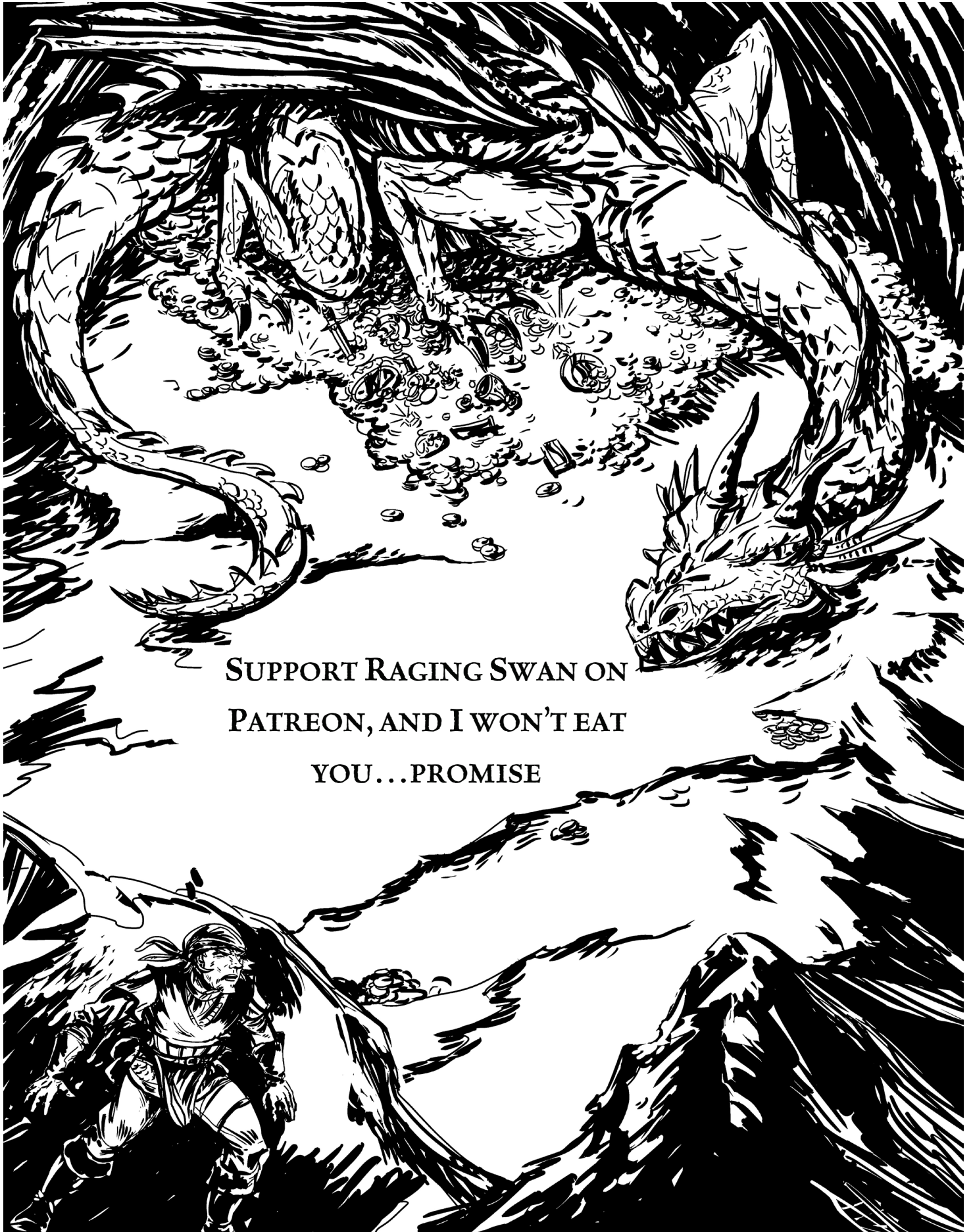


RAGING SWAN PRESS

ANCIENT EMPIRE OF THE TROGLODYTES

A PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE GM'S RESOURCE





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ANCIENT EMPIRE OF THE TROGLODYTES

Ages ago, when humans lived in caves and stared in wonder up at the glistening night sky, the ancient troglodyte empire of Ssar'targontha thrived and prospered in the deep places of the world. For thousands of years, from atop their gloom-shrouded ziggurats set at the very centre of the canal-ringed cities, the empire's high priests used the life-essences of enslaved and sacrificed elementals to build monuments to their demonic overlord and crush their enemies. But nothing is forever. Rebellion and civil wars wracked the empire and precipitated its long, but inevitable, fall into ruin and decay. Now, nothing remains of Ssar'targontha but ruined cities squatting in immense caverns, discarded treasures and near-forgotten knowledge of an elder time. Ancient Empire of the Troglodytes gives you, the busy GM, the tools to integrate the empire of Ssar'targontha into your campaign. Whether you want to run an entire adventure amid the empire's crumbling ruins or to add depth to your campaign's elder history, Ancient Empire of the Troglodytes is for you.

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Many races claim the gods made their kind first. Yet crumbling ziggurats, surrounded by the statues of profanely leering creatures left mouldering in long forgotten caverns, shows the troglodyte race must have been one of the first races to arise from the primordial ooze of creation. Empowered by the worship of their demonic patron, the troglodytes conquered, enslaved and ritually sacrificed creatures in a time predating even the ancient elves, all to give rise to the sweeping empire of Ssar'targontha.

Ssar'targontha arose in the deepest caverns of the world before recorded history when the civilised races of today—elves, dwarves and humans among them—were still in their infancy. Gigantic ziggurats squatted in immense caverns carved from divine magic powered by the life essence of sacrificed elemental creatures and giant worm-like creatures called zowrms. Canals and aqueducts writhed like serpents across the cavern floors, nurturing great fields of fungi where slaves toiled and died at their masters' whims.

Ssar'targontha endured for thousands of years in almost uncontested rule its bloody downfall. The primitive races the troglodytes once subjugated evolved, finding their own gods and divine magic as well as something nearly non-existent in Ssar'targontha—arcane magic. Unable to compete with this new and powerful force, Ssar'targontha began to crumble at its edges. This only inspired the high priests to fight amongst themselves for control, further fracturing the empire. Then the denizens of the elemental planes the troglodytes had sacrificed staged a brief, but violent invasion, after which Ssar'targontha split into smaller empires, each of which would fall prey to the encroachment of humanoids and other, younger races. The troglodytes never recovered from their defeat nor did they ever regain their former glory as ruinous war over resources caused them to descend further into barbarism and savagery.

Though most of the world has forgotten Ssar'targontha, certain of its ruined ziggurats and obelisks still exist, lying decrepit and abandoned in long forsaken caverns. Faded writing in the Ssar'targontha cuneiform script tells an embellished history of the mighty empire and the wonders it once wrought on the earth. Those exploring the benighted caverns and facing ancient dangers can learn powerful secrets of antiquity now lost.

ECOLOGY & SOCIETY

The troglodytes of Ssar'targontha differ from their brethren of today much as humankind differs from the ape. Standing nearly seven feet tall, the troglodytes' scales ranged in hue from deep reds to glistening yellow or even an emerald green. They also possessed greater intelligence, proving adept at engineering

feats the rest of world would take countless millennia to duplicate.

Life revolved around the worship of Ssar'targontha's demonic patron, Amon-Pyr, who raised the troglodytes up out of the sea where the aboleths and other ancient creatures had nearly hunted them to extinction. Throughout the empire, the troglodytes constructed cyclopean ziggurats in honour of Amon-Pyr. Each ziggurat served as the city's religious and government centre, ruled by a high priest and a cabal of lesser priests. High priests were specifically bred, the product of dark, unholy rites cast upon eggs bathed in elemental sludge. The high priests ruled with divine power granted to them by Amon-Pyr, a power they jealously guarded. These high priests were even more horrific than the other troglodytes—bloated, giant things, they squatted on golden thrones hoisted by slaves, unable to move under their own power.

The priests' divine magic led to Ssar'targontha's rise to greatness as it shaped everything around them. Amon-Pyr taught the first priests how to summon and bind elemental creatures from the four elemental planes. Sacrificed during a specific, blasphemous ritual, the slain elemental was reduced to an oozing sludge composed of its base elements which then become the components for spells to power the empire. Water elementals and earth elementals fed crop fields, while fire and wind elementals fashioned giant structures out of solid stone.

In addition to using the elemental sludge in rites to create the caste of high priests, the troglodytes of Ssar'targontha feed it to a race of giant wormlike creatures, the descendants of purple worms, called zowrms. These trained worms burrowed out the many canals crisscrossing cavern floors, chewing and digesting solid stone.

A fearsome warrior caste existed under the rule of the priests. The troglodyte warriors journeyed from their deep caverns to raid the primitive, developing humanoid races, bringing them back as slaves to either aid in Ssar'targontha's continuing expansion or to be eaten. The warriors also fought in the frequent battles between cities as high priests continually sought to expand their own personal power.

CUNEIFORM WRITING

The troglodytes used an ancient cuneiform writing system, inscribing their history and important events into the walls of a city's ziggurat and accompanying obelisks, as well as the large steles marking a city's borders. It is possible to decipher this writing with a DC 20 Linguistics check. One day spent studying the troglodyte writing grants the deciphering creature a +4 insight bonus to all Knowledge checks relating to the ancient troglodytes of that particular city.

Those troglodytes not bred to become priests or strong enough to be warriors formed the lowest caste in Ssar'targontha society. They often served as governmental underlings for the high priests. Others served as taskmasters of the slaves who worked in the fungi fields or tended and trained the zowrms. Though low in troglodyte society, their lot was much better than those they enslaved. Those with particularly unique scale colourings often lived an indolent life in a harem of a priest or warrior caste member.

Specially built ziggurats housed the troglodyte eggs for each caste where elemental sludge pumped in through aqueducts to bath the unborn troglodytes. Amon-Pyr claimed a quarter of all eggs produced, feeding on the unborn souls within in exchange for endowing the troglodytes with his power.

ENEMIES & ALLIES

Ssar'targontha never had allies but lacked no shortage of enemies.

At first, the machinations of the aboleths threatened Ssar'targontha's rise to power. Only Amon-Pyr's direct intervention saved the troglodytes from becoming the aboleths' slaves, allowing them to flee from the oceans into the deep caverns. Once the troglodytes found the safety of the caverns, the two races only occasionally came into contact, usually when one of Ssar'tongtha's cities lay by the shores of a deep underground lake or sea. At other times, advance aboleth scouts would battle with troglodyte warriors near the surface over slaves and raiding grounds.

The troglodytes of Ssar'targontha built much of their empire with the souls of captured and sacrificed elemental creatures. In specially constructed ziggurats surrounded by four towering obelisks, the high priests conducted divine rituals to rip open gateways to the four elemental planes and draw forth the elemental creatures on the other side. The



elementals suddenly found themselves bound to the ziggurat, unable to return home, and were then subsequently slain. This perpetual condition existed until near the end of Ssar'targontha when a cabal of Elemental Lords decided to fight back. The invasion from the elemental planes was short-lived, because of the elementals' diverse natures, but it still wrought significant devastation on an empire already reeling from the attacks of other subterranean enemy civilisations. Attacks on the empire's birthing chambers resulted in the destruction of tens of thousands of troglodyte eggs, which had a long lasting effect that rippled through the empire. Coupled with the new dangers of summoning elementals, Ssar'targontha began its inexorable slide into barbarism.

One of Ssar'targontha's greatest enemies was itself. Though a unified empire under the worship of Amon-Pyr, the high priests of each city always sought more personal power and it was not uncommon to have two or more cities in Ssar'targontha at war with one another. This, however, was not enough to destabilize the empire until near its end when civil war over increasingly limited resources finally shattered Ssar'targontha into smaller kingdoms, which each eventually collapsed. The surviving troglodytes became baser, plunging into a degeneracy in which they can now only recall faint legends and myths of their former empire.

FORGOTTEN POWER

The troglodytes worshipped one power now all but forgotten to mortal man.

AMON-PYR

CE troglodyte god of darkness, evil, madness and water

Epithets: The Elder One, Lord of Slime

Symbol: A tentacled whip

Domains: Chaos, Darkness, Evil and Water

Favoured Weapon: Whip

Holy Text: None survive intact, but some acolytes of the ancient ways have managed to collect several fragments of the *Amoninomicon*—a foul text so depraved that possession and knowledge of more than a few pages can drive the possessor mad with terror.

Additional Notes: Amon-Pyr is an ancient demonic power worshipped by troglodytes since the earliest days of the race's long-fallen empire. A tentacled demon that crawled from the unknown depths of the frigid, slime-coated waters of the Sea of Perpetual Misery, Amon-Pyr is a terrible figure from the world's pre-history. Only a few isolated troglodyte clans yet cling to his worship. Guarding fragments of ancient knowledge, these groups yet perform rituals the meaning and significance of which they have long since forgotten.

Ssar'targontha spread throughout the world's deep caverns and comprised many small cities each ruled by a high priest.

ARCHITECTURE & LAYOUTS

Ssar'targonthan cities were carved from the bedrock of the earth using slave labour, zowrms and demonic magic. Slave labour created and lifted the heavy stone blocks forming the ziggurats, birthing chambers and aqueducts. The zowrms, fed a diet of elemental ooze, ate and digested rocks, burrowing the numerous canals ringing the cities and fashioning roads. The priests used the power of the sacrificed elementals to exquisitely carve the many demonic statues the troglodytes favoured. Except for the holy city of Urshak, the cities of Ssar'targontha were all laid out in a similar fashion.

The towering, stone ziggurats formed the heart of each city in Ssar'targontha. Four coneiform inscribed obelisks, stretching nearly a hundred feet in height, stood at each corner of the ziggurat to aid in focusing the high priest's magic. A series of circular canals bored from solid rock formed concentric rings, spreading out from the city's centre and criss-crossed with aqueducts. At the widest ring around the city's outer edge, smaller canals struck out like spokes to feed the surrounding fungi fields. Large, stone bridges rose naturally to span the canals at major roads winding through the city.

Important buildings, like the birthing chambers, clustered near the central ziggurat. Other than the ziggurat and birthing chambers, most other buildings shared a similar appearance—low, flat-topped stone buildings one-storey high. A general troglodyte residence or business consisted of one or two large rooms carved into sections with curtains fashioned from the flayed skin of captives.

Giant steles marked the edges of each city, the coneiform detailing the particular city's past rulers and their great deeds. Large tunnels bored by the zowrms connected the cities to one another, serving as major thoroughfares. Cities close to the empire's centre were connected by many thoroughfares while the outer cities were connected by only one or two.

Founded on the worship of Amon-Pyr as it was, numerous large statues of the demon lord decorated the empire's cities. Demonic heads loomed out from the aqueducts while towering demon statues growled along the rocky walls of the thoroughfares connecting the cities. Each ziggurat housed a giant golden statue of Amon-Pyr, studded with precious gems.

SAMPLE LOCALES

Urshak, the Holy City: The first and oldest city of Ssar'targontha, Urshak sat on the edge of a vast underground sea, marking the location where the troglodytes first arose from its inky black

depths. Unlike Ssar'targontha's other cities, Urshak housed numerous small ziggurats, serving as homes to the high priests when they made their annual pilgrimages to discuss matters affecting the empire. The largest ziggurat, Urshak'gontha, dominated the city's centre, its stone walls covered in beaten gold and studded with thousands of gems. Here lived the Urshak'amon'entu (Holiest One of Amon), the highest priest who served as the religious emperor of Ssar'targontha, a position often short-lived due to assassinations. Most of Urshak now lies below the underground sea but the tops of its tallest ziggurats yet rise above its still, black waters.

Xulthun: One of the ancient cities, a past earthquake slid Xulthun even deeper into the earth. Suddenly cut off from the empire, the troglodyte survivors were amongst the first to descend into savagery. Their ancestors still lurk about the tumbled ruins in warring tribes, scavenging relics of their lost glory. Wild zowrms roam the ruins, devouring the rubble and hastening Xulthun's ultimate destruction.

Nervar'tok: One of the central cities of Ssar'targontha, Nervar'tok cultivated extensive fungi fields to export throughout the empire. Partial ruins of its main ziggurat still stand, the four obelisks lying broken atop it. The fungi fields have since grown wild, attracting many Ebon Realm denizens, though few venture into the skeletal remains of the city, haunted as it is by the souls of its former inhabitants. Its golden statue of Amon-Pyr lies buried in the rumble of the ziggurat.

Darongtha: In its heyday, Darongtha served as an outpost at the furthest edges of the empire, just a few miles from the surface. Constant warfare by various Ebon Realm denizens has scoured most of the city clean since the empire's collapse. However, a crumbling estele still remains as well as a mostly intact ziggurat (often used as a base by whatever creature is laying claim to the city at the time). Brave adventurers occasionally raid the ziggurat in hopes of deciphering the faded coneiform writing from which details (and even locations) of other Ssar'targonthan cities can be gleaned.

AREAS OF NOTE

The following areas of note stand in every Ssar'targonthan city.

Ziggurat: Fashioned from stone carved with dark magic, Ssar'targontha's four-sided, terraced pyramids rose upwards of 75 feet. A large flight of stairs lead to the ziggurat's main entrance on the second terrace where the government ruled. Below the offices, on the first terrace, snaked labyrinthine dungeons with cells, pits and laboratories in which they conducted unholy experiments. The top terrace, accessed from a flight of stairs on the roof of the second terrace, housed the ornately carved temple—residence of the priests where

unauthorized access was punishable by death. Atop the flat temple roof, a gold and gem encrusted statue of Amon-Pyr loomed above a blood-stained altar of jet black obsidian. This was where the priests performed sacrifices in the name of their demon lord. Four obelisks, used as catalysts to empower the troglodytes' divine magic, flanked the ziggurat.

Birthing Chambers: Almost as important in Ssar'targontha as its ziggurats, the birthing chambers comprised a huge central tower connected to a series of aqueducts and a number of large, flat-topped buildings accessible by a long ramp of stairs. Each of these buildings serviced one particular caste of troglodyte society. In a huge, terraced pit at the back of the building, the troglodytes of that particular caste laid their eggs. The central tower served as living and working quarters for the priests and warriors assigned to oversee and protect the birthing process. From the connecting aqueducts, rivers of elemental slime flowed into the central tower, routed down into the pits to coat the eggs. The troglodytes' predetermined caste decided how much and what kind of elemental ooze was used to nurture and influence the development of the unborn troglodyte.

Hall of Honoured Dead: Located near the central ziggurat, these one and a half-storey, steeped pyramids functioned as catacombs for the warrior castes and low-ranking priests. Inside was an ossuary of gilded troglodyte skulls in gold, silver and precious gems leering from carved niches along the walls.

Behind a black marble statue of Amon-Pyr, a secret set of stairs lead down into a maze-like burrow of tunnels, in which are buried the mummified remains of the city's most prestigious warriors. Undead priests called urshak'xhul served as guardians to ensure the dead slumber undisturbed.

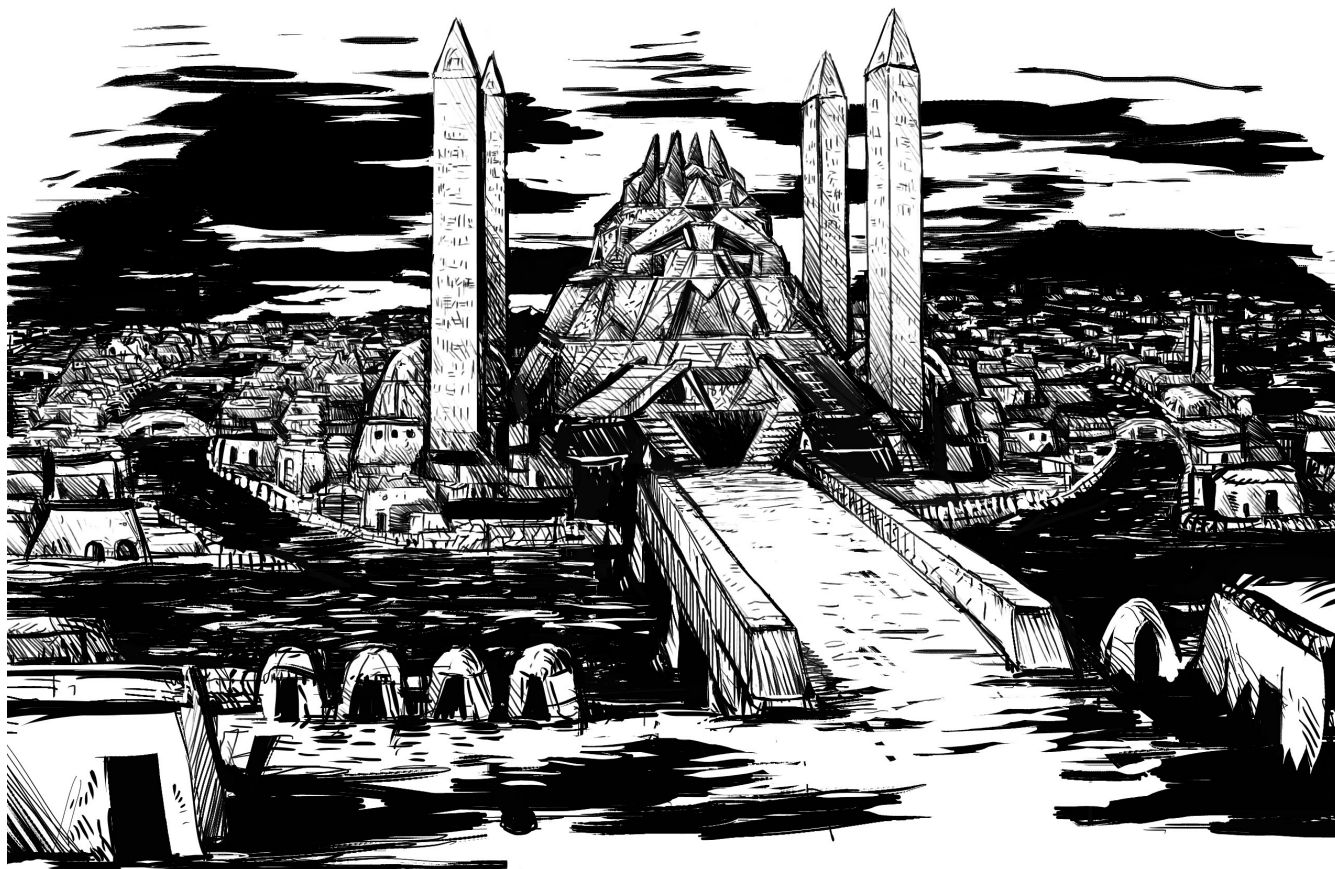
FEATURES OF NOTE

Each city had the following features of note:

Aqueducts: Ssar'targontha employed an elaborate series of aqueducts ranging from 25 to 50 feet in height, ferrying not only water but the elemental slime created by the priests' sacrifice of elemental creatures. A series of demonic-looking statues, placed at intervals, decorated the aqueducts crisscrossing the city. Though most lie in ruin, a few remain, home to large cave bats and other flying monstrosities of the Ebon Realms.

Canals: A series of wide canals sat in concentric rings around the cities, funnelling water and elemental slime to the surrounding fungi gardens. Large, demon statue decorated bridges spanned the canals.

Steles: Thin, obelisk-like structures, two 50 ft. steles guarded each thoroughfare leading into a city. In addition to detailing the city's particular history, it also denoted the neighbouring city connected by the thoroughfare, serving as a guidepost for travellers.



WHISPERS & RUMOURS

Use the whispers and rumours listed below to propel the PCs into adventures featuring the troglodytes and their ancient empire.

1. A ziggurat in a small Ssar'targonthan outpost city supposedly contains a detailed map outlining the locations of additional cities filled with ancient treasure. The map can be used to navigate ancient deep tunnels guarded by giant demonic statues.
2. Numerous troglodyte tribes have been gathering around an ancient ruined ziggurat. Sources say they awakened a forgotten "god" of their long lost empire. This god is said to possess the riches and knowledge of its empire.
3. A tribe of kobolds disappeared after unearthing an ancient ziggurat. Survivors claim a number of hideous beasts poured forth, slaughtering the kobolds with claws and tentacles. The beasts must have been guarding a fabulous treasure.
4. A band of adventurers tell stories of an ancient domed building filled with skulls. Beneath it is a labyrinth holding the wealth of long dead troglodytes. The adventurers warn of numerous traps, strange alien creatures and undead monstrosities guarding the treasure.
5. A tribe of troglodytes have erected an ancient demonic statue rumoured to be worth a fortune. A strange, unnatural drumming is said to sound from the cavern where the statue stands.
6. Giant black worms haunt ancient troglodyte ruins spitting acid and in some reports, fire or lightning. These worms devour rock as well as living creatures. Sometimes in their passing, they reveal the ancient ruins of the old troglodyte empire.
7. A duergar king was rumoured to wear an ancient crown of jade and gold that could control his subjects. Legend claims a horrible creature slew the king and took the crown back to a lonely, haunted ziggurat.
8. A consortium of dwarves is hiring adventurers to clear out ruins recently unearthed by an earthquake so they can mine a vein of valuable ore. The adventurers can keep the treasure they find.
9. A merchant specializing in objects of antiquity has a client with an obsession for artefacts and objects belonging to an ancient troglodyte empire. The merchant is looking for brave adventurers to retrieve whatever they can from the ruins. No object, no matter how insignificant it seems, is to be overlooked.
10. Strange creatures prowl about the ruins of a strange tower surrounded by small ziggurats. A thief entered the ziggurat and escaped with a golden egg the size of his head. The thief claims there are more, just lying there in deep pits for the taking.
11. A wizard searches for adventurers to enter an ancient site of a former troglodyte empire. The wizard specifically seeks samples of various coloured slime supposedly coating the ruined structures and fills half buried canals. The wizard claims the slime is harmless.
12. A new food craze has swept a dwarven kingdom using a special fungus as its main ingredient. The dwarves, of course, are keen to get their hands on a steady supply of this strange fungus said to only grow under the shadow of haunted ziggurats.
13. Rumours abound of strange, intelligent golden-scaled troglodytes gathering their lesser kin about them. They've already slaughtered a dwarven outpost and appear to be excavating a large cavern for some reason.
14. An ornate jade dagger has strange cuneiform writing engraved in it depicting a long lost city. Various merchant and wizard guilds have been gathering bands of adventurers to explore this city and unearth the lost treasure believed to be there. It's a race to see which group claims the city first.
15. A local cleric has been plagued with nightmares about a horrible tentacled demon. Divinations portend a brewing evil, recently unearthed in an ancient ziggurat deep within the earth. The cleric's church sees it as their holy mission to eradicate this evil and seek volunteers to assist them.
16. A shrouded troglodyte mummy was recently put on display at a noble's castle with the great wealth found in its tomb. However, the mummy disappeared, and noble's guards were killed. The noble fears the treasure is cursed and the mummy is coming for him—a creature from an ancient empire deep below the earth.
17. Legend tells of an ancient city of gold lying submerged under the waves of a sunless sea deep within the bowels of the earth. Its ziggurats peek above the black waters and is said to be a place even aboleths fear to venture.
18. A drow city has sent a band to investigate a recently unearthed ancient city once belonging to the troglodytes. This has caused concern amongst a number of underdwellers for fear of what the drow will discover. Rumours claim they are searching for powerful artefacts with which to subjugate their neighbours.
19. A strange cult belonging to a demon lord has been finding long lost artefacts belonging to an ancient kingdom that once revered their lord. A number of good-aligned organizations would like to see these activities stopped.
20. Something evil stirs in a long forgotten cavern. Reports claim a number of foul creatures, including ghouls, have been driven out of the neighbouring caverns, attacking peaceful settlements, as a result of this nameless evil. Rumours whisper this evil resides in a massive ziggurat where numerous troglodytes have begun gathering.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

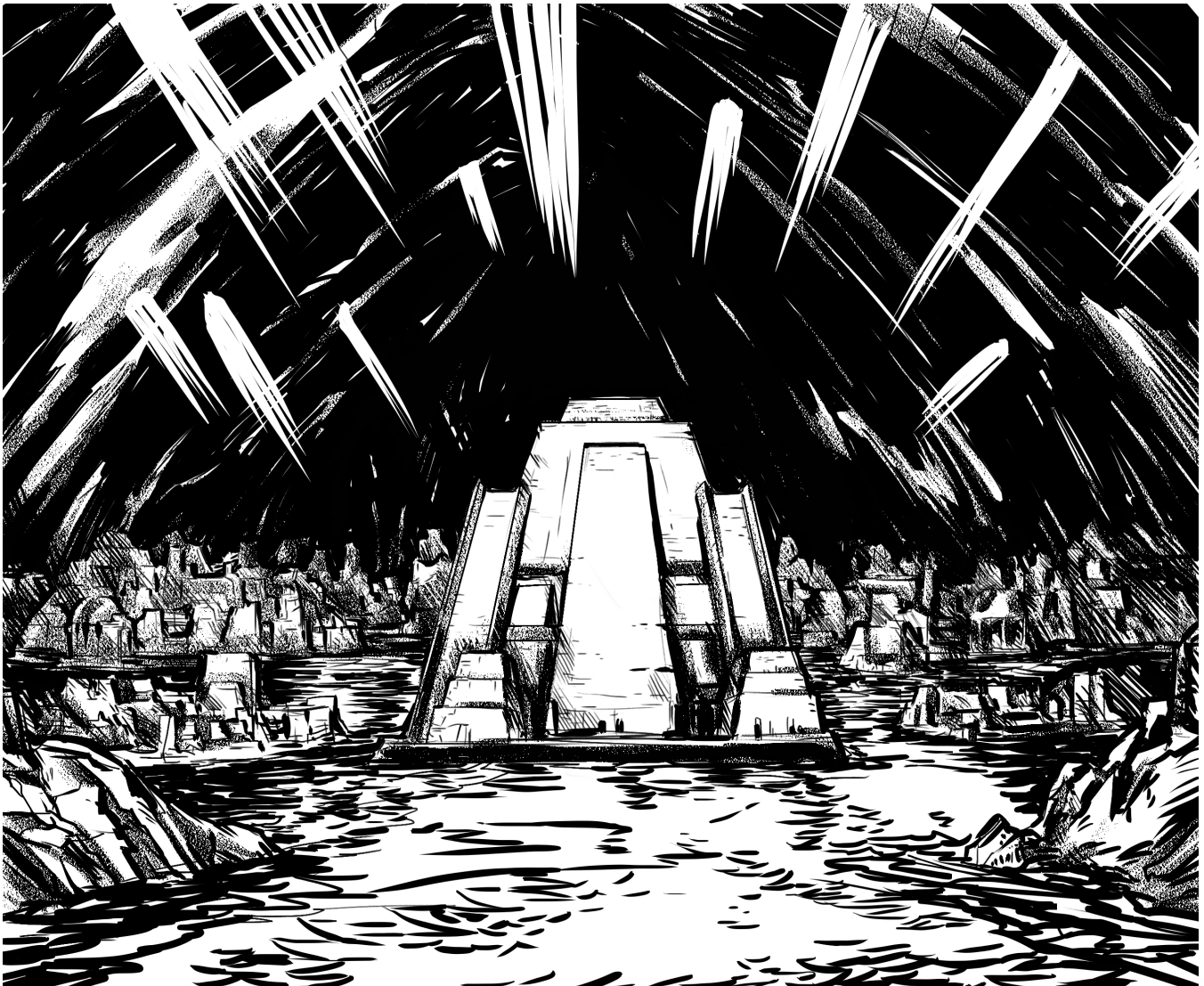
Ancient Empire of the Troglydtes gives you, the busy GM, the tools to set exciting, flavoursome adventures amid the ruins of ancient Ssar'targontha long fallen into decay and darkness.

Within these pages you'll find information on the troglodytes' ancient sites of power, their traps and guardians, treasures both magic and mundane as well as a selection of adventure hooks, whispers and rumours as well as dungeon dressing tables and even player options designed to enable them (or their enemies) to harness the powers of the fallen, elder folk!

Integrating ancient Ssar'targontha into your own campaign world is straightforward and easy. The troglodytes held power in the impossibly distant ancient past long before the civilisations of man—or even the long-lived elves and dwarves—arose upon the surface. As such, placing adventure sites both small and large in deep, isolated caverns far from the sun's warmth should prove little obstacle for the GM.

The information herein gives you the tools to reveal as much—or as little—of this ancient, scarcely imagined past, as you desire. PCs can stumble upon some remote outpost of the empire or even explore the ruined, gloom-shrouded streets of one of its major cities, depending on how much focus you wish to focus on this forgotten civilisation.

Alternatively, the party could even explore the so-called Twilight City (pictured below) buried deep in the megadungeon of Gloamhold. Founded by refugees after Ssar'targontha's fall was well underway, the Twilight City shares much in common with its mighty progenitor and many secrets lie awaiting discovery therein. For more information about Gloamhold, visit creightonbroadhurst.com.



DUNGEON DRESSING

Use this table to generate minor sights, sounds and features of interest the PCs encounter while exploring an ancient site of power. Some features listed below may be inappropriate—ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

D%	
1	A thick layer of red slime, warm to the touch, coats the rubble-strewn floor.
2	The mummified remains of a troglodyte spill out of its crushed sarcophagus. A golden circlet (worth 200 gp, DC 20 Appraise values) binds its head.
3	Two steles lean against one another for support, creating an arch. Age has worn smooth the cuneiform writing on their surfaces.
4	A stone carved demonic head, severed from a crumbling aqueduct, lies upside down amidst a pile of debris on the floor.
5	Rumbling noises reverberate as the sagging, ruined buildings buckle and shift from some unseen source.
6	Statues of ancient, sneering troglodytes lean drunkenly or lie shattered along a broad avenue.
7	A steep ramp of crumbling stone steps lead to the gaping entrance of a small but mostly intact ziggurat.
8	A giant, cracked obelisk bars the path. The cuneiform writing, however, reveals terrible secrets once lost (such as a new feat or spell).
9	The blackened ruins of a swath of former stone houses rise up from the floor like twisted, skeletal claws.
10	A thin layer of hardened blue slime coats the bottom of a debris-filled canal. If touched, the slime feels strangely cold and wet to the touch.
11	A field of wildly growing fungus and mushroom stretches across the cavern floor. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check determines they are edible.
12	The jutting remains of a large tower thrusts into the air while its broken top half lies atop a series of small ziggurats attached to the tower.
13	A giant, obsidian statue of a demon leers over a plaza.
14	Hundreds of rat-gnawed skulls spill out from the broken remains of a small ziggurat.
15	A crumbling aqueduct looms ahead, dotted with demonic statues that seem ready to collapse.
16	Flapping footfalls sound out amongst a stretch of partially collapsed low buildings.
17	The seared tip of a half-melted stone stele partially blocks the path ahead.
18	An eerie piping sounds faintly from a low, domed building surrounded by jade, demonic statues.
19	Fungus and patches of small mushrooms grow between the cracks of a wide, paved avenue.
20	A canal appears strangely debris free—what little rubble there is appears to have been melted by acid.
21	Broken spearheads lie amongst grotesquely shaped skeletons strewn about a plaza.
22	Shards of ornately formed pots, depicting daily life, litter the ground.
23	A broken troglodyte spear pins the rotting body of a humanoid creature to a half-collapsed stele.
24	The decaying carcass of massive worm-like creature (a zowrm) attracts scavengers.
25	Moist ooze, the consistency of mud, bubbles around a cluster of brilliantly coloured fungi.
26	A dark shadow suddenly disappears into a small ziggurat connected to the shattered shell of a tower.
27	The walls of a ruined building are still layered with gold (worth 250 gp if eight hours is spent scraping it off).
28	A collapsed aqueduct rests in ruin, filling a nearby canal with demonic statues.
29	The half-eaten remains of a creature float in a canal filled with a bubbling blue ooze.
30	The broken shell of a one-storey stone building reveals evidence of a recent campsite.
31	What appears to be a large red gem (actually coloured glass) rests unattended on a dais in a central square.
32	Echoes of chanting (in Aklo) emanate in the distance from a small, half collapsed ziggurat.
33	Pieces of a giant troglodyte skeleton encased in silver lie scattered about.
34	A nearby stele buckles and collapses suddenly. A sudden howling fills the air.
35	Wind whistles out of the mouth of a bloated, demonic looking statue on a dais.
36	Electricity arcs above a tall, lonely obelisk.
37	Shouts in Aklo and the clamour of battle sound ahead, but abruptly cease.
38	Giant mushrooms erupt from a series of broken one-storey houses. A layer of green ooze coats everything.
39	Multiple broken statues of troglodyte warriors lie shattered on the ground.
40	Six inches of water covers the ground, coming from an unknown source.
41	Large holes appear to have been blasted into the cavern's ceiling.
42	Part of the cavern's wall has collapsed, burying numerous dwellings in debris.
43	Scaffolding surrounds a small ziggurat. Recent signs of crude construction are evident.
44	Multi-coloured orbs of light—blue, brown, green, and red float high in the air above.
45	Numerous small dwellings teeter at the edge of a giant chasm; most seem on the brink of collapse.
46	The stench of decay and mouldering bodies fills the air. A cursory search discovers three dead troglodytes.
47	A red slime, warm to the touch, coats a nearby stele, and glistens in the party's lights.
48	The glint of gold appears through a small crack in a large domed building.
49	A circular tower lies toppled next to a small ziggurat, which leaks a multi-coloured slime.

50	A nearby canal is filled with humanoid bones. A Heal check reveals they come from a variety of different creatures (dwarves, elves, humans etc.).	76	Fungus grows from the corpses of a band of slain adventurers, their gear rotted and rusted.
51	The sound of drums resonates from a lonely, half buried circular tower.	77	Strange skulls (belonging to pyr-toks) form the religious symbol of Amon-Pyr in an empty plaza.
52	A demonic statue with gem eyes (200 gp) sits half melted in a pool of greenish acid.	78	A skeletal troglodyte claw scuttles along the ground by its own strange volition.
53	Short hooded figures in long cloaks appear to be cultivating a field of fungus.	79	Strange troglodyte shadows appear along the walls, writhing in horrible death throes.
54	A cluster of fungi stands in a pool of red slime. The fungi give off a reddish glow and appear to sway in an unseen wind.	80	Large, perfectly circular holes bore through a number of nearby walls. Acid drips from the holes.
55	The death cry of a troglodyte sounds from the darkened interior of a ziggurat. A sudden chanting is taken up.	81	The corpses of four dwarven miners hang from an aqueduct. The nooses appear to be fashioned from their own beards.
56	A bluish slime drips down from stalactites. It is cool to the touch.	82	The disgusting noise of some creature messily feeding comes from ahead in the darkness.
57	A thin moat of lava surrounds a small ziggurat. A crude stone bridge crosses the moat.	83	A wounded drow warrior, pierced by troglodyte spears, crawls on the ground, oblivious to the PCs.
58	Troglodyte skeletons lie scattered about the floors of a number of small stone buildings.	84	Torchlight wavers from a cluster of broken houses.
59	A lean stele suddenly collapses, crashing into a nearby aqueduct and crushing it.	85	The ground is buckled as if something burrowed under it recently.
60	A plaza appears to have been crudely rebuilt—primitive tools lie scattered about.	86	Acid drips from a large hole in a nearby building.
61	Graffiti (in Aklo) warning off intruders covers a collapsed stele blocking the way.	87	Four obelisks rise up over a pile of rubble. An arc of lightning streaks from one tip to another.
62	The body of a strange, pantherish creature (a pyr-tok) lies on the ground, pierced by many spears.	88	Blue and red ooze drip from an aqueduct forming pools on the ground that strangely don't mix.
63	A bonfire in the distance outlines a massive ziggurat.	89	An ornamental jade knives rests on top of a shrouded corpse sprawled on a dais.
64	Numerous humanoid skulls lie piled before a small domed structure. Chanting echoes from within.	90	A swarm of bats fly erratically around a large glowing obelisk like moths to flame. A few of the bats touch the obelisk and suddenly explode.
65	A stalactite suddenly breaks off, spearing a nearby stone structure. A creature howls in respond.	91	A red scaled troglodyte warrior appears to be sleeping on a stone dais. He is wearing ancient armour and a large spear rests next to him.
66	A waterfall of petrified red ooze hangs from the demonic fashioned mouth of an aqueduct.	92	Petrified troglodyte eggs lie smashed in a series of deep pits in the ground.
67	Scorch marks mar the ruined shell of a tower. A pool of water stands eight inches deep, inside.	93	Five duergar warriors lie half dissolved in a pool of acid. A rumbling sounds from deep below the ground.
68	The slaughtered remains of a band of drow warriors lie in front of an intact, small ziggurat.	94	A deep underground river cuts through the cavern. A few buildings yet teeter along its banks.
69	Occasional rumbles echo throughout the cavern as the ruins settle.	95	A large, skeletal troglodyte with a headdress of jade sits on a golden throne. The corpse of a recently deceased humanoid lies at its feet.
70	A red orb of light glows above the crumbling remains of a large, ziggurat.	96	Pools of lava bubble on the ground.
71	A haunting melody on brass horns reverberates throughout the cavern, coming from an unknown source.	97	The air suddenly grows icy cold.
72	Five ancient troglodytes appear petrified beneath a coating of brown ooze. The ooze has a muddy texture but appears to be otherwise harmless, if touched.	98	The presence of something vile and hateful dogs the PCs as they explore.
73	A well preserved mural depicts a troglodyte birthing chamber and the process of using elemental ooze to coat the eggs set into deep pits.	99	Pools of slime—blue, brown, green and red—rest at the bottom of a series of deep pits in the ground.
74	The skeleton of an ancient dragon lies pierced on a massive obelisk next to a giant mound of rubble.	100	A series of homes under the shadow of a large ziggurat appear to have recently been repaired. The tools scattered carelessly about are of dwarven make.
75	A blood-smeared message written in Dwarven on a ruined wall warns of unspeakable danger ahead.		

ANCIENT GUARDIANS: FELL TRAPS

The troglodytes of Ssar'targontha employed numerous traps to safeguard their most sacred sanctums. Though the troglodytes are long gone, and their cities are in ruins, many of their traps yet endure.

AIR RAZORS

The high priests created an elaborate trap to bar entrance to their private quarters in their ziggurats. Many rivals to the priests' power fell to this trap fashioned from slain elementals.

AIR RAZORS CR 9 (6,400 XP)

A low whistle sounds and the air shimmers with almost translucent beams shimmering with electricity criss-crossing the door.

Search DC 25 Perception; **Type** Magic

Disarm DC 25 Disable Device (2d4 rounds); activates on DC 20 or less; **Bypass** DC 30 Perception discovers a hidden switch in the wall.

Destroy Destroying the walls (AC 8, hardness 8, hp 540, DC 50 Break) defeats the trap.

Trigger Proximity (5 ft. from the door); **Reset** Automatic (1 hour)

Effect Thin beams of compressed air criss-cross the door (+15 melee touch attack against any creature moving through the door, dealing 4d10 slashing damage and 8d6 electricity damage). The beams remain in place for 1 hour until the trap resets.

AMON-PYR'S BREATH

The troglodytes placed an insidious trap to protect the entrance into the tower of their birthing chambers. Two tall statues of their demon lord flanked the door, raining death on intruders.

AMON-PYR'S BREATH CR 7 (3,600 XP)

The central eye on each of the 15 ft. tall statues flanking the door suddenly begins to glow.

Search DC 25 Perception; **Type** Magic

Disarm DC 25 Disable Device (2d4 rounds); activates on DC 20 or less; **Bypass** DC 30 Perception to notice cuneiform writing on the statue invoking a pray to Amon-Pyr that when recited, temporarily deactivates the trap for 1 hour.

Destroy Destroying both statues (AC 80, hardness 8, hp 270, DC 40 Break) defeats the trap.

Trigger Proximity (5 ft. of the door); **Reset** Automatic (1 hour)

Effect When triggered, this trap has the following effects:

Effect The statue to the right of the shoots a cone of fire from its eye (6d6 fire damage, DC 13 Reflex save halves, multiple targets in a 15 ft. cone).

Effect The statue to the left shots a cone of ice from its eye (6d6 cold damage, DC 13 Reflex halves, multiple targets in a 15 ft. cone).

SKULL SCREAMERS

The honoured dead, often interred with riches, were protected from looters with powerful wards placed on the skulls lining the walls of the above-ground chamber.

SKULL SCREAMERS CR 5 (1,600 XP)

A baleful light glows in the eyes of a dozen troglodyte skulls as their bony jaws suddenly open to scream paeans to their unholy lord.

Search DC 25 Perception; **Type** Magic

Disarm DC 25 Disable Device (2d4 rounds); activates on DC 20 or less;

Bypass DC 25 Perception to notice cuneiform writing on the floor detailing a ritual in which 5 hp of troglodyte blood must be spilled to deactivate the trap for 1 hour.

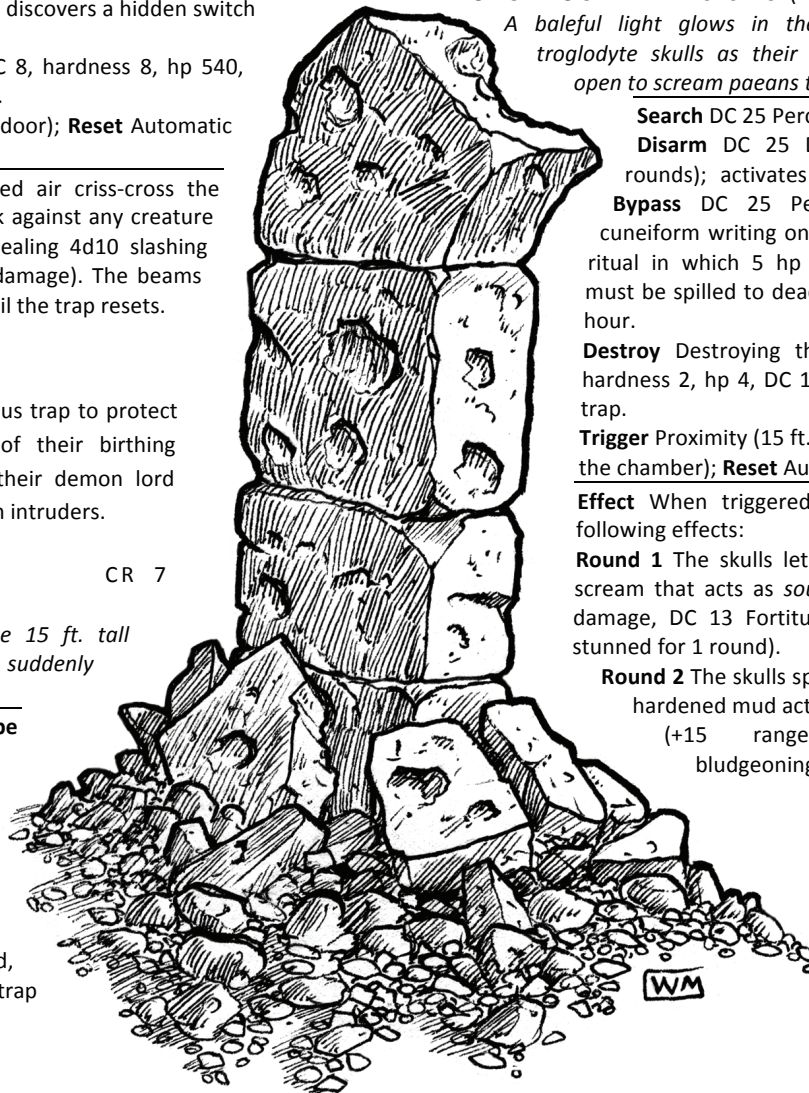
Destroy Destroying the 12 skulls (AC 4, hardness 2, hp 4, DC 10 Break) defeats the trap.

Trigger Proximity (15 ft. area in the centre of the chamber); **Reset** Automatic (1 hour)

Effect When triggered, this trap has the following effects:

Round 1 The skulls let out an ear piercing scream that acts as *sound burst* (1d8 sonic damage, DC 13 Fortitude save or become stunned for 1 round).

Round 2 The skulls spew forth a stream of hardened mud acting like large boulder (+15 ranged attack, 5d6 bludgeoning damage).



ANCIENT GUARDIANS: PYR-TOK

PYR-TOK

CR 6 (XP 2,400)

A panther-like body supports a vaguely reptilian head; tentacles sway from its hunched shoulders.

CE Large aberration

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8, Sense Motive +2
Speed 40 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +10 (+14 jumping), Stealth +7

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; **CMD** 24
(+2 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

hp 76 (9 HD); viscous blood; **DR** magic/10

Viscous Blood (Ex): A pyr-tok's bloated body is filled with an especially thick, dark blood. Whenever a pyr-tok takes hit point damage from a slashing or piercing melee weapon, the weapon becomes drenched in the pyr-tok's ooze-like blood. The blood makes the weapon slippery and cumbersome to wield, imparting a -2 to attack rolls while using the weapon unless the blood is cleaned off as a full-round action.

Space 10 ft., **stench** (30 ft.; DC 18; 10 rds.); **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +12 (+16 grapple)

Melee 2 claws (reach 10 ft.) +11 (1d6+5) and
2 tentacles +8 (1d6+2 plus grab)

Atk Options constrict (1d6+2), pounce

Spell-like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +8)
3/day—darkness

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 11

Feats Acrobatic, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills as above

Languages Aklo

The troglodytes created the pyr-tok from the eggs of lesser castes, infusing them with unholy energy to create servants acting as both hunters and bodyguards controlled by *urshak'knurs*. These predatory beasts survived Ssar'targontha's downfall and continue to stalk its blighted demesnes. Powerfully built, they hunt by springing suddenly at their prey, rending them with claws or crushing them to pulp with their writhing tentacles. They attack troglodytes on sight, fuelled by an instinctual rage against the creatures.



ANCIENT GUARDIANS: URSHAK'XHUL

URSHAK'XHUL

CR 9 (XP 6,400)

Funeral wrappings inscribed in cuneiform script shroud this large, emaciated skeletal creature, its red glowing eyes burning with hate.

CE Large undead

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +21, Sense Motive +21

Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 21; **CMD** 21
(+2 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless), cold

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +13 (+17 vs. channelling)

hp 119 (14 HD); **DR** magic/10

Space 10 ft., stench (30 ft.; DC 17; 10 rds.); **Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +16

Melee 2 slams (reach 10 ft.; Power Attack [-3/+6]) +15 (2d6+7 plus energy drain [I level, DC 21])

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave

Special Actions abyssal gaze, scroll wrappings

Abyssal Gaze (Su [standard; 1d4 rounds]) An urshak'xhul can make a gaze attack at one creature it can see within 30 feet, bombarding the target with visions of insane creatures formed from rending maws and squamous tentacles writhing monstrosly in abyssal gulfs of darkness.

The target takes 1d4 Wisdom damage and is confused for 1d6 rounds (DC 21 Will negates). A successful save negates the Wisdom damage and the creature is confused for only one round.

This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.



Scroll Wrappings (Sp [standard]) An urshak'xhul's funeral wrappings are inscribed with numerous spells. An urshak'xhul may use these spells as if they were scrolls created by a 7th-level cleric. An urshak'xhul is treated as a 7th-level cleric for the purposes of concentration checks (+11, +15 casting defensively or grappling) and spell penetration (+11). Once a spell is cast, it disappears for 24 hours. If an urshak'xhul is destroyed, the funeral wrappings crumble to dust. An urshak'xhul's funeral wrappings typically contain the following spells:

4th—*tentacle breath**, *shadow conjuration* (DC 14), *unholy blight* (DC 14)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 13), *deeper darkness*, *writhing tentacle**
2nd—*death knell* (DC 12), *demoniac punishment** (DC 12), *shatter* (DC 12)

1st—*cause fear* (DC 11), *command* (DC 11), *protection from good*

Abilities Str 20, Dex 15, Con —, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 19

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Casting, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion]), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills as above plus Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +26, Spellcraft +20

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common

*Denotes a new spell in this supplement.

Members of the priest caste conducted profane rites on selected members, transforming them into the blasphemous Urshak'xhul (Holy Guardians). Urshak'xhul guard the catacombs of the priests, their mummified bodies encased in wrappings with powerful spells. Deathless, some few Urshak'xhul still maintain their eternal vigil over the bodies and treasures of their dead brothers and sisters. Occasionally, though, an Urshak'xhul abandons its post and gathers a tribe of troglodytes about it, forcing them to worship it as a god.

ANCIENT GUARDIANS: ZOWRM

ZOWRM

CR 11 (XP 12,800)

A single giant, toothy maw dominates one end of this giant, black worm.

N Gargantuan magical beast

Init -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft. tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +17, Sense Motive +0

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; **ACP** 0

AC 25, touch 4, flat-footed 25; **CMD** 37 (+39 vs. bullrush, can't be tripped)

(-2 Dex, +21 natural, -4 size)

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

Fort +15, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

hp 161 (14 HD); energy change

Energy Change (Su) A zowrm's primary breath weapon is a cone of acid, however, the troglodytes breed these creatures to be able to change the energy type of their breath weapons to suit a variety of tasks. Whenever a zowrm is exposed to an attack dealing acid, cold, fire or electricity energy damage, its breath weapon immediately changes to match that type, even if the zowrm does not take damage from the attack. The breath weapon changes back to dealing acid damage after a 24-hour period expires in which it is not subjected to a different energy type attack.

Space 20 ft.; **Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +29 (+31 bull rush, +33 grapple)

Melee bite (reach 15 ft.) +22 (4d8+16/19-20 plus grab)

Atk Options breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 12d6 acid, Reflex DC 23 halves, usable every 1d4 round), swallow whole (4d8+24 bludgeoning damage, AC 20, 16 hp)

Abilities Str 32, Dex 6, Con 23, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 9

Feats Awesome Blow, Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills as above

Giant zowrms survive in many of the deepest caverns, slowly eating away to the remains of the empire. Free from the troglodytes' yoke, the zowrms run wild like their ancestors never could. Their insatiable appetites lead them to devour all kinds of prey. Though not found exclusively around Ssar'targontha's ruins, often their passing opens up entrances into sealed cavern's housing the empire's remains.



GLIMMERING TREASURES

Powerful items of the Ssar'targonthan empire remain hidden, buried amongst its ruined remains.

AMON-PYR'S BITE

A small gem constantly changing colour adorns a gold inlaid jade handle supporting a shimmering black blade inscribed with cuneiform writing.

Aura Moderate (conjuration and necromancy); DC 25 Knowledge [arcana] **Identify** DC 24 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 20 Linguistics) The cuneiform writing consists of unholy exultations to Amon-Pyr.

Lore (DC 20 Knowledge (religion)) This type of sword is commonly used in sacrificial rituals.

Abilities *Amon-pyr's bite* is a +1 elemental bane short sword.

- When a critical hit is confirmed on any creature with the elemental subtype, the creature must make a DC 19 Fortitude saving throw or become staggered for one round.
- Three times a day, *Amon-Pyr's Bite* allows a wielder with the channel ability to use its channel against creatures with the elemental subtype as if the creature possessed the Elemental Channel feat. The type of subtype of elemental (air, earth, fire or water) is chosen as a free action.

Activation Use activated; **CL** 9th

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Elemental Channel, *hold monster*, *summon monster I*; **Cost** 13,310 gp; **Price** 6,655 gp

AMON-PYR'S SCALES

A demonic face worked jade and onyx with glowing ruby eyes glares balefully from the breast of armour formed from shimmering scales of burnished gold.

Aura Moderate (abjuration; DC 19 Knowledge [arcana]) **Identify** DC 22 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 20 Appraise) The ruby eyes are worth 100 gp each.

Lore (DC 20 Knowledge [religion]) The demonic face depicts an aspect of Amon-Pyr.

Abilities *Amon-Pyr's Scales* is a suit of +2 scale mail.

- Once a day, as a standard action, *Amon-Pyr's Scales* can spew a offensively potent smelling cloud in a 30 ft. radius from the demonic face on the armour. Any creature caught in the cone's area of effect must make a DC 17 Fortitude saving throw or become nauseated for 7 rounds. The wearer of the armour is immune to this effect.
- Three times a day, as a standard action, the wearer can cause the armour to exude a thick layer of slime, granting the wearer resistance acid 5, cold 5 and fire 5 for one minute.

Activation Standard [armour]; **CL** 7th

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armour *poison*, *resist energy*; **Cost** 10,200 gp; **Price** 5,100 gp

SSAR'TARGONTHA LASHER

A thick cord of black, oozing leather sits tightly coiled atop a bone and jade handle.

Aura Faint (abjuration and necromancy); DC 17 Knowledge [arcana] **Identify** DC 18 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 15 Heal) The leather is crafted from humanoid skin.

Lore (DC 20 Knowledge [history]) This is an ancient device used to whip slaves.

Abilities When activated, a *Ssar'targontha Lasher* unwinds into a 10 ft. long coil. As a full-round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, the wielder may mentally command the *Ssar'targontha Lasher* to strike one creature within its 10 ft. range as a melee touch attack (using the wielder's attack modifier). The struck creature takes 1d6 sonic damage and must make a DC 13 Will saving throw or become shaken for 1 minute. The wielder of a *Ssar'targontha Lasher* receives a +2 morale bonus on Intimidate checks against shaken creatures. The shaken condition and Intimidate bonus do not stack if the same creature is struck again while shaken. Shaken creatures do not become frightened if struck again by a *ssar'targontha lasher*.

Activation Swift; **CL** 3rd

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cause fear*, *sound burst*; **Cost** 5,770 gp; **Price** 2,885 gp

URSHAK'KNUR

Semi-precious stones scintillate, set within a heavy headdress fashioned from jade, obsidian and beaten gold.

Aura Strong (enchantment; DC 20 Knowledge [arcana]) **Identify** DC 26 Spellcraft

Lore (DC 20 Appraise) The headdress contains 500 gp worth of semi-precious stones.

Lore (DC 20 Knowledge [religion]) These headdresses were worn by the lesser troglodyte clerics of Amon-Pyr.

Abilities This ornate headdress, called an *Urshak'knur* (holy crown), was worn by clerics of Amon-Pyr.

- By making a successful Intimidate check to demoralize a pyr-tok, the wearer of an *urshak'knur* can control the creature for 24 hours as if it were under a *command* spell. The wearer can only control one pyr-tok at a time but can dismiss the enchantment as a free action. If the pyr-tok is not demoralized and placed under the headdress's control or the effect ends, it is immune to the *urshak'knur's* effects for 24 hours.
- Once a day, the *urshak'knur* can cast *greater command* (DC 18 Will)

Activation Standard [head]; **CL** 11th

Requirements Craft Wondrous Items, *command*, *greater*; **Cost** 33,500 gp; **Price** 16,750 gp

TREASURE HOARDS

Use these treasure bundles as hidden troves, a monster's accumulated wealth or the burial goods of some long-dead hero.

HOARD 1

- **Coinage:** 11 pp, 238 gp.
- **Ceremonial Shield:** A demonic face snarls from a thin golden light steel shield (450 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Masterwork Spear:** A coating of gold covers the haft of this elaborately wrought spear. Its blade has sawtooth edges resembling fangs (360 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).

HOARD 2

- **Coinage:** 404 gp, 147 sp, 53 cp.
- **Silver Headdress:** Cuneiform etches praising Amon-Pyr decorate this clunky, but ornate, headpiece (550 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Jade Pendant:** A circular piece of jade hangs suspended in a silver setting and chain (230 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Scroll of Inflict Serious Wounds:** This scroll is written on a thinly beaten piece of copper, the writing etched with acid (faint [DC 18 Knowledge {arcana} necromancy]; DC 20 Spellcraft identifies; worth 375 gp).

HOARD 3

- **Coinage:** 33 gp.
- **Jade Sceptre:** A large red pearl tops this sceptre fashioned like a coiled tentacle (790 gp, DC 22 Appraise values).
- **Obsidian Statuette of Amon-Pyr:** A small, squat obsidian statuette depicts a demon composed of tentacles and fangs (175 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Cloak of Resistance +1:** Fashioned from tanned humanoid skin, this cloak has been dyed a deep red (faint [DC 15 Knowledge {arcana} abjuration]; DC 20 Spellcraft identifies; worth 1,000 gp).

HOARD 4

- **Fire Opal:** This precious stone gives off a warm reddish-orange glow (1,150 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Copper Discs:** A number of beaten copper plates tell a story of one of Ssar'targontha's great heroes (380 gp, DC 20 Appraise values).
- **Skull Goblet:** This humanoid skull has been hollowed out and lined with gold with gems for eyes (320 gp, DC 20 Appraise).
- **Potion of Remove Disease:** This blue, murky potion smells of herbs and spice (faint [DC 18 Knowledge {arcana} conjuration]; DC 20 Spellcraft identifies, worth 750 gp).

MINOR TREASURES & TRINKETS

Use the table below to generate minor pieces of treasure the PCs find during their explorations.

D20	ITEM (VALUE)
1	A small, petrified Ssar'targontha troglodyte egg with veins of red running through it (500 gp).
2	The mummified hand of a Ssar'targontha noble, gilded in gold and studded with gems (650 gp).
3	A silver coated goblet fashioned from a human skull with small gems for teeth (700 gp).
4	A depiction of troglodytes slaying various creatures adorns a pair of heavy jade bracers (875 gp).
5	A silver trimmed masterwork breastplate decorated with onyx gems depicting a demonic face (900 gp).
6	A golden staff with cuneiform writing depicting the building of the city of Dargatha and topped with a moonstone (1,150 gp).
7	A jade short sword with a golden handle and studded with semi-precious stones (950 gp).
8	A series of thin, beaten golden plates connected with a jade ring. The cuneiform writing imprinted on the plates describes disgusting troglodyte recipes for humanoid flesh (1,100 gp).
9	A gold and jade statue of a massively fat troglodyte priest (425 gp).
10	A +1 spear fashioned from jade. Its butt end, carved from onyx, depicts a demon's head (2,450 gp).
11	A human heart imprisoned in gold and set with dozens of small rubies (2,225 gp).
12	A well-preserved map of a typical Ssar'targontha city painted onto a canvas of tanned humanoid skin (250 gp).
13	A +2 dagger fashioned completely from onyx. It does not give off light but instead can cast <i>darkness</i> (CL 3rd) once a day (5,900 gp).
14	A shimmering robe made from tiny plates of beaten gold and set with jade buttons and gems along the shoulders (3,125 gp).
15	An intricately knotted gold and jade ring set with a small black pearl (625 gp).
16	A hideous statuette of a tentacled demon fashioned out of onyx (430 gp).
17	A heavy jade necklace filigreed with gold and set with tiny rubies and onyx (865 gp).
18	A +1 handaxe with a bone blade attached to a golden handle with an onyx set in the pommel (3,560 gp).
19	A golden ceremonial helmet shaped into a hideous visage studded with a large black pearl (775 gp).
20	A wide belt of beaten gold clasped with a jade buckle shaped into a demonic visage (540 gp).

PLAYER OPTIONS

Adventurers exploring the ancient ruins of Ssar'targontha will discover lost secrets and knowledge in addition to treasure. Explorers can discover these fell sorceries and techniques engraved in beaten golden plates or inscribed on scrolls fashioned from flayed humanoid flesh.

SPELLS

The troglodytes of Ssar'targontha devised their own unique divine spells powered by the malice of Amon-Pyr:

Demonic punishment (cleric 2): Use a swarm of tentacles to damage, blind and deafen your foe.

Raking claw (cleric 1): Gain a demonic claw attack

Stench (cleric 2): Increase the power of your stench ability.

Tentacle Belch (cleric 4): Belch forth tentacles to injure your foes.

Writhing tentacle (cleric 3): Use a tentacle to damage and grapple your foes.

DEMONIC PUNISHMENT

Level Cleric 2 (conjuration [summoning])

Casting Time 1 standard action; **Components** V, S, M/DF (a drop of your blood)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target** one creature; **Duration** instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial, see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You briefly summon a minor servant of Amon-Pyr, an amorphous swarm of rending teeth and flailing tentacles. The target takes 2d6 damage from the swarm and must make a Fortitude saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is blinded and deafened from the assault for 1d4 rounds.

RAKING CLAW

Level Cleric 1 (conjuration [creation])

Casting Time 1 standard action; **Components** V, S, M/DF (a piece of leather)

Range Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level); **Target** One creature; **Duration** Instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude partial, see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You create a large demonic claw hand to strike your enemies. You may make one melee attack using your base attack bonus + your Wisdom modifier against a creature in the spell's range. On a successful attack, you deal 1d6 damage and the creature must make a Fortitude saving throw or become sickened for 1 round due to the demonic taint. A successful saving throw negates the sickened condition but the creature still takes damage.

STENCH

Level Cleric 2 (transmutation)

Casting Time 1 standard action; **Components** V, S, M/DF (a drop of sweat)

Range Personal; **Target** You; **Duration** 1 hour per level

Saving Throw None; **Spell Resistance** No

You increase the power of your stench ability. You gain a +4 sacred bonus to the DC of your stench ability and the effects of your stench ability last an additional number of rounds equal to 1/2 your Hit Dice.

TENTACLE BELCH

Level Cleric 4 (conjuration [creation])

Casting Time 1 standard action; **Components** V, S, M/DF (a piece of flayed skin)

Range 30 ft. (distance); **Area** Cone-shaped burst; **Duration** 1 round/level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** Yes

On the round this spell is cast, you belch forth a streaming mass of writhing tentacles from your mouth in a 30 ft. cone. The tentacles strike all creatures within the cone using your base attack bonus + your Wisdom modifier. On a successful attack, the tentacles deal 2d6 bludgeoning damage plus your Wisdom modifier. On subsequent rounds, you may belch forth the tentacles as a standard action. The tentacles retreat back into your mouth at the end of your turn.

WRITHING TENTACLE

Level Cleric 3 (conjuration [creation])

Casting Time 1 standard action; **Components** V, S, M/DF (an onyx worth 50 gp)

Range personal; **Target** One creature; **Duration** 1 round per level

Saving Throw Fortitude partial, see text; **Spell Resistance** Yes

You call into existence a shimmering, black tentacle appearing over one of your arms. As a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, you can make an attack against one creature within 10 feet using your Base Attack Bonus plus your Wisdom modifier. The attack deals 1d6+4 damage. On a successful attack, as a free action, the tentacle can attempt to grapple the creature. The tentacle's Combat Manoeuvre Bonus is equal to your caster level +4 and its Combat Manoeuvre Defence is 10 + its Combat Manoeuvre Bonus. Each round the creature does break the grapple and it takes 1d6+4 hit points of damage plus it must make a Fortitude saving throw or gain one negative level. The negative levels return after a number of hours equal to your caster level and are not permanent.

FEATS

The troglodytes of Ssar'targontha also perfected specialized fighting and Metamagic feats to overcome their enemies. Each of the feats below has an additional Discovery section; this section provides an example of how the PCs may stumble upon the ancient knowledge.

CLEAVING THROW

When you strike down an opponent, you can throw a weapon at another opponent.

Prerequisites: Cleave, Cleaving Finish, Power Attack, Quick Draw.

Benefit: This feat works like Cleaving Finish, except instead of making a melee attack against an opponent in range, you may instead make a ranged attack at your highest base attack bonus with a thrown weapon. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Discovery: A ceremonial shield fashioned from gold and silver (325 gp, DC 20 Appraise values) depicts the technique troglodyte warriors used to slay enemies from a distance.

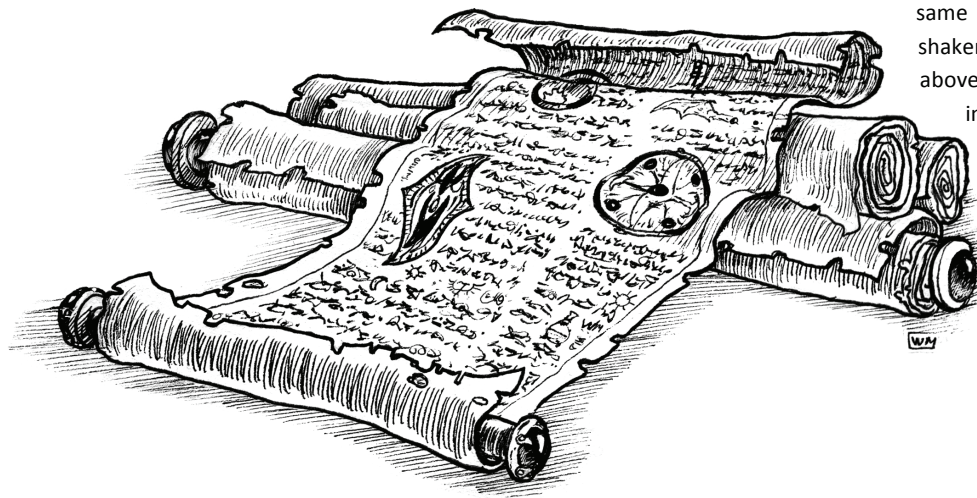
ELEMENTAL STRIKER [COMBAT]

You have been trained to strike down elemental creatures.

Prerequisites: base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When you roll a critical hit against a creature with the elemental subtype, roll to confirm the critical hit. If confirmed, you deal an extra 2 points of hit point damage to the creature. When your base attack bonus reaches +8 and every 4 points thereafter, you deal an additional 1 point of hit point damage. You can use this feat on creatures of the elemental subtype that are normally immune to critical hits.

Discovery: A sealed jade urn holds a series of thin copper plates connected with a ring. The rings depict troglodyte warriors battling various elemental creatures and the techniques used.



RESISTANT SUMMONING [METAMAGIC]

Your summoned creatures have greater vitality

Benefit: Any creatures you summon via a *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* gain damage reduction 1/— for every 4 caster levels you possess. The damage reduction stacks with any damage reduction the creature possesses. A resistant summoning spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

Discovery: A golden troglodyte skull, when touched, begins to speak in Aklo, reciting a technique to empower summoned creatures.

STAUNCH DEFENCE [COMBAT]

You are skilled at resisting combat manoeuvres when fighting defensively.

Prerequisites: base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: When you fight defensively you gain a +1 bonus to your Combat Manoeuvre Defence. Whenever your base attack bonus reaches +4 and every 4 points thereafter, the bonus increases by an additional +1.

Discovery: A fading mural depicts a band of troglodyte warriors standing fast as various elementals seek to overwhelm

TERRIFYING AURA

You create an aura of fear around yourself

Prerequisites: Channel or Life Steal class ability

Benefit: You may expend two uses of your channel ability to create an aura of fear centred on yourself in a 30 ft. radius for a number of rounds equal to the number of dice in your channel ability. Creatures with fewer Hit Dice than you who enter the aura must make a DC Will saving throw equal to 10 + 1/2 your character level + Charisma modifier or become panicked for a number of rounds equal to the number of dice in your channel ability. Creatures with equal or more Hit Dice must make the same saving throw as above or become shaken for a number of rounds as described above. A creature who makes its save is immune to this ability for 24 hours.

This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Discovery: On the shrouded remains of a former troglodyte priest, cuneiform writing describes a hymn invoked to Amon-Pyr to sow terror into one's enemies.

CLASS FEATURES

URSHAK'ENTU (CLERIC)

The priests of Amon-Pyr, the Urshak'entu (Holy Ones), ruled Ssar'targontha with dread powers gifted to them by the demon lord, Amon-Pyr. Wielding blasphemous divine magic, the Ursha'entu offered up countless souls to their demon lord through sacrifice to continue their dark reign.

Summon Spells: An Urshak'entu adds the *summon monster* spells to her spell list (using her cleric level as the wizard level).

Life Steal (Su): At 1st level, an Urshak'entu learns to steal the life force from her enemies for herself. As a standard action, a Urshak'entu can emit a burst within a 30-foot radius centred on herself. The burst deals negative energy damage divided amongst any creatures within the burst. The Urshak'entu receives a number of temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. The temporary hit points last for 1 minute per character level. The number of damage dealt and temporary hit points gained is 1d6 at 1st level and increases by an additional 1d6 every two levels beyond 1st. Urshak'entus often used this ability on slaves to empower themselves before battle. This replaces the channel energy class feature.

SSAR'TARGONTHA BLOODLINE (SORCERER)

The ancient power of Ssar'targontha's troglodytes flows through your veins, tainted with their demonic heritage.

Class Skill: Knowledge (planes)

Bonus Spells: *raking claw** (3rd), *demonic punishment** (5th), *writhing tentacle** (7th), *tentacle breath** (9th), *lesser planar binding*, (11th), *planar binding* (13th), *banishment* (15th), *greater planar binding* (17th), *gate* (19th).

Bloodline Feats: Augment Summoning, Cleave, Combat Casting, Greater Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge [planes]), Power Attack, Resistant Summoning, Toughness.

Bloodline

Arcana: Whenever you cast a spell from the creation subschool, it deals +1 point of damage per die rolled.

Bloodline Powers: You possess some of the powers of the ancient troglodyte priests and their dread master, Amon-Pyr.

Stench (Ex): You give off a foul-smelling musk at all times. Once per day + your Charisma modifier,

you can exude your musk through your pores, giving you the stench monster ability for one round. Its effect last a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your character level plus your Charisma modifier. If you already have a natural stench ability, add 2 to the DC to resist its effects.

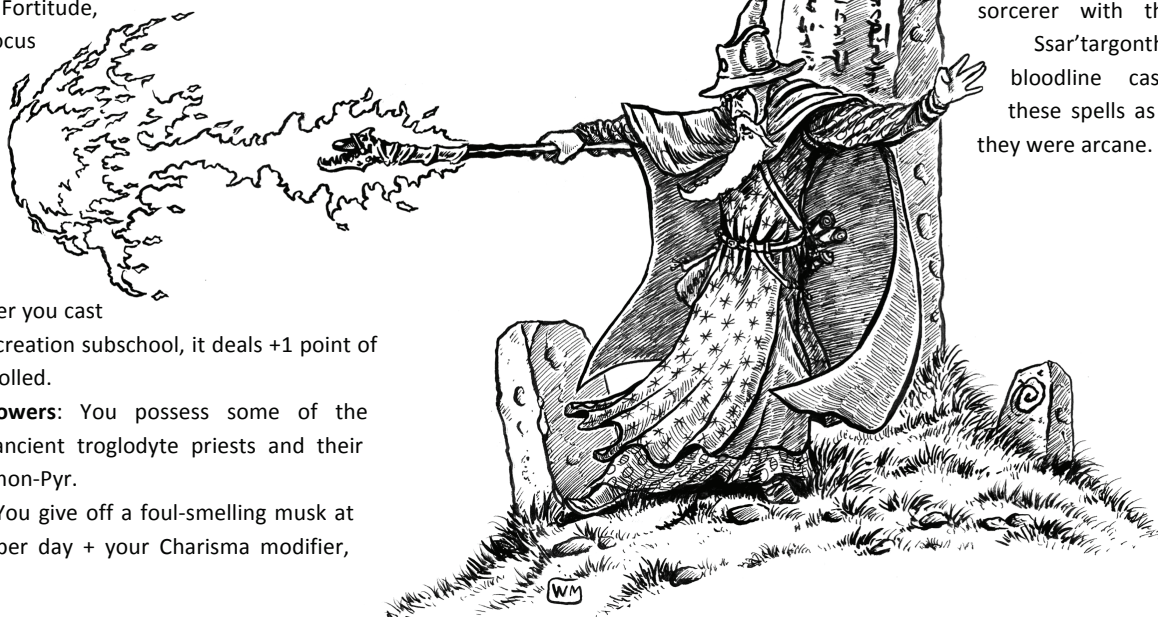
Troglodyte Scales (Ex): At 3rd level, you begin to take on the scaly appearance of the ancient troglodytes, granting you a +2 enhancement bonus to your natural armour. At 7th level and every four levels, thereafter, the bonus increases by +1 (to a maximum +5 at 15th level).

Tentacles (Su): At 9th level, you can grow a tentacle as a free action. The tentacle is treated as your primary natural weapon, allowing you one tentacle attack using your full base attack bonus. These attacks deal 1d6 damage each (1d4 if you are Small) plus your Strength modifier. The tentacle is a considered magic weapon for the purpose of overcoming DR. On a successful attack, you may initiate a grapple as if you had the grab universal monster ability. You can use your tentacle for a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Slime Form (Su): At 15th level, as a free action, you transform your body into an amorphous slime. While in this form, you are not subject to critical hits and flanking and are immune to attacks that deal bleed and/or precision damage. Additionally, you gain immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph and stunning. You can use your slime form for a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Amon-Pyr's Blessing (Su): At 20th level, Amon-Pyr whispers to you words of

*Denotes spells found in this supplement. A sorcerer with the Ssar'targontha bloodline casts these spells as if they were arcane.



NEW TEMPLATE: DEGENERATE CREATURE

Living in a feral state, degenerate creatures dwell in the wild places of the world, scavenging for what they need to survive. Often the survivors of fallen civilisations—such as troglodytes—or those that dwell in isolated places removed from the light of civilisation, they live a simple, primitive existence.

ECOLOGY & SOCIETY

Degenerate creatures live in a state of regressed barbarism. While they may dwell amid the ruins of their fallen civilisation, they have forgotten almost all the higher knowledge possessed by their forebears. Incapable of industry they live as hunter-gatherers and scavengers, taking what they need from the surrounding area.

Normally dwelling in small tribal groups, degenerate creatures often believe in elder, primitive powers shunned by more civilised folk. Normally led by the most physically powerful member of the group, degenerate creatures care nothing for the trappings of civilisation.

Tribal groups of degenerate creatures live where generations of their forebears dwelled. Their lairs are filthy, communal affairs often decorated with crude wall paintings depicting their day-to-day lives.

DEGENERATE TROGLODYTE CR 2 (XP 600)

Dark gray scales cover this emaciated, but muscular humanoid. It has a long tail and large, powerful claws.

CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft.; Perception +2, Sense Motive +2
Speed 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Stealth +4 (+8 in rocky areas)

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; **CMD** 12
(-1 Dex, +8 natural)

Fort +8, **Ref** -1, **Will** +0
hp 15 (2 HD)

Space 5 ft. (stench aura 30 ft.); **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +3

Stench (Ex) All creatures not immune to poison must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be sickened for 10 rounds. Creatures succeeding on the saving throw cannot be affected by the same degenerate troglodyte's stench for 24 hours.

Melee club +3 (1d6+2),
claw -2 (1d6+1) and
bite -2 (1d4+1) or

Melee 2 claws +3 each (1d6+2) and
bite +3 (1d4+2)

Ranged javelin (range 30 ft.) +0 (1d6+2)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9

Feats Alertness^B, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative^B

Skills as above plus Survival +8

Languages Draconic

Gear as above

COMBAT & TACTICS

Degenerate creatures are vicious combatants. Most degenerate creatures use only their natural attacks in combat or crude weapons (such as clubs). A rare few use better weapons scavenged from the bodies of their fallen enemies.

Degenerate creatures with class levels often have levels in barbarian or ranger. Occasionally, they have levels in sorcerer or druid, but clerics, monks and wizards are unknown among them.

CREATING A DEGENERATE CREATURE

“Degenerate” is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A degenerate creature retains all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

CR: Same as the base creature +1 (minimum 1).

Type: The creature's type remains unchanged. Do not recalculate HD, BAB or saves.

Armour Class: The creature's natural armour bonus improves by +2.

Melee: Degenerate creatures gain an enhanced natural attack. In regards to the damage they deal, they treat their primary attack as if they were one size larger than they actually are. If a creature has more than one primary attack, enhance the first such attack listed in its stat block.

Abilities: Str +2, Con +2, Cha -2.

Skills: A degenerate creature gains a +4 racial bonus to Survival checks and always treats Survival as a class skill.

Feats: A degenerate creature gains Alertness and Improved Initiative as bonus feats.

DEGENERATE CREATURE LORE

A character making a Knowledge check (of the type required to identify the base creature) may know some information about a degenerate creature. A successful check reveals all information gained by a lesser check.

DC 10 + creature's CR: This is a degenerate creature. Degenerate creatures have regressed into a more primitive state than their predecessors. More primitive than other creatures of the same ilk, they have forgotten much they once knew, living in a state of barbarism.

DC 15 + creature's CR: Degenerate creatures are stronger than their more civilised brethren and skilled in surviving in harsh conditions. They use only the crudest weapons in battle, but their natural attacks often deal more damage than normal for their size.

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