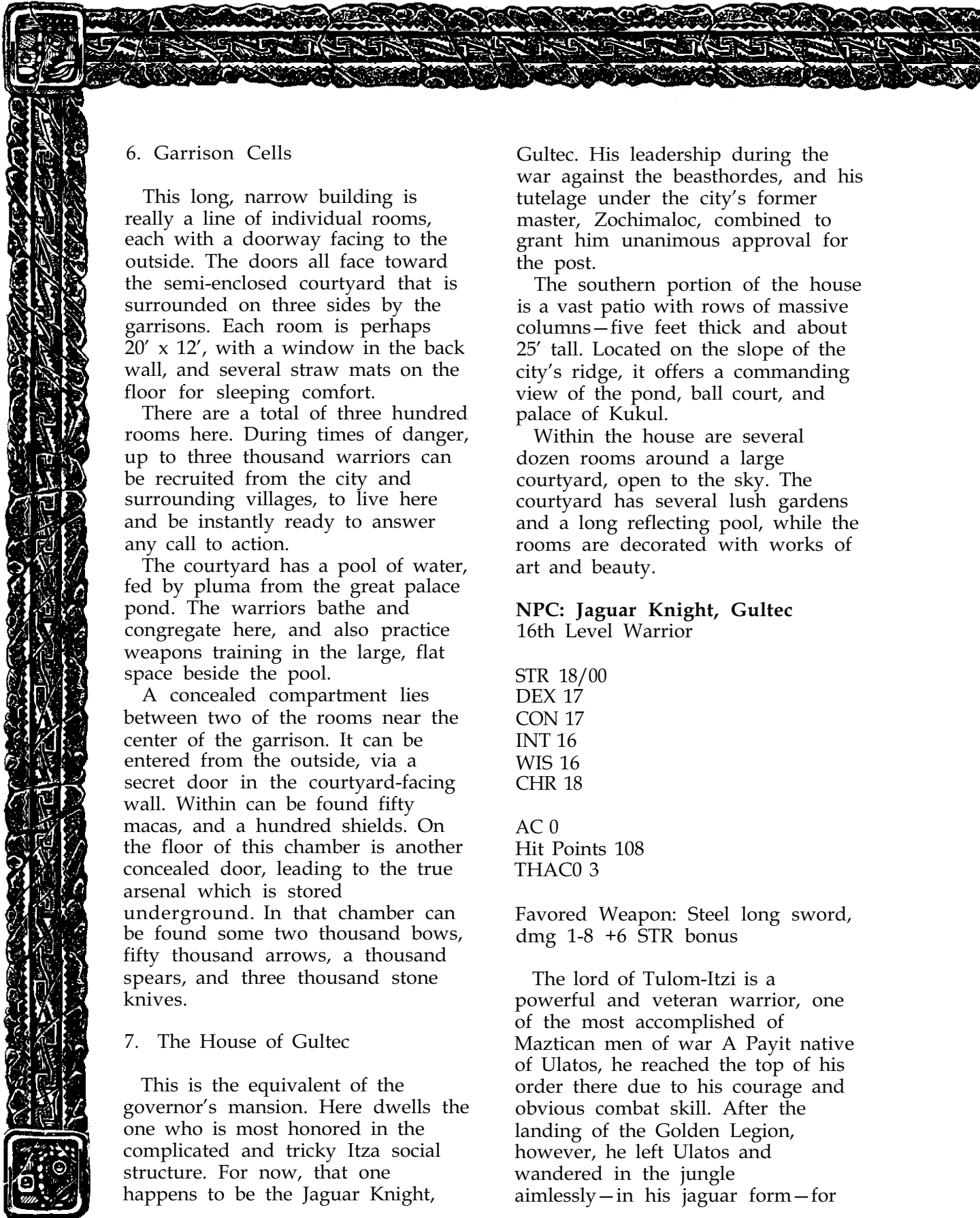
This bulky pyramid, as broad at the base but not so high as the Pyramid of Qotal, is dedicated to the unknown spirits of the night sky. It is made from pale granite, but is covered with signs and symbols of stars. These are laid in a mosaic of black obsidian, with several faces of the mirrorlike stone that are as large as a good-sized door.

No water, and no plants, can be found upon this structure—in fact, it is kept scrupulously barren of litter and dust. The building atop the pyramid is an opened-roofed frame of walls with a single door. The entryway is baffled by several turns through a dark corridor, before one enters the central room. By looking up from here, however, one can see more stars in the center of the sky than ever he could from the open, on ground level.

5. The Ball Court

This structure consists of the flat court and its two facing walls of stone—the side walls. Each of these has the requisite ring placed midway between its ends, 15' off the ground. The ends of the court are open.

Above each wall rises a gallery of platforms where several thousand people (on each side) can stand with a good view of the game below. Three towers—two on one side and one on the other—rise above these galleries. The tops of the towers are reserved for the city's most influential people and their guests.



6. Garrison Cells

This long, narrow building is really a line of individual rooms, each with a doorway facing to the outside. The doors all face toward the semi-enclosed courtyard that is surrounded on three sides by the garrisons. Each room is perhaps 20' x 12', with a window in the back wall, and several straw mats on the floor for sleeping comfort.

There are a total of three hundred rooms here. During times of danger, up to three thousand warriors can be recruited from the city and surrounding villages, to live here and be instantly ready to answer any call to action.

The courtyard has a pool of water, fed by pluma from the great palace pond. The warriors bathe and congregate here, and also practice weapons training in the large, flat space beside the pool.

A concealed compartment lies between two of the rooms near the center of the garrison. It can be entered from the outside, via a secret door in the courtyard-facing wall. Within can be found fifty macas, and a hundred shields. On the floor of this chamber is another concealed door, leading to the true arsenal which is stored underground. In that chamber can be found some two thousand bows, fifty thousand arrows, a thousand spears, and three thousand stone knives.

7. The House of Gultec

This is the equivalent of the governor's mansion. Here dwells the one who is most honored in the complicated and tricky Itza social structure. For now, that one happens to be the Jaguar Knight,

Gultec. His leadership during the war against the beasthordes, and his tutelage under the city's former master, Zochimaloc, combined to grant him unanimous approval for the post.

The southern portion of the house is a vast patio with rows of massive columns—five feet thick and about 25' tall. Located on the slope of the city's ridge, it offers a commanding view of the pond, ball court, and palace of Kukul.

Within the house are several dozen rooms around a large courtyard, open to the sky. The courtyard has several lush gardens and a long reflecting pool, while the rooms are decorated with works of art and beauty.

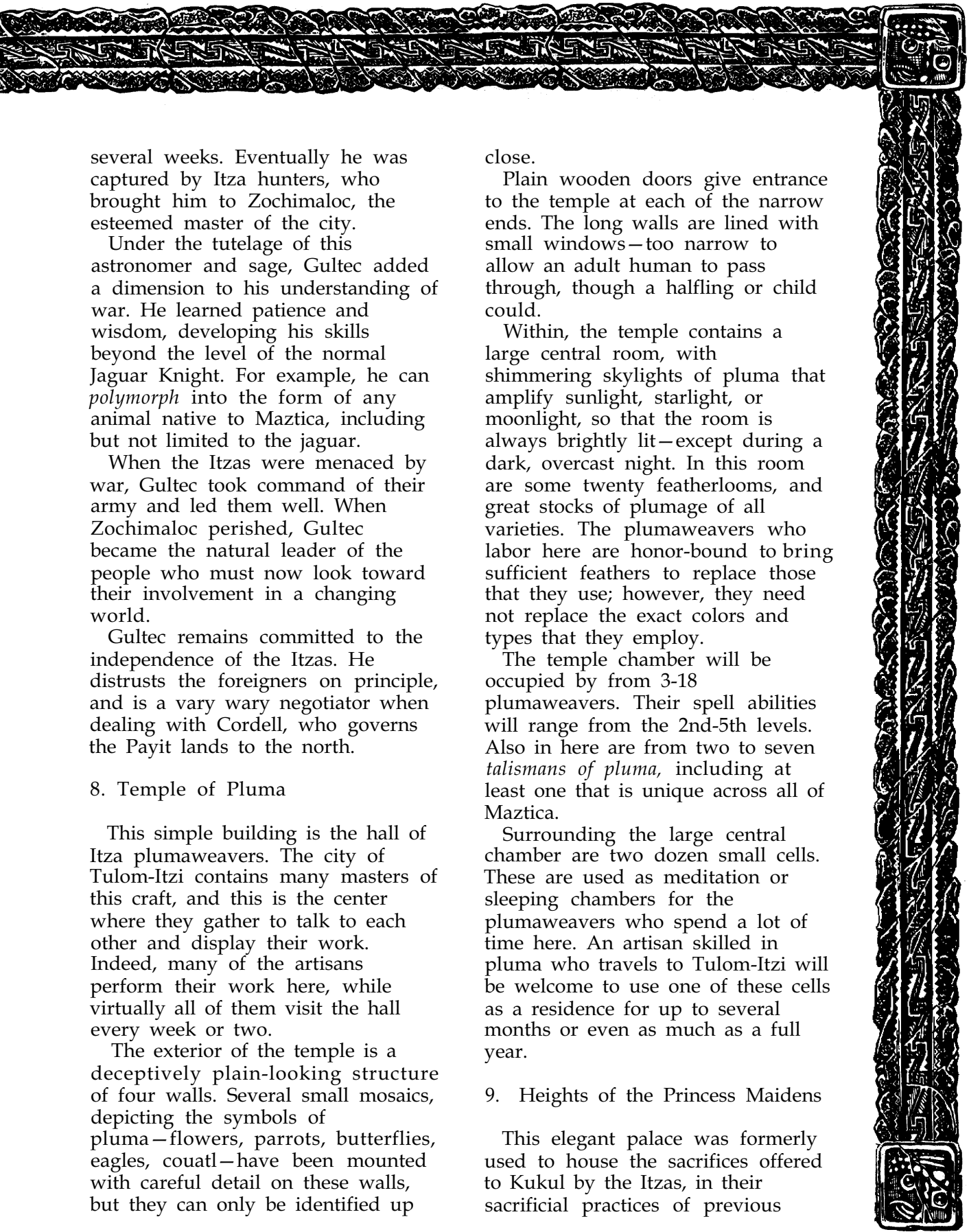
NPC: Jaguar Knight, Gultec
16th Level Warrior

STR 18/00
DEX 17
CON 17
INT 16
WIS 16
CHR 18

AC 0
Hit Points 108
THAC0 3

Favored Weapon: Steel long sword, dmg 1-8 +6 STR bonus

The lord of Tulom-Itzi is a powerful and veteran warrior, one of the most accomplished of Maztican men of war. A Payit native of Ulatos, he reached the top of his order there due to his courage and obvious combat skill. After the landing of the Golden Legion, however, he left Ulatos and wandered in the jungle aimlessly—in his jaguar form—for



several weeks. Eventually he was captured by Itza hunters, who brought him to Zochimaloc, the esteemed master of the city.

Under the tutelage of this astronomer and sage, Gultec added a dimension to his understanding of war. He learned patience and wisdom, developing his skills beyond the level of the normal Jaguar Knight. For example, he can *polymorph* into the form of any animal native to Maztica, including but not limited to the jaguar.

When the Itzas were menaced by war, Gultec took command of their army and led them well. When Zochimaloc perished, Gultec became the natural leader of the people who must now look toward their involvement in a changing world.

Gultec remains committed to the independence of the Itzas. He distrusts the foreigners on principle, and is a vary wary negotiator when dealing with Cordell, who governs the Payit lands to the north.

8. Temple of Pluma

This simple building is the hall of Itza plumaweavers. The city of Tulom-Itzi contains many masters of this craft, and this is the center where they gather to talk to each other and display their work. Indeed, many of the artisans perform their work here, while virtually all of them visit the hall every week or two.

The exterior of the temple is a deceptively plain-looking structure of four walls. Several small mosaics, depicting the symbols of pluma—flowers, parrots, butterflies, eagles, couatl—have been mounted with careful detail on these walls, but they can only be identified up

close.

Plain wooden doors give entrance to the temple at each of the narrow ends. The long walls are lined with small windows—too narrow to allow an adult human to pass through, though a halfling or child could.

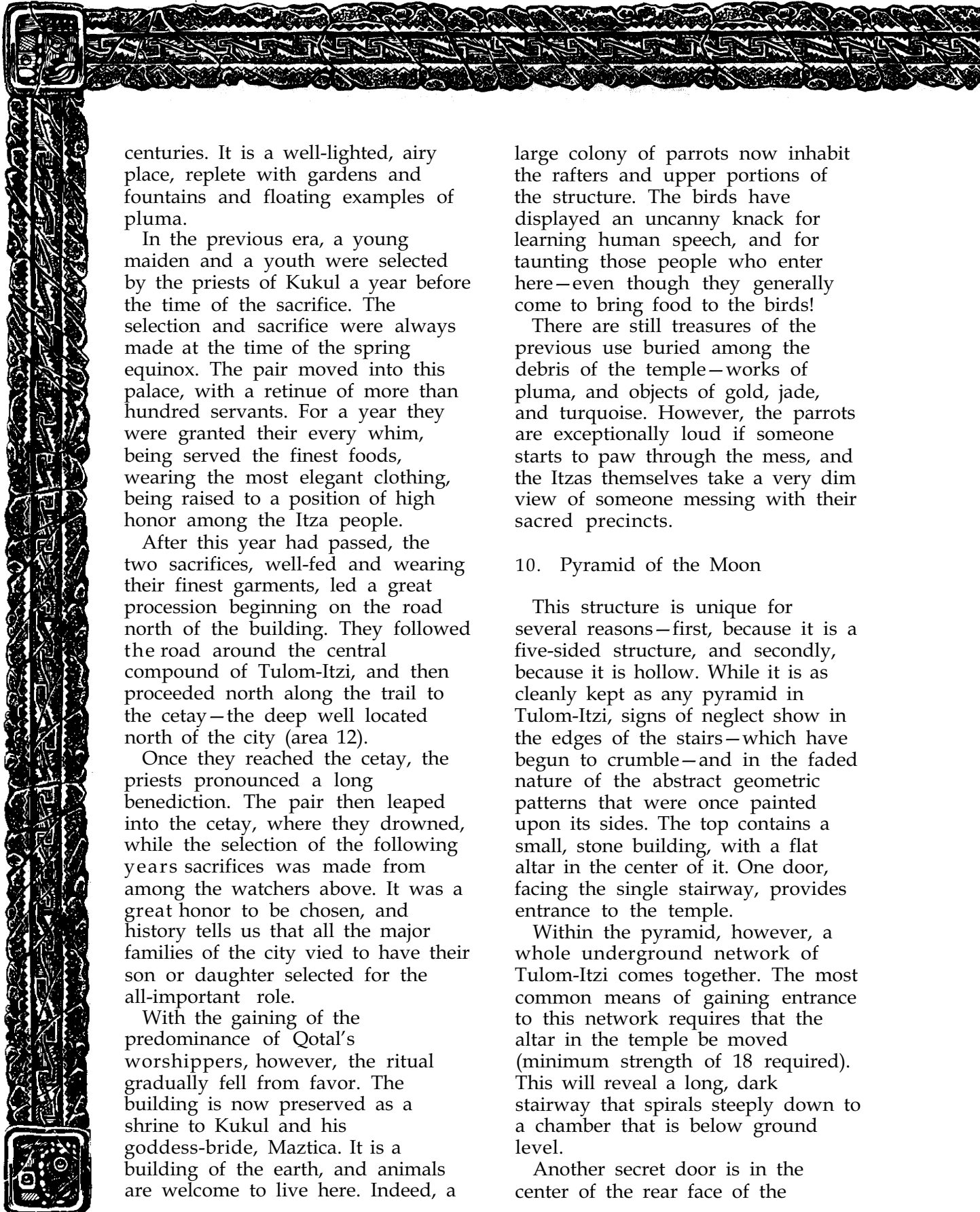
Within, the temple contains a large central room, with shimmering skylights of pluma that amplify sunlight, starlight, or moonlight, so that the room is always brightly lit—except during a dark, overcast night. In this room are some twenty featherlooms, and great stocks of plumage of all varieties. The plumaweavers who labor here are honor-bound to bring sufficient feathers to replace those that they use; however, they need not replace the exact colors and types that they employ.

The temple chamber will be occupied by from 3-18 plumaweavers. Their spell abilities will range from the 2nd-5th levels. Also in here are from two to seven *talismans of pluma*, including at least one that is unique across all of Maztica.

Surrounding the large central chamber are two dozen small cells. These are used as meditation or sleeping chambers for the plumaweavers who spend a lot of time here. An artisan skilled in pluma who travels to Tulom-Itzi will be welcome to use one of these cells as a residence for up to several months or even as much as a full year.

9. Heights of the Princess Maidens

This elegant palace was formerly used to house the sacrifices offered to Kukul by the Itzas, in their sacrificial practices of previous



centuries. It is a well-lighted, airy place, replete with gardens and fountains and floating examples of pluma.

In the previous era, a young maiden and a youth were selected by the priests of Kukul a year before the time of the sacrifice. The selection and sacrifice were always made at the time of the spring equinox. The pair moved into this palace, with a retinue of more than hundred servants. For a year they were granted their every whim, being served the finest foods, wearing the most elegant clothing, being raised to a position of high honor among the Itza people.

After this year had passed, the two sacrifices, well-fed and wearing their finest garments, led a great procession beginning on the road north of the building. They followed the road around the central compound of Tulom-Itzi, and then proceeded north along the trail to the cetay—the deep well located north of the city (area 12).

Once they reached the cetay, the priests pronounced a long benediction. The pair then leaped into the cetay, where they drowned, while the selection of the following years sacrifices was made from among the watchers above. It was a great honor to be chosen, and history tells us that all the major families of the city vied to have their son or daughter selected for the all-important role.

With the gaining of the predominance of Qotal's worshippers, however, the ritual gradually fell from favor. The building is now preserved as a shrine to Kukul and his goddess-bride, Maztica. It is a building of the earth, and animals are welcome to live here. Indeed, a

large colony of parrots now inhabit the rafters and upper portions of the structure. The birds have displayed an uncanny knack for learning human speech, and for taunting those people who enter here—even though they generally come to bring food to the birds!

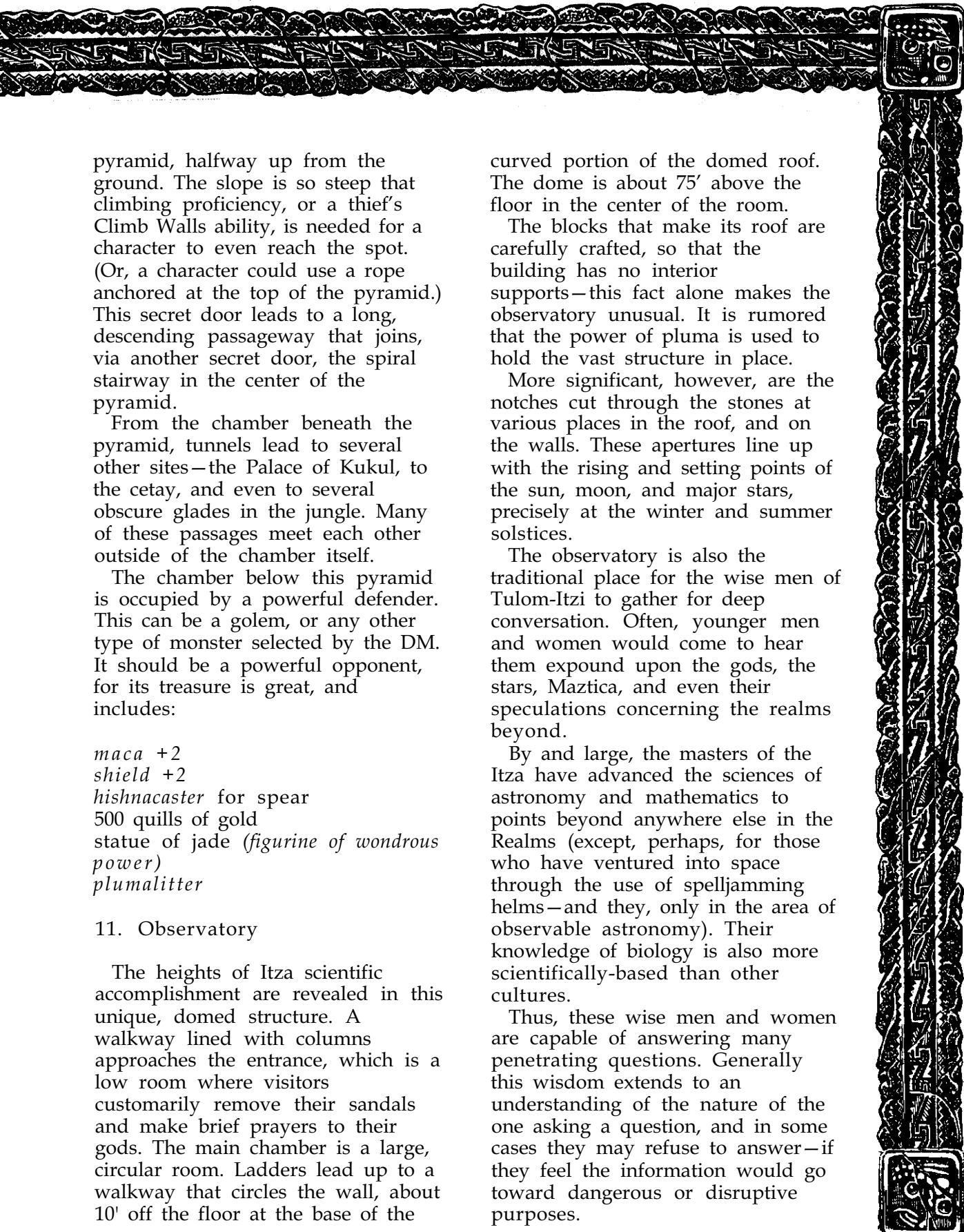
There are still treasures of the previous use buried among the debris of the temple—works of pluma, and objects of gold, jade, and turquoise. However, the parrots are exceptionally loud if someone starts to paw through the mess, and the Itzas themselves take a very dim view of someone messing with their sacred precincts.

10. Pyramid of the Moon

This structure is unique for several reasons—first, because it is a five-sided structure, and secondly, because it is hollow. While it is as cleanly kept as any pyramid in Tulom-Itzi, signs of neglect show in the edges of the stairs—which have begun to crumble—and in the faded nature of the abstract geometric patterns that were once painted upon its sides. The top contains a small, stone building, with a flat altar in the center of it. One door, facing the single stairway, provides entrance to the temple.

Within the pyramid, however, a whole underground network of Tulom-Itzi comes together. The most common means of gaining entrance to this network requires that the altar in the temple be moved (minimum strength of 18 required). This will reveal a long, dark stairway that spirals steeply down to a chamber that is below ground level.

Another secret door is in the center of the rear face of the



pyramid, halfway up from the ground. The slope is so steep that climbing proficiency, or a thief's Climb Walls ability, is needed for a character to even reach the spot. (Or, a character could use a rope anchored at the top of the pyramid.) This secret door leads to a long, descending passageway that joins, via another secret door, the spiral stairway in the center of the pyramid.

From the chamber beneath the pyramid, tunnels lead to several other sites—the Palace of Kukul, to the cetary, and even to several obscure glades in the jungle. Many of these passages meet each other outside of the chamber itself.

The chamber below this pyramid is occupied by a powerful defender. This can be a golem, or any other type of monster selected by the DM. It should be a powerful opponent, for its treasure is great, and includes:

maca +2
shield +2
hishnacaster for spear
500 quills of gold
statue of jade (*figurine of wondrous power*)
plumalitter

11. Observatory

The heights of Itza scientific accomplishment are revealed in this unique, domed structure. A walkway lined with columns approaches the entrance, which is a low room where visitors customarily remove their sandals and make brief prayers to their gods. The main chamber is a large, circular room. Ladders lead up to a walkway that circles the wall, about 10' off the floor at the base of the

curved portion of the domed roof. The dome is about 75' above the floor in the center of the room.

The blocks that make its roof are carefully crafted, so that the building has no interior supports—this fact alone makes the observatory unusual. It is rumored that the power of pluma is used to hold the vast structure in place.

More significant, however, are the notches cut through the stones at various places in the roof, and on the walls. These apertures line up with the rising and setting points of the sun, moon, and major stars, precisely at the winter and summer solstices.

The observatory is also the traditional place for the wise men of Tulom-Itzi to gather for deep conversation. Often, younger men and women would come to hear them expound upon the gods, the stars, Maztica, and even their speculations concerning the realms beyond.

By and large, the masters of the Itza have advanced the sciences of astronomy and mathematics to points beyond anywhere else in the Realms (except, perhaps, for those who have ventured into space through the use of spelljamming helms—and they, only in the area of observable astronomy). Their knowledge of biology is also more scientifically-based than other cultures.

Thus, these wise men and women are capable of answering many penetrating questions. Generally this wisdom extends to an understanding of the nature of the one asking a question, and in some cases they may refuse to answer—if they feel the information would go toward dangerous or disruptive purposes.



12. The Great Cetay

This still pool of deep green water is a ceremonial site that dates back to the earliest days of Itza culture. It was used as a site for human sacrifice, and for the sacrificial casting of objects of value.

Consequently, its bottom is littered with objects of gold, and precious stones; other objects, of pluma and hishna, have mostly rotted away in the dark depths.

The water is about 100' deep, so reaching this bottom is a task not easily accomplished. On the way down, several side caverns lead into darkness; five of these are dead ends, but the sixth connects to a long, water-filled cave. One who explores this cave may discover that the pool is a surface manifestation of a great network of underground caverns, crossing back and forth through Far Payit (see below). The connection from this cetay to the nearest airfilled passages, however, requires at least a half hour of constant underwater swimming—a feat obviously beyond the capabilities of someone who has not been aided by magic.

Within the pool itself, a monstrous presence lurks. This might be a giant constrictor snake, giant crocodile, dragon turtle—or even a combination of several creatures.

CAVES OF FAR PAYIT: The peninsula is based upon a bed of very porous limestone, and consequently the caves that have formed there are continuously growing and expanding. Many large cave systems have come together, to form a veritable highway net of passageways underneath the jungled lands.

Many of these are air-filled caves,

while a roughly equal number are submerged. They are host to a variety of subterranean life, including fish, bats, molds, and fungi; and also to a few monstrous denizens of the dark who are not used to encountering human intruders.

There are no intelligent races living in these caves, however, although they seem tailor-made for a dwarf, gnome, or even goblin or drow homeland. When they are discovered by a member of such a race, word of their existence will spread across the Realms. It is likely that they will become settled as a “new frontier” that has opened before the crowded populations of the underground peoples of the Forgotten Realms.

It is not known whether or not these caverns offer any connections to subterranean regions beyond Far Payit itself. Such links cannot be ruled out, however.

FOUNTAIN OF THE GODS: This is located at the headwaters of one of the rivers flowing out of Far Payit's central mountain range. The DM should choose one of the rivers, thus thwarting players who may have sneaked a peek at this passage in search of an unfair advantage.

The trek to the fountain is a hazardous one, involving exploration through trackless jungle, along a winding, twisting waterway. Crocodiles and venomous snakes dwell along the stream, but these are not the most effective of the fountain's defenders.

On the bank of the stream, some distance downstream from the fountain itself, is a village of the Little Folk that boasts some two hundred warriors and plenty of

kurari -tipped arrows. They well know the magical properties of the fountain, and have sworn to keep its secret for themselves. Any humans they encounter are quickly placed in a mud-filled maze of tunnels below the village, offered there as a sacrifice to the giant crocodile that lives there as the honored patriarch of the village.

Once one passes the halflings, however, there is another band of guardians—even more fearsome than the Little Folk. This is a pride of five jaguars that lurks in the bushes around the fountain. It is rumored that they are very intelligent, and can use human speech. They will attempt to ambush and devour any who come seeking the fountain.

The fountain is a small, bubbling torrent that gushes from a niche in a granite wall, collecting in a pool of lilies, before flowing into a nearby stream and mingling with the natural course of that waterway.

The waters of the fountain have potent properties which vanish within 1-6 turns of the water being removed from the well. These can be adjudicated by the DM, or he can use the following table to determine the effects of a drink from the well. Roll a d20. Subtract 1 from the die roll for every previous drink that the character has taken from the fountain water.

Effects Table: Fountain of the Gods

Die Roll	Result
0 or less	Deadly poisonous! Character must make a saving throw versus poison, with a -4 penalty.
1-4	Gagging and retching

discomfort—the character suffers 1d6 hp of damage, and also a -2 modifier on all subsequent rolls on this table (cumulative with all other modifiers).

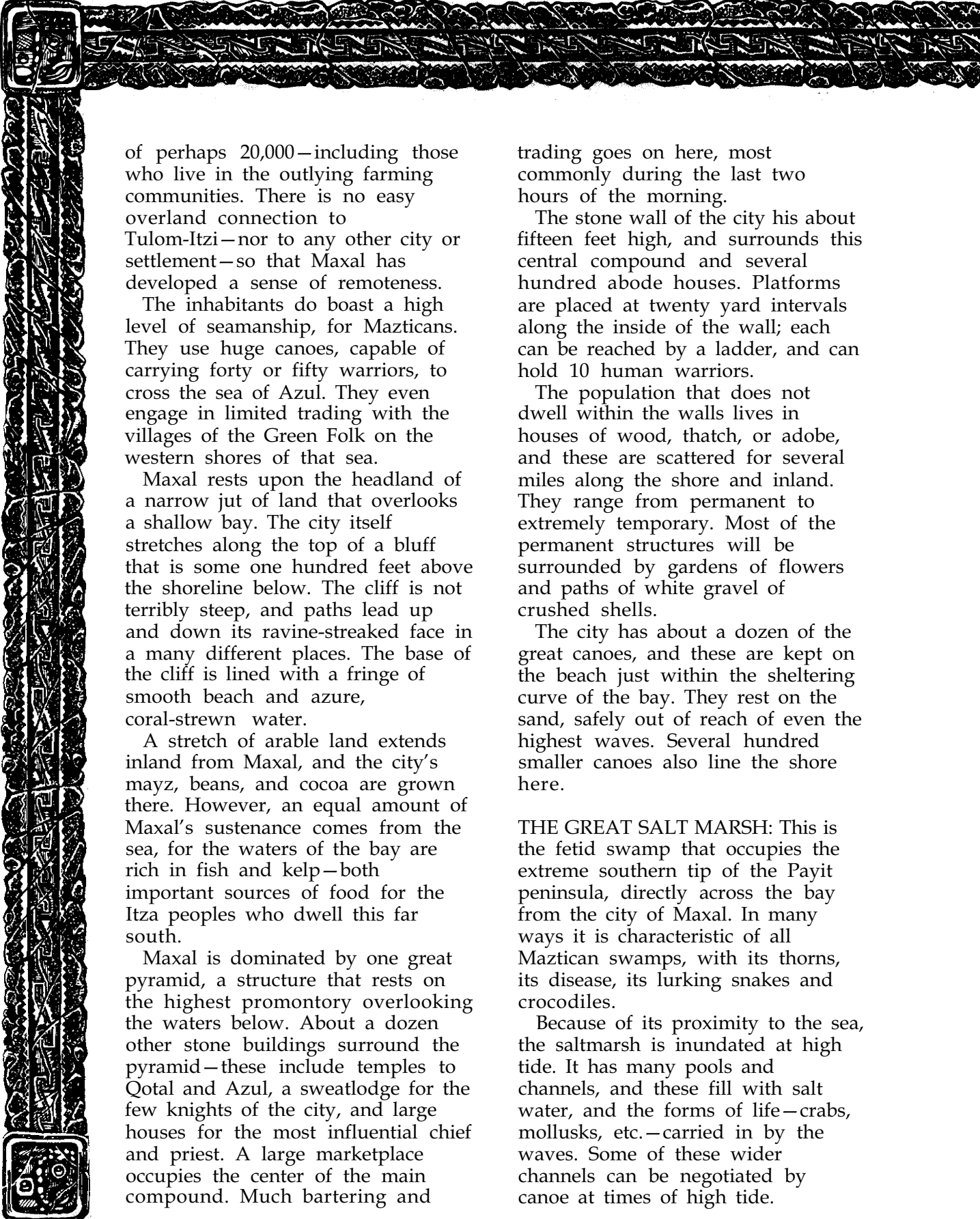
5-7	Character receives 1-4 additional hit points, added to his permanent total.
8	Character's Charisma increased by 1.
9	Character's Intelligence increased by 1.
10	Character's Constitution increased by 1.
11-12	Character's Strength increased by 1.
13-14	Character's Dexterity increased by 1.
15-16	Character's Wisdom increased by 1.
17	Character's chosen attribute increased by 1.
18	Character receives 2-12 additional hit points, added to his permanent total.
19	Character's chosen attribute increased by 2.
20	DM's choice: Wish, or character's chosen attribute increased by 3.

Note on Increasing Attributes: The fountain will not increase any attribute beyond 19.

MAXAL—CITY BY THE SEA: This city does not boast the grandeur or size of Tulom-Itzi, but it has several other features to mark it as unique and important.

Most significantly, it is one of the few walled cities of Maztica. Also, it commands a spectacularly beautiful setting, and is by far the largest community in the southern portion of the peninsula.

The city is inhabited by the Itza peoples, with a current population



of perhaps 20,000—including those who live in the outlying farming communities. There is no easy overland connection to Tulom-Itzi—nor to any other city or settlement—so that Maxal has developed a sense of remoteness.

The inhabitants do boast a high level of seamanship, for Mazticans. They use huge canoes, capable of carrying forty or fifty warriors, to cross the sea of Azul. They even engage in limited trading with the villages of the Green Folk on the western shores of that sea.

Maxal rests upon the headland of a narrow jut of land that overlooks a shallow bay. The city itself stretches along the top of a bluff that is some one hundred feet above the shoreline below. The cliff is not terribly steep, and paths lead up and down its ravine-streaked face in a many different places. The base of the cliff is lined with a fringe of smooth beach and azure, coral-strewn water.

A stretch of arable land extends inland from Maxal, and the city's mayz, beans, and cocoa are grown there. However, an equal amount of Maxal's sustenance comes from the sea, for the waters of the bay are rich in fish and kelp—both important sources of food for the Itza peoples who dwell this far south.

Maxal is dominated by one great pyramid, a structure that rests on the highest promontory overlooking the waters below. About a dozen other stone buildings surround the pyramid—these include temples to Qotal and Azul, a sweatlodge for the few knights of the city, and large houses for the most influential chief and priest. A large marketplace occupies the center of the main compound. Much bartering and

trading goes on here, most commonly during the last two hours of the morning.

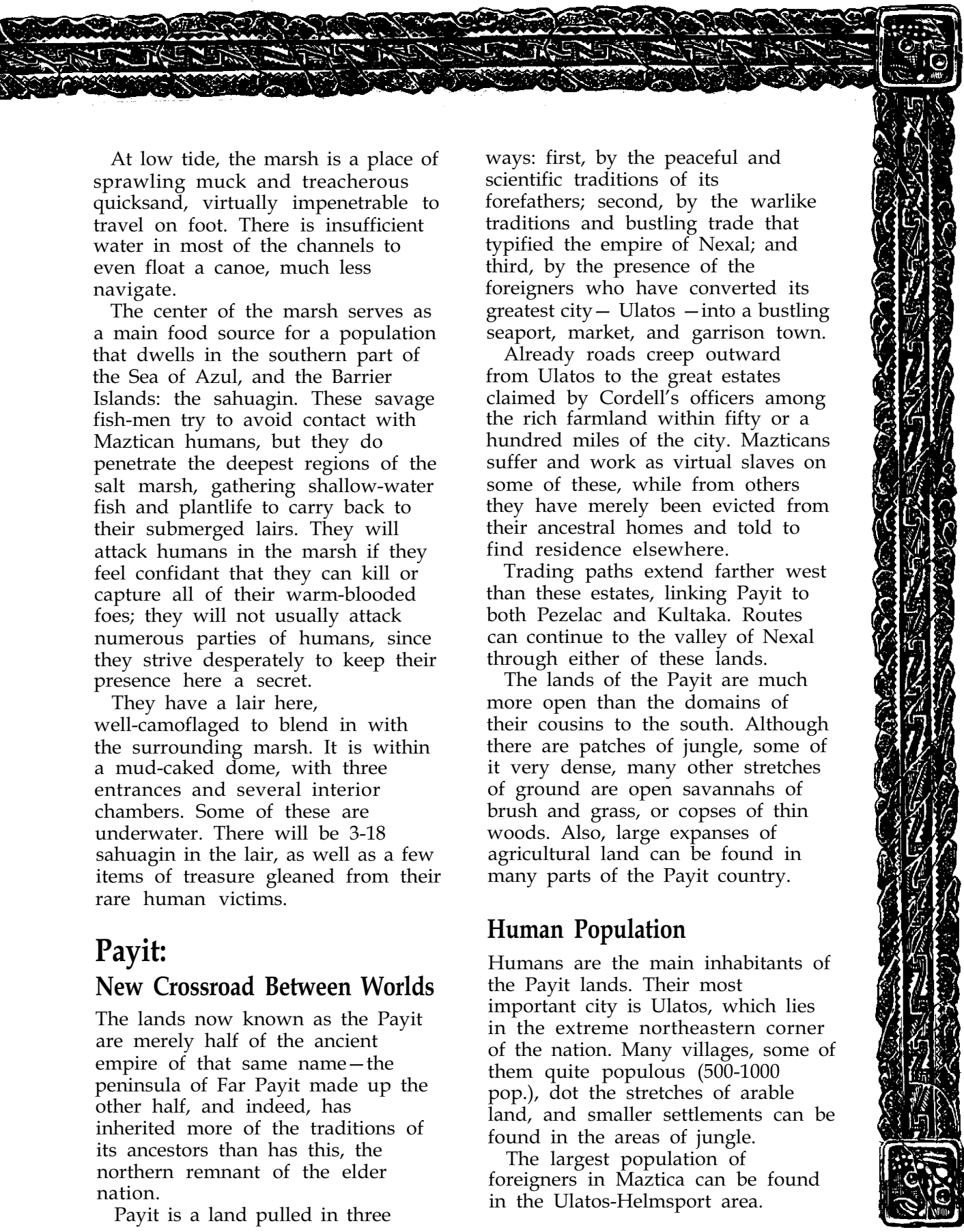
The stone wall of the city is about fifteen feet high, and surrounds this central compound and several hundred abode houses. Platforms are placed at twenty yard intervals along the inside of the wall; each can be reached by a ladder, and can hold 10 human warriors.

The population that does not dwell within the walls lives in houses of wood, thatch, or adobe, and these are scattered for several miles along the shore and inland. They range from permanent to extremely temporary. Most of the permanent structures will be surrounded by gardens of flowers and paths of white gravel of crushed shells.

The city has about a dozen of the great canoes, and these are kept on the beach just within the sheltering curve of the bay. They rest on the sand, safely out of reach of even the highest waves. Several hundred smaller canoes also line the shore here.

THE GREAT SALT MARSH: This is the fetid swamp that occupies the extreme southern tip of the Payit peninsula, directly across the bay from the city of Maxal. In many ways it is characteristic of all Maztican swamps, with its thorns, its disease, its lurking snakes and crocodiles.

Because of its proximity to the sea, the saltmarsh is inundated at high tide. It has many pools and channels, and these fill with salt water, and the forms of life—crabs, mollusks, etc.—carried in by the waves. Some of these wider channels can be negotiated by canoe at times of high tide.



At low tide, the marsh is a place of sprawling muck and treacherous quicksand, virtually impenetrable to travel on foot. There is insufficient water in most of the channels to even float a canoe, much less navigate.

The center of the marsh serves as a main food source for a population that dwells in the southern part of the Sea of Azul, and the Barrier Islands: the sahuagin. These savage fish-men try to avoid contact with Maztican humans, but they do penetrate the deepest regions of the salt marsh, gathering shallow-water fish and plantlife to carry back to their submerged lairs. They will attack humans in the marsh if they feel confident that they can kill or capture all of their warm-blooded foes; they will not usually attack numerous parties of humans, since they strive desperately to keep their presence here a secret.

They have a lair here, well-camouflaged to blend in with the surrounding marsh. It is within a mud-caked dome, with three entrances and several interior chambers. Some of these are underwater. There will be 3-18 sahuagin in the lair, as well as a few items of treasure gleaned from their rare human victims.

Payit:

New Crossroad Between Worlds

The lands now known as the Payit are merely half of the ancient empire of that same name—the peninsula of Far Payit made up the other half, and indeed, has inherited more of the traditions of its ancestors than has this, the northern remnant of the elder nation.

Payit is a land pulled in three

ways: first, by the peaceful and scientific traditions of its forefathers; second, by the warlike traditions and bustling trade that typified the empire of Nexal; and third, by the presence of the foreigners who have converted its greatest city—Ulatos—into a bustling seaport, market, and garrison town.

Already roads creep outward from Ulatos to the great estates claimed by Cordell's officers among the rich farmland within fifty or a hundred miles of the city. Mazticans suffer and work as virtual slaves on some of these, while from others they have merely been evicted from their ancestral homes and told to find residence elsewhere.

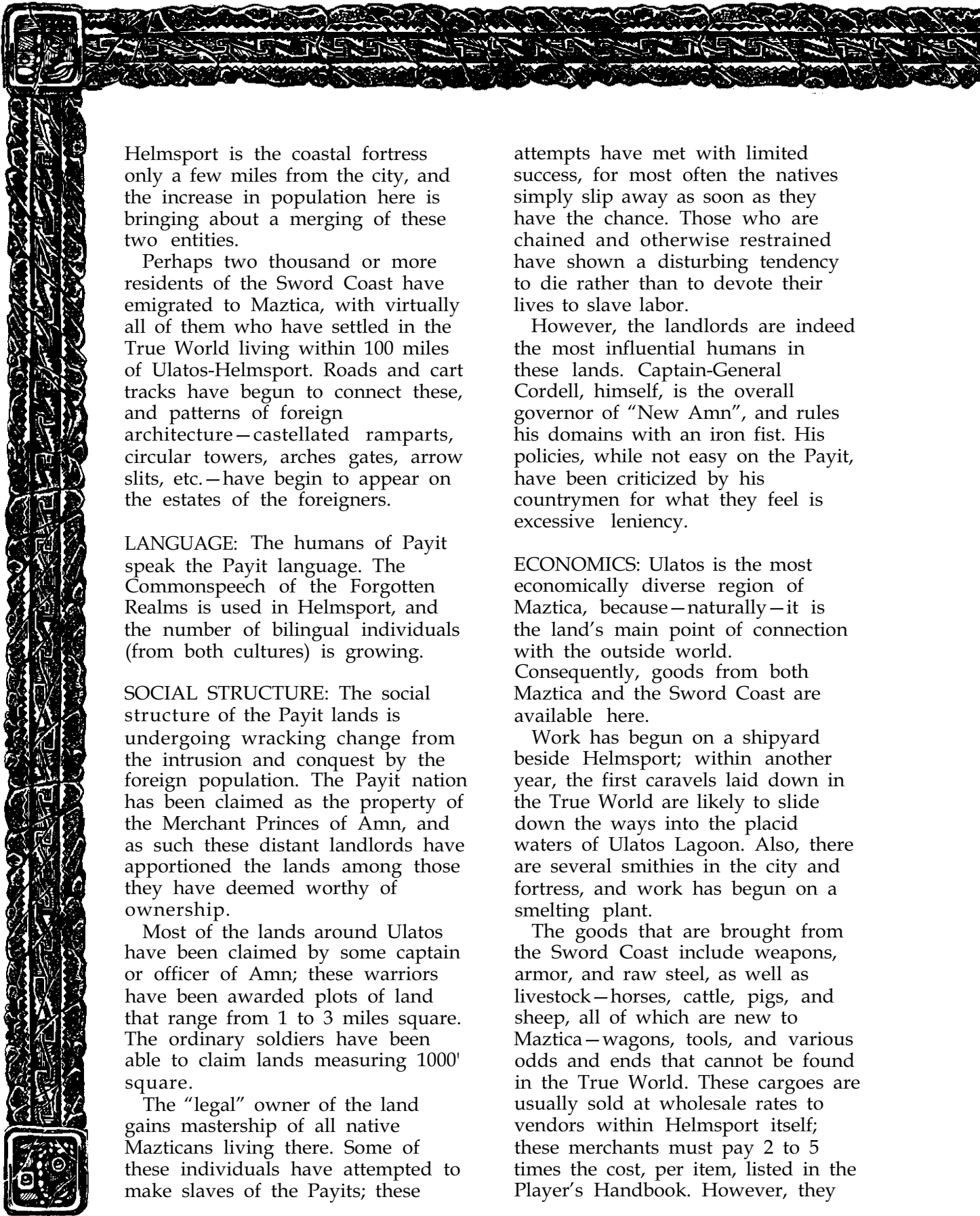
Trading paths extend farther west than these estates, linking Payit to both Pezelac and Kultaka. Routes can continue to the valley of Nexal through either of these lands.

The lands of the Payit are much more open than the domains of their cousins to the south. Although there are patches of jungle, some of it very dense, many other stretches of ground are open savannahs of brush and grass, or copses of thin woods. Also, large expanses of agricultural land can be found in many parts of the Payit country.

Human Population

Humans are the main inhabitants of the Payit lands. Their most important city is Ulatos, which lies in the extreme northeastern corner of the nation. Many villages, some of them quite populous (500-1000 pop.), dot the stretches of arable land, and smaller settlements can be found in the areas of jungle.

The largest population of foreigners in Maztica can be found in the Ulatos-Helmsport area.



Helmsport is the coastal fortress only a few miles from the city, and the increase in population here is bringing about a merging of these two entities.

Perhaps two thousand or more residents of the Sword Coast have emigrated to Maztica, with virtually all of them who have settled in the True World living within 100 miles of Ulatos-Helmsport. Roads and cart tracks have begun to connect these, and patterns of foreign architecture—castellated ramparts, circular towers, arches gates, arrow slits, etc.—have begun to appear on the estates of the foreigners.

LANGUAGE: The humans of Payit speak the Payit language. The Commonspeech of the Forgotten Realms is used in Helmsport, and the number of bilingual individuals (from both cultures) is growing.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The social structure of the Payit lands is undergoing wracking change from the intrusion and conquest by the foreign population. The Payit nation has been claimed as the property of the Merchant Princes of Amn, and as such these distant landlords have apportioned the lands among those they have deemed worthy of ownership.

Most of the lands around Ulatos have been claimed by some captain or officer of Amn; these warriors have been awarded plots of land that range from 1 to 3 miles square. The ordinary soldiers have been able to claim lands measuring 1000' square.

The “legal” owner of the land gains mastership of all native Mazticans living there. Some of these individuals have attempted to make slaves of the Payits; these

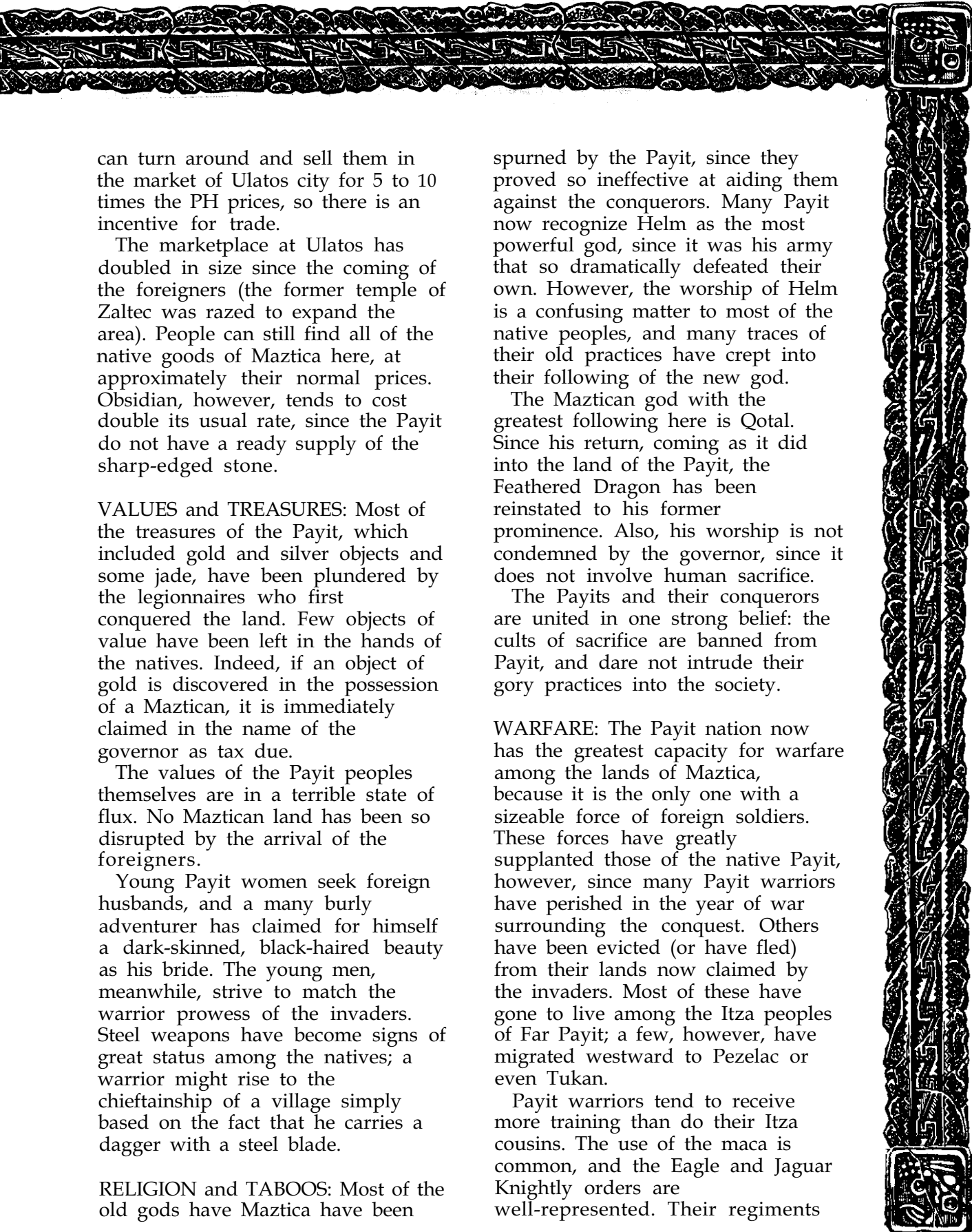
attempts have met with limited success, for most often the natives simply slip away as soon as they have the chance. Those who are chained and otherwise restrained have shown a disturbing tendency to die rather than to devote their lives to slave labor.

However, the landlords are indeed the most influential humans in these lands. Captain-General Cordell, himself, is the overall governor of “New Amn”, and rules his domains with an iron fist. His policies, while not easy on the Payit, have been criticized by his countrymen for what they feel is excessive leniency.

ECONOMICS: Ulatos is the most economically diverse region of Maztica, because—naturally—it is the land’s main point of connection with the outside world. Consequently, goods from both Maztica and the Sword Coast are available here.

Work has begun on a shipyard beside Helmsport; within another year, the first caravels laid down in the True World are likely to slide down the ways into the placid waters of Ulatos Lagoon. Also, there are several smithies in the city and fortress, and work has begun on a smelting plant.

The goods that are brought from the Sword Coast include weapons, armor, and raw steel, as well as livestock—horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep, all of which are new to Maztica—wagons, tools, and various odds and ends that cannot be found in the True World. These cargoes are usually sold at wholesale rates to vendors within Helmsport itself; these merchants must pay 2 to 5 times the cost, per item, listed in the Player’s Handbook. However, they



can turn around and sell them in the market of Ulatos city for 5 to 10 times the PH prices, so there is an incentive for trade.

The marketplace at Ulatos has doubled in size since the coming of the foreigners (the former temple of Zaltec was razed to expand the area). People can still find all of the native goods of Maztica here, at approximately their normal prices. Obsidian, however, tends to cost double its usual rate, since the Payit do not have a ready supply of the sharp-edged stone.

VALUES and TREASURES: Most of the treasures of the Payit, which included gold and silver objects and some jade, have been plundered by the legionnaires who first conquered the land. Few objects of value have been left in the hands of the natives. Indeed, if an object of gold is discovered in the possession of a Maztican, it is immediately claimed in the name of the governor as tax due.

The values of the Payit peoples themselves are in a terrible state of flux. No Maztican land has been so disrupted by the arrival of the foreigners.

Young Payit women seek foreign husbands, and a many burly adventurer has claimed for himself a dark-skinned, black-haired beauty as his bride. The young men, meanwhile, strive to match the warrior prowess of the invaders. Steel weapons have become signs of great status among the natives; a warrior might rise to the chieftainship of a village simply based on the fact that he carries a dagger with a steel blade.

RELIGION and TABOOS: Most of the old gods have Maztica have been

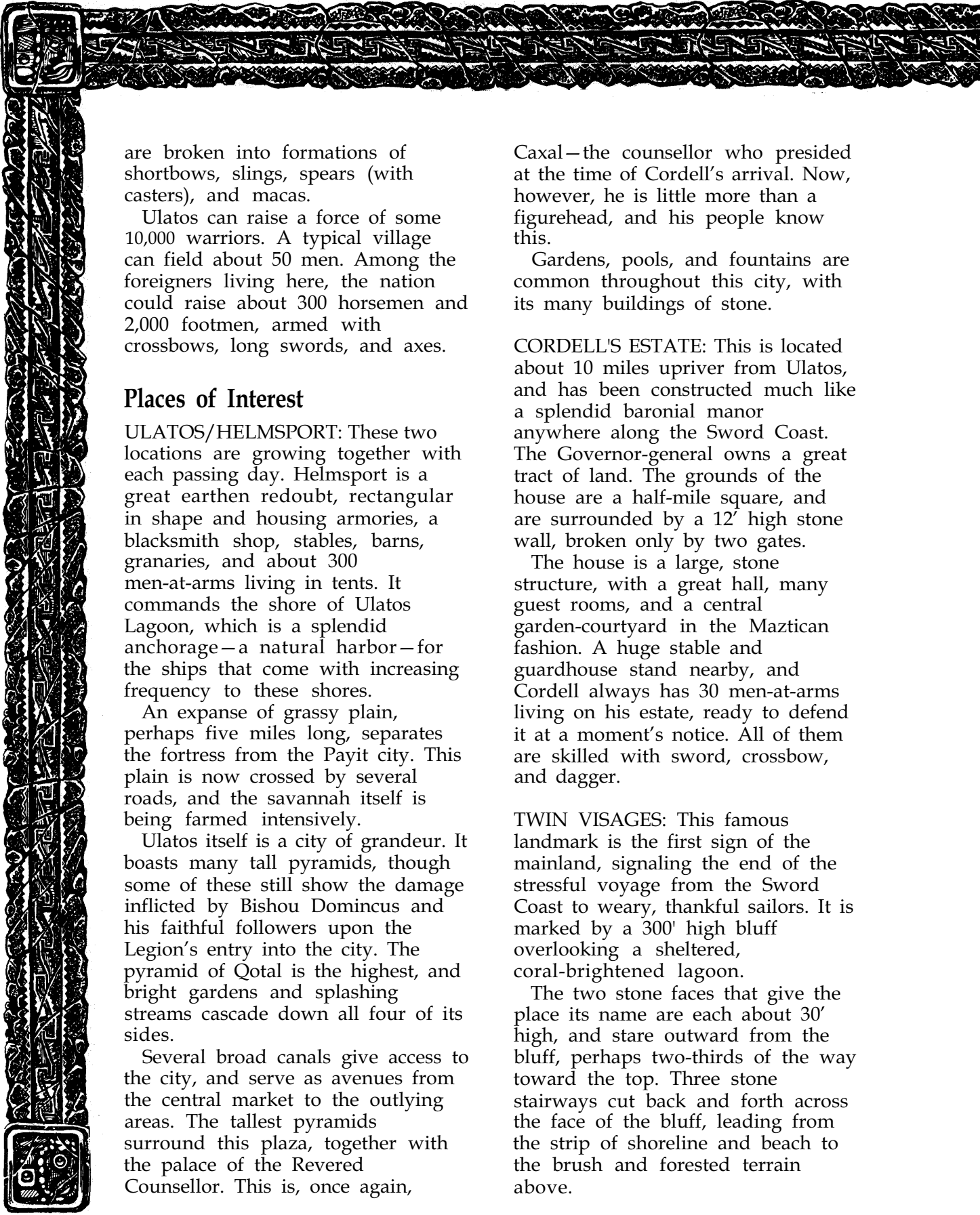
spurned by the Payit, since they proved so ineffective at aiding them against the conquerors. Many Payit now recognize Helm as the most powerful god, since it was his army that so dramatically defeated their own. However, the worship of Helm is a confusing matter to most of the native peoples, and many traces of their old practices have crept into their following of the new god.

The Maztican god with the greatest following here is Qotal. Since his return, coming as it did into the land of the Payit, the Feathered Dragon has been reinstated to his former prominence. Also, his worship is not condemned by the governor, since it does not involve human sacrifice.

The Payits and their conquerors are united in one strong belief: the cults of sacrifice are banned from Payit, and dare not intrude their gory practices into the society.

WARFARE: The Payit nation now has the greatest capacity for warfare among the lands of Maztica, because it is the only one with a sizeable force of foreign soldiers. These forces have greatly supplanted those of the native Payit, however, since many Payit warriors have perished in the year of war surrounding the conquest. Others have been evicted (or have fled) from their lands now claimed by the invaders. Most of these have gone to live among the Itza peoples of Far Payit; a few, however, have migrated westward to Pezelac or even Tukan.

Payit warriors tend to receive more training than do their Itza cousins. The use of the maca is common, and the Eagle and Jaguar Knightly orders are well-represented. Their regiments



are broken into formations of shortbows, slings, spears (with casters), and macas.

Ulatos can raise a force of some 10,000 warriors. A typical village can field about 50 men. Among the foreigners living here, the nation could raise about 300 horsemen and 2,000 footmen, armed with crossbows, long swords, and axes.

Places of Interest

ULATOS/HELMSPORT: These two locations are growing together with each passing day. Helmsport is a great earthen redoubt, rectangular in shape and housing armories, a blacksmith shop, stables, barns, granaries, and about 300 men-at-arms living in tents. It commands the shore of Ulatos Lagoon, which is a splendid anchorage—a natural harbor—for the ships that come with increasing frequency to these shores.

An expanse of grassy plain, perhaps five miles long, separates the fortress from the Payit city. This plain is now crossed by several roads, and the savannah itself is being farmed intensively.

Ulatos itself is a city of grandeur. It boasts many tall pyramids, though some of these still show the damage inflicted by Bishou Domincus and his faithful followers upon the Legion's entry into the city. The pyramid of Qotal is the highest, and bright gardens and splashing streams cascade down all four of its sides.

Several broad canals give access to the city, and serve as avenues from the central market to the outlying areas. The tallest pyramids surround this plaza, together with the palace of the Revered Counsellor. This is, once again,

Caxal—the counsellor who presided at the time of Cordell's arrival. Now, however, he is little more than a figurehead, and his people know this.

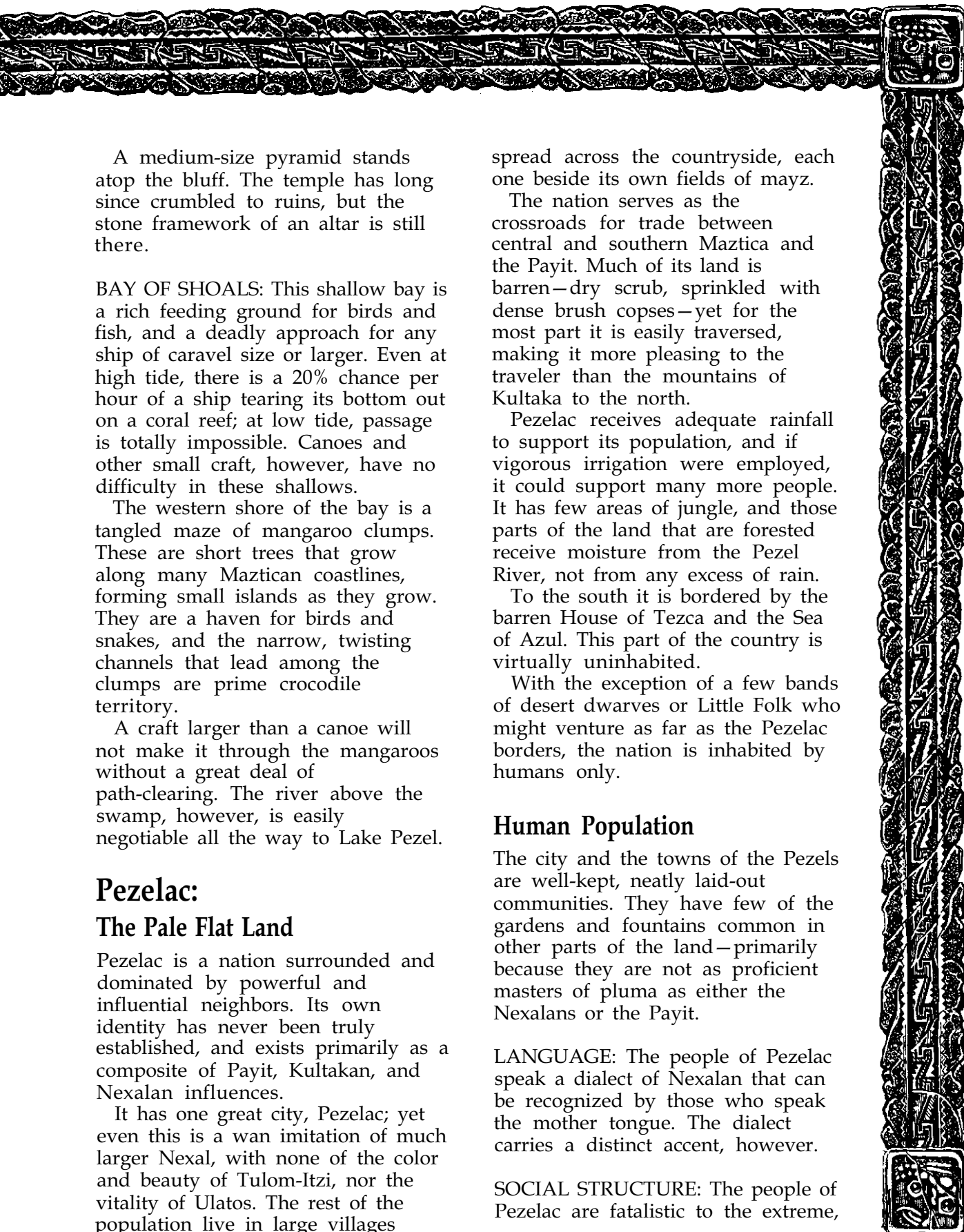
Gardens, pools, and fountains are common throughout this city, with its many buildings of stone.

CORDELL'S ESTATE: This is located about 10 miles upriver from Ulatos, and has been constructed much like a splendid baronial manor anywhere along the Sword Coast. The Governor-general owns a great tract of land. The grounds of the house are a half-mile square, and are surrounded by a 12' high stone wall, broken only by two gates.

The house is a large, stone structure, with a great hall, many guest rooms, and a central garden-courtyard in the Maztican fashion. A huge stable and guardhouse stand nearby, and Cordell always has 30 men-at-arms living on his estate, ready to defend it at a moment's notice. All of them are skilled with sword, crossbow, and dagger.

TWIN VISAGES: This famous landmark is the first sign of the mainland, signaling the end of the stressful voyage from the Sword Coast to weary, thankful sailors. It is marked by a 300' high bluff overlooking a sheltered, coral-brightened lagoon.

The two stone faces that give the place its name are each about 30' high, and stare outward from the bluff, perhaps two-thirds of the way toward the top. Three stone stairways cut back and forth across the face of the bluff, leading from the strip of shoreline and beach to the brush and forested terrain above.



A medium-size pyramid stands atop the bluff. The temple has long since crumbled to ruins, but the stone framework of an altar is still there.

BAY OF SHOALS: This shallow bay is a rich feeding ground for birds and fish, and a deadly approach for any ship of caravel size or larger. Even at high tide, there is a 20% chance per hour of a ship tearing its bottom out on a coral reef; at low tide, passage is totally impossible. Canoes and other small craft, however, have no difficulty in these shallows.

The western shore of the bay is a tangled maze of mangaroo clumps. These are short trees that grow along many Maztican coastlines, forming small islands as they grow. They are a haven for birds and snakes, and the narrow, twisting channels that lead among the clumps are prime crocodile territory.

A craft larger than a canoe will not make it through the mangaroos without a great deal of path-clearing. The river above the swamp, however, is easily negotiable all the way to Lake Pezel.

Pezelac:

The Pale Flat Land

Pezelac is a nation surrounded and dominated by powerful and influential neighbors. Its own identity has never been truly established, and exists primarily as a composite of Payit, Kultakan, and Nexalan influences.

It has one great city, Pezelac; yet even this is a wan imitation of much larger Nexal, with none of the color and beauty of Tulom-Itzi, nor the vitality of Ulatos. The rest of the population live in large villages

spread across the countryside, each one beside its own fields of mayz.

The nation serves as the crossroads for trade between central and southern Maztica and the Payit. Much of its land is barren—dry scrub, sprinkled with dense brush copses—yet for the most part it is easily traversed, making it more pleasing to the traveler than the mountains of Kultaka to the north.

Pezelac receives adequate rainfall to support its population, and if vigorous irrigation were employed, it could support many more people. It has few areas of jungle, and those parts of the land that are forested receive moisture from the Pezel River, not from any excess of rain.

To the south it is bordered by the barren House of Tezca and the Sea of Azul. This part of the country is virtually uninhabited.

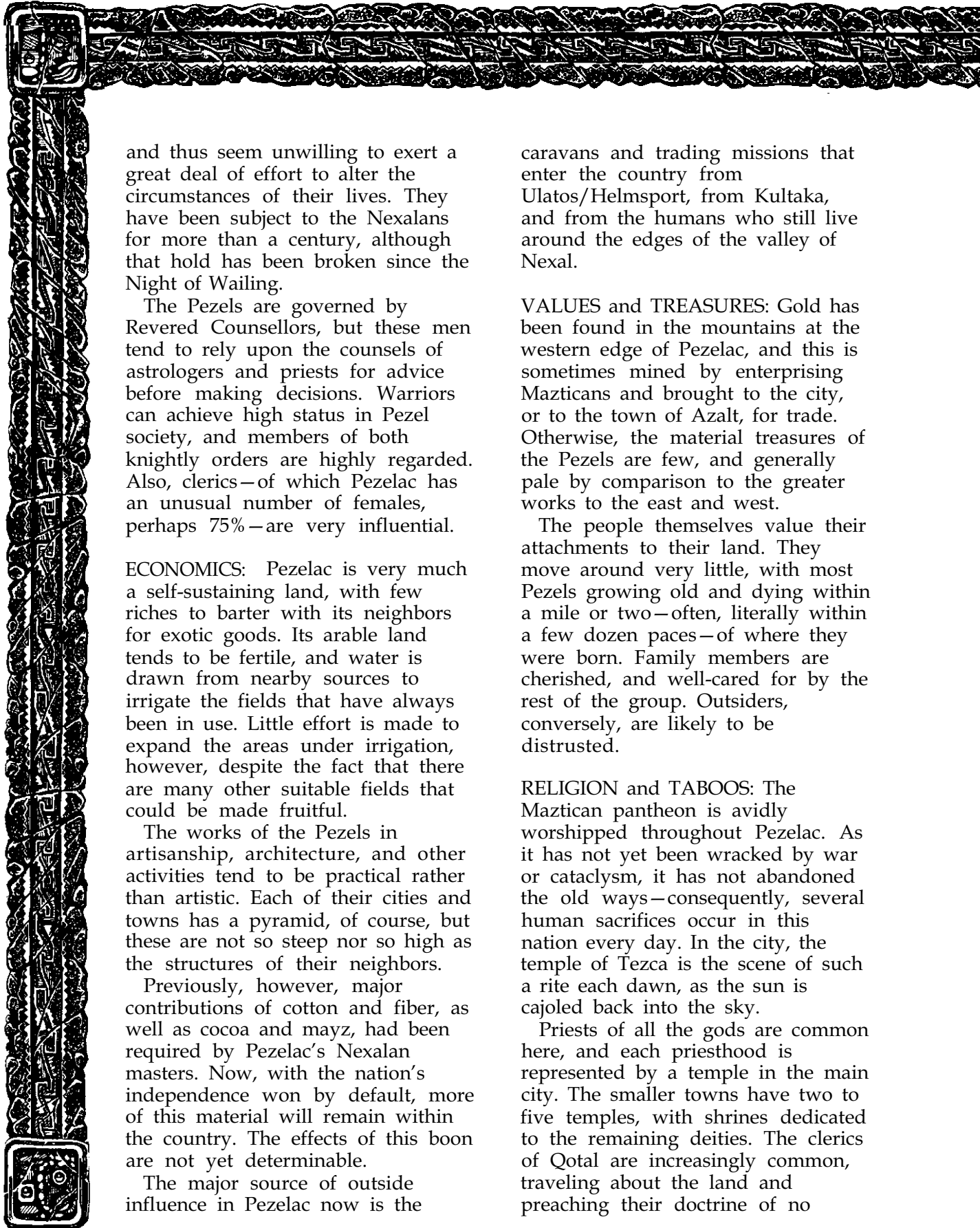
With the exception of a few bands of desert dwarves or Little Folk who might venture as far as the Pezelac borders, the nation is inhabited by humans only.

Human Population

The city and the towns of the Pezels are well-kept, neatly laid-out communities. They have few of the gardens and fountains common in other parts of the land—primarily because they are not as proficient masters of pluma as either the Nexalans or the Payit.

LANGUAGE: The people of Pezelac speak a dialect of Nexalan that can be recognized by those who speak the mother tongue. The dialect carries a distinct accent, however.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The people of Pezelac are fatalistic to the extreme,



and thus seem unwilling to exert a great deal of effort to alter the circumstances of their lives. They have been subject to the Nexalans for more than a century, although that hold has been broken since the Night of Wailing.

The Pezels are governed by Revered Counsellors, but these men tend to rely upon the counsels of astrologers and priests for advice before making decisions. Warriors can achieve high status in Pezel society, and members of both knightly orders are highly regarded. Also, clerics—of which Pezelac has an unusual number of females, perhaps 75%—are very influential.

ECONOMICS: Pezelac is very much a self-sustaining land, with few riches to barter with its neighbors for exotic goods. Its arable land tends to be fertile, and water is drawn from nearby sources to irrigate the fields that have always been in use. Little effort is made to expand the areas under irrigation, however, despite the fact that there are many other suitable fields that could be made fruitful.

The works of the Pezels in artisanship, architecture, and other activities tend to be practical rather than artistic. Each of their cities and towns has a pyramid, of course, but these are not so steep nor so high as the structures of their neighbors.

Previously, however, major contributions of cotton and fiber, as well as cocoa and mayz, had been required by Pezelac's Nexalan masters. Now, with the nation's independence won by default, more of this material will remain within the country. The effects of this boon are not yet determinable.

The major source of outside influence in Pezelac now is the

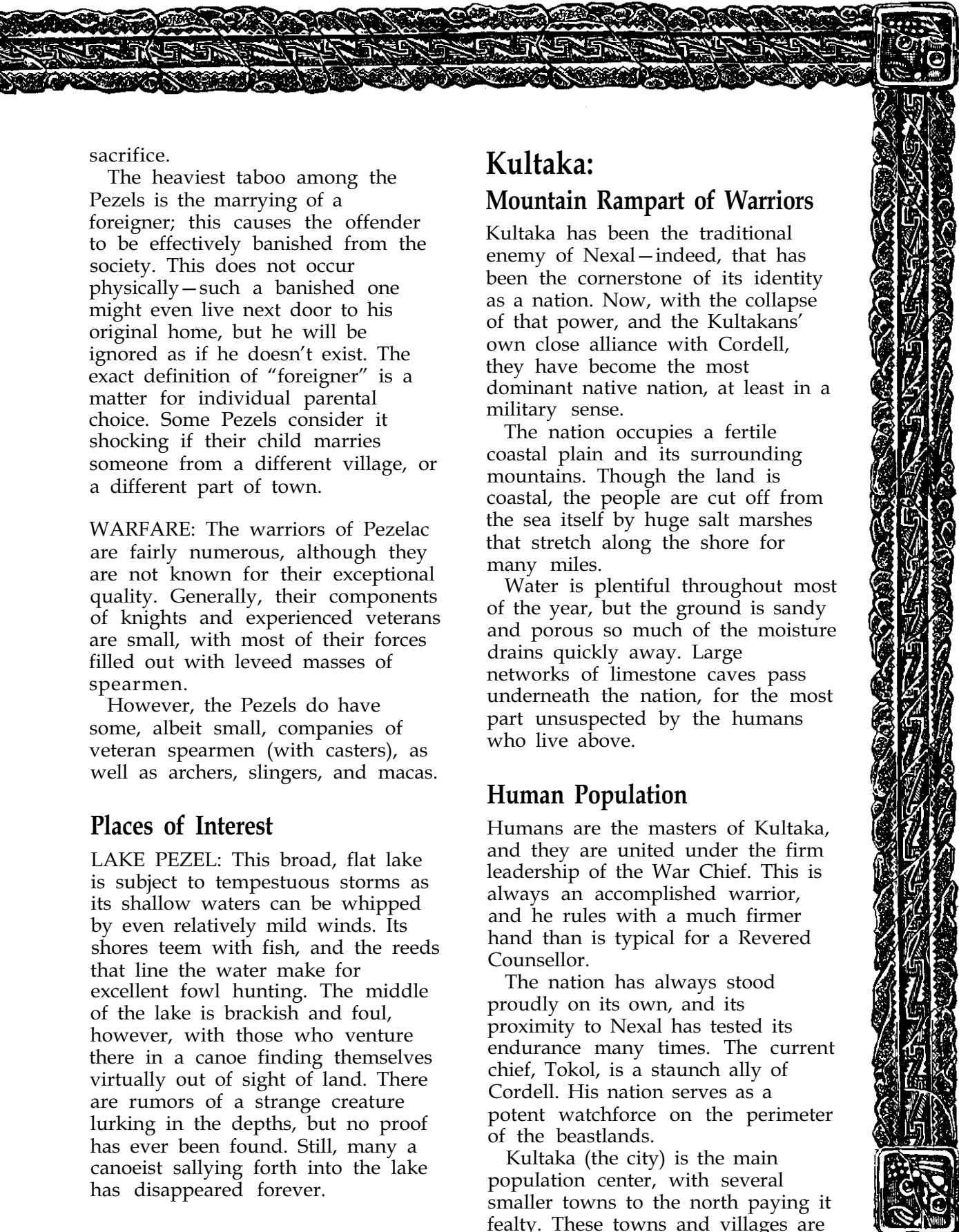
caravans and trading missions that enter the country from Ulatos/Helmsport, from Kultaka, and from the humans who still live around the edges of the valley of Nexal.

VALUES and TREASURES: Gold has been found in the mountains at the western edge of Pezelac, and this is sometimes mined by enterprising Mazticans and brought to the city, or to the town of Azalt, for trade. Otherwise, the material treasures of the Pezels are few, and generally pale by comparison to the greater works to the east and west.

The people themselves value their attachments to their land. They move around very little, with most Pezels growing old and dying within a mile or two—often, literally within a few dozen paces—of where they were born. Family members are cherished, and well-cared for by the rest of the group. Outsiders, conversely, are likely to be distrusted.

RELIGION and TABOOS: The Maztican pantheon is avidly worshipped throughout Pezelac. As it has not yet been wracked by war or cataclysm, it has not abandoned the old ways—consequently, several human sacrifices occur in this nation every day. In the city, the temple of Tezca is the scene of such a rite each dawn, as the sun is cajoled back into the sky.

Priests of all the gods are common here, and each priesthood is represented by a temple in the main city. The smaller towns have two to five temples, with shrines dedicated to the remaining deities. The clerics of Qotal are increasingly common, traveling about the land and preaching their doctrine of no



sacrifice.

The heaviest taboo among the Pezels is the marrying of a foreigner; this causes the offender to be effectively banished from the society. This does not occur physically—such a banished one might even live next door to his original home, but he will be ignored as if he doesn't exist. The exact definition of "foreigner" is a matter for individual parental choice. Some Pezels consider it shocking if their child marries someone from a different village, or a different part of town.

WARFARE: The warriors of Pezelac are fairly numerous, although they are not known for their exceptional quality. Generally, their components of knights and experienced veterans are small, with most of their forces filled out with leveed masses of spearmen.

However, the Pezels do have some, albeit small, companies of veteran spearmen (with casters), as well as archers, slingers, and macas.

Places of Interest

LAKE PEZEL: This broad, flat lake is subject to tempestuous storms as its shallow waters can be whipped by even relatively mild winds. Its shores teem with fish, and the reeds that line the water make for excellent fowl hunting. The middle of the lake is brackish and foul, however, with those who venture there in a canoe finding themselves virtually out of sight of land. There are rumors of a strange creature lurking in the depths, but no proof has ever been found. Still, many a canoeist sallying forth into the lake has disappeared forever.

Kultaka:

Mountain Rampart of Warriors

Kultaka has been the traditional enemy of Nexal—indeed, that has been the cornerstone of its identity as a nation. Now, with the collapse of that power, and the Kultakans' own close alliance with Cordell, they have become the most dominant native nation, at least in a military sense.

The nation occupies a fertile coastal plain and its surrounding mountains. Though the land is coastal, the people are cut off from the sea itself by huge salt marshes that stretch along the shore for many miles.

Water is plentiful throughout most of the year, but the ground is sandy and porous so much of the moisture drains quickly away. Large networks of limestone caves pass underneath the nation, for the most part unsuspected by the humans who live above.

Human Population

Humans are the masters of Kultaka, and they are united under the firm leadership of the War Chief. This is always an accomplished warrior, and he rules with a much firmer hand than is typical for a Revered Counsellor.

The nation has always stood proudly on its own, and its proximity to Nexal has tested its endurance many times. The current chief, Tokol, is a staunch ally of Cordell. His nation serves as a potent watchforce on the perimeter of the beastlands.

Kultaka (the city) is the main population center, with several smaller towns to the north paying it fealty. These towns and villages are



quick to send troops or food in answer to the commands from the city.

LANGUAGE: The Kultakans speak their own language. It can be partially (10-60%) understood by those who speak Nexalan, and vice versa.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The War Chief represents the pinnacle of Kultakan society, in power, prestige, and even wealth—inasmuch as wealth is measured among Mazticans. Tokol is the son of Takamal, Kultaka's most esteemed chief, and he strives to bring his nation back to its sense of pride and greatness. The victory over the beasts at Helmsport has done much to accomplish this.

His ablest lieutenants are the nobles of the city, and they enjoy privileges almost equal to their chieftain. Priests enjoy some high status as well—especially those of Tezca and Zaltec. Merchants and traders tend to be distrusted and despised.

ECONOMICS: Because of their isolated position, Kultakans have developed little trade with their Maztican neighbors. They are a self-sufficient people who produce a good standard of living, and a high level of accomplishment in pluma, hishna, and construction, as well as warfare.

Currently, trade with Ulatos and Helmsport has begun to flourish. Gold has been discovered in the mountains to the east of Kultaka City, and despite Tokol's best efforts to retain control of these mines Cordell has already sent dwarven experts to "supervise" the exploitation of these. The supervision shows every sign of

becoming complete control, as more and more miners will be brought in.

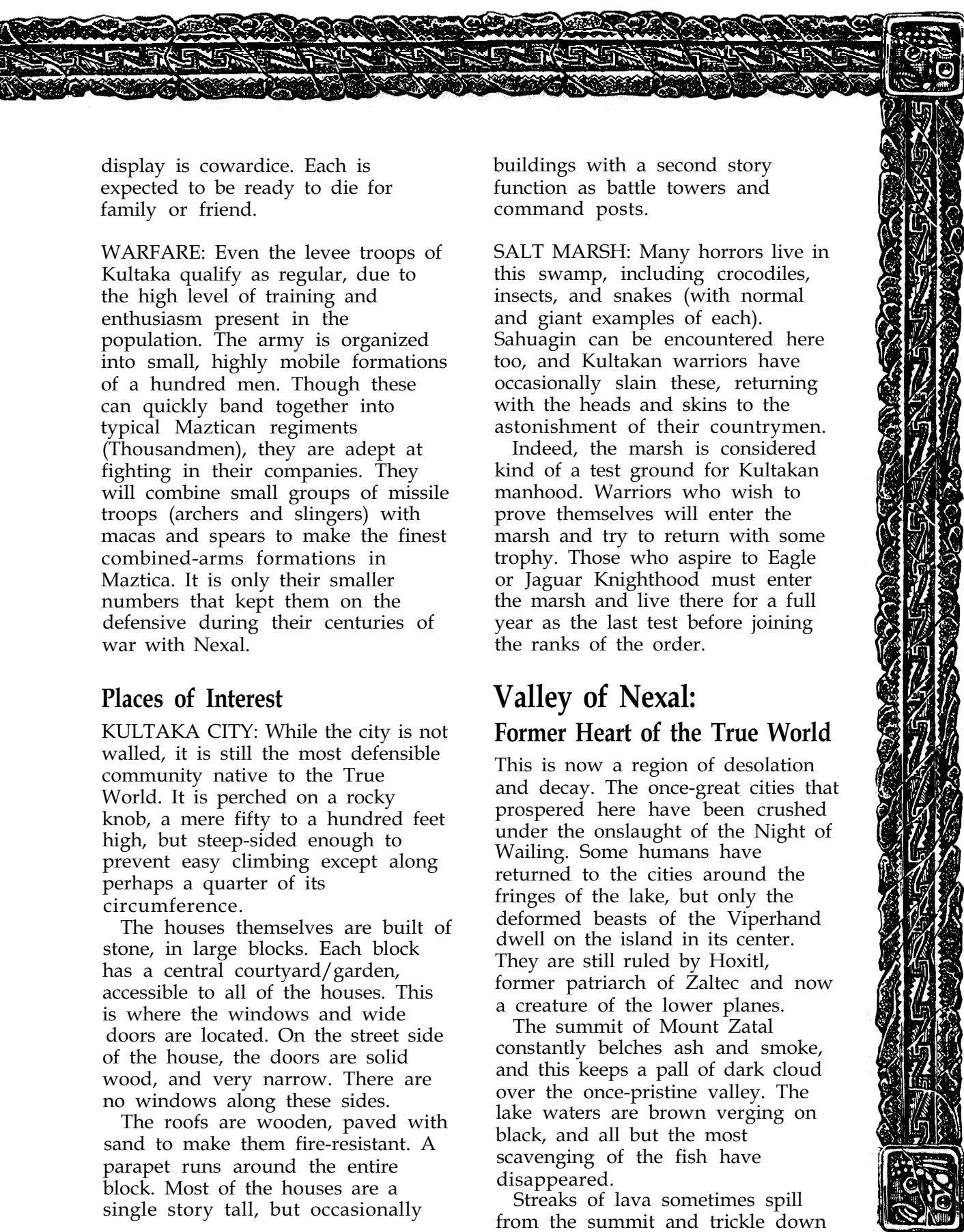
VALUES and TREASURES: The combative arts are the most highly praised skills in Kultakan society, and most aspects of its other crafts are devoted to combat. Buildings and temples are designed as fortifications, pluma and hishna are used to enhance fighting capability and weaponry, and even the food is traditionally blessed for its ability to keep a warrior strong.

The hishna, in particular, is employed to create the nation's greatest treasures. Macas, spears, arrows, and knives of various enchanted capabilities are traditionally made as the *talisman* of a hishna shaper who achieves mastery of his art. These magical weapons include simple +1, +2, and +3 modifications of the typical weapon, but also some unique and more potent arms as well. These include the equivalents of many of the magical weapons listed in the DMG.

RELIGION and TABOOS: Kultaka is in the unique position of a nation whose primary deity is Zaltec, the typically bloodthirsty god of war—yet whose priests have been forbidden to perform sacrifices. This edict came from Cordell, who rationalized to Tokol that the self-bloodletting practice had weakened the Kultakan nation, allowed its defeat at the hands of the Golden Legion.

Thus, the priests continue the rites of Zaltec with animal sacrifices, and the warrior nation continues to worship the god of war.

The greatest taboo and shame that a man or woman of Kultaka can



display is cowardice. Each is expected to be ready to die for family or friend.

WARFARE: Even the levee troops of Kultaka qualify as regular, due to the high level of training and enthusiasm present in the population. The army is organized into small, highly mobile formations of a hundred men. Though these can quickly band together into typical Maztican regiments (Thousandmen), they are adept at fighting in their companies. They will combine small groups of missile troops (archers and slingers) with macas and spears to make the finest combined-arms formations in Maztica. It is only their smaller numbers that kept them on the defensive during their centuries of war with Nexal.

Places of Interest

KULTAKA CITY: While the city is not walled, it is still the most defensible community native to the True World. It is perched on a rocky knob, a mere fifty to a hundred feet high, but steep-sided enough to prevent easy climbing except along perhaps a quarter of its circumference.

The houses themselves are built of stone, in large blocks. Each block has a central courtyard/garden, accessible to all of the houses. This is where the windows and wide doors are located. On the street side of the house, the doors are solid wood, and very narrow. There are no windows along these sides.

The roofs are wooden, paved with sand to make them fire-resistant. A parapet runs around the entire block. Most of the houses are a single story tall, but occasionally

buildings with a second story function as battle towers and command posts.

SALT MARSH: Many horrors live in this swamp, including crocodiles, insects, and snakes (with normal and giant examples of each). Sahuagin can be encountered here too, and Kultakan warriors have occasionally slain these, returning with the heads and skins to the astonishment of their countrymen.

Indeed, the marsh is considered kind of a test ground for Kultakan manhood. Warriors who wish to prove themselves will enter the marsh and try to return with some trophy. Those who aspire to Eagle or Jaguar Knighthood must enter the marsh and live there for a full year as the last test before joining the ranks of the order.

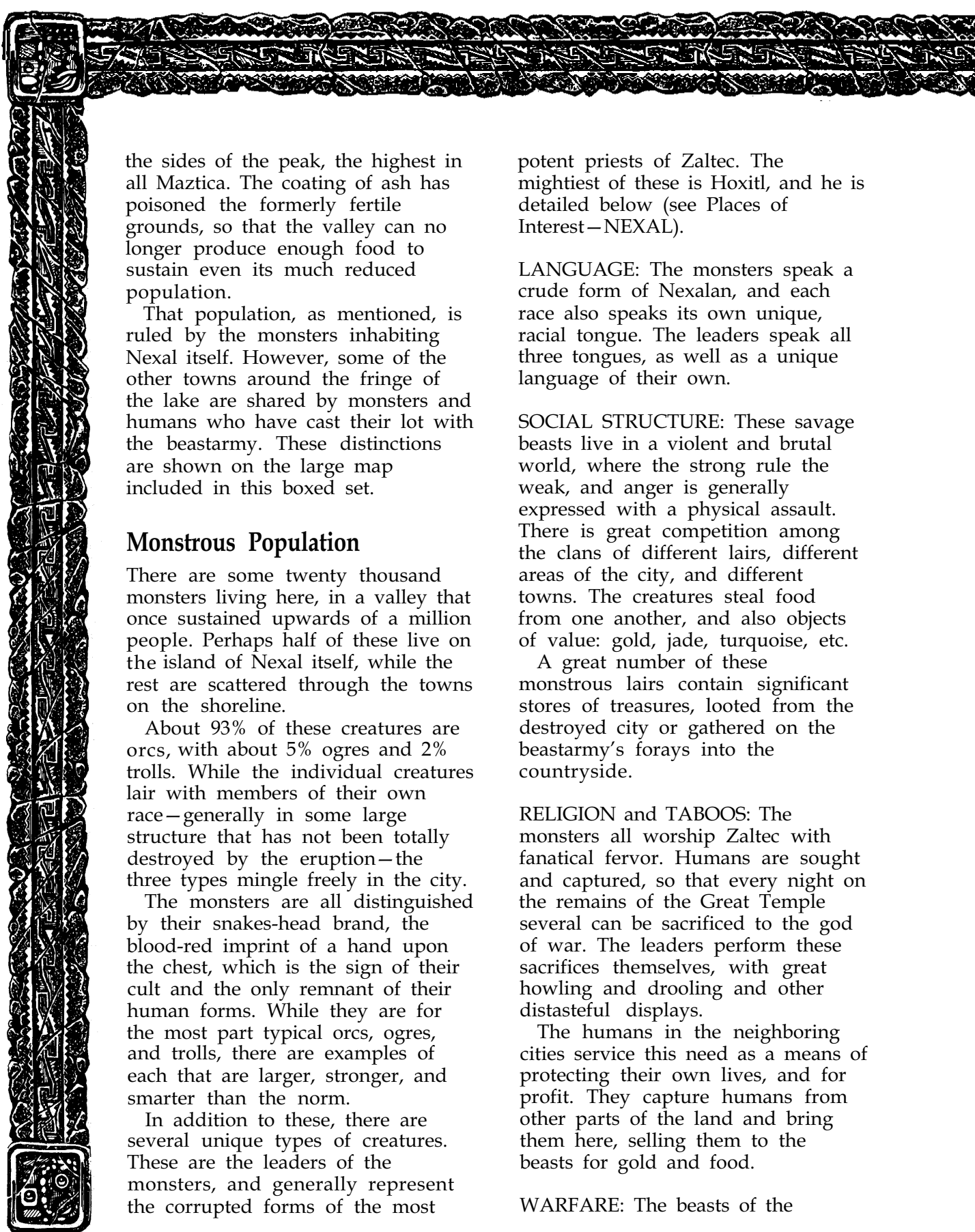
Valley of Nexal:

Former Heart of the True World

This is now a region of desolation and decay. The once-great cities that prospered here have been crushed under the onslaught of the Night of Wailing. Some humans have returned to the cities around the fringes of the lake, but only the deformed beasts of the Viperhand dwell on the island in its center. They are still ruled by Hoxitl, former patriarch of Zaltec and now a creature of the lower planes.

The summit of Mount Zatal constantly belches ash and smoke, and this keeps a pall of dark cloud over the once-pristine valley. The lake waters are brown verging on black, and all but the most scavenging of the fish have disappeared.

Streaks of lava sometimes spill from the summit and trickle down



the sides of the peak, the highest in all Maztica. The coating of ash has poisoned the formerly fertile grounds, so that the valley can no longer produce enough food to sustain even its much reduced population.

That population, as mentioned, is ruled by the monsters inhabiting Nexal itself. However, some of the other towns around the fringe of the lake are shared by monsters and humans who have cast their lot with the beastarmy. These distinctions are shown on the large map included in this boxed set.

Monstrous Population

There are some twenty thousand monsters living here, in a valley that once sustained upwards of a million people. Perhaps half of these live on the island of Nexal itself, while the rest are scattered through the towns on the shoreline.

About 93% of these creatures are orcs, with about 5% ogres and 2% trolls. While the individual creatures lair with members of their own race—generally in some large structure that has not been totally destroyed by the eruption—the three types mingle freely in the city.

The monsters are all distinguished by their snakes-head brand, the blood-red imprint of a hand upon the chest, which is the sign of their cult and the only remnant of their human forms. While they are for the most part typical orcs, ogres, and trolls, there are examples of each that are larger, stronger, and smarter than the norm.

In addition to these, there are several unique types of creatures. These are the leaders of the monsters, and generally represent the corrupted forms of the most

potent priests of Zaltec. The mightiest of these is Hoxitl, and he is detailed below (see Places of Interest—NEXAL).

LANGUAGE: The monsters speak a crude form of Nexalan, and each race also speaks its own unique, racial tongue. The leaders speak all three tongues, as well as a unique language of their own.

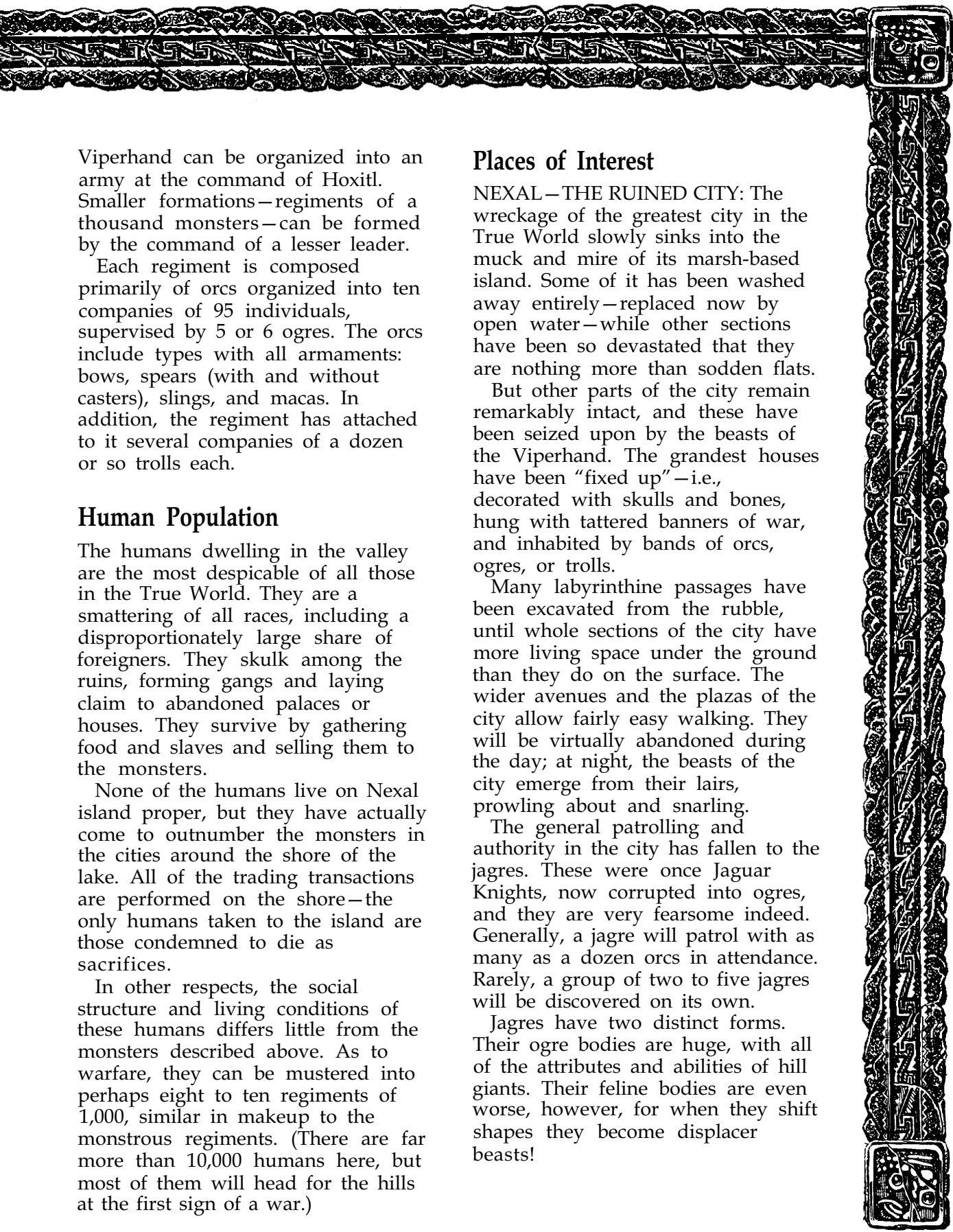
SOCIAL STRUCTURE: These savage beasts live in a violent and brutal world, where the strong rule the weak, and anger is generally expressed with a physical assault. There is great competition among the clans of different lairs, different areas of the city, and different towns. The creatures steal food from one another, and also objects of value: gold, jade, turquoise, etc.

A great number of these monstrous lairs contain significant stores of treasures, looted from the destroyed city or gathered on the beastarmy's forays into the countryside.

RELIGION and TABOOS: The monsters all worship Zaltec with fanatical fervor. Humans are sought and captured, so that every night on the remains of the Great Temple several can be sacrificed to the god of war. The leaders perform these sacrifices themselves, with great howling and drooling and other distasteful displays.

The humans in the neighboring cities service this need as a means of protecting their own lives, and for profit. They capture humans from other parts of the land and bring them here, selling them to the beasts for gold and food.

WARFARE: The beasts of the



Viperhand can be organized into an army at the command of Hoxitl. Smaller formations—regiments of a thousand monsters—can be formed by the command of a lesser leader.

Each regiment is composed primarily of orcs organized into ten companies of 95 individuals, supervised by 5 or 6 ogres. The orcs include types with all armaments: bows, spears (with and without casters), slings, and macas. In addition, the regiment has attached to it several companies of a dozen or so trolls each.

Human Population

The humans dwelling in the valley are the most despicable of all those in the True World. They are a smattering of all races, including a disproportionately large share of foreigners. They skulk among the ruins, forming gangs and laying claim to abandoned palaces or houses. They survive by gathering food and slaves and selling them to the monsters.

None of the humans live on Nexal island proper, but they have actually come to outnumber the monsters in the cities around the shore of the lake. All of the trading transactions are performed on the shore—the only humans taken to the island are those condemned to die as sacrifices.

In other respects, the social structure and living conditions of these humans differs little from the monsters described above. As to warfare, they can be mustered into perhaps eight to ten regiments of 1,000, similar in makeup to the monstrous regiments. (There are far more than 10,000 humans here, but most of them will head for the hills at the first sign of a war.)

Places of Interest

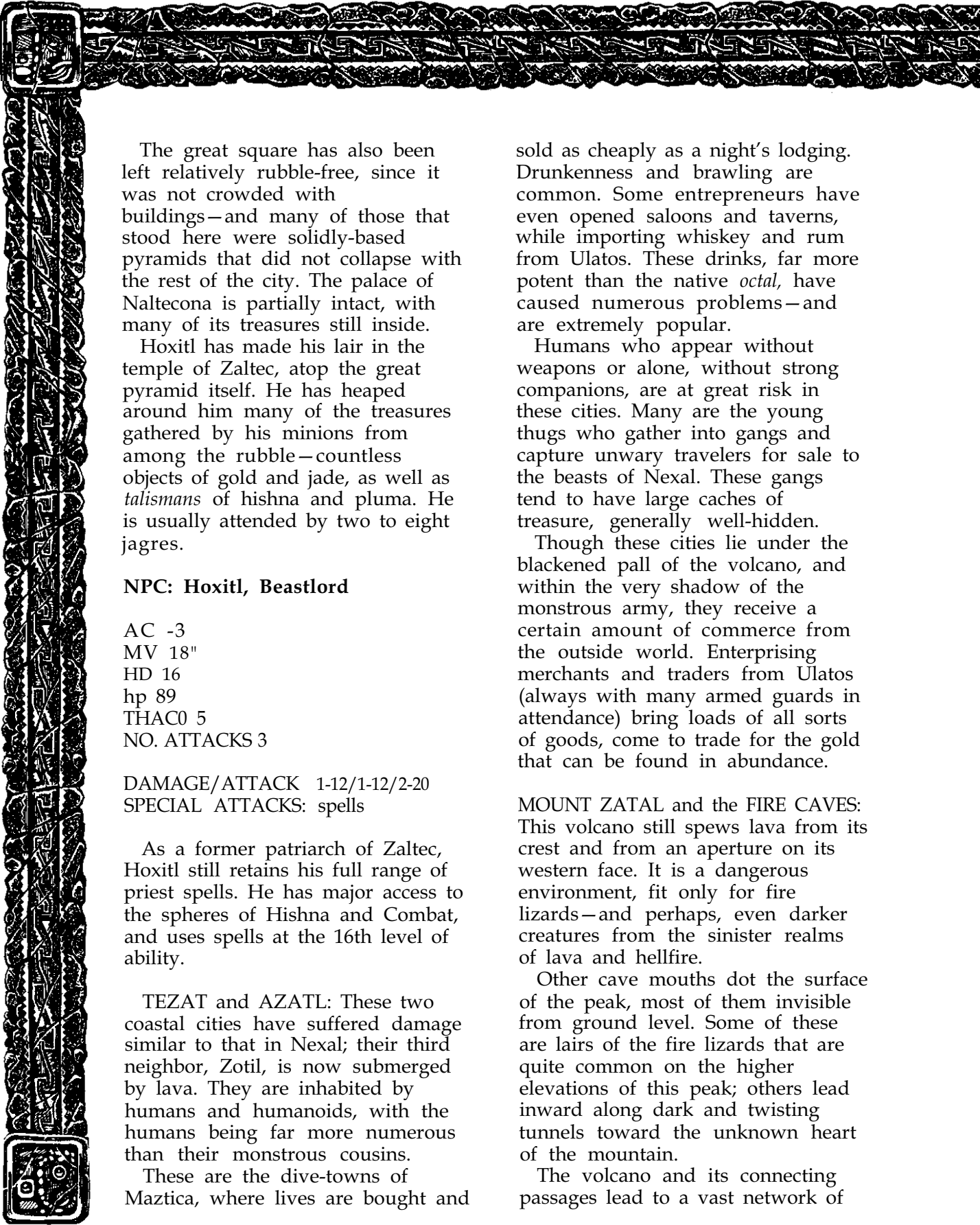
NEXAL—THE RUINED CITY: The wreckage of the greatest city in the True World slowly sinks into the muck and mire of its marsh-based island. Some of it has been washed away entirely—replaced now by open water—while other sections have been so devastated that they are nothing more than sodden flats.

But other parts of the city remain remarkably intact, and these have been seized upon by the beasts of the Viperhand. The grandest houses have been “fixed up”—i.e., decorated with skulls and bones, hung with tattered banners of war, and inhabited by bands of orcs, ogres, or trolls.

Many labyrinthine passages have been excavated from the rubble, until whole sections of the city have more living space under the ground than they do on the surface. The wider avenues and the plazas of the city allow fairly easy walking. They will be virtually abandoned during the day; at night, the beasts of the city emerge from their lairs, prowling about and snarling.

The general patrolling and authority in the city has fallen to the jagres. These were once Jaguar Knights, now corrupted into ogres, and they are very fearsome indeed. Generally, a jagre will patrol with as many as a dozen orcs in attendance. Rarely, a group of two to five jagres will be discovered on its own.

Jagres have two distinct forms. Their ogre bodies are huge, with all of the attributes and abilities of hill giants. Their feline bodies are even worse, however, for when they shift shapes they become displacer beasts!



The great square has also been left relatively rubble-free, since it was not crowded with buildings—and many of those that stood here were solidly-based pyramids that did not collapse with the rest of the city. The palace of Naltecona is partially intact, with many of its treasures still inside.

Hoxitl has made his lair in the temple of Zaltec, atop the great pyramid itself. He has heaped around him many of the treasures gathered by his minions from among the rubble—countless objects of gold and jade, as well as *talismans* of hishna and pluma. He is usually attended by two to eight jagres.

NPC: Hoxitl, Beastlord

AC -3
MV 18"
HD 16
hp 89
THAC0 5
NO. ATTACKS 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK 1-12/1-12/2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS: spells

As a former patriarch of Zaltec, Hoxitl still retains his full range of priest spells. He has major access to the spheres of Hishna and Combat, and uses spells at the 16th level of ability.

TEZAT and AZATL: These two coastal cities have suffered damage similar to that in Nexal; their third neighbor, Zotil, is now submerged by lava. They are inhabited by humans and humanoids, with the humans being far more numerous than their monstrous cousins.

These are the dive-towns of Maztica, where lives are bought and

sold as cheaply as a night's lodging. Drunkenness and brawling are common. Some entrepreneurs have even opened saloons and taverns, while importing whiskey and rum from Ulatos. These drinks, far more potent than the native *octal*, have caused numerous problems—and are extremely popular.

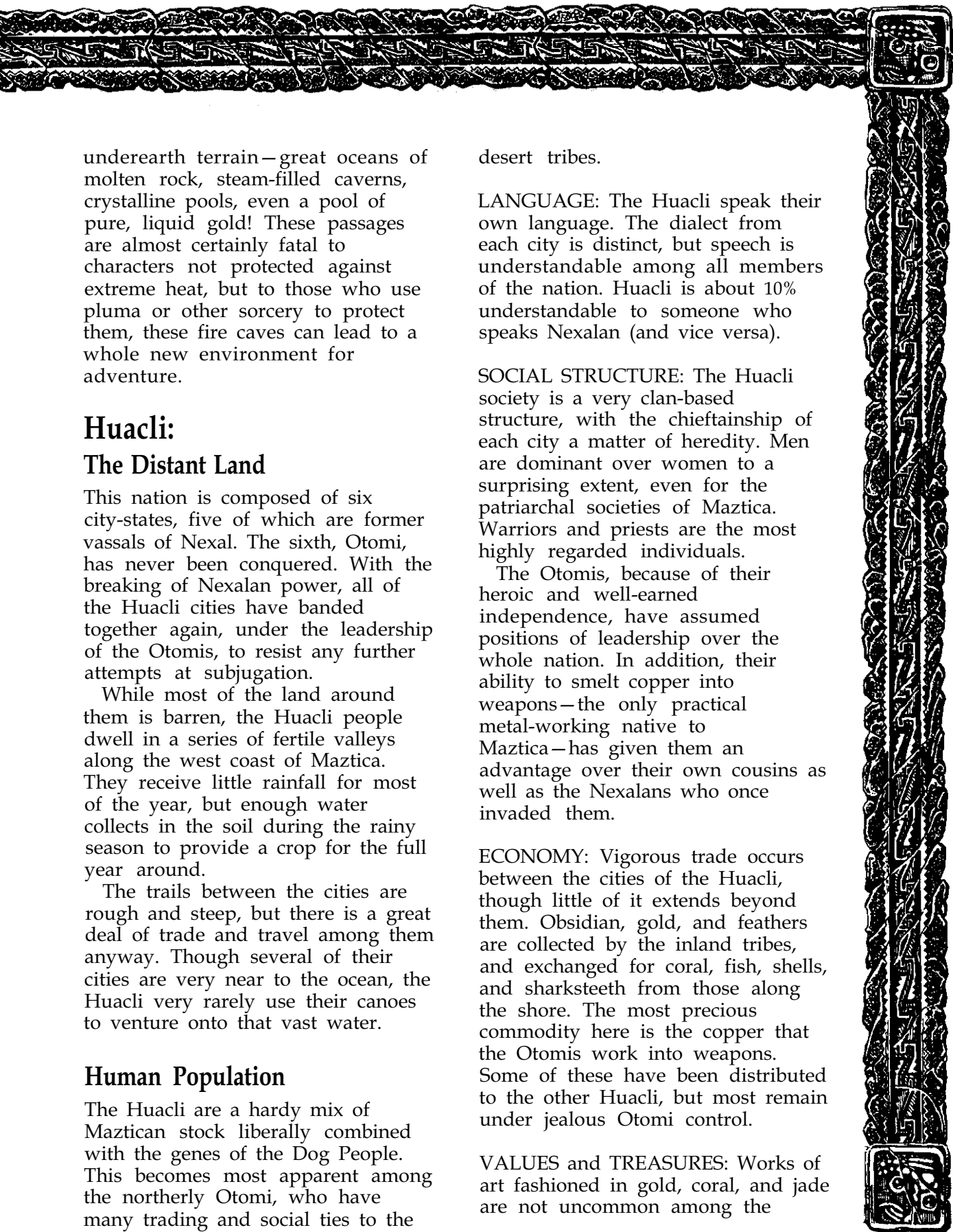
Humans who appear without weapons or alone, without strong companions, are at great risk in these cities. Many are the young thugs who gather into gangs and capture unwary travelers for sale to the beasts of Nexal. These gangs tend to have large caches of treasure, generally well-hidden.

Though these cities lie under the blackened pall of the volcano, and within the very shadow of the monstrous army, they receive a certain amount of commerce from the outside world. Enterprising merchants and traders from Ulatos (always with many armed guards in attendance) bring loads of all sorts of goods, come to trade for the gold that can be found in abundance.

MOUNT ZATAL and the FIRE CAVES: This volcano still spews lava from its crest and from an aperture on its western face. It is a dangerous environment, fit only for fire lizards—and perhaps, even darker creatures from the sinister realms of lava and hellfire.

Other cave mouths dot the surface of the peak, most of them invisible from ground level. Some of these are lairs of the fire lizards that are quite common on the higher elevations of this peak; others lead inward along dark and twisting tunnels toward the unknown heart of the mountain.

The volcano and its connecting passages lead to a vast network of



underearth terrain—great oceans of molten rock, steam-filled caverns, crystalline pools, even a pool of pure, liquid gold! These passages are almost certainly fatal to characters not protected against extreme heat, but to those who use *pluma* or other sorcery to protect them, these fire caves can lead to a whole new environment for adventure.

Huacli:

The Distant Land

This nation is composed of six city-states, five of which are former vassals of Nexal. The sixth, Otomi, has never been conquered. With the breaking of Nexalan power, all of the Huacli cities have banded together again, under the leadership of the Otomis, to resist any further attempts at subjugation.

While most of the land around them is barren, the Huacli people dwell in a series of fertile valleys along the west coast of Maztica. They receive little rainfall for most of the year, but enough water collects in the soil during the rainy season to provide a crop for the full year around.

The trails between the cities are rough and steep, but there is a great deal of trade and travel among them anyway. Though several of their cities are very near to the ocean, the Huacli very rarely use their canoes to venture onto that vast water.

Human Population

The Huacli are a hardy mix of Maztican stock liberally combined with the genes of the Dog People. This becomes most apparent among the northerly Otomi, who have many trading and social ties to the

desert tribes.

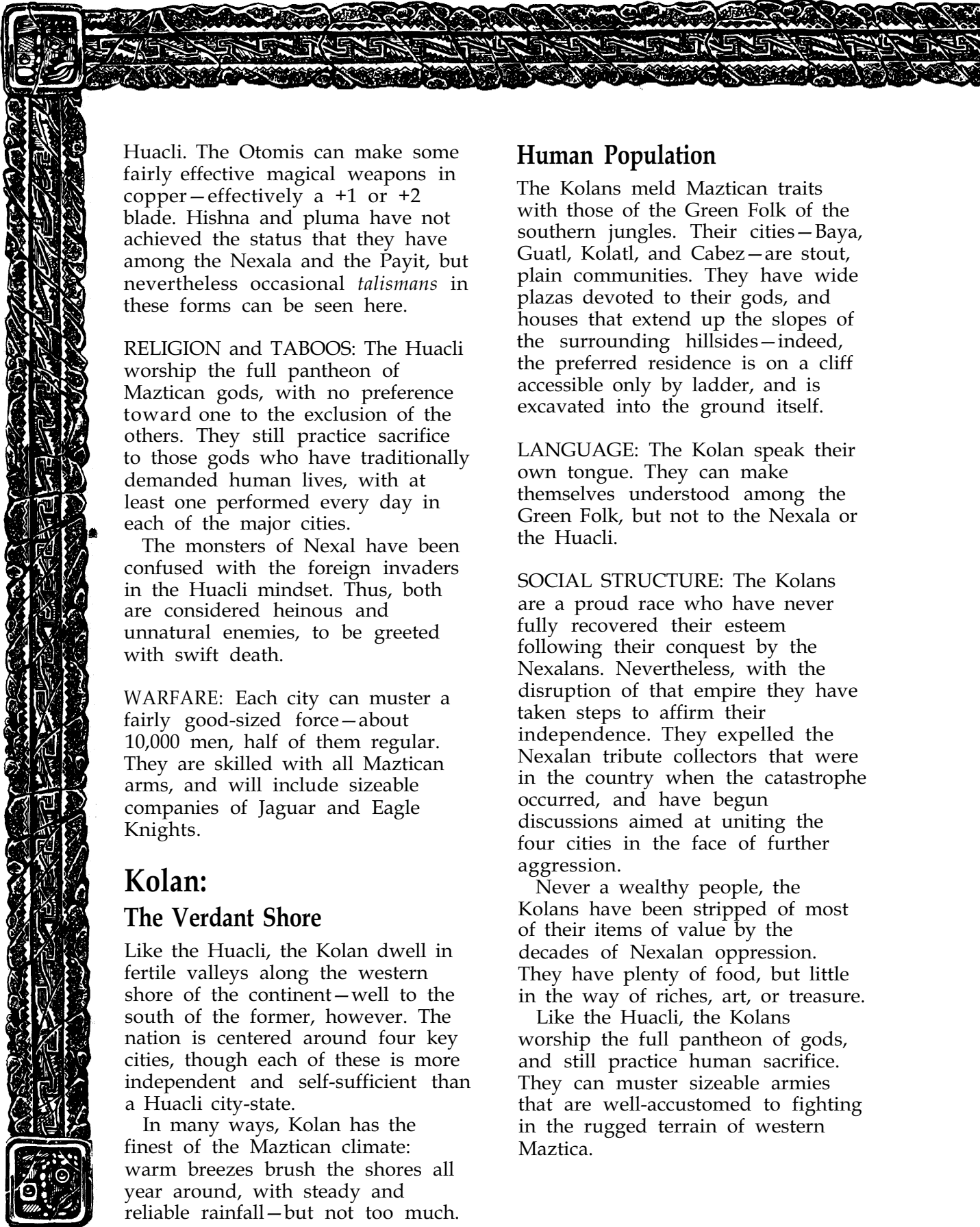
LANGUAGE: The Huacli speak their own language. The dialect from each city is distinct, but speech is understandable among all members of the nation. Huacli is about 10% understandable to someone who speaks Nexalan (and vice versa).

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The Huacli society is a very clan-based structure, with the chieftainship of each city a matter of heredity. Men are dominant over women to a surprising extent, even for the patriarchal societies of Maztica. Warriors and priests are the most highly regarded individuals.

The Otomis, because of their heroic and well-earned independence, have assumed positions of leadership over the whole nation. In addition, their ability to smelt copper into weapons—the only practical metal-working native to Maztica—has given them an advantage over their own cousins as well as the Nexalans who once invaded them.

ECONOMY: Vigorous trade occurs between the cities of the Huacli, though little of it extends beyond them. Obsidian, gold, and feathers are collected by the inland tribes, and exchanged for coral, fish, shells, and sharksteeth from those along the shore. The most precious commodity here is the copper that the Otomis work into weapons. Some of these have been distributed to the other Huacli, but most remain under jealous Otomi control.

VALUES and TREASURES: Works of art fashioned in gold, coral, and jade are not uncommon among the



Huacli. The Otomis can make some fairly effective magical weapons in copper—effectively a +1 or +2 blade. Hishna and pluma have not achieved the status that they have among the Nexala and the Payit, but nevertheless occasional *talismans* in these forms can be seen here.

RELIGION and TABOOS: The Huacli worship the full pantheon of Maztican gods, with no preference toward one to the exclusion of the others. They still practice sacrifice to those gods who have traditionally demanded human lives, with at least one performed every day in each of the major cities.

The monsters of Nexal have been confused with the foreign invaders in the Huacli mindset. Thus, both are considered heinous and unnatural enemies, to be greeted with swift death.

WARFARE: Each city can muster a fairly good-sized force—about 10,000 men, half of them regular. They are skilled with all Maztican arms, and will include sizeable companies of Jaguar and Eagle Knights.

Kolan: The Verdant Shore

Like the Huacli, the Kolan dwell in fertile valleys along the western shore of the continent—well to the south of the former, however. The nation is centered around four key cities, though each of these is more independent and self-sufficient than a Huacli city-state.

In many ways, Kolan has the finest of the Maztican climate: warm breezes brush the shores all year around, with steady and reliable rainfall—but not too much.

Human Population

The Kolans meld Maztican traits with those of the Green Folk of the southern jungles. Their cities—Baya, Guatl, Kolatl, and Cabez—are stout, plain communities. They have wide plazas devoted to their gods, and houses that extend up the slopes of the surrounding hillsides—indeed, the preferred residence is on a cliff accessible only by ladder, and is excavated into the ground itself.

LANGUAGE: The Kolan speak their own tongue. They can make themselves understood among the Green Folk, but not to the Nexala or the Huacli.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE: The Kolans are a proud race who have never fully recovered their esteem following their conquest by the Nexalans. Nevertheless, with the disruption of that empire they have taken steps to affirm their independence. They expelled the Nexalan tribute collectors that were in the country when the catastrophe occurred, and have begun discussions aimed at uniting the four cities in the face of further aggression.

Never a wealthy people, the Kolans have been stripped of most of their items of value by the decades of Nexalan oppression. They have plenty of food, but little in the way of riches, art, or treasure.

Like the Huacli, the Kolans worship the full pantheon of gods, and still practice human sacrifice. They can muster sizeable armies that are well-accustomed to fighting in the rugged terrain of western Maztica.

Tukan: The New City

This splendid and rapidly growing community has been constructed along many of the same lines as Nexal, though it occupies a peninsula rather than an island. Too, it is occupied by a mix of people—primarily Nexala, but many from the other valley cities of Axalt, Tezat, and buried Zotil. Also, some desert dwarves, some of the Little Folk, and even a smattering of legionnaires have settled here.

As Tukan is still evolving, it cannot be defined as tightly as the other, longer-standing nations. It will become what the campaigners desire it to be, to a great extent.

It is a rich land, with fertile lake waters surrounded by rich farmland. Canoes, and even a few larger craft, ply the waters of the lake—several legionnaire sailors live

here, and devote their time to constructing boats to meet the ever-increasing demand for watercraft.

The overland trade routes connecting Tukan to Ulatos are arduous and long, requiring travel across hundreds of miles of trackless desert, or dangerously near to the monstrous realm of Nexal. Nevertheless, such trade occurs—several rich veins of gold have been discovered near Tukan, and these insure that those who carry items to the city are well-compensated for their trouble.

Several great manor houses, palatial in size and classically Maztican in architecture, have been raised around the shores of the lake. Halloran and Erixtil, two of the heroes of the war against the monsters, dwell in one of these. The Eagle Knight Poshtli, war leader of the city, lives in another.





Other Points of Interest

House of Tezca

This is the largest desert of Maztica—a barren reach that occupies much of the center of the continent. It was formerly a total wasteland, but due to the miraculous intervention of Qotal a belt of fertility has been created, running north to south through the middle of the bleak landscape. Along this stretch, shown as arable land on the map and following a wide, flat valley, food and water are fairly plentiful. However, within a hundred miles or more of Nexal, the strip of land is infested with patrolling monsters.

The only permanent inhabitants of the desert itself are the desert dwarves. These hardy cave-dwellers live in small communities throughout the House of Tezca. While reclusive and private, they may help a stranded traveler if that one is deemed no enemy of the dwarves.

Their villages tend to be located in secluded canyons, excavated into caves along the walls. Many of these are raised, accessible only by ladders, though several large caves will be at ground level.

Sunstone

This mysterious artifact occupies the crater of an abandoned volcano. Within the crater lies a lake of liquid silver, about 200 yards across.

The Sunstone has the ability to give a seeker a vision, but only if that seeker's heart is pure, and his mind is empty of selfish thoughts. The vision can come only at one time per day: when a seeker sits upon the western rim of the volcano, in the morning, and stares

at the silver lake. At the time when the sun's rays hit the lake and reflect back up, directly at the seeker, the moment of revelation can come.

The exact nature of the revelation is a matter for the DM's adjudication—it can suggest a course of action, inform a character of an unknown threat, or otherwise expand his knowledge.

Those who study the Sunstone for false reasons will be given false information. Also, inherent to the liquid silver is a permanent *teleport* effect; anyone touching it, or touching an implement that touches it, is *teleported* to a random location 20-30 miles away in the surrounding desert.

Tewahca:

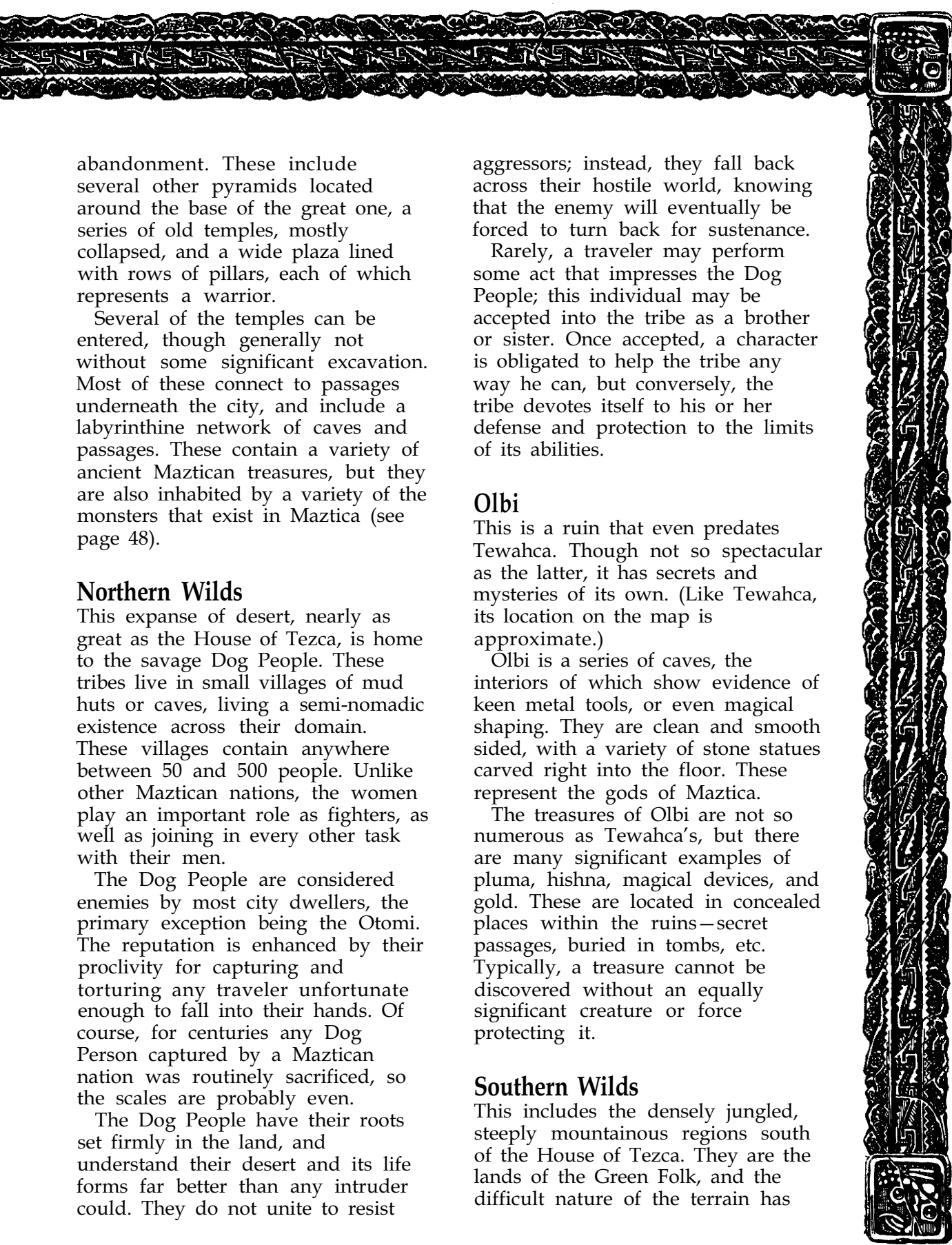
The City of the Gods

This sacred location was only rumored to exist among humans, until it was discovered during the war. It is a hallowed place, located in a barren and sandy valley. Tewahca was built by humans at the site of a battle between Zaltec and Qotal.

Its location on the map is approximate; the DM should feel free to place it some distance away from its marked site.

Its primary feature is the highest pyramid on all Maztica. This structure, the Pyramid of the Gods, towers nearly four hundred feet into the air, far higher even than the great pyramids of Nexal or Tukan. This pyramid is in immaculate condition, with brightly-painted sides and a huge, empty temple atop it.

Other buildings and pyramids surround Tewahca, but these show the neglect of centuries of



abandonment. These include several other pyramids located around the base of the great one, a series of old temples, mostly collapsed, and a wide plaza lined with rows of pillars, each of which represents a warrior.

Several of the temples can be entered, though generally not without some significant excavation. Most of these connect to passages underneath the city, and include a labyrinthine network of caves and passages. These contain a variety of ancient Maztican treasures, but they are also inhabited by a variety of the monsters that exist in Maztica (see page 48).

Northern Wilds

This expanse of desert, nearly as great as the House of Tezca, is home to the savage Dog People. These tribes live in small villages of mud huts or caves, living a semi-nomadic existence across their domain. These villages contain anywhere between 50 and 500 people. Unlike other Maztican nations, the women play an important role as fighters, as well as joining in every other task with their men.

The Dog People are considered enemies by most city dwellers, the primary exception being the Otomi. The reputation is enhanced by their proclivity for capturing and torturing any traveler unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. Of course, for centuries any Dog Person captured by a Maztican nation was routinely sacrificed, so the scales are probably even.

The Dog People have their roots set firmly in the land, and understand their desert and its life forms far better than any intruder could. They do not unite to resist

aggressors; instead, they fall back across their hostile world, knowing that the enemy will eventually be forced to turn back for sustenance.

Rarely, a traveler may perform some act that impresses the Dog People; this individual may be accepted into the tribe as a brother or sister. Once accepted, a character is obligated to help the tribe any way he can, but conversely, the tribe devotes itself to his or her defense and protection to the limits of its abilities.

Olbi

This is a ruin that even predates Tewahca. Though not so spectacular as the latter, it has secrets and mysteries of its own. (Like Tewahca, its location on the map is approximate.)

Olbi is a series of caves, the interiors of which show evidence of keen metal tools, or even magical shaping. They are clean and smooth sided, with a variety of stone statues carved right into the floor. These represent the gods of Maztica.

The treasures of Olbi are not so numerous as Tewahca's, but there are many significant examples of pluma, hishna, magical devices, and gold. These are located in concealed places within the ruins—secret passages, buried in tombs, etc. Typically, a treasure cannot be discovered without an equally significant creature or force protecting it.

Southern Wilds

This includes the densely jungled, steeply mountainous regions south of the House of Tezca. They are the lands of the Green Folk, and the difficult nature of the terrain has

kept them safe from incursions by the northern peoples.

The villages of the Green Folk are scattered throughout these jungles. In many places, overgrown pyramids and thickly-vegetated ruins can be discovered here; the Green Folk have no tribal memory of where these came from, who built them, or who used to live

around them.

Like the Dog People, the Green Folk are very suspicious of outsiders, and tend to shoot first and ask questions later. However, they can be impressed—especially by apparently supernatural phenomena—and those who impress them may be accepted or trusted as friends.





Maztica and the Passage to the Sword Coast

The Trackless Sea is no longer quite so trackless, thanks to the recent voyages of exploration. The route between Helmsport and Murann now sees several dozen voyages a year.

Cordell and the Golden Legion made this crossing in some forty days, which is about typical for the Sword Coast to Maztica route. It takes about sixty days to sail back, due to the easterly current. A northerly route of return can save fifteen days on this trip, but requires sailing dangerously close to the random teleporters surrounding Evermeet; most sailors prefer to invest the extra fifteen days to insure a safer passage.

There is a roughly 25% chance, per crossing, of a vessel being molested by some denizen of the deep—giant sea creatures, dragon turtles, sahuagin (especially near Maztican shores), or other threats. A large fleet is less likely to be bothered than an individual vessel, or group of two or three ships.

Several expeditions have sailed from Ulatos, exploring the coast of Maztica and this continent to the north and south. The general area map in this box provides a rough presentation of these reaches, at least in terms of coastline, mountain ranges, and major rivers. Inland features have not yet been determined.

In general, the realms to the south of Maztica seem terribly forbidding, with huge mountains and dense, impenetrable jungles. No signs of intelligent life have been reported there. The coastline continues

southward as far as it has been explored—and one final note: only one of the four ships that has sailed far to the south has returned.

To the north, the land is more fertile and hospitable. Forests line many of the shores, and there have been signs of human presence. Indeed, one legend tells of floating cities in the clouds, found somewhere along these northern shores, though no evidence of such as land has been found.



The Afterlife

When a Maztican dies, his or her *tonalli*, or soul, is released to begin its journey to the *temenos*, or sacred places. The average Maztican thinks of these places as filled with beings heroic and nightmarish, the latter known as *zizimime*, or the monsters of twilight. These beings watch over the souls that reside there.

Mazticans picture the Outer Planes as a great pyramid (see diagram). Most scholars and sages agree that the pyramid holds 13 *temenos*, though others claim there are only nine. When a Maztican soul leaves the Prime Material plane, it eventually arrives at the top of the Great Pyramid. Here, in a large building, and *tonalli* is directed to go in one direction depending on the kind of life that person led. Generally speaking, west leads to goodness, north to lawfulness, south to chaos, and east to evil (compare the lakes arranged around the city of Nexal).

The building, which represents the *tenemo* called Maztlan, either takes up the whole top of the pyramid, or sits in the center of a large, flat surface.

If the soul is to go elsewhere, it is forced to go in one of the four directions. The first step out of the building takes the soul into another *tenemo*, Xilen, Itzli, Mayel, or Mictlan. Some souls reside in one of these, the Platform Worlds. Others are directed to go down the pyramid's stairs to one of the other *temenos*, which are collectively named the Worlds on the Sides. From those, rare souls are directed to go to one of the four *temenos* on the corners of the Great Pyramid. Again, scholars disagree on the

existence of these four, sometimes called the Shadow Worlds.

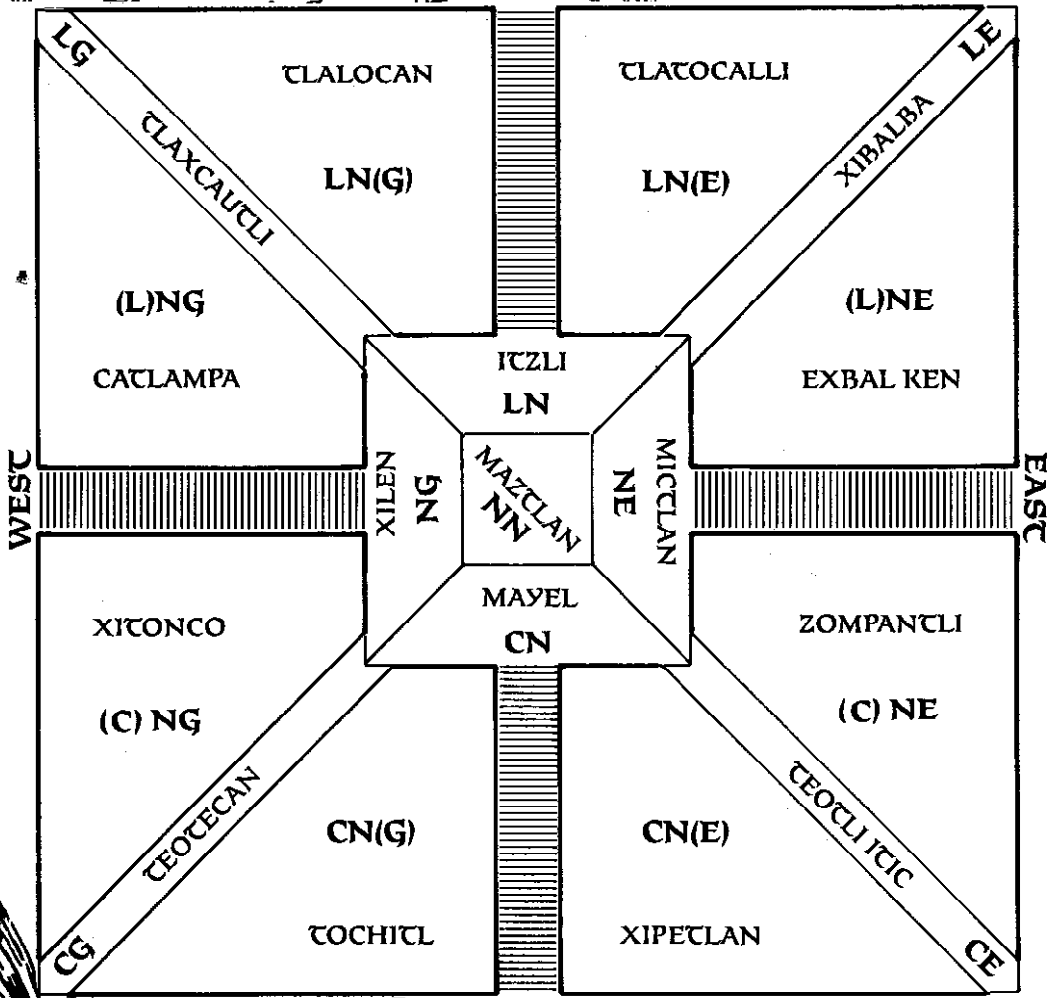
Scholars who believe in only nine *temenos* cite Maztlan and the Worlds on the Faces. Those who believe in 13 cite Maztlan, the Worlds on the Sides, and either the Platform Worlds or the Shadow Worlds. Strangely, no Maztican scholars claim that there are 17 *temenos*. There are, however, and they are detailed here (the *Manual of the Planes* would be helpful for reference).

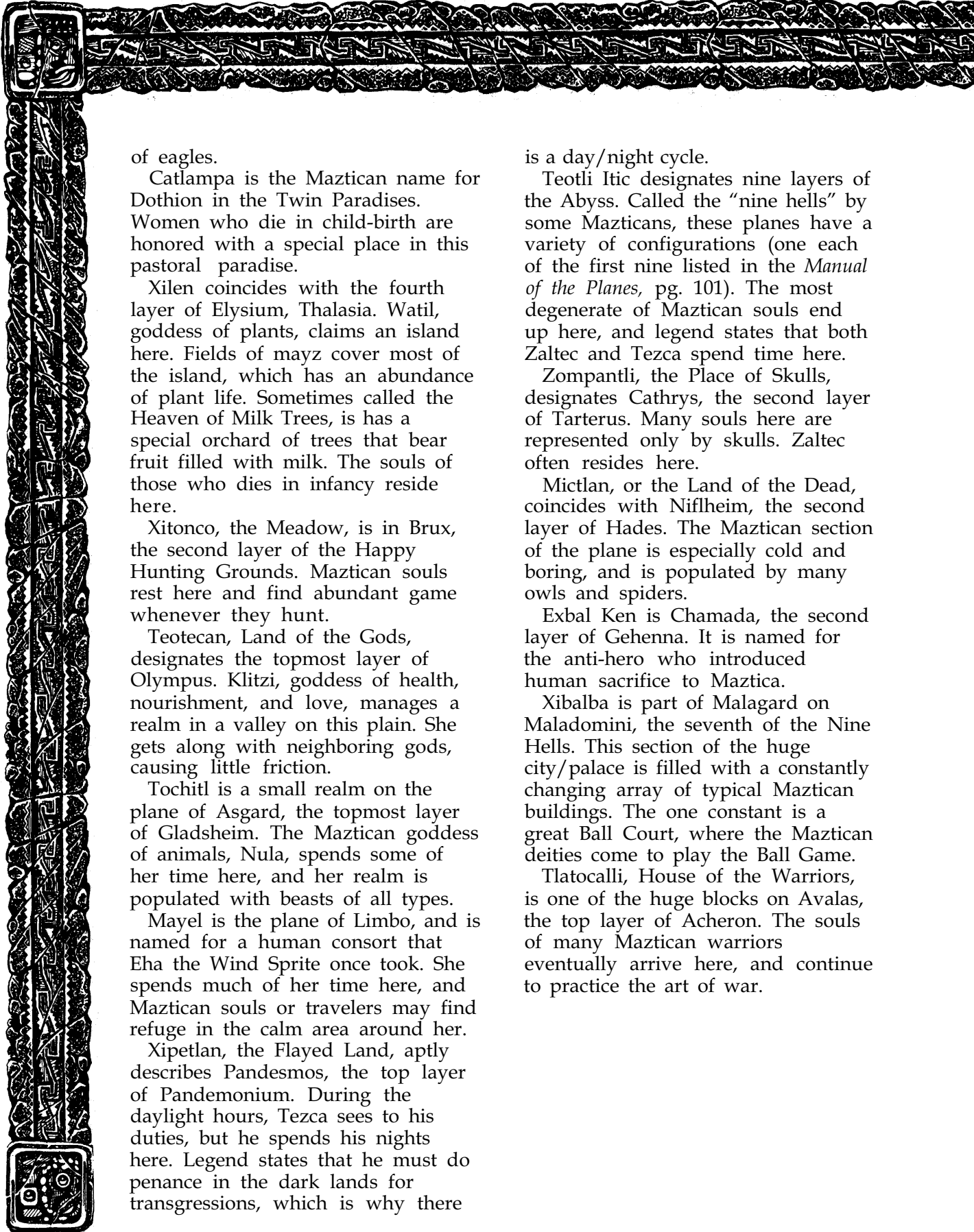
If a soul is directed to stay in Maztlan, the place becomes an island set in the middle of a large lake. On the islands are seven caves, from which all races of mankind (including demihumans) are said to have emerged. The spirit of the goddess Maztica is said to live on the island, where life is pleasant and natural wonders abound. Maztlan is the Maztican term for the plane of Concordant Opposition.

Itzli is the Maztican name for Nirvana. Plutoq is said to reside in a fantastic stone city on one of the great cogs that make up the place.

Tlalocan, the Water Land, is the top layer of Arcadia. Mazticans who were killed by water are sent here, a land of gentle rains and friendly animals. Many consider this a paradise. Legend states that Azul created this area to please his wife.

Tlazcautli, Home of Eagles, coincides with the sixth of the Seven Heavens, Jovar. Qotal sometimes resides in the unending pyramid (sometimes mistakenly called a ziggurat) on this plane. Maztican souls stay near the pyramid, and are often visited by archons in the form





of eagles.

Catlampa is the Maztican name for Dothion in the Twin Paradises. Women who die in child-birth are honored with a special place in this pastoral paradise.

Xilen coincides with the fourth layer of Elysium, Thalsia. Watil, goddess of plants, claims an island here. Fields of mayz cover most of the island, which has an abundance of plant life. Sometimes called the Heaven of Milk Trees, it has a special orchard of trees that bear fruit filled with milk. The souls of those who die in infancy reside here.

Xitonco, the Meadow, is in Brux, the second layer of the Happy Hunting Grounds. Maztican souls rest here and find abundant game whenever they hunt.

Teotecan, Land of the Gods, designates the topmost layer of Olympus. Klitzi, goddess of health, nourishment, and love, manages a realm in a valley on this plain. She gets along with neighboring gods, causing little friction.

Tochitl is a small realm on the plane of Asgard, the topmost layer of Gladsheim. The Maztican goddess of animals, Nula, spends some of her time here, and her realm is populated with beasts of all types.

Mayel is the plane of Limbo, and is named for a human consort that Eha the Wind Sprite once took. She spends much of her time here, and Maztican souls or travelers may find refuge in the calm area around her.

Xipetlan, the Flayed Land, aptly describes Pandemos, the top layer of Pandemonium. During the daylight hours, Tezca sees to his duties, but he spends his nights here. Legend states that he must do penance in the dark lands for transgressions, which is why there

is a day/night cycle.

Teotli Itic designates nine layers of the Abyss. Called the "nine hells" by some Mazticans, these planes have a variety of configurations (one each of the first nine listed in the *Manual of the Planes*, pg. 101). The most degenerate of Maztican souls end up here, and legend states that both Zaltec and Tezca spend time here.

Zompantli, the Place of Skulls, designates Cathrys, the second layer of Tarterus. Many souls here are represented only by skulls. Zaltec often resides here.

Mictlan, or the Land of the Dead, coincides with Niflheim, the second layer of Hades. The Maztican section of the plane is especially cold and boring, and is populated by many owls and spiders.

Exbal Ken is Chamada, the second layer of Gehenna. It is named for the anti-hero who introduced human sacrifice to Maztica.

Xibalba is part of Malagard on Maladomini, the seventh of the Nine Hells. This section of the huge city/palace is filled with a constantly changing array of typical Maztican buildings. The one constant is a great Ball Court, where the Maztican deities come to play the Ball Game.

Tlatocalli, House of the Warriors, is one of the huge blocks on Avalas, the top layer of Acheron. The souls of many Maztican warriors eventually arrive here, and continue to practice the art of war.



Mictlatepec and the Mictlaneca

Terrain: Mountainous
Total Party Levels: 42 (average 7)
Total gp: 8,000
Monster XP: 61,296

Set Up

- The PCs hear legends of a nearby “city of the dead.” Local villagers bury their own dead near the city when possible, but seldom enter the city itself, and never go near it at night. Legends state that there are several tombs in the city, filled with riches, but they are guarded by horrible monsters.
- Traveling in the mountains, the PCs see a nearby mountain whose top has been leveled. A city, complete with temples and pyramids, graces the manmade plateau.
- One or more PCs wishes to (or has been instructed to) visit the “city of the dead.” The journey is intended to be a pilgrimage to pay homage to ancestors or nobles buried in or near the city.

Background

Years ago, the City of the Dead, Mictlatepec, was an administrative center for the Zateca, who dominated the area now inhabited by the Huacli. The Zateca ruled several cities from their mountain stronghold.

The city was used primarily for administration, though it later became a center for trade and produced fine pottery. The inhabitants buried important personages in the city, after they

had passed on to the next world. Tombs were placed throughout the city and in the surrounding areas as well.

Only nobility lived in the city, and common visitors were restricted to certain areas. Only the most important nobles could enter the palace complex at the north end of the city, for the proud and arrogant ruler, Alban, resided there.

After ruling successfully for many years, Alban decided that he wished to continue his reign even longer. He instructed the royal hishnashaper to create a *talisman* which would allow him to do so. The shaper did as commanded, creating the *talisman of perpetual life*. Alban wore the *talisman* for the rest of his days, and when he died, he promptly returned to life—almost. The *talisman* animated Alban as a “dead one” or mictlanec (wight).

Alban’s new form horrified him, but when he set upon the hishnashaper to slay him, he was gratified to learn that his mere touch could kill.

Because the daylight bothered him, and he wished to share his unlife with those nearby, he commanded that another *talisman* be created. The highest ranking shaper still in the city created the *knife of perpetual service*. When used to slay a victim, the knife animated the corpse as lesser mictlaneca: ghosts, ghouls, or zombies, depending on former social standing.

During the day, the city appears deserted, because all the inhabitants are resting in their lairs. At night they venture out into the city again,



to act out portions of their former lives. Those unlucky enough to see the city at night witness a macabre sight, as the Dead Ones carry on trade, perform religious and state activities, and play the ball game.

If any living being ventures into the city during the nightly activity, he is first treated as a welcome visitor. Higher ranking mictlaneca (ghosts and wights) recognize living beings for what they are, and order others to attack and capture them for sacrifice. Any living beings who venture into restricted areas, as noted below, will also be recognized as intruders and attacked. All mictlaneca have the ability to recognize the true social status of all visitors, even if their outward appearances differ.

Those captures alive are slated for sacrifice at one of the temples, the rite to be performed by an undead priest using the *knife of perpetual service*.

During the day, some mictlaneca remain in designated tombs. Unless a specific tomb is mentioned, undead stay in the narrow tunnels which crisscross under the entire city. The peasant zombies lie under the floors of their homes outside the city.

In the following descriptions, all activities and inhabitants given are for night-time unless otherwise noted.

The Zateca were less decorative than other Mazticans. Murals grace only a few walls, while most surfaces are covered with single colors, usually red, black, or white.

The mictlaneca have six forms. All individuals of each type have the same characteristics, as given below.

Wight (1): AC 5; MV 12; HD 4 + 3; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain; SD spell immunities, hit only by silver or +1 or better weapons; ML 14; AL LC; XP 975. Individuals killed by energy draining become half-strength wights under Alban's control.

Half-Strength Wight (4): AC 5; MV 12; HD 2 + 1; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain; SD spell immunities, hit only by silver or +1 or better weapons; ML 14; AL LE; XP 420. Individuals killed by energy draining become half-strength wights under Alban's control.

Ghast (32): AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 12; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA paralyzation and stench; SD spell immunities; ML 13; AL CE; XP 650.

Ghoul (83): AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD spell immunities; ML 12; AL CE; XP 175. Individuals killed by a ghoul become a ghoul unless blessed or eaten.

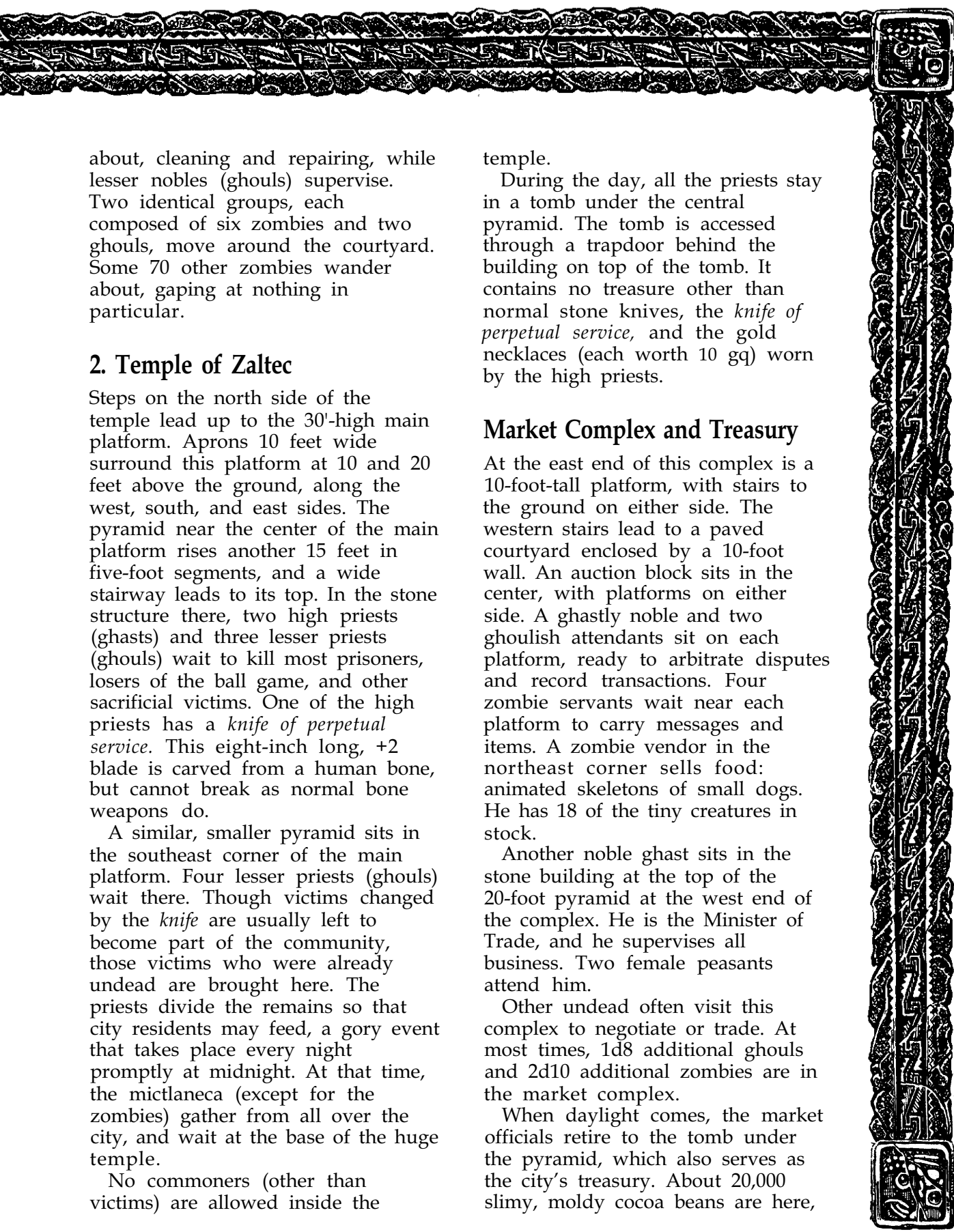
Zombie (96): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD spell immunities; ML 20; AL N; XP 65.

Chihuahua Skeleton: AC 10; MV 3; HD ½; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; ML 4; AL N; XP 7.

The Lair

1. Inner Courtyard

The ground between buildings is smoothed rock, kept free of plant life. The surrounding valley cannot be seen from here, nor can any other mountains, so all city buildings stand out against the sky. Undead servants (zombies) travel



about, cleaning and repairing, while lesser nobles (ghouls) supervise. Two identical groups, each composed of six zombies and two ghouls, move around the courtyard. Some 70 other zombies wander about, gaping at nothing in particular.

2. Temple of Zaltec

Steps on the north side of the temple lead up to the 30'-high main platform. Aprons 10 feet wide surround this platform at 10 and 20 feet above the ground, along the west, south, and east sides. The pyramid near the center of the main platform rises another 15 feet in five-foot segments, and a wide stairway leads to its top. In the stone structure there, two high priests (ghasts) and three lesser priests (ghouls) wait to kill most prisoners, losers of the ball game, and other sacrificial victims. One of the high priests has a *knife of perpetual service*. This eight-inch long, +2 blade is carved from a human bone, but cannot break as normal bone weapons do.

A similar, smaller pyramid sits in the southeast corner of the main platform. Four lesser priests (ghouls) wait there. Though victims changed by the *knife* are usually left to become part of the community, those victims who were already undead are brought here. The priests divide the remains so that city residents may feed, a gory event that takes place every night promptly at midnight. At that time, the mictlaneca (except for the zombies) gather from all over the city, and wait at the base of the huge temple.

No commoners (other than victims) are allowed inside the

temple.

During the day, all the priests stay in a tomb under the central pyramid. The tomb is accessed through a trapdoor behind the building on top of the tomb. It contains no treasure other than normal stone knives, the *knife of perpetual service*, and the gold necklaces (each worth 10 gp) worn by the high priests.

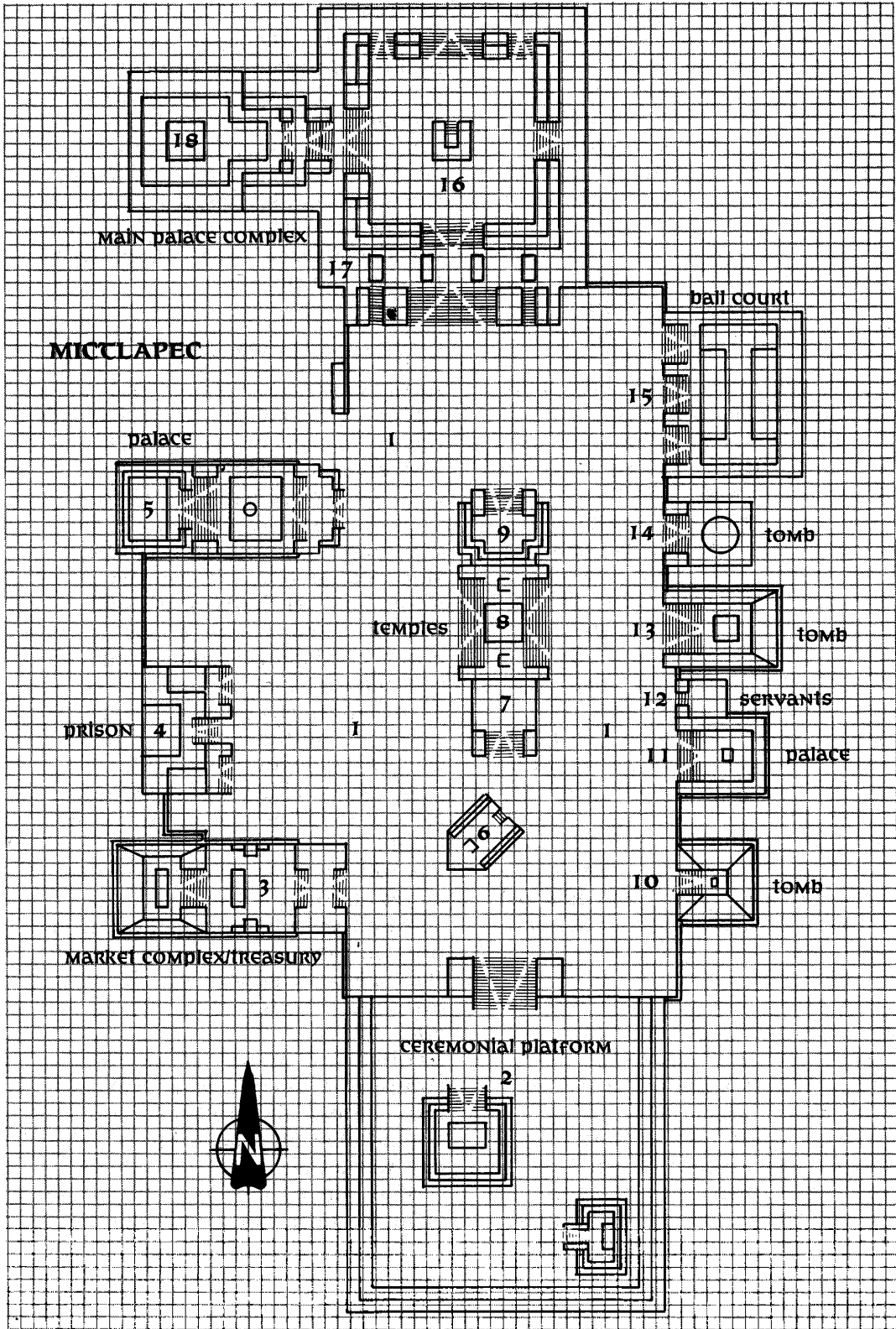
Market Complex and Treasury

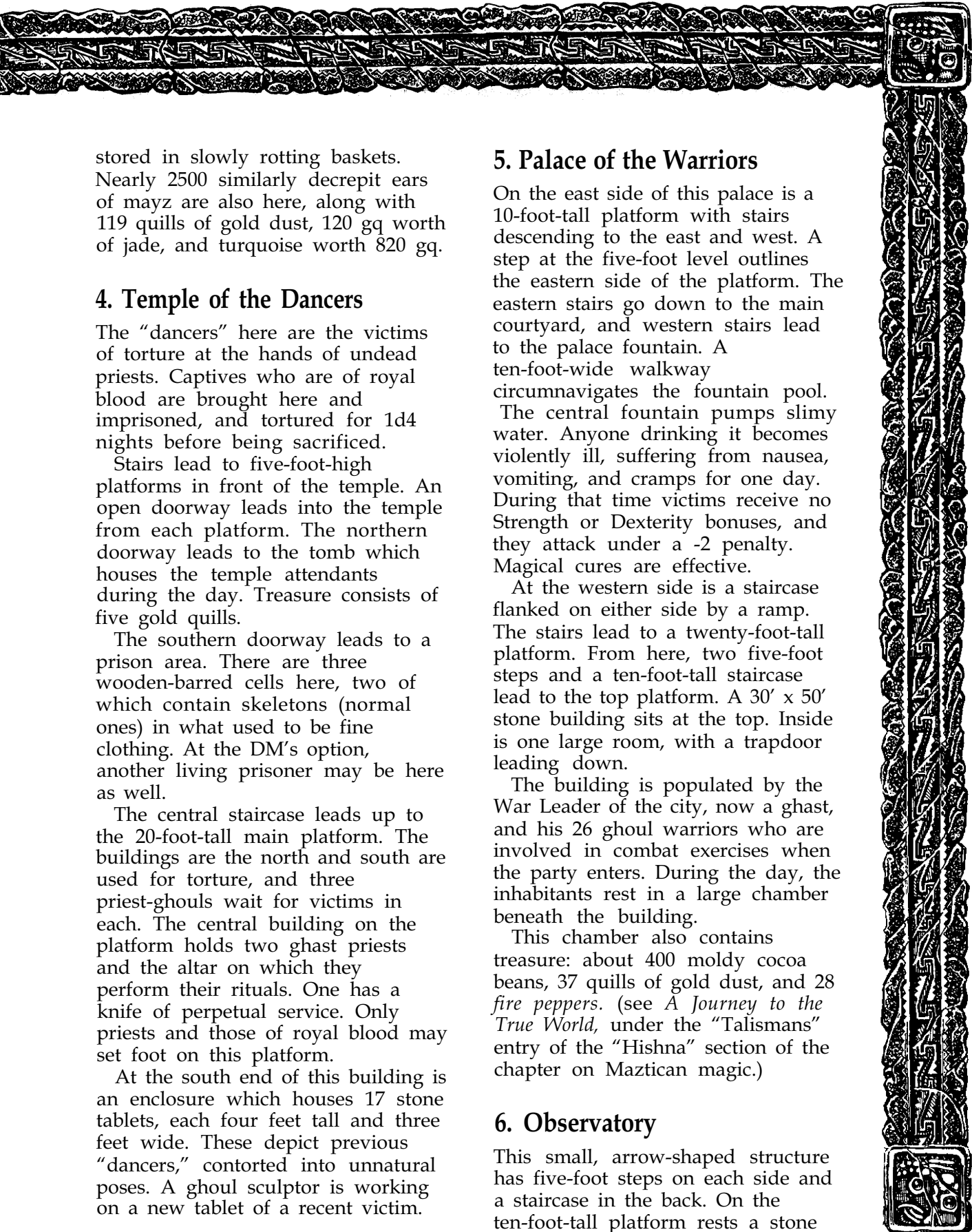
At the east end of this complex is a 10-foot-tall platform, with stairs to the ground on either side. The western stairs lead to a paved courtyard enclosed by a 10-foot wall. An auction block sits in the center, with platforms on either side. A ghastly noble and two ghoulish attendants sit on each platform, ready to arbitrate disputes and record transactions. Four zombie servants wait near each platform to carry messages and items. A zombie vendor in the northeast corner sells food: animated skeletons of small dogs. He has 18 of the tiny creatures in stock.

Another noble ghast sits in the stone building at the top of the 20-foot pyramid at the west end of the complex. He is the Minister of Trade, and he supervises all business. Two female peasants attend him.

Other undead often visit this complex to negotiate or trade. At most times, 1d8 additional ghouls and 2d10 additional zombies are in the market complex.

When daylight comes, the market officials retire to the tomb under the pyramid, which also serves as the city's treasury. About 20,000 slimy, moldy cocoa beans are here,





stored in slowly rotting baskets. Nearly 2500 similarly decrepit ears of mayz are also here, along with 119 quills of gold dust, 120 gq worth of jade, and turquoise worth 820 gq.

4. Temple of the Dancers

The “dancers” here are the victims of torture at the hands of undead priests. Captives who are of royal blood are brought here and imprisoned, and tortured for 1d4 nights before being sacrificed.

Stairs lead to five-foot-high platforms in front of the temple. An open doorway leads into the temple from each platform. The northern doorway leads to the tomb which houses the temple attendants during the day. Treasure consists of five gold quills.

The southern doorway leads to a prison area. There are three wooden-barred cells here, two of which contain skeletons (normal ones) in what used to be fine clothing. At the DM’s option, another living prisoner may be here as well.

The central staircase leads up to the 20-foot-tall main platform. The buildings are the north and south are used for torture, and three priest-ghouls wait for victims in each. The central building on the platform holds two ghastr priests and the altar on which they perform their rituals. One has a knife of perpetual service. Only priests and those of royal blood may set foot on this platform.

At the south end of this building is an enclosure which houses 17 stone tablets, each four feet tall and three feet wide. These depict previous “dancers,” contorted into unnatural poses. A ghastr sculptor is working on a new tablet of a recent victim.

5. Palace of the Warriors

On the east side of this palace is a 10-foot-tall platform with stairs descending to the east and west. A step at the five-foot level outlines the eastern side of the platform. The eastern stairs go down to the main courtyard, and western stairs lead to the palace fountain. A ten-foot-wide walkway circumnavigates the fountain pool.

The central fountain pumps slimy water. Anyone drinking it becomes violently ill, suffering from nausea, vomiting, and cramps for one day. During that time victims receive no Strength or Dexterity bonuses, and they attack under a -2 penalty. Magical cures are effective.

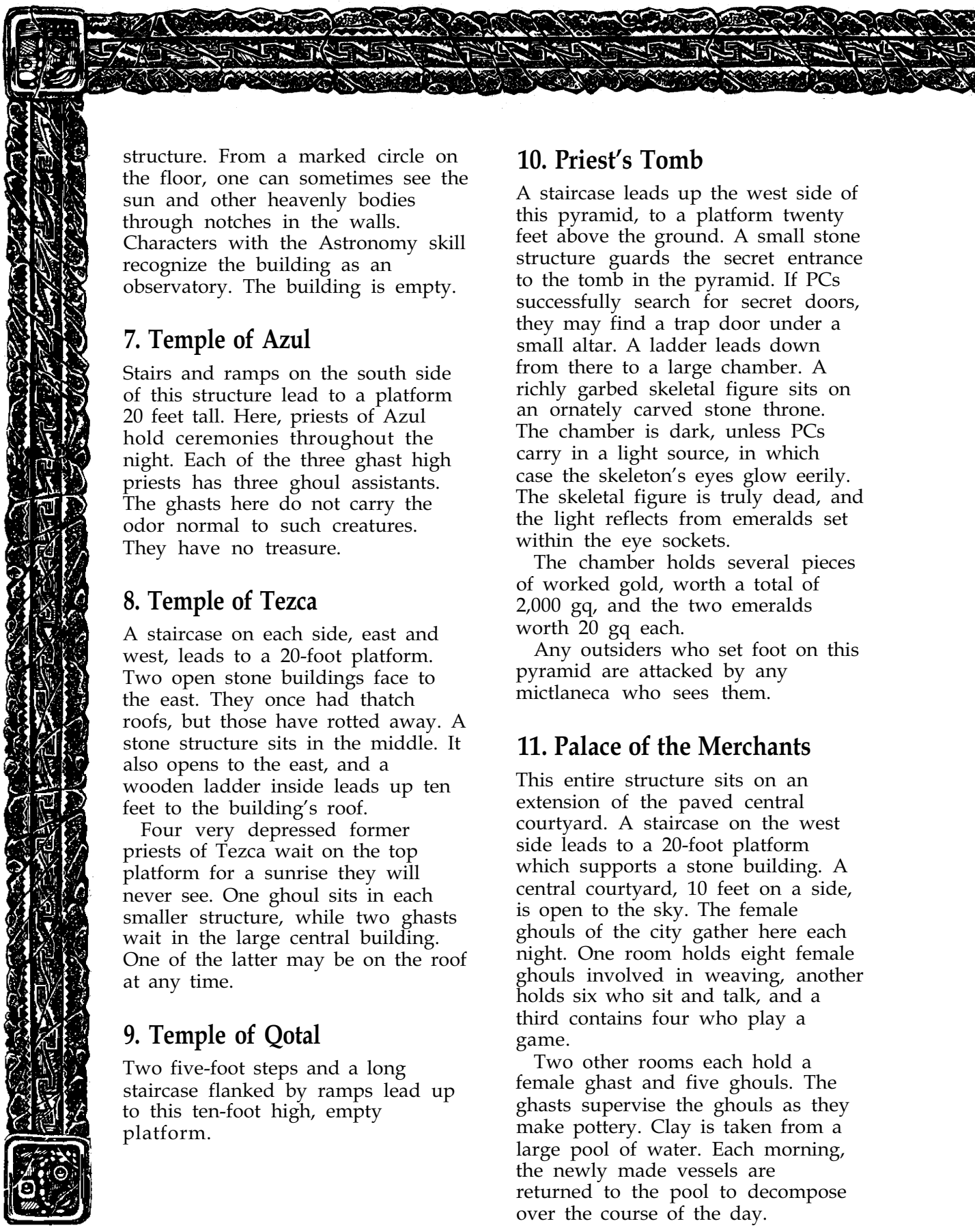
At the western side is a staircase flanked on either side by a ramp. The stairs lead to a twenty-foot-tall platform. From here, two five-foot steps and a ten-foot-tall staircase lead to the top platform. A 30’ x 50’ stone building sits at the top. Inside is one large room, with a trapdoor leading down.

The building is populated by the War Leader of the city, now a ghastr, and his 26 ghastr warriors who are involved in combat exercises when the party enters. During the day, the inhabitants rest in a large chamber beneath the building.

This chamber also contains treasure: about 400 moldy cocoa beans, 37 quills of gold dust, and 28 *fire peppers*. (see *A Journey to the True World*, under the “Talismsans” entry of the “Hishna” section of the chapter on Maztican magic.)

6. Observatory

This small, arrow-shaped structure has five-foot steps on each side and a staircase in the back. On the ten-foot-tall platform rests a stone



structure. From a marked circle on the floor, one can sometimes see the sun and other heavenly bodies through notches in the walls. Characters with the Astronomy skill recognize the building as an observatory. The building is empty.

7. Temple of Azul

Stairs and ramps on the south side of this structure lead to a platform 20 feet tall. Here, priests of Azul hold ceremonies throughout the night. Each of the three ghastr priests has three ghoulish assistants. The ghastrs here do not carry the odor normal to such creatures. They have no treasure.

8. Temple of Tezca

A staircase on each side, east and west, leads to a 20-foot platform. Two open stone buildings face to the east. They once had thatched roofs, but those have rotted away. A stone structure sits in the middle. It also opens to the east, and a wooden ladder inside leads up ten feet to the building's roof.

Four very depressed former priests of Tezca wait on the top platform for a sunrise they will never see. One ghoul sits in each smaller structure, while two ghastrs wait in the large central building. One of the latter may be on the roof at any time.

9. Temple of Qotal

Two five-foot steps and a long staircase flanked by ramps lead up to this ten-foot high, empty platform.

10. Priest's Tomb

A staircase leads up the west side of this pyramid, to a platform twenty feet above the ground. A small stone structure guards the secret entrance to the tomb in the pyramid. If PCs successfully search for secret doors, they may find a trap door under a small altar. A ladder leads down from there to a large chamber. A richly garbed skeletal figure sits on an ornately carved stone throne. The chamber is dark, unless PCs carry in a light source, in which case the skeleton's eyes glow eerily. The skeletal figure is truly dead, and the light reflects from emeralds set within the eye sockets.

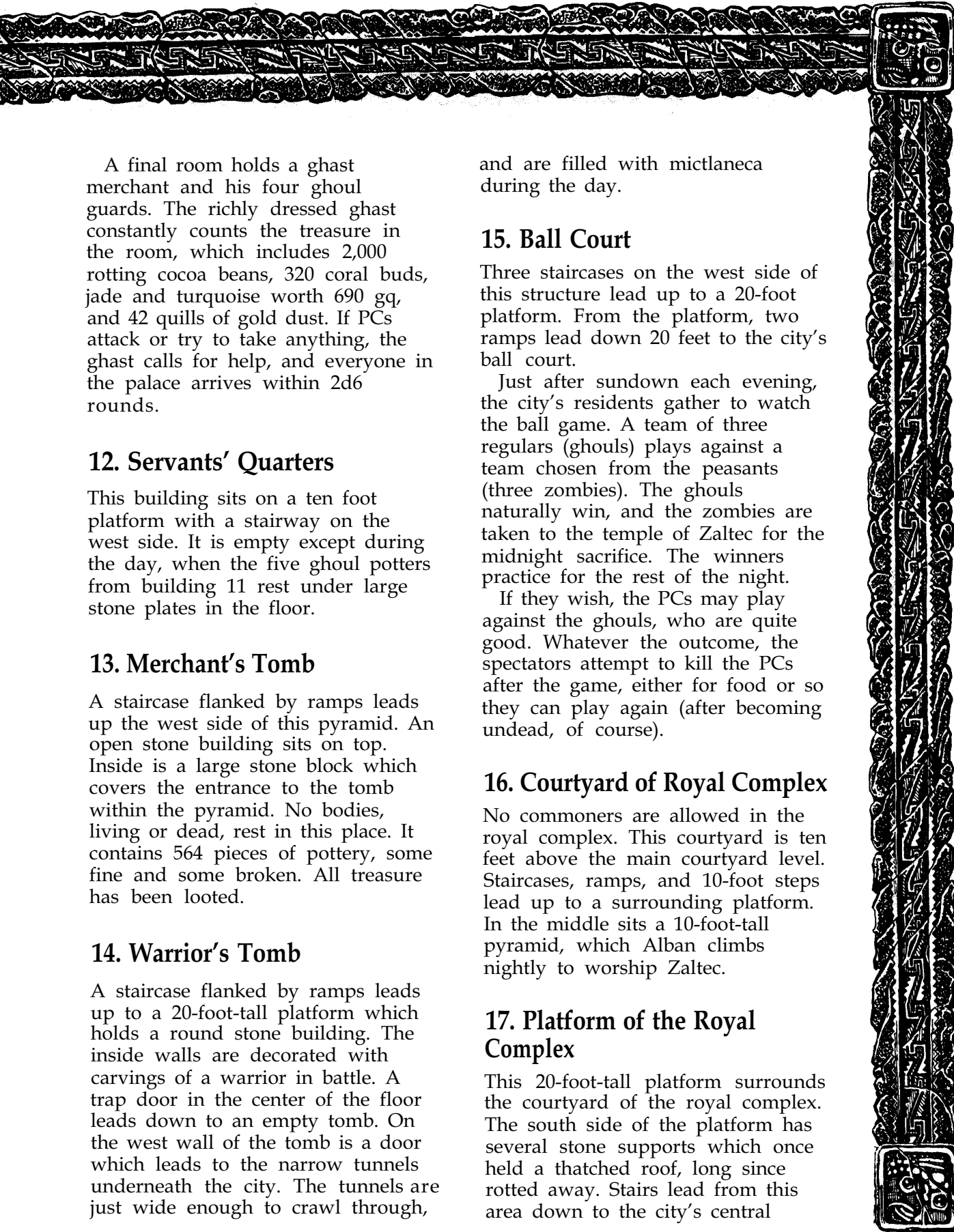
The chamber holds several pieces of worked gold, worth a total of 2,000 gq, and the two emeralds worth 20 gq each.

Any outsiders who set foot on this pyramid are attacked by any mictlaneca who sees them.

11. Palace of the Merchants

This entire structure sits on an extension of the paved central courtyard. A staircase on the west side leads to a 20-foot platform which supports a stone building. A central courtyard, 10 feet on a side, is open to the sky. The female ghastrs of the city gather here each night. One room holds eight female ghastrs involved in weaving, another holds six who sit and talk, and a third contains four who play a game.

Two other rooms each hold a female ghast and five ghastrs. The ghastrs supervise the ghastrs as they make pottery. Clay is taken from a large pool of water. Each morning, the newly made vessels are returned to the pool to decompose over the course of the day.



A final room holds a ghost merchant and his four ghoulish guards. The richly dressed ghost constantly counts the treasure in the room, which includes 2,000 rotting cocoa beans, 320 coral buds, jade and turquoise worth 690 gp, and 42 quills of gold dust. If PCs attack or try to take anything, the ghost calls for help, and everyone in the palace arrives within 2d6 rounds.

12. Servants' Quarters

This building sits on a ten foot platform with a stairway on the west side. It is empty except during the day, when the five ghoulish potters from building 11 rest under large stone plates in the floor.

13. Merchant's Tomb

A staircase flanked by ramps leads up the west side of this pyramid. An open stone building sits on top. Inside is a large stone block which covers the entrance to the tomb within the pyramid. No bodies, living or dead, rest in this place. It contains 564 pieces of pottery, some fine and some broken. All treasure has been looted.

14. Warrior's Tomb

A staircase flanked by ramps leads up to a 20-foot-tall platform which holds a round stone building. The inside walls are decorated with carvings of a warrior in battle. A trap door in the center of the floor leads down to an empty tomb. On the west wall of the tomb is a door which leads to the narrow tunnels underneath the city. The tunnels are just wide enough to crawl through,

and are filled with mictlaneca during the day.

15. Ball Court

Three staircases on the west side of this structure lead up to a 20-foot platform. From the platform, two ramps lead down 20 feet to the city's ball court.

Just after sundown each evening, the city's residents gather to watch the ball game. A team of three regulars (ghouls) plays against a team chosen from the peasants (three zombies). The ghouls naturally win, and the zombies are taken to the temple of Zaltec for the midnight sacrifice. The winners practice for the rest of the night.

If they wish, the PCs may play against the ghouls, who are quite good. Whatever the outcome, the spectators attempt to kill the PCs after the game, either for food or so they can play again (after becoming undead, of course).

16. Courtyard of Royal Complex

No commoners are allowed in the royal complex. This courtyard is ten feet above the main courtyard level. Staircases, ramps, and 10-foot steps lead up to a surrounding platform. In the middle sits a 10-foot-tall pyramid, which Alban climbs nightly to worship Zaltec.

17. Platform of the Royal Complex

This 20-foot-tall platform surrounds the courtyard of the royal complex. The south side of the platform has several stone supports which once held a thatched roof, long since rotted away. Stairs lead from this area down to the city's central

courtyard. A wall 20 feet tall extends from the platform's southwest corner. Five ghoul guards armed with slings stand watch there, alert for hostile intruders.

18. Royal Palace

Two sets of stairs flanked by ramps lead to the palace, on a platform 60 feet above the ground. An entryway extends eastward from the main palace building. Nine elite guards (ghasts) watch for intruders here.

Alban (the wight) spends most of this nights in the open courtyard in the center of the main palace. He wears his *amulet of perpetual life*, a small item made from jaguar claws and human teeth. Anyone wearing it when slain will be animated as a wight.

Alban is attended by six ghouls (servants), three ghasts (priests), and four half-strength wights (advisors). Holy water and pluma-enchanted weapons will damage the wights. Bright light will drive the wights back, but will not harm them.

Underneath the palace is the treasury, with four more ghastly guards. The treasure consists of 10,000 rotting cocoa beans, 211 quills of gold dust, 20 coral buds, jade worth 1060 gq, turquoise worth 432 gq, and gold ornaments worth 2,370 gq. At the DM's option, a *hishna talisman* may also be present, but it will be used by the guards if possible.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Mountain caves
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Clan

ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Very high (11-14)

TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-4

ARMOR CLASS:	4
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 12
HIT DICE:	5

THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3/1-3/1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	30%
SIZE:	M (5'-7' tall)
MORALE:	Steady
XP VALUE:	

Chacs look much like slender jaguars. They generally travel on all fours, but they may assume a bipedal stance as well where upon they look much like werejaguars.

These spirits help control the rains in Maztica. From their cave lairs high in the mountains, they send rain out to the countryside. Those rare people who see a chac will observe tears trickling incessantly down its cheeks. This is not from any kind of sadness, but rather a sign of the creature's aquatic affinities.

Chacs are associated with a certain color, depending on where they live. Those in northern Maztica are associated with blue, those in the east with black, those in the south with red, and those in the west with yellow. Chacs in central Maztica are associated with green. A chac's eyes are of the appropriate color, and when one assumes gaseous form the mist is tinted with that same color. Thus, a chac in southern Maztica has red eyes, and its mist is reddish.

COMBAT: Chacs always seek to avoid combat, fighting only if they are threatened and no escape is possible. They possess magical abilities which they will use to protect themselves if need be. A chac can cast spells as if it were a 5th level priest of Azul, but can cast only water-related spells from the elemental sphere. In addition, they can cast *weather summoning* once per week, and *assume gaseous form* (as per the potion) four times per day.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: These creatures are nonviolent by nature, preferring to use their magical powers to govern the weather near their lairs. Though they use spells as if they were priests of Azul, only half are actually servants of the Giver of Rain and Taker of Breath. Those that serve Azul directly have evil tendencies, and some of these share lairs with rain dragons, or tlaloatl. Most chacs may be appeased by local natives through gifts of food, while evil members of their race, especially those living with tlaloatl, often demand a sacrifice of some sort.

If more than one chac is encountered, it will usually be a family group; with one male, one female, and one or two offspring (equal chance of either sex). Chacs have an elaborate mating ritual, involving merging essences while in



gaseous form. The birth of a baby chac takes place a year later, and is often celebrated by all nearby chacs, who gather and produce a tremendous rainstorm.

Chacs tend to live long lives, some reaching ages of 100 years or more. A young chac stays with its parents until it reaches maturity (about five years). The death of a chac is generally followed by a drought of 1-4 weeks in length while nearby chacs are mourning, though some droughts last longer or are influenced by tlaloatl.

Chacs are very shy and reclusive, and almost always avoid direct contact with intelligent humanoid life. Too many of their legends tell of chacs being captured by humans and harmed if they refused to produce rain in accordance with the whims of their captors. If a chac is captured, and other chacs find the identities of the offenders, they bring their combined powers to bear on the perpetrators, causing flooding or drought until the offenders release the prisoner and atone for their actions.

ECOLOGY: Chacs eat a combination of things, including meat and cocoa beans, but water is their main source of nourishment.

Chacs always have a hoard of 100-1000 cocoa beans in their lair, and they use the beans to produce a chocolate drink of which they are very fond. Chacs also collect art objects, especially carved jade and turquoise, but rarely of gold or other metal. A typical chac lair contains art pieces worth 200-800 gp.

Chacs have no natural enemies, and they get along with most denizens of their areas. However, a rain dragon will sometimes attack a chac to gain the moisture in its body. The rare humans who find chacs will sometimes seek to capture it, thinking to thus gain control over the rains.

Chac skin may be used as a material component for *potions of gaseous form* or *sweetwater*, while their claws are useful for some forms of hishna magic.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Low-very (5-12)
TREASURE:	D
ALIGNMENT:	Any evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	12
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 + 7 or by weapon (2-12 + 7) or 2-6/2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (16' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	4000

These monstrosities were spawned by Zaltec on the Night of Wailing, though they did not make their appearance until later. While normal warriors became orcs, and jaguar knights were transformed into ogres, certain high level jaguar knights became especially large ogres, which were later changed into jagres.

A jagre is a huge, brutish humanoid with cruel features. All jagres bear the mark of the Viperhand, a red brand in the center of their chests. They wear armor made from displacer beasts, which allows them to transform themselves into displacer beasts. The latter form has the tentacles and six legs common to displacer beasts, but its coat is usually a reddish brown with dark spots, like a jaguar's.

COMBAT: A jagre is as likely to enter combat unarmed as with a weapon. Those that prefer weapons usually (75%) carry huge *macas*, while others wield clubs. A jagre may transform itself into displacer beast form at will, gaining its attacks and special abilities. In its cat-like shape, a jagre attacks with two tentacles, inflicting 2d4 points of damage on its victims. If pressed, it may attack with two claws and a bite for damage of 1-3/1-3/1-8, but is more likely to attempt to escape or switch back to humanoid form.

In beast form, a jagre has the same armor class, hit dice, hit points, and saving throws as its humanoid form. It gains the beast's displacement ability, however, making it appear to be three feet from its actual location. Anyone attacking the jagre's beast form receives a -2 on his attack roll. In addition, the creature makes saving throws at +2 while in this form.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Jagres are leaders of the beasts of the Viperhand which now inhabit the Valley of Nexal. They are huge variations of Viperhand ogres, having been rewarded with special powers for their service to Zaltec. The special displacer beasts armor they wear, imbued with *hishna* magic, allows them to change shape.

At present, there are only male jagres. To increase their numbers, they sometimes invite especially strong and smart ogres to join their ranks. They also mate with some of the few female ogres in the Valley of Nexal, producing



ogres as offspring. When one of these offspring reaches maturity, or when an ogre is invited into the ranks of the jagre, that individual must obtain the skin of a displacer beast. In a special ceremony, the ogre and the skins are then imbued with the power of *hishna*, creating a jagre. If the jagre loses its armor, it is stripped of the power to change forms, though it retains all other jagre abilities.

Some jagres take things a step further, going through a special unholy ceremony which bonds the armor to their skin so that it can not be removed. Maztican displacer beasts often have colorations different from their eastern cousins, and jagres often choose a pelt of a color that appeals to them.

Jagres are recognized as authorities by all inhabitants of the Valley of Nexal. They answer only to Hoxitl and his personal servants, the Beast Leaders.

Jagres often lead companies of other Viperhand beasts. Some 50% will be accompanied by 10 ogres, while 25% lead 20 orcs, 15% lead a mixed group of orcs and ogres, 5% lead 2-5 trolls, and 5% lead a company of ogres, orcs, and trolls. Jagres are sometimes encountered when they are off duty, and will not be accompanied by anyother Viperhand beasts.

ECOLOGY: Jagres are some of the most powerful creatures in Maztica, and they have no natural enemies. Because they are relatively new to the world, their impact on the local ecology has not yet been fully determined. It is known that they eat any form of meat, though they seem to prefer that of humans, demihumans, and humanoids.

Jagre lairs often hold treasure recovered from the ruins of Nexal. When determining treasure for a jagre, substitute Maztican valuables for coinage. Magical items will also be Maztican, with most being *talismans* of *hishna*.

The displacer beast armor, if taken from a jagre, will not allow other creatures to make the transformation.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Kamatlan Any tropical	Kamadan Tropical jungle or forest
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Carnivorous	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2-4)	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil	C
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1	1
ARMOR CLASS:	4	4
MOVEMENT:	15	15
HIT DICE:	5 + 2	4 + 2
THACO:	15	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	7	9
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3/1-3/1-8/ 1-4 (x4)	1-3/1-3/1-6/ 1-4 (x6)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison	Breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	L (6'-7' long)	L 5'-6' long)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	975	975

Kamatlan resemble large jaguars with two snakes growing from each shoulder. They are very likely related to displacer beasts.

A kamatlan's coat is generally medium yellow in hue, and is covered with dark spots. The snakes extend about three feet from its shoulders, and are sandy colored with a diamond pattern. A rattle, much like that of a rattlesnake, tips the kamatlan's tail, and rattles when the beast is frightened or otherwise agitated.

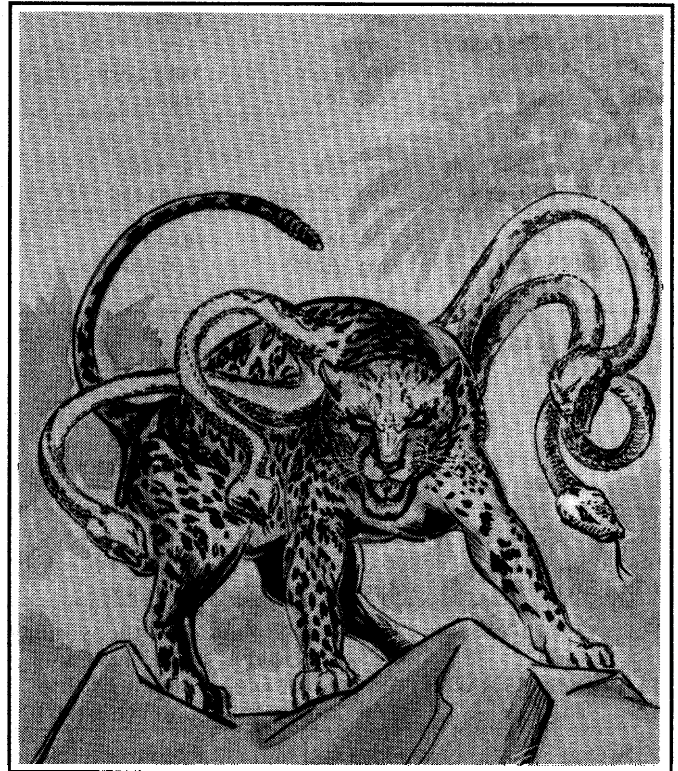
COMBAT: A kamatlan stalks its prey cautiously before attacking, though its rattle sometimes betrays its presence. The kamatlan is a fearsome opponent, hissing, growling, and rattling during battle. When it attacks, it uses its front claws and its bite, as well as the bites of the snakes. Victims bitten by a snake must make saving throws against poison at +3 or contract an incapacitating illness which has an onset time of 1-4 turns and lasts for 2-8 days.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Kamatlan are relatively new additions to Maztica, having appeared in various places during the Night of Wailing. Presumably, they were spawned in some manner by Zaltec.

Kamatlan prowl the uncivilized parts of Maztica, and may be found in jungle, desert, or mountains. They climb and swim superbly, and spend a great deal of time in tree tops when in a forested area. They often stalk their prey for hours before pouncing.

Kamatlan are solitary and territorial, and they come together only rarely and briefly to mate. Mating may take place at any time of year. Two months after mating, the female lays 1-4 large, leathery eggs, which she buries in a shallow hole. The eggs hatch two months later, producing half-sized young with only 2+2 Hit Dice but all the attack abilities of an adult. The young mature in about six months.

ECOLOGY: Kamatlan have little to fear from other preda-



tors, except for those much larger like dragons and giants. Being a mixture of snake and jaguar, however, they provide excellent materials for hishna magic, and almost any part of a kamatlan's body can be put to use by a hishnashaper. Men, therefore, hunt them whenever they are discovered.

Kamadan: A relative of the kamatlan, the kamadan lives in parts of Toril other than Maztica. A kamadan resembles a large leopard, with a long body, a tawny coat, and rosette-shaped spots. Three green snakes, about three feet long each, sprout from each shoulder. A kamadan's tail is like that of any large cat.

The kamadan attacks much like its Maztican cousin, with claws, a bite, and its snake heads. The bites of a kamadan's snakes are not poisonous, but the creature does have a formidable breath weapon. Three times per day, a kamadan can breathe a cloud of sleep gas 20' long and 10' wide. The effects of the cloud are much like those of a wizard's *sleep* spell; creatures with 4+3 or more Hit Dice are unaffected, and the cloud puts creatures totaling 2d4 Hit Dice to sleep. No saving throw is allowed against this effect, though it only affects those within the area of the gas cloud.

Kamadans hunt and reproduce much like kamatlan, with similar mating times and gestation periods. They seldom dig holes for their eggs, preferring to hide them under foliage.

These beasts are seldom prey, but have more enemies than their Maztican relatives. Their tongues make useful components for *sleep potions*.

	Lesser	Greater
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Spécial	Spécial
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Special	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Any good	Any good
NO. APPEARING:	1	1 (1-2)
ARMOR CLASS:	3	3
MOVEMENT:	3, Fl 12	9, Fl 48
HIT DICE:	1 to 5	6 to 10
THACO:	1 to 2 HD: 19 3 to 4 HD: 17 5HD: 15	6 HD: 15 7 to 8 HD: 13 9 to 10 HD: 11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/1-4/1-4	1-6/1-6/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spell use	Spell use
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Hit only by magical weapons	Hit only by magical weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	5% per Hit Die	5% per Hit Die
SIZE:	T (3") to S (4')	M (5') to L (10')
MORALE:	Elite (13)	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	1 HD: 270 2 ND: 420 3 HD: 650 4 HD: 975 5 HD: 2000	6 HD: 3000 7 HD: 4000 8 HD: 5000 9 HD: 6000 10 HD: 7000



Payit legends tell of a time long ago when a powerful plumaweaver, Itzamna Manik, set out to create life with his magic. After many years of labor, using spells that have long been forgotten, he created a plumazotl, a living creature of pluma. The gods destroyed Itzamna Manik for his audacity, but some of his creations managed to escape and reproduce. Their descendants still inhabit lonely spots in Maztica. These rare creatures are composed completely of brightly colored feathers. They commonly take the forms of birds, although some have a humanoid shape. Their sizes range from that of a hummingbird to that of a giant eagle. Plumazotl have very musical voices, and generally speak an ancient form of Payit as well as the language of intelligent species that dwell near them.

COMBAT: Plumazotl are peaceful creatures, and they generally avoid combat if possible. If forced into combat, an individual defends itself with bites and clawing attacks. A plumazotl may use pluma magic. Lesser plumazotl cast spells as if they were plumaweavers of levels equivalent to their Hit Dice. Greater plumazotl have better spellcasting powers; those with 6 HD cast as 7th level plumaweavers, 7 HD as 8th level, 8 HD as 10th level, 9 HD as 12th level, and those with 10 HD cast as 14th level plumaweavers.

Plumazotl are especially vulnerable to fire and take double damage from all fire-based attacks.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: The first of these creatures were given life hundreds of years ago. Granted intelligence and a will to survive, they became a true race and learned to feed and reproduce.

Plumazotl tend to live far from any civilization. They use

their spellcasting abilities to create wonders in their homes, which eventually become safe, peaceful places filled with color and music. Though they prefer to live alone, they are unafraid of humans, and sometimes approach them to gain news of what is happening in the outside world. They offer tidbits of information in exchange for a brief conversation, but if given a bit of pluma magic, they become quite friendly and relate any desired information to the best of their ability. These visits are rare and brief, because it takes only a short time to satisfy a plumazotl's curiosity about the outside.

Though generally solitary, a pair of greater plumazotl sometimes comes together to mate. In a dazzling ritual, they pluck feathers from one another's bodies, form them into small images of birds or humans, then infuse them with a bit of their magic. These small creatures are lesser plumazotl with 1 Hit Die. A pair of greater plumazotl produces one or two offspring in this way before parting ways.

Most plumazotl grow very slowly, finding bright feathers to add to their own bodies. If one finds or is given a pluma *talisman*, however, it may incorporate the magic of the item, growing by one or more Hit Dice, depending on the power of the *talisman*.

When lesser plumazotl reach the height of their growth, they begin searching for more and more material to incorporate into their forms. After they acquire, or one pluma *talisman*, they metamorphose into greater plumazotl.

ECOLOGY: Plumazotl feed on feathers and pluma magic, adding items directly into their bodies. *Talismans* are broken into their component parts before being absorbed.

Plumazotl have no natural enemies, though sometimes men hunt them for their inherent magic. If killed, a plumazotl produces a quantity of feathers suitable for featherweaving and pluma magic. A greater plumazotl may yield enough feathers for a *blanket of featherweaving*.

Guardians: Monsters of Maztica

The following types of monsters are known to exist in at least one part of Maztica. Generally, monsters are extremely rare and will not be encountered near any human habitation. However, exceptions suited to an individual campaign are not only possible, but likely.

After each creature, an abbreviation notes whether its description is found in 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium One, Two, or Three.

This is not an exclusive list; there can be other types of monsters in Maztica. The purpose of this list is to get the DM started on his encounters, when the guardian of a treasure or a dangerous wilderness encounter is needed.

Aarakocra	MC2	Jackal (coyote)	MC1
Ankheg	MC2	Jackalwere (as coyote)	MC1
Ascallion	MC3	Kelpie	MC2
Baboon	MC2	Lycanthrope (werejaguar)	MC1
Bear	MC1	(as weretiger)	
Behir	MC1	Merman	MC2
Beholder	MC1	Mud-man	MC1
Bichor	MC3	Nixie	MC1
Bunyip	MC3	Oozes, slimes and jellies	MC1
Carrion Crawler	MC1	Plant, Carnivorous	MC2
Doppleganger	MC2	Rhaumbusun	MC3
Dragonne (called Hakuna)	MC2	Sahuagin	MC2
Dragons (DM's option)	MC1	Sea Horse, giant	MC2
Dragon Turtle	MC1	Sea Lion	MC2
Elementals	MC1	Selkie	MC1
Golems (except iron)	MC1	Slug, giant	MC2
Giants (fire and hill)	MC1	Treants	MC1
Snakes, spiders, scorpions, bats,		Triton	MC2
centipedes, lizards, rays, birds, eels,		Urchins	MC2
fish, insects, toads, crocodiles,		Vurgens	MC3
crustaceans, lampreys, leeches,		Wyverns	MC1
frogs, porcupines, weasels, whales,		Yeti	MC1
fungus, dolphins—all normal and			
giant versions	MC1, MC2		
Harpies	MC1		

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GODS AND BATTLES

Portfolios and Statistics
for the Dungeon Master



Fred Fields '90

Ken Fink

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

Maztica Campaign Set

Gods & Battles

by Douglas Niles

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INTRODUCTION

The information in the player's book— *A Journey to the True World* —is enough to get a PC started on a Maztican campaign. However, several types of play will require more information, specifically for characters who are priests or warriors.

This book, on *Gods and Battles of Maztica*, is intended to expand the playing opportunities for both types of characters. In addition, it provides the DM (and any BATTLESYSTEM™ miniatures rules player) with the information needed to create large battles. Included are some special rules for Maztican

armies, as well as several specific scenarios.

The Maztica BATTLESYSTEM rules, incidentally, can be used by players who have armies of Aztec figures, or other pre-Columbian armies of Mexico, in creating historical scenarios.

The section on Maztican gods explains some of the general religious practices of the land. The section goes on to list the major deities of the True World, together with information on alignment, general descriptions, and what spheres of influence their clerics can master.





BATTLESYSTEM™ Rules for Maztica

The general provisions of the BATTLESYSTEM™ Miniatures Rules (2nd Edition) apply to mass combat in Maztica. However, several modifications can be made which reflect the tactics, qualities, and equipment of the armies of Maztica. These are organized along the same outline as the BATTLESYSTEM rules themselves.

Basic Troop Information

Maztican armies are organized and converted from AD&D® game characteristics just like any other fantasy army. A few specific provisions apply, however.

All native Maztican formations are infantry, obviously due to the lack of rideable creatures. This can be subject to modification depending upon the time frame of the campaign, and the degree of commerce between Maztica and the Sword Coast.

Even among the infantry, however, there is a great variety of weaponry and levels of training. Typical Maztican troop types include both regular (veteran) and irregular (levee) formations armed with the following weaponry: Macas, clubs, spears (with and without casters), bows, and slings. Jaguar and Eagle formations are also present in many armies.

Unit And Base Sizes

Maztican units tend to be larger than those employed by armies of other cultures. The following are guidelines:

Unit Type	Min.	Recommended
Irregular, melee weapons	10	24-48
Irregular, missile weapons	8	20-40
Regular, melee weapons	6	24-36
Regular, missile weapons	6	16-32
Jaguar or Eagle Knights	2*	4-12

*Unless only one is present.

Another difference to consider is that Maztican warriors do not fight in quite so tightly packed formations as do some other forces. Consequently, the ideal base size for a Maztican warrior is a full 25 mm (1") square per figure. If smaller bases are already in use, those figures must be designated as regular troops.

Morale

Several unique provisions apply to morale checks for Maztican units in battle.

Cumulative Penalties. The normal rule requiring a unit to make no more than 1 Morale Check per step applies. However, when a check is made for one reason, every additional reason that would cause an additional Morale Check inflicts a -1 penalty to the unit's morale. All modifiers that apply, because of any of the morale triggers or for any other reason, are applied cumulatively. (This, as an optional rule, can be employed for all BATTLESYSTEM games.)

For example, a unit suffers the



first casualties of a turn, losing five figures to a non-Maztican wizards *cone of cold* attack. This provides three reasons to check morale (first casualty; more than 4 hits in a single step; figures eliminated by magic). Only one check is made, but a -2 modifier (for the two extra morale triggers) to the unit's morale applies (in addition to all other modifiers that already apply).

Special Morale Check Modifiers. Maztican formations apply special modifiers, for several circumstances. These reflect the fact that, while the infantry is not so willing to grapple for long periods with opposing infantry, neither does it willingly flee the battlefield while a fight still rages.

DURING MELEE, when a Maztican unit is in base-to-base contact with an enemy unit (not merely a hero), a -1 modifier applies to the Morale of the Maztican formation.

DURING MOVEMENT, when a Maztican unit is attempting to rally from Shaken to Good formation, a +1 modifier applies to the unit's morale. If a unit is attempting to rally from Routed to Shaken formation, a +2 modifier applies.

First Shock of Foreign Tactics. This is designed as a scenario rule, or a procedure to be adjudicated by a DM during a campaign. It reflects the effects on Maztican warriors of first appearances of certain tactics, formations, and equipment that are very terrifying when they first appear.

CAVALRY causes Awe (BATTLESYSTEM™ Rules, page 88) when it is first encountered by Maztican warriors.

WIZARDS and CLERICS who employ a spell of Level 3 or higher

will cause Awe (range 12"), as soon as the effects of the spell are visible or otherwise felt.

GUNPOWDER weapons force a morale check by any unit they are fired against, with no regard for hits or misses. Each hit inflicted is a -1 modifier to the unit's morale rating, for that check only. A unit must check each time it is fired upon, until it passes a check. It need not check thereafter.

Movement

Normal movement rules for infantry apply to Maztican units. They can assume column formation, and regular units can assume regular or irregular formation.

Irregular units, however, can only assume irregular formation (whether in column or not). They cannot perform a march to the rear.

Combat

Normal BATTLESYSTEM rules apply. Some specific changes have been noted on individual unit rosters.

Skirmishers: Any Maztican regular formation can enter skirmish formation. Elite formations (Jaguar and Eagle Knights) can enter skirmish formation, and in addition they enjoy some exceptions to normal skirmisher rules. They *can* move freely into contact with enemy formations, even their fronts, and they can initiate charges.

Special Formations: Maztican formations cannot employ the Shield Wall or Pike Block formations. They can employ the Mixed Line formation.

Eagle and Jaguar Knights:

Formations of Knights can function in regular, irregular, or skirmish formation, or they can be employed as Heroes (within the restrictions on Number of Heroes per Battle, BATTLESYSTEM™ Rules page 57-58),

Knights with four or more Hits can use either their human or their animal forms (Jaguar or Eagle) on the field. Two separate roster notations should be made for these units, one for each form. The number of Hits, of course, remains constant.

See Maztican Troop Rosters, page 7, for full details of these troops.

Heroes: Maztican heroes function normally, and typically include the most powerful members of the Knightly orders, as well as high-level warriors, and the occasional cleric, Plumaweaver, or Hishnashaper.

Flying Creatures: Eagle Knights, in avian form, are the only commonly encountered flying formation in the True World. The normal flying rules apply, except that they suffer no morale penalty when in flight.

Undead Units: Undead are extremely rare in Maztica, and an army-sized group of them would have to be introduced by some enterprising cleric from the more "civilized" parts of the realm.

Buildings: Units in and around buildings follow the normal rules. Buildings of stone or adobe cannot be burned. Unique Maztican building features have the following hits:

1	House door
5	Thatch Wall
10	Adobe Wall

12	Hut
22	Adobe House
30	Small Temple Building

Magic

The pluma and hishna magic of Maztica is not so dominating on the battlefield as are the sorceries typical of a powerful wizard. Nonetheless, the following spells can have notable effects:

Pluma: The *missileflight* spells (*arrowflight*, *spearflight*, and *stoneflight*) can benefit troops on a battlefield. It doubles the range of the missile fire, and allows a figure to get an AD of 8 instead of 6.

A plumaweaver can cast the spell on one figure for each hit of the spellcaster.

The *water summoning* spell can turn a section of dry land into marsh or swamp, with its corresponding effects upon movement and combat. The spellcaster must remain immobile for a full turn; on the *following* turn the spell takes effect during the Magic Step, if the caster still has not moved.

The center of the area of the effect must be within 6" of the caster. An area of 4" radius from that spot is immediately turned to swamp. The area expands by 1" (added to radius) per turn after this, to a total number of turns equal to the Spellcaster's hits. For example, a caster with 4 hits would cause the swamp to expand for 3 additional turns after it first appeared.

Hishna: The *ambush* spell can allow as many figures as the hishnapaper has hits (one per hit) to conceal themselves on the battlefield. They

are placed off to the side, and their location carefully noted. They may appear whenever, and with whatever facing, the casting player decides.

The *pestilence* spell can create an obstacle on a battlefield, covering a 5" square for each hit of the caster. It will last for the duration of the battle, and requires no delay to cast.

Troops within an area of pestilence must make an immediate Morale Check, as if caused by Horror with a -1 penalty to morale.

They need not flee the area, unless they receive a rout result.

Troops must make a Morale check before they will enter an area of pestilence; the check is made during movement, immediately before the unit would enter the affected area.

Any troops that spend any portion of a turn within an area affected by pestilence suffer 1 hit per five figures in the area. The hit(s) is suffered immediately, but those same figures cannot again be hit by the pestilence until the following turn.

Typical Maztican Troop Rosters

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML	MV
Irregular Levees					
Clubwielders	6 (4 vs. large foes)	9	1	8	12"
Spearman	6	9	1	9	12"
Range 1"/2"/3" Levees cannot use spearcasters					
Archers	6* 4	10	1	9	12"
Range 5"/10"/15"					
Slingers	4	10	1	8	12"
Range 4"/8"/16"					
Regular Warriors					
Macas	8*	7	1	11	10"
Spearman (with casters)	6	8	1	11	12"
Range 2**"/4**"/8"					
Archers	6* 4	9	1	11	12"
Range 5"/10"/18"					
Slingers	4	9	1	11	12"
Eagle Knights (Elders)	10	4	5	15	12"
Can use bow and arrow, AD 6, Range 5"/10"/18"					
Eagle form:	12	5	5	15	6"/36" (MC B)
Eagle Knights (Apprentice)	8	4	3	13	12"
Can use bow and arrow, AD 6, Range 5"/10"/18"					
Jaguar Knights (Elders)	10	3***	5	15	12"
Jaguar Form:	12+8	4	5	15	15"
Can charge at 30" movement rate					

*(6 after 3 rounds of melee attacks, due to weapon deterioration)

* **When cast at these ranges, spears get AD of 2d6 for each figure.

* * *AR 5 when attacked with metal weapons

Scenario 1: The Early Days of Empire

During the reign of Ipana III, Fourth Revered Counselor of Nexal

When the forces of Nexal gained control of the valley floor, they had to look no farther than the slopes above their lakes to find the first victim of expansion. They found a place rich in treasure and population, and barely a day's march for the army beyond the boundaries of Nexal itself.

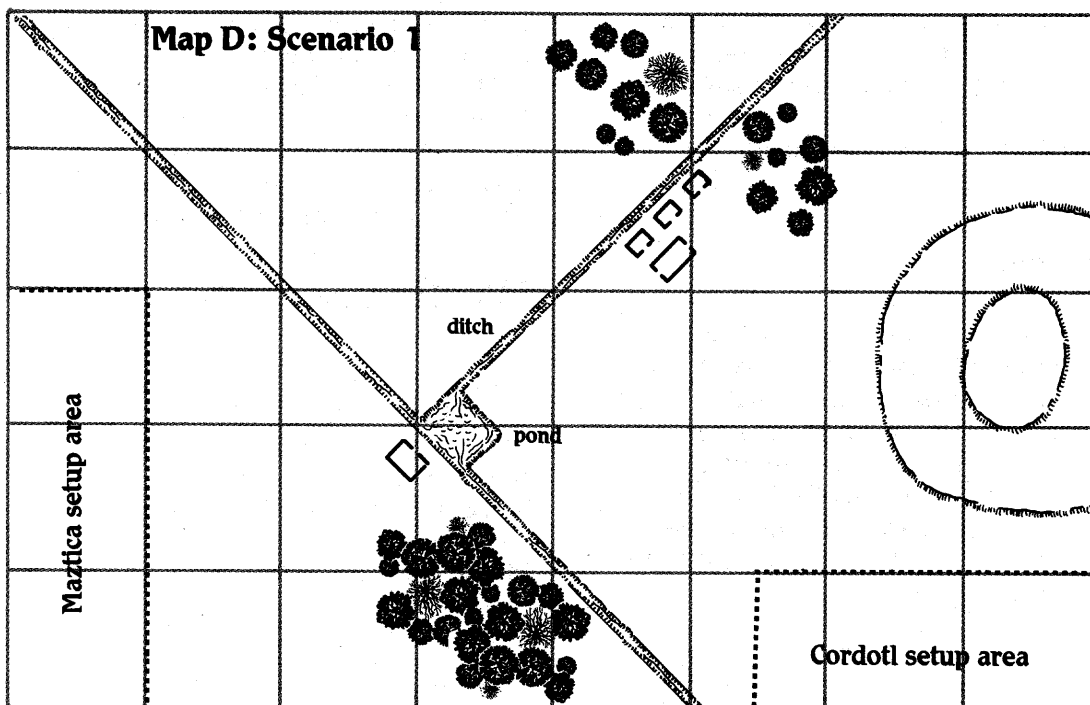
The small city-state of Cordotl occupied a key pass, between the great summits of Popol and Zatal. It was a busy trading town, where foodstuffs from the valley were hauled and bartered for goods from the coast and from the Payit and Pezel countries.

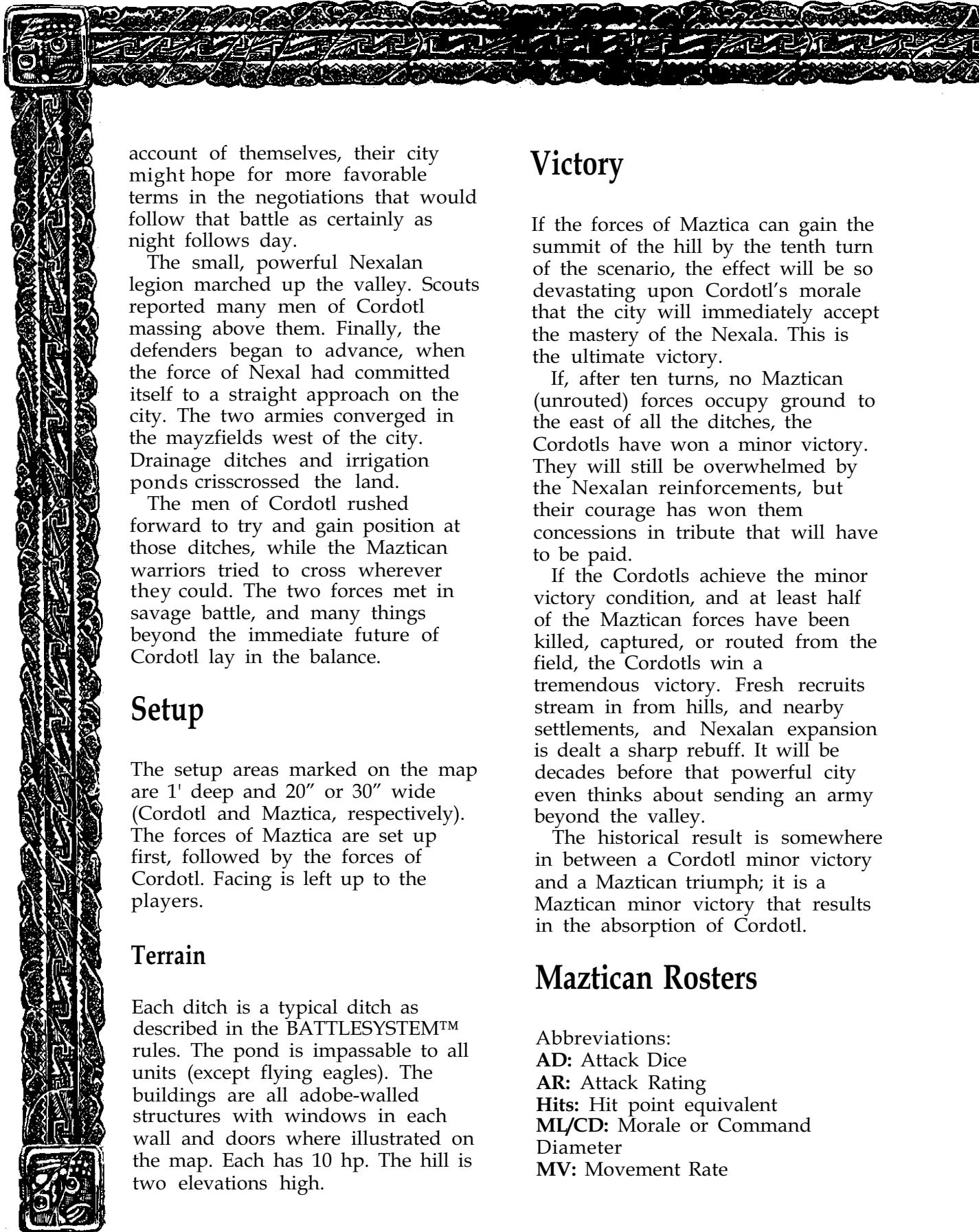
Always before it had been ignored by the powers in the valley, for they had had their own neighbors to worry about. Now, for the first time, these squabbling precincts were all united—albeit forcibly—under the

leadership of one city, and one Revered Counselor.

Ipana III began his campaign ambitiously, with plans for the quick subjugation of Cordotl, Palul, and eventually Kultaka beyond. While he busily recruited warriors in the valley, he sent a small army of his most loyal veterans against Cordotl, reasoning that the small city would put up little resistance. The counsellor planned for his force to take Cordotl and gain mastery of the pass in time for the rest of the army to march up for the grand campaign into the valleys beyond.

Cordotl, surprisingly, mustered a large force of warriors from the city and the surrounding lands. Though many of these were levees of untrained farmers, they were united in their determination to see Cordotl remain free of Nexalan control. Failing in that, the warriors knew that if they gave a good





account of themselves, their city might hope for more favorable terms in the negotiations that would follow that battle as certainly as night follows day.

The small, powerful Nexalan legion marched up the valley. Scouts reported many men of Cordotl massing above them. Finally, the defenders began to advance, when the force of Nexal had committed itself to a straight approach on the city. The two armies converged in the mayzfields west of the city. Drainage ditches and irrigation ponds crisscrossed the land.

The men of Cordotl rushed forward to try and gain position at those ditches, while the Maztican warriors tried to cross wherever they could. The two forces met in savage battle, and many things beyond the immediate future of Cordotl lay in the balance.

Setup

The setup areas marked on the map are 1' deep and 20" or 30" wide (Cordotl and Maztica, respectively). The forces of Maztica are set up first, followed by the forces of Cordotl. Facing is left up to the players.

Terrain

Each ditch is a typical ditch as described in the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules. The pond is impassable to all units (except flying eagles). The buildings are all adobe-walled structures with windows in each wall and doors where illustrated on the map. Each has 10 hp. The hill is two elevations high.

Victory

If the forces of Maztica can gain the summit of the hill by the tenth turn of the scenario, the effect will be so devastating upon Cordotl's morale that the city will immediately accept the mastery of the Nexala. This is the ultimate victory.

If, after ten turns, no Maztican (unrouted) forces occupy ground to the east of all the ditches, the Cordotls have won a minor victory. They will still be overwhelmed by the Nexalan reinforcements, but their courage has won them concessions in tribute that will have to be paid.

If the Cordotls achieve the minor victory condition, and at least half of the Maztican forces have been killed, captured, or routed from the field, the Cordotls win a tremendous victory. Fresh recruits stream in from hills, and nearby settlements, and Nexalan expansion is dealt a sharp rebuff. It will be decades before that powerful city even thinks about sending an army beyond the valley.

The historical result is somewhere in between a Cordotl minor victory and a Maztican triumph; it is a Maztican minor victory that results in the absorption of Cordotl.

Maztican Rosters

Abbreviations:

AD: Attack Dice

AR: Attack Rating

Hits: Hit point equivalent

ML/CD: Morale or Command Diameter

MV: Movement Rate

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML/CD	MV
Individuals:					
Talok * *	12	4	8	18"	12"
Eagle Knight, Army Commander and Hero					
Eagle Form	12	5	5		6"/36" (MCB)
2 Jaguar Knight Heroes	12	3	5	13"	12"
Jaguar Form	12+8	4	5		15"
Can charge at 30" movement rate					
4 Warriors	10	5	5	12"	12"
Unit Commanders					

Units:

5 Eagle Knights* *	8	4	3	13	12"
Need no commander					
4 Jaguar Knights	10	3	3	12	12"
20 Spearmen (Regular)	6	6	1	11	12"
with casters; range 2/4/8; double AD at short and med. range					
24 Macas (Regular)	8	7	1	11	10"
AD drops to 6 on fourth turn of melee attacks					
24 Archers * * (Regular)	6* 4	9	1	10	12"
* *can use bows; range 5"/10"/18"; AD 6					

Cordotl Rosters

Individual

Karmac	12	3	8	18"	12"
Jaguar Knight, Army Commander and Hero					
Jaguar Form	12+8	4	5		15"
Can charge at 30" movement rate					
2 Warrior Heroes	12	5	5	12"	12"
Armed with Heartseeker spears; on AD roll of 10 or better, automatically eliminates opponent in melee combat					
6 Warriors	10	5	4	12"	12"
Unit Commanders					

Units:

24 Macas (Regular)	8	7	1	11	10"
AD drops to 6 on fourth turn of melee attacks					
36 Clubwielders (Irreg.)	6	9	1	8	12"
24 Spearmen (Irregular)	6	9	1	9	12"
Range: 1"/2"/3"					
20 Slingers (Irregular)	4	10	1	8	12"
Range: 4"/8"/16"					
24 Archers (Irregular)	6*4	10	1	9	12"
Range: 5"/10"/15"					

Scenario 2: The Golden Legion at Ulatos; First Triumph

During the reign of Naltecona, Fifteenth and Last Revered Counselor of Nexal

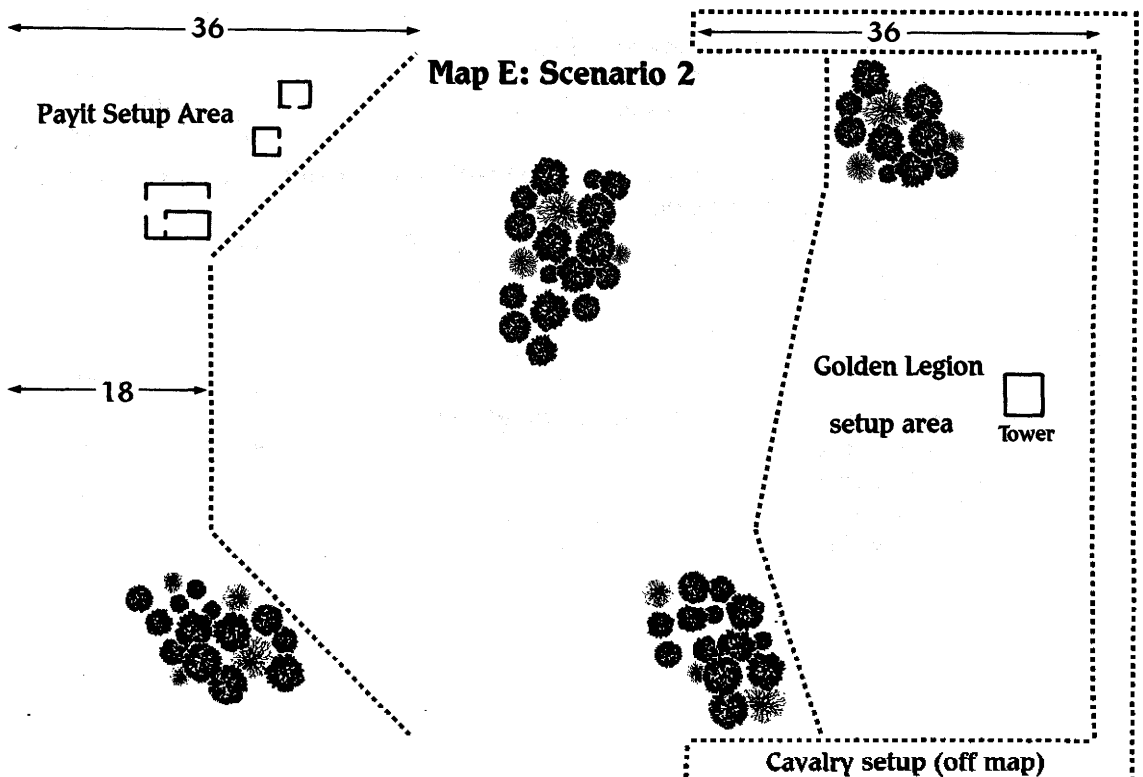
Captain-general Cordell landed his force on the shore at Ulatos knowing there would be war. His legionnaires had already skirmished with Payit warriors, at the nearby promontory of Twin Visages. Now he sailed up to the largest city in the Payit lands and dropped anchor.


In a daring debarkation, he brought his men ashore late in the day, in the full view of the Payit army massing on the plain before its city. The pyramids, palaces, and rooftop gardens of Ulatos were clearly visible from the ships, and the shore—only a few miles of relatively open, brushy savannah and mayzfields separated them.

A twilight or night attack by the Payits might have destroyed the legion then and there, but nighttime warfare is not the way of the True World. In proper civilized fashion, the army of the Payit waited until the following morning to begin its attack.

In the meantime, Cordell's men erected a lookout tower for the commander, and he set about preparing for the morrow's battle.

His horsemen were few, but he took the risk of dividing them into even smaller wings. These he concealed in ravines near the field, out of view of the Mazticans. Too, he had delayed the debarking of the horses until after dark, hoping that the cavalry would provide a shocking attack against the footbound Payit.





The Payits mustered a huge force, including the veteran guards and Knights from the city itself, and a great many irregular regiments of spearmen from the surrounding villages. These had hastened to answer the call to war, knowing only that some unspeakably strange force had landed on the shores of the True World, bent on domination and destruction.

The Payits waited for full daylight, but not a moment longer. With the rising of the sun, the savannah quaked to a cacophony of whistles, shouts, conch-shell horns, and stamping, pounding feet. The men of the Legion stood ready, and the Battle of Ulatos began.

Special Scenario Note: To reflect the dramatic disparity in effectiveness of the two armies, the Golden Legion is represented at an inflated scale. Each figure represents a mere 5 men, not the standard 10. This has no effect upon play, but further illustrates just how outnumbered Cordell and his men were.

Setup

The Payits set up first. At least four units must be placed with their rear rank adjacent to the south edge of the table. These forces cannot move until after at least one melee combat has occurred between Mazticans and Legionnaires. (This is to reflect the crowded conditions as many huge Payit regiments tried to attack the compact companies of the invaders.)

The Golden Legion is set up next. The cavalry units are not placed on the table. Instead, their location is noted—they are assumed to be at

the table edge, just out of play (and out of sight). They can be brought onto the table during any Legion Movement Step. They can initiate charges from their off-table positions.

Terrain

The trees shown on the map are light forest.

The buildings on the Payit side are adobe. The small ones are houses and can take 10 hits. The large one has a portion of roof that is two levels high, and it can take 40 Hits before it is destroyed.

The tower is two elevation levels high. It can take 20 Hits, but is subject to burning. When the Cordell figure occupies the tower, his Charisma Bonus can be used to rally any figures within 48" of the tower.

Victory

This is a decisive battle in the history of the True World. The Payits, with a victory that eliminates or routs all of the Legion from the field, will change the course of Maztica's future. The Legion, shattered, will flee back to the Sword Coast. The nations of Maztica will prepare confidently for the next coming of these once-whipped foreigners. A prolonged and bloody war becomes inevitable.

A legion victory requires Legionnaire figures to occupy or destroy all of the buildings, and eliminate at least four of the Payit Heroes. If this occurs, the Payits fall to the invaders and the Legion embarks upon its march to destiny.

Payit Army Rosters

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML/CD	MV
Individuals:					
Lok**	12	4	8	18"	12"
Eagle Knight, Army Commander and Hero					
Eagle Form	12	5	5		6"/36" (MCB)
Gultec	12+8	3(5)	9	16"	12"
Jaguar Form	12+8	4	9		15"
Can charge at 30" movement rate					
3 Jaguar Knight Heroes	10	3(5)	5	10"	15"
Jaguar Form:	12+8	4	5	15"	
Can charge at 30' movement rate					
Xaktl	6	8	4		18"
Plumaweaver and Hero, select 6 spells from pluma and priest spell lists					
Kikil	10	4	4		12"
Hishnashaper and Hero, select 6 spells from hishna and priest spell lists					
7 Warriors	10	6	5	10"	12"
Unit Commanders					
Units:					
12 Eagle Knights* *	8	4	5	14	12"
Need no commander					
Eagle Form	12	5	5		6"/36" (MCB)
12 Jaguar Knights	10	3	3	13	12"
Need no commander					
20 Spearmen (Regular)	6	8	1	11	12"
with casters; range 2/4/8; double AD at short and med. range					
24 Macas (Regular)	8	7	1	11	10"
AD drops to 6 on fourth turn of melee attacks					
24 Archers * * (Regular)	6*4	9	1	10	12"
24 Clubwielders (Irreg.)	6	9	1	8	12"
24 Spearmen (Irregular)	6	9	1	9	12"
Range: 1"/12"/13"					
20 Slingers (Irregular)	4	10	1	8	12"
Range: 4"/8"/16"					
24 Archers (Irregular)	6*4	10	1	9	12"
Range: 5"/10"/15"					
** can use bows, AD 6; Range 5"/10"/18"					

Golden Legion Rosters

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML/CD	MV
Individuals:					
Captain-General Cordell Hero and Army Commander, mounted	10	2	11	18"	24"
Daggrande Hero and Crossbow Unit Commander, Dwarf	12	2	9	14"	9"
Garrant Hero and Swordsmen Unit Commander, mounted (optionally)	12	3	8	14"	9" or 24"
Bishou Domincus Priest	10	3	8	12"	
Darien Wizard, has spells	6	4	9		24"
5 Captains Other unit Commanders	8	5	5	10"	12"
Units:					
12 Crossbowmen Range 8"/16"/24", Rate	8	5	3	13	9"
16 Archers Range 7"/14"/21", Rate	6	6	2	12	12"
12 Swordsmen	8	6	2	12	9"
8 Swordsmen	10	4	3	14	6"
18 Pikemen	6		2	12	12"
2 Cavalry (There are four units of cavalry, all with these attributes)	(12+8) 10	6	6	15	18"

Scenario 3: Humans United at Tukan

In the fourth month after the Night of Wailing

After the calamities of the Night of Wailing, a mass of refugees fled southward from the valley of Nexal. While predominantly residents of Nexal itself, some of these were the remnants of the Kultakan forces brought to the city by Cordell, and even some hundred and fifty of his original five hundred legionnaires.

The humans fled along a series of formerly desert valleys that, through the miraculous intervention of Qotal, now flourished with water and grain—enough to sustain the humans on their long, perilous flight.

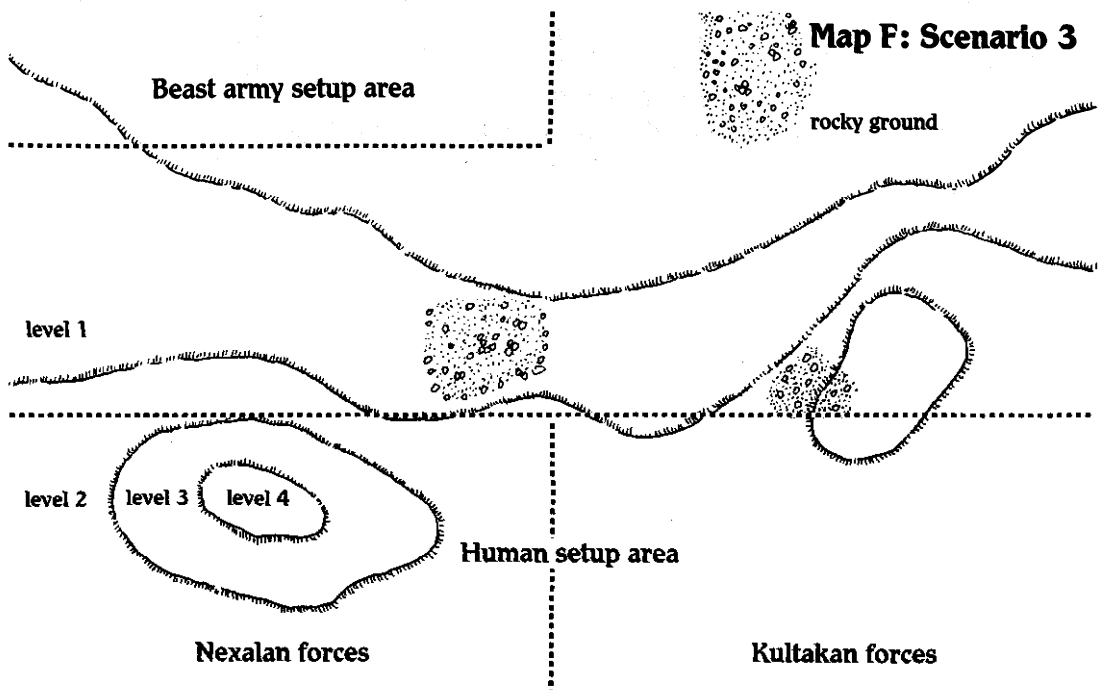
But behind them came the pressing horde of the Viperhand—the creatures that had been born of the

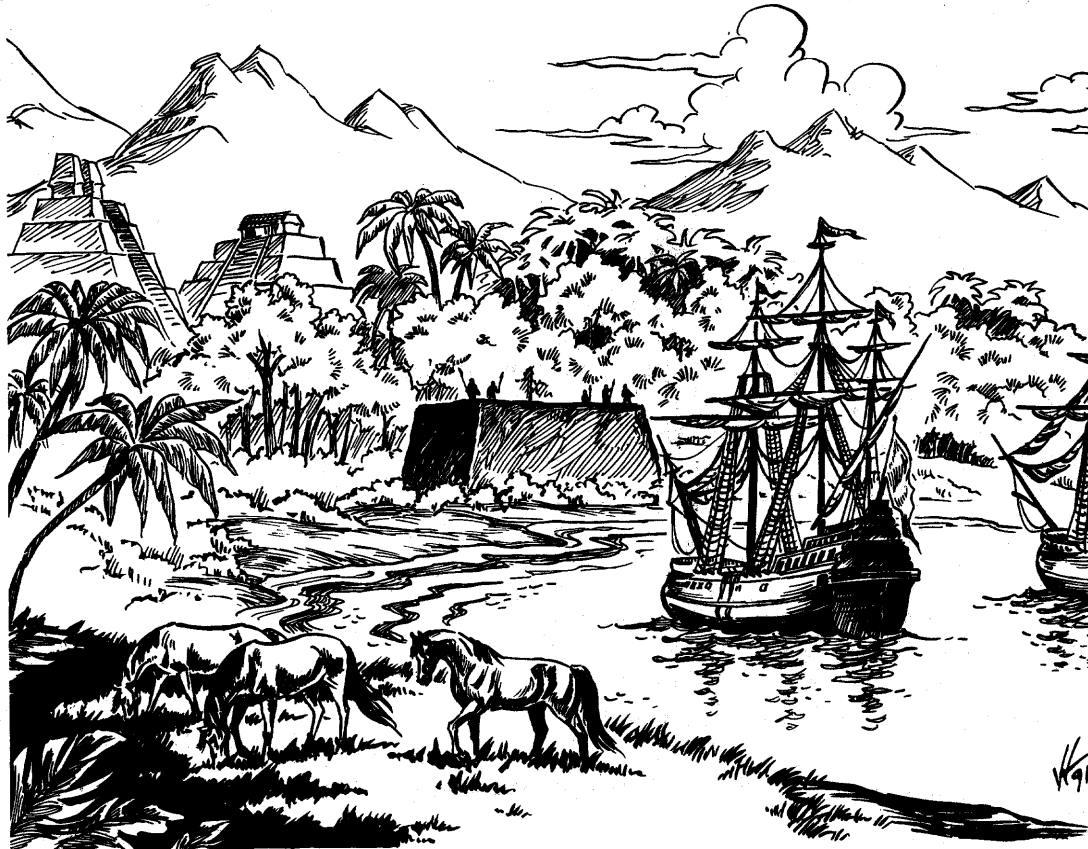
Night of Wailing, perverted by the power of Zaltec into growling monsters: orcs and ogres.

These beasts pressed after the humans, nearing the huge column just as they refugees entered a wide, very fertile valley. Here they decided to stay, and here they would have to stand against the Beasts of the Viperhand.

Setup

The forces of the Beastarmy are set up first. Next, the human army is set up. The forces of Kultaka and Nexal must be separated as shown on the setup diagram. The few Legionnaire forces can be placed anywhere among the humans.





Terrain

The battlefield slopes upward to two crests, one of elevation three and the other of elevation four. Several patches of rough ground—boulder fields, in this case—obstruct portions of the battlefield.

Victory

This is a fight for nothing less than the future of humankind in Maztica, and as such will be fought to the finish. The last player with unrouted troops on the board is the winner.

If the humans win, they preserve their valley of Tukan, and go on to build the city there that will soon rival Nexal in its splendor and glory. It becomes the new heart of the True World, balancing the foreign influence that soon changes Ulatos and the Payit lands beyond all expectations.

If the monstrous forces win, the refugees scatter southward, where many perish of starvation and others fall victim to the Green Folk in the dank southern jungles. The victorious Beasts of the Viperhand roam across the continent, destroying city after city of humankind, until all of Maztica has been driven back to primitive savagery.

Human Rosters

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML/CD	MV
Individuals:					
Captain-General Cordell Hero and Army Commander, mounted	12	2	11	18"	24"
Garrant Hero and Swordsmen Unit Commander, mounted (optionally)	12	3	8	14"	9" or 24"
2 Captains Other legion unit Commanders	8	5	5	10"	12"
Chical* * Eagle Knight, Army Commander and Hero	12	4	8	18"	12"
Eagle Form	12	5	5		6"/36" (MCB)
Tokol Kultakan Army Commander and Hero	12	5	8	15"	12"
2 Jaguar Knight Heroes Jaguar Form	12	3	5	13"	12"
Can charge at 30" movement rate	12+8	4	5		15"
8 Warriors Maztican Unit Commanders must be designated Kultakan (Kult.) or Nexalan (Nex.).	10	5	5	12"	12"

Units:

NEXALAN FORCES:

5 Eagle Knights* * Need no commander	8	4	3	13	12"
24 Macas (Regular) AD drops to 6 on fourth turn of melee attacks	8	7	1	11	10"
24 Archers * * (Regular)	6*4	9	1	10	12"
36 Clubwielders (Irreg.)	6	9	1	8	12"
24 Spearmen (Irregular) Range: 1"/2"/3"	6	9	1	9	12"
20 Slingers (Irregular) Range: 4"/8"/16"	4	10	1	8	12"

KULTAKAN FORCES:

4 Jaguar Knights Need no commander	10	3	3	12	12"
20 Spearmen (Regular) with casters; range 2/4/8; double AD at short and med. range	6	8	1	11	12"
16 Macas (Regular) AD drops to 6 on fourth turn of melee attacks	8	7	1	11	10"
24 Archers (Irregular) Range: 5"/10"/15" * * can use bows; range 5"/10"/18"; AD 6	6*4	10	1	9	12"

Golden Legion Roster:

Name/Group	AD	AR	Hits	ML/CD	MV
8 Crossbowmen Range 8"/16"/24"	8	5	3	13	9"
12 Swordsmen	8	6	2	12	9"
3 Cavalry Need no commander	(12+8) 10	6	6	15	18"

Beasts of the Viperhand Rosters

Individuals:

Hoxitl, Beastlord Army commander	2d12	4	12	18"	12"
Hamhock, Ogre Brute	12	6	8	10"	12"
Blackfist Ogre Champion and Hero	12	5	9	11"	12"
9 Ogres Unit Commanders	10	7	4	9"	9"

Units (All are Irregular):

24 Orcs with sword (There are three units like this)		8	1	11	9"
16 Orcs with bows (Two units of these; Range 5"/10"/15")			1	11	9"
24 orcs with spears (Two of these units; Range 1"/2"/3")	6		1	12	9"
8 ogres (Two of these units)	10	7	2	13	9"





Powers of Maztica

Gods play an important role in the lives of Mazticans—indeed, they are a matter of life and death to many, if not most, of the peoples of the True World. Not only is this reflected in the sacrifices so commonly expected by some of these powers, but also in the way that they affect the climate, food supply, and environment of the entire continent—at least, as viewed and explained by their followers.

Much of the mythology surrounding these beings is contained in the “History of Maztica” section, in the *Journey to the True World* book. There are related the tales of their lives, and the most profound events they were involved in as they related to the history of the people.

This section identifies the major powers in terms of their areas of influence, and the types of followers they are most likely to attract. Also included here is pertinent information about the priests of each being, as it differs from typical clerical abilities.

Pyramids and Temples

The most typical platform supporting a temple to any of the Maztican powers is the pyramid. The pyramid is not the temple itself, however—it is the structure below the temple.

The pyramids follow a stepped design of many layers. Indeed, many of the pyramids have been erected atop earlier, smaller pyramids, in as many as five or six layers, or “shells.” Typically, a pyramid will have a stairway

climbing each of its four sides, though some have steps on only two opposite sides.

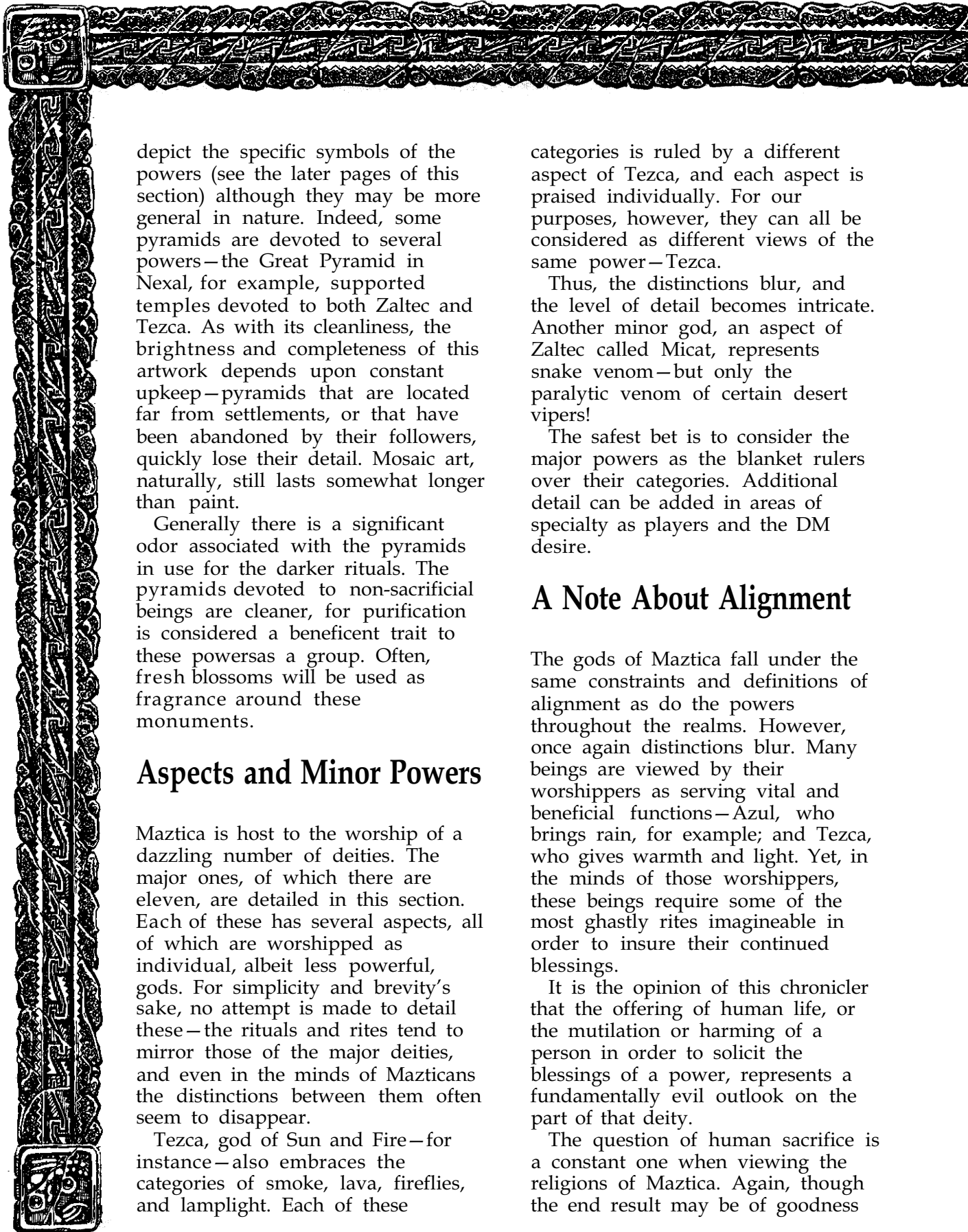
These stairs are always steep, in many cases climbing at an angle in excess of forty-five degrees. Some of the steepest use one foot risers for six-inch-wide steps (one foot of rise per six inches of run, in other terms).

Maztican pyramids are sometimes solid, but many of them are penetrated by secret passages, burial chambers, treasure troves, or hidden meeting places. The entrances to these places are well-concealed, and may be located anywhere, including on top of the pyramid, around its base, partway up one side, or—rarely—in some place removed from the pyramid, and connected to it by an underground passageway.

The temple building is erected on top of the pyramid, and can be made of wood, stone, or plastered adobe. The temple itself will generally contain a painted tiled, or carved image of the god worshipped there, and perhaps an altar or brazier such as might be required for the rites performed there.

A pyramid that is being utilized will always be kept scrupulously clean, except for signs of its rituals that are assumed to be desirable to the being in question. But the steps will be swept of dust, and dirt will not be allowed to darken the sides. Any stone that crumbles will be mortared, or replaced if it is too far gone.

Mosaics and murals, usually in bright colors, often encircle the layers of a pyramid. These will often



depict the specific symbols of the powers (see the later pages of this section) although they may be more general in nature. Indeed, some pyramids are devoted to several powers—the Great Pyramid in Nexal, for example, supported temples devoted to both Zaltec and Tezca. As with its cleanliness, the brightness and completeness of this artwork depends upon constant upkeep—pyramids that are located far from settlements, or that have been abandoned by their followers, quickly lose their detail. Mosaic art, naturally, still lasts somewhat longer than paint.

Generally there is a significant odor associated with the pyramids in use for the darker rituals. The pyramids devoted to non-sacrificial beings are cleaner, for purification is considered a beneficent trait to these powers as a group. Often, fresh blossoms will be used as fragrance around these monuments.

Aspects and Minor Powers

Maztica is host to the worship of a dazzling number of deities. The major ones, of which there are eleven, are detailed in this section. Each of these has several aspects, all of which are worshipped as individual, albeit less powerful, gods. For simplicity and brevity's sake, no attempt is made to detail these—the rituals and rites tend to mirror those of the major deities, and even in the minds of Mazticans the distinctions between them often seem to disappear.

Tezca, god of Sun and Fire—for instance—also embraces the categories of smoke, lava, fireflies, and lamplight. Each of these

categories is ruled by a different aspect of Tezca, and each aspect is praised individually. For our purposes, however, they can all be considered as different views of the same power—Tezca.

Thus, the distinctions blur, and the level of detail becomes intricate. Another minor god, an aspect of Zaltec called Micat, represents snake venom—but only the paralytic venom of certain desert vipers!

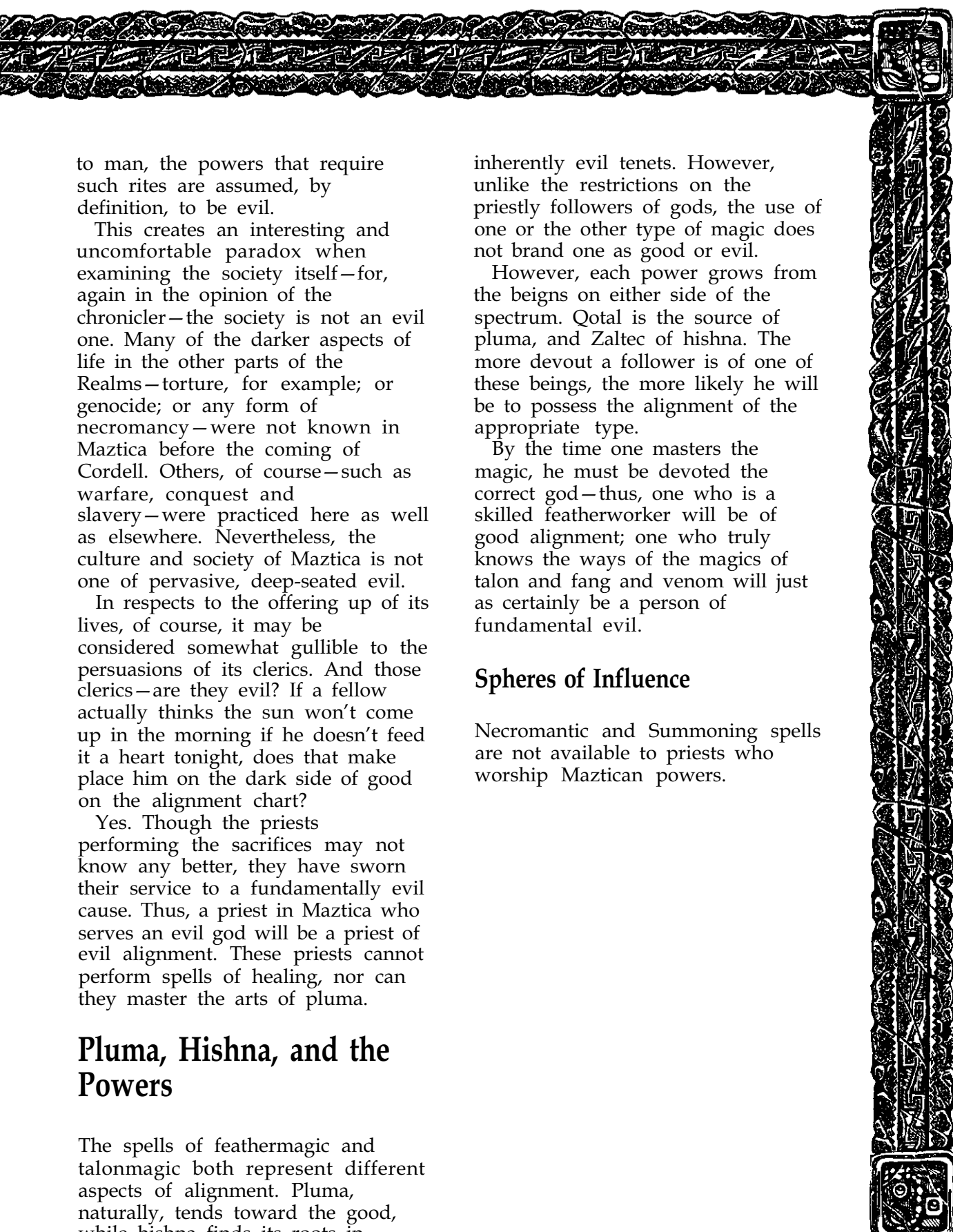
The safest bet is to consider the major powers as the blanket rulers over their categories. Additional detail can be added in areas of specialty as players and the DM desire.

A Note About Alignment

The gods of Maztica fall under the same constraints and definitions of alignment as do the powers throughout the realms. However, once again distinctions blur. Many beings are viewed by their worshippers as serving vital and beneficial functions—Azul, who brings rain, for example; and Tezca, who gives warmth and light. Yet, in the minds of those worshippers, these beings require some of the most ghastly rites imaginable in order to insure their continued blessings.

It is the opinion of this chronicler that the offering of human life, or the mutilation or harming of a person in order to solicit the blessings of a power, represents a fundamentally evil outlook on the part of that deity.

The question of human sacrifice is a constant one when viewing the religions of Maztica. Again, though the end result may be of goodness



to man, the powers that require such rites are assumed, by definition, to be evil.

This creates an interesting and uncomfortable paradox when examining the society itself—for, again in the opinion of the chronicler—the society is not an evil one. Many of the darker aspects of life in the other parts of the Realms—torture, for example; or genocide; or any form of necromancy—were not known in Maztica before the coming of Cordell. Others, of course—such as warfare, conquest and slavery—were practiced here as well as elsewhere. Nevertheless, the culture and society of Maztica is not one of pervasive, deep-seated evil.

In respects to the offering up of its lives, of course, it may be considered somewhat gullible to the persuasions of its clerics. And those clerics—are they evil? If a fellow actually thinks the sun won't come up in the morning if he doesn't feed it a heart tonight, does that make place him on the dark side of good on the alignment chart?

Yes. Though the priests performing the sacrifices may not know any better, they have sworn their service to a fundamentally evil cause. Thus, a priest in Maztica who serves an evil god will be a priest of evil alignment. These priests cannot perform spells of healing, nor can they master the arts of pluma.

Pluma, Hishna, and the Powers

The spells of feathermagic and talonmagic both represent different aspects of alignment. Pluma, naturally, tends toward the good, while hishna finds its roots in

inherently evil tenets. However, unlike the restrictions on the priestly followers of gods, the use of one or the other type of magic does not brand one as good or evil.

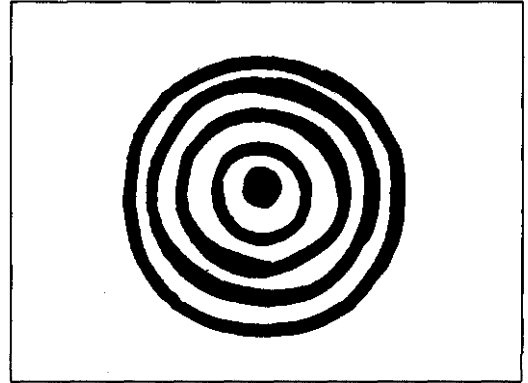
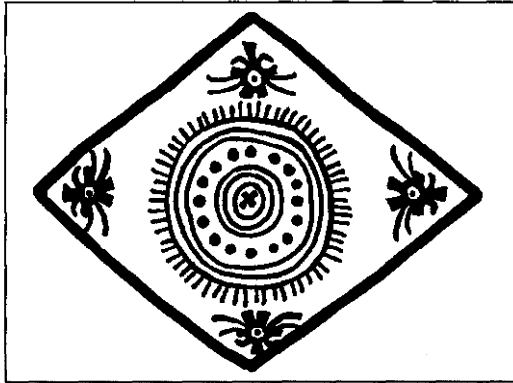
However, each power grows from the beigns on either side of the spectrum. Qotal is the source of pluma, and Zaltec of hishna. The more devout a follower is of one of these beings, the more likely he will be to possess the alignment of the appropriate type.

By the time one masters the magic, he must be devoted the correct god—thus, one who is a skilled featherworker will be of good alignment; one who truly knows the ways of the magics of talon and fang and venom will just as certainly be a person of fundamental evil.

Spheres of Influence

Necromantic and Summoning spells are not available to priests who worship Maztican powers.

KUKUL: Ancient Father of the Gods



SYMBOLS: Stars, meteors, gold

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Kukul is not well-described in the annals of Maztican religion, though it is assumed that he had a vaguely manlike shape. He is also assumed to be huge—mountainously so, since he was the first of the gods, and the maker of all the rest. There is speculation that he was a being of pure gold—and indeed, one of the myths about gold holds that the precious metal is the remains of Kukul's body, found in the earth for use by his creation: man.

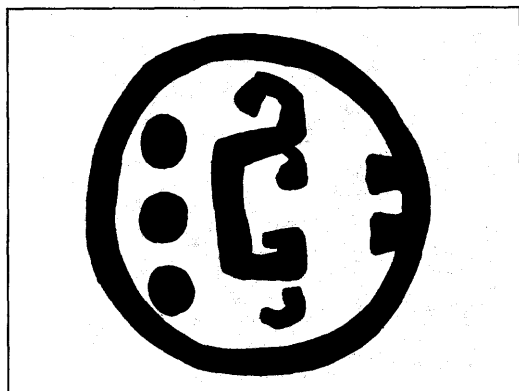
Kukul is an ancient god, believed to be dead by the humans of Maztica—slain by the knowledge of strife between his sons. His memory is seen in the night sky. In particular, the stars that rotate through their fixed and predictable locations, and the shooting stars that blaze quickly and then disappear.

ROLE: Kukul was the mate of Maztica the earth, and the father of all the other gods. Also, he was the creator of man. He was perceived as a kindly, somewhat bewildered father to his chaotic offspring. His

death, of grief and shame, is considered highly honorable by Mazticans, and so he is given favored status as a “remembered” god.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: There are no priests of Kukul, per se—since the god is dead, he cannot bestow any powers. However, he is a favorite of sages and chroniclers, since they do not employ magic, but knowledge, in the pursuit of their activities. Kukul is also remembered fondly by the clerics of the younger gods, who always blame someone else's deity for the god's untimely demise. (Priests of Qotal blame Zaltec, while priests of Zaltec blame Qotal, for starting the war that led to Kukul's death.)

MAZTICA: Mother of Life, The World



SYMBOLS: Mountains, Soil, Silver

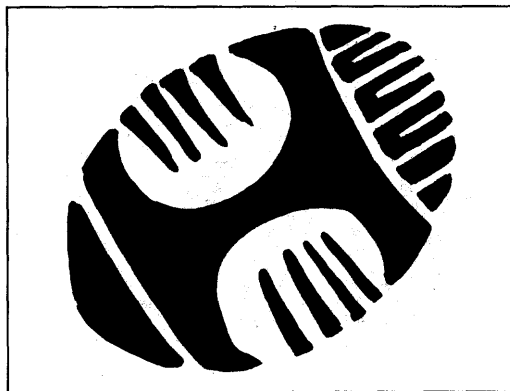
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: The body of Maztica was once the epitome of fertile womanhood, lush and rounded. Following her death at the hands of her son Zaltec, she has become the world surrounding the humans of Maztica—the landscape itself.

Obviously her size was huge—perhaps even exceeding that of her husband Kukul. When she is pictured as living, she has a human form, rather heavyset, and a full, round face. She is always smiling.

In the modern era she is perceived in such things as broad vistas. Mirages of landforms are considered to be a great sign of blessing from her, and earthquakes and landslides are examples of her displeasure.

ROLE: Though Maztica, the second of the elder gods, is also treated as dead by the majority of Maztican priesthood, she lives on in ways that her husband cannot. Though plants and lakes and streams, for example, are all the territory of different gods, they are earth-based, and as



such, Maztica is still worshipped through them.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES:

The priests of Maztica are very similar to druids—indeed, the fundamental beliefs and practices are the same, and priests of Maztica have access to the same spheres and spells as do druids. Her worshippers are found most commonly among the shamans of small tribes dwelling in the wilderness—she is generally ignored by the more civilized (that is to say, city-dwelling) peoples.

However, the tribes where she is held in high regard are located across the length and breadth of the True World. They can be found among the Dog People of the northern deserts, and the small villages deep in the jungles of Far Payit.

QOTAL: The Feathered Dragon



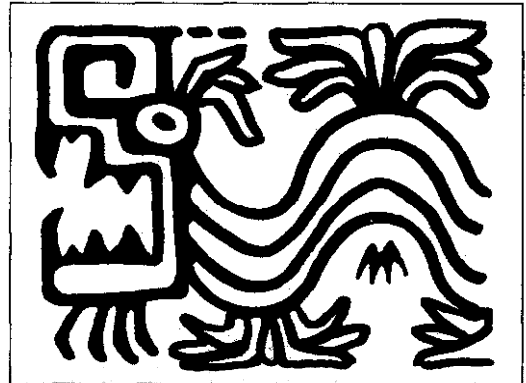
SYMBOLS: Feathers, Butterflies, Mayz, Wind and Air, Clouds, Couatl, Macaw, Eagle

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Good

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: The Feathered Dragon, also called the Plumed One, is the most beautiful and colorful of Maztican gods. He is generally portrayed as a huge golden dragon, although instead of scales he is covered with bright, downy plumage. These feathers are gold, except around his neck. Here Qotal has a mane, as lush and thick as any lion's, but it is a mane of feathers in all colors.

ROLE: Qotal is generally regarded as a source of goodness and health, in many different aspects. He is a god known to abhor sacrifice. Centuries ago, he left Maztica because of this abhorrence, and for long years he languished in the minds of the people as a relatively forgotten, powerless god.

However, his memory lived on in a devout cadre of priests, and as the excesses of the priest of Zaltec and others increased, Qotal was increasingly missed. Following the



Night of Wailing many Mazticans turned back to his worship.

Now he has returned to the True World, and is worshipped widely again. Although his original intent to drive Zaltec away was thwarted, he now exists in equilibrium with his brother.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: Lives, even of small animals, are never offered to Qotal. Instead, his rituals often include the freeing of caged creatures—butterflies and birds, in particular.

Priests of Qotal have major access to the spheres of influence of pluma, and of Healing, Creation and Protection spells. They have minor access to the spheres of Animal, Astral, Divination, and Plant spells.

ZALTEC: Bringer of War and Eater of Hearts



SYMBOLS: Hearts, Skulls, *Macas*, Knives, Bloody Hand, Talons, Fangs, Jaguars, Rattlesnakes

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Zaltec's appearance is much more human-like than Qotal's, in that it is a torso walking upright, with two legs, two arms, and a face. That face, however, is beastlike and savage—with widespread jaws revealing a mouth filled with curved teeth like a jaguar's, sometimes with two very long, sharp fangs like those of a rattlesnake.

Zaltec is almost always visualized as a hungry, angry god. His face is perpetually scowling or snarling, and his hands are ready to clasp around any weapon, to drive home any blade.

ROLE: Zaltec is the god of war, and as such most violence is worked in his name. He is known to all the peoples of Maztica, though none have raised him to such a height as did the Nexala. They attributed the patronage of Zaltec as directly responsible for their success at war, and they tried to reward him by

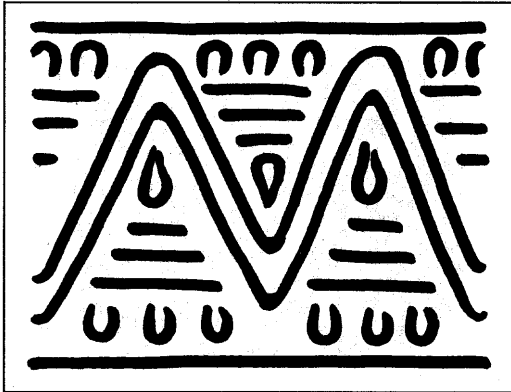
carrying the cult of sacrifice to appallingly excessive levels. The Feathered Wars, ironically named after a symbol of Zaltec's chief rival, were waged in Zaltec's name, in an effort to procure sufficient sacrifices during times of peace.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: Zaltec demands blood and hearts, and his priests struggle to keep up with his essentially insatiable hunger. Hearts offered on the altar are deemed the most satisfying, though slaying on the field of battle is also gratifying to him. He is thought to favor the fortunes of those who wage war in his name.

Zaltec's priests fast constantly, and often mark themselves with ritual wounds. Their characteristic garb is a black, soiled robe. They cake their hair with the blood of their victims, and twirl it into sharp points jutting out in all directions from the head.

Priests of Zaltec gain minor access to the following Spheres: *hishna*, Sun, Combat, and Charm, and major access to spheres of influence. When a priest reaches the 9th level of experience, he can gain major access to two of the four spheres—his choice.

AZUL: Giver of Rain and Taker of Breath



(Also called Calor, particularly among the Nexalans)

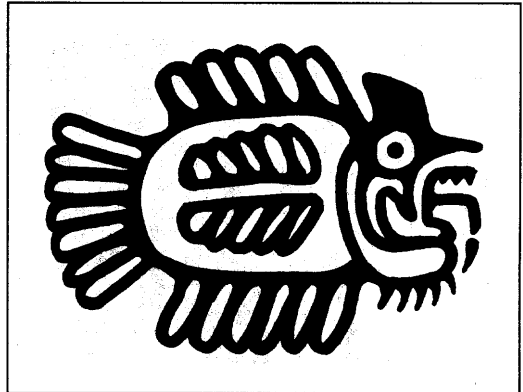
SYMBOLS: Rain, Ice, Octal, Fish, Frog

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Azul is often portrayed as a smiling cherub—a somewhat ghastly reminder of his favorite sacrifice. His skin is meticulously clean, and he leans toward plumpness. He always wears a gown of the cleanest, softest cotton.

ROLE: As god of rain, and all forms of moisture, Azul is a tremendously important god to the people of Maztica. In that inherently dry continent, those places favored by Azul are the lands that are worth living in, so one of the first things people did when they populated a new valley was to build a new temple and consecrate it to Azul.

He, and his many aspects, represent lakes, oceans, streams, snow, and virtually every other aspect of water's nature. Also, Azul is the god of *octal*, and consequently, drunkenness.



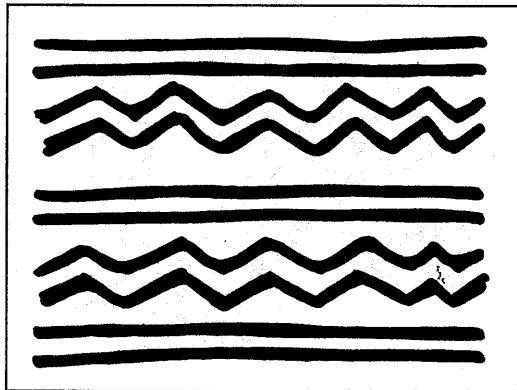
TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES:

The priests of Azul keep themselves scrupulously clean in deference to their deity's nature. Indeed, a priest wears as badges of honor the abrasions in his skin caused by the rough pumice soap that is the ritual ingredient in their baths.

The primary sacrifice demanded by Azul, in order to insure a good growing season of rainfall, is the life of a young child, most often the child of a slave or prisoner—drowned in a ritual pool. Most communities of any size have a priest perform this ritual each spring, though it is a senseless and horrifying claiming of a young life.

Priests of Azul can have major access to spells of the Elemental and Weather spheres; they can have minor access to the spheres of *pluma*, *hishna*, Protection, Creation, and Charm spells.

PLUTOQ: Master of Earth and Stone



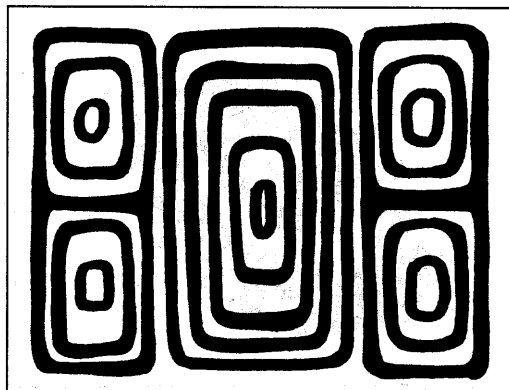
SYMBOLS: Mountain peaks, Obsidian, Copper, Adobe, Dust, Jade, Turquoise, Clay and Pottery

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Plutoq is pictured as a sort of giant earth elemental, a towering pillar of dirt and rock. His eyes are green jade, and his teeth are long spikes of obsidian. He towers forty or fifty feet high, and his body has great girth, as well.

ROLE: Plutoq is a powerful god, but he lacks the numerous followers of Tezca or Azul. He is mainly prayed to when formerly fertile fields have gone barren, and prayers to Watil have not been successful. Plutoq is also regarded as the undisputed master of those heights above the treeline, where few—if any—Mazticans live. Such heights are rumored to be strange places, inhabited by bizarre and dangerous creatures. Those who must traverse a high range will often beseech Plutoq for safe passage.

Plutoq receives the blame for earthquakes and avalanches. These are generally viewed as evidence of



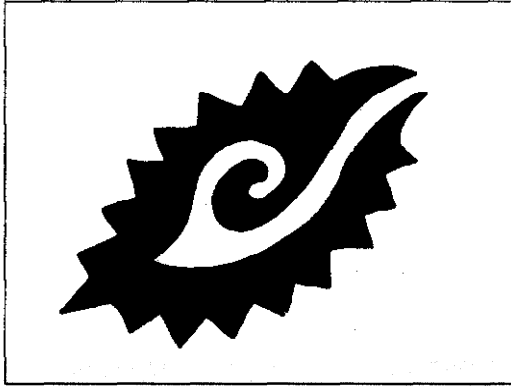
his displeasure, and are usually said to be the result of insolence toward Plutoz on the part of some hapless soul who has already suffered from the disaster.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: The few priests of Plutoq dedicate themselves to the use of stone, gems, and/or clay, practicing as artisans as well as priests. The most meaningful sacrifice to Plutoq is the shattering of a vessel of pottery, or even jewelry, upon the ground where the god's benevolence is sought.

Clerics of Plutoq can gain major access to the Elemental sphere; they can gain minor access to the spheres of pluma, hishna, Guardian, Creation, and Protection.



TEZCA: Ruler of Sun and Fire



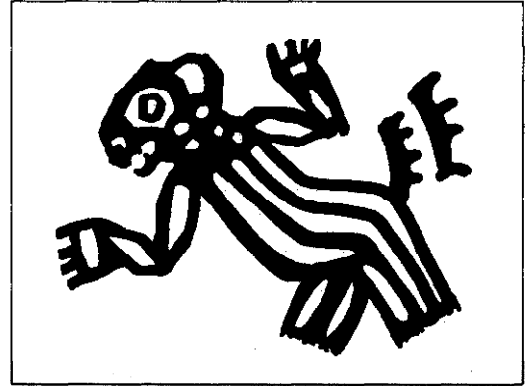
SYMBOLS: Flame, the Sun, Fireflies, Snakeskin, Lava, Smoke, Fire, Lizards

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Tezca is pictured as a fire-faced giant. His body is humanoid in shape, and the center of his face is very natural looking. However, fringing this visage is a mane of crackling flame—similar to the stylized image of the sun, with a face painted in the middle of it.

His skin is orange, and anything that it touches, reputedly, instantly bursts into flame. His hair is like a thick column of smoke floating upward, solid and opaque, and trailing after him as he moves.

ROLES: Tezca is the lifegiving force of heat and sunlight, and the hungriest of all the gods except for Zaltec. Tezca is particularly well-worshipped among the Kultakans, raised to even higher status than Zaltec there, though all Mazticans acknowledge his importance and his might. He is hailed as the one who brings life to the world, and in more minor aspects, the provider of warmth and



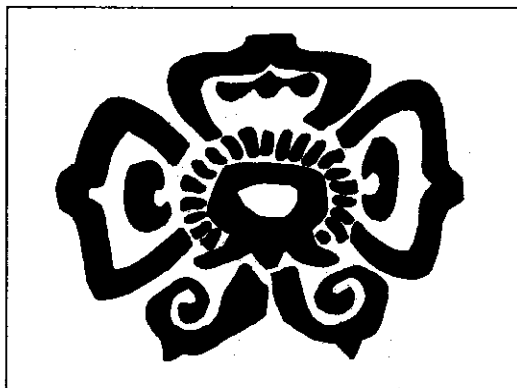
light in the night, and also the one who makes it possible to cook food.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES:

The priests of Tezca are committed to performing a sacrifice each sunset, in order to insure that that sun-god returns to the world on the following day. These rites are similar to Zaltec's—the heart of the unfortunate victim is torn out and offered to a stone image of the god.

Priests of Tezca can gain major access to the Elemental, Sun, and Combat spheres of influence. They can also employ major access to the Weather Sphere, but only under the light of the sun. His priests can gain minor access to the spheres of hishna, Animals, Divination, and Guardian spells.

KILTZI: Giver of Health, Growth, Nourishment, and Love



SYMBOLS: flower buds, pregnant women, babies, rainbows, the moon

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Good

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Kiltzi is generally pictured as a vibrantly beautiful woman, with clear, smooth skin and hair that would trail behind her on the ground if it fell freely. That hair is used to clothe her full, feminine body—a body that is often, but not always, portrayed as very pregnant. Her eyes are like deep, placid pools, and it is rumored that one can lose his mind by staring into them even for a second—so beautiful are they!

ROLES: Kiltzi is a benign goddess who offers only happiness, health, and contentment when she is properly worshipped. Her name is most commonly invoked at weddings, during pregnancies, and after childbirth. However, she is reputedly fond, occasionally, of the more wilder forms of human affection, and it is not unusual for her presence to be noted, and appreciated, following a long night of *octal* -drinking, dancing, and singing among warriors and their

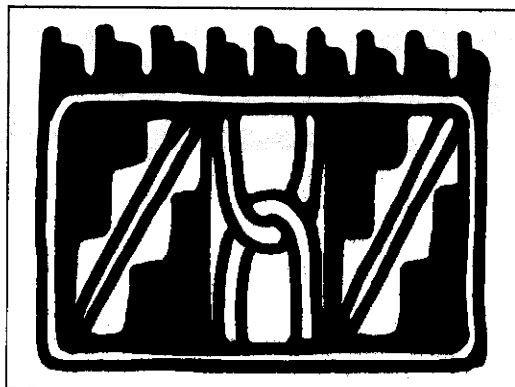
women.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: Kiltzi's priests are the most effective healers among the peoples native to Maztica. They are consulted by those who are in physical or emotional distress, and often can offer spells to aid their unhappy flock.

No sacrifice is ever offered in Kiltzi's name, though sometimes a shock of mayz or bag of seeds is burned at her altar. The more common form of devotion to Kiltzi is performed privately between a man and a woman.

Priests of Kiltzi gain major access to the spheres of Charm, Creation, Guardian, Healing, and Protection. They can utilize minor access to the spheres of pluma, Plant, Animal, and Weather.

EHA: Wind Sprite



SYMBOLS: Clouds, smoke, steam, wind, flutes and horns

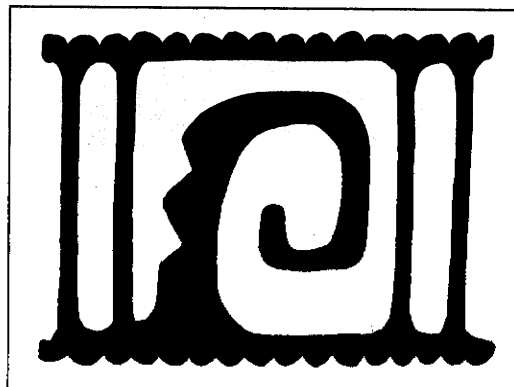
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Eha is a shifting form of white smoke. She has a long plume of hair that trails around her, and at times she coalesces to the point where she appears solid. But generally there is an insubstantial quality to her—light can pass through her form, and she has a tendency to vary her shape quickly, flowing into a long, slender caricature of a woman, and then curling herself into a pudgy ball.

ROLES: Eha is hailed as the giver of breath to newborn babies, and as a freshening indicator of spring, and warmth. Even when angry her displeasure—powerful winds—is not so deadly as Tezca's or Azul's or even Plutoq's. Thus, she is regarded as a primarily beneficial sprite. She is not greatly feared.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES:

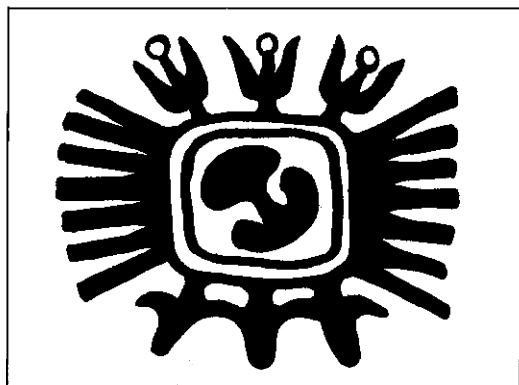
The father of a newborn baby will usually place a small offering of food—ground mayz, or cocoa—outside on a windy night, in thanks to Eha for granting the baby



breath.

Priests of Eha can gain major access to the Elemental and pluma spheres; they can gain minor access to the spheres of Healing, Divination, Charm, Summoning, and Weather.

WATIL: Guardian of Plants



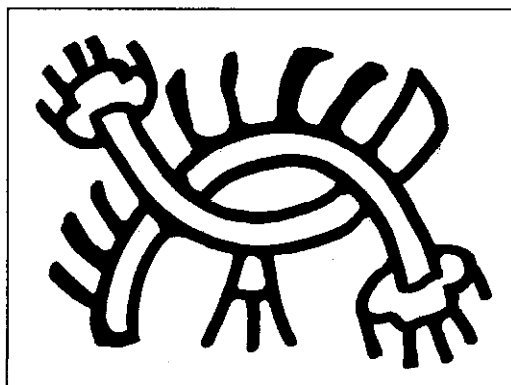
SYMBOLS: Lily Mayz, Cactus, Leaf, Blossom

ALIGNMENT: Neutral Good

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Watil, like her sister Kiltzi, is portrayed as a human female of lush sensuality and ample womanhood. Her hair frames her face in white petals, like a lily's. Her clothes are rich, green foliage, accented by belts and sandals and cloaks of bright flowers.

Watil can assume the form of any plant she desires, in any size—as long as it has earth in which to take root. She maintains the abilities to communicate, and to use all of her senses, in whatever form she takes.

ROLES: Watil is a benign power, of obvious benefit to all Maztica. Too often she is viewed as the weak pawn of Azul, however—for such is the thrall in which rain holds all plant life. Her aspects include deities that overlook mayz, flowers, mushrooms, seaweed, cactus, and cocoa. Fruit is considered to be her greatest blessing, and her name is often praised when citrus or mango is harvested.



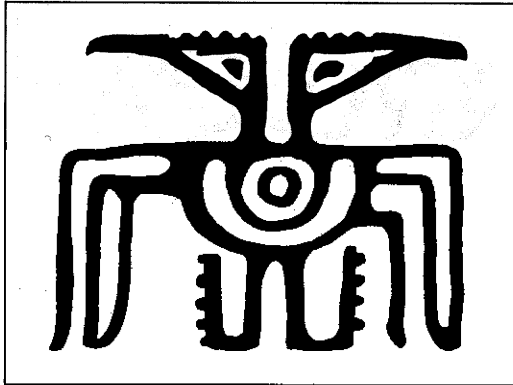
TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES:

In common with the other goddesses, Watil demands no sacrifices. Her priests perform blessings upon crops when they are planted and harvested, and a favorite ritual is the gathering of a thousand worms, which are then released into a field before it is seeded.

Many priests of Watil prefer to dwell in forests and swamplands, away from humans. They study and care for many exotic plants—usually in great secrecy—and some of them have developed very unusual strains, with bizarre powers.

Priests of Watil can gain major access to the Spheres of Plants, Healing, and Creation. Minor access is allowed to the pluma, Animal, Divination and Guardian spheres.

NULA: Guardian of Animals



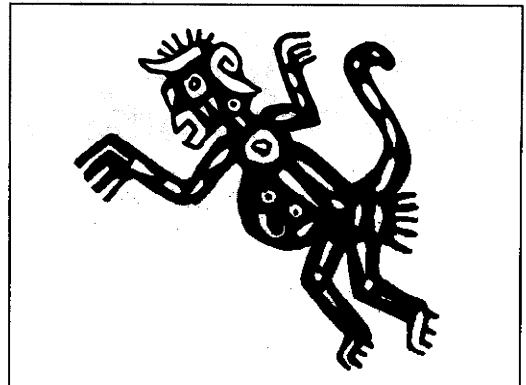
SYMBOLS: Jaguar, Hummingbird, Snake, Buzzard, Monkey

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Neutral

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Unlike the other goddesses, Nula appears generally in the guise of a wise, long-limbed monkey. She has a long, sinuous tail that she employs as a hand, using it to lift and manipulate objects. She can, however, assume the guise of any of her creatures, when she desires to.

She is given to loud and exuberant displays of happiness, whether that be joy or hilarity. When she is angered, she shrieks and spits and pummels with incredible force. Her emotions can swing from one extreme to the other with surprising suddenness.

ROLES: Nula does not have the stature in Maztican culture that Watil does, primarily because human survival centers around plants to a far greater extent than it does animals. Mazticans keep no livestock, save a few types of fowl and some small dogs. They have no beasts of burden, and wild game is generally an embellishment to, not a staple of, a family's diet.



Nula has aspects devoted to most categories of animals (carrion-eaters, cats, fish, birds, monsters), and several specific types, including hummingbirds, vultures, parrots and eagles, as well as snakes, dolphins, and fire lizards.

TENETS and PRIESTLY PRACTICES: Nula is most often invoked by a fisherman or hunter before he sets out after his quarry. A small offering of seed, or bone, is placed on the ground or in the water. With the coming of the foreigners, however, Nula's stature has grown, as now, for the first time, Mazticans encounter horses, and cattle, and swine.

Priests of Nula can gain major access to the spheres of Animals, Combat, Guardian, and Protection spells. Minor access is allowed for hishna, pluma, Plants, Sun, and Weather spheres.



1066XXX1903

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Voyages to the True World



Michaca (City of Gold)


Otomi



HUACLI

KIITAKA

GUL



ITZCATLI
Realm of the
Sea People

Fortieth day, aboard the Falcon

The fifteen ships stand away from shore, behind the protection of a small reef. ... I will ... plant my banner on this, the first western shore to greet us.

Thirty-ninth day, aboard the Falcon

Darien and Bishou Domincus have sustained us, each calling upon the deepest strains of power, bending the wind to their commands. ... And now we have hope! Flocks of birds sighted each of last three days. Crews work with vigour, all eyes...

I must go, hearing a disturbance on deck.

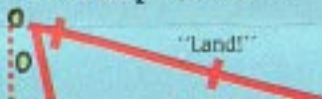
Thirty-second day, aboard the Falcon

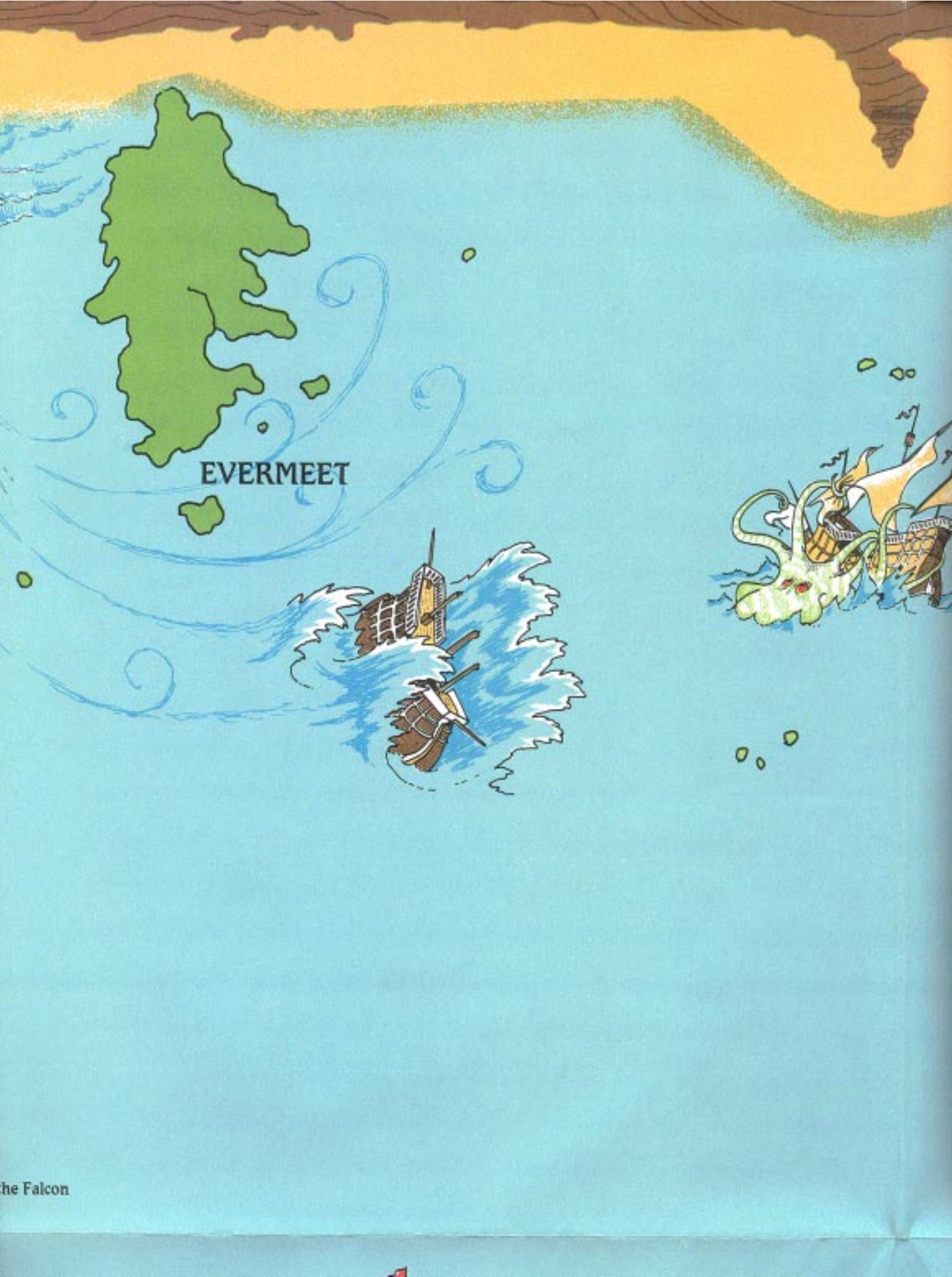
Still nothing but the sea—not a bird nor a floating log to give us hint of land. ... Evening. Now we've had wind drop away to nothing. The fleet sits with limp

GULF OF

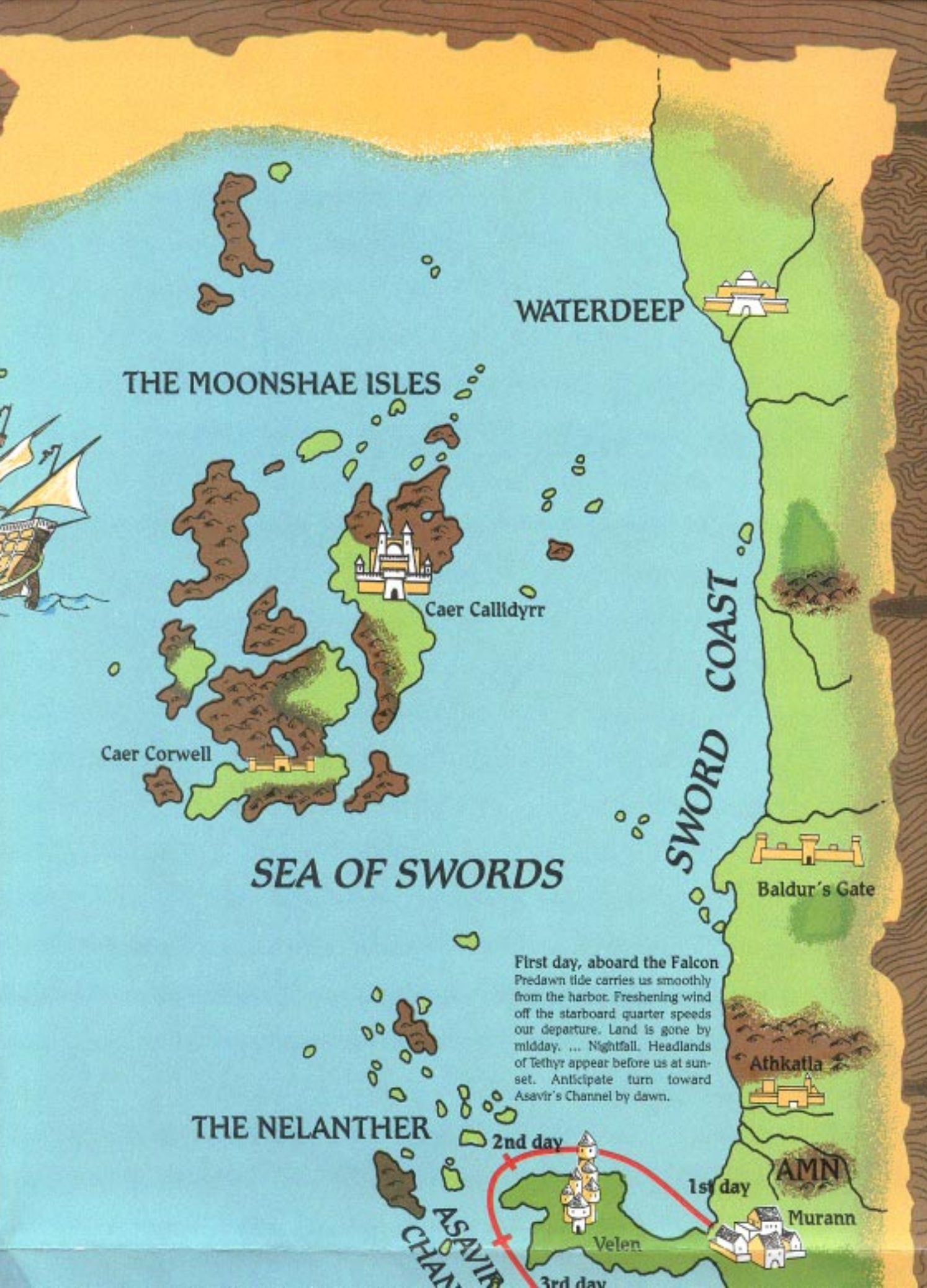
CORDELL

40th day





EVERMEET



WATERDEEP

THE MOONSHAE ISLES

Caer Callidyr

Caer Corwell

SEA OF SWORDS

SWORD COAST

Baldur's Gate

Athkatla

AMN

Murann

Velen

THE NELANTHER

ASAVIR CHAN

2nd day

1st day

3rd day

First day, aboard the Falcon
Predawn tide carries us smoothly
from the harbor. Freshening wind
off the starboard quarter speeds
our departure. Land is gone by
midday. ... Nightfall. Headlands
of Tethyr appear before us at sun-
set. Anticipate turn toward
Asavir's Channel by dawn.

PAIZCOATL the WESTERN OCEAN

KULTAKA

MT. ZATA

NEXAL

PEZELAC

KOLAN

THE HOUSE OF TEZCA

Tewahca
(The City of the Gods)

Tukan

Tulom-Itzi

PELANKAC

Maxal

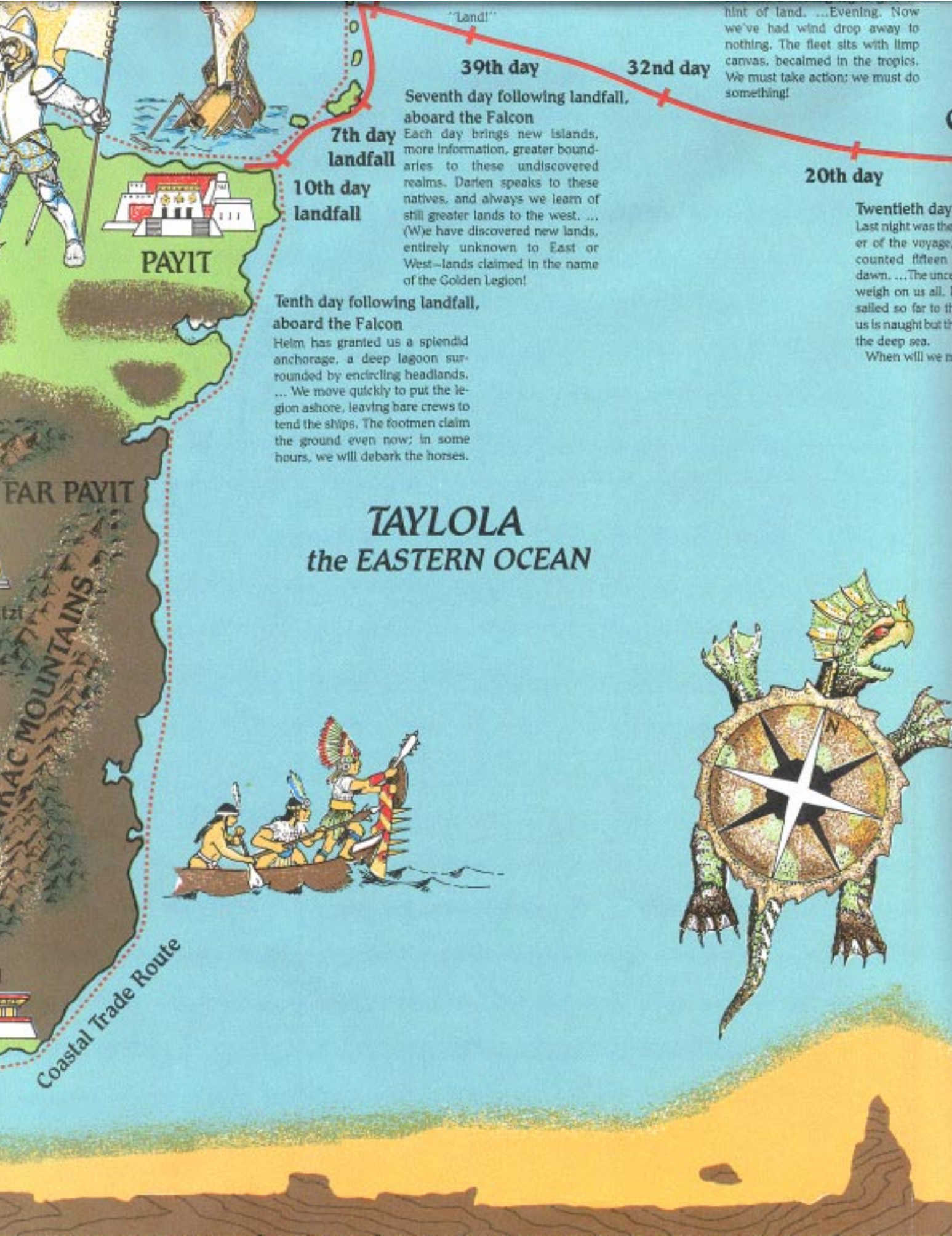
SEA OF AZUL

LOPANGO
Land of Fire

1066XXX0701

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"Land!"

39th day

32nd day

20th day

7th day
landfall

10th day
landfall

PAYIT

Tenth day following landfall,
aboard the Falcon

Helm has granted us a splendid anchorage, a deep lagoon surrounded by encircling headlands. ... We move quickly to put the legion ashore, leaving bare crews to tend the ships. The footmen claim the ground even now; in some hours, we will debark the horses.

Seventh day following landfall,
aboard the Falcon

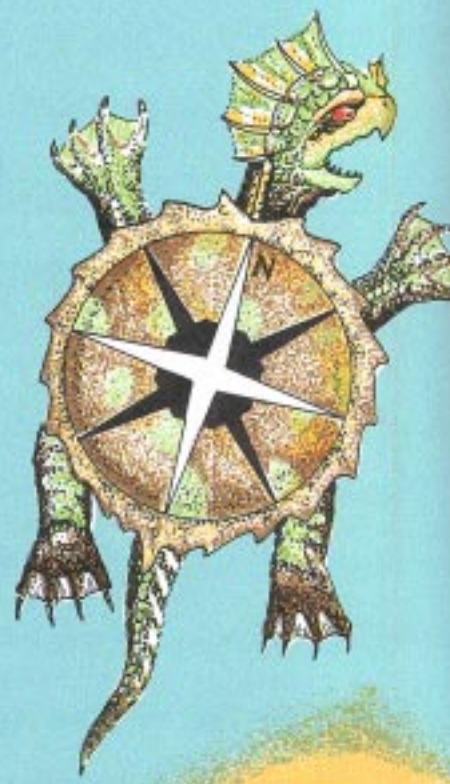
Each day brings new islands, more information, greater boundaries to these undiscovered realms. Darten speaks to these natives, and always we learn of still greater lands to the west. ... (We have discovered new lands, entirely unknown to East or West—lands claimed in the name of the Golden Legion!

hint of land. ...Evening. Now we've had wind drop away to nothing. The fleet sits with limp canvas, becalmed in the tropics. We must take action; we must do something!

Twentieth day

Last night was the fiercest of the voyage, counted fifteen days down. ... The uncertainty weighs on us all. ... I sailed so far to find that it is naught but the deep sea. When will we reach the land?

TAYLOLA the EASTERN OCEAN



Coastal Trade Route

FAR PAYIT

MOUNTAINS

CORDELL'S VOYAGE

On day, aboard the Falcon
was the heaviest weath-
oyage; with relief, we
fteen vessels in the
e uncertainty begins to
is all. Never have men
er to the west. Around
t but the rolling swell of
ea.
ll we make landfall?



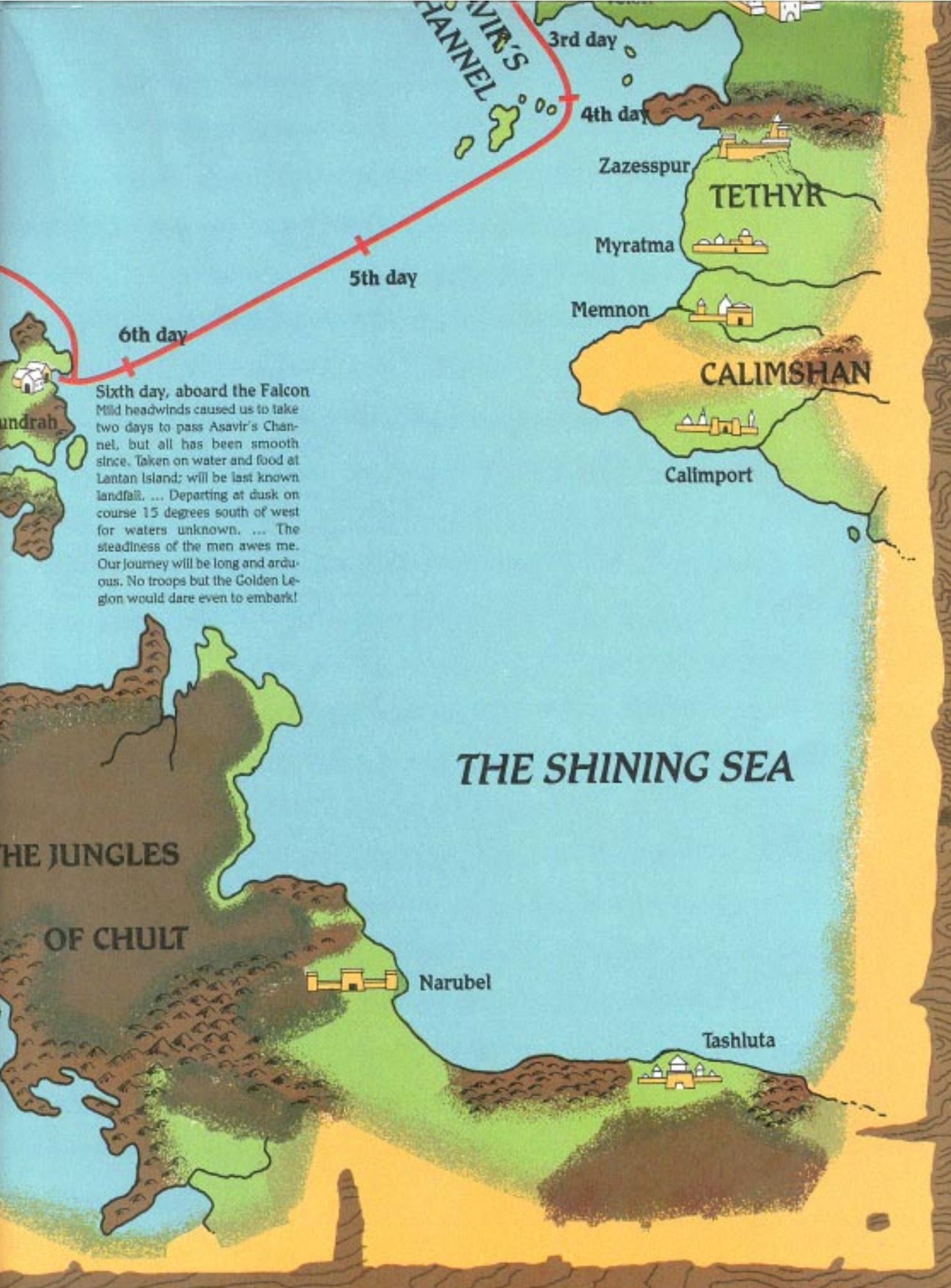
TRACKLESS SEA

LANTAN

Sundra

THE





ASAVIR'S CHANNEL

3rd day

4th day

5th day

6th day

Sixth day, aboard the Falcon
Mild headwinds caused us to take two days to pass Asavir's Channel, but all has been smooth since. Taken on water and food at Lantana Island; will be last known landfall. ... Departing at dusk on course 15 degrees south of west for waters unknown. ... The steadiness of the men awes me. Our journey will be long and arduous. No troops but the Golden Legion would dare even to embark!

TETHYR

CALIMSHAN

THE SHINING SEA

THE JUNGLES OF CHULT

Tashluta

Narubel

Lantana

Zazesspur

Myratma

Memnon

Calimport



Bay of Kolan

Kolati

Baya

KO

Chimatepec Mt

Guatl

Mt. Mixhuacan

OLAN

MtNS.

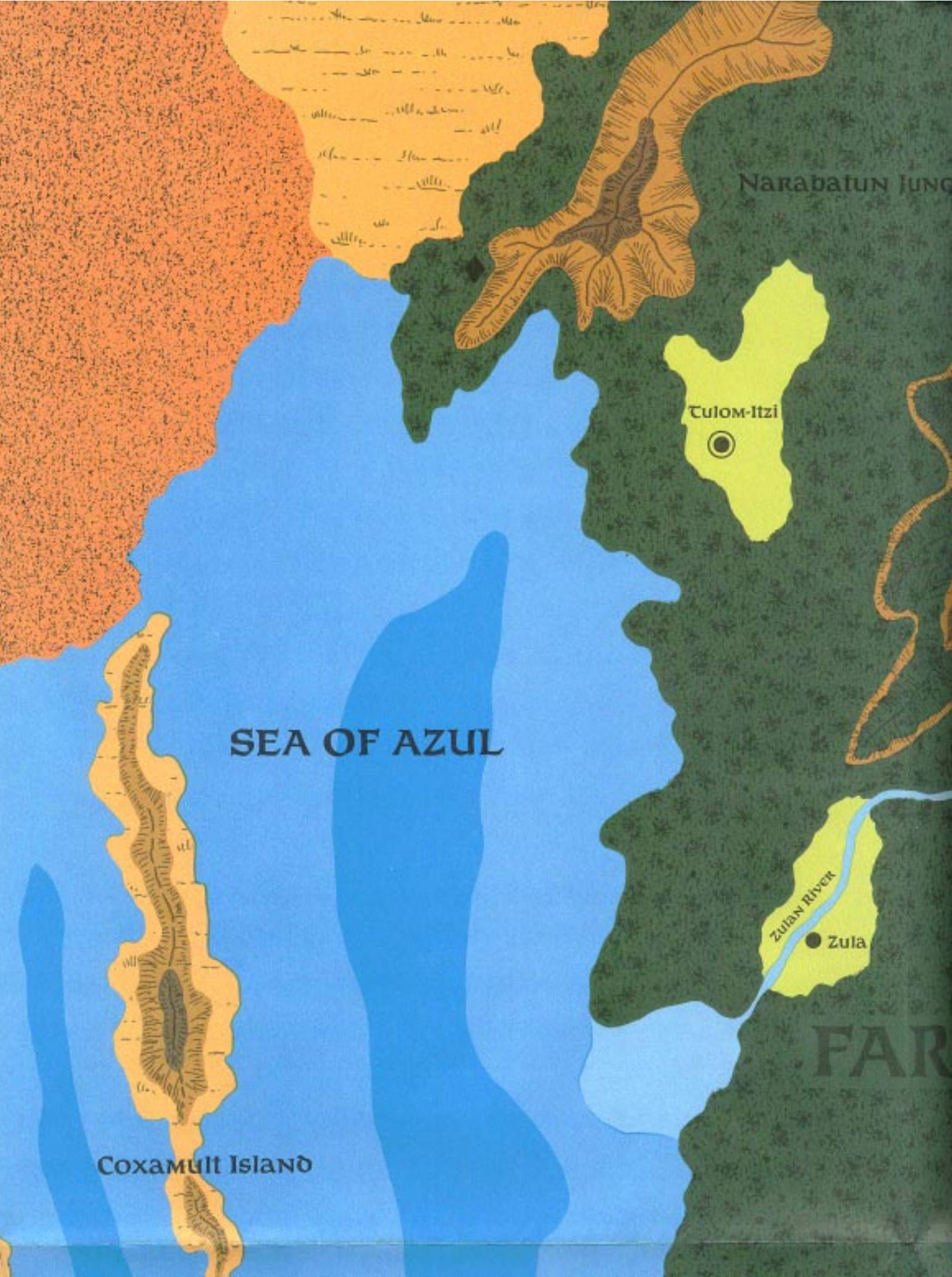
Nachtal MtNS.

Cewahca

Tukan

Gualata MtNS.





Narabatun Jung

Tulom-Itzi

SEA OF AZUL

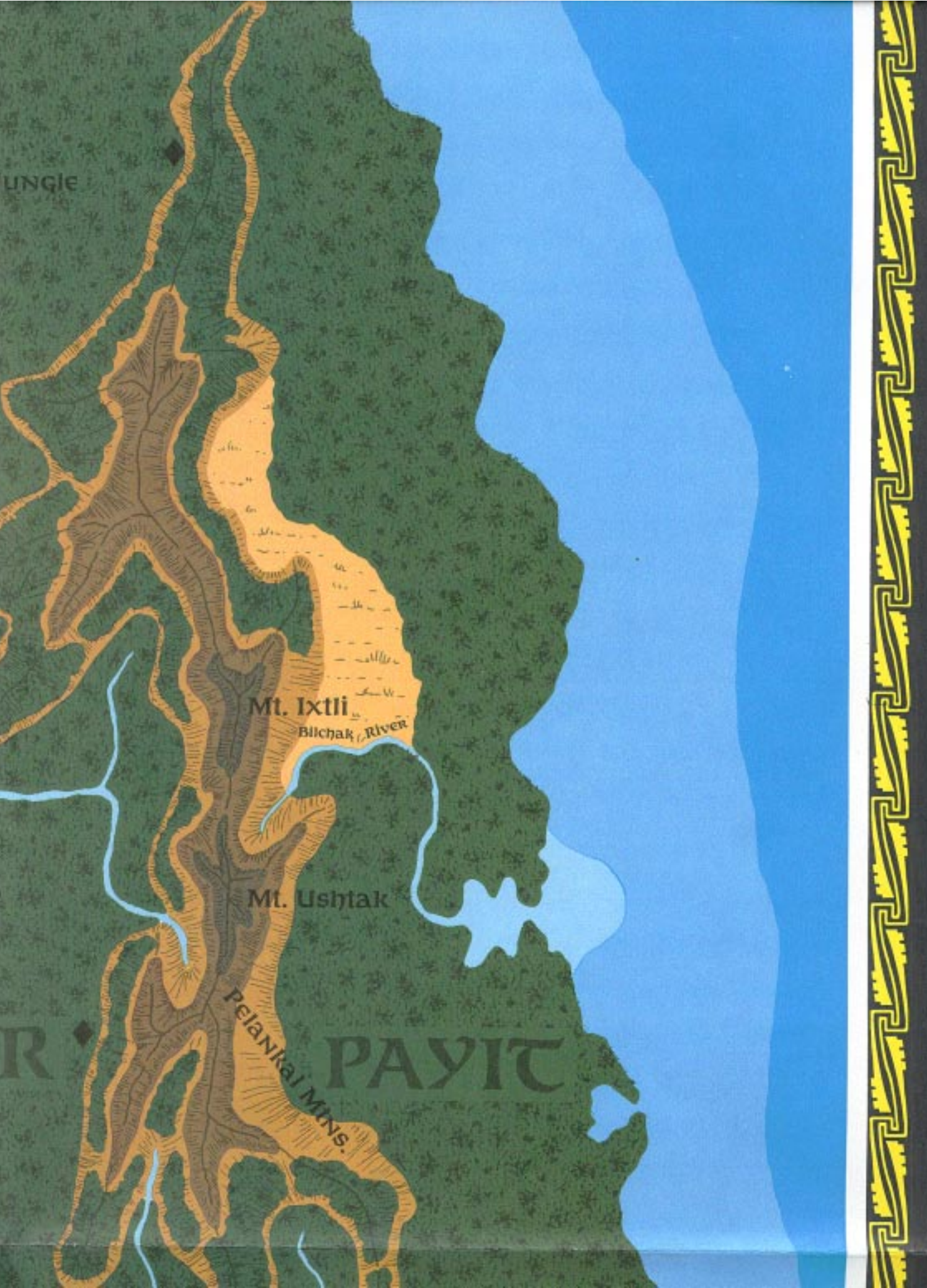
Zulan River

Zula

FAR

Coxamult Island

JUNGLE



Mt. Ixtli

Bilchak River

Mt. Ushtak

Pelankal MNS.

PAYIT

R

Mt. Xochipas

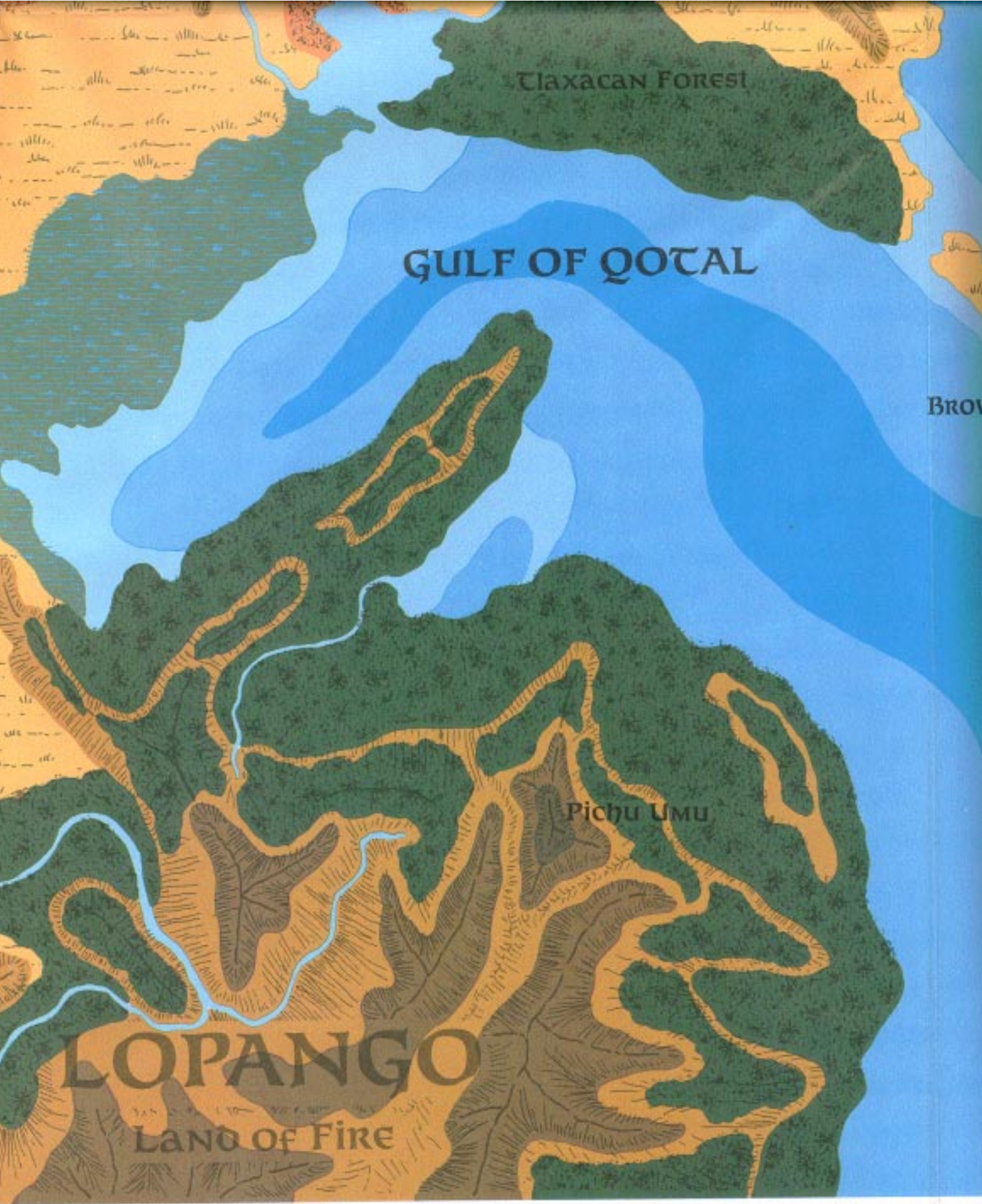
Chapultecl Jungle

Apu Roca

Mt. Cuzcalac

1068XXX0702

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Tlaxacan Forest

GULF OF GOTAL

BROV

Pichu Umu

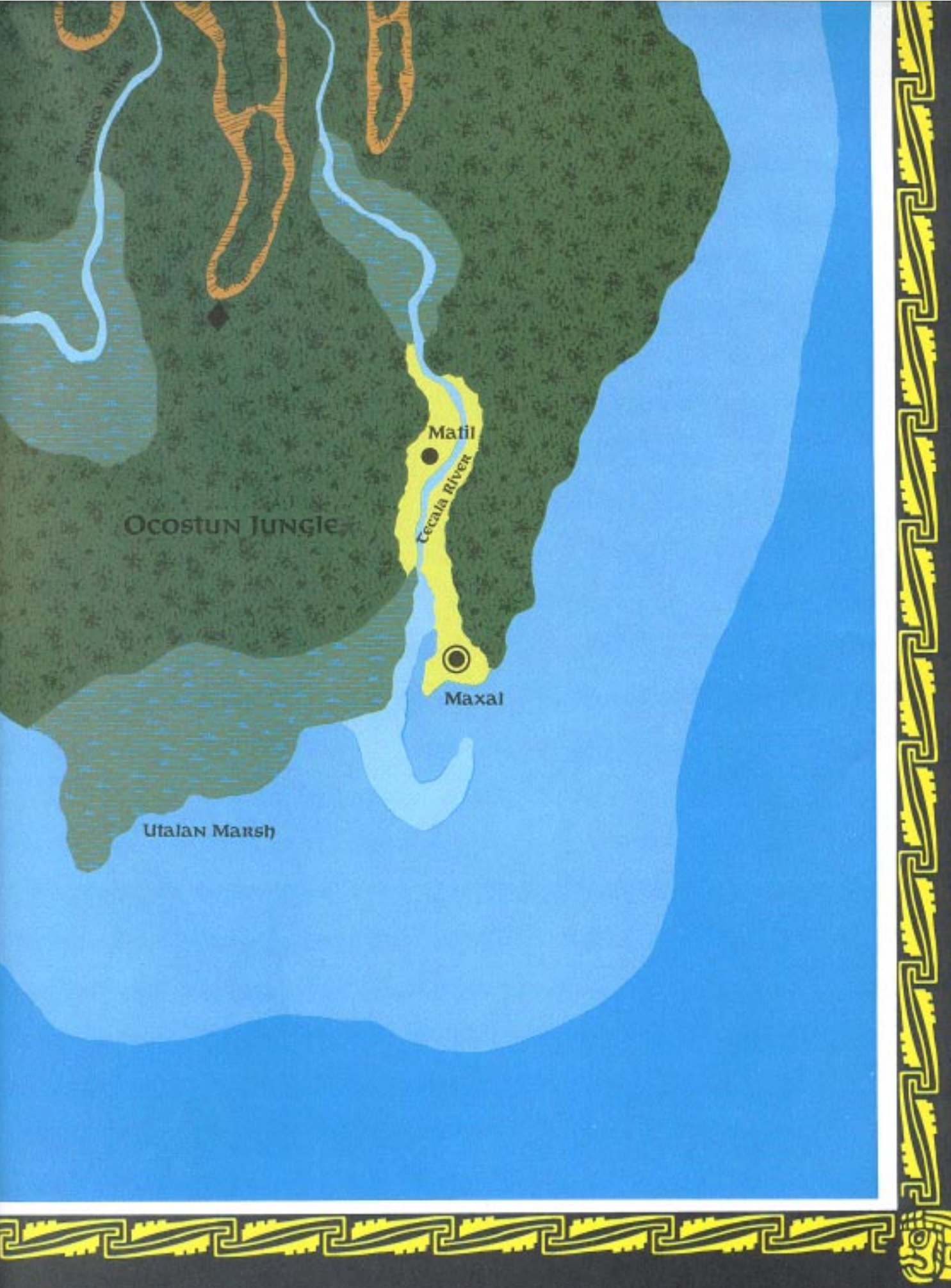
LOPANGO

Land of Fire



BROWN SISTERS





Tecalca River

Ocostun Jungle

Ufalan Marsh

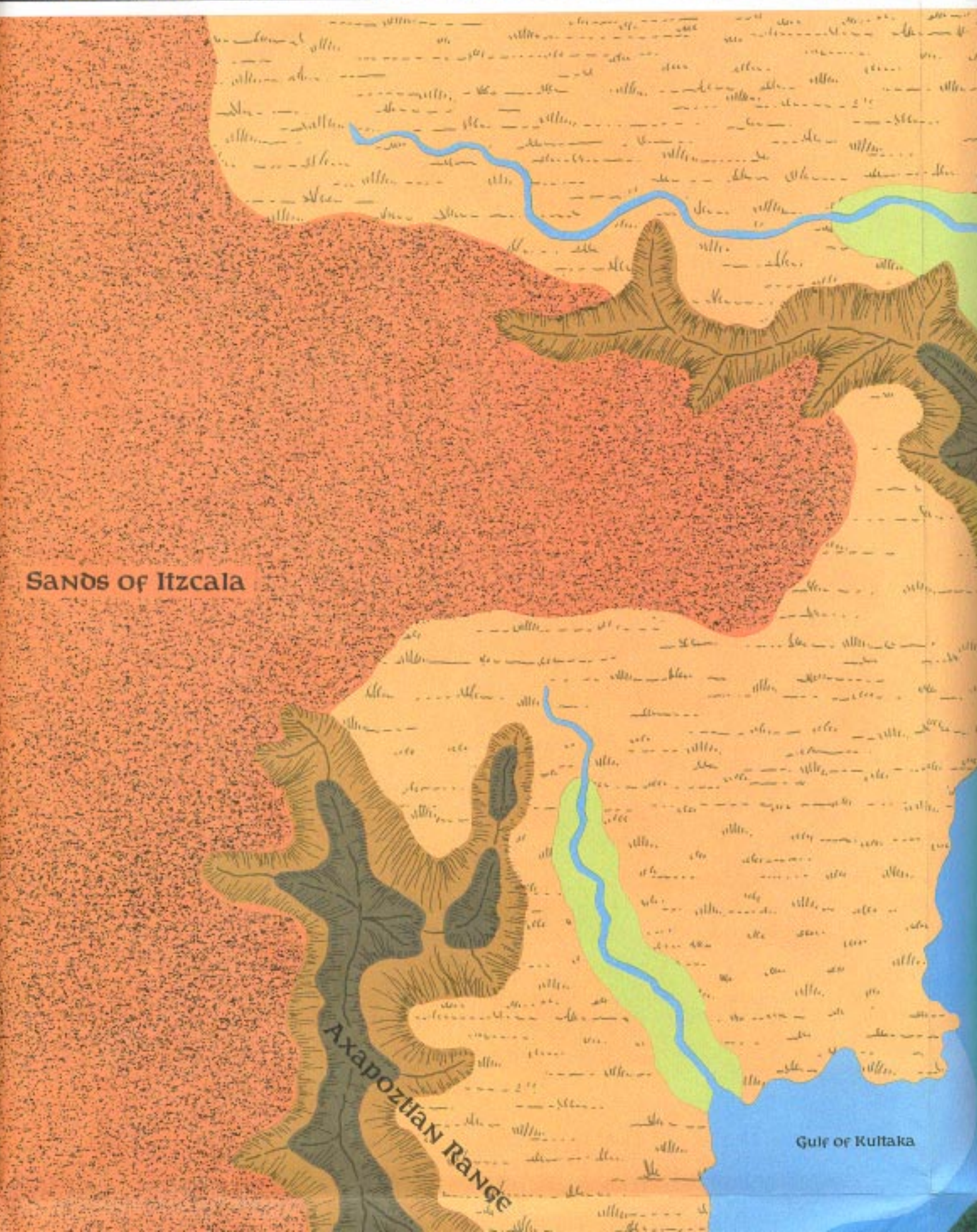
Matil

Tecalca River

Maxal

MICHACA

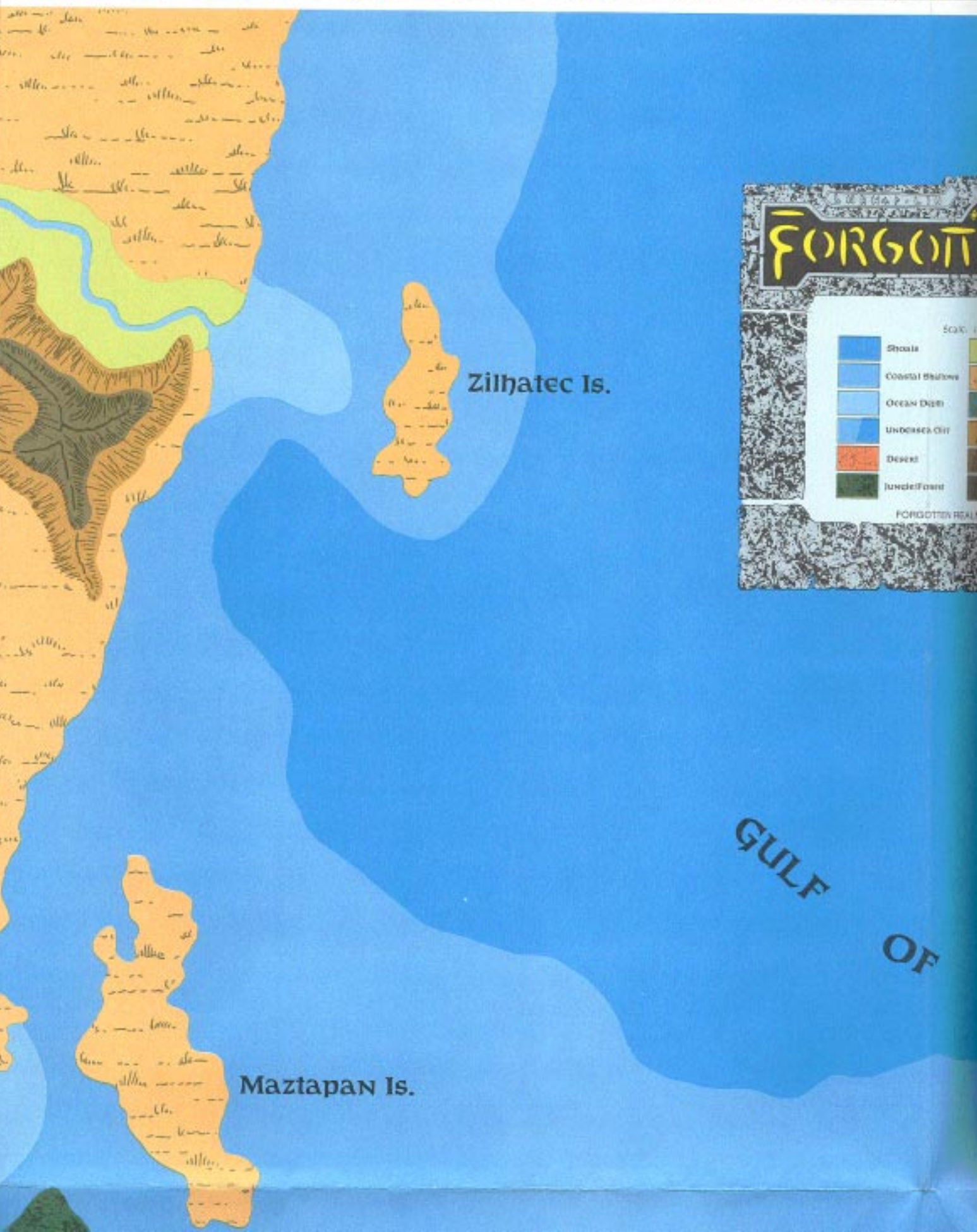




Sands of Itzcala

Axapoztlan Range

Gulf of Kuitaka



FORGOTTEN REALMS

	Shallows
	Coastal Shallows
	Ocean Depth
	Unbottomed Chit
	Desert
	Jungle/Forest

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Zilhatec Is.

Maztapan Is.

GULF OF

OTTEN REALMS

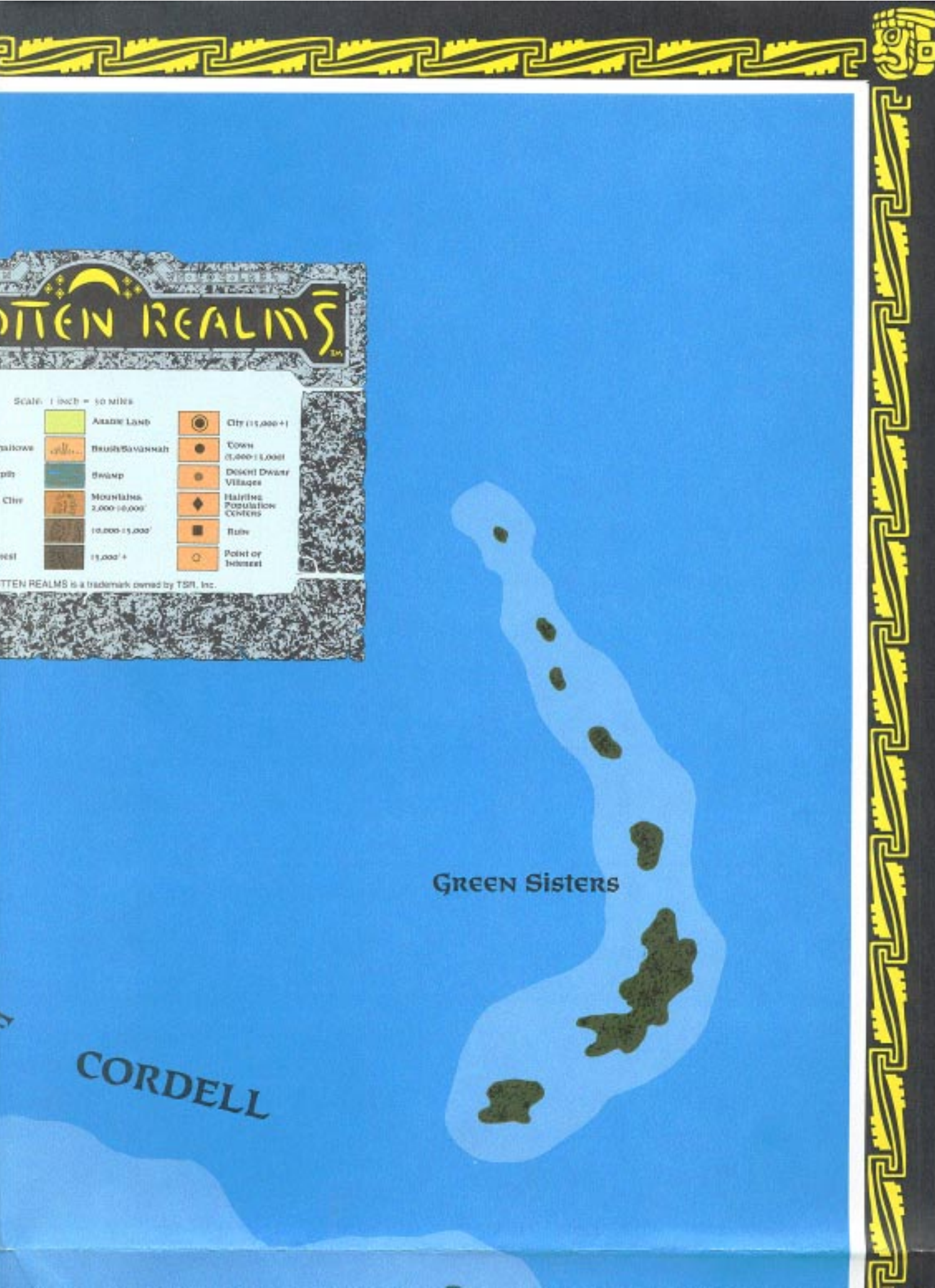
SCALE: 1 INCH = 50 MILES

Arable Land	City (15,000+)
Brush/Savannah	Town (5,000-15,000)
Swamp	Desert/Dweller Villages
Mountains (2,000-10,000')	Highways
10,000-15,000'	Population Centers
15,000'+	Rails
	Point of Interest

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Green Sisters

CORDELL



Huetle Is.

HUJACLI

Ixit

Honal

Pulco

Azcat

PATZCOATL
(THE WESTERN OCEAN)

Pillar of Tezca

Cabe

1066XXXX0703

KULTAKA

Kultaka

NEXAL

Tezat
Nexal
Zokil

Azatl

Mt. Popol

Patul

Cordoll

Mt. Zatal

Ozatl

Ixtal

The Fertile Desert

The House of Tezca

Chical Hills

SUNSTONE

abbez



Mt. Plutoq

Patenoj

BOMAK JUNGLE

PEZELAC

Chu

Pezelac

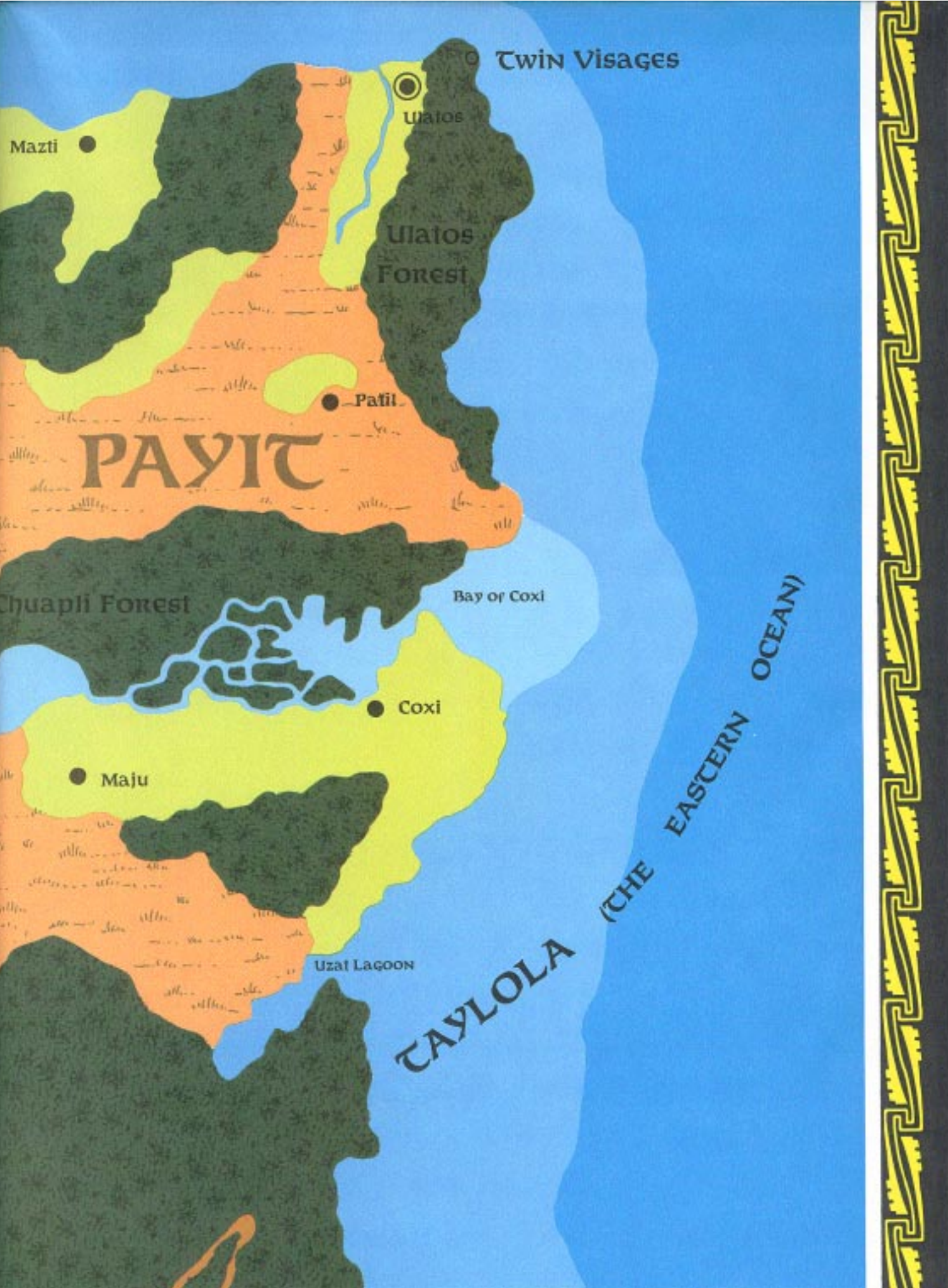
Lake Kiltzi

PEZMIX FOREST

Haki

ZIMJI RIVER

Ocolaw Range



Twin Visages

Ulatos

Ulatos Forest

Patil

PAYIT

Chuapli Forest

Bay of Coxi

Coxi

Mazu


Uzat Lagoon

TAYLOLA

(THE EASTERN OCEAN)

The Valley of Nexal

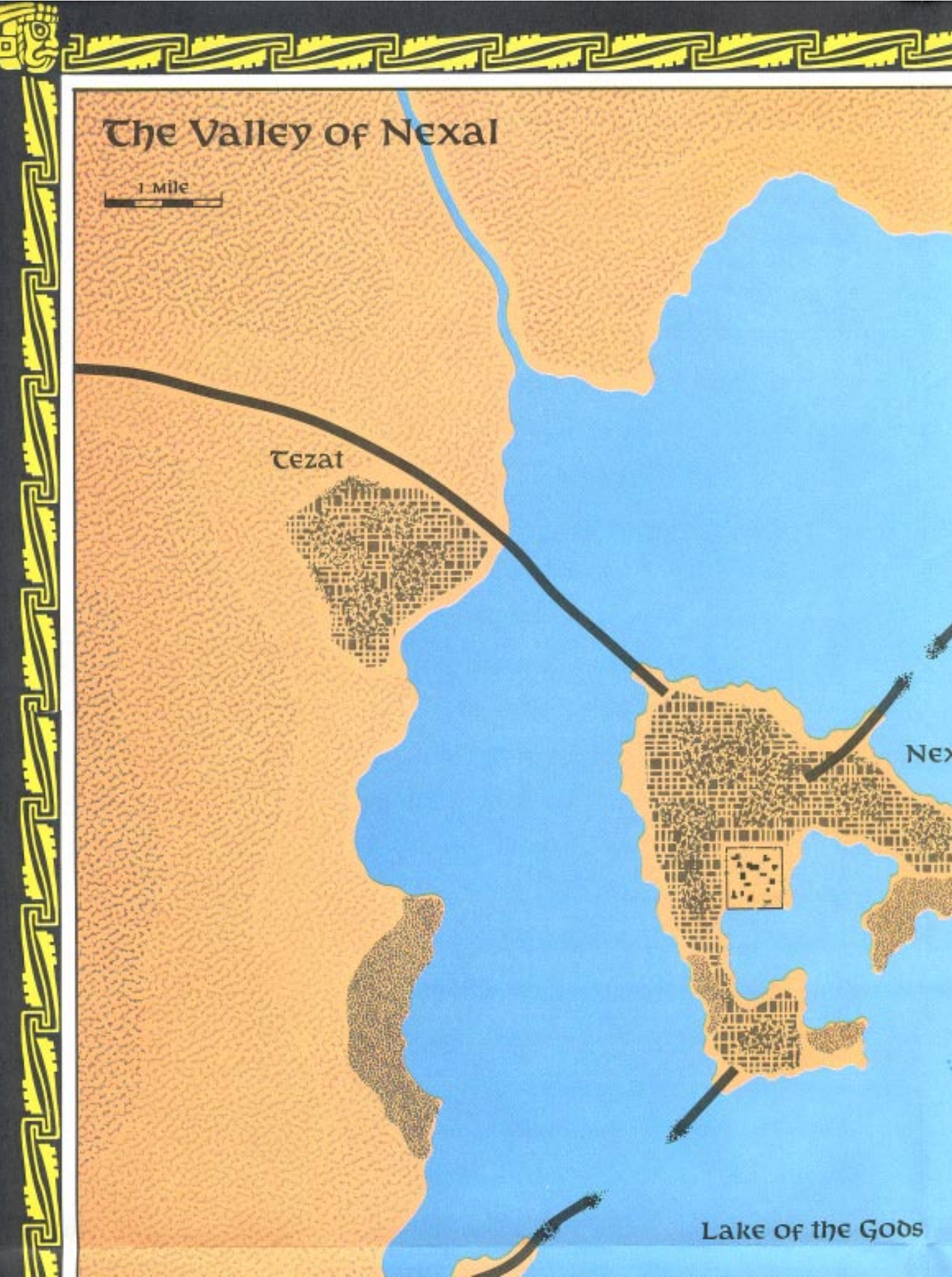
1 Mile

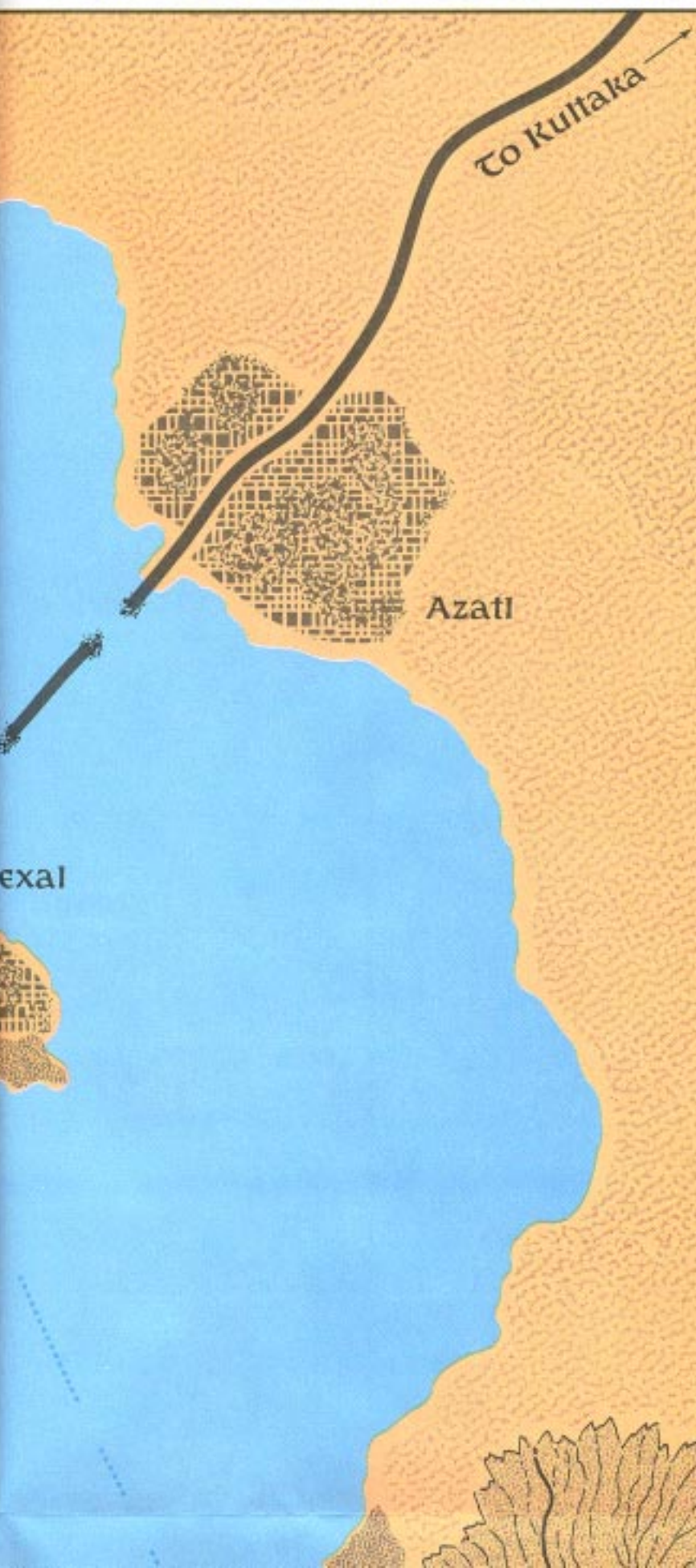


Tezat

Nex

Lake of the Gods





-  City and ruins
-  Mud flat
-  Aquaduct
-  Spring
-  Road (trail)
-  Mountain ridge
-  Lake
-  Lava flow
-  Cave mouth
-  Barren ground



Tukan

1 mile



Great house
(MANOR)



Buildings
and streets



Breakwater



Avenues



Floating
garden



Trade route

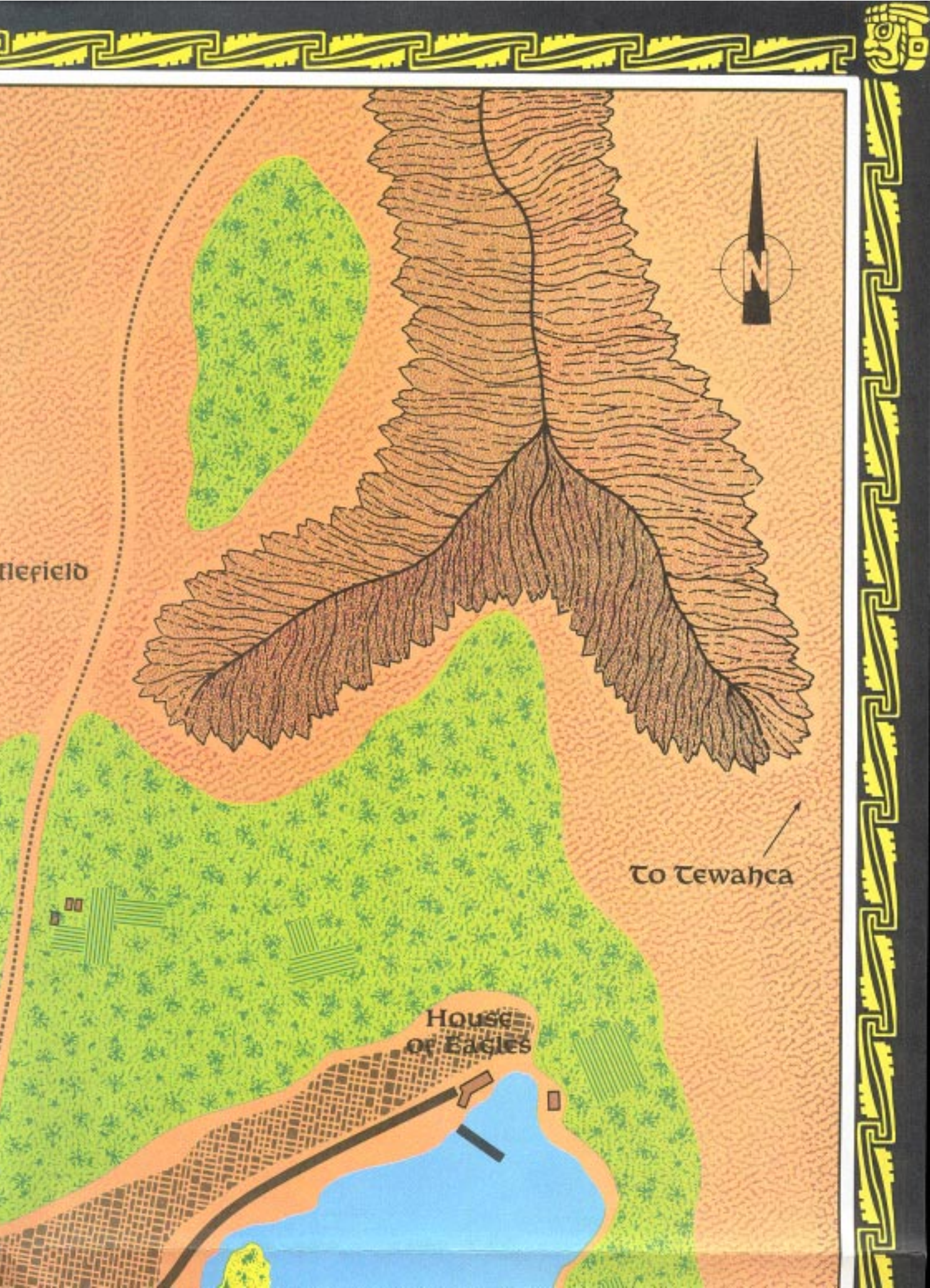


Dock



Grassland,
mayz fields



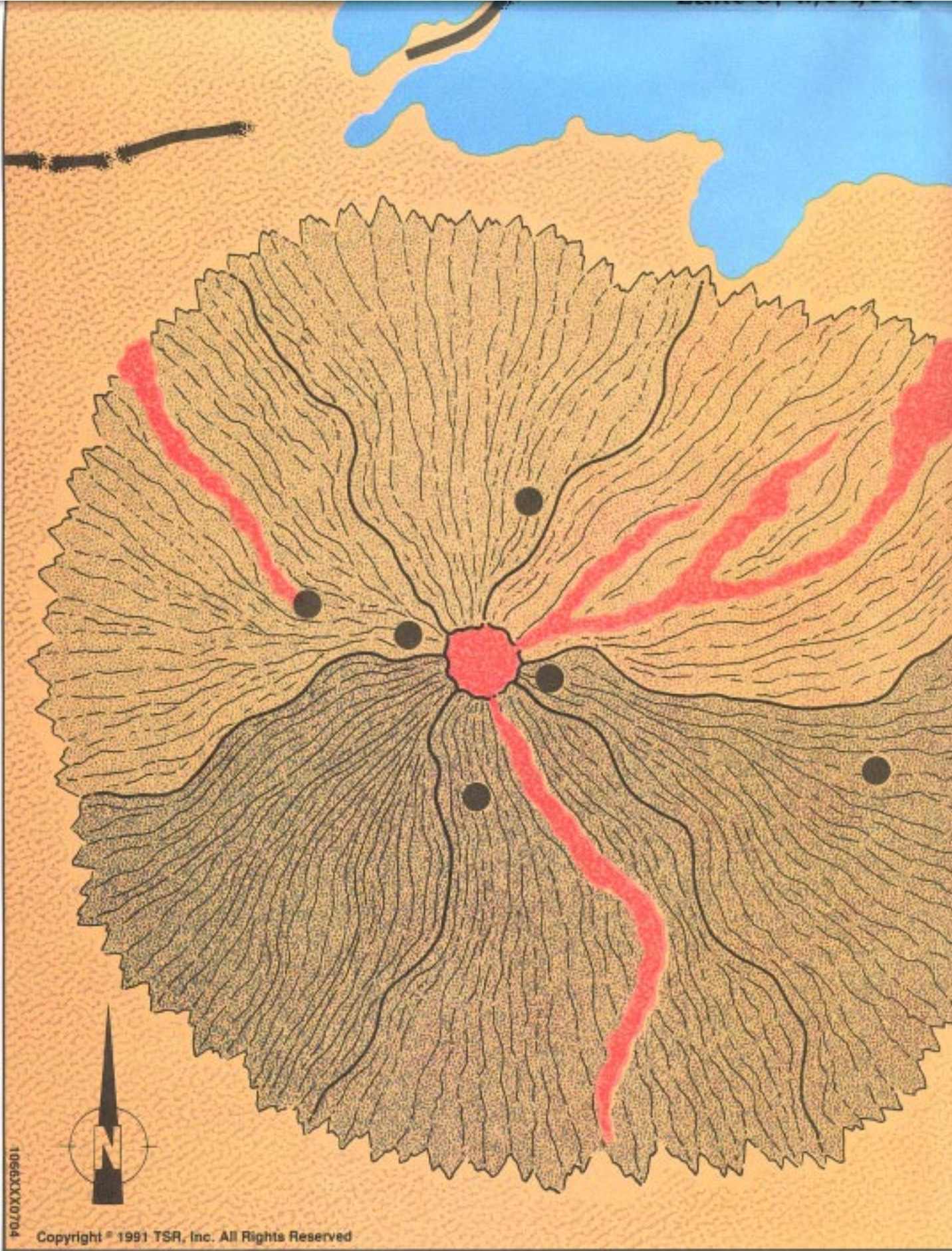


field



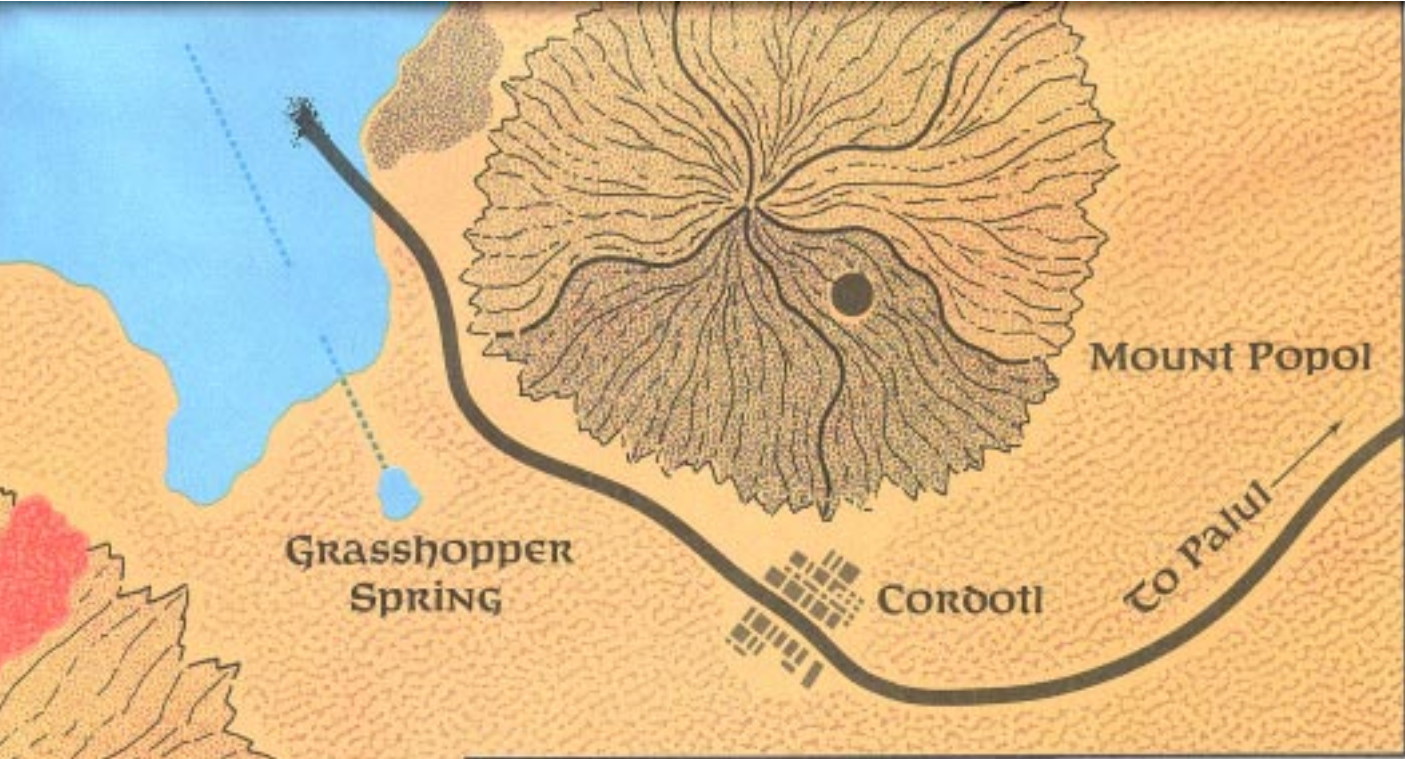
To Tewahca

House of Eagles

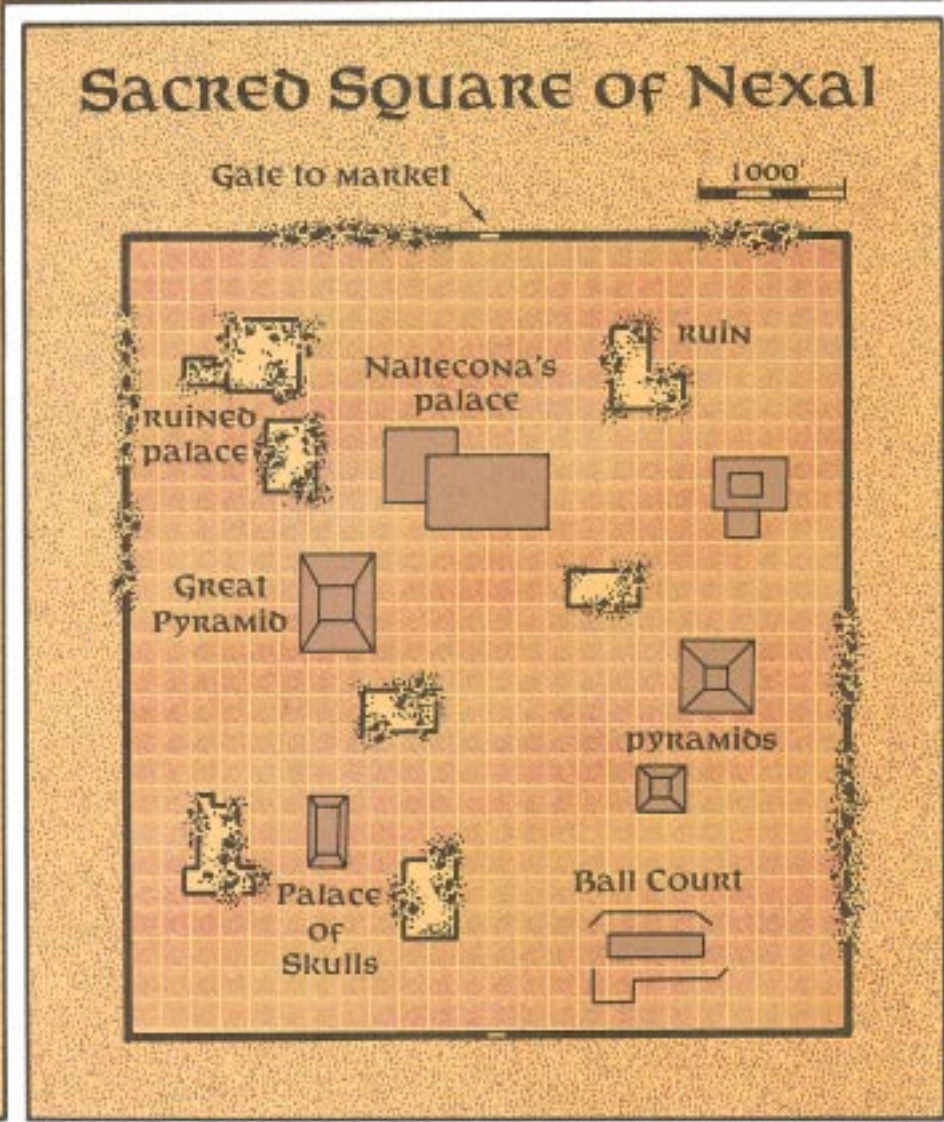


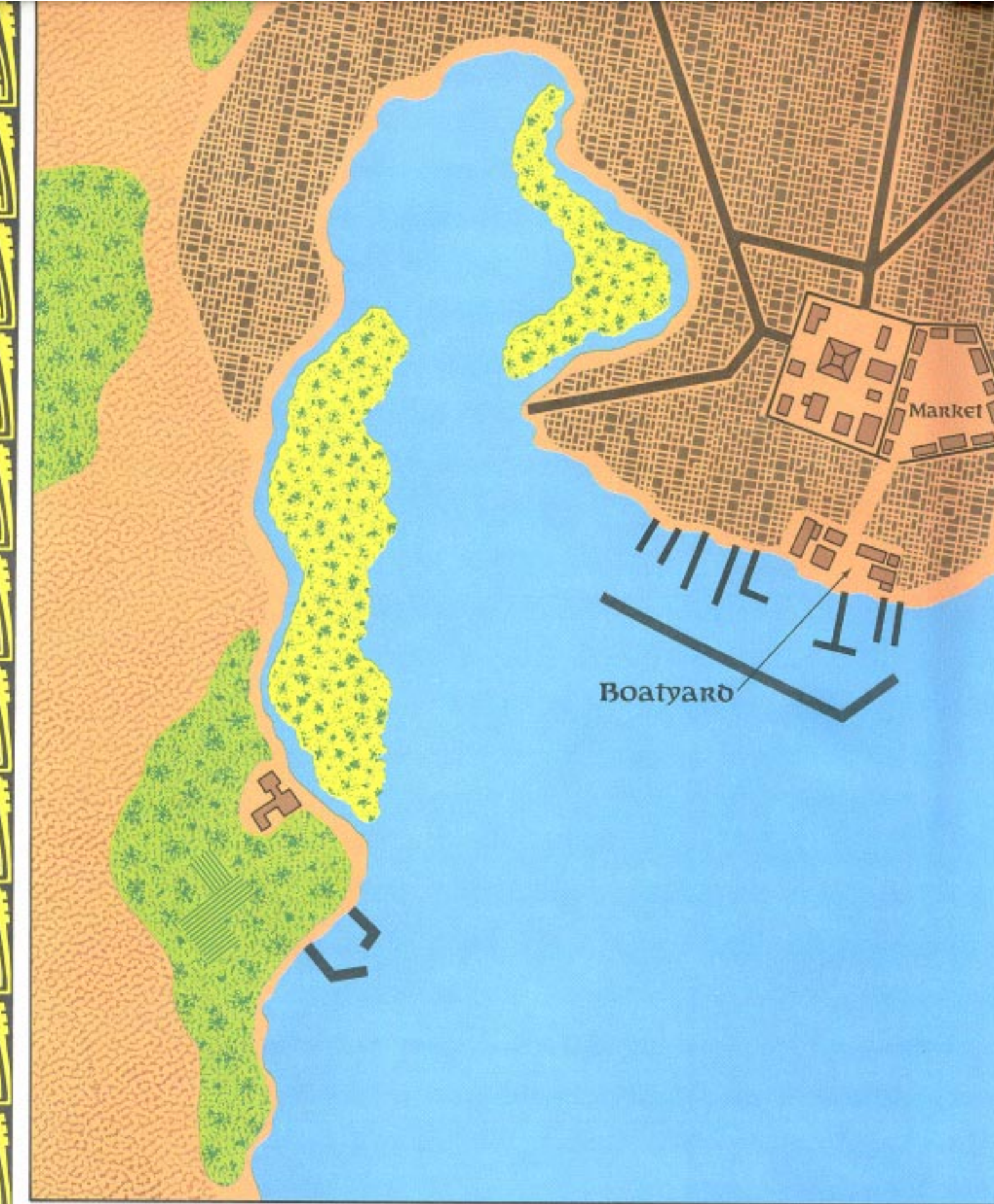
1066XXX0704

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Sacred Square of Nexal





Market

Boatyard





House
of Poshtli

House
of Halloran



MAZTICA

Campaign Set

Enter the True World. Marvel at the jungle's lush greenery, the desert's shimmering sands, the birds' jewel-toned plumage, the people's gentle demeanor. Beware, though, the dark side of this beauty: the gods of this place are very much alive, and their troubles are the people's troubles.

Set in the countries first described in the Maztica trilogy of novels, this campaign set provides players and DMs with all the information necessary to recreate the storyline of *Ironhelm*, *Viperhand*, and *Feathered Dragon*, or to build a campaign of their own. Four new character classes, Eagle Knights, Jaguar Knights, plumaweavers, and hishnashapers, add to the mystique of Maztica. New magical spells and items,

new deities, new proficiencies all add to the flavor of this setting loosely based on the Aztecs and Mayans of Central America.

This boxed campaign set includes:



- *A Journey to the True World*, a 96-page player's book;

- *Maztica Alive!*, a 64-page DM's book;

- *Gods and Battles*, a 32-page book containing BATTLESYSTEM™ rules statistics for the Golden Legion and various Maztican

armies, and profiles of the Maztican pantheon;

- Four poster-size maps showing the True World and Cordell's voyage from the Sword Coast to Maztica's shores, as chronicled in *Ironhelm*.

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