

DWARVES AND GOBLINS OF TELLENE



By Paul "**Wiggy**" Wade-Williams

Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 3
Hill Dwarves	p. 7
Mountain Dwarves	p. 62
Stone Dwarves	p.94
Half Dwarves	p.122
Dwarves as Player Characters	p.124
Goblins	p.142

Dedicated to: My wife (who again was widowed while I wrote), the Kenzer & Co staff (for another sterling job producing this book), Dave Blewer (a new friend and a true friend), and Auroch, Nighteyes, and Weem (who introduced me to Jago™)

Axe & Anvil

The Dwarves of Tellene

By Paul "Wiggy" Wade-Williams

Introduction

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While the word "dwarf" appears frequently throughout this work, the reader should remember that this book deals with all the dwarven subraces. Which sort of dwarf it refers to depends solely on which section you are reading.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

There cannot be many gamers you have never played a dwarf. These short, sturdy, dour-faced beer-guzzlers and gold-grabbers have graced adventuring parties. Clad in chainmail and carrying a big axe, they are as stereotypical as elves being tree-huggers.

All that is about to change. This book does not go against the grain and try to make dwarves something they are not, did you ever wonder why they had beards, or collected gold and gems? Now you can find out. This book takes a look beneath the surface and explores what makes a dwarf a dwarf and why they hoard precious objects? Now you can find out.

What this book is not, however, is a definitive guide to every dwarven domain on Tellene. Dwarves living in different territories have unique customs, brought about by centuries of contact with other races. There is not the space to detail every single custom and oddity shared by this diverse race. Instead, we present the common view; the base template of all dwarves on Tellene.

Notes: The terms "civilized," "great," and "major races" are used throughout this book and refer to members of the races of humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, halflings, half-orcs who follow their human parentage, hobgoblins, and any half-breeds produced by these races.

What This Section Contains

This section is nothing short of a player's guide to dwarves, providing everything you wanted to know about their culture, as well as providing an in-depth look at playing a dwarf. For those of you interested more in the game mechanics of this race, there are new feats and prestige classes to look through. For others, the wealth of background information will enable them to bring their characters to life in a unique culture.

The dwarf section is broken down into three key chapters, one for each subrace. Certain aspects of all dwarves are very similar. As such, hill dwarves are treated as the base race, with only the differences highlighted in the other chapters. Each chapter is in turn broken down into several sections, covering a single aspect of dwarven daily life.

Section one explores the lengthy and complex history of the dwarven race.

Section two explores the physical and mental make-up of dwarves and half-dwarves.

Section three explains elf social structure, looking at the social structure and the dynamics of government.

Section four details the culture of elves, covering everything from their cycle of life through to their language.

Section five is dedicated to warfare and details unit organization, weapons and armor, and tactics.

Section six expands on the mysteries of dwarven religion, showing how the gods and dwarves interact.

Section seven looks at common misconceptions of dwarves and the truth behind some of the more common beliefs.

History

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But, but, but...

There will be readers of this book that notice discrepancies between what is written here and what is written in the *Kalamar Player's Guide* and the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign Setting*. These discrepancies are unavoidable and where they occur, they are usually in favor of the *Kalamar Player's Guide*, which is based off newer material. For example, the dwarves of Karasta are mountain dwarves, yet the temples listed are those of lowland dwarves.

This sourcebook presents a generic view of the dwarven races and does not claim to represent the view of every dwarf, nor of every settlement, on Tellene. Nothing is definitive, for to do so would limit your creativity and freedom - this is a guidebook on dwarves, not an encyclopedia.

The early history, which took place long before humans arrived, is as much mythology as historical record. It is also based on hill dwarf records, which are more accessible, and therefore heavily biased in favor of their cultural and religious views. Most scholars take the whole matter with a heavy dose of salt.

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Dwarven history is grouped into two separate ages. The Heroic Age, often referred to by others as the Mythological Age, covers events that took place millennia before humans crawled out of their caves. The Historical Age began soon after the mass human migrations to the mainland.

Heroic Age

Dwarven history stretches back to the beginning of time. Much of what is known today comes from the Book of Ages, a mixture of sacred texts and oral traditions that supposedly tell the complete history of the dwarven race. Much of the story is presented as an epic narrative, lacking dates and hard scientific proof. Dwarves do not question the veracity of the tales and scorn those who mock their ancient heritage.

The Creation of the Seven Families

At the heart of dwarven mythology lies the creation. Dwarven history actually begins shortly after the God War, when chaos threatened to engulf the universe. Though they claim to be offspring of the Creator, she was killed by some of her jealous children before she could give them purpose. So it was they huddled in caverns and tunnels deep beneath the earth, unsure of what to do next.

The Founder, who dwarves call *Hildal*, took matters to hand and visited the dwarves along with seven other gods. *Hildal* looked upon the wretched masses and saw that within their spirits lay great promise for an ordered society, one which would grow and prosper and remove chaos from the world. So it was that he lay down his first laws, which bonded the race into a cohesive entity. Despite modern differences, all dwarves hold true to the traditions of their race to some degree. Of course, *Hildal* had no influence in other spheres and so spoke with his companions, asking them to grant boons to the race.

The exact order in which the gods granted their boons varies by subrace, but all agree the race was granted seven gifts. Each gift was bestowed upon one dwarf, who in turn taught others his knowledge. These legendary dwarves became founders of the seven families and their followers took their name as their own in honor of their deeds. For convenience, the gifts are granted in alphabetical order by family name.

Angklin was taught how to shape the rock to create the first architecture. With his skills the dwarves excavated the first realms, moving out of the rough natural caverns into crafted homes, temples, and workshops. Caverns were bridged, pillars supported walls, watercourses diverted, and so on. It is said the Mule bestowed this gift.

Damvalk was gifted with the knowledge of how to turn rock and metal in tools. Clay was transformed into pottery, metal purified and forged into picks and shovels. Later on, he taught the dwarves how to craft weapons and armour with which to smite their foes. The Mother of Elements, in her guise as the Earth Mother, granted this gift.

Gramdal was the first dwarf to encounter goblinoids and orcs. Although he used a pick to smite his foes his greatest weapon was his courage, for dwarves soon learned that the creatures of darkness were timid in comparison. Once he had weapons, Gramdal formed the first armies, though in truth they were disorganized rabble. The Knight of the Gods is the patron of Gramdal.

Gunterm was a close friend of Gramdal and saw that while courage was as important as weapons and armour it was useless against overwhelming hoards. Gifted by the Old Man, Gunterm developed the first tactics and learned secret ways to defeat the foes that would become the racial enemies of the dwarves. He also developed the military ranking and organizational structure that survives to this day.

At some point in their existence dwarves visited the surface and encountered the elves. The Speaker of the Word bestowed on Kerak the gift of diplomacy, and through his efforts the first treaties and trade agreements came into being. Honor became importance to the dwarves, who developed a strong racial pride. The Founder urged the Speaker to prevent chaos and treachery infecting the dwarves to his laws, and so oaths were introduced to dwarves.

The Powermaster gifted Talek the healer. Originally the dwarves were a short-lived race with life spans measured in decades. Realizing that a longer span was required in order for his laws to be remembered and for the new skills to be passed on, the Founder had Powermaster increase their lifespan, though he could not make them immortal. Injury and warfare took their toll on the dwarves and so Powermaster granted a second gift; the gift of medicine.

Lastly, there is Tukurz. In order that they should not be forgotten, and to honor the other gods to whom dwarves would one day turn, the Holy Mother granted the gift of community spirit. Once the dwarves learned to cooperate, they created the first temples and sang prayers of thanks to their benefactors. Tukurz took this unity to heart and actually set about becoming the organizer of the religions, forming the ceremonies and hymns still used today. Modern dwarves stoically ignore the fact he did not use the Holy Mother's gift as she intended.

Despite the poetics of the tale, it would seem more likely dwarves invented this myth much later than is suggested to account for the skills they developed. It is virtually impossible to put a cohesive order to these boons as all are needed virtually simultaneously to form a working culture. The myth also fails to explain why mountain dwarves favor the Eternal Lantern, for example, or why stone dwarves promote the Watcher as a major god. Since there is no god of religion, it is likely the Holy Mother was shoehorned into this role to add to her influence among the races.

Whatever the truth, the seven families became the default family names for virtually all future generations of dwarves (others do exist, but they are considered minor lines) and certain dwarves do exhibit signs of the boons granted by the gods.

The Early Years

As time passed they realized that demand for certain minerals was outstripping supply. The concept of precious metals and stones was developed (over several millennia) and the dwarves finally understood what the Earth Mother meant by "farmers of the earth." To produce more of these minerals they would have to sow new seeds.

Rise & Fall of the Zarduk

Zarduk Magic

A Race Divided

Until this stage in their history dwarves had been a unified race, living in the highest peaks and sharing common ideals. Few dwarves lived near the surface, and although the *adurek* are now considered the standard dwarven subrace, much of this belief extends from their being the most frequently encountered. One should remember that these were still early days in Tellene's history. Humans were unknown, and gnomes and halflings considered new arrivals on the scene. Evil races were numerous and roamed unchecked.

Culturally, dwarves were lawful neutral, following the Founder's laws without much thought as to the consequences of their actions and scraping an existence from day today in small family groups. Despite the best intentions in the world nothing lasts forever. Cracks began to show in the fabric of dwarven society. The process was gradual, but over the eons the dwarven race split into three groups.

Explorers reported discovering a realm where food was more plentiful and foes less scarce and many saw this as the true place dwarves were meant to live. It was not exactly a heavenly realm, but it was a land of plenty compared to their current habitat. After much debate the dwarves reached a decision; those who wanted to leave could do so. So it was they began an exodus lasting centuries. As they tunneled upward they created found new water supplies, mineral veins, and vast caverns of edible fungus.

Messengers were sent down to the original realm, offering those who stayed behind the chance to live a better life. Many refused, claiming that they were living in the land bestowed them by the gods and would stay here no matter what hardships they had to endure. Adherence to tradition at any cost became their watchwords. Those who remained in the deep depths became the *durwalk*.

Higher up, in their new caverns, the dwarven émigrés began to alter their core beliefs. With more food and resources readily available dwarves needed to spend less time trying to gather enough food to survive. They talked with each other, they developed common interests, and they even began to live near each other, sharing resources equally. What began

as small villages grew into townships, with communal facilities available to all. Other townships sprang up close by and the first clans developed, with the eldest patriarch being given noble status. Eventually the towns turned to cities, ruled by a king. Cooperation had replaced strict adherence to tradition and had allowed the realms to expand.

Life was far from ideal, however, as goblinoids and orcs lived in the same region and brooked no rivals. Metal was more plentiful, however, and the dwarves turned to creating vast quantities of new weapons and armor to defend their realms. The war has never ended, but if anything the attacks served to bond the dwarves closer together and they developed standing armies and a greater sense of community spirit.

Yet not all were happy. Many demanded a more orderly society in keeping with tradition, while simultaneously accepting that cooperation was a good thing. After centuries of trying to introduce change without success a second exodus began. New homes were excavated on what was later realized to be the foothills of mountains, for dwarves had yet to breach the surface and meet the other races.

The new dwarves organized their culture around the ancient traditions, dividing the social classes into narrower bands and living by the laws rather than with the laws. Power was placed in the hands of the elite as the Founder intended but all dwarves were considered equal in the eyes of the law. So it was the third dwarven race, the *adurek*, came into being.

Overall the splits produced no dissention between the dwarves. Each held tightly to their new beliefs but accepted their kin as they always had. Contact remained strong and new alliances arose. Trade between the near surface realms and the underearth continued, though new ideas were seldom swapped. Despite being dwarves carved from the same stone, they once unified race had become three unique subraces.

Many scholars believe this tale is based on actual migrations and consider it the first historical fact in dwarven mythology. Differences in the creation myths, they propose, came about long after the migrations, when each race sought to give its migration meaning and acceptance in the eyes of the gods.

Hill Dwarves

Anatomy

"Of course I like dwarves. They're a little tough, but they roast well."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

When thinking of dwarves, few people ever get past the usual description of short, stout, and bearded. Dwarves are more than just their external appearance. The same applies to their psychology makeup, which is far more complex than a love of strong drink and precious metals.

The dwarven name for members of the hill dwarf race is *adurek*, which translates loosely as "born of stone." In days of old, people took this to literally mean the dwarves were born from stone, making them a sort of golem. Of course, this is utter nonsense. In truth, the name refers to the properties of stone—tough, resolute, and unshakeable—as well as their adherence to the old ways. Like stone, hill dwarves are unchanging, weathering all attacks on their cultural heritage. Humans invented the term "lowland dwarves" to distinguish the *adurek* from their cousins, the mountain dwarves.

Physiology

An average male hill dwarf stands 4 to 4 1/2 feet tall and weighs in the region of 160 pounds. Females tend to be a few inches shorter and as much as 50 pounds lighter. Both sexes are broad shouldered, barrel-chested, and compact. Although dwarves look physically stronger than humans, their muscles are no more powerful. As noted, dwarves come in two sexes, though few races have ever met a dwarf female. Well, this is not exactly true, and the reason behind the myth that dwarves have no females can be found in the section on *Beards*.

Dwarven skin is invariably brown, though actual tone differs greatly. Unlike their rock gnome cousins, dwarven skin tones do not alter greatly with age, though the texture becomes more leathery and rougher over time. In rare cases the skin can become as tough as leather, though this usually points to stone dwarf blood somewhere in the family tree.

Dwarves possess two eyes, which are usually brown in color, though as with skin the exact shade can vary. The eyes have a larger pupil than those of humans, which allows them to see in poor lighting. Indeed, hill dwarves are capable of seeing in zero light conditions, though such vision is monochrome. Modern dwarves rarely live in total dark conditions, preferring at least a minimal level of light as a mark of civility.

Despite rumors of them possessing special vision, their ability to detect changes in natural rock surfaces is not supernatural. It is a combination of education in geology and stone working combined with a sixth sense about unusual stonework. Even the most dim-witted fighter can detect stone traps and false stonework with an unerring degree of skill. Their ability to estimate depth underground, once thought a supernatural power, is nothing more than an understanding of geological strata and sensitivity to subtle changes in pressure.

Both sexes have bodily hair. Black and shades of brown are extremely common, though facial hair tends to gray as the dwarf ages. Contrary to rumor, only male dwarves grow beards. A fuller description of beards is given elsewhere. Head hair tends to be worn long, though both sexes braid their hair to keep it tidy. Eyebrows are usual quite long and developed as a means of keeping dust, stone chippings, and sparks out of their eyes.

Speed is not a dwarven trait and though not much shorter than some human races, dwarves walk at a pace similar to halflings and gnomes. Though slower than humans, their greater endurance means they can travel for longer periods and cope better in rough terrain. Though not bow-legged, dwarves tend to stand with their feet apart and their weight spread evenly. This improves balance, vitally important when exploring caverns, and makes them harder to knock over or push back, which has proven handy when faced with hordes of goblins and kobolds trying to overwhelm their lines.

Many races joke that dwarves swim like rocks, but nothing could be further from the truth. Many underground rivers and flooded chambers exist beneath the earth, and dwarven explorers have to overcome such obstacles if they are to locate precious mineral veins. They can hold their breath longer than humans, but also use clever devices to extend their duration underwater, such as animal bladders filled with air.

The phrase describing someone as having "the constitution of a dwarf" is a truism. Life underground is hard, not just because of the intense labor required to carve out a city but also because of poisonous gases and bad air. Some foods are also edible to dwarves but not to other races, who suffer mild poisoning from eating such delicacies.

Dwarven resistance to magic is a common talking point in taverns. Although dwarves do not use much arcane magic, they have tough bodies, strong minds, and were around when magic was more commonplace. In actuality, dwarves are not resistant to magic, just better at coping with the effects.

Dwarves age slower than humans, but not as slowly as the long-lived elves. Adulthood is reached around 40 years of age, and dwarves can live as long as four centuries, baring premature death from accident or warfare. Approximate age is relatively easy to deduce based on skin, hair color, and beard length, though few races understand the significance of the latter.

Psychology

Adurek are generally considered to be surly and ill-tempered, yet they are the most open of the dwarven subraces. They are naturally suspicious of strangers, having learned from past experiences that humans especially value gold more than friendship. Early encounters with goblinoids, whom the first dwarves originally thought potential allies, have also soured their demeanor.

The rigors of life below ground have also tempered their sense of humor, and dwarves are slow to laugh or jest. This is not to say they do not enjoy a good joke, but their mind is usually on other matters, such as work quotas, forthcoming raids, and such like. Perry frivolity is often replaced by singing and dancing, but rather than just recreational activities these are an important part of their culture and religion.

Though it takes many years for a dwarf to accept a non-dwarf as a friend, their generosity to such companions is nearly limitless. As well as gifts of precious metals and worked items, they also extend the hand of hospitality, even allowing non-dwarves to partake in a few religious practices. Such individuals, known as *bedervenn* ("honored friends") are treated as dwarves by their dwarven host, who will defend their rights as quickly as he would a member of his own family.

To break the bond of friendship is seen as dishonorable, and dwarves place great value on honor, as they do making oaths. To a hill dwarf, his friendship and his word are indisputable truths, and if mocked even the most kind-hearted dwarf can become vengeful to an extreme not found in other civilized races. Blood feuds, bitter disputes between dwarven families, are an accepted part of dwarven life, but they can extend to non-dwarves as well. Blood feuds are further described in the section on *Law and Order*.

Courage and tenacity are tied into the honor system, and cowardice is seen as a sign of spiritual weakness. Dwarves are not suicidal, but they do fight battles other races would consider lost causes. More often than not, the dwarves win out, but the cost in terms of lives can make even the sweetest victory taste bitter.

Tied in to this is the dwarven lack of spontaneity. Their traditions are millennia old and few individuals have the desire to break with tradition, even at the cost of their own life. This is not a stubbornness born out of laziness or complacency, but out of a deep religious belief that change is bad. Order promotes strength and unity, and new ideas are seen as dangerous to the stability of the race. New inventions are rarely spontaneous ideas fuelled by a sudden burst of imagination, but from a long series of slow tests and alterations. Indeed, dwarves have poor imaginations and stick to tried and tested principals, even in their artwork and stories.

Dwarves are renowned for their love of gold, jewelry, and raw precious metals and stones. To many it is simple greed, but the truth lies much deeper. Back in the days of yore, dwarves were seen as farmers of the earth, reaping precious metals and stones, but also ensuring their continued existence through lengthy rituals, effectively resowing the seeds that would transform into more precious minerals. Their love of precious metals was not materialistic in the sense of wealth, but in the sense of beauty and awe such works produced. To dwarves, the value of an object is in its crafting, not its intrinsic value.

Originally, dwarves held onto much of Tellene's mineral wealth, for elves traded with dwarves and did not mine the earth. When the other races evolved, they began mining the earth for metal to use in coins and weapons. Goblinoids especially exploited the great gift of metal, tearing great gouges in the earth to rob it of the bounty beneath. The dwarven clerics foretold a time when the earth would run out of wealth, which would leave the dwarves without purpose. Rather than let this happen, the dwarves vowed to begin hoarding as much metal, ore, and precious stones as they could acquire for the purpose of reseeding the earth. To this day the practice continues, and metal and gems are stored away in reparation for the next resowing.

This desire to limit the amount of metal in circulation also explains their apparent reluctance to pay a fair price for anything. Selling high means you receive more coins and buying low means you give fewer away. While it makes perfect business sense to any merchant, it also slowly takes away metal coins from the races and delivers them back where they belong; in the hands of the earth farmers.

Some dwarves become fixated with gathering wealth for its own sake, succumbing to a form of madness known as *kelbeger* ("gold lust"), from which there is no cure. Some say this madness is a curse laid upon the race by the Jealous Eye, others insist the race has lost its way.

Hill dwarves despise goblinoids and orcs, who they view as destructive, dishonorable, cowardly, and greedy. In short, everything dwarves are not. Near-constant warfare against these races has seen the great dwarven kingdoms decline in stature over the centuries, as the faster breeding foes drain valuable resources. No mercy is shown to these foes, who dwarves consider barely sentient.

Social Structure

"Dwarves only have eight family names? Doesn't that limit marriage options?"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Dwarven society is less flexible than that of many races. Every dwarf, male or female, has his place and is expected to work for the betterment of the race in accordance with the law. Promotion is slow, requiring many years of hard work, though not without its rewards. Crafters can become master crafters, fighters can become courage nobles, and even the lowliest miner can work his way up the ladder to become a foreman or supervisor.

Despite the rigid structure designed to promote group unity and wealth, dwarven loyalties lie first with direct family, then blood relatives, then clan, and finally kingdom. Of course, each unit is a cog in a much larger machine, but to dwarves, loyalty begins firmly at home, among those a dwarf trusts most.

The family is the smallest unit and comprises those related to the dwarf by close blood ties, such as his parents, his offspring, and their offspring. Spouses may or not be treated as family, depending on the type of marriage. A fuller description of marriage types can be found in the section on *Cycle of Life*. One step up from family are blood relatives, such as uncles, aunts and cousins. These close relatives are known as *urslekt* ("blood kin"), and while important, are not as important as direct family.

Beyond the blood kin is the clan. Formed from families bonded by vows of loyalty and honor, it is a socio-political unit, led by a blood noble. Dwarves only use a few family names (as detailed in *Naming*), but sharing a family name does not necessarily imply any direct connection more recent than a few millennia ago. It is a common misconception that because dwarves share a familial name they hold any strong allegiance to each other.

Families may switch clans simply by declaring themselves removed from their original clan and sworn to another. Transferring loyalty because of monetary gain is seen as abominable, but usually results from jealousy rather than any religious or social reason.

Lastly, there is the kingdom, formed from many clans answering to a sole ruler. Kingdoms vary in size and power and again, there is nothing to stop an entire clan changing allegiance and moving elsewhere. Such changes are rare, however, and the last recorded incident of a clan switching king was centuries ago.

A dwarven clan typically numbers around 500 adults, divided into as many as one hundred families. With a clan, nobles account for some 1%, master crafters 5%, clergy 5%, warriors 20%, crafters 25%, and workers 42%. The last 2% are comprised of dwarves not fitting into the typical categories, such as rogues or wizards. The percentage for warriors is for professional soldiers, for in times of war the militia, made up of all able bodied males, gathers to fight.

Females make up one third of the numbers, but may hold any post. Traditionally they were left at home to look after the children, but for the last millennia they have enjoyed much more freedom. Sadly, the truth behind this does not stem from any sense of equality, but from a shortage of males due to deaths in combat. Children add a further 25% to the clan's strength.

Blood Nobles & Royalty

At the top of the food chain are the blood, or hereditary, nobles, the *jernberre* ("iron lords"). Their right to rule was established during the earliest days of dwarves and, in most cases, remains unbroken through successive generations. As one might expect, succession is passed from father to eldest son, or daughter when there are no sons.

Topping the list are the kings, or *jerngan* ("iron crowns"). Though few in number these days, there were once dozens of dwarven kingdoms, their domains stretching across Tellene like a chain of fortresses beneath the surface. Today, there are but a handful, and most of these are weakened through countless centuries of attrition at the hands of goblinoids. The days of the great kingdoms are but a distant memory, lamented in folk song.

Next come the king's children, who human title princes. The dwarven term, *engan*, applies to both sexes and means "little crown." They hold power in their own right, usually as a clan leader within the kingdom. A few, however, have branched out to form their own territories. By tradition, no prince (or princess) can adopt the title *jerngan* while their father still lives, out of respect and because they are honor bound to serve him as their liege. When the king dies, younger children have the right to leave the kingdom, adopt a kingly title for themselves, and start afresh. Few choose to do so, for a king without a powerful kingdom is a wretch indeed.

Below the royal princes are the *adugan*, or "stone crowns," who humans call dukes or counts. Serving as clan heads under a king, or in many cases these days as rightful ruler of a domain, the *adugan* are both military and political leaders, expected to govern their followers from the front. When subservient to a king, they form the noble council.

Since the great kingdoms fell, many *adugan* have found themselves ruling large clans without a king. They had become de facto rulers, though could not assume the title out of tradition. Instead, they created a new set of lesser hereditary nobles, the *nygan* ("new crowns"), or barons, who serve as the heads of smaller clans. No new *nygan* have been created in several centuries, for the dwarven kingdoms that remain are strong and unlikely to fall soon.

Courage Nobles

Courage nobles are the military commanders of a clan and are granted their title by their lord. Unlike hereditary nobles, the title does not pass to children, but reverts back to the bestower, who may hand it out as he sees fit on the death of the holder. The family loses its status, though there is no shame in this, and reverts back to its original standing.

The position comes with several key benefits, including the right to have an entourage of bodyguards, which form the key element of the clan's permanent army. Indeed, it is a rare warrior who is not attached to a noble household. Courage nobles inherit one or more mines, which are theirs to do with as they please so long as they hold the title. A portion of the income, variable depending on the status of the individual, is kept to pay his retinue, while the rest goes to the central coffers. A typical courage noble can expect to keep around a fifth of the income. Courage nobles may fly their own standard, hold their own court, and dispense justice among their followers as they see fit. Lastly, they have the right to sit on the Military Council.

It is important to note that courage nobles do not lead a clan. They control a portion of the military within a clan. Small clans may have just one or two nobles, whereas the largest clans may have a score or more. Their first loyalty is expected to be to their clan leader, then the king (if one exists).

The dwarven term for courage nobles, *kilgan*, literally means "sword crown." Children of these leaders have no title, but receive an elevated social standing while their parent rules.

Master Crafters

Below the courage nobles are the master crafters, whose skill distinguishes them from the bulk of the crafter class. One cannot be born a master crafter; one must achieve the position through hard work and recognition of one's social superiors. As with courage nobles, the position is not hereditary, though most fathers ensure at least one child follows in their footsteps and adopts the family craft.

Known individual as a *zedgan* ("guild crown"), they control the activity of the appropriate guild within the clan. In this respect, they are in charge of financial transaction, setting trading policy, quality assurance, dealing with industrial disputes, and such like. Most have secretaries, paid for out of guild membership.

Every master crafter sits on the guild council. Within a kingdom, there may be several master crafters from the same guild, each belonging to a different clan. In a kingless domain, only one member per craft is allowed to hold the title. Competition is fierce, for a master crafter has the ear of his lord and plays a direct role in the governing of the clan. By law, they are also entitled to take a few percent of the guild's income as a stipend, on top of their own salary.

The stipend is supposedly to pay for the master's services on guild business, when he would lose income from his own workshop. Many see it as a perk, however, especially those belonging to powerful guilds, whose income is a small fortune.

Clergy & Scholars

Next are the priests, or the *drosgol* ("mouthpieces"). They are the first of the traditional social classes, based on occupation rather than merit. Dwarves do not have many adepts or shamans, and as such clerics are the only members of this caste. Social status is bestowed on the individual, his spouse, and children until they reach adulthood. A priest may hold this rank while his father is a lowly miner.

In theory all clerics are equal, with their exact status defined by their religious rank and applicable only to that particular faith. In reality, the clan's leaders accord the priests of the four main gods, the Founder, the Speaker of the Word, the True, and the Powermaster, extra favors.

The high priest of each religion within a kingdom sits on the Religious Council. In smaller domains, where a high priest may not be available, the highest-ranking priest assumes the seat. When two clerics of the same faith are of equal rank, it is left to the clan leader to decide who sits on the council. Nepotism is actually rare among dwarves, who believe that individual merit is stronger than blood. Of course, few would dare say this in front of a blood noble.

Scholars, or *thordros* ("old tongues") in Dwarven, are grouped with in the same asocial class as clerics. Dwarves can write, indeed, their language is extremely ancient, but oral traditions are preferred for remembering religious texts, historical deeds, and lineage. Scholars do not receive this social class because they can read (most dwarves are literate), but because they can recall lengthy texts from memory. Though bards use arcane magic, dwarves group them with scholars, and indeed rank them the highest of the scholarly professions.

Warriors

Below the clergy are the warriors of the clan. Although every dwarf male is expected to serve in the militia, only professional soldiers, those who serve a noble, belong here. The generic term for a professional warrior, *preg adurek* ("banner man") should not be confused with the word for the warrior NPC class, *fem adurek* ("arms man"). In return for their loyalty,

professional warriors receive free food and accommodation, a monthly stipend of 5 gp per level, and, above all respect from other dwarves, whose safety rests in their hands.

Fighters make up around 80% of this class, most serving as infantrymen. Their life is one of constant training, patrols, and battles, though it is not without its rewards. A brave and skilled fighter can become a courage noble, and a leader in his own right. Fighters spend around six hours each day training, practicing both weapon use and tactics in a series of simulated environments. Once dwarves were an offensive race, taking war to the orcs and goblinoids they hate so much, but in recent times their attitude has changed to one of defense and consolidation.

Though most fighters serve a noble, those of strong faith can find employment as temple guards. Only the largest temples can afford to hire full-time soldiers, and most make do with a small squad loaned by the ranking noble. Professional religious soldiers serve their faith before their clan lord, but few priests would deny their lord the use of their services when required.

Most non-dwarves see rangers as woodsy types, not suited to dwarven realms. For the most part this is true, but rangers do exist among dwarves. Though they are often deployed as missile troops or skirmishers, their primary role is to maintain vigil in the lowest levels of the domain, where the lack of carved tunnels makes formation fighting difficult. Many serve as explorers, mapping out new cave systems ready for construction crews and determining the extent of enemy activity in the region.

Once the enemy's boundaries are determined, the infiltrators go to work. Dwarven infiltrators serve two roles; the first is to construct traps along the border to deter goblinoid incursions, the second is to explore beyond the clan's domain, gathering intelligence on enemy numbers, current activity, and, more importantly, the location of traps and hidden barracks. In pitched battles, infiltrators are used as assassins, taking down enemy commanders in order to weaken morale.

The elite warriors of the clan, the *tenokthan* ("boar warriors") are a remnant of the old days. Trained to fight as a unit, their sole purpose is to drive a wedge through enemy lines, so opening up channels for other warriors to exploit. Membership is highly prized, for these brave souls are well rewarded for their skill and bravery, receiving 100 gp per month from their liege. Because of this expense, few nobles except kings can afford to maintain a full-strength unit, though lesser nobles may keep a handful in their retinue to spearhead attacks.

At the heart of any defense are the *hival*, or "defenders." Trained to maintain the line at all costs, these stouthearted individuals are placed along the shieldwall to maintain discipline and set an example to lesser warriors. Most clans lack the strength to muster more than a handful of such individuals. In many respects they are suicide troops, for they know that when called upon to form a single unit they are all that stand between victory and defeat.

A special form of warriors are the templars, or *fulkaft* ("sacred spears"). Rather than answer to a noble, they take orders from the senior cleric of their faith and serve as his bodyguard. Usually too few in number to form an effective military unit, they can be sent into battle with clerics of their faith or to form part of larger units under the command of a noble.

As with rock gnomes, hill dwarves maintain a militia (*adomkaft*, "gathered spears") to assist the warriors in times of great need. Every male of fighting age, typically viewed as 40 to 160, is expected to fight, regardless of his social rank. Special dispensation is given to certain individuals, whose skills are more useful behind the frontlines, such as healers, weaponsmiths, armorers, and so forth. Females may join the militia, but such eagerness to fight is frowned upon. Old habits die hard, and most dwarves view fighting as male territory.

All males are required by law to own a suit of armor, a shield, and at least two weapons. No stipulation on exact types of equipment is listed, so poorer dwarves often make do with leather, bucklers, and spears. Regardless of equipment, the militia is drawn up in large, massed ranked formations under the command of their clan lord.

Because the militia train with regular soldiers, training takes place in rotation. The population is divided into quarters drawn from a record of forearms listed alphabetically. Each squad trains once every month, usually on Godsdag, which is a public holiday. Unlike rock gnomes, dwarves take their militia duties seriously, for the threat of destruction at the hands of goblinoids is very real, and most dwarves have relatives somewhere across Tellene who have suffered at their hands.

The section on *Warfare* details the weapons, armor, and tactics of these fighters.

Crafters

The generic term *kezak* ("shaper") covers any profession that actually produces a tangible, sellable product from raw materials. As well as the regular crafts, such as leatherworkers and armorers, jewelers and sculptors, the class also includes more esoteric trades, such as alchemists and wizards who produce magic items, and rogues who specialize in trapmaking.

To become a crafter, a dwarf must pass his apprenticeship. He need not own his own workshop, for many guilds have formed collective workshops to up production and cut down on overheads. Recognition as a crafter requires a practical test and the agreement of the guildmaster that the apprentice has reached the necessary standard. Apprenticeships can last many years. Most clans specialize in just one or two crafts, though there are small numbers of other crafts. Clans apprentice some of their young to other clans, a practice that helps foster unity.

Every crafter within a clan belongs to a guild. Guilds act as a form of safety net, giving crafters protection from nobles. In return for a monthly fee, usually a few gold pieces, crafters receive access to legal council, receive money if unable to work through injury, pay toward a benevolent fund in case they die in an accident, and, of course, receive a license to trade. Every crafter has the right to bring concerns to his guildmaster, who is honor bound to act on them.

It should be noted that dwarves do not have a separate merchant class. Although they do conduct trade, merchants do not actually produce anything and therefore rank among the masses.

The Masses

The masses, or *thekog* ("unskilled"), are something of a misnomer. The term covers everything from miners, who are undoubtedly skilled at their work, to apprentices who have yet to learn a trade to entertainers. In reality, the term applies to dwarves who do not belong to a guild and who do not craft objects.

As such, the *thekog* have no guild protection and work directly for a noble. Miners, who form the bulk of the class, are paid a monthly wage, but the noble owns the stone, metal, or gems they produce. He sells the raw mineral to the guilds, from where the workers are paid. Miners are paid based on the amount of mineral they excavate, and a god worker can earn almost as much as a low-ranking crafter. Most live on the breadline, however. Accidents are common, but most nobles pay a minimum wage to the injured party while he is off work. Widows can expect to receive a single payment equivalent to a year's wage to cover funeral expenses and allow her to survive until a relative takes her in or she remarries.

Merchants are a special case within the *thekog*. Dwarves view merchants as a necessary evil, earning a living off someone else's hard work. Merchants do not belong to guilds, but are freelancers, transporting cargoes as required in return for a nominal fee (usually a few percent of the cargo's base value). Crafters are happy to pay for this service, as being away from their workshop on trading missions means no new goods are being manufactured, and trading, especially overland, is not without risks. Bandits and goblinoids are a constant threat, though the clan noble provides security for a fee.

Outsiders

Placed under the blanket title *dagterak* ("those who do not fit"), many professions are considered strange to dwarves. Like gnomes, dwarves consider these professions to be outside their social system rather than at the bottom. Arcane spellcasters, barbarians, non-productive rogues, and adepts all fall into this category.

Classes

"Dwarves are predominantly crafters and warriors, what I like to call makers and breakers."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Adept

Dwarves generally mistrust adepts, with their combination of primitive magic, stage tricks, and hocus-pocus rituals. As the dwarven saying goes, "If a dwarf has faith let him be a cleric; if he has sorcerous blood let him sing." Isolated communities, or those whose domains have suffered devastation at the hands of enemies, often lose faith in the gods and fall back to older ways. Adepts are referred to as *bulbetro* ("hollow faith").

Aristocrat

Few except blood nobles are members of this class, though courage nobles often take a level or two to learn how to act in polite society. As an exception to the rule, courage nobles may multiclass as aristocrats after first level, though their aristocrat level may never exceed half the level of their main class (rounded down). Most nobles learn a more adventurous profession, typically fighter, as they are expected to lead from the front. There is no general term for this class and individual noble titles are used instead.

Barbarian

With their strict codes of laws and centuries of tradition behind them, few dwarves voluntarily opt to become a barbarian, for to do so would mean turning their back on their heritage. Those that do invariably hail from domains fallen into barbarity from constant war against goblinoids. Though undoubtedly powerful combatants, barbarians fight better alone than in massed ranks, which dwarves prefer. Barbarians are referred to as *raserieks* ("furious blades").

Bard

As noted above, bards are one of the few arcane spellcasters accepted by dwarven society as a whole. Dwarven bards are more than just petty thieves and spellcasters; they are learned scholars who put the acquisition of knowledge before thievery.

In game terms, a bardic character should devote at least half his spell slots and skills to social or divinatory specialties. Still, actual bards are uncommon and each clan has only a handful at its disposal. Bards are called *dyktigsprak* ("clever tongues").

Basiran Dancer

Aside from their dislike of arcane spellcasters, dwarves avoid this class simply because they lack the grace and elegance it requires. Those that opt to follow the profession are treated as odd by fellow dwarves and must endure the ridicule of other races, who see their ungainly dances as rather primitive and comical. Dwarves do appreciate the skill of Basiran Dancers, but not among their own species. The dwarven term for a Basiran Dancer, *snurreseil*, literally means "one who whirls and glides."

Brigand

Few dwarves voluntarily opt to become brigands, for but some it is the only way of life possible. Since dwarves place great weight on familial ties and the bonds of kinship, being outcast from one's clan is a serious matter, and usually reserved for the most heinous crimes. With nowhere else to go, banditry is often the only course open. Of course, not all brigands are outcasts. Many exiles from Karasta follow their path, waging a guerilla war on the Kalamarans, whereas others are the survivors of domains overrun by goblinoids. The dwarven word for a brigand depends on the circumstances. Outcasts are called *gelender* ("severed hands"), whereas refugees and exiles are known as *telsethan* ("homeless warriors").

Cleric

Dwarven religious faith runs deep and strong, having developed over countless millennia. While a few clerics have devoted their lives to chaotic, neutral, or evil gods, most follow the gods of law with a strong leaning toward good before neutrality. Militant clerics are not unusual and even courage nobles have risen from this class. The name of the class, *drosgol*, derives from their position as the spokesdwarves of the gods on earth.

Commoner

Farmers, shopkeepers, builders, and miners all belong to the commoner class. As stated before, these workers do not produce anything from raw materials (though farmers have tried unsuccessfully to appeal against their position for countless centuries) and so differ from crafters. Dwarves do not practice feudalism in the same way as certain humans, and all dwarves are considered freemen with rights and privileges. Even the lowliest peasant may approach his lord without fear of being rebuked. As stated before, the term for this class in general is *thekog*.

Druid

While dwarves respect nature, they lean heavily toward stone and metal rather than plants and animals. As such, dwarven druids are rare and something of an oddity. Most blame too much time spent above ground as the common cause of druidism, which they liken to a mental illness. While considered wise, few dwarves have much interest in flora and fauna. Druids are known as *fargedros* ("green tongues"), though the term *alfrvenn* ("elf friends") is sometimes used in a derogatory fashion.

Expert

Most experts fall into two clear brackets; crafters and scholars. The former produce finished goods from raw materials, whereas the latter are master of lore, whether that is history or politics, law or anatomical research. As mentioned earlier, dwarves place great respect on oral tradition, even though they can write. Crafters are called *kezak*, whereas scholars receive the title *thordros* ("old tongues").

Fighter

The favored class of hill dwarves across Tellene is the fighter. Whether elite boar warrior, infantryman armed with axe and shield, or crossbowman, fighters are the professional soldiers of the dwarven domains and the backbone of their defense. Approximately one in five male dwarves are fighters. While the term *preg adurek* covers members of the warrior social class, members of the character class are called *mankil* ("bonded swords").

Gladiator

Within their own society, professional gladiators are unusual and treated as entertainers. Why a dwarf would choose to fight for sport rather than serve a lord is beyond most dwarves to reason. As such, gladiators receive little praise for their skills and are often referred to as cowards behind their backs. Among non-dwarves, they are famed for their stalwart fighting style and skill, if not their elegance and showmanship. Millennia of warfare have taught dwarves to end fights quickly before the enemy can bring reinforcements. Gladiators are referred to as *wisthan* ("show warriors").

Infiltrator

As mentioned above, dwarven infiltrators are used as long-range scouts, saboteurs, and assassins. Their referred environment is underground, where their dwarven heritage and infiltrator training combine to make them deadly opponents. When not working on a combat mission, most are used to explore new cavern systems, where their survival training comes in handy. The dwarven word for an infiltrator, *kamadam*, literally means "one who lives as a rock."

Monk

Dwarves possess the lawful attitude required of monks, but find the entire concept alien. Their culture allows little time for quiet meditation and few professions allow enough time for the training required. In addition, most dwarves laugh at the idea of forgoing armor and heavy weapons in lieu of bodily weapons. Monks also put their strongest loyalty to their monastery or mentor, which goes against the dwarf principal of "family first." Dwarves call monks *slortthan*, which loose translates as "unarmored warrior."

Paladin

Paladins are not as common as one might think. While they require a lawful good alignment, something dwarves naturally practice, a paladin's first loyalty is to his faith, not his family. Few dwarves have ever managed to completely break familial ties, except when outlawed (which naturally precludes paladinhood as the outcast is a convicted criminal). Dwarven paladins are fiercely loyal and devout, but may find themselves torn between serving god and family. Paladins are referred to as *mankthan* ("oath warriors").

Psions

Psionics is not unknown among dwarves, but the race has yet to decide if the power is spiritual or arcane. For the most part psionics are treated with respect, if a little curiosity, and allowed to do their own thing so long as no one gets hurt. Due to their martial nature, dwarves favor the psychic warrior class over others. Regardless of their powers, all psionics are known as *nedfalos*, or "will workers."

Ranger

Rangers, like fighters, belong to the warrior social class. Trained to fight underground, they are experts at close quarter fighting, ambushes, and concealment. In addition, their training in geography, dungeoneering, rope use, and survival allows them to operate far from supply lines for extended periods, exploring vast networks of natural, and in some cases not so natural, caverns. The name for rangers, *sniike*, is derived from the phrase "one who walks in darkness" and alludes to their propensity for spending long months without ever seeing the sun.

Rogue

Even in the most lawful society there are rogues and thieves. Dwarven thieves have a recognized guild in each domain, but the guildmaster never takes his seat on the council, for to do so would result in immediate arrest. As such, the position is honorary. Rogues accepted by society are those that specialize in a more honest aspect of the trade, such as locksmiths and trapmakers. Rogues with a criminal bent are called *forbryt* (literally "lawbreakers"), whereas crafter-rogues receive the same title as crafters.

Shaman

Dwarves view the gods as a vital part of their society and brook no place for spirits. Dwarves do refer to stones and metals as possessing spirits, but usually mean their particular characteristics rather than an actual entity. Those few who opt to follow spirits, even those of the earth, are seen as natural magicians, able to use the harmonies within rocks and metals to produce magical effects. Their peculiar ceremonies are viewed as odd, but dwarves do not see shamans as anything than arcane spellcasters, despite the latter's arguments. Shamans are known as *adusprike*, or "stone talkers."

Sorcerer

While sorcery can occur in any race, it seems to give dwarves a wider birth. Fewer than one in a thousand are born with the gift, and only a tiny fraction actually takes up sorcerous training. As such, sorcerers are rarer than paper swords, as the dwarven saying goes. Even those that are trained are rarely welcomed in dwarven society, for sorcerers, and arcane other spellcasters, were declared anathema long ago. The term *forurs* ("foul blood") aptly sums up dwarven views on those with Zarduk's blood in their veins.

Spellsinger

Those dwarves born with sorcerous blood have a surprising talent for spellsinging. Whereas elves and gnomes sing in higher pitches, dwarves produce a notably baritone rumbling. Many dwarven spellsingers prefer to work together, forming a sort of arcane choir. Dwarves claim that through group harmonies they can produce more powerful effects, but few others believe such tales. Spellsingers can achieve recognition as entertainers, though most consider this a rather demeaning position. Dwarves call spellsingers *gasomsprik*, which means "magical voices."

Warrior

Few professional soldiers follow the warrior class. Virtually every male dwarf has at least one or two levels in this class from his militia training. Because they serve as part time warriors, they receive the name *fem adurek* ("arms man"), which implies that while they carry weapons, they do not serve a lord as a soldier.

Wizard

Wizards, like sorcerors, are rarities in dwarven society. While they have the temperament and capacity to learn magic, their society does not place any value on such matters. Those dwarves that take up the spellbook are trained in foreign lands but may find a place in their own culture if they use their arts to produce magic items. These wizards are referred to as crafters and, so long as their magic is kept to creation rather than destruction, they are tolerated. Standard wizards are called *astopra* ("book casters"), in reference to their need for a spellbook.

Government

"Every great machine needs small cogs."

Traditional hill dwarf saying.

Lawful Good Society

As a whole, dwarves lean heavily toward lawful good alignment. Some gamers see lawful good as highly restrictive and good only for paladins and certain clerics. Let us take a few minutes to discuss what lawful good alignment, both individually and culturally, means to a dwarf.

The *Player's Handbook* says that a lawful good character "tells the truth, keeps her word, helps those in need, and speaks out against injustice." What could be more virtuous in any race than these traits? Let us not forget that alignment is also subjective. Dwarves treat each other, and most civilized races, differently to evil races. There are also degrees of honesty and help that allow lawful good characters chance to escape honor traps.

Dwarves do place great weight on spoken words and oaths, considering them to be binding in the eyes of the gods. An oath breaker ranks among the worst kind of criminal, for his actions taint his entire family and shame his ancestors. When a dwarf swears an oath he invariably means what he says. What is most important is what he actually says. Oaths can be worded to exclude certain circumstances without making them invalid. Warriors swear to serve a lord, but not to lay down their lives on his whim. In return, he offers them food and accommodation appropriate to their station. He does not go around giving away magical weapons to all and sundry.

In keeping with the honest nature, dwarves do not seek to lie or bend the spirit of oaths. Whereas a human may soften the blow of bad news to his lord, perhaps fearing for his life, a dwarf tells it as it is. A dwarf may lie to a member of another race, but does so only under extreme circumstances, and usually when such information would be to the detriment of himself or his race. A dwarven thief caught stealing, for example, would likely admit his guilt, but he would never reveal the location of his thieves' guild if he took an oath never to betray his fellows. It may be a thin line, but it can be walked.

The other alternative to lying is silence. While some may see it as an admission of guilt, one cannot be sure what the silence actually means. "Better to keep quiet than speak a falsehood," goes the old dwarven saying. The same applies to oaths; if one does not utter an oath, one cannot break the oath. Dwarves are not fools, nor are they slaves to their laws.

Dwarven society is geared around helping those in need. One need only look at their welfare system to see that in operation. No dwarf would aid a goblin or orc, unless perhaps there was valuable information to be gained, but most would consider helping another civilized race (hobgoblins can be an exception) if there was no life-threatening danger. He may give a beggar a gold piece, but he does not have to furnish a ten-room house. He may help a small village fight off bandits, but he may demand a reasonable reward, if only food and a bed. Lawful good characters are not mercenaries, however, demanding a fee for every service.

They fight for just causes and accept what reward they are offered. Grumbling about poor payment does not mean you cannot be lawful good. Fellow dwarves and trusted friends are a different matter, however, and a dwarf would risk death to protect these, so long as he upheld his traditions and laws.

Lastly, dwarves value their ancient laws, for these are what keep their race bonded together. Criminals endanger the entirety of their society and so must be punished. For the most part, dwarves let the judges handle criminal cases, and

guidelines ensure that the punishment fits the crime. What really rankles dwarves is seeing other races flout criminal justice because the accused is a noble, or he pays a bribe.

As a society, lawful good alignment covers cultures that "have a codified set of laws that most people follow willingly." Dwarven society is not about rigid codes of conduct enforced on members. The laws and traditions are designed to promote good deeds and protect the culture, regardless of social standing, ability, or familial bonds.

The King (or Clan Leader)

A king or blood noble runs every dwarven domain in Tellene. For convenience, all references to the title king in this section should be applied to ruling blood nobles as well. By tradition, kings cannot rule alone, and few have the expertise necessary to control every aspect of the domain anyway. Instead, the king lets his advisors run the domain under his overall guidance. For the most part, he avoids interfering in day-to-day affairs and concentrates on the larger picture.

Whether a king ruling a twenty-clan kingdom or a blood noble with just one clan to control, dwarven rulers rely on their councilors to keep things running smoothly. The ruler retains the power of veto of any decision they make, but most are content to let the government do its job.

By tradition, a dwarf may only sit on one council. For example, the high priest of the Valiant, if also a courage noble, must choose between the religious and military council. In this way, dwarves reduce the chance of a single individual influencing multiple spheres, as well as giving other dwarves a chance to prove their mettle.

The king appoints councilors and only he has the power to remove them while they live. Unless the entire council unanimously opposes his appointee, the new candidate takes his seat at the next meeting. As with appointments, the councils retain the right to veto the firing of one of their member, but again the decision must be unanimous. In this way, the council retains some control over its membership and can preclude the ruler from stacking the body with lackeys and yes-men.

Different councils meet at different times of the year, and some more often than others. Membership size varies considerably based on the numbers of clerics, crafters, nobles, and courage nobles within the domain. Where there are less than five members or two or more councils, which can happen in single clan domains, no council is formed and the entire government acts as a central body discussing all four aspects of rulership. There is some cross over, of course. If the guilds have failed to produce enough weapons, for example, the military council will demand answers, sending a representative to speak for the council as a whole.

Each council maintains its own chambers, usually in the administrative section of the domain. By law, the king may not enter whilst a meeting is in progress without an invitation from at least two-thirds of the members. Once a decision is reached on any matter, the chairperson, an honorary post appointed each year by general vote, relays the information to the noble council.

In addition to the councils, the ruler retains his individual councilors, such as a Treasurer, Chamberlain, and Lawspeaker, as well as diplomats and other courtiers. Members of his military retinue are always present at his side, even in the most secret meetings. Such individuals honor and integrity is beyond reproach.

Guild Council

Formed from the master crafters of the domain, the guild council, or *kloksprik* ("trade speakers"), handles all matters of craft production and trade. They meet in early winter to discuss strategies for the forthcoming financial year, though as always with councils they can meet at any time to discuss important business.

The guild council sets trading prices, determines surpluses or shortfalls in exportable goods, sets import and mining quotas, listens to guild grievances (individual problems are handled by individual guildmasters), sets non-religious tax levels, and so on. Merchants wishing to trade guild goods must be sanctioned by the guild council and issued a special license.

Military Council

Every courage noble is entitled to sit on the military council (*bardunsprik*; "war speakers"). Meetings are held every spring and fall equinox to discuss upcoming military endeavors, set militia training schedules, check weapon stocks, hear reports on enemy activity, and so forth. In truth, the council tends to meet monthly, for their foes are numerous and ever restless.

What should be remembered is that the ruler is the supreme commander, the blood nobles are the senior commanders, and the courage nobles the unit commanders. The council may design strategies, but they cannot carry out any military missions without the approval of the noble council. For the main part, they serve as the military administration, saving the blood nobles the onerous task.

Noble Council

In any domain where there is more than one clan there is a noble council, or *ursprik* ("blood speakers"). Comprised of every blood noble holding power, which means just the clan heads, they meet every new moon (Veshemo) to discuss matter affecting the entire domain. Emergency sessions can be called as needed, though usually only matters of imminent war or the death of a king without heir prompts such gatherings.

Collectively, they are the ruler's right hand man, keeping him isolated from petty issues. The guild, military, and religious councils handle the most important matters, and report their findings to them. The noble council, for the most part, simply stamps the paperwork before passing it to the king, though they have the right to return matters to the appropriate guild.

Religious Council

The religious council (*korkespruk*; "rite speakers") is formed from the high priests, or at least the highest-ranking priests, of every religion within the domain. Of course, by "every religion," the dwarves actually mean all non-proscribed religions, for the priests of evil deities are forbidden from joining. Unlike the other councils, where each member has a single vote, the religious council favors the four primary gods, and clerics of the Founder, the Speaker of the Word, the True, and the Powermaster receive two votes apiece.

By tradition, the council meets every Founder's Day, the day on which the first tunneling to create the realm started. Their duty is to organize the festival calendar for the year, set religious taxes, organize inquisitions to purge heretical faiths, and so on. Compared to the other councils, their duties are light and the council is more a social gathering. Only when a dangerous faith is discovered do they have their work cut out.

Culture

"Change creates chaos. Tradition creates stability."

Dwarf saying.

Dwarves are arguably the second oldest civilized race on Tellene. Their culture extends back to the dawn of creation, when only the elves and gods walked the land. Ever since dwarves formed their first laws, little has changed. Tradition binds their race together, but it also stifles certain aspects, especially when it comes to creativity. However, dwarf culture is as interesting as any other race and requires further examination.

Cycle of Life

"What is born from stone will go back to stone."

Dwarf saying.

Reproduction

As with all the major races, dwarves have two sexes and reproduce internally. Males and females possess the same sexual organs as humans. Like most civilized races, dwarves are slow reproducers and do not become sexually active until their fifties. Dwarves remain fertile for approximately one hundred years but sexual reproduction is hindered by their biology.

Unlike humans, dwarven females produce only four eggs a year, one per season. The egg can be fertilized only during the third month. Males also possess low sperm counts and pregnancies are not guaranteed no matter how sexually active the dwarves involved may be. Because males outnumber females by two to one, not every male will find a partner. This is another contributing factor to their relatively low numbers.

Dwarven sex is a highly physical affair, though it can be intensely passionate. Bonds between sexual partners run deep and few dwarves are promiscuous, not that many get the opportunity. Dwarves rarely display their lover physically in front of others, even family members, and couples rarely hold hands or kiss in public. Though human wags use this as proof dwarves are loveless, the real reason is one of respect for others who may not have a partner. Dwarves express their feeling for each other with gifts, lengthy poems, and even, on occasion, musical recitation. Invariably, such expressions revolve around traditional themes.

Human-dwarf relationships are usually political rather than for love, though the latter is not unknown. Dwarves treat human partners with as much respect as they would a dwarf, but find the concept of physical touching in public strange to learn. Because dwarves age much slower than elves, mixed race partnerships tend to work better, though invariably the human dies of old age first.

Gestation takes 14 Tellene months, the longest of any civilized race, and results in a single birth. Twins are so rare that none have been recorded since the arrival of humans, though the two factors are not related. Once a female has given birth, she will not become sexually reproductive for another three to five years. As such, a typical female can produce no more than ten to fifteen children during her life, though few manage even a third of this.

Childhood

Dwarves age at roughly half the rate of humans, though individual cases are always an exception. For the first two years of its life a child is wet nursed, moving onto to solid food only when its first teeth appear. The dwarven diet involves tough, fibrous foods and children invariably develop their molars first.

For the first five years the child is kept at home, surrounded only its family, which includes more distant kin who come to visit the new baby. The strong familial bond that permeates dwarven society is formed during this time. Until the child walks, which can happen anytime between five and eight years depending on the individual's development, the child is not given its own name. Once it has taken its first steps, the parents have the child blessed by a priest and named. Traditionally, children are named after an ancestor, living or dead, in the hope the child will grow up with his ancestor's virtues.

Language skills develop around the same time as the child walks. The child is taught basic words and, more importantly, the names of his relatives and parts of his lineage. This is repeated parrot fashion until the child grasps the basics. Once the child has a sense of who its family are, it is allowed to mix with other children.

Being sturdier than human babies, dwarven children are less susceptible to deadly diseases, though not completely immune. Playing with other children not only develops social skills and a sense of kinship with clan members, but it also helps boost the child's immune system by introducing it to new environments. Children play rough and tumble games that would scare a human parent witless. Few suffer any real injuries as compared to more frail humans, who would undoubtedly break a limb or two during the friendly games.

Schooling begins at 14, when the child is taken to one of the schools, usually run by the Brothers in Logic and Seekers of the Three Strengths, to learn basic grammar and arithmetic, history, language, and geology. Children remain at infant school until puberty, which occurs sometime around 25 years of age.

Adolescence

As with humans, dwarves undergo physical changes at puberty. Hair begins to grow in places other than the head, the voice drops, in both males and females, and coordination suffers a slight setback as the dwarf undergoes several rapid growth spurts. As said before, sexual organs do not develop fully until into early adulthood.

Schooling continues during adolescence, but the curriculum changes. Between 25 and 30 the child is introduced to basic craft skills with a heavy emphasis on stone and metal working skills. Tuition begins with theory, and only when the child nears the end of this period of his schooling is he allowed to develop his practical skills. Recognition of the value and properties of stones, metals, and gems is also conducted during this period.

Children must also learn Merchant's Tongue and many learn one or more other languages in preparation for adult life. The basic school curriculum covers only Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Orc, Terran, and Undercommon, but other languages can be learned from private tutors or family members. Of all the extra languages, Goblin is the most common, followed by Orc and Gnome.

Regardless of sex, the child must undergo military training for three years. Initial training involves stamina building, and the child is taught to move quickly wearing armor, though no actual training in its use is given, and bearing heavy loads. What seems savage by human standards is a fundamental survival skill for dwarves, who rely on armor to make up for their lack of numbers. Basic weapon practice includes learning how to use daggers and spears, as well as dwarven racial weapons. The idea is not to teach the youngster how to become a killing machine, but to develop a sense of recognition and prepare him for the hard life ahead.

Lectures and physical practice against tutors fighting with orc and goblinoids tactics teach the child how to combat his most common foes. Specific attention is paid to weak spots, flaws in tactics, and how to overcome weight of numbers with quick thrusts and mobility. Few dwarves ever get to see a giant these days, but tradition decrees that all children learn the ancient ways for avoiding such beasts' blows.

For the last seven years before adulthood, the child can either return to more traditional schooling, with only periods of crafting and military training each week, or become an apprentice. For those who remain at school, advanced history and geology, geography, engineering, languages, politics, and a myriad of other subjects are hammered home during long hours. By the time the child reaches adulthood, he has enough basic knowledge to survive in the world.

Adulthood

The key defining factor as to when a dwarf becomes an adult is not his physical age, but when he first develops a beard. Although only men sport natural beards, women do develop a light smattering of hair on their cheeks, though one could not call them hirsute because of this.

Having left school with as much knowledge as his teachers can cram into his head, the young adult must make a decision that will shape the rest of his life; what profession to follow. For many the choices are limited. It is either the mines, the family trade, or the church. While it is possible to get an apprenticeship outside the family trade, such activity is unusual and expensive. A would-be apprentice must live with his master and mentor, which places a burden on him. Parents are expected to support a dwarf during his training and must therefore pay the crafter to take the child.

The same rule applies to the military. While any dwarf may join, he must bring, at minimum, a suit of chainmail, two shields, a sword or axe, and three spears to boot camp. Few families can afford this expense, and so young dwarves must spend a few years working in order to save enough funds.

Dwarves wishing to learn a non-standard profession, such as magic, must leave their home in order to do so. Parents view this time with great sadness, or their child is turning his back on his heritage, but also with joy, for the child is now an adult and can make its own way in the world.

Traditional dwarves wishing to go adventuring head off into the wide world shortly after completing their training. Having learned about the other races from books, they now feel they must encounter these races face-to-face and develop a new set of experiences to make them individuals. Fortunately, most dwarves can boast at least one distant relative in a nearby civilized town or city who will take the traveler in until he finds his feet.

Adventuring dwarves that intend to return to their homeland do so before they reach middle age. As with most adventurers, they return wealthier and most experienced than when they left. Their deeds, if noteworthy, are added to the family history and their friends welcomed as siblings of the dwarf. Sadly, many adventurers never return home. Some find a new life outside the domain, but most are killed. Returning a dwarf's corpse to its homeland is sure to earn the good Samaritan many favors, for dwarves feel the rightful resting place of the dead is with their kin.

Courtship

Once the biological clock reaches 45 or so most dwarves feel the sudden urge to settle down and raise a family. Of course, with females in short supply this is not always possible and competition for mates is fierce, though seldom fatal. Most courtships take several years to develop and follow traditional steps, starting with intention to court and ending in marriage (or separation). Gift giving is common from both parties, though the most precious gifts are often the simplest, such as a lock of hair or a poem. Physical contact is slight during the courtship, though not expressly forbidden.

Because dwarves only use eight family names, special investigators, called *bakimak* ("lineage judges"), are used to ensure that the two dwarves are not closely related. By tradition, there must be at least three degrees of familial separation, so dwarves can marry their third cousins but no closer relative. Most dwarves do not marry within the same clan, simply because it is very likely that one or more members are related somewhere down the line.

Females are choosy, however, and often have several suitors at any one time. As well as superficial features, such as good looks and personality, females are also looking for strong constitution, which often implies good virility as well as resistance to disease, which will hopefully be passed to any offspring, wealth, so the male can look after her and their children, and combat experience, so the male has a better chance of surviving hostile actions.

Marriages

Dwarves recognize five distinct types of marriage. All five marriages are legally recognized by the major religions and children produced in all cases are considered legitimate. Dwarven custody battles over young children are unusual. Until a dwarf becomes an adult, he retains his mother's family name and is always placed with her in the result of separation.

Honor marriage or *sprokmank* ("word bond"), is a renewable oath made between two individuals lasting for five years. At the end of that period, the couple has the option of renewing their vows for another five years, separating, or changing to a different form of marriage. Many couples take an honor marriage before tying the knot permanently.

During an honor marriage all property and wealth the female brings to the relationship remains hers and when the contract ends she is entitled to it back. While it is only to be expected that one or both parties will spend some of their wealth during the five years, legal action can result if either party refuses to relinquish appropriate funds. Typically, both couples agree on a separation fee before speaking the oath.

Love marriage, or *kramank*, ("soul bonding"), is rare among the nobles but more common among the masses, and lasts for life. Divorce is extremely rare and considered dishonorable to both parties. Dwarves look badly on any male who abuses his partner, and if the matter comes to court the female can be granted a divorce without dishonor, known as an *ubeldkat* ("honorable parting").

Bed marriage, known to dwarves as *midmank* ("child bonding"), is much less common today than it was a few centuries ago. An ancient practice, the female becomes the consort of the male rather than a wife. Any children that result are considered legitimate but belong to the male, even though they retain their mother's name. When the dwarven kingdoms were at their height this was the favored way of securing heirs, but as numbers have dropped so the practice has fallen out of favor. Bed marriage is for life, or until the male ends it.

Political marriage, the *endermank* ("hand bonding"), is usually reserved for nobles seeking to strengthen their family through alliances with another family or, in some cases, neighboring humans. The couple rarely knows each other before the marriage, and in many cases have never even met. Such marriages come with a wealth of clauses, promises, and exchange of goods, and cannot be ended without political, and sometimes military, repercussions.

Widow marriage, known to dwarves as *narremank* ("second bonding"), is far more common now than it once was. They are a special case, which only the female can end. The female must be a widow (hence the name) whose spouse died in battle. Property bought to the marriage by the male becomes the woman's and she retains control if the marriage ends in divorce. Existing children take the name of their biological father when they reach adulthood in honor of his memory.

In all marriages, gifts are given to the couple from family and friends to help them in their new life. Families also swap gifts to celebrate the joining of bloodlines. Such gifts are not considered to be dowries, which dwarves seldom offer except in the case of the *endermank*.

Adultery is severely punished in dwarven society, with both parties being outcast from the domain. For women this is very shameful, for few males who know of her reputation will court her in the future. Such shame can be expunged only by death.

Advanced Years

Even the long-lived dwarves are subject to the ravages of time. A dwarf reached 125 years of age is middle aged. By this time he has learned and mastered his craft, and the telltale signs of old age cause him to think about slowing down and cutting back his workload. Few dwarves carry the adventuring dream beyond this age, and a dwarf that has yet to travel rarely does so now.

Old age begins shortly before the second century of life. Noticeable physical changes include hardening of the skin, gray hair, creaky joints, and aching limbs. Years of hard work in the workshops or mines have more often than not led

to a hunched posture, and many dwarves suffer from arthritis as they age. When a dwarf whines about his "aching bones," he means it, for few other races spend as much as a century performing the same labor-intensive work.

At last the dwarf enters the venerable stage of life, which begins around 250 years of age. Few dwarves are active at this age, and most have retired to become advisors, teachers, or mentors to younger dwarves. Most are gnarled, with stiff joints and crooked fingers, a legacy of hard work and the dwarven way of life. Death from old age, something of a rarity these days, can happen any time after reaching 250, though most dwarves live another 100 years or so. No dwarf in recent memory has lived for more than five centuries. Funeral rites are covered in the section on *Religion*.

Habitat

"Their homes are quite cozy, but as I sat there I began to wonder where all the bodily waste goes."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Hill Dwarf Lands

Adurek tend to live in vast underground cities. These communities rival human settlements in size, but this information is intentionally kept hidden from most humans. Large extended families lie in smaller settlements of only a few hundred and these are scattered across Tellene, typically clustered around a rich vein of ore. Lowland dwarves can be found in the foothills of any mountain, but there are high concentrations near the Kakidela and Ka'Asa ranges. Because of their exile from Karasta, many *adurek* now live in southwestern Reanaaria as well.

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While most hill dwarf settlements have existed for millennia, new towns and cities are still being founded to this day, though they are considerably smaller than the like of Karasta. When searching for a new home, hill dwarves seek two key components. The first is mineral wealth, for this is what dwarves prize most highly. The second is defensibility. No dwarf wants to live in an area that can be easily overrun.

When searching out a new home, teams of rangers and infiltrators, all trained geologists, are dispatched to the target area. They explore suitable areas, looking for large natural caverns from which to start the new city. Areas near external veins of ore are often ignored, for humans are capable of mining such veins and dwarves prefer to work underground and in secret. The best veins are those lying deep beneath the earth.

The next step is to locate nearby goblinoid lairs. The geologist teams are not expected to fight, but to bring back vital information on the defenses and strengths of such lairs. In most cases, small tribes are attacked and destroyed to make room for the new settlers. Larger concentrations may prohibit dwarven settlement, though if the mineral wealth is great they are willing to risk all-out war to secure the site. In some cases, greed overrules common sense, and can lead to catastrophic losses.

Once an area has been cleared, a garrison is placed to stop the goblinoids returning and deter other races from excavating nearby. While this can lead to racial tension, dwarves put such thoughts second to acquiring new mineral wealth. Once secured, miners begin construct the city. Tunneling a shaft out toward the surface is the last step and by the time sunlight is reached the realm is all but completed. As the last stage, the elaborate gates that mark dwarven strongholds are built. The defenses of a dwarven stronghold are detailed in the *Warfare* section.

Layout

Unlike rock gnomes, dwarves live entirely underground. This is not to say they do not work above ground, but no structures are built outside the subterranean city, save for a few stone shacks to house shepherds in bad weather. These are not defensible positions.

Dwarven cities exist on multiple levels, but all have one thing in common; there is only ever a single entrance. Escape tunnels are not used, as dwarves know that if they ever abandon a lair they are unlikely to recapture it. Tenacity and solid defenses are the watchwords of dwarves. Access between levels is via stairs or elevators, all of which are heavily guarded day and night.

The first part of any city is always a military zone. Hostile forces can often be held here long enough that they retreat, usually with heavy losses. While the passage to the main city seems safe, hidden guardrooms, barracks, armories, and traps are plentiful. Most visitors never see these workings and consider dwarven strongholds poorly defended compared to the lairs of goblinoids or kobolds. Such misinformation serves the dwarves well. Soldiers are posted to defend areas on a rotating basis, with each clan being responsible for the safety of one or more parts of the realm.

Non-dwarf guests are housed in a special annex near the entrance, complete with their own sleeping areas, kitchens, toilet facilities, and chapels. Very few outsiders progress much further than these suites, and even merchants must wait here while their goods are brought from the central warehouses. Further in, one encounters the outer habitation zone, which houses the poorer members of society. While most settlements have a central avenue, smaller tunnels lead off to

houses, barracks, storehouses, wells, and other features. As always, hidden guardrooms and traps protect these areas from intruders.

Next are the workshops, those these are usually spread over many levels to reduce pollution and stop a single determined attack destroying the entire productivity of the stronghold. More accommodation is dotted around this zone, though usually only the crafters live here. Vast storehouses come next, though these are reached via concealed side passages. Everything from food to gold bars is kept here under heavy guard.

Toward the core of the city are the main temples, though smaller shrines and chapels exist in the housing areas. Clerics and higher status member of society have their chambers in this territory. Lastly, one reaches the heart of the city, in which are located the ruler's throne room and private chambers, the council chambers, the vast treasuries, and so forth.

Agriculture may not be a renowned dwarven trait, but they have to eat. While shepherds maintain herds of goats and mountain sheep, farmers look after vast caverns of vegetable crops. For the most part these are fungi and mosses, for most vegetables require sunlight, which is lacking in dwarven realms. Fortunately, as discussed in *Diet*, dwarves are primarily carnivores.

The mines, which comprise as much as half the area of the city, lie deep beneath the core living areas. Hundreds of miles of passageways and tunnels zigzag through the stone, following the veins of minerals. Many tunnels are disused, having been mined dry, but new ones are always appearing. Only the poorest of the poor live down here, where the air is bad and the dangers of poison gas or cave-in ever present.

Passageways vary in size considerably. The main avenues through the city may be as wide as fifty feet with arched ceilings towering dozens of feet overhead. Columns provide support and decoration to otherwise bland corridors. In the main habitation and housing areas, passageways narrow to ten feet with ceilings of similar height. Arches are again prominent, but columns less so, as buttresses support the walls. Oil lamps or everburning torches provide light, though little traveled areas are kept dark.

Only in the mines can one find truly narrow passages, for weak veins may only require a single dwarf, who works in a five foot passage, often kneeling or crouching in the low workspace. Of course, large veins may extend over several hundred feet in height, with the entire area opened into a vast cavern with workers using scaffolding to work every available inch of the rock face.

Supplies and Dangers

Water is fed into vast cisterns from aqueducts and diverted underground springs. Rainwater is collected in natural traps and fed into these cisterns as well, but sluice gates allow these to be cut off and diverted outside the city during a siege, when the risk of attackers poisoning them is too great. Wells extend down into the cisterns, allowing the inhabitants to draw water as needed, though some realms have running water. Flooding is rarely a risk. The sluice gates can divert ground water, and deep pits dotted throughout the city lead to caverns far below the city. Water can be channeled away to these pits using metal doors and sliding walls, so protecting the inhabitants.

One constant danger is poisonous gas, related to which is a lack of oxygen. The deeper the tunnels go, the less fresh air is available. Dwarven tunnels are designed to slope, though only by a single degree or so. While this may not seem much, it does mean that toxic fumes, which are often lighter than air, can flow along the ceiling to catchment areas, where they are diverted into storage chambers.

In most cases the gases are either burnt off using controlled explosions or transferred to workshops via pipes to provide fuel for the forges. A small portion is harvested for use in gas traps, though dwarves are not fond of such tactics. The sloping tunnels also mean water trickles downward, where it is fed into the cisterns through large grilles.

Oxygen near the main entrance is plentiful and rarely a problem during times of peace, when the gates are left open. The further in and deeper down one goes, the more polluted the air becomes. Dwarves use two methods for drawing in fresh air. The first is to use vast bellows and air pumps, which circulate fresh air around the upper chambers. Further down this method is less useful, as all it does is move bad air around the domain.

Fresh air can be drawn into the lower levels by using vast fires. As the warm air rises, it draws in fresh air from other parts of the city, creating a breeze beneath the surface. It also provides heating for the entire domain. Vast chambers of subterranean mosses are also used to provide oxygen, though the dwarves do not fully understand the complex biology behind such matters. Most dwarves just assume the plants give off breathable air.

Houses

The dwarven word for house is *beldor*, which means "shelter." A typical house consists of a central living area, in the middle of which is the cooking pit. Hollow, stone benches, padded with furs for comfort and added warmth, line the longest walls. Cupboards are rare, with most goods, including food, being stored within the stone benches. The one exception are weapons and armor, which hang near the door for easy access. A large stone basin is used for washing dirty dishes. The water is heated over the central hearth and when used poured down a drain. Bodily washing is performed in the same manner, though dwarves have communal bathhouses and toilets.

The central hearth provides warmth, light, and is used for cooking. It is also the focal point of family activity. It is worth noting at this point that where possible dwarves refer to use coal over wood in their fires. Coal not only produces more heat, it burns longer and produces considerably less smoke. Most domains have access to coal locally, but those lacking the resource are prepared to import it at great cost. Whether because dwarves have never revealed its secret or because they keep the price artificially high, few humans except for smiths use coal in their fires.

Most family units comprise parents, children, and sometimes one or more grandparents, and each group has its own bedroom. As with the living area, stone is predominant and the beds are stone blocks into which the sleeping area is carved. Again, furs provide comfort and warmth. Because dwarves do not use reeds or leaves for padding, regularly washing and airing the fur covers keeps pests to a minimum. Storage space beneath the bed allows personal possessions to be stored away.

Hill dwarves are not fond of undressed stone, considering it vulgar and unsightly. Walls are invariably smoothed with plaster and then tiled. Traditional tiles are embossed with heraldic or religious motifs, though some families have poems or stories engraved upon them, especially when they honor an ancestor. Other decorations are rare. A family may keep a small statuette of one or more gods near the heart, where they can protect the house, but paintings and flower arrangements are simply not appealing to dwarves.

Within any domain, members of the same clan tend to live near each other. This is partly from a sense of camaraderie, but also from the traditional view that one should keep one's clan members close at hand to offer support and protection when needed. Although most living areas containing fifty or more houses have a small storehouse (often called "the market"), well, and chapel, these are not just for the clan's use. Any dwarf may use the facilities.

Temples

Whether actual temples or small chapels, religious buildings receive great love and care when created. Rather than being simple rectangular structures, they are often carved in other geometric shapes, with hexagons and octagons being the most common. Dwarves find such regularity pleasing, whereas pentagons, heptagons, and other odd-numbered sides are considered vulgar and "off center."

The heart of any religious building is the altar, which stands on a raised platform against the wall opposite the door. Most altars are actually basins, in which a sacred fire burns continuously. Behind the altar basin is a large statue of the god, carved from a hard stone, such as marble or basalt. Carvings are not decorated in any way, as the craftsmanship speaks for itself. Around the statue are inscribed parts of holy texts, usually simple prayers or psalms.

Worshippers invariably have to stand during the long ceremonies, and seats are only provided for elderly dwarves who frailty prevents such feats of endurance. Few use cushions, however, as they are not at church to relax but to worship their god.

The most noticeable feature of any room is hard to see with the naked eye. The skill involved in carving the ceiling and the dimensions of the chamber result in fantastic acoustics. When the chamber is empty, a whisper can sound like a shout as it reverberates off the walls. When the congregation gathers to sing prayers, the sound is like thunder, only much more beautiful.

Beyond the central room are small chambers where the priests robe, a library, one or more treasuries, private prayer rooms, guardrooms for any templars or paladins serving the temple, and the inner sanctum. Within the inner sanctum, each temple retains a holy artifact. In most cases this has no special powers, being a stone or weapon favored by the god and said to contain his spirit. In this way, it is an object of faith and not a magic item. Only the most powerful temples actually have magical relics, many of which, it is claimed, were used by the god during the early ages of Tellene. Such claims are hard to disprove and these items do contain magical powers, some of them very dangerous in the wrong hands.

Unlike temples of other races, priests do not have bedchambers within their sacred walls, though they live nearby. It is said that no dwarf can sleep in a temple, for these are the realms of the gods and to infringe on their house without invitation would be a breach of hospitality. Rock gnomes joke that the snoring of a sleeping dwarf would sound like a dragon with toothache given the acoustics of the chamber and anyone sleeping there would go deaf.

Workshops

Large or small, workshops also contain two important features; workspace and a fire. Workspace can vary from a large forge in the case of smiths to a small bench on which jewelers work their art. Tools hang from racks on the walls, and raw materials are kept in secured chests. Some crafters, mainly those working with precious stones and metals, employ magic to protect their workshops. Even dwarves have thieves in their number, and the lure of such wealth can be tempting to the most hardened soul.

Whether or not the crafter uses fire in his work, there is always one present. As well as light and heat, it helps draw fresh air into the chamber. Coal is preferred over wood as it burns longer and cleaner and is more readily available. Some forges make use of natural gas, such as methane, but these are not commonplace in most realms. Most workshops are

crowded, for dwarves do not see the value in wasting space purely for the sake of comfort. A crafter can work just as well in a small room as he can a cavern, or so they say.

Many factors determine the size of a workshop, but typically the number of workers and the craft being performed are the dominant factors. While ten jewelers may fit into a room measuring thirty feet to a side, only one or two smiths can fill the same space because of the forge, the raw materials required (including fuel), and the oppressive heat.

Other Structures

Many other types of buildings exist in a dwarven domain. Barracks and guardrooms are the most numerous but the least seen. Even native dwarves may not know where every hidden security area is located. Both types of room are designed to be functional rather than comfortable. Barracks contain rows of beds, a small hearth for cooking, a food storage area, a communal toilet and bath area, and benches, but no home comforts. Every barrack block contains a small statuette of *Lusurk* the Valiant, *Lastern* the Powermaster, and *Tragrim* the Tactician. Together they form the militant trio of bravery, strength, and comradeship.

Likewise, guardrooms are not built for relaxation and lack even benches, though there is a small table on which to rest mugs and spare weapons. Access is gained through a secret door, which can be opened only from the inside. Typically five guards man the guardroom at any one time, with a further ten to fifteen stationed in the adjoining barracks.

Warehouses come in varying sizes, from the small markets found in the habitation area to the vast central stores that hold the entire wealth of the stronghold. All crafters, merchants, and mine owners deliver their goods to the central warehouses, where they are appraised and priced accordingly. By tradition, all stockpiles belong to the ruler of the stronghold, who has to pay the supplier a fair price as laid down by the guild council. Further details on finances and trading methods are detailed in *Trade and Tribute* below.

Hill dwarves prefer smooth walls and flat surfaces. In many cases they avoid using large caverns because of the work required to make them presentable. Building bridges is an option (and forms a bottleneck for attackers), but this still leaves unsightly natural walls. At the end of the day, their strong love of order overrides practical logic and they simply tunnel around large caverns.

Wells are distributed around the stronghold, each leading to one of the cavernous cisterns buried in the lowest levels. Buckets and chains allow water to be hauled up from the depths, where it is stored in large clay urns until needed. Wells are covered with a stone covering when not in use to prevent accidents. Some realms have running water fed straight into houses, though water must still be heated over a fire.

Which leads onto to lavatories. Dwarves are no different to any other race in that they produce biological waste. Living underground, the last thing one wants is a pile of rotting waste stinking out the tunnels. Although dwarves live separately, they bathe and remove bodily waste in communal toilet facilities, except in the mines, where they use buckets, which are emptied every hour.

Each toilet block consists of a large, metal bath built over a fire pit and several small commodes. Water for the bath is dispensed via a pipe from the ceiling, though this is icy cold. Heating the bath can take several hours, and most fires are kept burning day and night, reheating the water once used ready for the next bather. When the bathers have finished, the dirty water is sent down a second pipe into an underground stream used only for this purpose, never for drinking water.

Likewise, bodily waste is channeled along a gently sloping channel through which water constantly flows. Waste matter is dropped into the same stream as dirty bath water. Where possible, this underground disposal stream does not immediately run out from the stronghold. To do so would pollute the surrounding land and, in some cases, run straight to the nearest human settlement. To avoid any neighborly problems, dwarves ensure the stream stays subterranean for many leagues.

Mines

Perhaps the most well known aspect of any dwarven realm are the mines. As mentioned above, mineshafts range from tiny crawlways to immense open-faced caverns. What they all have in common is that they are workspaces and therefore lack comfort. The air is dry and filled with dust, the temperature often stifling from the fires used to draw in air, the noise of metal on stone deafening, and the risk of cave-ins or breaking into a pocket of poison gas ever present.

Industrial accidents are actually rare, as dwarves place safety high on their list of priorities. While this does cost money, they consider it better to have safe workers and workers who refuse to enter the mines. Of course, even the best dwarf cannot spot every weak point in a rock face and cave-ins and avalanches are an unfortunate part of life. As noted elsewhere, widows are catered for with compensation funds set up by the guilds and nobles.

Where possible, main shafts are smoothed on the floor and ceiling; the former to allow easy passage, and the latter to reduce head injuries and prevent build up of volatile or poisonous gas pockets. The constant trickle of water coming down the tunnels would make the surface treacherous, so water channels are cut down the center to keep the main walkways dry.

All mines belong to a noble, who is responsible for ensuring their smooth running and paying the workers. Naturally, this requires a steady influx of wealth and miners are expected to work long and tiring shifts. By human standards they are compensated with high rates of pay, roughly double that of a human miner, compensation for injuries, and, in rare cases, a small bonus if the noble makes a good quarterly profit. Slaves are never used in the mines. For one dwarves abhor slavery, and secondly they are considered too unreliable.

Recreation

"Dwarven humor isn't deadpan. It's dead!"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

For all their dour and sullen nature, dwarves are sociable creatures; they just find frivolity pointless. Dwarves do appreciate humor, but usually prefer it in the form of stories rather than short tales with a punch line. Hearing how a fellow dropped his father onto a metal sheet which sounded like the gong to end work for the day, leading to an early mass walk out is much more humorous to a dwarf than a quick joke with no significance to their everyday lives. Many dwarf jokes are centuries old, being retold to new generations as a form of parable, for most jokes do end with a moral conclusion. In the case of the dropped hammer, the morale is "Not to jump to quick conclusions which go against tradition." Dull to most, but potentially hilarious to dwarves.

Dwarves enjoy singing and making music, though again these are often ancient songs with either an overt or covert message. On the surface, the Tale of Two Suitors is seen as a love story where two males are fighting over the same female. As one goes deeper, one actually reveals a lamentable story where women are in short supply and male dwarves cannot afford to be choosy.

Musical instruments come in a variety of forms, though drums, stringed instruments, notably harps, and wind instruments, with a preference for bagpipes, are the most common. As with stories, most songs are passed down the generations and keep alive ancient traditions. The sweetest music, according to dwarves, is the sound of metal on metal and metal on stone, for these activities lie at the very heart of their being.

Female dwarves enjoy sewing as a pastime as well as a trade. Tapestries depicting ancestral endeavors are the preferred subject, though these are rarely put on display, being brought out on birthdays and other special occasions so the ancestor can partake in the festivities and be remembered. Dwarf women also gossip, but rarely maliciously. In a city which might stretch for dozens of miles, such gossiping is a vital way of maintaining communication and keeping abreast of news.

Simple boardgames are commonplace around the hearth at night. Dwarves of all ages play a version of chess, which they claim they taught humans, called Shieldwall. Unlike regular chess, there are more pawns and no knights, and the rules are more complex. Pawns, for instance, move in pairs, so keeping the defensive shieldwall intact, whereas boars, which replace rooks, can punch through pawns at the cost of self-sacrifice.

Another favored game is a version of checkers, in which pieces move to capture each other and acquire wealth. Even simple games like knife-parchment-rock are popular with adults while waiting for the evening meal to cook. Card games are very uncommon, and dwarves are generally slow to learn new games, finding learning new rules frustrating.

Males also train with weapons regularly, in addition to their militia training, keeping their selves in practice for the inevitable day they are called to war. Children are taught how to clean and maintain their parent's armaments in preparation for the day they become warriors.

Children are physical active creatures and often spend hours wrestling or pretending to be miners, which can lead to chastisement when the parents discover the hole they have excavated in the walls. Mock fights with makeshift weapons are not unusual, though few youngsters want to play the part of the soon-to-die-horribly orcs or goblinoids. Adults encourage such behavior, especially in males, for combat is prevalent in adulthood and any early training is seen as a boon.

Hospitality

Visitors to dwarven realms are not unusual. Merchants, allied neighbors, diplomats seeking treaties, scholars wishing to consult ancient records, and even mercenaries seeking employment can be found in the outer parts of a realm. Whether dwarf or outsider, the dwarven hosts are honor bound by the laws of hospitality to give visitors shelter, provisions, and safety in accordance with their status.

Guests are treated cordially, given private bedchambers, edible provisions, beer or mead to drink, and are guarded around the clock. To many, the positioning of guards seems like a form of house arrest, but in fact the guards are there to ensure no harm befalls the visitors. Aside from the risk of goblinoid attack, dwarven realms are littered with traps, and an innocent guest losing his way can easily end up crippled or killed by a trap. Injured guests are entitled to compensation.

In return, guests are expected to obey the wishes of their host in staying within the confines of the visitor area, not take up arms against their host while under his protection, be polite and respectful of dwarven customs and traditions, and agree to fight in the defense of the realm should it be required.

According to ancient tradition, uninvited guests may stay for no longer than three days without offering the host a gift as payment for the extra drain on his resources. The value of the gift varies according to the status of the host and the guest. Guests refusing to honor the tradition are asked to leave on some minor pretense.

Diet

"A dwarven feast is a sight to behold. None of this elf leafy food, just good old fashioned meat and ale."

Grag Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Life underground limits dietary options and dwarves are primarily carnivores with a high protein diet. Limited animal husbandry is practiced, though only with sheep and goats, which can cope with the rugged terrain above the dwarven realms. Pigs and cattle are ill suited to such environs, except certain types of wild boar, though their dried or cured meat is imported. Game meat, such as venison or pheasant, is eaten, as is rabbit and pigeon. Unless desperate, dwarves shy away from eating rat, though it is a convenient source of protein.

Whether produced locally or imported, most meat is dried or cured. Cold rooms do exist for storing fresh meat, but curing produces stronger flavors. Meat can be salted, air dried, smoke dried, or pickled in vinegar, though the latter is an acquired taste for most races. Cooking usually involves roasting over a roaring fire or boiling, in the form of stew, though dwarves do fry some meat in animal fat.

Chickens are not commonly found beneath the earth, so dwarves hunt for wild bird eggs to supplement their diet. Fortunately, the forested slopes of their hills are abundant with such creatures and eggs form part of a meal at least three times a week.

Fish is often plentiful in the stream and rivers surrounding the realm, and even blind cavefish are considered edible if not particularly flavorful. Fresh fish is boiled or fried, whereas smoked fish is thrown into stews where the flavor is allowed to enrich the broth. Dwarves do not practice large-scale fishing, and certainly never use boats, and in most cases nets are strung over parts of a river to catch whatever comes along.

A high-protein diet is not the most efficient way of taking in energy. Meat must be cooked if it is to provide energy with any speed, as this allows the body to break down the protein quicker. The best form of a quick energy fix is carbohydrate, especially sugars. Fortunately for dwarves, nature provided sugar in the form of honey, which they harvest from wild hives.

Honey is eaten raw, spread on top of flatbread, or used to make honey cakes, which are popular with children and the elderly because they dissolve in the mouth and need little chewing. The other use of honey, and some would say the best use, is in the brewing of mead, at which dwarves excel.

As for vegetables, dwarves eat a lot of fungus (which is actually another source of protein) and edible moss, which grows well below ground. These can be cooked in a variety of means and can even be dried for use later. Some of these are mildly toxic, but dwarves rarely suffer from nasty side effects. The same cannot be said of visiting non-dwarves, who are warned not to eat any fungus they have not eaten before.

When it comes to "proper" vegetables, dwarves look to their neighbors. Gnomes and halflings, common allies to their taller cousins, produce plenty of fresh produce and sell it to dwarves in return for ore and manufactured goods. In this way, dwarves eat carrots, radishes, cabbages, potatoes, turnips, parsnips, sprouts, and pretty much all other common vegetables. They never eat them raw, but always boil them to the point where they become a thick paste. Typically eaten with a meal, they can also be stuffed into flatbread along with some meat for use the following day as a snack.

Bread is made from wheat or barley and never contains yeast. As such it remains flat. Most bread is used to mop up juices left from a meal, though it can be eaten with honey, jam, or even cut in half and filled with meat. Dwarven quern stones are efficient and the flour produced is very smooth. Still, living beneath ground does mean that some dust and tiny chippings can find their way into the mix. Dwarves have strong teeth, but visitors are advised to chew slowly to avoid chipping their teeth.

Fruit is limited to wild berries, though there are dozens of varieties edible to dwarves (and not all of which agree with the stomachs of other races). Eaten fresh or dried, thrown into stews or casseroles, stuffed into roasting meat, or used to make jam and cakes, berries provide all the vitamins a dwarf needs to remain healthy. Many dwarves brew wine using berries.

Which brings us on to alcohol. If there is one thing dwarves do well, it is drink. Their love of strong ale is renowned, as is their capacity to quaff large amounts, but few races ever stop to ask why. Dwarves are not alcoholics, in that they do not need to drink. They enjoy it, but they are not addicted. Dwarves work long days and need to relax quicker than other races, so they drink alcohol. Aside from water, non-alcoholic liquids are scarce; even goat's milk is something of a luxury. Dwarves rarely drink water, which although full of minerals and generally clean, they find lacking in taste.

Another key factor is that dwarves have always drunk strong alcohol. According to their traditions, it was a gift from the gods and is therefore to be drunk as often as possible in their honor. Non-dwarves who regularly drink with

dwarves find alcohol has one of three effects on their comrades; they fall asleep, they suddenly develop a loud and crude sense of humor, or they become even more surly and withdrawn. Few become violent, which is perhaps a good thing.

Dwarves brew beer and spirits from imported barley and grain, mead from honey, and wine either from fruit and vegetables or grapes, which can grow locally. Beer varies in strength from small beer at 4% alcohol by volume to a potent 9% by volume. Spirits range from 35% to 75%, and mead and wine tend to be 14 to 17%, the latter of which is slightly stronger than most human wines. Some drinks are exported, though most do not travel well over long distances. Outside of dwarven realms, their beer is best drunk in neighboring lands.

Dwarves eat five times a day. Breakfast is taken when they wake and usually consists of porridge, flatbread, and small beer. Sometime during mid-morning they stop work for a light lunch, which is usually cold meat, flatbread, and more small beer. Lunch is a mid to late afternoon affair and meals vary depending on the diner's job. Crafters and soldiers typically go home, where they are fed stew and herbs, bread, and small beer, with a sugary dessert for afters. Miners, while they stop work, eat at their workplace. Many eat the same as their mid-morning snack, whereas others bring bowls of stew or slices of meat (leftovers from the night before) and slabs of bread. Either way, the food is heated over the nearest fire.

The main meal is the evening meal, which is usually eaten around eight o'clock. Stews and roasted meats are most common, seasoned with herbs and a few vegetables. Again flatbread is eaten as the primary source of carbohydrate. Drink tends to be strong beer, mead, or spirits. Before bed the dwarf will take his supper, eating a portion of the remains of the evening meal washed down with small beer.

Clothing

"It's sturdy and hard wearing, but the colors are very drab. Anyone would think they were color blind."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Fashion ranks very low on the list of dwarven traits. Compared to elves and gnomes, their sense of fashion is actually non-existent. Instead, they opt for durable, practical clothes. Both sexes wear leather boots, the height varying on particular taste and occupation. Boots are rarely laced or buckled and simply pull on over thick woolen socks. During winter months when the dwarf must travel outside, fur leggings are worn to keep the feet warm. These are fastened at the knee with leather straps.

Men wear trousers made of leather or wool fastened at the ankle, knee, and waist by leather drawstrings. Men involved in manual labor or military work have thick pads on the knees and bottom to provide extra protection. Leather is tanned but undyed, though some woolen pants are stained brown or green using natural dyes from minerals or berries. Formal wear consist of a woolen kilt or trousers, dyed with blues and reds in a primitive tartan effect. Shirts are invariable woolen, with padded elbows and shoulders. While the latter can make a dwarf look strange, the added comfort it provides when wearing heavy armor or carrying baskets of rocks is worth the ridicule of other races. Hats are unusual indoors, but when traveling abroad they don wool or cloth caps for warmth.

Females also wear trousers, but favor long wool skirts much of the time. Most skirts are worn straight, though pleated skirts may be worn on formal occasions. When wearing a skirt, females wear loose wool shirts similar to those of their menfolk. A variation of the skirt is the dress, which hangs over the shoulders on straps fastened by metal brooches and hangs from the bust down to the floor. Again, a shirt is worn to cover the arms and upper chest.

Cloaks are hooded, made of wool, and worn to knee-length. They fasten via brooches at the neck and can be drawn tight through a series of leather straps. Wool is naturally waterproof, though beeswax is smeared on before long journeys to ensure added protection from the elements.

Both sexes wear belts but not to keep their clothes from falling down. Instead, they use them to hang work tools, weapons, money pouches, or sets of keys. Belts are typically one-inch wide leather bands fastened with an ornate buckle; the more precious the metal, the higher status the wearer. Wearing gloves outside of work or travel outside in unusual, even in the coldest conditions.

As can be seen, dwarves do not make much use of cotton or silk, which they consider flimsy and ill suited for life below ground. Nobles may wear such garments on important occasions, but never for everyday use. Such materials are expensive, suffer mishandling poorly, and are considered by many too elvish for a good dwarf to wear.

Although dwarves manufacture their own clothing, gnome-crafted clothes, especially those made by forest gnomes, are very popular at the markets. Gnomes have a better sense of fashion than their taller cousins and use stitching as decoration rather than just as something to hold the garment together. Gnome tailors living near dwarves always keep a stock of dwarf-sized garments in stock and are quick to point out to visiting males how lovely they would look on their spouse. Given the rivalry between males for a woman's attentions, a gift of fine quality clothing is a sure way to get one over on rivals.

Dwarves invented safety clothing out of necessity. Miners wear metal caps with leather flaps to protect their head, neck, and ears from falling rocks and flying stone chippings. Their boots are likewise layered top and bottom with a layer of metal, placed under the leather to avoid slipping or rust, to protect against sharp rocks underfoot and crushing their toes.

Crafters involved with fire wear thick leather gloves and aprons, which come up to the chin and enclose the beard. Though dwarves have learned the secret of glassblowing, they rarely wear safety goggles. Armor is covered in the section on *Warfare* elsewhere in this section.

Jewelry is common among females, who wear brooches, necklaces, armbands, and rings, but less so among men, who favor only simple rings. Body piercing is rare and dwarves prefer to wear jewelry on rather than in their skin. While most jewelry is metal, typically silver or gold even for the poorest dwarves, shale (a form of coal) bracelets and simple leather straps are popular when not at any formal occasion. Precious stones are usually worn on necklaces or studded into bracelets, but never on rings.

Tattoos are common among male dwarves though usually refined to the forearms. Most designs are heraldic, displaying clan loyalties, or runic inscriptions naming loved ones or notable deeds. Facial tattoos are extremely rare, perhaps not surprising given the bears sported by males, but war paint is popular. Made from crushed rocks mixed with water or vegetable dyes, it is only worn in battle and usually highlights the eyes of the wearer. Some warriors have taken to dyeing their beards in bright colors both to intimidate foes and make themselves stand out in battle so as to attract (or possibly divert) their enemy's attention.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

New Equipment

Dwarves of all subraces have developed equipment to help them explore the underearth. The new equipment listed here is generic; different subraces utilize slightly different designs, but the end result is the same.

Rekzaki

Rekzaki ("stone cloaks") are stiff cloaks whose outer surface consists of gravel held to the cloak by glue. The gravel is designed to blend in with the rocks of the underearth, granting the wearer limited camouflage. When the wearer is stationary, the cloak grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks. A moving wearer has only a +1 bonus.

Cost 10 gp. Weight 5 lb.

Gramok

Gramok, or "lung bags," are membranous bags constructed from animal bladders. Carried flat, they are inflated by breathing into them when needed. Used as a flotation device, each bag provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Swim checks. They can also be used to provide air to divers or explorers by placing the opening over the nose and mouth, granting 3 minutes of breathable air. When using an inflated air bag, the dwarf is immune to the effects of gas attacks.

Cost 9 gp. Weight 2 lb.

Lukduk

Lukduk ("rope stairs") are twin lengths of silk rope joined with thin, hollow metal rungs of exceptional strength. They come in fixed lengths of 10 feet but can be tied together to form longer ladders. They function exactly as a regular ladder but are more portable. A *lukduk* can support 300 pounds in weight.

Cost 4 gp. Weight 3 lb.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Beards

"I tugged this dwarf's beard and it came off! I swear, those things are glued on."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Many folktales exist about dwarven bears, the most common of which is that women have facial hair as well. Females do have sideburns, but do not grow beards or moustaches. This does not mean they do not wear them, however.

A female dwarf is allowed to wear a fake beard in several circumstances. The first, and most common, is when traveling outside the realm. Dwarves are loath to let their womenfolk travel around for fear roving bands of goblinoids will take the opportunity to whittle down their numbers even further. In this sense, they are disguised as men and take male names. Since all dwarves have a deep voice, most races cannot tell the sexes apart when disguised this way. In a similar vein, women dealing with outsiders must wear disguises. Because of this paranoia, dwarven females are rarely, if ever, seen by outsiders, which has given rise to one of the most common misconceptions about the race.

The second reason for wearing a beard is when a female joins the military. Ancient traditions state that only those old enough to sport a beard may fight with the army, so female warriors have no choice but to adopt the custom and become bearded. There is also the added advantage that the presence of a woman does not attract arrows like flies around a dung heap.

Thirdly, a woman may wear a beard when she is head of her household, which usually means she has no older male relatives. By tradition, she may then adopt the role of a male, performing any task to which she is skilled. During her time as a man, she is treated as a male and is expected to adopt male customs. Should she remarry, she must revert to her woman's role in society, no matter how skilled or powerful the male role she holds.

Males, however, are expected to wear beards and a dwarf is considered an adult when he grows a full beard. Basing one's mental competence to handle life as an adult on a physical biological factor may not be wise, but dwarves rarely grow their first beard before they are 40 anyway. So, if all men have beards, why do so many styles exist? As with many things, tradition plays its part.

The style of beard and its length denotes many factors in society. A good rule of thumb is the longer the beard, the more important the dwarf. Of course, beard lengths can be hard to judge on sight and dwarves dislike other races trying to measure their facial hair. A non-dwarf should be very careful when using beard length to judge social rank. Calling a dwarf "my lord" may be amusing to a commoner, but addressing a high ranking noble as a *mygan* is downright insulting. Even within the same social class, beard lengths vary according to status.

As for style, this is actually easier to spot. Nobles wear three-stranded beards bound with eight leather straps, representing the eight great families of dwarvenkind. Whereas most dwarves sport unadorned straps, nobles have their engraved with the names of famous ancestors in honor of their memory.

Warriors wear their beards braided into two separate strands (a forked beard) and tied with leather straps. Because military titles are based on social status as well as experience, length plays its part as well. To add to the confusion, warrior nobles do not wear the three strands of their birthright but the twin plaits of their profession. Non-noble soldier swear green straps, whereas nobles sport blue ones. Boar warriors grow their beards to resemble a boar's horns, which looks similar to an inverted handlebar moustache.

Crafters wear their beards in a single bound strand, which makes it easier to tug out the way when working. Master crafters are titled to wear two strands braided together to form a single length. There is no differentiation between trades based on beard style, but most crafters wear their guild symbol branded onto their leather ties.

Miners wear their beards untethered and bushy, which helps keep dust and small chippings out of their mouths. Clerics wear four-stranded beards as reverence to the four main gods of their race, though their bindings are decorated with the holy symbol of their specific faith, whereas scholars wear a bushy beard near their face, and divide it into strands once it passes shoulder length.

Lastly, convicted criminals wear close shaven beards as a mark of their status, whereas outlaws are shaved and branded with irons to prevent the beard from growing back along the chin, thus making them easily identifiable to other dwarves.

Moustaches are considered part of the beard and nearly always cover the top lip. Style varies by personal choice, though most go for the bushy look or the trimmed option, which looks like they have a hairy comb stuck under their nose. Outsiders should be very careful about insulting a dwarf's beard, for great reverence is attached to them and touching one without permission is insulting. Cutting or burning it, even unintentionally, can lead to violent retribution.

Noble or pauper, dwarves take great care over their beards and groom them daily. Barbers are visited every few weeks to keep the beard neat, and woe betide a barber who decides to shave a few inches off the bottom to make it look neater. Dwarves know the significance of beard length and can accurately judge what length a beard should be, but humans are generally ignorant of the important. Gnome barbers should be trusted at the dwarf's discretion, for rock gnomes are not above "accidentally" lopping off a few inches.

Medicine and Healthcare

"Only worry when it stops hurting."

Dwarf saying.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

New Alchemical Mixtures

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture (Dwarves/Non dwarves)
<i>Bakwask</i>	15	5 gp/15 gp
<i>Fotarurska</i>	15	9 gp/ 27 gp
<i>Proturs</i>	13	3 gp/ 9 gp

Bakwask

A single bandage worn over night heals 2 hit points of burn damage in addition to the patient's own natural healing. The salts quickly dissolve into the wound, and if worn a second night the bandage cures only 1 hit point. Wearing the bandage for a third day has no effect. If the patient has complete bed rest for an entire day and night, the restorative powers are doubled, but the bandage is still only good for two days.

Fotarurska

Any goblinoid or orc moving within 5 feet of the wearer)or spillage or if struck by a thrown potion) must make a Fortitude (DC 15) roll or suffer a -2 penalty to attack and skill rolls for ten rounds. Other races are not affected unless they have orc or goblinoid blood.

Proturs

Each dose adds a +3% chance to the victim's stabilization roll, to a maximum of 21% (seven doses). At this point the blood is saturated and cannot process any more. Only one dose can be applied each round, it provides the bonus the round it is inhaled, and remains potent for ten rounds.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Dwarven healthcare is remarkably advanced. Given the near-constant warfare they wage against orcs and goblinoids it is perhaps not surprising they are experts at dealing with wounds. Likewise, industrial accidents are commonplace and have led to some horrific injuries, which the dwarves have coped with admirably.

Most healers are Seekers of the Three Strengths, whose temples double as hospitals. Many retain the religion's belief of avoiding physical confrontation, but a militant band operate as frontline combat surgeons, risking life and limb to save fallen soldiers. Though kept in reserve until needed, they are prepared to wade into battle when called upon and pay little heed to those they kill and maim.

Wounded soldiers are either treated where they lie or dragged to the rear. Minor cuts are treated quickly with poultices and alchemical brews designed to get the soldier back on his feet as quickly as possible. Proper first aid can wait until the battle is won. More serious injuries may involve the use of magic, but if a healer can provide a quick fix he will do so. Few soldiers are prepared to leave their comrades fighting just because of a wound. Though often seen as bravado and glory seeking, this is a common feature of the dwarven kinship bond and is considered to be one of the greatest acts of loyalty a dwarf can perform.

Most civil injuries are burns or crushing damage, caused either by falls, dropped objects such as hammers, or cave-ins. Burns, even severe ones, are treated with chemical-soaked bandages and the patient kept in a humid environment. Dwarves understand the cleansing properties of salt and use it on burns to prevent infection. It can be applied neat or in a weak water solution, depending on the needs of the patient. Crushing injuries involve splinting the area to secure it cannot move, but apart from pumping the patient full of medicine and praying, little else can be done.

As with most races, dwarven clerics cannot remove all ills from the world, and this includes injury and death. There are far fewer clerics than there are inhabitants, and as service providers they charge for their spells and cures. The religious council sets tariffs based on social class, with no differentiation on actual wealth or status. Those who cannot pay often ask family and friends for help, and few are slow in chipping in a few gold coins to aid a fallen dwarf.

Dwarven alchemists rarely employ herbs or roots, of which they have little knowledge. Their mineral knowledge, however, extends to levels undreamt of by most other races, and by mixing certain crushed rocks and mineral salts, combined with the usual alchemical boiling, distilling, infusing, and so forth, can devise a cure for all most all ills.

The three commonest alchemical brews available on the open market are described below. Dwarven fighters routinely drink anti-toxin before entering into battle against orcs and goblinoids, who regularly use poisoned weapons.

Bakwask, or "glistening skin," is a specially prepared cloth bandage soaked in mineral salts for many days. Used to treat burns, it is placed over the wound and tied in place. The mineral salts are highly effective but once exposed to the wound the salts are quickly absorbed into the wound. Bandages can be used for two days, but should be changed every day if the patient is to heal at the fastest possible rate. The strange name comes from the two sources. First, burns lead plasma and glisten with moisture. Second, the bandages shimmer with light refracted through the copious quantities of salts.

In large battles, or when the battlefield is within labyrinthine goblinoid lairs, many warriors bleed to death before the healers can reach them. *Proturs* ("powder blood") is a fine red powder carried by most warriors, who do not need to be healers to use it. Even unconscious dwarves breathe and dwarves inhale through their noses. A small pinch of the powder is placed under each nostril, which is then sucked in when the patient next inhales. Membranes in the nose allow the powder to quickly enter the bloodstream, which it works as an advanced clotting agent. While it will not allow the patient to get up and start fighting, it will keep him alive until he can be healed.

Lastly there is *fotarurska* ("orc bane"). While not a medicine, it is included here for convenience. Produced from a variety of ground minerals and diluted into solution, *fotarurska* is smeared over clothes and skin and acts as a chemical agent against orcs and goblinoids (including half-orcs). To most races the dwarf smells a little ripe, as if he has not bathed in a week, but goblinoids find the stench repulsive. Alternately, the potion can be spread over the floor to form an invisible barrier or thrown at opponents.

Law and Order

"At least dwarves give you a fair trial."

Grarg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Dwarves pride themselves on their sense of justice. Their ancient laws have remained unaltered since their inception and have served the race well. While a written codex of the laws exists in every realm, lawspeakers, usually clerics of the True, are expected to know them by heart. Given the size of these volumes, learning them takes many decades.

The dwarven legal system is broken down into two distinct parts, trial and sentencing, each governed by a separate court. Three Truthspeakers judge the accused, regardless of his social status. There is no tradition preventing the accused being tried by his own kinfolk, for Truthspeakers put the law and justice above family ties. No special dispensation is shown just because the judge and accused are related.

The accused may speak for himself, or he may hire a junior lawspeaker to act on his behalf. The same is true for accuser. Defendants may call witnesses to attest to their character or provide alibis, while the prosecution witnesses are usually eyewitnesses and character witnesses (who are there to swear the accuser is of good moral standing and has been sorely done by). Material evidence is accepted into court, though modern forensics does not exist. A bloody sword found in the defendant's home is evidence, but a smudged handprint is not.

Witnesses play a vital part, for the number and status of witnesses is important. A lonely rat catcher accused of a crime who musters only one witness stands little chance compared to a noble bringing in multiple kinfolk, clerics who will swear to his god nature, and so on. Dwarves are less likely to lie under oath than other races, but it has been known. Perjury is a very serious offense.

The Truthspeakers only role is to evaluate the evidence, not to determine guilt or innocence. Once all evidence has been presented, it is passed to a panel of three Builders of the Law, chosen by random lot to serve a month on the panel. They listen to the accounts and then determine guilt or innocence based on the ancient laws. Sentences are determined according to tradition and the Builders may not alter these based on mitigating circumstances. Indeed, dwarven law has very few gray areas and legal wrangling over fine print and wording is an alien concept.

Once judged, the defendant is either free, his guilt expunged, or subject to immediate sentence. Due to the backlog of cases, it may be weeks or months before sentence is past. Depending on the crime and the defendant's status, he is either allowed to return to normal life or placed under house arrest. Because interpreting the law is relatively straightforward, appeals are all but unknown. Exceptions are made when a late witness comes forward, but such witnesses are also subject to trial for failing to present evidence at the correct moment.

Dwarven law breaks crimes into three categories; crimes of honor, crimes of passion, and crimes of malice. Within each section, virtually every crime can be found. The Truthspeakers hearing the evidence must determine in which category a crime belongs. For example, a dwarf is accused of murdering a fellow dwarf who physically assaulted his wife. The court must decide if he acted to defend her honor, lashed out in a moment of anger, or sought brutal revenge. The same crime carries different penalties depending on the category. It is possible to kill a dwarf in a crime of honor, openly admit the fact, and be found innocent of any wrongdoing if the defendant acted according to the law. Such cases are rare and inevitably lead to blood feuds. Oath breaking is always a serious offense and no mitigating circumstances can ever be applied. An oath was either broken, or it was not.

Sentences vary according to the type of crime, but social status plays no part. Nobles breaking the laws are judged as harshly as a rat catcher. Fines, beard cuttings, and periods of indenture are common for low-level crimes, for dwarves do not believe in physical punishment. The most serious offenses are dealt with by outlawing the guilty party from the realm on pain of death. Cut off from family and friends, an outlawed dwarf is considered a worthless wretch among his own race. Fines are paid to the injured party, with the court taking a 25% cut to pay for costs involved in the trial.

Blood feuds, or *nagedkat* ("bad partings"), result when the courts fail to reach the verdict the accused was looking for. Perhaps the defendant was freed, or maybe he was sentenced under an honor crime when the injured party wanted a crime of malice judgment. Whatever the reason, blood feuds must be declared to the court and the other party. Any crime committed by either party against the other (and this involves all kinfolk) is automatically judged as a crime of honor. While this may sound bad, some honor crimes receive lighter sentences, including murder and theft (especially when trying to claim an unpaid crime in the latter instance). A blood feud declared before the court has reached its decision automatically becomes a crime of malice in and of itself, for dwarves believe that the courts must be allowed to pass justice first and foremost.

In days of old, accusations could be settled out of court by duels. Such practice is now considered antiquated (which is in itself a rarity) as it gave military and noble families an edge. Such duels were legal but considered by many to be unjust. The ancient Truthspeakers checked the records and agreed that "equal justice for all" was not possible in a duel.

Engineering

Dwarves are renowned as the leading exponents of technology. As well as more mundane arts, such as metalworking, they are proponents of engineering. Aqueducts and canals are controlled by complex locks and sluice gates, forges burn natural gas, which is much less polluting than coal or wood, and elevators allow travel between different levels of the realm as well as making moving large quantities of resources more convenient.

Pumps are used to clear flooded areas and to raise water from deep cisterns to more accessible cisterns. These are manually operated but very efficient. Waterwheels are used to power machinery, such as elevators and large grinding machines and even use gears, though clockwork mechanisms are in their early stages and never used to tell the time. Durvak Angklin, an inhabitant of Dijishy, has been experimenting with steam powered machines but so far his experiments have met with failure; usually highly destructive failure.

In some realms water is fed into pipes within the natural rock, flowing through the city and accessible by opening a tap. The water falls from high cisterns through the pipes (and is thus under some pressure) to a lower cistern, where it is pumped back to the upper cistern. Running hot water is a problem the dwarves have yet to solve, though experiments with placing a series of coal fires at certain stages along the network are being carried out by several engineers. Once cracked, dwarves will undoubtedly create the first true showers.

Engineering is not just limited to large works. Lanterns emplaced in columns and corridors are fed oil through a network of pipes topped up from a central reservoir. Flint and steel igniters are placed within the lantern, allowing the operator to light the lantern by wiggling a lever back and forth until the flint sparks. Even locks for doors and chests are a dwarvish invention. Most are common key locks, but dwarves know how to build primitive combination locks using cogs and levers. Such inventions are rarely sold to other races, however.

Dwarves do not use beasts of burden to pull mining trucks, nor do they expect their miners to do such work. Wooden trucks run on metal rails throughout the mines, pulled by a chain wound and released by waterwheels. The operator activates the waterwheel to pull the truck up the slope and lets gravity take it back down. Even in some workshop areas, trucks are used to transport raw resources and collect finished goods, delivering them to the central warehouses. In these areas the trucks run on a carefully designed loop, stopping for a few minutes at selected spots in a never-ending cycle. Dwarves thinking of catching a ride need to be careful, for the tunnels are barely higher than the truck and limbs can easily be crushed if not tucked inside the truck.

Despite rumors of a magical or alchemical black powder, dwarves have not invented gunpowder (or indeed any other form of explosive). Their siege engines throw boulders through complex counterbalances and an in-depth knowledge of levers rather than hurling them from cannons. Picks and shovels are used to mine ore, though there have been some experiments with automated mining machines.

Rock gnomes, no strangers to engineering themselves, often visit friendly realms to study the marvels of engineering. Gnomes and dwarves live in different habitats, however, and most are not suited to rock gnome settlements. That does not stop them coming to learn.

Relations with Other Races

Hill dwarves may not be the most gregarious of races, but they still interact with other races, both sociably and in war. On the whole, dwarves rarely engage in casual banter, preferring to speak when something needs to be said. Many civilized races consider them rude, but getting a dwarf to talk casually can be like getting blood from a stone. Dwarves prefer the company of their own race most, feeling comfortable in a common language, religion, and culture. They do not adjust well to new or unexpected situations and often become withdrawn until they have grasped the situation and developed a way of coping.

Presented here in the typical dwarven view of the other races inhabiting Tellene. These are cultural views, and individuals may react differently.

Other Dwarves

Adurek are just one three dwarven subraces inhabiting Tellene. Although the races diverged many millennia ago, their split was amicable and the races maintain good relations to this day. Differences in their views on other races and religion aside, they are still brothers.

The commonest interaction is trade, and all three races trade with each other, carrying vast quantities of goods up and down the underearth. In general, food and manufactured goods head down, and raw minerals head up. As is typical with dwarves, they give preferential treatment to their own kind and buy and sell at much lower prices than with other races. Cultural ideas also move between the subraces, though in practice these are typically limited to families rather than entire domains.

Although hill dwarves rarely send troops to aid the stone dwarves, whose foes are alien to the near-surface dwellers, mountain dwarves can expect to receive aid in the form of professional soldiers when they call. Depending on the situation, the *adurek* may want payment, but more often than not the battles are against a common foe and the chance to remove an enemy is payment enough.

Intermarriage between the races is not unknown, though most alliances are purely political. This helps strengthen the bonds behind the disparate kingdoms and reunites them in blood if not in faith. Mixed race children are unknown, and any offspring are members of one race or the other rather than a cross. Regardless of external appearance, they raised in the culture into which they were born. In this way, it is possible to find a hill dwarf whose mannerisms are alien compared to others of his subrace.

Dwarves adventuring together, regardless of subrace, have a natural bond and understanding than runs deeper than mere friendship. Both races understand the earth and are adept at underground exploration. Slight differences in cultural and religious views do surface into heated arguments at times, but these are quickly resolved. Adventuring with fellow dwarves also gives a dwarf the comfort of familiar surroundings, and he can speak his native tongue without having to continually wince at poor pronunciation or grammar.

Elves

For the most part, elves and *adurek* avoid each other. Any trade between the races is usually conducted through middlemen, such as gnomes or halflings, whom both races tolerate. No great animosity lies at the heart of their cool relationship. In truth, cultural and religious differences separate the races.

Elves believe in freedom of will and an egalitarian society, whereas dwarves favor close bonds, a structured society where every dwarf knows his place, and a class system laid down by their ancient forebears. Of course elven society works, but dwarves see it as a collection of individuals vaguely working together rather than a well-oiled machine serving the betterment of the race through hard work and dedication to a common cause. Elven frivolity and stopping work to sing or dance is, to dwarves, a waste of precious work time, which could be better spent earning money for the kingdom.

The biggest sticking point is the view on nature. Elves see the great forests and towering mountains as wondrous miracles, whereas the more practical dwarves see them as fuel and minerals respectively. This is not to say dwarves do not appreciate nature, but their love is restricted to rocks, metals, and gems, about which their knowledge surpasses that of the elves.

Religious practices also differ, with elves favoring personal liberty, enjoyment of life, and nature. Compared to the dwarven preference for hard work, loyalty, honor, and bravery, it is perhaps not surprising the two races have little to say to each other. Any contributing factor is the different views of magic. Whereas most elves understand and respect magic, both arcane and druidic, dwarves have only clerics in their society. They dispensed with arcane magic many eons ago and druidic magic has little to offer them as a race.

Elven warriors are respected for their skill, if not their actual combat moves. Elven archers are undoubtedly among the best in the world, but dwarves care little for a swordsman's leaps and dances. Dwarves prefer to stand firm and meet their foes with strength of numbers rather than launch into individual battles. Of course, this mentality reflects their culture differences as much as anything else.

The only race hill dwarves hate are the drow, whose infrequent raids result in unnecessary deaths, enslavement, and material loss. Most drow colonies lie too deep for the dwarves to attack, but any shadow elves encountered on the surface can expect a rough time.

When adventuring together, dwarves and elves have little in common about which to speak. Elves tend to be flighty and act as they wish, whereas a dwarf looks to strengthen party bonds, devises plans for every possible encounter, and insists on everyone working to the same plan. The two races can form long friendships. Given their long lives, it is only natural that the closeness of an adventuring party will begin to rub off on both races and a happy middle ground form. Of course, this may take decades, but both races are patient.

Dwarves refer to all surface dwelling elves as *alfr* ("woodland folk"), seeing little difference in their ways of life, but reserve a special name for the drow; *slitealfr* or "enslavers."

Gnomes

Dwarves and rock gnomes consider themselves to be distant cousins, though there is no biological or mythological link between them. The belief stems from the shared love of crafting, knowledge of the earth, clannish attitudes, and the common bond shared between sub-surface races. Although rock gnomes spend a great deal of time aboveground, their homes are familiar to dwarves and share many of the same features.

The famous rock gnome sense of humor is alien to dwarves, who fail to see how the gnomes can produce such quality workmanship and yet spend so much time fooling around. Gnome jests that they are simply better crafters go down like lead weights in the ocean. Arcane magic, which gnomes embrace, is accepted by visiting dwarves so long as it is not flouted in their face. Gnome storytellers, whose particular magic enhances any tale, are often sought out, for appreciation of a good story is something the two races have in common.

Both races share common foes, and joint military ventures are not unknown. For the most part, the gnomes hire dwarves as mercenaries to work alongside their own Granite Legion, whose tactics are very similar to those of the dwarves.

Dwarven crossbowmen can find employ in gnome armies, whose own weapon are lighter and have a shorter range. Conversely, dwarves hire gnome soldiers for their skill with alchemical weapons and sneakiness, a trait lacking in dwarves.

Forest gnomes are far too elvish for most dwarves to fully appreciate. Their religion differs greatly from the more familiar rock gnomes, their military tactics reek of elven influence, and they put individual rights above those of society. These differences do not stop trade, and forest gnomes sell vast quantities of food to local dwarves in return for metal, which they do not mine. Most trade goes through rock gnomes, who happily rake in the profits.

Forest gnomes sometimes act as a buffer between dwarf and elf merchants. The forest gnomes' praises and compliments often sit well with dwarves, who appreciate being recognized for the advanced race they are. Slandering dwarven culture as "rigid" or "restrictive" sits less well, however.

Deep gnomes are an oddity to most dwarves, but trade has been known between the two races. Deep gnome and hill dwarf merchants meet with some regularity to exchange commodities. Discussions are formal and restricted to business, resulting in little practical knowledge being known. Rock gnomes, the deep gnomes' nearest relations, simply shrug their shoulders when asked about them, for in truth dwarves and deep gnomes meet more regularly than do the gnome subraces.

When adventuring together, dwarves and rock gnomes swap stories, discuss matters of metalwork, and regale each other with tales of their deeds. So long as the gnome reins in his jesting, he can quickly become a trusted friend. Forest gnomes and dwarves share little in common, although dwarves appreciate the constant stream of compliments, not realizing the true nature behind them. Deep gnomes and dwarves share a common subterranean bond, but know very little about each other. As such, dealings are likely to be awkward and very formal until both races have adjusted.

Dwarves call rock gnomes *muket-sla*, ("little cousins"), forest gnomes *erklere* ("tree imps"), and deep gnomes *hellige* ("lost ones").

Halflings

Dwarves and halflings are often neighbors, with the former living in the hills near the halfling communities. Relationships are cordial, but not overly friendly. Aside from food, the diminutive halflings have very little to offer dwarves. Likewise, halflings buy raw metals but prefer to craft weapons more suited to their size than buy chunky dwarven versions. Dwarven toys are popular with adults and children.

In desperate times halflings may be employed as scouts or missile troops, but dwarves prefer to employ rock gnomes when they have a choice. Despite their ferocity when riled, halflings are simply too frail looking for dwarves to take seriously as warriors. However, dwarves can find work protecting halflings and, in some areas, a defense agreement gives the dwarves responsibility for defending the halflings in return for tributes of food. Both sides prosper and mutual respect can grow into friendship between the races.

Adventuring dwarves know halflings are very skilled thieves and spies, but have no faith in them in a standup fight. As a result, they can be over protective toward them, even to the point of being unintentionally insulting. Once the dwarf understands what the individual is capable of the relationship is much smoother and the pair can become friends.

The dwarven word for halflings is *muktreki*, which means "little people."

Humans

Humans are a mixed bag that have both worked with and against the dwarves. As such, dwarven views are split based on personal circumstance. When dwarves live among humans, they invariably earn a living as crafters and engineers, putting their traditional skills to use building bridges, fortifications, and so forth. Such creations endure the ages and are seen by many as a lasting legacy of human-dwarf friendship.

Trade is quite common among peaceful neighbors, with precious ores and crafted goods heading out of the hills and caravans of food, leather, and cloth heading back in. Regular contact with trading partners is often subject to fixed price contracts, imposed to overcome the belief on both sides that the others are greedy. Humans insist on negotiating new contracts every year, which the long living dwarves find tedious. Where contact is less frequent, both sides can find the going tough, for dwarves do not haggle and charge high prices for their wares.

Other branches of humanity, especially the Kalamarans and Brandobians, have repeatedly shown their true colors to dwarves, treating them as second-class citizens or slaves waiting to be chained. Although Karasta was a mountain dwarf stronghold, its fall to the Emperor sent shockwaves through hill dwarf realms. If mighty Karasta could fall, what hope was there for their realm?

How a human-dwarf adventuring relationship works out depends more on the human than the dwarf. Dwarves are fixed in their traditions and beliefs and do not change their minds quickly, if at all. A Kalamaran or Brandobian is likely to be treated with open hostility at the suffering of the dwarf's kin, whereas a Fhokki may be respected for his strength, a Dejj mocked for his backward view of technology, a Reanaarian treated as a potential ally who probably knows at least one of the dwarf's relatives living in the Bay area, and a Svimohz treated with respect because of his formal society.

Dwarves do understand the main differences between the human subraces, but prefer to lump them together under the title *sejjon*, which loosely translates as "latecomers."

Hobgoblins

Despite their so-called civilized society, hobgoblins remain high on the list of the *adurek's* foes. Dwarves look upon the hobgoblin kingdoms with disgust, claiming their view that "nothing changes quickly for the better" remains as true today as it did eons ago. Despite having cities and being included among the great races, hobgoblins remain callous, militaristic, and worst of all, oppressive. No love is lost between hill dwarves and any of the hobgoblin subraces.

Relationships are limited to battlefield encounters. No dwarf wishing to keep his beard would be caught dead socializing with a hobgoblin, yet alone trading with one. While hobgoblins lack the tactics to overcome a dwarven stronghold, their courage should not be underestimated, for unlike their lesser cousins, the goblins, hobgoblins are persistent foes and learn quickly from their mistakes.

A dwarf and hobgoblin adventuring together share one common factor; they hate each other with a passion. While the dwarf undoubtedly wants only to kill his foe, he must ensure his prowess is enough to overcome that of his stronger opponent. To fail would mean certain death.

Regardless of subrace, the dwarves refer to hobgoblins by one name, *diskmor* ("vile ones").

Half Races

Dwarves recognize four distinct half races; half dwarves, half elves, half orcs, and half hobgoblins. Half dwarves are covered elsewhere in this book. Although half races often portray characteristics from both parents, dwarves treat them as members of the non-human race unless proven different. Most of this stems from a traditional view that no matter what he looks like an orc (or other race) is still an orc. Half races resulting from a forced union are considered labeled by their non-human status, even when the human parent was the perpetrator of the crime.

Dwarves label half races other than half dwarves as members of the non-human race with the prefix *keh*, which loosely means "not pure."

Non-Civilized Races

Dwarves may live in subterranean realms but they are not isolated. They know of, and regularly encounter, a variety of creatures. The most commonly encountered non-civilized races are goblinoids and orcs. No love is lost between dwarves and these races and bloodshed is the only acceptable outcome of a confrontation. Dwarves view all goblinoids and orcs as rapacious creatures with no respect for the earth in which they dwell. Rapacious, in this sense, does not refer to their mating practices, but to how they strip metal from the ground with no intention of returning any. In short, they are desecrating Tellene with their activity.

Although variant species exist within each group, hill dwarves refuse to give these sub breeds any special favor by giving them their own title. As such, the following racial names encompass all sub breeds, no matter how different they look from the major breed. Goblins are called *krengari* ("filth dwellers"), bugbears are *donske-na-mare* ("eaters of the dead"), and orcs are *fotarurs* ("savage bloods").

Kobolds have the sense to leave dwarves alone, for the most part, but will attack small realms when desperately short of resources. Gnomes are of course their preferred foes, and kobolds lack the military strength to conduct anything other than attacks of opportunity against the sturdier dwarves. For their part, dwarves view kobolds as an irritating nuisance and lacking anything the dwarves need. Still, they do rape the earth and when encountered are usually attacked. Dwarves call kobolds *esellingsst*, which translates as "yapping dragons."

While gnolls do not have the courage to venture into dwarven realms, they happily attack merchants and patrols of lower strength. Gnoll tactics are not suited to combating dwarves, for while gnolls like to overpower their foes and knock them down, dwarves are hard to bowl over and resist such attacks with consummate ease. Gnolls coming up against boar warriors often find their own tactics used against them. Gnolls are referred to as *likebran*, or "corpse ravens," in reference to their scavenging any target of opportunity.

Despite having lived below ground for countless millennia, dwarves still encounter giants, though obviously not in the tunnels. Giants living in the hills and mountains are a threat to dwarven expansion, the safety of merchants, and, of course, their goat and sheep herds. Fortunately, dwarves have retained their tradition of teaching their young anti-giant tactics. Of course, attacking a giant requires large numbers of troops and in most cases dwarves are happy to drive the beast off with missile weapons rather than engage in melee combat.

Hill dwarves, who prefer to live in lower altitudes, rarely encounter cloud giants. Some trade exists between hill dwarves and good-aligned cloud giants and non-aggression pacts are common in such instances. Cloud giants are called *aloskempe*, which means "castle giants." Fire giants are again rarities to *adurek*, and are usually hostile. Their name, *thukempe*, means "red giants." Only by hill dwarves living in the arctic regions encounter frost giants (*emedkempe*, "white giants") with any regularity, and as with fire giants are considered hostile creatures.

Of all the giants, hill giants are the most common in *adurek* lands. They see dwarves as tasty treats, though are wary of the dwarves' weapons and armor. Sheep and goat herders are at most risk from these brutes, and when a hill giant is

spotted in the area rapid measures must be taken to ensure the safety of the flocks and their tenders. Dwarves call hill giants *tijkempe*, or "brown giants."

Stone giants sometimes wander into *adurek* lands but for the most part prefer to leave the dwarves alone. For their part, the dwarves are grateful of not having to wage war on another species of giant. Since stone giants prefer stone weapons and leather armor, dwarves do not consider these giants to be a threat to their mineral wealth. In most cases the giant can be persuaded to leave with gifts of ale or sheep. Sacrificing a few tons of low-value resources is seen as a better option than risking valuable lives. Stone giants are called *adomkempe* ("rock giants"), in deference to their skill at throwing boulders.

Storm giants are another friendly race, at least by other giant standards, with whom hill dwarves have some dealings. Since storm giants till fields and value metal, dwarven traders find a ready market, albeit involving a treacherous journey into the higher mountains. For their part, storm giants appreciate dwarven craftsmanship and are happy to sell what they see as minor quantities of food in return for precious metals.

Woodland giants, or *fargekempe* ("green giants") are viewed as a nuisance rather than a threat. Dwarves prefer to burn coal or peat to wood (because of their higher calorific value), but timber is still required for scaffolding and pit props. Rather than trade for lumber, dwarves prefer to cut it down. Although this angers the elves, dwarves do not take more than they need and only take what can be spared. After all, there is no point in draining a ready resource. Woodland giants tend to be more militaristic against "thieving dwarves" and must be dealt with quickly before they kill the loggers.

As with giants, dragons rarely trouble dwarven realms directly. Although universally greedy, dragons know they have no hope of defeating an entire realm. Instead, they keep their activities to attacking merchants and patrols, seeking the legendary wealth of the dwarves in small portions rather than a single, vast haul. Only dragons lording over kobolds launch attacks beneath the surface. For their part, dwarves view dragons as gluttonous and greedy. Their vast treasure piles have lured many dwarves to their deaths, both altruistic dwarves trying to reclaim the precious metal and greedy adventurers seeking a get rich quick victory. All dragons are universally referred to derogatively as *bingst* ("treasure hoarders"), though each species does have a unique name.

Vermin, including rats, stirges, and poisonous spiders and centipedes, are ever present in dwarven realms. No matter how thoroughly the dwarves check, such creatures always find somewhere to hide. Fortunately dwarves are tough creatures and can cope with poison and disease better than other races.

Trade and Tribute

"When I asked about a discount I swear I could hear him choking."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Despite their desire to lessen the amount of metal in the world, no dwarf realm is self-sufficient and trade is the only way of securing vital resources. Where possible the dwarves trade small amounts of metal for large amounts of wood or foodstuffs, keeping the value of ore artificially high among other races. Dwarves do not give discounts, not do they haggle when selling (though they do when buying). Unfortunately, this practice has proven detrimental over the ages, as it encourages humans to start their own mines. Despite the loss of trade and the stripping of metal by other races, dwarves hold true to their tradition.

Dwarven merchants employ porters to carry their goods to market rather than use beasts of burden. As well as saving on animal fodder, the porters double as guards, though most merchants hire professional soldiers from the clan or courage nobles. Merchants invariably trade directly with wholesalers when possible, traveling into neighboring towns and cities to conduct business.

Visiting merchants are allowed into the dwarven realm but guards must relinquish their weapons on entrance. Trade is conducted in special areas near the entrance, so preventing nosy outsiders from learning the layout of the realm or making note of security measures. As lawful good beings, dwarves would never stoop to attacking visiting merchants and stealing their cargoes, and most merchants know that when a dwarf noble offers them hospitality they are in safe hands. Indeed, allowing a guest to come to harm dishonors the host, who must pay recompense to his guest.

Within a realm, the nobles control mineral production. Ore is sold to the smelters, who extract the metal and in turn sell it to the crafters and armorers. Finished goods are taken to the central stores, where they are evaluated and priced according to ancient rules. From here, goods are sold to the smaller clan warehouses, or markets, where they are marked up and sold to the consumer. Clan leaders receive a portion of income from each market, and in turn pay a tax to the realm's ruler. A portion of all ore is sold to merchants for sale outside the realm, with the seller keeping the profit. Strict export quotas limit the quantities of each metal that can be sold according to its rarity.

Dwarves do not collect tribute from other races, but they do sell their services. Soldiers are hired to trusted neighbors as mercenaries when needed to defeat a common foe, and even clerics and crafters can be employed, though the latter only when helping to rebuild a settlement destroyed by goblinoids or orcs. Likewise, neighbors under threat may seek refuge in the safety of the dwarven realm for a fee.

Possessing an ordered society, it is only natural dwarves pay tax. Taxes are usually paid to the clan or realm leader. By law, maintenance of tunnels, water systems, and defenses within a clan's holdings are the responsibility of the clan ruler. Since a king also governs his own clan, he must also maintain his holdings. Nobles also equip their professional soldiers, pay their room and board, must ensure mines operate safely, and so forth. In addition, they must pay their non-craft workers. Miners, for instance, are paid directly by their employer based on production quotas and the value of the goods they excavate.

Business Tax & Guild Licenses

Any dwarf earning a living from supplying goods, whether as a crafter or a merchant, must pay business tax. Ax levels are set at 1 sp per 1 gp profit (10%) and are payable directly to the central treasury. Trading permits cost a fixed 20 gp per annum, payable directly to the guild involved.

Guild Dues

Dwarves belonging to a guild pay 4% of their monthly income to the guildmaster. This payment is not a tax per se, but covers payments when the crafter cannot work through sickness or accident, legal support in disputes with nobles or other races, funeral provision, and such like. Most guildmasters use the money to invest in business ventures, so increasing the actual capital available to the guild. By law this money does not count as income for the guild and so is not taxable.

Nobles pay a similar amount into a worker fund for non-guild workers in their employ, such as miners. The fund serves a similar purpose to that of the guilds. Naturally the sum donated is considerably larger than a single crafter pays, but a noble may have hundreds of miners working for him.

Income Tax

All dwarves pay income tax to their social superior. Common dwarves pay clan nobles, who in turn pay the ruler. The ruler pays his portion of the tax into the central coffers. Regardless of actual income, the tax is fixed at 3 sp per 1 gp earned (30%). It is payable monthly.

Temple Tax

Every dwarf must pay 5% of his income to the temples to help maintain them and to pay for clerics and templars, who receive a stipend from the organization. A dwarf may choose which temple he gives a donation and may spread out his payment to multiple temples.

Trade Tax

Any goods entering or leaving a dwarven realm are taxed according to their value. Import tax is fixed at 2% of the value and is paid by the merchant wishing to sell his goods to the dwarves. Export tax stands at 7% and is paid by the buyer. As one can see, this favors the dwarves in both cases. Dwarven realms accept any currency, basing its value on weight and purity rather than ephemeral exchange rates.

Calendar

"Ah yes, how notably the seasons change underground. I know I'm being sarcastic!"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Dwarven Month	Translation	Standard Name
<i>Blit Jar</i>	Start Year	Renewal
<i>Klok</i>	Trading	Sowing
<i>Zumol</i>	Wandering	Mustering
<i>Hirthi</i>	Watching	Declarations
<i>Ulgas</i>	Restocking	Mid-season Harvest
<i>Imprago</i>	Strengthening	Replanting
<i>Thulke Jar</i>	Mid Year	Siege-hold
<i>Mone</i>	Warming	Arid
<i>Ankalos</i>	Gathering	Reaping
<i>Fal</i>	Waiting	Harvest
<i>Udest</i>	Cooling	Frosting
<i>Ritkum</i>	Axe Fall	Snowfall
<i>Salk Jar</i>	End Year	Famine

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

The dwarven calendar is typically seen as being organized around the 13-month lunar year of Tellene as with other civilized races, but it was not always so. The modern calendar was adopted to allow dwarves to deal with the surface-dwelling races, who were taught it by the elves. The true dwarven calendar is extremely complex and never revealed to outsiders.

In the early days, soon after they discovered the surface world, it was the Brightstar that caught their attention. Whereas the moons moved erratically Brightstar kept perfect time. Dwarves call it *Flamrokk* ("Celestial Heart"), believing it controlled the true rhythm of the universe and kept everything in order. Dwarves later discovered that the moons do move in fixed cycles, but these take many centuries to complete.

Dates are calculated based on the movement of *Flamrokk*, the three moons, and the sun. Centuries of stargazing have enabled the dwarves to calculate eclipses and alignments with remarkable accuracy. Because everything in the universe moves to a cycle, dwarves understand that solar eclipses and celestial alignments are regular events and therefore not portents of doom as some races believe. They have effectively created the science of astronomy but lost much of the wonder of the heavens in the process. Rhythm and order have replaced speculation and mythology.

Complex astrolabes and charts are required to perform even the simplest calculation, but to the orderly loving dwarves it is a labor of love. Clerics of the Founder are responsible for maintaining the dwarven calendar. Dwarves have enough understanding of the heavens that they no longer need to view it to tell the date; all the data they need is in their charts.

Calendrical notations varied with major events and dwarves have used many names over the eons. Until recently the calendar was called the Time of Man and began when humans arrived on the mainland. Following the fall of Karasta the hill dwarves took the unexpected move of following the new cycle started by the mountain dwarves. The current year is now 15 N.M. (after the dwarven term *Norjis Maklosh*, meaning "Fall of the Great Realm").

Dwarves see the sky as the *Amytral* ("Great Smithy"). The sun is *Amythom* ("Great Forge") and the stars as sparks caused by the celestial hammer of the Founder striking *Amythom*. The three moons are not viewed as planetary objects, but as heavenly representatives of the dwarven social stratum. Diadolai, which spends much of its cycle hidden from view, is *Kul Yak* ("Dark Delver"), who mines the heavenly metals for the celestial forge. Pelselond, or *Ful Than* ("Divine Warrior"), roams across the heavens, always searching for foes who would extinguish the forge, and Veshemo is *Gomore* ("The Supervisor"), who ensures the heavenly workshop runs smoothly.

Only during a meteor storm do dwarves look skyward. During such events dwarves believe that hot metal, flakes fly off the forge. Most burn up in the sky but sometimes a flake falls to earth. Dwarves will travel vast distances to claim such a prize, for the metal contained within (meteoric iron) is priceless, being divine in origin. In game terms, treat meteoric iron as adamantium.

The Months

The year begins in *Blit Jar*, the traditional date for recording new events. Enemy raids lessen throughout the month, with the cowardly goblinoids retreating to their lairs to begin breeding. Goats and sheep are let out of their winter pastures to run free in the hills.

Being less bothered by adverse weather than other races, dwarves begin their trading year shortly after *Blit Jar*. Merchants travel to close neighbors to buy excess winter stores of food and wood in return for metal ore and manufactured goods. Few dwarves bother to travel any extensive distance, as most races are more concerned with planting new crops than trading.

Zumol is the first time the merchants from other races begin their journeys to dwarven realms. Dwarven explorers begin their annual search for new mineral veins, both inside and outside the realm. As the days lengthen so the goblinoid tribes slowly withdraw from open warfare, limiting their raids to subterranean forays the dwarves can usually contain with practiced ease.

Hirthi is named for the practice of sending scouts to keep an eye on neighboring troop movements. During the spring months most races muster their armies after the winter break to take stock of equipment and begin drills. Ever suspicious of the motives of other races, the scouts try to gather information on likely targets of aggression and troop strength. Military aides are sent to friendly neighbors to discuss plans for joint raids. Scouts also begin to explore nearby goblinoid lairs, gathering valuable information of defenses before the summer raids begin.

Once the first harvest is gathered the merchants travel further afield in search of foodstuffs. Vast quantities of cereals are imported while hunters gather meat for the larders. Non-dwarf merchants begin their first visits to the realm, bringing new goods to market, while dwarves travel further afield with their wares. Goats and sheep have already given birth, and as the days warm they are shorn and the wool used to make clothes.

As spring turns to summer so the dwarves gather their military strength in *Imprago*. Raids on goblinoid lairs are conducted during this time, the intention being to weaken their numbers before the winter, when goblinoids tend to be more active. Adults are killed before the young, simply because it is the adults who will attack the dwarves in winter.

Particular attention is paid to destroying smithies and looting ore stockpiles, both to deny the enemy these resources and to reclaim the metal.

Depending on how success the raids were and the activities of neighbors, *Thulk Jar* can be a time of renewed military activity or peace. Most races conduct surface warfare during this time, taking advantage of the long days. Dwarven defenses are bolstered, especially in trouble spots, and visitors subjected to intense scrutiny.

Mone marks the height of summer and the inevitable slide toward fall. Although comfortable living below ground, most dwarves take the time to spend at least a few hours above ground, basking in the fresh air and sunlight. Mercantile activities die down during the height of summer in preparation for renewed efforts after harvest. Military raids against hostile neighbors continue throughout the summer, the dwarves having replaced any losses with fresh recruits.

Ankalos is as important for dwarves as it is for other races. Merchants travel far and wide to buy as much food as possible before winter seals the dwarves in their mountain realms. Although harvest is not complete, the merchants travel in a circular route, buying and selling as they go. Distant towns are visited first, with nearby settlements visited on the return leg of the journey, by which time the full harvest is in.

Fal is a time of renewed military activity, although this time of a defensive nature. As the days shorten so the goblinoids grow braver and sentries must be ever vigil for enemy scouts and raiders. Sheep and goats are brought off the mountain to their winter fields near the realm and patrols are doubled. Civilized races rarely devote much time to raiding as gathering the harvest takes priority, so dwarves carry out raids against troublesome neighbors during this period.

Udest marks the transition from fall to early winter. The nights grow long and the temperature drops low enough to form frosts. Although this does not bother the dwarves (the temperature beneath ground tends to remain fairly constant all year), it does put a stop to trading. Most dwarves pay their last visit of the year to close neighbors and prepare to seal their doors until spring.

Ritkum is the favored time for goblinoids to conduct raids against the dwarves. Ever greedy for metal ore, manufactured goods, gems, and food, goblinoid attacks are relentless throughout the winter. Depending on their strength, the dwarves may seal off parts of the realm, diverting miners and laborers to militia units to bolster the strength. With food at a premium, visitors are rarely welcome, though fighters can always find lodgings in return for service.

The last weeks of the year are called *Salk Jar*. Dwarves place no special significance to the end of a year, seeing it as just another revolution of the great cycle of life. Naturally they are pleased that spring is coming, but winter gives them some respite from greedy neighbors and allows them to build reserves of ore ready for the new trading season. Goblinoid raids continue in strength but by now the dwarves have usually contained the threat and are beginning to regain ground lost to earlier attacks.

Dwarves retain the day names of Merchant's Tongue when dealing with other races, but among their own race determine the date by the plurality of the word "day" combined with the month name. Thus, the second Veshday of *Fal* is simply called *dosa Fal* ("day of Fal") with the last vowel of *dosa* held to indicate 14 days. After the halfway point of a month, Dwarves sometimes refer to the day as being the preceding month less so many days. For example, the 15th day of *Fal* can be referred to as *Udest* less 13 days. Dwarves are equally at home with both methods of timekeeping.

Language

"To speak dwarven properly, first gargle with sharp stones."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Spoken & Written

As with much of their culture, the Dwarven spoken today has changed little from the ancient dwarven language that originated eons before the advent of humans on Tellene. Dwarven vocabulary is comprised of short words with specific meaning; there is little ambiguity. Many dwarven words are under three syllables long, and most words are only two syllables. Double consonants are used infrequently, and double vowels used sparingly.

Both written and oral Dwarven revolve around the use of verbs. When conjugated, all verbs end in a vowel, with the stress usually being placed on that last vowel. The vowel used indicates the subject of the verb. For example, the dwarven word for "to run" is *dorom*. An "i" on the end means "She (or it, female) runs;" an "o" means "He (or it, male) runs;" and an "e" reflects first person (I run).

Plurality (they, male and female, and we) is reflected in the length of time the final vowel is held. For example, an "o" held for longer than three seconds would indicate a large number of people or items (they); an "e" held for a full second would indicate two or three people (we). Plurality in the written language is expressed by a series of backslashes (\) after the vowel. The number of backslashes indicates the length of time the final vowel is to be held.

Because of the peculiarity of plurality, dwarves do not have specific words for numbers. Everything is stressed on the final vowel. Dwarves have no trouble differentiating plurality in their own language and are able to tell apart the slight difference between "three" and "four" items, whereas most races can only make an educated guess at the numbers involved.

Dwarves can determine longer numbers, such as thousands and tens of thousands, to the nearest hundred, though obviously telling 1317 orcs from 1340 is difficult and involves a long wait while the speaker finishes the final vowel.

Fortunately, dwarves use other terms to describe large numbers. For instance, rather than count every single axe in the armory, dwarves count them in bundles of ten, fifty, or one hundred, each of which has a unique name. Food and drink are weighed in pounds, hundredweights, and tons (and pints, gallons, and tuns for liquids) rather than individual items. Groups of people are defined by military terms, which every dwarf understands, combining large and small groups to give a fairly accurate picture.

No, this is not a perfect way for a race to count, but it suited dwarves when they first appeared on Tellene and so it remains in use to this day. However, times have changed and many dwarves now use Merchant's Tongue when counting to make life simpler. Within another millennia, all counting is likely to be done in Merchant's Tongue, the numbers becoming part of standard Dwarven.

The Dwarven language consists of the following letters:

A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
N	O	P	R	S	T	TH	U	W	X	Y	Z

Dwarven is unusual in that every letter is pronounced the same no matter what letters precede or follow it. A rough guide to pronunciations follows. Dwarven is not easy for non-dwarves to pronounce correctly, but dwarves have long understood this "problem" and rarely bother to correct the speaker.

A	as in "apple"	J	as in "jig"	S	as in "snake"
B	as in "boat"	K	Short c as in "cat"	T	hard t, as in "it"
D	as in "dungeon"	L	as in "leg"	TH	as in "that"
E	as in "egg"	M	as in "mother"	U	as in "under"
F	as in "fun"	N	as in "nut"	W	as in "water"
G	as in "gully"	O	as in "orange" except at the end, when it is lengthened as in as "tool"	X	"dge" as in "judge"
H	as in "hen"	P	as in "pick"	Y	short I as in "it"
I	Long "e" as in "feel"	R	as in "rock"	Z	ts as in "its"

Dwarven is written from right to left or up to down. Even though dwarven writers know how to use ink, they chiseled dwarven characters for centuries, and still scribe often in stone. A right-handed scribe needs to chisel the letters from right to left, thus the language is written in that fashion.

Names

Dwarves are clannish and reluctant to break a family tradition by brazenly claiming to start their own dynasty. Therefore, they have retained only a handful of family names for centuries. These names belong to the first dwarven families and are considered sacred. Dwarves typically name their children after deceased family members, often in the hope some of the relative's traits will rub off on the youth. Children take the family name of their mother until adulthood, when they take their father's family name.

The full name of a dwarf includes his entire bloodline and is very sacred. Thus, dwarves reveal their full name only to a trusted few, if anyone, and to a non-dwarf in only extremely rare circumstances. Dwarves mingling with other races will typically choose first and last names based either on a personal trait, a stone, a metal, an element, or an occupation. These names might be in Dwarven, but more often dwarves will choose names in Merchant's Tongue or the local human language.

Many dwarves take a nickname, which they use even among their own people. Some nicknames are based on physical features (Big Nose, Greybeard, or the Short), others on deeds (Orcslayer, the Unlucky, Ore Finder), and others on reverse traits (Longshanks for a short dwarf, or the Stick for a portly dwarf). Most nicknames are not chosen, but start with a single individual picking the name, the use of which grows over time until it becomes a part of the dwarf's self identity.

Warfare

"There is no such thing as an unprepared warrior."
Hill dwarf saying.

Dwarves have long been considered a martial race, and not without good reason. They wage a relentless war on orcs and goblinoids, possess the secrets of advanced metalworking, and are renowned for their courage. Given a choice, however, dwarves would rather mine than fight, but when called to war they do so with a ferocity and tenacity not found among the other civilized races.

Weapons and Armor

"Iron is strong, steel stronger, but courage strongest of all."
Hill dwarf saying.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Dwarven Weapons

Throughout all the dwarven warfare sections you will find references to many weapons not common to D&D. These are taken from the *Goods & Gear* sourcebook, which contains their full statistics, in addition to notes on non-mithral dwarven chainmail and a plethora of other useful equipment.

Players without access to *Goods & Gear* should substitute standard D&D equivalents for these weapons based on their description. The player's section provides a detailed list of suitable substitutions.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Metal armor is preferred over leather and hide. Militia troops wear scalemail, which is restrictive but afford as much protection as a chain shirt. Its dominance is due mostly to its low cost. Since militia troops are trained to fight in tight formations, its restrictiveness rarely becomes an issue. Professional soldiers prefer chainmail, both for its flexibility, protection, and because its higher cost denotes their status. Chain shirts are worn on patrol on performing civil duties, whereas heavier chain suits are donned in times of war. Wealthier soldiers wear banded mail to war, sacrificing maneuverability for protection.

Courage nobles typically wear breastplates to denote their status. Many of these are ancestral possessions, and are decorated with runic inscriptions and heraldic devices. Platemail is usually only found in the form of dwarven plate, which is made of iron. The secret of its construction remains a closely guarded secret, passed on from master armorer to apprentice down the generations. Few save the most powerful nobles can afford such garb, and so it has become a status symbol as much as a suit of armor.

Helmets are commonplace. Steel caps, with or without nose and cheek guards, are the most common. A standard variation has a hinged faceplate, complete with beard guard, which can be lifted to allow the dwarf to breathe more easily. Full helmets, sometimes known as bucket helmets, are usually only worn with banded mail or plate.

For the most part, dwarves prefer round shields. Constructed of metal and covered with a hide covering, which muffle the sound of weapons striking the shield, reduce light glint, and allow the wearer to decorate the front, they are common among all ranks of dwarves. The other popular shield, the axe shield, is so named because of its unusual design. A large metal shield, it has two divots in the sides, giving it the appearance of a double-bearded axe. Although these divots allow the dwarf extra arm room to swing weapons or on which to rest spears, they prohibit the shield's use in a shield wall. Skirmishers, missile troops, and pikemen, as well as support personnel such as healers and priests commonly carry bucklers.

When it comes to weapons, the axe is perhaps the most well-known and is considered by many to be the dwarven racial weapon of choice. The *zarwalk* is the most common and is a one handed, long haft axe found among militia and professional alike. When used with a shield it is a purely slashing weapon, but when carried by itself it is swung in a figure-eight pattern, providing both defensive and offensive uses.

Heavy infantry prefer the dwarven waraxe, which is usually a double-bearded axe carried and wielded in two hands. While it inflicts more damage, it prohibits the use of a shield, which forms a key role in dwarven tactics. As such, waraxes are carried by elite troops whose heavier armor makes up for the lack of shield. Should the dwarves be caught off guard (a rare event), miners have ready access to pickaxes, which although not designed for warfare can inflict terrible injuries.

In a similar vein, the *urgrash* is rarely employed by frontline troops unless fighting cavalry or on battlefields with enough room for the enemy to charge. When so employed, the axe end is set into the ground leaving the spear ready to impale opponents foolish enough to try and break the line.

Most races use some form of dagger, and hill dwarves use the *forakek*. It has a thick blade making it useful for cutting or slashing, as well as a sharpened edge for piercing. It is balanced for throwing, but few dwarves have mastered the art of the knife-thrower, preferring more powerful missile weapons.

Dwarves rarely use chain weapons in massed ranks, where whirling weapons can strike allies or become entangled in other weapons. When they are used, the dwarves prefer the *grumli*, a heavy, spiked metal ball attached to a wooden handle by a short chain. Unfortunately they are two-handed weapons and lack the reach to be used over a shieldwall. When swung in an overhead arc, however, they enable a small number of dwarves to hold a narrow corridor against attackers.

Although dwarves are renowned smiths, hammers are considered weapons for second-rate troops. As well as the traditional long-hafted, lightweight hammer, hill dwarves also use the *nelzruk*, a weapon used for both crushing and piercing. It is not the easiest weapon to use, despite being a one-handed weapon, and few warriors bother to become proficient in its use.

Polearms are actually popular in defensive battles, where the long shafts allow the business end to protrude over the shield wall. Most useful for this is the *zormed*, which has a straight, tapering blade. Rather than used to impale foes, it is swung up and down or side-to-side to slash foes. When a unit moves their blades in the same direction, the dwarves call the effect a *gaz-ar-dirk-eks*, which fully translates as "sea of shimmering blades." Although less effective, the *ulmed*, which has a hammer and axe head fitted to the same end, is used to push foes back or break up charges without leaving a heavy foe impaled on the end.

Short spears, the favored weapon of the militia, can be used with the shieldwall to break up charges and thrust at foes without disrupting the integrity of the wall. The *gramduk* is a short steel spear with a tanged, diamond-shaped blade. A hand guard and grip are located halfway down the shaft, which stays protected behind the shieldwall. A thrusting dagger is concealed in the butt, but is employed only when all other weapons are broken or to finish off foes. The *talduk*, a longer, two-handed spear, is carried by troops in the second rank, and used to stab over and through the shield wall, doubling the number of weapons in the front rank.

As with most races, swords are popular weapons and come in a variety of forms. The *fargrum* is a straight bladed weapon with a single blade save for the last few inches, which are double bladed for thrusting in and then ripping up through an opponent's flesh. The *gimzkek* is less common and has a single edged, curved and forked blade. The *ongar* is a slightly curved slashing blade with a reinforced back edge to extra strength in parrying and to add weight to the blade. As with the *fargrum*, only the last few inches of the blade are double-edged, allowing it to use for slashing or piercing.

Dwarves rarely employ cavalry, yet the myth remains that the dwarven saber is used for mounted combat. As with most curving swords, the principal purpose is to allow more of the blade into contact with the enemy during a slashing attack. With a straight blade, only a small part strikes the foe, but a curved edge allows the blade to continue slicing during the arc.

Officers favor the *gundmar*, which is a slightly curved single-edged slashing sword with a spiked pommel. The blade is highly decorated, usually with the deeds of the bearer. Once a foe has been slashed, the spiked pommel can be driven into his head to finish him off. Another popular sword for officers, and by default nobles, is the dueling sword. Usually wielded two-handed, the dueling sword was once used in ritual duels, a practice dwarves no longer carry out except in very rare circumstances. The blade is wide but thin, making it ineffective against heavier blades. Most are carried for ceremonial purposes, but a noble facing an enemy commander may opt to stain his dueling sword.

Lastly, there is the *zomburd*, a heavy bladed, double-edged two-handed sword. Since it prohibits the use of a shield, it is only carried by elite troops whose duty is to disable larger foes, such as giants or trolls, where a quick kill is preferable to a drawn out combat.

When it comes to missile weapons dwarves favor the crossbow, which they invented. Although slow to reload, they require little skill to operate, being point and fire weapons. As such, most missile troops are militia. Throwing axes are popular with all classes of warrior, and dwarves usually carry two or three axes to use against charging foes before entering melee. Throwing spears and daggers are uncommon, but do find use with individuals who prefer them to axes.

The steelbow, a composite weapon perfected by the dwarves, is used by professional missile troops (when available). Although it has a shorter range than other composite bows, it is perfect for use in tunnels where distance rarely favors either side. Dwarven archers can be excellent shots, but elves remain the masters.

Ranks

"A glorious death is earned, not sought."

Hill dwarf saying.

The lowest rank with command powers is the *gramthan*. Often called a sergeant by other races, the name means "senior warrior" and refers to the soldier having earned the title through service. Always a non-noble, *gramthan* lead small units of soldiers both on the battlefield and during battles. Like all officers, their beards denote their status, for dwarves do not wear rank badges or uniforms to denote rank. Not every sergeant goes on to become a courage noble, but it is seen as the first step on the ladder.

Courage nobles hold the first true officer rank. They retain their social name, "sword crown," as their military rank. Although not born nobles, their valor and dedication has earned them the right to hold the title in absence of noble blood. Humans usually refer to such leaders as "lieutenants," lacking the understanding to separate courage nobles from blood nobles. Courage nobles do command fixed size units and serve as adjutants for captains.

At the top of the regular military command structure are the *bardungan*, or "war crowns," known outside dwarven lands as captains. Each captain controls the entire military strength of a single clan. Captains must be blood nobles, though if the actual clan leader is elderly or infirm, the position falls to his eldest son. Daughters are usually only given command responsibilities when there are no sons and the female has served a military career all her life. It is because of this they receive a unique title rather than carry their social title.

When more than one clan musters, overall command lies with the king or realm leader. No specific military term applies to the commander, as all nobles are both political and military commanders.

Colored cloaks differentiate rank. Common soldiers wear grey, *gramthan* wear dark grey, courage nobles deep red, and captains sport dark blue. If the king is present on the battlefield, he wears a deep purple cloak. Scouts and saboteurs often wear grey and black striped cloaks for camouflage, regardless of any rank they hold.

Organization

"Be firm of mind and the body will hold."

Hill dwarf saying.

Unlike most races, dwarves favor a strong defense and fight static battles where possible. Their greatest strength lies in solid lines, strong courage, and a tenacity to win at any cost. Military units are expected to operate as part of a larger formation and unless issued orders are expected to stand fast, even when it looks like the enemy is routed. Possessing fewer numbers than many of their foes, dwarves cannot afford to be lured into traps or break their strong defensive formations for a moment of fleeting glory.

The smallest unit, the *starez*, or "guard," comprises three to five warriors. As their name implies, they are used as guards within the realm, operating in fixed positions or as roving patrols. Dwarven realms lack a civil police force and warriors perform the same function. When operating alone, authority lies in the hands of the oldest dwarf, though he has no official title. Regular *starez* are never employed in battle as a standalone unit but comprise part of a larger entity. The title is applied to other units, however. An artillery team commanding a single weapon, a group of ranger or infiltrator scouts, and a noble's immediate bodyguards all form a *starez* and in such cases may operate independently of other units.

Although not technically a recognized unit, an *am-herék* ("half retinue") comprises two or three *starez* led by a sergeant. Rarely operating alone, they actually form part of a larger unit known as a *herék* ("retinue"). Led by a courage noble aided by two sergeants, a retinue has between eleven and twenty warriors. The name comes from the fact that the warriors are sworn to serve their commander, who in turn swears loyalty to his clan leader. Except in very rare circumstances, all members of a retinue belong to the same clan.

The military strength of a clan is known as an *eka-starez* (or "clan guard"). The exact military strength varies by clan size, but typically numbers between thirty and one hundred professional warriors. Sergeants are appointed to command each group of ten men with one courage noble commanding each *herék*. Overall command lies in the hands of the captain, the clan's leader (or his appointed surrogate if he is too elderly to fight).

In addition to the soldiers, the *eka-starez* has an additional number of support personnel equal to roughly 30% of its warrior strength. Included in this number are dedicated scouts, medics, priests, and so on. Although capable of fighting, their primary use is to support the clan in warfare, ensuring logistical lines remain open and catering for the needs of the immediate soldiers. Additional support personnel, such as stretcher-bearers and cooks, are formed from militia units.

The largest military structure is the *maklok* or "kingdom." Comprised of every professional soldier in the realm, its overall varies immensely. The smallest *maklok* may be no more than two or three clans, whereas the largest can muster twenty or more. As stated before, command is given to the realm's leader with his captains forming his battlefield officers. Junior courage nobles may be used as aides and staff officers, with their retinue forming an extension to the leader's own permanent guard.

Should the militia be needed, they are formed into units known as *fem adurek kek* ("militia squads") and attached to *herék* as required. Summoning the militia is an all or nothing affair within a clan, though not every clan may be called upon simultaneously to send troops. Militia do not hold ranks and they are laced under the command of a courage noble and his sergeants.

When operating in their own realm supply lines are easily maintained and food, medicine, and reinforcements can be ferried back and forth with ease. Operating in enemy territory or outside can involve complex logistical problems. As a rule of thumb, each ten miles of supply lines are supervised by a single courage noble and his retinue and supported by a number of militia squads varying with terrain. The easier, and friendlier, the terrain, the less guards are required. Small scout units constantly patrol the flanks to limit enemy ambushes.

Dwarves fighting away from home are expected to carry supplies for two weeks. This includes all provisions, tents, medical supplies, entrenching tools for constructing defenses, and so on. A typical soldier carries double the weight of his armor and weapons in non-combat equipment. Fortunately, dwarves are a hardy race and can bare such loads with greater ease than other races, even being able to fight with only a minimal reduction in combat effectiveness.

Dwarves can also suffer the physical effects of starvation longer than most races, but moral loss is a more serious consideration that must be addressed by commanders. The old adage about an arm marching on its stomach refers to this more than to physical weakness. Lacking the in depth knowledge of the world above ground, dwarves make poor foragers and must rely on their supply lines, or allied units, to provide food.

Troop Types

Infantry form the core of the dwarf armies. Most professional soldiers are medium infantry, clad in armor and carrying shield, axe, and sword, and trained to fight offensively or defensively as required. Supporting them are more specialist infantry types. Units of pikemen stand behind the shieldwall to break up charges, skirmishers, consider medium infantry by the standards of other races, perform flanking maneuvers and whittle down foes with short range missile fire, and heavy infantry, whose task is to advance forward, pushing the enemy back.

Missile troops are invariably crossbowmen, though all dwarves are skilled with throwing axes. Except when defending a realm, when they are the first line of defense, they are kept on the flanks to support the infantry. Unlike missile troops employed by other races, they are heavily armored and expected to enter melee when called upon.

As noted before, there are three special types of troop available to dwarves. Boar warriors are used to punch through enemy lines, opening a gap for the bulk of the army to exploit. These hardy souls are never used defensively, for their training encompasses only attacking strategies. Being the first in to battle does lead to a shorter than average life expectancy, but there are always plenty of would be recruits lined up to take the place of the fallen.

Forming the core of the defense are the defenders, known elsewhere as dwarven defenders. Sturdy and brave, they are the last line of defensive, called to fight in the shieldwall to bolster the defense or to stand together when all else fails. Some races see these dwarves as the least brave, waiting as they do for the enemy to come to them. Such misconceptions serve well, for those that have never faced a dwarven defender tend to underestimate their resolve and defiance. Their motto, "Never Step Back," sums up their willingness to die rather than yield valuable ground.

Lastly there are the templars, elite holy warriors serving a cleric or noble (when requested) and spurred on by their unwavering faith. Templars are perhaps the rarest of the special forces and do not work well with members of different faiths, but as bodyguard units or shock troops leading a charge their value is incalculable.

Dwarves do not make good cavalry troops. A life underground prohibits the deployment of such troops and even when fighting above ground dwarves prefer to rely on the courage of their men rather than the flighty temperament of animals. Animal suitable as mounts also require foodstuffs not grown by dwarves and specialist medical knowledge to heal. This is not to say that dwarves never use animals in combat, however.

Certain species of dog are employed to serve with scouts or clad in spiked metal armor and let loose on weaker foes, such as goblins. Some clans keep dire weasels and badgers for the same purpose, letting them loose to roam through key areas in times of siege, attacking anything in their path. Should actual cavalry be required, most realms hire gnome badger riders or human or elf cavalry.

Tactics and Strategy

"Victory is not won on the battlefield, but in the preparation."

Hill dwarf saying.

Dwarven military tactics evolved thousands of years ago and, for the most part, have never altered. Once a tactics has been proven to work, it is forever fixed in military training regimes. This rigid adherence to proven tactics has been detrimental more than once, but dwarven brains are not geared toward spontaneity. Fortunately virtually every possible situation has been encountered at some point in the past and a counter-tactic devised.

Dwarves do understand that a battle plan rarely survives contact with the enemy and make adjustments as the battle ebbs and flows, though always using fixed tactics. When fighting in large-scale battles, dwarves employ signal horns to control troop movements. Each clan guard has a horn delivering a different note, so the dwarves can recognize the sound of their own signal. A complex set of signals covers everything from advance to wheel left and engage the enemy.

One should never confuse dwarves' rigid adherence to set tactics to mean they are easy to fool. Dwarven tactics may be fixed but they can be remarkably complex. Their resolute nature, and centuries of experience, means it is hard to draw them into feints and ambushes, no matter how carefully they are executed. Any easy way to defeat a dwarven army is likely to have already been used at sometime in the past and therefore been countered by a change in tactics.

Against the civilized races, save for hobgoblins, who barely count as such in dwarven eyes, dwarves take prisoners, ransoming them back for precious metals or gems. Prisoners are well fed and their wounds cared for. They are priced

according to their social status and health, for according to the dwarf way of thinking a fit individual works better than a sick one and is therefore more valuable.

Orcs and goblinoids (including hobgoblins) can expect no mercy. Ransoming such foes never takes place, for the dwarves know that a single goblinoid can father dozens and dozens of new foes before its death of old age. Prisoners are killed quickly and cleanly, allowing the dwarves to get on with more important tasks, such as looting the dead.

Again, this has been misunderstood as pure greed, but battles are a way of gathering large quantities of metal in a single stroke. As usual, much of this booty is returned to the earth, but some will be used to create new weapons, coins, and tools for the dwarves. Even the crudest orc sword is a welcome sacrifice and takes both the weapon and metal out of circulation.

Ambushes

Dwarves use ambushes to weaken larger forces or destroy smaller ones entirely, but are not masters at the art. The races that are considered experts at this form of warfare are usually skilled magic users, such as gnomes or elves, or can respond quickly to sudden turns of events, like halflings. Other races favoring ambushes usually take the dwarf approach and use total aggression as the main form of attack.

The ideal terrain for a dwarven ambush is a steep sided gully with only one route passing through. Dwarves are not skilled at camouflaging themselves in vegetation, nor are they adept at moving stealthily through such terrain. Give a dwarf some rocky ground, however, and he is as agile as a mountain goat. This is not to say dwarves never employ ambushes in non-hilly areas, but they do so less often.

Once an area has been chosen, the attackers split into four forces. The two largest units take up position atop the gully walls, where they have a good view of the trail beneath. The remaining units take up position at either end of the approaches, with the force nearest the enemies' approach being further back from the road and concealed behind boulders or in gullies. That they cannot see their foe is not important, for they only act when signaled to do so.

Scouts are deployed along the trail in both directions to watch for victims, reporting back in person with information. Once a force has been spotted, the ambushers take cover and wait, leaving one scout to spy on enemy progress. As soon as the victims reach a designated spot, the ambush is sprung.

The flanking forces open fire with crossbows, aiming to take out officers, spellcasters, and mounts first. While the first volley is being launched, the front and rear forces move to block the trail with a shieldwall, thus preventing the enemy from escaping. If the ambush has been well executed, the defenders' initial confusion seals their fate. Crossbows continue to fire into the trapped defenders while the shieldwall slowly advances, pushing the survivors into an ever-narrower killing zone. Only when the defenders are severely weakened does one shieldwall break to enter melee.

Of course, shieldwalls are not unbreakable, and a determined push in either direction can cause a breach. If this looks likely, one squad of crossbowmen abandon their post to reinforce the wall. In extreme cases, missile fire may stop entirely and both shieldwalls be strengthened ready for the push forward.

When no ravine is available, dwarves favor steep (but not sheer) hillsides but require more troops to execute the ambush. The bulk of the army is split again on the flanks, with both sides using crossbows in the first attack. Rather than reload, however, one side charges into combat while the other forms a shieldwall to prevent foes from escaping. The aim is to drive the defenders onto the spears of the shieldwall, trapping them against an immovable object. The two end forces form shieldwalls to form three sides of a rectangle, leaving the attacking force to butcher their foes in a contained area. Again, there is enough flexibility for the shieldwall to be strengthened in one area, though at the expense of another. If enough confusion has been wrought in the first volley, the enemy is unable to mount a coordinated push on any one part of the wall.

Few divine spells are well suited to ambushes when compared to arcane magic, and for the most part dwarves leave fighting to warriors. That said, certain spells are employed to aid the ambushers. Any spells that negate an enemy officer's ability to command, such as *cause fear*, *command*, *hold person*, *enthrall*, or *blindness/deafness* remove their ability to coordinate their men. *Obscuring mist* and *darkness* can cause confusion in the vital first moments of an ambush, preventing the enemy from detecting the attackers. When targeting spellcasters, *silence* and *hold person* are especially useful, as are any damage causing spells that might cause a spellcaster to lose concentration.

Spells that directly aid the attackers, such as *bless*, *aid*, and *bear's endurance*, are also useful, though usually there are not enough available to affect more than a handful of troops. Most dwarven clerics devote spells to offensive magics, especially area effect spells. Offensive spells requiring touch are likewise all but useless, for an ambush is won or lost in the first few seconds.

Pitched Battles

Pitched battles refer solely to conflicts above ground. Since dwarves rarely launch into mass battles without the entire realm's military might at their disposal, this section assumes the dwarves have a full range of troops, including militia units,

at their disposal. Tactics remain the same without militia troops, but in such cases the dwarves prefer more favorable terrain.

Although dwarves can run in armor without penalty their preferred tactic is to let the enemy come to them. As such, terrain is always first and foremost in a commander's eyes when preparing for battle. The ideal terrain is hilly, which allows the dwarves to station their troops on high ground and hampers the movement of foes. Should dwarves have a choice, they always opt to take the most defensible position, and being hemmed in on two sides by natural obstacles is seen as an asset rather than a liability as it prevents outflanking.

The core of the army forms a long shieldwall facing the enemy force. To form a shieldwall the defenders simply interlock their shields to form a solid wall. The front rank kneels, their shields protecting their bodies and the legs of the second rank, who stand with shields locked. Spears and polearms protrude through the gaps to form what resembles an armored hedgehog. A solid shieldwall can withstand cavalry assaults but is only as strong as its weakest link.

Where terrain is favorable, natural obstacles, such as rivers or dense forests, protect the ends of the shieldwall. Usually, however, the terrain is more open, requiring the ends to be anchored by additional troops. Typically a small force of axe men is positioned at each end with crossbow troops supporting them. The shieldwall is flexible, however, and can bend back to form an enclosed circle should outflanking be a possibility. Its main purpose is to stand firm, allowing enemy charges to break on the spears and shields, while the flank units circle round to hit exposed sides. Since most enemies carry shields in their left hands, it is more favorable to attack their right flank.

As an approaching army nears, the shieldwall is non-existent. Two lines of dwarves stand ready to meet their foes and hurl throwing axes into the enemy ranks. Only when the enemy nears is the command to form the shieldwall given. The enemy, already weakened from axes and crossbow fire, suddenly finds itself facing an impenetrable wall. If timed well, the enemy cannot halt its advance in time and the momentum of the charge is stymied.

A third rank of troops waits behind the shieldwall to reinforce areas under heavy attack. This can be achieved by adding thrusting long spears through the gap to pin foes or simply by throwing extra weight behind the wall to keep it fixed. These reserve troops can also be dispatched to aid the flanks or launch flanking attacks. A relatively new tactic (by dwarven standards) is to feign a breach in the shieldwall, sucking in enemy troops and dispatching them with reserve troops. When this happens, the wall folds back to form a corridor of shields, funneling the attackers into pre-selected areas where crossbowmen and infantry stand ready to engage them.

Ideally, the dwarves simply wait behind the shieldwall until the enemy is exhausted, at which point the wall is broken and the dwarves slaughter their tired foes. Of course, ideals are rarely at home on the battlefield. Foes used to fighting dwarves often form their own shieldwall, either static or advancing. When two shieldwalls collide a pushing match takes place, with each side trying to form a breach. Once a shieldwall is breached, troops can pour through and attack the defenders from the rear.

When trying to break a shieldwall, dwarves employ their boar warriors. Formed into wedge shapes known as the boars' head, the warriors charge the wall, attempting to knock back their foes and open a hole. Casualties are often higher among these troops than regular units, but without their sacrifice many more dwarves would die trying to puncture the defenses.

As stated elsewhere, dwarves prefer a defensive fight and are hard to lure from their positions. Charges followed by feint retreats may lure most races into following, but dwarves have met this tactic far too often to fall for such ruses. Instead, fleeing foes are pelted with axes and crossbow bolts. Only when the commanders are 100% sure the enemy is in full rout does the shieldwall break to follow.

Specialist units, such as templars, rangers, and infiltrators are dispatched to target enemy commanders. Whereas templates prefer to charge their foes, rangers and infiltrators opt for stealth and long-range attacks. Dwarves rarely employ poisons and so only the best marksmen are used in this role. Artillery weapons may be employed if available and are used to smash enemy lines before they reach the dwarves. The downside is their fixed position, which means retreating leaves them open to capture or destruction.

Sieges

Dwarves rarely conduct sieges and when on the receiving end use the tactics for defending lairs, as detailed below. That said, they are masters of artillery use and have the patience necessary to conduct a siege. The tactics below assume a small walled keep is being attacked. When attacking larger obstacles, such as castles, dwarves employ these tactics against only a portion of the target, seeking to exploit a weak spot.

Artillery and troops are always placed out of enemy missile range. Despite the ability to throw heavy boulders over long distances, artillery is not used to smash walls. Rather, it is used to fire into courtyards and outbuildings, denying the enemy cover and creating obstacles that will, hopefully, prevent the defenders from organizing a line of resistance. Flaming bales of straw are launched at wooden targets, both to cause destructive fires and also keep the enemy on his toes. Sleep deprivation can bring even the strongest enemy to his knees and also leads to costly mistakes. Despite rumors to the contrary, dwarves do not employ siege towers.

Dwarves also employ primitive psychological warfare. As well as maintaining attacks day and night, they play loud music and make as much noise as possible to stop defenders sleeping, and, in prolonged sieges, roast animals. At night, when dwarven vision allows them to move unhindered, they light small fires near the walls and begin roasting meat. The smell wafts toward the hungry defenders, who are then told they can eat when they surrender. On more than one occasion starving defenders have killed their lord, who invariably eats better than they do, and surrendered en masse. The dwarves remain true to their word and feed the prisoners.

To breach a wall, dwarves opt to tunnel, even through solid rock foundations. Tunnels are started out of sight of the defenders, either in vegetation or behind wooden palisades. The miners, either regular troops or civilians, tunnel to a point just beneath the outer wall, where they excavate a small chamber. Stout wooden beams are used to prop up the wall to avoid it collapsing on the miners. Wood and coal are piled into the chamber then ignited. The aim is not to set fire to the wall (stone does not burn well), but to burn away the props, resulting in a collapse. Dwarves are skilled enough to time collapses to within an hour, based on the wood used and size of the fire.

Once a breach is opened, the dwarves send in the boar warriors to secure the gap, followed closely by regular troops, then the militia. Narrow breaches are obvious deathtraps, but the boar warriors are experts at driving through enemy lines. As soon as they are through, the reserves follow to secure the tenuous hold.

Since defenders usually have the advantage of height, they place missile troops on the battlements. Dwarves counter such tactics by forming a *dret-nizək* ("shield cavern"), where the front rank forms a shield wall to protect their advance while following troops interlock their shields to form a roof over the formation. The flanks are left unprotected, but the *dret-nizək* is only employed after the boar warriors have breached the gap and formed a bridgehead.

Attacks Underground

Aside from living underground, dwarves also fight their most common foes in subterranean conflicts. When fighting below ground, dwarves endeavor to move quickly and overwhelm their opponents before they can mount a stiff defense. Where multiple entrances to a lair exist, dwarves attack them all simultaneously to stop the enemy from coordinating his efforts and to split enemy troops into smaller units.

Whether the entrance to a lair is reached above ground or through tunnels, it is nearly always the strongest point of defense. Denying an enemy access to a lair spares lives and protects stored resources. As such, dwarves know to hit the entrance with their best troops. Using lower quality troops may secure the objective, but more lives are likely to have been wasted. When it comes to needing the best, dwarves utilize infiltrators or boar warriors, depending on the expected resistance.

The boar warriors are not used to capture the entrance, simply to smash the defenses. Following closely behind are regular troops, who fan out to secure the area as soon as a path is cleared. Infiltrators work to a different strategy, using their skill to circumvent traps and penetrate the defenses before the attacker detects their presence. Infiltrators are not equipped for close combat and as soon as they have penetrated the outer defenses reinforcements are called up.

Once the entrance is secured, the dwarves begin their push forward into the lair itself. Time is of the essence, for sound carries well along tunnels and securing the outer lair must be achieved before any resistance can be mounted if losses are to be kept low. To achieve this, the dwarves advance without protection, simply charging through and slaughtering everything in their path. Sooner or later, however, the enemy will respond with tactics that make such activities suicidal.

As soon as resistance is met, the dwarves bring tower shields to the front of the advance. Sheltering behind these portable barricades, they push forward, using brute strength to overcome their foes. Broken lines of resistance are exploited by troops pouring out from behind the shield, only closing ranks once the chamber is cleared and the next passage must be explored. Should the enemy counterattack, the tower shield can be used as a barricade, propped up by dwarves and stout poles. Should that fail, the standard shieldwall is erected to contain the attack while other units look for routes around the problem.

Traps are an ever-present danger, but dwarven tactics do not allow for rogues and infiltrators to spend time disarming them. One tactic is to throw a heavy log on a rope down a corridor and then drag it back, hopefully setting off any traps along the way. Heavy boards are used to bridge pit traps. Helmets on sticks are poked around corners to draw enemy fire; as soon as the enemy fires, the dwarves surge forward before he can reload. Always the dwarves keep moving as fast as possible, sacrificing a few lives for the greater good.

Given that surprise is lost very quickly in such battles, dwarves actively seek to make as much meaningless noise as possible. Echoes from multiple directions confuse foes, especially those of weak mind such as goblins, and hamper lines of communication. Fortunately, dwarves employ infiltrators as runners when fighting underground, carrying message between different units.

Slaughtering every inhabitant of a lair is next impossible. Bolt holes and escape tunnels allow the defenders chance to flee. Grabbing treasure, however, is more easily achieved as fleeing foes rarely stop to pick up their valuables. Once the treasuries and armories are located, the dwarves halt their advance and form a solid line of defense. While the frontline soldiers hold off counterattacks, other soldiers remove the treasure as quickly as possible.

Once all objectives are met, the dwarves withdraw, using shieldwalls to protect the troops and prevent counterattacks from catching them unawares. Slowly but surely the dwarves move backward to the entrance, always vigilant for sneak attacks from hidden chambers, which they employ against foes invading their territory.

Defending Lairs

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Dwarven Traps

Within a realm, most traps are activated not by pressure plates or tripwires but by levels operated by guards viewing the area through concealed viewing holes. Because of this, traps within a dwarven realm are harder to detect and disarm. Search and Disable Device checks are made at +5 DC.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

The most obvious feature are the vast gates that allow entry to the city, but these are actually the second line of defense. Constructed around the gate are networks of small tunnels opening into chambers whose upper levels protrude just above ground. These chambers are guardrooms, in which soldiers keep constant vigil. Small slits allow the defenders to fire crossbows at approaching foes while providing maximum protection for the troops. Cleverly concealed trapdoors, reached via metal rungs in the walls, allow the soldiers to reach the surface and enter melee. Hoards of provisions, medical supplies, and crossbow bolts allow the defenders to last out many weeks without support.

Most cities have only a single trail leading to the main gate. These are designed to restrict travel to a snail's pace, with many twists and turns, steep inclines, and, where possible, steep sided ravines to traverse. Again, small bunkers provide firing platforms for troops against on-coming attackers.

Attackers traveling across country can expect to encounter large numbers of pitfalls, staged avalanches, and crossbow traps, though the latter are not favored as they require constant checking to remove dead animals and reset the traps. Bunkers are positioned around ambush points, either naturally occurring ones or shaped by the dwarves to funnel aggressors into killing zones. No matter how stealthy an army may be chances are dwarven sentries are watching their every step.

The tunnels extend back into the main settlement, but any attacker hoping to use them must be exceptionally brave. Multiple thick iron doors bar entrance, and secret guardrooms with concealed crossbow slits allow defenders to isolate and slaughter foolish intruders. At the end of the tunnel are several guardrooms, each manned constantly by hardened warriors.

As for the main gates, these monstrous structures stand a hundred feet tall and twenty feet wide. In most cases they are carved to resemble the natural rock face and are all but invisible when closed. When possible, they are constructed at the end of a canyon or ravine. Within the rock face are multiple guardrooms, each allowing defenders to fire crossbows or drop boiling oil onto hapless attackers below. Opening the gates from outside requires battering rams or magic, and the doors always open outward. From within, just two dwarves are required to push open the cunningly weighted doors.

Within the main city the defenses are no less impressive. The first part of any city is always a military zone, with numerous barracks, guardrooms, and armories stationed off what appears to be an unobstructed corridor. Anyone who has ever tried to storm a dwarven domain knows from experience that such corridors are open invitations to die.

Once a portion of the attacking force has entered the corridor, metal doors slide shut at both ends. Guards fire crossbow bolts from hidden firing slits to weaken the enemy force and then emerge through secret doors to finish the survivors. In some cases, the entire corridor is a lever-activated pit trap, which dumps live attackers or corpses into a deep pit (from where the bodies are removed later). When the doors reopen, the corridor appears empty, as if the trapped attackers vanished into thin air. Large entrance corridors may have an upper level, from which defenders can pour boiling oil or use missile weapons through concealed trapdoors.

Against goblinoids, such terror tactics can deter a large force, sowing in them doubt as to the wisdom of pushing the assault further. The tactic can be repeated endlessly, though a determined foe will allow himself to succeed in overcoming his foe, whether through weight of numbers (leading to defender attrition) or magic.

Further in, hidden guardrooms allow the defenders to control a myriad of traps through levers, which makes disarming the traps much more difficult. Pit traps are the most common, though spears, scything blades, and falling rocks are used. Iron doors and sliding sections of wall can be used to block access or turn a simple set of corridors into a maze. Usually, such mazes lead the attackers toward killing zones, where they can be dispatched easily.

Another favorite method of dispatching large numbers of foes is to seal a corridor and pump in poisonous gases "harvested" from the mines. In such cases, dwarves run the risk of making the area impassable for their troops, but such self-imposed no-go zones are better than being overrun. Enemies reaching the mines run the risk of being caught in a flood and drowned. Again, dwarves consider the work involved in cleaning up afterward a small price to pay.

As for small unit tactics, dwarves adopt hit and run style raids, using the network of secret doors to encircle foes. The favored tactic is to appear behind an enemy, draw off a small portion, retreat into a secret room, and kill them missile

fire. Though this may sound ineffective against an army, morale can be sapped quite quickly by just a few strike teams who, it seems, can operate at will, striking from shadow with impunity. Other units form mobile barriers with shieldwalls, thus preventing the attackers from encroaching further while simultaneously giving allies chance to attack from the rear.

Non-combatants are sent to the lowest levels of the city, from where secret tunnels lead through a maze of traps and guardrooms to a storehouse of provisions and specially prepared accommodation. Water is diverted to cisterns via underground springs not used elsewhere in the city to prevent an enemy poisoning them. Once safe, huge stone blocks are lowered from the ceiling, effectively sealing the dwarves off from the conflict. To all intents and purposes, they simply do not exist. The provisions allow for a year's survival.

Religion

"I never pictured the Valiant as a short, bearded dwarf."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Adurek are a religious race, holding true to their gods and goddesses down the eons. Religious practices have changed little over the centuries and the same prayers and hymns are used today as they were during the first days of the race. Temples to the Founder exist in every realm and most clans have large shrines in their territory. Other gods have temples only if there are enough worshippers to support the infrastructure, but shrines and chapels are common to the entire dwarven pantheon.

Unlike other members of the dwarven race, *adurek* believe in communal worship. Temples, while not the power bases they can be among other races, are important structures and clerics treated with reverence. To desecrate a dwarven temple is to dishonor the entire realm and no energy is spared hunting down the perpetrators.

The Pantheon

"Strength in heaven gives strength on earth"

Hill dwarf saying.

Dwarves recognize a wide number of gods, but pay special homage to only a few. These are dealt with below, in order of importance. Clerics of these deities always receive preferential treatment over servants of other gods, regardless of the comparative size of congregations. The relationship between the gods and the great families is covered in *History*.

Hildal ("Cornerstone")

At the head of the pantheon is *Hildal*, who other races call the Founder. His teachings are the cornerstone on which dwarven society is founded and all other gods are considered subservient to his laws. Regardless of which deity a dwarf holds most allegiance to, the Founder is always in his heart. Because of this unrivaled popularity, his temples are always the richest and largest within any realm.

The clerics of the Founder are learned in the law to a higher degree than the clerics of the True. They are less concerned with truth than with facts. Indeed, the two-tier dwarven legal system removes them from the evidence gathering stage and leaves them only to determine innocence or guilt based on the facts of the case. Their decisions are based on the ancient laws and are not subject to appeal. Assuming the evidence they receive is truthful (and no one would ever accuse a Truthspeaker of falsifying evidence) their decision is considered final. To appeal would be to doubt the traditional laws that have seen dwarves prosper through the eons.

Junior clerics, usually Upholder rank or lower, patrol the realm alongside military patrols, acting as law keeper and ensuring society remains working smoothly. They have no power to make arrests (that is a perk of the military, which keeps power in the hands of the nobles rather than the clerics) but may order their escorts to arrest suspicious characters for questioning on their behalf.

A council of senior clerics (Enforcer rank or higher) from every dwarven realm must approve any changes to traditions. Perhaps because of their strict adherence to the old ways, or perhaps because of the difficulty in assembling such a body, no such changes have been made in centuries.

Clerics of the Upholder aspect are skilled architects and while they do not get their hands dirty in actual construction they are responsible for designing the realm. From corridors to aqueducts, traps to mine shafts, the clerics design and oversee the construction of every aspect. Virtually every chamber and corridor within a realm contains the mark of *Hildal*.

By tradition, the ruler of the realm has a personal birthday (the actual day he was born) and an official birthday, which is on Founder's Day. In dwarven realms, Founder's Day is held on the day the first work began on the realm rather than when the Founder's temple was consecrated. Of course, it is no coincidence the two usually fall on the same day.

Seslik ("Oath Holder")

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Optional Rule — Warrior Boasts

Most races see boasting as a way of self-promotion. Dwarves, however, see boasts that apply to something yet to happen as an oath. A dwarf who has slain a hundred orcs and brags about it is not boasting (to dwarven ears); he is stating a simple truth. The same dwarf boasting he *will* slay a hundred orcs is making a warrior boast, which *Seslik* hears.

Any dwarf character can make a warrior boast. A warrior boast must have a single, well-defined combat objective, be less than ten words in length, and be made before a cleric of *Seslik*. The boast can be as little as vowing to slay ten orcs in the forthcoming battle or swearing to kill the dragon that ate the king last winter. A character may only have as many boasts currently unfulfilled as his Charisma modifier (to a minimum of 1).

Boasts do not have strict time limits but are considered forfeit after one month per level of the character when he made the boast or if an agreed time limit (such as killing the orcs in the next battle) passes. Additionally, the character must fulfill the boast without any outside aid. He may use any personal resources, as these are figured into his character level, but may not accept help from colleagues in any form, including healing. Any interference, whether active or passive, automatically results in the oath being broken. In short, warrior boasts are solo ventures, not group activities.

A fulfilled oath earns the character 100 xps times the difference between his level when he completes the boast and the CR of the monster he slays. The DM is free to increase or decrease the reward slightly depending on the actual wording. Slaying a bear is one thing, but boasting of (and succeeding in) doing it bare handed or without armor is another.

Any dwarf character who fails to live up to his word for any reason suffers an experience point penalty as punishment from *Seslik*. Unlike the bonuses, the penalty is the difference between the foe's CR and the level of the character when he made the boast, not when he completed it.

This rule is not a tool to give away experience points. Warriors boasts should involve risk (hence the creature's CR is important), be completed within a sensible timeline (no "I'll kill one hundred orcs before I turn 200" boasts), and achieve some goal that benefits the dwarf's family, clan, or realm. Making oaths simply to earn extra xps is not in the spirit of the rules and should be disallowed.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Adurek are an honorable race and believe that an oath is a solemn bond. Dwarves do not give their word easily, especially to non-dwarves, but when they do it is an irreproachable truth. Even agreeing to meet someone at a certain time is considered an oath, and rather than say "I will meet you at sunset" a dwarf is more likely to say "I will try to meet you at sunset." In this way, the dwarf's honor is not stained if unforeseen events delay him, so long as he endeavors to keep his word.

Seslik, also known as the Speaker of the Word, oversees business deals, political treaties, warrior's boasts, and such like. In dwarven society, he is not responsible for marriages; that falls to his younger sister, *Manklim* (see below). While the dwarven legal system is heavily tied into the Word, the god's sacred book, *Seslik's* clerics do not act as judges. They are present in court, however, for everyone involved with the case must swear an oath to uphold truth and justice.

As noted elsewhere, oath breaking is a serious crime. Although punishment is fixed according to tradition, clerics of *Seslik* have been known to hunt down such criminals and brand them on their face or hands, thus revealing their crime to all who encounter them. Clerics conducting such activity can be tried, but invariable the crime is ruled one of honor and declared a legitimate act.

Salimak ("Final Judge")

As well as being honorable, dwarves are also truthful and have a strong sense of justice. Because honor and truth are so intertwined, *Salimak* (the True), is seen as the twin of *Seslik*. Unlike with most races, the True is male in dwarven eyes not female.

Clerics oversee all matters of truth within the realm but do not act as judges. Clerics of *Salimak* serve only to determine whether or not evidence is truthful; Builders of the law determine actual determination of innocence or guilt. Their services are available to all dwarves, but it is the guilds who make most use of them in non-court matters. Worker grievances are appraised by a cleric paid for out of guild dues before being handed over to the Builders for judgment. All clerics are expected to be able to recite large portions of the law, though most specialize in a single area.

Because of their strong sense of justice and truth, dwarves find perjury abhorrent and impose strict punishments on perjurers. Outlawing is not unusual, for any dwarf that lies in court has broken sacred oaths and blasphemed against *Salimak* in a single action.

Lasterm ("Invigorator")

Lasterm, the Powermaster, is patron of medicine for the body, mind, and spirit. His clerics are usually traditionalists, following ancient remedies to care for every aspect of dwarves. *Lasterm* is the last of the major gods, whose holy places adorn every realm. According to dwarven theology, he is the younger brother of *Seslik* and *Salimak* and was tutor to the first dwarves on Tellene.

His clerics serve a variety of roles. Some act as teachers, operating alongside clerics of *Gramlek* to run schools, others join the military, where they serve as combat medics and battlefield surgeons, while other become counselors (the nearest thing dwarves have to psychiatrists). Truly gifted clerics can become part of a noble's entourage, serving as tutor, physician, and bodyguard.

Temples have hospital wings attached, where clerics tend the sick and injured. Their services are not free, but patients receive excellent healthcare during their stay. Most temples operate a sliding scale to take into account differences in pay. Many clerics are also skilled alchemists, brewing a range of potions and powders to heal body, mind, and spirit.

By tradition, clerics of *Lasterm* may not carry weapons except when serving as a bodyguard or in the military. Few choose to do so even when given the choice, for they try to avoid physical confrontation. Despite this seeming cowardice, they are trained with the militia and many spend a few seasons acting solely as a warrior to learn the martial arts.

Suzek ("Earth Sister")

Although *Suzek* is only one aspect of the Mother of Elements, dwarves treat her as a separate entity, rarely paying heed to the other three aspects. In some respects she is a surrogate for the Creator, who dwarves still revere but no longer worship as a deity. Her patronage covers the earth and everything within it, especially metals and precious gems.

When dwarves sacrifice metal and gems back to the earth, they are in fact sending them to *Suzek*. It is believed that she gives birth to all the products of the earth, with some being rarer than others. In accordance with their traditions and beliefs, the only way for her to produce more metal is to ensure she always has some to produce from. In the same way that trees grow from seeds, so metal ore and gems grow from small deposits. Dwarves may appear rapacious and greedy for wealth, but they always temper what they take by delivering a certain portion back into the earth.

Suzek's clerics work with the guilds and nobles, evaluating products, testing the purity of excavated minerals, locating new mineral veins, and ensuring that a certain portion is returned to the goddess. Their skill at evaluating the value of precious metals and gems is unparalleled in dwarven society.

Gramlek ("Great Teacher")

Dwarves claim that *Gramlek*, who others call the Mule, is a dwarven deity who graced the other races with his wisdom. Given that dwarves are one of the most technologically advanced races on Tellene, having invented the crossbow and, in the case of one dwarf, steam engines, there may be some truth to their claims. Given *Gramlek's* teachings about geometric order and tradition, it is not surprising he is part of the main pantheon.

Clerics are expected to serve as teachers in schools, where they tutor young dwarves in everything from history to politics and language to mathematics. Many are skilled geologists and architects, even rivaling the Founder's followers in the latter case. When combined with their love of geometric shapes, it leads to wondrous feats of architecture decorated with sparkling minerals and layers of colored rocks. They also serve as historians and lore keepers, and are responsible for ensuring the deeds of the ancestors are never forgotten.

Many work as crafters in addition to their clerical role, and strive to create new inventions for the betterment of dwarvenkind. Unfortunately, dwarves are not the most imaginative creatures and their designs tend to be based on centuries of previous attempts rather than innovations of their own. As the old dwarf saying goes, "The best things come by evolution, not revolution."

Tragrim ("Tactician")

Better known as the Old Man, *Tragrim* is considered the father of warfare and is held in high esteem by both blood and courage nobles, as well as by sergeants. *Tragrim* taught the first dwarves how to defend themselves from aggressors and how to fight back, but it was not until his son, *Lusurk*, taught them bravery that dwarves understood both sides of warfare. Dwarves across Tellene thank *Tragrim* for teaching them the shieldwall tactic, which has proven to be their greatest weapon.

All dwarven clerics of *Tragrim* are members of the professional army and are considered soldiers rather than clerics. This tradition dates back millennia, when many nobles joined the church and the Temple of armed Conflict was close to controlling the military and noble council. *Tragrim's* servants lost their priestly status and become common soldiers, albeit ones with special privileges. Because of this ruling, all soldiers are automatically considered lay members of the church. It also means that the cleric seated on the religious council has a military bent, but he is one voice among many.

Non-noble clerics serve as drill sergeants, quartermasters, tactical advisors, and bodyguards to their lords. They receive an extra stipend for their services but are expected to fulfill their regular duties as well. Cleric/fighters have the necessary skills to become a courage noble, though their clerical duties often make them unsuitable for a full-time leadership role.

Because all clerics are soldiers, chapels exist in barrack rooms rather than as separate structures. Usually closed to the public, they are opened to all and sundry on holy days and for festivals. Many chapels contain an array of exotic weapons, both trophies of war and for training purposes.

Lusurk ("Stout Heart")

The Knight of the Gods, *Lusurk* is patron of valor of chivalrous conduct both on and off the battlefield. The son of *Tragrim*, *Lusurk* is patron of professional warriors, who live by his tenets. Indeed, *Lusurk* is represented in carvings and statues as a powerful warrior clad in plate mail and wielding a greatsword. His clerics are skilled soldiers in their own right, and many serve with the army as combat priests, venturing into battle to deal death to their enemies and heal wounded allies. Many go on to become courage nobles, which can lead to political problems.

Because a dwarf may only sit on one council, a courage noble cleric of *Lusurk* often finds himself serving with the military council whilst retaining strong ties to his church. This, of course, can lead to a certain bias, but by tradition there is nothing to stop this happening. While other courage nobles do not doubt the dwarf's ability, they question where his first loyalty lies. Fortunately, the noble council exists to keep the military serving the rightful causes—the king and the realm.

Many clerics dye their hair white, including their beards, in honor of their god. While such devotion is to be lorded, it singles the cleric out among foes for special treatment. To disguise one's white hair in combat is a mark of cowardice and can result in the offender being expelled from the order, leaving him little option but to stay with the military as a regular soldier..

Metal weapons of defeated foes are sacrificed back to the earth. Since the ceremony is held immediately after battle, the items are thrown into the nearest pond, river, or crack in the ground. Captured standards are returned to the temple, where they take their place among the other trophies.

Manklim ("Bonder")

Known elsewhere as the Holy Mother, *Manklim* is the patron of female dwarves. Her image is that of a dwarven female wearing an apron and carrying two linked metal rings in her open palm. Though few females hold positions as crafters, most practice a craft for the benefit of their family, such as weaving or pottery. She is also the patron of marriage, and all marriage oaths, regardless of type, are spoken in her name. In this respect, she is more important than *Seslik*, who dwarves believe is her older brother. She is also viewed as the patron of families and fertility, and every dwarven home has a small statuette of her near the hearth.

Clerics act for the benefit of their clan, then the realm, serving as motivators and matchmakers. They regularly tour the mines and workshops, encouraging the workers through speeches and traditional songs, and it is not unusual for their voices to be heard in the deepest mines.

Matchmaking is still required of her clerics and such events are popular with males and females. Once a couple indicates they wish to wed, a cleric is appointed as a lineage judge and investigates family trees for signs of familial bonds that would invalidate the union.

Dwarven society has few orphans. It is a dwarf's duty to take in orphaned children from his family or clan (depending on the closeness of the blood ties). Where multiple families are available, the clerics serve as a form of social service counselor, seeking the best match for the child. In the rare event no family can be found, such as with outlawed parents abandoning their children, they are adopted by the church as a whole and placed with one of the clerics' families.

Religious Beliefs

"Seats in heaven cannot be reserved, only earned by deeds."

Hill dwarf saying.

If written down, dwarven religious beliefs would fill many hundreds of books. Each faith maintains its own creed, but underlying them all is a racial belief that, no matter which god they follow, resides in the hearts of all dwarves. Attempting to describe even a few percent of these beliefs would require a book considerably larger than this one. Instead, the beliefs most affecting a dwarf's life are described here.

Other Gods

Aside from the main pantheon, *adurek* pay homage to many other gods. This section gives a short description of the gods followed, and not followed, and reasons why. Dwarven names for the various deities can be found in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide*.

The Eternal Lantern receives less worship than *Lusurk*, who in many respects fulfills the role of goblinoid-hater commonly associated with the Eternal Lantern. Devil, demons, and undead rarely plague dwarven realms, though on occasion miners break through into long-forgotten catacombs from a bygone age and disturb the occupants. Most clerics serve as inquisitors, rooting out heresies.

As a non-agricultural race, hill dwarves pay little attention to the Raiser. Small shrines can be found in the fungi farms, but actual worship is limited to fungus farmers paying lip service around harvest time. Clerics of the Peacemaker serve as diplomats and ambassadors, traveling to neighboring lands to secure peace treaties. While their teachings apply to the civilized races (except hobgoblins), dwarven life is fraught with conflict and the deity has never achieved much recognition.

Worship of the Pure One tends to be limited to courting couples seeking her blessing. Matchmaking and marriage ceremonies are the realm of *Manklim*, which removes a major sphere of influence from the Pure One. The Lord of Silver Linings often has a shrine within temples of *Lasterm*, who dwarves consider the senior deity of healing. They only enter the battlefield against non-racial foes, tending to the wounded on both sides with impartiality.

The Traveler's sphere of influence extends to any dwarf leaving the realm, whether to go adventuring or on mercantile activities. Clerics bless departing caravans (and individuals) and in many cases travel as guards and guides. Dwarves find the Guardian's teaching subversive. He preaches freedom and liberty for all, which the dwarves agree with to a degree, but places such things above all else. Dwarves, with their love of orderly society, see the two things as inseparable. Clerics are often considered rabble-rousers, though the faith is not heretical.

Worship of Raconteur presents something of a dichotomy. Dwarves appreciate art in many forms, but their stories, paintings, and songs are based on ancient traditions and spontaneity is not something dwarves find easy. Most dwarven clerics tend to be historians rather than actual artists, relating the epic tales of yore in song and verse.

As with the Guardian, the Shimmering One's teaching border on rebellious. Individualism is not a dwarven trait, who see familial bonds as necessary for a dwarf to enjoy life to the full. Dwarves also limit their appreciation of beauty to metals and minerals, finding the concept of ornate gardens or watching the moons travel the heavens as somewhat bizarre.

Dwarves hunt game animals and practice limited archery, preferring the crossbow, but pay no respect to the Great Huntress. *Adurek* have been around long enough to understand that over hunting has a negative effect on future hunts and do not need a god to remind them of such matters. Shepherds may pay her lip service in order to keep predators away from their flocks.

Coddlers is another subversive deity. Dwarves are expected to accept their lot in life and work to their best ability. One can dream about promoting or siring lots of children, but a dwarf is expected to put his current work first. The concept of starting a task then moving onto another before the first is finished, as practiced by clerics of this faith, is alien. Once a dwarf starts a task, he is expected to see it through to the end, no matter how long it takes.

Clerics of the Eye Opener are accepted as historians and teachers. Although wise in many things, they lack the spontaneity to enter battles of wits, preferring to fall back on tried and tested riddles. Of all the dwarves, clerics of the faith are more likely to have sudden flashes of inspiration, but such revelations are still rare. Riftmaster, lord of arcane magic, has few worshippers. Despite having the correct mindset for wizardry, dwarves rarely take up the profession and many frown at those who practice the art.

The Bear, has a nature god, receives almost no worship among *adurek*. The Landlord is actually a popular god, despite his association with greed. Profiteers across Tellene are often treated as friends simply because of their practice of sacrificing money and gems. Merchants pay him regular homage, as do many crafters, who seek to ensure their products fetch good prices. His clerics are almost always merchants, using their skills to secure favorable prices and opening new trade routes. Some, however, serve the nobles as tax collectors and more than a few are skilled jewelers.

Dwarves have no need to see their destiny, for they are taught from birth their lot in life is to serve their clan and kingdom. Any god teaching otherwise borders on being branded heretical. Such is the case with the Fate Scribe, whose clerics are escorted out of dwarven realms when detected. Battle Rager finds no place among dwarves, who fight as a cohesive unit and with sound tactics, rarely embracing their bloodlust.

As with the Bear, the Storm Lord controls realms virtually unknown to dwarves. Storms and bad weather rarely bother them in their subterranean homes. Risk is another ill-favored deity. Dwarves do not believe in taking chances, preferring to opt for the safe method, even if this would lead to a less successful outcome. Rogues, and even infiltrators, may follow him, but usually do so for his stealth aspect.

The Laughter finds little favor among dwarves, who prefer to control their emotions rather than submit to them. Dwarves rarely undergo mood swings, though some wags have pointed out that for a dwarf to smile represents a severe change of mood. Most dwarves view followers of this faith as troublemakers, whose activities threaten the ordered society of their race.

Evil dwarves are not unknown, but they are uncommon. Of all the evil deities, three are usually behind the corruption of *adurek*. The Emperor of Scorn plays on their mistrust of other races, whispering paranoid thoughts about how much they value dwarven gold and how the other races seek to destroy the dwarves. The Jealous Eye fuels the dwarves' natural love of gold into the dreaded gold lust. Her followers hoard precious metals rather than sacrifice them. Lastly, there is the Dark One. Living beneath the earth, dwarves often operate in total darkness. He urges the dwarves to stay in their tunnels beneath the earth, forsaking sunlight and moonlight. For many dwarves, especially older ones who have witnessed many wars and treacheries, his teachings are comforting.

Funerary Practices

Though they live for centuries, dwarves' physical bodies eventually succumb to death. Warfare, disease, accident, and old age strike the greatest kings to the lowliest miner, and in death, it is believed, all are equal. Indeed, the Book of Ages has this to say on physical death, *"Let not kings and princes consider themselves safe, for death does not judge by status but by time. Great king and lowly miner are judged equally, each receiving an allotment of life, and none shall add to or take from this time."*

Death is always a great mystery, for what truly lies beyond the mortal life can be learned only by dying. While dwarves lament their mortality, they do not fear death, for as the Book of Ages says, *"He who fears death is already dead, for he is afraid to live."* So long as a dwarf has lived well, there is nothing to fear in death.

Dwarves understand that the body is temporal and the soul eternal, but they treat the corpses of their fallen with great respect. No matter where he falls, a dwarf is taken back to his family, where the corpse is prepared for death. He is dressed in his finest clothes or armor, complete with weapon, his beard and hair groomed by grieving relatives, and his wounds (where applicable) sewn closed. He then lies in state for eight days, in honor of the eight great families. During this time, family and friends pray over the body, say farewells, and leave small gifts. Although dwarves do not believe in grave goods per se, the tokens are ones of remembrance, not for use in the afterlife.

On the morning of the ninth day, the body is taken to the temple the deceased favored most in life, where the clerics say prayers and sing ancient hymns to aid the passing of the soul, which at this point still resides in the body. For this reason, dwarves react badly to creatures that feast on the dead or seek to mutilate them. The body may be senseless, but the spirit within still feels pain.

After the temple ceremony, the corpse is taken to the catacombs that lie beneath the city. Nobles are usually buried in stone mausoleums, where their remains lie for eternity. Poorer dwarves must make do with a wall niche in one of the common cemeteries. Because dwarves do not believe in physical reincarnation and rarely gift their dead with valuable items, they do not protect their dead with traps or magic. Indeed, any metallic offerings are taken away and sacrificed back to the earth as a final act of honoring the dead.

The final act before the corpse is sealed away is the *bitoth*, or "releasing kiss." A member of the dwarf's family, usually a spouse or child, kisses the deceased on the lips. After doing so, he gently opens the mouth, releasing the soul from its earthly prison. The corpse, while honored, is now nothing more than an empty vessel, the physical form of the eternal soul now climbing toward heaven.

Afterlife

Following the completion of the funeral rites, the soul leaves the physical body and travels to the hall of the gods. Here the spirit stands naked and bare before the Truth, which sees every deed committed in life and the reasoning behind the action. The deeds of the spirit in life are weighed against the Truth. Depending on how well the dwarf has lived, and in some cases died, he is judged and sentenced to the afterlife.

Despite following a pantheon of gods, dwarves retain a belief in a racial afterlife, which all dwarves, regardless of faith, can achieve. The concept of a single heavenly paradise is unknown, and its place are four heavenly abodes. After judgment, dwarves are reunited with their ancestors. No earthly troubles reach the great halls, which are filled with song and laughter, and ever full tankards of mead and platters of roasted meats. Stories are told and ancient songs sung as they are on earth, and the tales of great deeds told on earth reach up into the heavens.

While it is virtually impossible to rise up through the great halls, souls can fall downward. A dwarf whose name is forgotten and whose deeds are no longer sung about can slip from one hall to the next lower, though he can never fall from grace completely.

The first, and most important, is the *Ara Jerngan* ("Hall of Kings"). Despite its grandiose name, it is not restricted for members of the nobility, but is reserved for dwarves whose mortal deeds shaped the dwarven race. Few dwarves ever reach this great hall, but those that do are in illuminated company, for here dwell the likes of Zardoz Longtongue (who codified the language), Borts Silverstream (the miner who first discovered mithral), and Enrik Eightsongs (who united the eight families).

Ranking one place beneath is the *Ara Dolle*, or "Hall of Heroes." Guardians of the heavenly realms, the Hall of Heroes is the eternal resting place of warriors whose deeds are remembered in song. Dwarves who seek a glorious death are rarely found here, however, for as the Book of Ages says, "*Let your deeds be done in life, for death brings an end to the story, on which no more can be written.*" Those who died defending dwarven realms against insurmountable odds, whose courage held when others fled, and whose sacrifice allowed others to live in peace are welcomed.

Next one finds the *Ara Ken*, or "Hall of Deeds," which is reserved for dwarves whose name lives on within a single kingdom. Non-military acts and those that did not affect the entire race earn one a seat in the mead hall. Many nobles and kings end up here, for although warriors, most are remembered for other deeds, such as the founding of a realm or making an alliance with civilized neighbors that allowed the realm to exist in peace.

Lastly, there is the *Ara Lekt* ("Hall of Kin"), in which all dwarves who led a good life and kept to the traditions and customs of their race dwell. The vast majority of dwarves end up here after death, but despite being the "common afterlife," it is no less a paradise than any of the others.

Of course, not every dwarf makes it to heaven and the dwarven underworld is a dark and lonely place. Known as *Nizek Ganith*, which translates as "Cavern of Echoes," dwarves who forgot or disavowed their traditions, those who murdered kinfolk or betrayed an oath, and the lazy and work shy all end up here. Once sentenced here, the soul can never be redeemed.

Said to lie beneath the great heavenly halls, the cavern echoes with the tormented cries of lonely spirits, cut off from their kith and kin by their mortal acts and forever cursed to wander alone. It is said that a soul, no matter how hard he tries, can hear nothing but his own voice. Even when he finds a kindred spirit, no conversation is possible between the

parties, for each hears only his own words repeated. For a race so tightly bound by oaths of blood and friendship, to wander forever alone is a terrible price.

Important Ceremonies

"Prayer unites body, spirit, and mind."

Hill dwarf saying.

The dwarven calendar is littered with holy days. Holy days of the main pantheon are public holidays, spent in prayer with family and friends. Other holy days are recognized as such but are standard workdays unless they happen to fall on Godsdays. Worshippers of the lesser gods attend small services, either in a shrine if the god is popular enough or at the house of friends who share the same belief.

Within the calendar exist a number of special days, some of which are held regularly while others are held only as needed. The most important of these ceremonies are detailed below. DMs should feel free to create other religious ceremonies as required by their campaign.

Korke Janok

Despite its name, the Rite of Welcoming is not held to welcome guests or newborn babes, but to celebrate the finding of a new mineral vein. Held in honor of *Suzek*, it is seen as a sign that the earth is still producing metal and mineral wealth, despite the activities of other races. The ceremony is held several weeks after the vein is actually found, for certain tests must be carried out first.

Once the discovery is made, the highest-ranking cleric of *Suzek* visits the site to appraise the situation. It is his task to appraise the quality of the vein, calculate its density and exploitability, and decide whether it should be mined or left alone to grow richer. Infiltrators and rangers may be called upon if the vein runs through previously unexplored territory or runs through dangerous territory, either natural or close to goblinoid lairs. While the tests are carried out, the populace waits patiently. More often than not the vein is low grade or too dangerous to mine and dwarves are accustomed to disappointment.

If the vein is found to be unworkable for any reason the dwarves lament the further loss of resources. Many dwarves feel that the other races have caused the earth serious long-term harm through their mining operations. One need only look at new dwarven mines, which extend deeper into the earth than ever before, to realize that the metals and gems are running out. Militant dwarves repeatedly demand the kings take action to stop all non-dwarf mining across Tellene, but the rulers understand that dwarves no longer have the strength to eliminate goblins, yet alone every race on Tellene. The days of the great realms are long gone. A few extreme militants have taken to sabotaging non-dwarf mines, causing cave-ins and killing miners in the name of religious conviction. Such actions are not against any dwarven law, but lead to heightening tensions between neighboring states.

Assuming the vein is workable, the cleric announces the discovery to the king, who then sends word throughout the realm. Preparations begin for the festival, which is held on the second Godsdays after the announcement. Few dwarves actually get to attend the ritual itself, mainly because of space, but everyone says prayers to *Suzek* and enjoys a feast laid on by the king, who owns the new vein at this stage.

The entire priesthood of *Suzek*, the king, the nobles, and the immediate family of the dwarf who discovered the vein attends the ceremony itself, which is held as near to the new vein as possible. Prayers are said, songs sung, and offerings of gold and silver made to thank the deity for her blessing. After the initial ceremony, the king rewards the dwarf who found the vein with a silver pick, a symbol of his thanks, and prays to *Hildal* that when the finder dies his soul reaches the Hall of Deeds. While this may not seem much of a reward, its true value lies in the afterlife, where the lucky dwarf can spend eternity as an honored ancestor.

The final act is for the king is to allocate ownership of the vein. He may keep it for himself, give it to a blood noble, whose family then owns it in perpetuity, or grant it to a courage noble (which reverts back to the king on the noble's death). The latter is seen as a wise move, for it allows the king to reissue the mining rights in the future and stops any one noble family becoming too powerful.

After the ritual is completed the owning noble throws a feast for the entire realm. This is an expensive undertaking, but is offset by the new wealth waiting to be mined. Again, kings use this as a way of limiting power among their nobles. If the owner is a courage noble, his clan lord is expected to donate money for the festivities. Since courage nobles pay taxes to their blood noble lord, both will profit from the new wealth.

Since the dwarves will soon be removing more ore from the ground, they are draining her resources. In order to compensate for this, a Rite of Replenishment (see below) is held a month after this festival.

Korke Helstra

Known in Merchant's Tongue as the Rite of Replenishment, it lies at the heart of the dwarven psyche and is responsible for the misunderstanding that dwarves are greedy beings. As noted elsewhere in this book, dwarves hoard treasure, sell high and buy low, and even loot the bodies of fallen goblinoids and orcs for their metal items. Despite their poor reputation, dwarves weather such insults with tight lips.

Dwarves know the earth is a living creature. Plants and animals represent only a tiny fraction of what she has to offer. The majority of her treasures are buried deep within the earth, being precious metals, gemstones, and even the rock through which dwarves tunnel. Like all living creatures, the earth cannot produce something from nothing and they believe that metals and minerals grow in the way animals and plants do.

In order to ensure a new harvest of ore, dwarves "plant" metal and gems back in the earth. Whether unprocessed ore, manufactured goods, or polished gemstones, a percentage of all metal goods gathered by dwarves throughout the year (typically 5-10%) are deposited back into the earth each year. In many cases the goods total hundreds of thousands of gold pieces in value.

The rite is usually held on the first new moon of Diadolai of the year, when the moon cannot see what the dwarves are doing. Dwarves never bury anything in the earth, even their dead, if Diadolai is present in the sky, for it is said that Diadolai is always searching for material for the Great Smithy. It is worth noticing that dwarves do not believe the Great Smithy will go out if not supplied with suitable metal to forge or fuel for its fire. The Great Smithy burns fuel found only among the gods and its metal does not exist on Tellene, except when a spark falls to the earth.

On this sacred night, dwarves across Tellene gather to throw coins, weapons, jewelry, and lumps of ore into the bottomless chasms and subterranean rivers on the edge of their realm while singing prayers to *Suzek*, and sometimes the Landlord. Dwarves believe that underground rivers are like veins, carrying the seeds from one place to another, and are therefore considered especially sacred. Over the next few nights every dwarf in Tellene will throw something into the abyss. To refuse to sacrifice is to rob the earth of its fruit and insult all that dwarves have stood for since their creation.

In general, dwarves value older metals over freshly excavated ones. The longer a piece of metal (or gem) is left outside the earth, the weaker the earth becomes. Because of this, dwarves place little value of ancestral weapons and armor, even magic ones. As a rule of thumb, any piece of metal older than 500 years is sacrificed as quickly as possible in order to save it from extinction.

Korke Lamsilk

The Rite of Founding is one of the most sacred days in the calendar, though its exact date varies by realm. It marks the day the first work began on the realm, the day the Founder's temple was consecrated, and is also the ruler's official birthday. Many dwarves also pay special homage to their ancestors.

Dwarves throughout the realm gather in the corridors outside their homes and sing extracts from the Book of Ages referring to the time when *Hildal* appeared to the dwarves and imparted his wisdom. The deep chorus reverberates throughout the entire realm and outsiders fortunate enough to be visiting at this time swear the very rock vibrates with the harmony, adding its own voice to the choir.

While this is taking place, the king and his entourage visit *Hildal's* temple. Here they offer their own prayers, thanking the god for his gifts and promising him the dwarves will remain true to his teachings, no matter what adversities they face. While he prays, the clerics perform the annual sacrifice, melting silver into bricks, which are then marked with the king's heraldic design.

Once this part of the ceremony is complete, the king begins a tour through the realm, handing out small gifts as he goes. Every dwarf, no matter what his social status or profession, is awarded the same value. As the king hands over each gift, the recipient repeats another verse from the Book of Ages, promising to uphold the ancient laws and obey the king, who was appointed by *Hildal*. In this respect, the ceremony is one of loyalty as well as remembrance.

After receiving his gift, the dwarf travels to the temple. Here he kisses the now cooled silver bricks and speaks personal prayers to the god. After every dwarf has visited the temple the bricks are carried to sites of new construction, where they are placed in the structure. Any project started on this day receives *Hildal's* special blessing; workers' safety is assured, the project will encounter no obstacles, and will be completed on time. Many projects are communal works, such as new expansion tunnels or mine shafts, whereas others are smaller, such as a single temple or a new house. Living in a property marked by a silver brick is said to bring great boons to the family, including a comfortable life, good health, and many children.

The evening is marked with a great feast. Rather than being held in a single chamber, tables are set out along the main corridors and dwarves from different clans mingle with each other, eating from the same plates, singing songs, forming bands to play sacred songs, and generally enjoying each other's company. Visitors are also given a feast, though within the guest quarters, but are visited by many dwarves who seek to make new friends among like-minded races.

Misconceptions

"What misconceptions? When did you ever see a magic wielding beardless dwarf laughing with a female dwarf?"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Beards

The one defining factor about dwarves that everyone claims to know is that they have beards and that beards hold special powers. Those that believe in female dwarves usually believe they have beards as well. Strangely, both statements are true, but only to a degree. As usual with non-human races, the truth lies buried beneath centuries of ignorance.

Contrary to some myths, dwarves do not lose physical or magic strength if their beards are shorn, but they do lose status. How a dwarf wears his beard and at what length fixes him within the social order. A king with a beard shorter than a commoner is no king, while a tailor who wears the beard of a warrior had best be prepared to back up his claim in combat.

The state of the beard is also very important. A well-kept beard implies the dwarf is healthy, prosperous, trustworthy, and pious, for no dwarf worth his salt would allow his beard to become unkempt or dirty. Even explorers working deep beneath the earth or warriors on campaign ensure their beards are kept trimmed and cleaned. An unnamed human adventurer, whose diary tells of the last moments of a dwarf adventurer by the name of Zaptros Angklin, records how important beard care is.

"Zaptros' hands and face were covered in blood—his blood. He knew he was dying and yet he didn't ask for healing, just a mirror, a sharp knife, and a bowl of water. As we watched he washed his beard clean and then cut off the loose ends that had grown over the last few days. Finally he looked at us, as if seeking approval. Through our tears we could do nothing but nod. Zaptros simply smiled at us, and said, 'I have fulfilled my last tradition.' With that he died."

Females sporting beards is discussed further below.

Females

What is rarer than a beardless dwarf? A female dwarf, of course. Over the centuries humans have come up with some remarkably reasons for the apparent lack of dwarven women. Some claim they grew from stones, others insist they are carved from the rock and given the gift of life through magic, while others claim that women have beards and are therefore hard to tell apart from males.

Out of all these myths, the latter is the closest to the truth. Dwarven females do exist, but account for only about one-third of the species. They are considered a precious gift and treated with great respect, but with this respect comes deep feelings of insecurity. As a result, females are kept away from danger as much as possible, and this means limiting their movements inside the realm when outsiders are present and when traveling abroad.

In both cases, women can interact with other races so long as they wear beards and act like males. Yes, female dwarves have breasts, but clever use of strapping and baggy clothes can hide this fact. Even if noticeable, the dwarf merely has to comment on "lack of exercise" and pass them off as excess fat. Given the decades of practice most women who have regular outside dealing have had at passing as males and their equal tenacity and deep voices, the myth has arisen they simply do not exist.

Of course, female dwarves can be spotted in mixed race towns, where the dwarven inhabitants are more relaxed in their dealings with outsiders and safer than living next to a goblin lair, but the myth remains firm among country folk who rarely visit the big cities in which these dwarves live.

Greedy

Everyone knows dwarves are greedy. They mine gold, silver, and gems from deep beneath the earth, yet how much of this fabulous wealth ever reaches other races? They even steal rusty swords from dead orcs and goblinoids to exchange for a few coppers to spend on beer. They also sell high and buy low, thus making the greater profit.

Everything just mentioned is true, and yet completely misunderstood. Dwarves make no claim on owning all the metal and precious stones in the world, but they do consider themselves to be the caretakers of the underworld. Elves tend the forest, plants, and animals; dwarves tend the stone. In the same way elves react badly to orcs burning their forests, so dwarves react to strip mines and money hoarders of other races.

Everything works of a cycle of life. Animals and plants are born, grow old, and die. The earth follows a similar cycle, but in order for new metals and stones to be born, some of the wealth must be returned to act as a stimulant. Place a single acorn in the ground, tend it over the years, and eventually you have a few trees. Maintain your devotion and you have a copse, and then a forest. Dwarves believe that by replanting precious metals the earth will make more.

Sadly, other races are mining faster than the dwarves can replenish the earth. Once it was just gold and silver the other races sought, but now they want copper, bronze, tin, and iron. The more metal the dwarves can take out of circulation, the quicker the earth will recover. It is for this reason, more than pure greed, they discourage mining activities near the homes.

Yes, a few dwarves do carry the hoarding to the extreme of becoming fixated by accruing wealth. Such unfortunate individuals are said to be suffering from malady that no potion or spell can cure. Rather than sacrifice their gains to the earth, they seal it away in treasuries, basking in its beauty when alone, when the gold whispers to them it is lonely and needs more friends.

Arcane Magic

Many folk are convinced that dwarves do not, indeed cannot, wield arcane magic. Some claim the race was cursed by the elves, who held it as their great weapon, others insist dwarves magic resistant and therefore cannot use it, whereas a few hold to the belief that dwarves have simply never opened their eyes to its potential.

In truth, dwarves can work arcane magic but rarely do. In the days of yore the dwarves existed without magic. Eager to see his gift spread far and wide, the Riftmaster granted the knowledge of arcane magic a dwarf named Zarduk, who taught it to his family. Over time they became a major family, the eight great family, but they also became corrupted. Magic was used to craft and destroy, to enslave and release, and the Zarduk family soon developed aspirations of grandeur beyond their status.

Magic became the be all and end all to them. They became convinced that their power put them on a higher level than all other dwarves for their gifts could shape the very universe without the need for divine intervention. So it was they set about trying to make themselves higher than kings. The resultant civil war almost shattered dwarven society, but the Zarduk were eventually thrown down.

So it was that arcane magic became reviled as dangerous to an orderly society and looked upon as a negative influence. Dwarven sorcerors and magicians still exist, but in very few numbers and usually outside of dwarven society. Riftmaster has never been forgiven for his interference.

Why do the Zarduk remain one of the eight families? Well, despite the terrible consequences, a god directly blessed Zarduk and that is worthy of recognition. Their name also reminds dwarves that non-dwarven things, specifically those gifts not given to their race by the seven great gods (whichever ones that may have been), are a corrupting influence.

Hill Dwarf Glossary

Although all dwarves speak the same base language, there are differences among the individual races. The words contained here are those used by hill dwarves.

Adomkempe	"Rock giants"; stone giants
Adomkraft	"Gathered spears"; generic term for the militia
Adugan	"Stone crowns"; hereditary noble, usually a clan head serving a king
Adurek	"Born of stone"; dwarven name for hill dwarves
Adusprik	"Stone talkers"; a shaman
Alfr	"Woodland folk"; all breeds of surface elves
Alfrwenn	"Elf friend"; derogatory term for a druid
Aloskempe	"Castle giants"; cloud giants
Am-herék	"Half retinue"; ad hoc military unit
Amythom	"Great Forge"; the sun
Amytral	"Great Smithy"; the sky
Ankalos	"Gathering"; the month of Reaping
Ara Dolk	"Hall of Heroes"; heaven reserved for warriors of daring deed
Ara Jerngan	"Hall of Kings"; heaven reserved for dwarves whose deeds benefit the entire race
Ara Ken	"Hall of Deeds"; heaven reserved for dwarves important within a single realm
Ara Lekt	"Hall of Kin"; heaven for regular dwarves
Astopra	"Book casters"; wizards
Bakwask	"Glistening skin"; a salve for treating burns
Bardungan	"War crowns"; captains, always blood nobles
Bardunsprik	"War speakers"; the military council
Blit Jar	"Start Year"; the month of Renewal
Dagterak	"Those who do not fit"; generic name for character classes unknown to dwarves
Diskmor	"Vile ones"; hobgoblins of any breed
Donsk-na-Mare	"Eaters of the dead"; bugbears
Dret-nizek	"Shield cavern"; defensive formation using shields
Drosgol	"Mouthpieces"; generic term for clergy
Dyktigsprak	"Clever tongues"; member of the bard class
Eka-starez	"Clan guard"; entire military strength of a clan
Emedkempe	"White giants"; frost giants
Endermank	"Hand bonding"; a political marriage
Engan	"Little crowns"; any child of a king
Erklere	"Tree imps"; forest gnomes
Eselhingst	"Yapping dragons"; kobolds
Fal	"Waiting"; the month of Harvest
Fargedros	"Green tongues"; members of the druid class
Fargekempe	"Green giants"; woodland giants
Fem adurek	"Arms man"; members of the Warrior NPC class
Fem adurek kek	"Militia squads"; generic name for militia formations
Flamrok	"Celestial Heart"; the Brightstar
Forbryt	"Lawbreakers"; rogues of criminal bent
Forurs	"Foul bloods"; a sorcerer
Fotarurs	"Savage bloods"; orcs
Fotarurska	"Orcsbane"; foul smelling orc deterrent
Ful Than	"Divine Warrior"; the moon Pelselond
Fulkraft	"Sacred spears"; members of the Templar prestige class
Gasomsprik	"Magical voices"; spellsingers
Gaz-ar-dir-k-par	"Sea of shimmering blades"; a combat maneuver using polearms
Gelender	"Severed hands"; a brigand, typically one who has been outlawed
Gomore	"The Supervisor"; the moon Veshemo
Gramlek	"Great Teacher"; the Mule

Gramthan	"Senior warrior"; a sergeant
Gramok	"Lung bag"; flotation device also used to provide limited breathable air to divers
Hakimak	"Lineage judges"; dwarves who ensure marriages are not incestuous
Hederwenn	"Honored friends"; non-dwarf close friend
Heldor	"Shelter"; a house
Hellige	"Lost ones"; deep gnomes
Herek	"Retinue"; military unit led by a courage noble
Hildal	"Cornerstone"; the Founder
Hingst	"Treasure hoarders"; dragons of any color
Hirthi	"Watching"; the month of Declarations
Hitoth	"Releasing kiss"; final act of a funeral which releases the spirit to heaven
Hiwal	"Defenders"; members of the dwarven defender prestige class
Hulhettro	"Hollow faith"; member of the adept NPC class
Imprago	"Strengthening"; the month of Replanting
Jerngan	"Iron crowns"; the kings
Jernherre	"Iron lords"; hereditary nobles
Kamadom	"One who lives as a rock"; an infiltrator
Kelbeger	"Gold lust"; dwarven yearning for material wealth
Kezak	"Shaper"; crafter, usually a member of the Expert NPC class
Kilgan	"Sword crown"; courage noble
Klok	"Trading"; the month of Sowing
Kloksprik	"Trade speakers"; the guild council
Klyp	"Not pure"; half races other than half-dwarves
Korke Helstra	"Rite of Replenishment"; annual ceremony to replenish the earth
Korke Janok	"Rite of Welcoming"; celebration marking the finding of a new mineral vein
Korke Lamsilk	"Rite of Founding"; ceremony marking the day the realm was started
Korkesprik	"Rite speakers"; the religious council
Kramank	"Soul bonding"; a marriage for love
Krengari	"Filth dwellers"; goblins
Kul Yak	"Dark Delver"; the moon Diadolai
Lasterm	"Invigorator"; the Powermaster
Likhran	"Corpse ravens"; gnolls
Lukduk	"Rope stairs"; a collapsible rope ladder
Lusurk	"Stout Heart"; the Knight of the Gods
Maklok	"Kingdom"; entire military strength of a realm
Mankil	"Bonded swords"; a member of the fighter class
Manklim	"Bonder"; the Holy Mother
Mankthan	"Oath warriors"; a paladin of any faith
Midmank	"Child bonding"; archaic marriage legitimizing consorts
Mone	"Warming"; the month of Arid
Mulktreki	"Little people"; halflings of any breed
Mulkt-sla	"Little cousins"; rock gnomes
Nagedkat	"Bad partings"; a blood feud
Narremank	"Second bonding"; a marriage honoring widows of husbands fallen in battle
Nedfalos	"Will worker"; a psionicist
Nizek Ganith	"Cavern of Echoes"; dwarven version of Hell
Norjis Maklosh	"Fall of the Great Realm"; the current dwarf calendrical cycle
Nygan	"New crowns"; lesser hereditary noble
Preg adurek	"Banner man"; professional soldier
Proturs	"Powder blood"; a stimulant and coagulant
Raserieks	"Furious blades"; member of the barbarian class
Rekzaki	"Stone cloaks"; dwarven camouflage cloak
Ritkum	"Axe Fall"; the month of Snowfall
Salimak	"Final Judge"; the True
Salk Jar	"End Year"; the month of Famine

Sesjon	"Latecomers"; generic term for humans
Seslik	"Oath Holder"; the Speaker of the Word
Slitealfr	"Enslavers"; drow elves
Slortthan	"Unarmored warriors"; a monk
Snike	"One who walks in darkness"; a dwarven ranger
Snurreseil	"One who whirls and glides"; a Basiran dancer
Sprokmank	"Word bond"; an honor marriage, renewable every five years
Starez	"Guard"; smallest military unit
Suzek	"Earth Sister"; the Mother of Element's earth aspect
Telsethan	"Homeless warriors"; a brigand, usually a refugee
Tenokthan	"Boar warriors"; elite soldiers
Thekog	"Unskilled"; generic term for the masses, most being farmers or miners
Thordros	"Old tongues"; generic term for scholars
Thukempe	"Red giants"; fire giants
Thulk Jar	"Mid Year"; the month of Siege Hold
Tijkempe	"Brown giants"; hill giants
Tragrim	"Tactician"; the Old Man
Udest	"Cooling"; the month of Frosting
Uheldkat	"Honorable parting"; a divorce imposed by the courts to protect the wife from abuse
Ulgras	"Restocking"; the month of Mid-Season Harvest
Urslekt	"Blood kin"; any blood relation
Ursprik	"Blood speakers"; the noble council
Wisthan	"Show warrior"; a gladiator
Zedgan	"Guild crowns"; master crafters
Zumol	"Wandering"; the month of Mustering

Mountain Dwarves

Anatomy

"Choosing an important sounding name for a small race must be compensating for something."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Mountain Dwarves and Language

Mountain dwarves speak Dwarven and retain many words used by hill dwarves. Unless otherwise stated, the hill dwarf glossary applies equally to mountain dwarves and similar words are not duplicated.

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Tellene is graced with three species of dwarves, the second most common being mountain dwarves. Their Dwarven name is *rurok*, which translates as "earthen dwellers" in reference to their preference for living deeper beneath ground than their more open hill dwarf cousins. Many races refer to them as highland dwarves, referring to their mountains homes, but not all mountain dwarves live under mountains.

This section covers only the key differences between the mountain dwarves and their hill and stone dwarf kin. Where no difference is mentioned, one should assume the hill dwarf description stands.

Physiology

Contrary to popular belief, *rurok* are actually slightly taller than hill dwarves, though only by a few inches. Weight is similar between the subraces, with mountain dwarves being only a few tens of pounds heavier. The slight differences mean it is easy to confuse them when seen in poor lighting, though as will be seen they are more recognizable in good visibility.

Skin tones tend to be darker and actually darken with age, Young mountain dwarves are little different from their *adurek* kin, but by puberty the difference becomes apparent. Tone continues to alter over the centuries, reaching a deep brown or black by the third century. Hair color has a wider range, ranging from brown to black, though shades of red are not unusual. Most mountain dwarves have some tinge of auburn in their hair.

Eyes are usually dark brown and as with all dwarves they can see in total darkness. *Rurok* tend to visit the surface less often than hill dwarves and make greater use of their darkvision in their daily lives. Scholars have often wondered how it is mountain dwarves live underground and yet retain dark skin tones and the ability to operate in sunlight. The general consensus is that they have only recently taken to subterranean living (in historical terms) and that sooner or later their skin will change, as evidenced by the chalky skin of stone dwarves. Mountain dwarves rarely stop to dwell upon such matters.

As with hill dwarves they are slow moving yet able to bare heavy loads with only a minimal reduction in speed. They are likewise steady on their feet. They receive training in geology the same as hill dwarves and possess the same stonecunning ability, though if truth be told their greatest strength lies with metalworking. As well as receiving training in their youth, their eyes can detect slight flaws in metal items, allowing them to appraise value with great skill. Despite living beneath the ground, they are less skilled at evaluating stonework.

Again, they are less susceptible to poisons than many other races and show a marked resistance to magic. Indeed, aside from minor biological differences their physical makeup is remarkably similar to hill dwarves. Given that the two subraces have not been apart for the same length of time as stone dwarves, this is perhaps not unexpected.

Psychology

If hill dwarves are sullen and slow to make friendships, mountain dwarves are positively isolationist. Although already wary of other races, centuries of living beneath the surface have added further fuel to the fires of mistrust. Every stranger, save for fellow dwarves, is seen as a possible enemy rather than a possible friend, and mountain dwarves are guarded in their speech until they learn something of the stranger's motives. Even when operating in an adventuring party, mountain dwarves tend to be reserved. Of course, once a friendship is made they are no less generous than hill dwarves, freely gifting close friends with wonderfully crafted metal items as tokens of their loyalty.

Rurok are less traditional than hill dwarves. They still maintain the ancient ways but feel able to alter them if changes are required. However, racial pride runs deep in their veins and they regard their culture as being among the most enlightened on Tellene. Their laws and traditions, while less rigid than hill dwarves', are not something to be mocked. Their sense of vengeance is no less sharp, and an angry mountain dwarf will travel across Tellene to get revenge.

Less emphasis is placed on formal honor, though being honest is still expected. Indeed, mountain dwarves are regarded as being so honest they have difficulty detecting lies. This is a rather unfair judgment, however. While being as physically able as hill dwarves, their sense of intuition and perception is actually lower, most likely as a result of being isolated from the rest of the civilized races.

They believe in a strong sense of cooperation, but one based on good deeds rather than rigid laws. Laws are seen as restrictions placed to curtail the activities of the minority who seek to trouble society, rather than something honest dwarves need worry about on a daily basis. Willing cooperation with authority thus replace rigid dictates.

They retain the *adurek* hatred of goblinoids and orcs, as well as their appreciation, and sacrifice of, precious metals. Unlike *adurek*, however, mountain dwarves place less value on gems and stones and do not consider them as important, either in value, art, or sacrifice.

Social Structure

"Leaders who don't lead? Sounds a bit elvish to me."

Gragr Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Mountain dwarves are less clannish than hill dwarves. They still place family before friends, and friends before other dwarves, but with less rigidity. Mountains dwarf clans, and by default realms, and are more a collective of interwoven support networks than groups bound by oaths of mutual support. Of course, family and clan names rank highly among these racial proud dwarves and an insult to one dwarf offends all his kinfolk.

Dwarves move through the social ladder, such as it is, based on their skill. As described below, mountain dwarf leaders rarely involve themselves with the day-to-day affairs of the realm, trusting in their followers to work to the best of their ability. Of course there are leaders, for someone must make final decisions on important matters, but mountain dwarves do not rely on them to make every decision for them.

A dwarven clan typically numbers around 350 adults, divided into as many as one hundred families. With a clan, nobles account for some 1%, honor nobles 3%, clergy 2%, warriors 20%, crafters 30%, and workers 42%. The last 2% are comprised of dwarves not fitting into the typical categories, such as rogues or wizards. The percentage for warriors is for professional soldiers, for in times of war the militia, made up of all able bodied males, gathers to fight.

Males outnumber females by approximately two to one but females have more options in their choice of profession. Few choose to become warriors or miners, out of respect for the traditional male roles, but many become crafters. Females may own and run their own business.

Mountain dwarves have a special name for their way of life, *Roirak* ("Tranquility"). It is also the dwarven name for the Pure, though as detailed in the section on *Religion* they do not treat the Pure as a unique deity, more an ideal.

Blood Nobles & Royalty

Blood nobles are the top of the social ladder, holding position based on their lineage rather than ability. All ranks found among hill dwarves exist among the *rurok*. Despite the dwarves' more open society, blood nobles still hold the most power, owning the most profitable mines and commanding the military. Their followers, however, swear oaths of mutual support rather than total allegiance.

As stated above, nobles are responsible for making final decisions but do not decree how dwarves should lead their daily lives. So long as society is running smoothly, the nobles refrain from interference. In general they have their minds of loftier matters, such as ensuring the dwarves of the realm have enough to eat, that enemies are dealt with appropriately, and securing diplomatic ties with neighboring states.

Honor Nobles

Rurok social strata are rather simple by hill dwarf standards. At the top are a few blood nobles and below them are the masses. In the middle is a special class known as *breidagan* ("honor crowns" but usually translated as "honor nobles"). In much the same way as courage nobles are recognized military leaders, honor nobles are recognized within their field of expertise.

Because only a few dwarves may practice a specific trade within a clan and there may only be one cleric of a given faith, certain measures ensure the number of honor nobles does not get out of hand. Trades or professions with more than twenty proponents may elect a noble to serve as their guildmaster. Smaller professions are grouped together and a single noble chosen. The highest-ranking cleric of the four major faiths, the Holy Mother, the Eternal Lantern, the Night Watchman, and the Mule, within each clan are automatically appointed as nobles, regardless of character level. Among other faiths, the highest-ranking cleric in the realm receives the title, not the highest from each clan. Thus, one clan will have honor nobles serving the Knight of the Gods, for example, but no others will. The military is exempt from this ruling, and blood nobles may appoint military honor nobles as required to lead their armies. Most use the traditional method employed by hill dwarves, selecting commanders for their bravery and skill.

With power comes responsibility. Outside of the military, honor nobles have no actual authority and serve more as advisors and mediators. Religious nobles already hold some power based on their church rank but still defer to higher ranking clerics of the same faith from other clans. Trade and profession nobles serve as guildmasters, overseeing matters of business, collecting dues, and ensuring the workers are well treated. The non-military honor nobles within each clan form an advisory body known as the *Kled Spra* ("Common Voice").

All honor nobles are equal; there is no distinction between ranks. Honor nobles hold their position in society until they die, step down, or are removed from power by common consensus of the people who elected them. The position is not hereditary.

The Masses

The vast bulk of mountain dwarves fall into this category, known simply as *thuk* ("people"). Certain rank distinctions do exist, such as military sergeants, master crafters, clerical ranks, and such like, but these individuals hold limited authority only within their own profession, as in other societies. Pay scales and living standards vary according to profession or rank, but there are no class distinctions. *Rurok* do not understand concepts such as upper class or working class. All *thuk* are equal and deserve (and command) equal respect.

Mountain dwarves retain the standard Dwarven words for groups, such as crafters, clerics, and warriors to differentiate jobs rather than social status. Since hill and mountain dwarves understand each other's culture, even if they do not agree on which is best, they treat each other according to their status in their own society. For instance, a hill dwarf guildmaster is treated as an honor noble even if he would not be eligible for the title among mountain dwarves.

Others

As with any race there are members who do not fit in. Some follow odd professions (from a dwarven perspective), whereas others have alienated themselves by their actions or words. Members of classes not typical to dwarves, criminals, those who hold the law above the good of the community, followers of unusual gods, and so on, are called *karim* ("wanderers"), implying they have left the true path.

Some *karim* still hold positions of authority, though because of their unusual beliefs they do so only among like-minded dwarves. A Basiran dancer, for instance, may be highly respected for his skill and dance at the king's court, but only other dancers give them any elevated social status. Such individuals are not treated any differently to the masses; they are just unlikely to ever become someone of importance.

Classes

"Dwarven rangers are like mountains. They're not tall or snow covered, just cold and silent."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Adept

Mountain dwarves are more accepting of religious differences than hill dwarves but still treat adepts as outsiders. The practice is viewed as backward, being only one step removed from the witchcraft used by orcs and goblinoids. Most dwarves who follow this profession come from isolated mountain realms, whose power has waned over the millennia and whose traditions having fallen into barbarity. Adepts are commonly referred to as *mirtbel* ("forgotten ones") because it is said the dwarven gods have forsaken them.

Aristocrat

As with most races, aristocrats are small in number and usually born to the post. Mountain dwarves elevated to honor noble status can, however, take levels in this class. This represents their increased social status and their mixing in higher circles. Should he ever lose his social status, he retains his existing class levels but may no longer advance in the aristocrat class. As with hill dwarves, there is no unique name for followers of this class.

Barbarian

Mountain dwarves are less rigid in their approach to law and social boundaries than their lowland cousins but barbarians are still unusual. Unbridled rage has never been a strong dwarven trait, though as with adepts there are communities that have fallen onto hard times. Most barbarians live in small realms surrounded by hostile foes. Centuries of constant warfare have driven the dwarves to adopt desperate measures and move away from what they see as stifling traditions.

Bard

Bards are not so accepted among *rurok*, whose culture relies more on written word or on sages. Being less outgoing than *adurek*, mountain dwarves have a lower opinion of humor and the tricks, both manual and vocal, of bards are viewed as a waste of time serving little purpose in the community as a whole. Such effort would be better put to hard work of benefit to others. As such, *rurok* refer to bards as *mardo* ("wastrels").

Basiran Dancer

Basiran dancers are less common among hill dwarves. The lack of graceful bodies and adherence to more somber dances, combined with the usual dwarven lack of imagination, stifles their ability to learn this art. Learning the art can be difficult, for few *rurok* mix well among other races and there is no dwarven tradition to adopt. *Rurok* are also extremely proud creatures and tend to react badly if laughed at or mocked. Those few who follow the art can achieve recognition by nobles but rarely dance for outsiders.

Brigand

Since the fall of Karasta the number of *rurok* brigands has soared. Few are actual highwaymen and robbers, however. Most live as guerilla fighters, continuing the war against the Kalamarans on a new battlefield. Because mountain dwarves are less traditional, they are more open to new ideas. Their tactics lack imagination but their in-depth knowledge of mountains and geography and less rigid military tactics gives them an edge over their foes. Dwarves who take the class to become guerilla fighters are called *lokthan* ("goat warriors") in reference to their lifestyle on the slopes of mountains. Those who follow a criminal bent are called *roirokebel* ("selfish ones").

Cleric

Rurok tend to place less emphasis on organized religion and ceremony in favor of personal worship. Strict vows and codes of conduct are seen as restrictive and do not serve the needs of the community. As such, there are fewer clerics than among hill dwarves. Clerics rarely worship gods who demand major signs of dedication, such as blindness or other maiming and most have a secondary profession, acting as clerics only when called upon by followers of their faith. They do not form a social class, but receive the name *tirbar*, which means "high follower."

Commoner

The commoner class covers everything from miners to shopkeepers, taking in craft apprentices, laborers, and other dwarves whose skills are considered easily taught. Of course, such generalization can be insulting, but the key difference between commoners and experts is purely one of advanced training. Experts study their craft before practicing; commoners work at it from the beginning. Mountain dwarves have no set name for this class, referring to members by their profession or social status.

Druid

Concerned more with metal than stone, there are only a handful of dwarves following this belief system. Refugees from Karasta have taken up the faith in small numbers though only as a practical solution, using the spells and powers to further their rebellious goals. Isolated communities may rarely turn to druidism, but there is always an emphasis on metal over stone and stone over flora and fauna. While they have the neutral temperament to accept the faith they rarely interact with the surface world so beloved by druids. Followers are called *alspriki*, which translates as "wood talkers."

Expert

In general experts tend to practice skilled crafts, such as armoring and weaponsmithing, or be skilled in scholarly pursuits. They learn their craft from a tutor (mountain dwarves rarely use the term "master" because of its connotations of superiority) and study for long years before actually practicing their art. While they may get more recognition for their work, their social status is no higher than a common miner. All experts are referred to as *sakbel* ("tutored ones") in reference to their training.

Fighter

As with *adurek*, mountain dwarves favor the fighter class. Their realms usually lie closer to the powerful orc and goblinoid lairs, who dwell deeper in the earth. Fighters are not bound to nobles by oaths of allegiance but instead work for their community. A special tax is levied to pay for their services. Fighters serve under the blood noble in charge of their clan, who is in command of the army for the good of the clan, and rarely, if ever, follow a different lord. Members of the fighter class are known as *sakrit* ("tutored axes") and soldiers as a social group are called *sirkmag* ("shield bearers").

Gladiator

Dwarven gladiators are renowned for their durability, fierce courage, and strong defense, if not their showmanship. Within a realm there are few gladiators. *Rurok* have no love of blood sports and do not see how such acts benefit the community. Mock fights are important parts of training, but to fight for money or the love of fighting is a waste of talent. Note the key difference between hill and mountain dwarf views. Hill dwarves see gladiators as warriors who do not serve a lord; mountain dwarves view them as warriors who do not serve the people. The *rurok* term for a gladiator is *mardsirk*, or "wasted shield."

Infiltrator

Rurok infiltrators serve much the same function as with *adurek*. They are saboteurs, scouts, pathfinders, and explorers more at home underground than on the surface. Mountain dwarves make great use of bridges and stairs climbing steep subterranean chasms and infiltrators are charged with destroying these structures should the realm be invaded. Rebuilding

them may take many months, but better to do some hard work than be destroyed. Infiltrators are sometimes called upon to assassinate enemy leaders and while the work is dangerous, and rarely enjoyed, the dwarves have a proverb for such tasks; it is better to remove the head with a single stroke than hack the body to pieces.

Monk

Since monks follow strict vows and codes, few mountain dwarves find the class attractive. While monks live in communities, they are monasteries and schools. Their skills and outlook, therefore, are centered more on serving a small group than an entire community. Mountain dwarves are also workaholics at heart. Spending time meditating when one could be helping a neighbor borders on social heresy and is certainly seen as selfish. Although they use the *adurek* term for monks to their faces, most *rurok* refer to them as *roirokemor* ("selfish thinkers") when out of earshot.

Paladin

Partly because of their lack of belief in rigid authority and partly due to their private religious beliefs, *rurok* are seldom drawn to paladinhood. Doing good because you can is inherent in their psychological makeup, but to do good because you must is almost akin to bondage. Mountain dwarves use the term *mankethan* to describe paladins, but it is vocalized almost as a tone of disgust. They do not mock paladins for their conviction, however; they simply dislike the level of servitude and zealotry it implies.

Psions

Mountain dwarves are more open to free expression and accept psionists as a somewhat unusual expression of free will. They rank among the *karim* simply because they are so few in number and because individuals tend to follow their own path rather than stand among their society. The term *nedfalos* thus refers to how they work their magic and to their free will to make their own destiny.

Ranger

Despite being less intuitive than many other races mountain dwarves make good rangers. Their tough bodies and detailed knowledge of their mountains homes, both above and below ground, make them ideally suited to the hard life of a ranger. Many act as scouts and sentries, whereas those whose favored enemy is a racial foe are considered elite warriors. Their lack of intuition and perception is more than offset by their ability to cope with harsh conditions and the training all *rurok* receive in survival. They receive the name *dulthaj* ("foe haters"), which should not be confused with the prestige class of similar name.

Rogue

Those who practice thievery are reviled by *rurok* society. Mountain dwarves are usually happy to help their neighbors, either lending a hand to help make or fix something or with donations of food or money. That a dwarf would steal from a member of his own realm is simply abhorrent. Because of their strong sense of community, theft is viewed as a serious crime. On the other hand, rogues who use their skills to become trapmakers or locksmiths, or even scouts, spies, or merchants, are treated as valued members of society. Criminals are referred to as *balthuik* ("anti social") whereas rogues with a recognized trade use the trade name in lieu of any class distinction.

Shaman

Aside from their differing views on traditions, the three dwarven subraces also have differing views on the earth's resources. Hill dwarves favor metal and stone, stone dwarves prefer stone, and mountain dwarves prize metal. What they all share is a lack of knowledge about surface flora and fauna. Shamans are found only among regressed clans and even then "worship" metals. Each metal, they believe, has a unique spirit, which can be tapped into to work magic. The class name, *kursprik* ("metal talker"), derives from this belief.

Sorcerer

Mountain dwarves retain the tradition of mistrusting arcane magic in raw form. The incident with the Zarduk family has forever tainted dwarven views on arcane magic users as easily corrupted and power hungry. Unless a sorcerer has a trade, such as alchemy, he is unwelcome in mountain dwarf realms. Many sorcerers practice a second profession, using their magic only when it serves the community.

Spellsinger

Spellsingers are slightly more common among *rurok* than the other subraces but are still a tiny minority. Their willingness to learn new songs is offset by their lack of convergence with other cultures, which makes learning new songs difficult. Those

who exist within a realm tend to work together in a chorus, mixing harmonies to produce new powers. Some work as entertainers to earn a living whereas others use their magic for the benefit of the community.

Warrior

While few professional soldiers follow this class (preferring fighter or ranger) all dwarves receive some training in martial arts. Males serve with the militia upon reaching adulthood and more than a few actually study well enough to progress in this class. It should be noted that training with the militia is not a formal obligation, but few dwarves refuse to join. Doing so would let down their community in its greatest time of need and be a source of great shame. Followers of this class have no specific name simply because it is not a standalone profession.

Wizard

Mountain dwarves are no more drawn to wizardry than they are sorcery. Aside from their distrust of arcane magic, wizards have little to offer most dwarves, who prefer to let clerics handle magical matters. As with sorcerors, alchemists can find ready work so long as they do not flaunt their arcane powers. Even in battle, dwarves prefer hardened steel to *fireball* spells.

Government

"Only the wisest rulers say little and achieve much."

Mountain dwarf proverb

Neutral Good Society

What is a neutral good society? It is one in which leaders do not impose their presence on society unless such attention is warranted and where the members work for the well being of the whole community by choice without thought for tradition or selfish acts. Although mountain dwarves are not communists, in that not everyone is equal, everyone does have equal rights based on common good. Aside from having greater wealth and the burden of decisions making, nobles have no more privileges than other members of society.

Mountain dwarves do not swear oaths of allegiance to nobles but rather agree to cooperate with them for the greater good. Should a noble make a bad decision the people let him know through the approved channels. No dwarf is barred from voicing his opinion. Nobles thus rule because they have the support of the people rather than because their position gives them divine or legal right to rule.

Laws are created not to restrict the majority but solely to punish the minority. This does not mean mountain dwarves live in a state of anarchy, however. Soldiers patrol the streets and caverns and judges preside over courts, but these are not symbols of authority designed to instill fear. So long as an individual lives by common laws of decency and cooperation with the authorities he has little to fear. Lawbreakers are not just breaking the laws; they are upsetting the sense of community so important to these proud people.

This even goes so far as sense of timing. Lawful good dwarves go to work at set times because they must. Chaotic good dwarves go to work when they feel like it, but do not shirk their responsibilities. Once they achieve their daily quota, however, their time is their own. Neutral good dwarves go to work because it is their duty to aid their society by producing goods. Once their work is finished they help out in their community in other ways.

Traditions are viewed as important so long as they do not stifle or restrict society. Mountain dwarves respect the ways of their forefathers and follow many of the ancient traditions, but do so because they are good and just not because they exist. If a tradition imposes strict codes of conduct it is changed or dropped.

The key difference between neutral good and lawful or chaotic good is that traditions and laws are as equally respected as free will and independence so long as the outcome is good and beneficial. If a dwarf wants to attend a temple and partake in a particular ceremony then that is his choice. If he wants to stay at home and pray, then he is equally entitled to do so. The decision lies with the individual.

In short, a neutral good society promotes community spirit based on good deeds over the sense of self but does so without strict laws to enforce such behavior.

Workings of Government

So how does *rurok* society function if everyone is left in peace to do their own thing? The secret lies in cooperation with the rulers and a strong sense of community spirit. Nobles hold important positions but they are not rulers in the traditional sense. Dwarves do not expect their nobles to interfere in their daily lives so long as things are working well. In return, the commoners are entrusted to ensure they do everything they can to maintain this balance by working to aid the community. For instance, taxes are paid on time because to hold back would harm others, not because fines are imposed on late payers.

In order to understand the decision making process, it is necessary to start at the lowest level of government and work back up. Each clan has a council of honor nobles, the *Kled Spra*, who act as a regional government. They meet every

Godsday afternoon to discuss tax levels, work quotas, the repairs needed to maintain the clan territory, security problems, and so on. Any dwarf may bring a matter to their attention simply by asking to address the council.

The council is also responsible for collecting and spending community taxes. Soldiers must be paid, roads and bridges maintained, drainage problems sorted, and even food supplies purchased for hard times. These are public meetings and are often attended by large numbers of the community. Once the council has finished business, a representative passes on the information to the clan noble.

Blood nobles act as advisors to the king. Since they receive regular reports from the *Kled Spra*, who in turn listen to the masses, they have a good idea of public mood. When something important needs to be settled, such as a new trade contract or a war commenced against neighboring goblinoids, the king uses the nobles to sound out public opinion. This is actually more a tradition than a requirement, and the people are usually happy to follow their leader's decision so long as it serves the realm. Because the king has the same sense of community as his people, he usually has their best interests at heart.

Kings, and indeed lesser nobles, cannot be overthrown except by acts of treason but they can be forced to stand down from office in favor of their appointed successor. Unlike hill dwarves, *rurok* nobles appoint their successor rather than hand it to their oldest child. In this way they pick the best candidate for the post. This can, and does, lead to sibling rivalries, but the nobles put their community before offending one of their children. When no offspring are deemed suitable, they may appoint a more distant relative, such as a cousin. New clan dynasties are formed in this way.

A wise ruler has nothing to fear from his followers, but one who acts selfishly or with vested interests for only certain clans can find public opinion turning against him. In such times the masses make their feelings known by a series of industrial strikes and protests. Such things are extremely rare, however.

Culture

"Adherence to tradition does not blind one from change."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Despite variations in government and adherence to traditions, mountain dwarf culture is very similar in many ways to that of hill dwarves. Cultural differences came from harsher living conditions, a different interpretation of the ancient laws of conduct, and millennia of separation leading to a natural evolution. *Rurok* should not be viewed as lesser cousins to *adurek*. At heart they are still dwarves.

Cycle of Life

"They let their children run free on mountains. It's a giant's buffet lunch!"

Grarg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Like all dwarves, *rurok* are long-lived. Their reproduction is no different to that of other dwarves and birth rates remain similar to *adurek*. Mountain dwarves live near their racial foes, though not through choice, and centuries of warfare have dwindled their numbers. The fall of Karasta was a severe blow to the race, who lost one of their greatest strongholds. With thousands of dwarves now refugees they are more susceptible than ever to attack and many fear the loss of the great fortress is a death knell.

Childhood

Until they reach the age of five children are looked after by their parents and rarely leave the home except to play with the neighbors. After five they are introduced to their community, learning faces and names, discovering the layout of the realm, and helping out with simple chores such as the laundry or helping carry supplies from the market hall. As with *adurek* children, their games are very physical but team events are more common, and indeed actively encouraged. Dwarf children are considered members of their community from this age onward.

Children begin school at age 10. They learn basic literacy and numeracy, history, and are introduced to the metals so beloved of their race. Basic theology is also taught but covers a variety of faiths rather than being restricted to just a few chosen gods. Introvert traits are drummed out of them with cooperative activities, which include dances as well as sports and communal activities.

Adolescence

During adolescence the pupils begin survival training. All mountain dwarves are expected to be able to survive in the mountains on their own. The course covers fire lighting, hunting, coping with inclement weather, finding and building shelters, basic trap making, and so forth. Males and females must take the course.

The curriculum also covers expanded Dwarven, history, geology, practical metalworking, metallurgy and appraisal of metals, and basic masonry and carpentry classes. Each Godsday afternoon the adolescents are expected to donate their free time to aiding the community in some way, whether that be helping clear spoil from a new excavation or simply aiding an elderly neighbor with her chores.

Youths also receive basic combat training, learning the ancient techniques for combating racial foes as well as avoiding giants, which are more common on the higher slopes. All dwarves receive tuition in the waraxe and urgrosh, learning how to wield them and maintain them. Practice weapons are blunt and mock fights are carried out between teams to build cooperative spirit and instill a sense of duty.

Toward the end of his adolescence, every dwarf undergoes the *Aust Pomdak* ("Week of Hardship"). The *Aust Pomdak* is a rite of passage into adulthood and is the final test of the dwarf's ability to cope with life in the mountains. Candidates are escorted into the mountains around the lair and given a dagger, an empty waterskin, and a set of clothes. In order to pass the test they must survive a week without outside help, using only their basic combat training and survival skills to see them through. The test is one of cooperation as well as survival skills and dwarves who work well in a team stand a better chance of succeeding.

Although there is a risk of death from dehydration, hypothermia, and goblinoid attack, the students are not completely helpless. Unbeknownst to them, their activities are watched by rangers and infiltrators. The watchers have orders only to interfere if the situation is life threatening, but many take the opportunity to place further tests on their students, such as setting traps and making noises at night to rattle the heart-fainted among the students.

At the end of the week, the students are collected and returned to the realm for a debriefing. Healers are on hand to fix any injuries gathered along the way and to judge how well individual students coped. The tutors then begin the debriefing, shocking the students by revealing what they did wrong, when, and why. Those who cope well pass and can begin their adult life early. Students who fail, which are the majority first time through, may participate next year. There is

no shame in failing the test. It is designed to ensure the youngsters are ready for the hardships ahead and helps build team spirit.

Adulthood

As with other dwarven subraces, mountain dwarves reach adulthood around their 40th birthday. Only once a dwarf passes the *Aust Pomdak* is he or she considered a full adult. Reaching adulthood after the age of 45 is considered rather shameful and the young adult is likely to be given a bad nickname by his peers.

Dwarves who choose to leave the realm and go adventuring are typically seen as being anti-social and lacking community spirit. In some cases this is true, and adventuring is an escape for those who cannot fit into the cultural expectations placed on their shoulders. Others merely wish to expand their view of Tellene and encounter what lies beyond the cavernous realm. Those who survive and return are ready to fit back into society, drawing on years or decades of teamwork. Most come back richer than when they departed. Some start businesses, others donate money to community projects, but the majority join the army, finding the thrill of battle impossible to let go.

Becoming an adventurer does place a degree of shame on one's parents, who view themselves as having failed the community by allowing their offspring to leave his home. Some departures are tearful affairs, with parents pleading their children to stay; others result in family rifts that never heal.

For those who stay behind the only course of action available is to find work. Less academic students go on to be miners, soldiers, laborers, or other non-academic professions. Those who excel are apprenticed to crafters to learn a trade. Either way, they are now part of their community and rarely, if ever, get the urge to go adventuring after settling into a steady routine.

Courtship

The Holy Mother is a popular deity among *rurok* and it is not surprising they take courtship and marriage seriously. Courting usually begins once a dwarf has settled into his adult role and can provide for his would-be partner. Males are expected to ask the female's family for permission to court their daughter but there is no firm ruling on this; it is simply considered polite. Most marriages are inter-clan and the closeness of dwarven society means the families likely know something about each other beforehand. By tradition a female may have no more than two suitors, primarily to avoid arguments and confrontations. Once the couple is serious in their commitment, a *bakimak* is hired to investigate their family lines.

Mountain dwarves recognize only one type of marriage. Whether made for political reasons or for love, marriage is a union between two families (or clans) as much as it is between the couple. Marriage ceremonies are presided over by a cleric of the Holy Mother though there is no fixed ceremony; courting couples may create their own vows so long as they meet the approval of the presiding cleric.

Marriages are held in the Holy Mother's temple. Vows are exchanged and sealed by the exchange of rings between the couple and gifts between the families. *Rurok* place less formality on the structure of the vows and concentrate on their nature. Pledges of mutual support, fidelity, honor, and such like are always included.

Divorce is frowned upon as disruptive rather than an affront to the deity and couples attend counseling beforehand to ensure they are prepared for the centuries of union that lie ahead. Only in very rare instances does the cleric refuse to marry the couple. Even during married life dwarves may attend marriage guidance sessions to work over any problems they cannot resolve themselves.

Advanced Years

Throughout their working life, *rurok* are active members of their society. Even during old age many find the time and energy to perform small chores and are happy to act as babysitters and tutors to young dwarves, passing on their wisdom to the next generation. As the dwarf progresses further into old age he finds his joints ceasing, a result of a century of more of hard work, and his health waning. By the time a dwarf reaches 250 he is ready to retire from active life.

Dwarves respect their elders. Their accumulated knowledge and years of dedication are rewarded rather than shunned. Most move in with one of their children, being no longer able to run their own household. As the last decades of life pass by they spend time reminiscing, passing on snippets of wisdom in the form of tales, and ensure their children and grandchildren are provided for. Within a century or so most succumb to the cold hand of death and leave the mortal world forever.

Habitat

"I prefer minimalism. It's cheaper to maintain."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Mountain Dwarf Lands

Mountain dwarves live in all the major mountain ranges. They prefer the high peaks that offer safety and seclusion, so there are concentrations of mountain dwarves in the Ka'Asa, P'Rorul, Elenon, and Deshada ranges.

Karasta, the great kingdom now fallen to humans, is still regarded as the pinnacle of dwarven architecture. It combines elements of *adurek* and *rurok* design, extend for countless miles, and even has surface structures. Constructed millennia ago, it makes use of water in a way seldom seen today, for barges travel its waterways, carrying raw ore and supplies throughout the city. In recent times dwarves have failed to produce any city so wondrous, and all dwarves lament its loss.

Although it is impossible to date Karasta with accuracy, it is referred to as the First Kingdom of the Seven Clans. Some scholars claim this means it was built before the Zarduk came to power, whereas others use the name to "prove" it was built after the Zarduk fell from grace. In truth, it is not that old, being the first mountain dwarf refuge constructed after the exodus.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Most *rurok* realms lie beneath the peaks of the great mountain ranges of Tellene. Contrary to popular belief, the mountain dwarf realms are the oldest on Tellene, built before the lowland dwarves went their own way. As such, they are some of the grandest of the dwarven realms and easily outclass anything built in recent times.

Away from the other races, they dig deep and mine their precious metals. Although there are many similarities between *rurok* and *adurek* realms, saying, "dwarves live underground" is as meaningless as "humans live in houses." Differences, both artistic and practical, are detailed below.

Protection & Layout

Most realms are located beneath the highest peaks in a mountain range. Access is limited to usually only one pass, which still requires an arduous climb with an ever present risk of being caught in storms or buried beneath avalanches and rock falls. During the winter months, many settlements are cut off from the surface races, which suits the inhabitants.

Mountain dwarves maintain small bunker complexes along the path, both for defense and for housing visiting guests on the long march. Only a few are ever shown to visitors; the majority remaining hidden and permanently manned. Inside are barracks, armories, kitchens, guardrooms, and sometimes there are small workshops for making repairs. Access is gained via secret doors carved into the rock face, marked with runes visible only with darkvision.

As one near the entrance, the pass opens (either naturally or excavated) into a plateau or ridge dotted with small buildings. Some are guardhouses and warehouses, but most are designed for visitors. *Rurok* seldom welcome strangers into their realms in these troubled times. Beyond the plateau, built into sheer rock faces, stand massive gates decorated with inlays of mithral and runes of ancient power, a symbol of dwarven power and wealth. Many of the runes have become so worn their magic is lost, but those that survive contain powerful charms to keep the gates closed and safe from attack. Even giants have difficulty battering down such doors.

Inside the gates are more barracks and armories, most concealed by secret doors. Visitors gaining access always pass through several open guardrooms as a reminder that the dwarves hold power here. Traps tend to be lever-operated, which allows dwarves safe passage, and are invariably pit traps. Some are designed to catch intruders and are therefore shallow; other open up into caverns hundreds of feet high. A favorite trick is to drop foes into the icy water beneath the city. As well as the risk of drowning, victims can also suffer hypothermia within minutes.

Corridors lead from the entrance to various parts of the city. Without a guide it is exceptionally easy to become lost, especially in the lower levels, and starvation and dehydration are a real risk. Much of the outer city appears deserted or abandoned, for there are no tiled walls or smoothed corridors to show the realm to be anything other than a series of natural passageways. This lack of artistic endeavor makes it extremely difficult to locate the correct passage to the core.

Once in the core, the walls are smoothed to prevent injury though rarely decorated. Stairs between levels are carved into regular shapes rather than left as natural rock, and small water channels along the sides of the cambered corridors carry water to the cisterns. As with all realms, there are no signposts or markers to point the way through the labyrinth of tunnels.

After passing the perimeter guard posts one enters a hive of accommodation areas, small chapels and shrines, markets, and schools. Workshops are clustered together for convenience, allowing for quick deliveries and keeping polluting smoke and waste contained. Again, barracks and guardrooms provide a line of defense. Further in one comes to the central core. Contained here are the houses of the nobles, the main temples, central warehouses, armories, and treasuries.

One should not think of a dwarven city as a two-dimensional structure. Most cities are spread over dozens of levels joined by stairs or ramps, and even common areas, such as the workshops, are located across multiple levels. In many

cases this is because of natural terrain, which dwarves utilize whenever possible, but sometimes different clans live on different levels of the city.

Houses

Housing areas are designed to allow for communal activities as well as privacy. Houses are grouped around a central paved area, much like the club suit in a pack of card though there can be as many as ten houses in places. The "courtyard" is used by children to play under the watchful eye of their parents, to hang laundry, to sit and meet neighbors, and to hold parties. Some dwarves operate cottage industries from their home, and erect small stalls in the courtyard.

Houses are very similar to those of hill dwarves. In fact the opposite is true, for hill dwarves once lived in the mountains. *Rurok* make less use of locks on their doors, however, and neighbors are free to pop in any time for a chat or to borrow household items. Dwarves do value their property but are happy to loan it out so long as certain traditions are met. Simply entering a neighbor's house and taking something is akin to theft. One is expected to ask a member of the household or, if they are out, leave a note.

Noble houses are larger, often having a small treasury, a dedicated shrine, and guestrooms. Interiors are more spacious and tend to stand alone rather than be clustered around a courtyard. Decoration is more common, with tiled walls and floors, small statues of ancestors or gods, and possibly even ornamental items, such as lamp stands or candleholders.

Temples

Temples are not usually as spacious as with the lowland dwarves. Those that exist are at best large chapels, designed to accommodate hundreds rather than thousands of worshippers. There is an altar on which to leave offerings or pray before, but rather than have a huge statue the god is represented by a smaller carving placed in a wall niche or via an engraving of his or hers holy symbol.

Clerics rarely live in the temple but dwell among their kinfolk. The temple may have a small armory if of militant faith, a treasury, a library, and possibly even a guardroom, but most have only a robing room and a small office for the senior cleric to manage church affairs. Templars are less common due to the lack of commitment to organized religion and are found only in the largest cities, where there is usually a proper temple.

Other Structures

Rurok confine their artistic endeavors to the core of the city. Most passageways and chambers are left unfinished and rarely, if ever, tiled or plastered. Since rock is given no special place in their culture, cutting flat walls and laying miles of tiles serves no purpose other than looking pleasing. The vast expenditure of energy required for such tasks is better spent elsewhere. The same mentality applies to stairs, especially in the outer zones; only within the core city are steps squared off and leveled.

Whereas *adurek* prefer to tunnel around natural caverns, *rurok* utilize them when possible and bridge over them when through access is required. Despite requiring extensive building work, bridges provide the quickest route through the realm and can be defended by only small number of troops. Should push come to shove, they can be demolished to block access. Indeed, it is a rare mountain realm that does not have bridges separating the core from all other areas.

Recreation

"They even play as a community. They're like sheep, only with axes."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Rurok prefer to live among their own kind, deal with their own kind, and play with their own kind. Although more sullen and withdrawn around strangers, they are much more outgoing among dwarves, with whom they share common traits. Recreational events are often social, involving multiple participants, but can involve games with only a few players, such as dwarven chess.

Relaxation takes place after work. Families often gather in the courtyard near their home to swap gossip, tell stories, perform small acts of joint worship, and sometimes to share meals. The sharing of food is a common mountain dwarf trait, with each family bringing what it can afford. Even the washing up is a communal task, usually left to older children while the adults enjoy a pipe and a few beers. At special times of the year entire clans gather in open spaces for communal feasts.

Adult games range from chess to tests of memory based around legends and traditions. One dwarf starts the tale by reciting a few sentences then passes the tale to the person on his right, who takes up the story. Failing to recount the story results in good-natured jibes. A more adult game involves drinking a set quantity of beer if you get the story wrong. In such cases, failure can lead to further failures as the effects of the alcohol kick in. As well as bonding neighbors together

it keeps the stories and traditions alive. Older children are often invited to join in as a learning exercise, while younger children sit in the wings and listen.

Children play at mock battles, sit together and recite lessons from class, hold pretend feasts, and even play ball games. Some ball games are akin to football, others to soccer, but few use a bat or racket. *Gloik*, or "push back," is a non-ball game involving two teams. A pitch is marked out with a scoring line at each end and a central starting line. The idea is simply to push as many of the other teams players back over their line, so scoring a point. No carrying or physical attacks are permitted, but tripping and dragging is a valid tactic. As well as building teamwork (players may gang up, and often the game devolves into a mass huddle) it builds stamina, strengthens muscles, and teaches the young dwarves to stay on their feet. In later life the skills learned on the *gloik* pitch allow the dwarves to resist goblinoid and orc charges. Warriors, whether professionals or militia, play a similar game during training, using shields to push back opponents.

Diet

"How do they grow so fat on such meager rations?"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Living on the high mountains prohibits the growing of many vegetable crops and even fresh meat is scarce. Shepherds maintain goats and hardy mountain sheep for meat and wool. The flesh is very tough and must be broken down by boiling. The most common form of boiling is in a stew, in which herbs and vegetables are placed. While meat boiled in water is edible, it lacks flavor.

Imported meats are usually smoked or salted to preserve them. Typically dwarves import beef, pork, and venison, though they are partial to most meat. Fresh meat, typically rabbit, fox, bear, boar, and sometimes deer can be frozen in the winter months by leaving it in special chambers. Since the temperature underground is already cold and does not fluctuate much, rooms near slow running water can become cold enough to freeze.

Since few vegetables grow in the rocks of the mountains, merchants must import vegetables, fruit, and herbs. Where possible *rurok* prefer to deal with lowland dwarves, or failing that rock gnomes. All manner of goods are imported, though root vegetables and dried fruits and herbs are more likely to survive the long journey than fresh produce. Some berries can be found on the lower slopes of the mountain and these make a healthy addition to an otherwise bland diet.

Dairy products can be made from goat and sheep milk. Cheese, butter, yogurt, curd, whey, and even a fermented drink are common in dwarven larders. Most are taken plain, but the addition of dried fruit or herbs allows for some variety. Again, the coolness of the subterranean realm helps extends the lifespan of these products.

Alcohol is drunk with every meal and even children drink small beer once they are weaned. Beer is used in stews with some regularity, which perhaps leads to the view that dwarves drink a lot. Boiling the beer does result in a lot of the alcohol evaporating, leaving behind a thick, flavorful stock. Wine is less common because of the cost of importing grapes and the dwarves' reluctance to try their hand at agriculture. Mead is imported from lowland dwarves at special prices, but is kept for special occasions.

With food at a premium, especially in winter months, meals are taken three times a day. Dwarves never eat more than their fill; leftovers are reused in meals the following day. Breakfast is a simple porridge laden with honey or dried fruit for flavor and to provide energy. Honey water (honey mixed with warm water) and small beer are drunk. Lunch consists of reheated leftovers or slices of cold meat served with bread, dried fruit, and small beer. Depending on the community spirit, dinner can be a family or neighborly affair, with pots of stew, cuts of meat, vegetables, cakes, and bread. As stated before, families bring what they can and poorer folk rely on their wealthier neighbors to see them through.

Many nobles sponsor soup kitchens in the winter, offering workers thin but tasty broth for free as a mark of generosity and to ensure they have enough energy to keep working. Some communities use taxes to sponsor similar events, but cater more for the poor than all and sundry.

Clothing

"Practical, hard wearing, and too small for me."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Clothing is designed to be practical and hard wearing. Leather and wool are the most common materials used, and often in combination. Woolen trousers, for example, have leather pads on the knees and rear to provide durability to the most worn areas. Even woolen shirts, a necessity in the unheated mines, have leather elbow and shoulder plates sewn in.

Despite their tough constitution, virtually all dwarves wear woolen undergarments. Most sport a thin shirt and knee-length pants under their main clothing and wear woolen hats when working in the colder parts of the realm. Gloves reduce manual dexterity and are rarely worn unless absolutely necessary.

Males typically sport knee length leather boots, often reinforced with metal bands, leather or wool trousers, and a wool shirt. Females prefer long wool dresses, though most crafters wear pants and trousers. Their boots tend to be leather, though thick wool socks with leather soles are frequently worn around the house. Cloaks are not worn indoors, save by nobles and soldiers, but are used when operating outdoors. Most have a hood to help provide extra protection and to keep the head warm.

Jewelry is popular with both sexes but is usually restricted to rings, armbands, belt buckles, and brooches. Precious metals are worn with formal dress and base metals, such as bronze or tin, preferred when working. Mountain dwarves are expert metalworkers and their jewelry is famed across Tellene. Although quite chunky, the workmanship is rivaled only by certain elves (whose products are usually fragile and worn only rarely). Precious stones are not commonly used as decoration, though small stones may be used to represent eyes in belt buckles and brooches with an animal motif.

Beards

As with many things, *rurok* are less traditional about their beards. They keep them neat and tidy, but as with their head hair they grow them long. Whereas hair is left natural, beards are braided and often tucked into belts. Crafters and warriors prefer to keep their beards tucked away to stop them becoming entangled in tools or weapons, and in the case of warriors to stop an enemy grabbing it.

Indeed, while beards are trimmed to keep them neat they are never shortened. A good rule of thumb is the longer the beard the older the dwarf (though not all hair grows at a uniform rate). Fortunately the growth rate slows with age, and elders rarely have beards extending much below their knees.

Because *rurok* place less emphasis on social divisions, length is a poor indicator of standing. The material used to tie the end of the beard often indicates status. Simple leather strands are the norm for the masses, whereas nobles prefer gold or silver clasps. Still, there is no firm ruling and strangers are advised to avoid making remarks on social status based on such things. Mountain dwarves tend to react more vehemently to attacks on their beards, verbal or physical.

As with *adurek*, mountain dwarf females do not grow facial hair. Women wear fake beards when operating outside the realm to conceal their presence and keep the other races misinformed.

Medicine and Healthcare

"Giving freely cleanses the spirit."

Mountain dwarf saying.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

New Alchemical Mixtures

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture (Dwarves/Non dwarves)
<i>Hoskwar</i>	21	50 gp/NA
<i>Zaritek</i>	17	15 gp/60 gp

Hoskwar

The imbibor can last without oxygen for 5 minutes. During this time he can "breathe" underwater and suffers no effects from gas attacks or suffocation. Taking multiple doses in the same hour cause internal tissue damage, resulting in 1 point of temporary Constitution damage per dose after the first.

Zaritek

The imbibor can push his body further than normal. He can make a forced march (or perform other tiring work) for an additional 1d3 hours before he needs to make a Constitution roll (*DMG*, page 164). Taking multiple doses in a single day has side effects. The character must make a Fort save (DC 10, + 2 per extra potion) or suffer 1d3 temporary Intelligence and Wisdom damage from the powerful stimulant. *Sleep* spells affect the mind not the body, and this potion provides no defense against such magic.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Whereas *adurek* look to the Powermaster for their skill in medicine, *rurok* call upon the Lord of Silver Linings. Hospitals are usually not attached to temples but instead each clan maintains its own community hospital, complete with a shrine of course. Senior healers are usually clerics but nurses and orderlies are usually just lay members, helping out both as an act of devotion and to help others. Most have some basic first aid knowledge, leaving the clerics to care for the seriously injured and create alchemical medicines.

Because hospitals are run for the community they are paid for out of community taxes (see *Trade and Tribute* below). Patients receive free healthcare from their clan hospital but non-clan dwarves are asked to pay a small fee to cover

bandages and medicine. Outsiders are charged full rates, plus a premium for taking up a valuable bed. The healthcare they receive is no less thorough, however.

Burns, broken bones, and cuts are common injuries and the healers are well versed in treating these. Dwarves have a slightly faster healing rate than some races and are less likely to visit the doctor for minor ailments. Indeed, many females, and some warriors and miners, have a basic knowledge of first aid.

When it comes to alchemical medicines *rurok* use those found among hill dwarves as well as producing their own variants on other medicines. Mineral concoctions are preferred over herbal ones, and even metals are employed. Despite its toxicity, mercury can be found in many potions in tiny doses. Two new alchemical brews are presented here.

Zaritek ("heart thumper") is a powerful stimulant given to soldiers and miners to reduce fatigue and let them march or work longer. It has some nasty side effects and is only used sparingly. *Zaritek* comes in liquid form and is mixed with beer (or any other liquid) to mask the foul taste. Long-term users have been known to suffer from night terrors, insomnia, permanent shakes, and in rare cases heart failure.

Hoskwar ("air grower") is a unique medicine among mountain dwarves and unknown among other races. Favored by explorers and carried by some miners, it produces oxygen for a short spell, allowing the dwarf to breathe underwater or when caught in a gas pocket. Imbibing multiple doses in a short space of time can be deadly, even to dwarves, and user discretion is strongly advised.

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Engineering

Much has already been said about dwarven engineering accomplishments in the hill dwarf section. Rather than repeat the section, it need only be said that mountain dwarves are as skilled at engineering as their lowland cousins and employ similar inventions. In most cities these devices are more common, for the mines run deeper and water cisterns are located further beneath the surface.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Law and Order

"Laws should guide, not constrain."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Despite their relaxed attitude to traditions, mountain dwarves believe in a just society. Their laws are relatively simple and do not allow for mitigating circumstances. Any crime weakens the cohesion of the community, which being supportive and sharing means criminals are less likely anyway, and is harshly punished.

Lawbreakers can be detained by the city guard or by citizens, who have the power of arrest. Suspects are taken to the nearest barracks and kept locked up until their trial. Trials usually take place within 1d3 days, for dwarves are loathe to leave criminals unpunished for long periods. Unlike among the *adurek*, trials are held in the clan xxxx chamber rather than a temple. The members of the council act as both judge and jury, though proceedings are watched over by a blood noble. The noble is not so much a judge as a chairman, there to ensure the court runs smoothly and the law is upheld. Trials are held by the clan the criminal affronted, not his own (unless they are one and the same, of course).

Witnesses for both parties present evidence, though character witnesses are not called. A dwarf's previous nature is not in question, only whether he committed a crime or not is relevant to the court. The defendant may appoint another dwarf to speak for him, but actual lawyers are rare unless there is a cleric of the True or the Founder available.

Once evidence has been presented the council members confer to discuss the case. *Rurok* courts can reach one of three verdicts—guilty, not guilty, or unproven. Not guilty results in all charges being dropped and the case dismissed with no tarnish of the defendant's honor. A guilty verdict results in sentencing. Unproven means the court suspects the defendant is guilty as charged but lacks enough evidence to be sure. It does not mean the accused is left off, however.

Most crimes are punished with community service. The felon must work for the good of the community he harmed, usually performing menial tasks such as cleaning wells or rat catching. Sentences range from a few days to decades, depending on the nature of the crime. At night the convict is locked up in the local barracks. During his incarceration, Peacemakers visit the criminal to discuss why he strayed from the path and provide help in adjusting back into normal society once his sentence is served.

Criminals have no rights as members of the clan while serving their sentence and are treated as outsiders. Serious crimes, such as murder, rape, and other crimes generally horrific to a civilized society, result in banishment on pain of death. Outlaws are branded on the palms to show their status before being escorted from the realm.

Defendants found unproven are placed on probation for a set time, again variable depending on the crime. They must report to a representative of the council every day at a set time. Failure to do so results in sentencing as if they were found guilty. Unproven dwarves may live among their clan and work as normal, but are usually treated with an air of suspicion.

Relations with Other Races

"You mean they actually have relations with other races?"

Grarg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

So far, the text has described *rurok* has community spirited and rather friendly folk. Such is true among their own people, but when dealing with other races their attitude changes. Deeply mistrustful of the other races and fiercely proud of their racial heritage, they dislike all races to one degree or another. Some of this boils down to non-compatible beliefs; some is based on previous dealings.

Other Dwarves

Rurok accept other dwarves as their equals. Despite current differences in society, culture, and religion, all dwarves were made the same originally. Cosmetic differences aside, they still share common goals. Dwarves interact on a mercantile level more than a social one, traveling across land and beneath earth to trade goods and resources. Hill dwarves especially are common guests, bringing foodstuffs and textiles, not to mention lumber, and taking away metal ore and crafted metal goods.

Rurok rarely start debates with other dwarves other the differences in their cultures. All three subraces understand why the ancient division happened and attempts to reform the race into a single entity have repeatedly failed. Too much time has passed and current ways become too set for the slow-acting dwarves to make such a major step.

Dwarves adventuring together usually speak to each other in Dwarven. Unless there are personal issues to be resolved they watch over each other, share supplies and provisions, and generally avoid their other companions as much as possible. The racial pride they feel extends to all dwarves and mountain dwarves will stick up for fellow dwarves, presenting a unified front. Naturally, dwarves refer to each other's race by the Dwarven name.

Elves

Misconceptions that dwarves and elves hate each other have circulated Tellene for millennia. While they do not always see eye to eye, most elves and mountain dwarves consider the Great Mountain Wars of 956 Y.K. as an isolated incident that reached the proper conclusion. Those involved see things differently, however, but peace has reigned for almost a century now.

Elves, with their sorcerous ways and love of worthless trees, are still mistrusted, however. Gray elves especially (among the surface elves) are deeply mistrusted for their faith in arcane magic, and even high elves are looked upon as little better. Of all the elven subraces it is wild elves who dwarves regard as being true elves. Elves should tend their plants, as dwarves say, and forget about trying to emulate their race by building in stone and forging metal.

Elven products are valued for their fine workmanship, however, but dwarves prefer goods that can survive a little rough handling. Light, flexible swords, despite their craftsmanship, are little use in dwarven fighting styles, and dwarven stubby fingers find delicate clasps break too easily or cannot be undone. Dwarves also refute elven claims to have developed metalworking independently and look upon their belief in the creation of mithral as a travesty.

Mountain dwarves know of drow elves from their stone dwarf kin and although meetings are rare they dislike all they stand for. Slavery and strict social structures do not sit well the open society of *rurok*. When drow have been encountered they have been driven back, but the drow seem more intent on visiting the surface world then ever, even daring to use dwarven tunnels.

Elves and dwarves adventuring together tend to spend a lot of time arguing. Dwarves continually point to elvish weapons as being made with "dwarven metal," regardless of the truth. They also view their individuality as dysfunctional to a cooperative adventuring party, especially in combat. Elves insulting a *rurok* tread a thin line, as does any race, for dwarves dislike hearing such comments about their society and culture.

Wild elves are called *alkinol* ("tree herders"), whereas all other surface elves receive the epithet *barek*, or "pretenders" in reference to their use of stone and metal, which dwarves hold as their birthright. Other less savory names are used and usually refer to the elven love of arcane magic. Drow are called *kulkel*, or "black souls."

Gnomes

Despite sharing many cultural traits and a similar belief in an open and fair society, mountain dwarves are less outgoing with rock gnomes than their lowland cousins. Rock gnomes are suspiciously close to being mountain dwarves in many ways save for their humor. Regardless of their good intentions and peaceful nature, *rurok* look on gnomes as a warped parody of their own race, created by jealous gods who played no part in dwarven creation.

Forest gnomes are too elf-like to be trusted and their fawning seen as masking a deep secret. Mountain dwarves accept praise, but there can be too much of a good thing. Deep gnomes are sometimes seen in stone dwarf markets but

contact is rare. Both races are mistrustful of others, and deep gnomes keep even their friends at distance. Mountains dwarves see them as an insulting parody of their own race.

Dwarves have little patience with rock gnomes and their constant jokes. Violence can quickly break out, especially if the gnome insults the dwarf's culture. Forest gnomes are likely to be gagged to stop their constant drivel, or at best treated as an elf child. The mutual suspicion shared by *rurok* and deep gnomes of other races likely means no friendship will ever form. Even if one does, the dwarf will find his generosity goes unrewarded and

Regardless of subrace, mountain dwarves refer to all gnomes as *burdask*, which insultingly means "flawed copy." The name refers specifically to the belief that rock and deep gnomes are copies of dwarves and forest gnomes are parodies of elves.

Halflings

Of all the halflings, *rurok* are most likely to encounter amberhairs and then predominantly in the Lopoliri Mountains. Their good nature and respect for strong social values mean dwarves get along reasonably well with them, but their strict laws can seem oppressive. Trade is limited, but friendly settlements receive military aid if requested. Despite their good alignment, amberhairs exude an air of secrecy and *rurok* are suspicious of the halflings' hidden motives. Contact usually involves keeping the halflings at a polite distance and limiting conversation to the bare necessities.

Lightfoot halflings tend to live on the flats, where agricultural land is better, and as such are rarely encountered in large numbers. Some trade does take place, with dwarves buying fresh produce in return for small quantities of metal goods. Halfling curiosity and propensity for troublemaking goes against *rurok* social values and halflings visiting a realm are kept under close supervision.

Adventurous dwarves and halflings have little in common but also have little to argue about. As such, relationships are common, though not without problems. Amberhairs are always suspected of knowing more than they are letting on, whereas lightfeet must be watched closely lest they bring trouble on the party.

Amberhairs are referred to as *femsork* ("wheat heads"), a term denoting the color of their hair rather than any love of agriculture. Lightfeet are called *mathok* ("soft feet").

Humans

Humans are among the most distrusted race of the civilized races. They are a young race, prone to violent expansion, show little respect for the earth, can be oppressive to their own race as well as others, and invariably consider dwarves to be greedy. Or so the dwarves believe.

Kalamarans went from being simply mistrusted to universally despised as word of the fall of Karasta spread through the dwarven realms. All Kalamarans are now considered fair game and neighboring kingdoms have begun sending food and weapons to the rebels in secret while maintaining an overt air of neutrality. Among dwarves, blood truly is thicker than water. Of course, things were not always this way. During the early days of Kalamaran expansion, King Ali Ingkas made the first trade agreement with the dwarves of Karasta, trading food and gold for bronze. Hindsight is a wondrous gift indeed, and many dwarves lament the day they aided humans.

Although dwarves have relatively peaceful with smaller human communities they are always wary of human motives. The Battle of Kadir Ridge reinforced the belief that all humans favor metal more than friendship. Wary of another attack, humans are kept at arms length more than ever before and even trusted friends are viewed with a certain mistrust.

Dwarf adventurers are very likely to have to work with a human at some point in their career. Humans are simply too numerous to avoid. Mistrust prevents the dwarf from making strong attachments, though a human who takes the time to learn dwarvish customs and the language can earn a certain amount of respect. Kalamarans are considered to be an enemy. Any foolish enough to mention Karasta, even to express sorrow at its fall, are likely to require emergency healing.

Mountains dwarves use the *adurek* term for most humans, which they invented first. Kalamarans have received a new name, *premkalesh*, which means "traitors" (lit. "no allegiance"), in reference to the broken pact made with King Ingkas.

Hobgoblins

Hobgoblins are not mistrusted; they are hated. Dwarves watched them rise from primitive thugs to an oppressive empire of slavers and conquerors. Dwarves lament the rise of the hobgoblins, but know in their hearts there was nothing they could do. Hobgoblins were one for among many and there is some consolation in the fact goblins and orcs have not taken the first steps. No dwarf will deal with a hobgoblin and other races who do are automatically distrusted more than usual.

Given the choice, a *rurok* refuses to join an adventuring party containing a hobgoblin. Dwarven racial memory is long and a goblinoid cannot change its nature. Any excuse to remove the hobgoblin from a position of power within the party is exploited, though outright murder is rare simply because hobgoblins have legal status in other cultures.

Rurok use the *adurek* term to describe hobgoblins.

Half Races

Half elves, half orcs, and half hobgoblins are treated as members of their parent race. As such, half elves receive better treatment than the others, who are viewed as wolves in sheep clothing. Lurking beneath a thin veneer of humanity still beats the heart of a racial foe.

Half dwarves who live a human life are generally treated as humans. Regardless of circumstances they have turned their back on their dwarven society. Some families go as far as to remove their names from their lineage, pretending the half dwarf does not exist. Others are more lenient and are willing to give him a second chance. Half dwarves living a dwarven life are treated as valued members of the society and often employed in dealings with humans, who they understand better.

While half dwarves have their own dwarven name, other half breeds receive the standard racial prefixed by *baralak*, which means "false."

Non-Civilized Races

Mountain dwarves retain the same racial foes as their lowland kin and use the same names. Contact is more sporadic in the higher mountains but no less bloody. Most goblinoids and orcs are wary at assaulting a large realm, but smaller realms and mines make very tempting targets. Gold and silver may be pretty metals, but iron and bronze are highly valuable prizes. Given their faster breeding rates, goblinoids and orcs are prepared to launch wars of attrition against the dwarves, weakening them over successive generations. Gnolls and kobolds prefer to live in foothills and forests, and while dwarves treat them as enemies when encountered, they are not a daily threat.

Many species of giants are more common in mountains. Cloud giants may be friends or foes, depending on the giants. Even with friendly giants trade is rare, the cloud giants having little to offer the dwarves. Fire and frost giants are always treated as foes. Despite their huge size, the dwarves are willing to war against such giants in order to secure their territory and remove a threat. Hill giants may wander into the mountains, but such ventures are unusual. For the most part they are encountered only by merchants and long range patrols. Since Kadir Ridge many realms have placed bounties on the heads of evil giants. In game terms, dwarves pay between 1 and 10 gp per hit point for each dead giant.

Stone giants are usually content to treat dwarves as potential trading partners rather than as something edible. Dwarves happily trade vast quantities of stone, on which they place little value, for meat and wool from the vast herds kept by these towering brutes.

Storm giants are usually allies with local realms, trading food and metal to their smaller neighbors in return for jewelry shaped to fit their frame. Storm giants also hire dwarves, on occasion, to guard their caves when they go traveling. Despite the temptation to loot the lair, the dwarves honor their part of the bargain. The giants are grateful for the aid and reward their protectors with additional supplies. This is a purely business arrangement and the dwarves rarely get to know their neighbors personally.

In all cases, *rurok* use the standard Dwarven words for giants.

Trade and Tribute

"You know what makes these guys stand out from the crowd? They make BIG axes."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Dwarven Discounts

Prices for locally made goods are kept artificially when sold internally. Typically, dwarves can buy locally made goods at up to 40% off standard prices. This allows virtually all dwarves to buy standard weapons and armor for militia duty and keeps the metal in dwarven hands while still making everyone richer. At the DM's discretion, any dwarf characters may buy any common metal item from the equipment lists at this reduced rate, including weapons and dwarven-sized armor.

Buying at discount and then reselling the goods to non-dwarves is viewed as fraudulent trading and punishable to 6 months to 5 years community service, depending on the values involved. Characters who abuse the system should be caught and punished accordingly.

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Trade is an essential part of daily life. Common imports include a variety of foodstuffs and textiles, as well as timber. Exports include raw ore, crafted metal goods, uncut gems, and jewelry. Trade is conducted with giants, gnomes, humans, and other dwarves. Any elvish or halfling goods usually pass through middlemen, such as rock gnomes or hill dwarves. Indeed, dwarves refuse to trade with outsider merchants they have never met before.

Due to their distrustful nature of other races, guards always escort dwarf merchants when traveling abroad. More often than not the greater the number of guards the more valuable the cargo, but dwarves have been known use decoys of

heavily guarded but low value cargoes to lure goblinoids into attacking. Troops belong to the clan performing the trade but can hire extra guards from other clans, using community funds to pay them.

Any goods entering the realm are also subject to intense scrutiny and evaluation before acceptance. Any attempt to swindle the dwarves is viewed with hostility and the offending merchants banned from dealing with the realm ever again. Dwarves have long memories and misdeeds performed centuries ago by the predecessors of a merchant are still remembered to this day. For obvious reasons, open trade with Kalamar has all but ceased.

Within the realm each community maintains its own warehouses and markets but there is also a central store. All imported goods are sent to central stores and paid for by the king. Each shopkeeper or stallholder in the realm buys its goods and provisions from the king at a slightly increased price. Goods are then sold to the consumer at a profit.

Locally crafted goods follow a slightly different route. Raw materials mined locally are sold in bulk to the crafter honor nobles. The honor noble sells the goods to his crafters at a small profit, but still cheaper than if they bought a similar quantity straight from the supply. Because honor nobles buy in bulk, the supplier has a better indication of what quotas he must meet each year and what is available for export. Most raw resources belong to blood nobles (especially metal ore). Crafters sell the finished goods straight to the shopkeeper, who in turn sells it to the end user.

Taxes

An open and fair community still needs money to operate effectively and *rurok* pay taxes like everyone else. Unlike *adurek*, however, many taxes are generally paid to fund community projects. Each clans responsible for maintaining its own part of the realm, though a portion goes to the central coffers. Dwarves make money either by crafting, in which case they are their own masters, or by working for someone else. Miners, for instance, are always employed by blood nobles as all the mines belong to them.

Community Tax

A quarter of a dwarf's income goes to pay his community tax. The money is used to fund all community projects, such as paying for fighters, maintaining the corridors, lanterns, bridges, buildings, and so on. The money also serves to pay sickness benefit to injured dwarves to enable them to live, but it barely covers the cost of food. Temples receive a portion of this money to help pay for clerics and to provide services. The most common temple service is the hospitals run by the Church of Everlasting Hope. Exact amounts received vary on the size of the temple and the services it offers.

State Tax

Ten percent of income goes on paying state tax. These funds are collected into a central treasury and used to pay for realm-wide projects, such as new warehouses, rail truck networks, water piping, aqueducts and so on, and to pay for wars. Clans can apply for a grant to fund projects. In such cases the clan noble must petition a council comprising of the king and the other blood nobles.

Business Tax

Any dwarf operating a business pays 5% to his honor noble. This money is used in the same way as with hill dwarf guilds. Because crafters have a higher lifestyle, any loss of earnings hits harder and so much of the funding covers sickness and injury. Honor nobles also use the funds to buy bulk quantities of resources for their followers. Performing this service requires the say so of the crafters, but most are wise enough to recognize a bargain when they see one.

Property Tax

Dwarves pay a 1% tax on the market value of all personal property to the community coffers. Many dwarves share non-essential items to help lower their tax burden. In poorer districts it is not unusual for several families to share cooking pots, preferring to share meals than pay extra taxes for the luxury of owning their own cooking pot.

Temple Tax

Temple tax is optional but most dwarves pay a few percent of their income to one or more temples. This money is in addition to the money temples receive from community taxes. Most of the funds are put back into community projects, which ranges from running hospitals to maintaining libraries.

Calendar

"Why bother? They have no concept of seasons."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

The *rurok* calendar is identical to that of the *adurek*, who took it with them during the division of the races. For the most part they perform the same tasks throughout the year as their lowland cousins and no expansion is required. Given

the shared genesis and similar living conditions, this is not surprising. Of more interest, however, is the *rurok*'s mythological view of the heavens, which differs greatly from the lowland dwarves.

Despite living beneath the earth, *rurok* hold the sun in honor. It is viewed as a manifestation of *Resgad*, the Eternal Lantern, patron of good and vanquisher of evil. As described in *Religion*, *Resgad* gave the subterranean race an advantage over their common foes. The sun is symbolic of gold. Although its strength waxes and wanes, it is always present. In the same way, gold is always valuable.

The three moons are *Resgad*'s servants, who serve her while she rests. Diadolai is called *Metaka* ("The Helper"). Dwarves believe that he (all moons are male) is the most active of the moons, rarely in the sky because he is carrying out work elsewhere in the heavens. His metal is bronze, which dwarves consider the most useful metal, useful for making weapons, armor, jewelry, tankards, and so forth.

Pelselond is known as *Ramgad* ("The Scout"), who searches the heavens for signs of evil. He travels far and wide across the heavens, ever vigilant for goblinoid incursions. His metal is silver, traditionally seen by dwarves as a ward against evil. Veshemo, the largest moon, is *Kirur* ("The Herald"). His light is a constant reminder that *Resgad* is ever vigilant, even when not in the sky. Because of his special status, Veshemo is granted patronage of electrum, a cross being gold and silver. Dwarven electrum contains more gold than silver and has a pale yellow color.

Although the similar calendars can be explained away by common origins, it is harder to define when the celestial imagery changed. Dwarven history as known among the other races is based heavily on hill dwarf records. Whether hill dwarves altered their beliefs to fit their view of the universe or whether mountain dwarves changed is unknown. Both races insist theirs is the correct version.

Language

"Unless you speak Dwarven these guys don't want to know you. Fortunately intimidation is a universal language and I speak it fluently."

Grag Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Spoken

All dwarves speak Dwarven with virtually no change in syntax or grammar. Even the gods carry common names across the three subraces. The only notable difference is the vocabulary for stone and metal, as well as certain cultural naming conventions for social strata, military ranks, or other races. When it comes to stone and metal, *rurok* have fewer words for types of stone but dozens more for metals. As well as basic names, such as gold or tin, there are specific names to denote purity, form (raw, processed, molten, Damascene, bonded, etc.), value, specific weight, texture, shininess, and such like. This increased vocabulary is easily explained by their preference for metal over stone.

Names

Mountain dwarves follow the same naming convention as hill dwarves with one slight exception; names chosen in Merchant's Tongue tend to reflect metal and metalworking rather than stone. Thus, names such as Steelbeard, Goldtongue, Silvermane, and even the ubiquitous Smith dominate over names like Stonehand, Rockhelm, and Mason.

Despite differences in opinion of which gods granted the first dwarves their gifts, the seven family names (eight if you count the Zarduk) are still considered sacred. *Rurok* do not deny the seven dwarves existed and continue to honor them to this day.

Warfare

"Warfare is a team endeavor."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Despite being a non-expansionistic race, *rurok* have weathered millennia of attacks from goblinoids and orcs, and in more recent times humans. As a result, their armies are well equipped and well trained, ready to defend the realm or march into enemy territory to protect their people.

Weapons and Armor

"A weapon is only as good as the one who wields it."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Rurok are masters of metalworking and produce some of the best armour on Tellene. Leather and hide armors are scorned as belonging to primitive societies. Every adult male dwarf owns a chainmail shirt and most warriors have full chain. Quality varies; militia troops use standard chain, whereas warriors wear masterwork quality. Even skirmishers and infiltrators wear metal armor; dwarves are trained from an early age to bare heavy loads and still move at full speed. Stealth is not a weapon found in the typical dwarven arsenal.

Honor nobles don engraved breastplates, again masterwork items, as a symbol of their status, and blood nobles have masterwork plate mail. Mountain dwarf soldiers make greater use of axe-shields but most militia troops make do with small, round metal shields. Again, professional soldiers wield masterwork quality items.

There is some commonality in weapons among the dwarven race. Mountain dwarves wield the *zurvalk*, *waraxe*, *grumli*, *urgrush*, and *talduke* used by hill dwarves, as well as generic throwing axes, picks, hammers, and crossbows. The rest of this section is devoted to unique *rurok* weapons.

Favored bludgeoning weapons are the *borlarr* and the *korderum*. The *borlarr* is a fighting club with an elaborately carved axe-like head. The *korderum* is a mace, crafted from solid steel with a cubic head. Each face has a short triangular point to concentrate the energy of the attack onto a small area, thus increasing the power of the blow. Wielded correctly, either weapon can crush a goblin's skull in a single strike.

The dwarven combat knife of choice is the *damak*. Its heavy, single-edged blade is set at an angle to the hilt and is primarily used for slashing. As well as carving through flesh it can be used to hack through vegetation and all dwarves leaving the realm carry one as part of their standard attire.

The *ulbarek* is a specialized weapon and rarely carried. While it appears to be nothing more than a thick staff, it is in fact hollow, concealing a small iron ball attached to a chain. With a downward swing of the staff, which is two or three times the height of a dwarf, the ball flies out. Although designed to be whirled around the head to keep foes at bay or inflict damage on multiple opponents, it is very effective at entangling legs and weapons, and is primarily used to trip or disarm foes.

Hunters and warriors use *lomduk* spears as throwing and melee weapons. The shaft is wooden, but the head is a wide, tanged, double-barbed blade. The use of a wooden shaft is deliberate. Thrown spears especially may not kill a foe in a single hit. If the opponent flees with the spear in him, the dwarves lose only a small spearhead rather than an entire metal object. Using wood also reduces weight, allowing the warrior or hunter to carry multiple weapons.

Mountain dwarves manufacture and use three types of sword. The *damrik* is the sword of choice for warriors. It has a straight, broad blade, double edged for slashing and piercing, with a basic crossbar hilt. While usually carried in a leather scabbard, such coverings are inlaid with precious metals. The *kurzek*, a single edged blade, save for the last few inches, is viewed by many as the workhorse of the militia. Easier and cheaper to manufacture than the *damrik*, it is carried by militiamen and hunters rather than soldiers.

Despite the problems of wielding large weapons in enclosed spaces, mountain dwarves do employ a two-handed sword, known as the *korli*. It has a straight, double-edged blade for slashing or piercing, and two upturned side blades as a guard.

Ranks

"True power is given by one's followers."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Dwarven ranks below blood nobles are appointed based on martial skill, leadership qualities, experience, and popularity. Mountain dwarves wear the same colored cloaks as their hill dwarf cousins, but decorate theirs with gold and silver thread.

woven into the runic name of the clan. Such patterning is usually found on the shoulders and along the hem. Blood nobles use mithral thread.

At the bottom of the command structure is the *ledadem* ("appointed leader"), usually called a sergeant by other races. Commanding approximately ten warriors, they receive their posts from the honor noble they serve. Although they have no special social status, they are paid more for their work. Sergeants tend to be older dwarves, to whom their young charges look upon as a father figure.

Next up are the honor nobles, who are appointed by the clan noble they serve. Most are members of the fighter class with decades of combat experience under their belts. They typically command around twenty soldiers. Unlike with hill dwarves, these soldiers do not form a retinue. They may follow the officer, but they serve the clan. Non-dwarves often refer to them as lieutenants though *rurok* use the *adurek* term.

Commanding the clan is a blood noble. As with hill dwarves, this may not be the actual clan head but an appointed sibling or relative. The term *kildem* ("sword leader", or captain) is used to mark their position when serving in a military role. They are responsible for leading the clan in battle but rarely take part in day-to-day military affairs, appointing an aide to deal with queries, oversee training schedules, and so forth. They might make snap inspections, but most soldiers are serving their community and act professionally at all times.

Ranks only apply to professional soldiers. Depending on their size, militia units may be commanded by a sergeant or a lieutenant. Commanders are usually drawn from the next lowest rank, gaining a temporary promotion. When this happens they receive the prefix *relka* ("raised") to denote their status lasts only for the current battle. More often than not this honor is bestowed on them because they show potential for future permanent promotion. Of course, actual battle is vastly different to training and a fighter with the potential to become a sergeant may not cope well in the heat of combat.

There is one instance when civilians run the militia. When the realm is under attack, clerics of *Manklim* serve as sergeants, organizing the troops into small but fiercely determined bands. As patron of the community, she is said to watch over defenders and her clerics motivational speeches are as beneficial as any tactical advice.

Organization

"Though today your body may perish you will not die for nothing. Through your sacrifice your people will live. So long as they live, you can never truly die."

Typical mountain dwarf battle speech.

Mountain dwarf armies are based around the community of the clan. Soldiers serve their clan before their realm. Despite their more relaxed society, *rurok* soldiers serve along rigid lines of command. Soldiers are expected to obey their superiors, who they trust to make wise decisions. Military discipline is relaxed; each soldier knows what his clan expects of him and strives to meet their needs. When a soldier fails in his duty punishments are harsh, for a soldier failing in his duty leaves his entire clan, and maybe the realm, at risk. Depending on the situation, punishments range from demotion to outlawing. Soldiers still retain the right to be tried by their clan council rather than military superiors.

The smallest unit is the *kilklad* ("sword family"), a group of three to five warriors who when on duty live, work, and sleep together. Many soldiers serving together are likely to be close family members anyway. Even off duty, soldiers' families are close friends and interact often. The *kilklad* serves as the basic guard patrol, watch detail, and bodyguard unit. Artillery crews are formed into *kilklad*, serving on the same artillery piece. Seniority is granted to the most skilled dwarf, but he holds no actual rank.

Next up is the *breidaklad*, or "honor family." Led by a military honor noble, the regular unit comprises three regular *kilklad* (9-15 warriors). One *ledadem* is appointed per ten members, serving as the commander's adjutants. A fourth *kilklad* is always added, but its composition depends on circumstances. In most cases this is a regular infantry unit, bringing to the total warriors to around twenty, but scout, cleric, saboteur, and artillery units are used as well. The most common non-infantry mix has two scouts and two clerics. The *breidaklad* serves as the standard defensive structure of a realm, with the individual *kilklad* spread over multiple guardrooms within a defined area.

When a clan gathers its entire military strength it can summon multiple *breidaklad* grouped together under the clan noble to form a *kilamklad* ("sword community"). Most clans can gather between two and five *breidaklad*. The clan noble acts as overall commander and the honor nobles as his unit commanders. Support units are added as required but rarely exceed 30% of the total infantry strength. The *kilamklad* only ever gathers for military services and war. In most daily circumstances only half the clan's strength is on duty at any one time.

Above the *kilamklad* is the *kilmaklok* ("sword kingdom"), the entire military strength of a realm. Again, sizes vary, with the smallest clans mustering only two or three *kilamklad* and the largest realms as many as twenty. At its height, Karasta could muster thirty full strength *kilamklad*. Overall command is given to the king, or his appointed general. Clan nobles serve as military advisors and high-level commanders, with honor nobles beneath them.

Militia units are summoned as required, but *rurok* are loath to call on their crafters and miners unless the situation is desperate. Even when Karasta was assaulted, the king chose not to summon the reserves. In his wisdom, he knew the

Kalamarans were not launching a war of extinction and that the common dwarves, while enslaved, would still have a chance to enact revenge. Depending on the numbers involved, militia troops are organized into *kilkklad* or *breidaklad* on a clan basis.

Mountain dwarves rarely conduct lengthy wars outside their realm. Most attacks are made against them by goblinoids or orcs and the dwarves have the full strength of their realm behind them. When attacking lairs they prefer quick strikes to drawn out battles and soldiers are expected to carry their supplies with them. Lines of retreat are routinely set up and guarded, but supply lines are used only when the dwarves sense that the enemy can be totally annihilated with a further push. In such cases militia troops ferry supplies to the frontline.

Tactics and Strategy

"The true key to a good defense is teamwork and flexibility."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Mountain dwarves are less rigid in their tactics than *adurek*. They are no less valiant in combat, however. Indeed, where as hill dwarves fight to maintain their racial way of life, *rurok* fight to defend their kith and kin above all else. While still lacking the spontaneity of elves, they are more open to new ideas and alter their tactics as necessary.

Signal horns are employed only rarely, and runners are preferred when carrying messages. Dwarves are briefed on the objectives of the campaign whenever possible and are usually left to follow those orders to the best of their ability. Soldiers are expected to think about the needs of the clan rather than blindly follow orders. Likewise, dwarves do not seek personal glory on the battlefield. A dwarf who kills twenty orcs single-handedly is a hero; one who dies trying to slay twenty orcs is a selfish.

Tactics are geared around attack and defense, as the situation requires, and *rurok* have more boar warriors and dwarven defenders than *adurek* per head. Soldiers are trained in both styles. Training for attacks against the realm is commonplace and soldiers have set positions to which they can retreat or advance as the situation decrees.

As with *adurek*, mountain dwarves take civilized prisoners for ransom and slaughter captured goblinoids and orcs as quickly as possible. When large numbers of prisoners are taken they prefer to keep only the most valuable, allowing common soldiers to depart in peace once they have been disarmed. Such practices not only mean there are less mouths to feed but also allay suspicions that the prisoners will attempt a breakout or are spies placed to learn the layout of the realm. Ransoms are accepted only in coin or food, with a strong emphasis on the former.

Sieges, underground fighting, and realm defense are conducted as per hill dwarves.

Ambushes

Ambushes now fall into two distinct groups; those against goblinoids and orcs and those against Kalamaran troops. The key difference is the duration. Attacks against racial foes are bitter fights to the death, whereas those against the Kalamarans are hit and run tactics.

As with hill dwarves, *rurok* favor hilly terrain, preferably with plenty of boulders to provide cover, a narrow trail (if any at all), and preferably with a steep drop on one side. Lacking the numbers of their non-human foes, dwarves see ambushes as the great equalizer in their never-ending war. Of course, their foes usually operate at night, but dwarves are blessed with the same nocturnal vision, as well as stouter hearts.

Even with favorable conditions, dwarves rarely launch as ambush unless they have a minimum strength. Against hobgoblins the dwarves prefer to be outnumbered no more than two to one, against orcs three to one, and against goblins five to one. As one can see, the weaker the foe the fewer dwarves are required; unless fortunate enough to come across a small scouting party, numbers are rarely in the dwarves' favor.

The most common form of ambush plays out exactly as described under hill dwarves. However, when there is a precipice available the dwarves adopt a different approach. The majority of the force lies in wait along the opposite side to the drop, usually several tens of feet back and well concealed. Because goblinoids and orcs are naturally suspicious of such places, dwarves must employ a lure to stop them climbing to higher ground and avoiding the drop.

A small unit of dwarves is placed in the open further along the trail, the aim being to encourage the wary intruders to attack. Although skilled with missile weapons, goblinoids and orcs prefer to overpower small numbers of foes in melee to prove their worth. All being well, the first wave charges the outnumbered dwarves, automatically encouraging troops behind to follow in order to claim their share of any loot.

Whether lured or not, once the foe reaches a preset point the main dwarven forces charges from cover into the ranks of the enemy, using their shields, momentum, and brute force to shove their foes off the cliff. Boar warriors are experts at this form of ambush and engage superior numbers with relative ease. Should the foe be wise to the tactic, the dwarves must either hastily begin a standard ambush or fall back and wait for a better opportunity.

Against Kalamarans, the exiles of Karasta cannot afford to be caught in a bloody battle to the death. Standard ambush tactics are designed to weaken and disorient foes before melee and are therefore unsuitable. Instead, the rebels set deadfall traps, dig pits, and set rockslides in the ambush area. Given their skill at surviving on the harsh mountains and

ability to see at night, bad weather is the dwarves' greatest ally. Kalamarans rarely stay on the mountains at night, preferring to retreat to their barracks.

Once the Kalamarans activate the traps the dwarves release a volley of missile fire and spells (when available) before fleeing into the mountains. The Kalamaran heavily armored infantry are as fast as the dwarves, but any pursuers are cut down by crossbowmen hidden along the dwarves' path of retreat. As the first wave fall back they reload, covering the retreat of the troops who gave them fire. Each attack only injures or kill a handful of foes, but dwarven losses are lower. Such guerilla raids also weaken morale.

Pitched Battles

Mountainous terrain is not ideally suited for pitched battles, but *rurok* have left their homes to fight large engagements. Most often they go to help allies, but the tactics discussed here cannot cover every alliance. As such, they cover *rurok* tactics on the rare occasions they go to war alone. With poor supply lines, a larger enemy force (more often than not), and little enthusiasm to be away from home for long periods, they fight offensively rather than defensively.

Enemy cavalry are usually deployed for a charge (heavy) or to encircle the lines (light or medium). Against heavy cavalry dwarves form a solid line bristling with spears to break the charge. Missile troops and spellcasters are deployed to break up the enemy formation as much as possible before it hits. When given the opportunity, dwarves dig holes in the ground for several yards in front of their lines to break the legs of horses. Until the cavalry is deployed, which is usually first, the dwarves can do little but wait patiently.

Against flanking cavalry, dwarves position units of troops armed with longswords and pikes with missile troops with spellcasters behind on the flanks. Lighter cavalry rarely start a battle and so the squares must advance with the line. The flanks are hinged and rotate to keep their front face to the enemy at all times. There is a risk of encirclement, of course, with the flanks being folded completely until the dwarves have their backs against the frontline troops, but dwarves accept such risks. Determined fighting and concentrated missile fire against horses usually prevents this.

When facing massed infantry ranks, lines are drawn up in saw tooth formation, the boar warriors forming the teeth and the regular troops a solid line behind them. The line advances toward the enemy, shields raised in a shieldwall formation. Crossbows are straight-line weapons, so dwarves use steelbows to arc arrows over the advancing troops and into the enemy ranks.

At a predetermined point the boar warriors charge, smashing into the enemy line and, hopefully, penetrating. With the enemy line broken, the main force charges, seeking to exploit holes and envelop their foes. Fighting is brutal, with the dwarves accepting no quarter until the battlefield is secure.

Most goblinoids prefer to use missile weapons to soften up foes. Dwarven armour is thick, their shields heavy, and their spirit determined. They simply advance through such attacks as quickly as possible, seeking to engage the enemy and limit the use of archers. Units of infiltrators and skirmishers use their own missile weapons to disrupt fire against the main force before engaging in melee. Few non-dwarf missile troops wear heavy armour and even fewer can stand up a dwarven charge.

Religion

"Having fewer temples makes it harder to find them and therefore harder to loot. Very clever ploy."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Rurok religion is centered on personal faith rather than organized religion and ceremony. Dwarves are free to worship who they want and in the manner they want so long as worship does not harm the community. Despite being from a common dwarf race, *rurok* no longer hold the Founder in high esteem, though he still receives worship. Their belief that a society runs more effectively based on mutual support does not adhere them to follow his restrictive tenets on a daily basis.

The main *rurok* pantheon comprises seven deities. Gods are not placed in order by power or relationship to each other, but by popularity. Why *rurok* follow different gods to *adurek* has never been fully investigated. The most likely reason is a difference of opinion over ancient scripture, though different cultural views must have played a part in shaping the pantheon into its current form.

The Pantheon

"An individual's prayer still reaches heaven."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Manklim ("Bonder")

The Holy Mother is patron of the home and to a lesser degree the community. Her teachings that cooperation and selfless acts benefit society sit well with mountain dwarves. Dwarves hold that marriage is far more than an act of love. It is a communion between two people who agree to share their lives and cooperate on the tasks necessary to build a strong home, as well as creating bonds between different clans and realms. All marriages vows are taken in her name.

Her clerics work tirelessly to promote strong community bonds through motivational sermons and good deeds. The organization of community projects usually falls to them and they are masters of leading without appearing authoritative. Suggestions and ideas are preferred over direct orders. Temples are rare, for the entire community is one vast temple to her glory. The council chamber is considered to be a sacred place in which to invoke prayers to her, but most homes have her symbol carved into the doorframe.

Many clerics are given the task of organizing the militia when the realm is attacked. Their strong community spirit, motivational skills, the respect showed them by dwarves, and military training as militia members make them ideal for commanding the citizens they serve in daily life. Their tactics are more defensive than offensive, but several times in dwarven history the stout hearts of cleric-led militia bands has blunted attacks.

The *rurok* creation myth places *Manklim* as the patron of the Gunterm family, for only through the gift of cooperation did dwarves learn to defend themselves against their foes.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Roirak ("Selfless")

To dwarves she is *Roirak*, to others the Pure. Whatever her name, *Roirak* is patron of community spirit and selfless deeds and hence very popular with mountain dwarves. However, dwarves consider her to be the unified aspect of the entire pantheon and the essence of their race rather than a separate entity, for all the major gods promote good deeds and selfless acts in some way. As such, *Roirak* has no clergy and yet receives daily worship from hundreds of thousands of dwarves across Tellene.

Because mountain dwarves care little for other races, they see no value in worshipping a god devoted purely to such endeavors; charity begins firmly at home. If peace is required with neighbors, let clerics of the Peacemaker do the work. Despite dwarves not recognizing her as a unique god, every selfless good deed is an act of worship to *Roirak* and she continues to bless dwarves.

Dwarves cannot understand how individual races can separate *Roirak* into a unique entity. Their whole culture is based around close support networks and no god is required to tell dwarves how to live that way. In many ways mountain dwarves are the living embodiment of her teachings, and no god could ask for more praise than that.

Roirak has no family patronage. All dwarves are her patrons.

Game Mechanic

The relationship between dwarves and *Roirak* is highly unusual. All dwarves worship her yet do not accept her as a separate entity. Instead she is the unified ideal of the whole pantheon. At the DM's discretion, any mountain dwarf cleric following a major god can access the domains of the Pure in addition to their regular domains.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Resgad ("Lightbringer")

Resgad may seem a peculiar choice of deity for dwarves, for she is the Eternal Lantern. Symbolized by the sun, who dwarves name after her, she is not just the patron of light and the sun, but also of war, especially against goblinoids and orcs. It is in this regard she is mostly highly honored and barracks and armories are decorated with her holy symbol.

According to *rurok* mythology, dwarves were blinded by her radiance when they first set foot aboveground, in the same way as many goblinoids and orcs. *Resgad* at first thought the new race were goblinoids, but the goodness she sensed in their hearts, not to mention the battles they fought against goblinoids and other servants of darkness, warmed them to her. As a gift she granted them the ability to function in darkness and in light without hindrance, giving the dwarves an advantage over their foes.

Her clerics are more militant than usual and many serve in the army as both soldiers and clerics. In some realms they serve as elite troops, spearheading attacks against goblinoids and orcs; in others they are found as sergeants, leading by example. Even non-soldier clerics serve with the army as sentries. They are also charged with maintaining the lantern system operating in most realms, which although not strictly required is kept lit (except when under attack by races without darkvision in her honor.

She is the patron of the Gramdal family, for it is said she first taught dwarves how to fight their racial foes.

Suzek ("Earth Sister")

Suzek fulfills the same role among *rurok* as she does all dwarves, though with greater emphasis on metal rather than stone. She is both patron of crafts involving metal (and to a lesser extent stone), creator of metals (and stone), and the very essence of the earth.

She is both benefactor and life taker, for earthquakes and tunnel collapses are seen as being of her making. When struck by a natural disaster involving the earth dwarves immediately sacrifice great quantities of metal and stone to appease her. Rather than use coins or mere rocks, they sacrifice precious work of art and metallic magic items.

Few formal temples exist, but every forge and mine is considered a shrine to her. Most picks and hammers are inscribed with her symbol, and many dwarves hold it is an act of blasphemy to mine the earth or work metal without her blessing. Any dwarf venturing on an overland journey pays a visit to a forge to ask her blessing, for she controls the surface rocks as well as those below ground, and explorers always carry a holy symbol to grant them protection when exploring new caverns and tunnels.

Less knowledgeable races, such as goblinoids, who find the corpses of explorers killed in accidents or attacks often mistake them for clerics lost while performing a pilgrimage. Explorers who never return for an expedition are believed to have encountered *Suzek* and have been taken to heaven to serve her. Despite being a sad time for family and friends, who have lost a loved one, it is also a time of celebration and the dwarf is remembered as being chosen by the earth for special privileges.

Her clerics pay daily homage through their mundane trade. Some are miners, who praise her by revealing the gifts she has left dwarves; others are crafters, honoring her by shaping the metal into tools, jewelry, and other items. All dwarves honor her by sacrificing metal back into the earth to reseed the veins.

Suzek is patron of the Damvalk clan, the first miners and metalworkers on Tellene

Gilli ("Aspirer")

Known elsewhere as the Coddler, to mountains dwarves he is *Gilli*, patron of aspirations and dreams. His teachings about personal aspirations may seem at odd with dwarven culture, but his clerics perform good deeds in the community as an act of sacrifice. Rather than tie themselves to one clan, they travel throughout the realm, helping any dwarf in need and showing them how they can achieve greatness by aiding others.

Any place a dwarf can lay his head is considered a shrine and many dwarves have his holy symbol carved on their beds, both to ensure a good night's sleep and to summon good dreams. Children having nightmares wear a silver symbol around their necks as defense from the Sultan of Fear's dark magic. While his clerics do insist on getting plenty of sleep and leaving projects unfinished, they are not slackers.

Dwarven clerics cooperate on projects only until they are convinced the workers can handle the problem on their own. Whether training a dwarf in some art or craft or helping with a community project, they encourage others to find their own solutions, thus building self-esteem and showing others their true potential. They teach in a similar manner, encouraging others to think through their problems and reach new goals based on personal strengths rather than being told what to do. In this respect they promote dwarves to be the best they can. Once this has been achieved, they lose interest and move on to find other needy soles.

It is important to note that while they teach individuality, they do not encourage dwarves to become loners or rebel against their society. Being part of a society does not limit one's aspirations and mountain dwarf culture allows for upward mobility. One might never become an honor noble, but one can achieve great things nonetheless.

Gilli is patron of the Tukurz family. While this may seem odd at first, he taught the dwarves that the gods exist everywhere and could be worshipped through individual endeavors as much as fixed doctrine and prayer.

Gramlek ("Great Teacher")

Gramlek, also called the Mule, is the father of knowledge, invention, science, and reasoning. Despite being lawful neutral, he has many clerics among mountain dwarves, who use his inventions to better their society. All the great inventions of their race, from the waterwheel to the lantern system, are down to his teachings. His clerics are the most traditional of the *rurok*, acting in many ways as hill dwarves and retaining traditions all but lost by the *rurok*, but he teaches that new designs come from logical thought processes rather than leaps of fancy.

His temple is usually close to the workshop district and is more a design house and repair shop than a place of worship. Most technological structures bear his holy symbol somewhere, whether emblazoned on the side of an ore truck or crafted into the glass on a lantern.

His clerics serve two key roles, being teachers and maintenance workers. While all devote themselves to the design of new technologies, they also help their community by teaching the young a variety of subjects and ensuring the complex technologies used throughout a realm run smoothly. Virtually all craft and scholarly courses taught at school are done so by his clergy. Their services are free, being funded from community coffers rather than individual pockets, and count as acts of devotion to their deity.

As with *adurek*, mountains dwarves believe *Gramlek* is patron of the Angklin family.

Namleka ("Healer")

The Lord of Silver Linings is known to *rurok* as *Namleka*. His primary patronage is that of physical healing, but he is also a counselor, assisting dwarves who have reached a low point in their lives. As god of mercy he encourages dwarves to take pity on civilized races asking for help, but such charity does not extend to goblinoids, orcs, and more recently, Kalamaran soldiers.

His clerics primarily serve as healers within the community hospitals. Hospitals are run both through community taxes and donations. In smaller clans it is not unusual for them to go on visits to other clans to raise funds, either by providing medical care or simply by asking for a few silver pieces. While his clerics prefer to avoid combat, they are employed on the battlefield as medics.

They are also charged with watching over prisoners, ensuring they are treated well and kept fit for ransom. Prisoners thinking their guards are a pushover are greatly mistaken, for many have picked up more than a little combat knowledge from serving with the army. Despite possessing the racial pride common to all *rurok*, clerics are more forgiving of transgressions, but they can be pushed too far.

Of course, *Namleka* is more than just a patron of healing, and his clerics can be found helping out in a variety of roles in times of need. Whether helping to clear a collapsed passage or clearing up after an attack, they assist their community in anyway they can when extra hands are required.

Namleka is patron of the Talek family, the traditional healers of dwarves.

Nisakil ("Tranquility")

Nisakil, or the Peacemaker, is the dwarven god of diplomacy and peace. Despite their limited interaction with the other major races, dwarves would rather be on speaking terms than dealing with them at sword point. No dwarven cleric of *Nisakil* has ever, and would ever, consider making peace with goblinoids or orcs.

Large realms may have one or more clinics run by members of the Peacemakers. These are considerably smaller than hospitals run by *Namleka's* clerics, being the equivalent of a doctor's surgery. As well as curing physical ills they also cater for emotional problems and offer a free mediation service. Any matter requiring dispute may be brought to their door, no matter how trivial.

Mountain dwarves do not have lawyers. Criminals are either guilty or innocent with variation as to level of guilt. Peacemakers may speak for the accused in court but they are not there to debate matters of law, merely to ensure their client has a fair hearing.

The Pacifist sect is extremely rare among mountain dwarves. Any dwarf not prepared to fight for his kith and kin is not worthy of being called a dwarf. Dwarves are not belligerent, but they never shy away from a fight and are prepared to die defending their neighbors from harm. The idea of martyrdom is more akin to high treason.

The Preachers are therefore the most common sect. With regard to other civilized races they act as diplomats, promoting peaceful cooperation between the dwarves and their neighbors, proffering trade agreements and mutual defense pacts as a way of securing lasting harmony. Neighbors who renege of peace treaties can expect no quarter and the clergy happily lend their strength to the army if forced to war against former allies.

When it comes to goblinoids and orcs, the Preachers fully understand that conversion is impossible. Only in the utter destruction of these races can peace be achieved. Thus, many Preachers can be found serving with the army in wars against racial foes. They see combat against such creatures as a holy act rather than a breach of their sacred vows.

Nisakil is patron of the Kerak family, the best dwarven diplomats.

Religious Beliefs

"Individuals die. Communities wither. Names and deeds endure the ages."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Being personal, mountain dwarf religious beliefs are quite varied. Even worshippers of the same god have differing views on how to worship the deity. Only clerics hold true to the main tents, as described in the *Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign Setting* and *Player's Guide*. No matter the apparent lack of doctrinal acceptance, the gods obviously accept the dwarves' acts of worship, for their clerics have divine powers.

Only in two religious areas are mountain dwarves united—funerary practices and the afterlife. Because of the lack of central religious authorities and traditional views, the section on other gods is a stereotypical view rather than an attempt to explain individual beliefs.

Other Gods

Mountain dwarves acknowledge but do not necessarily worship most of the benevolent gods. Many are worshipped in small numbers and may have clergy within a given realm, whereas others receive next to no praise at all. Evil gods are universally shunned save for those individuals of evil alignment. Worship of a proscribed faith is punishable by exile on pain of death.

Dwarves praise valorous individuals, especially those who stand up for weaker members of society, and respect the Knight of the Gods. Despite his clerics performing acts of kindness, dwarves often see his tenets on chivalry as restrictive. Still, extra swords are always welcome in battle.

The teachings of the Speaker of the Word and the True are also held in esteem. After all, honesty and promise keeping are integral parts of a civilized society. Dwarves dislike being forced to swear oaths because it limits their freewill but will do so if it serves a higher purpose.

The Raiser receives virtually no worship, though dwarves trading for food may leave small offerings at nearby temples as thanks. Merchants, explorers, adventurers, and simple travelers pay homage to the Traveler before any trip. Shrines are usually placed near the entrance so prayers can be offered before a journey and thanks given on a safe return.

Despite being chaotic the Guardian has worshippers. As much as they appreciate order, they dislike totalitarianism and Guardian reminds them that their lives are devoted to selfless good rather than the ideals and restrictions of tradition. His views on self-dependence can be a little off-putting for some dwarves, who accept that leaders are required to make a final decision.

Dwarves find beauty in metal objects, sculpture, and even natural caverns, but do not appreciate paintings, secluded glades, or other handicrafts. Thus, the Shimmering One has few adherents. The use of Elven is certain ceremonies is also viewed as insulting, for the language cannot be used to describe metals in the poetic way of Dwarven. Hunters may pray to the Great Huntress, but dwarves are not skilled archers as a rule.

The Founder is still recognized as the original chief deity, having laid down the ancient laws and traditions on which early dwarf culture was built. While many of his traditions are still valid today, others have been dropped as restrictive. Many architects still follow his faith and his holy symbols are displayed on most public works. If there were a pantheon of secondary gods, the Founder would rank near the top. The key reason for his demotion is his belief that laws make a strong society, rather than acts of goodwill and mutual respect for common values.

Powermaster has some adherents but overall the belief that one must have a strong body to live a healthy life is not popular. Many dwarves view his clerics as selfish, devoting their time to meditation and bodybuilding instead of helping in the community. The Old Man is still popular in the military and many barracks have smaller shrines in his honor. Clerics can sometimes forget about the needs of the community in favor of winning a conflict.

The Lord of Intuition has many follows, for dwarves live long lives and consider it their duty to pass on knowledge they have gained. Many are wanderers, traveling Tellene in search of wisdom and new experiences, with does not sit well with all dwarves, but those who settle to become teachers are highly respected.

The Mother of Elements is recognized and worshipped in all her forms, with the Earth Mother being the favorite and fire being the least common. The Riftmaster has never been forgiven for his interference in dwarven society and most dwarves avoid arcane magic. Those who do take up the art are naturally drawn to him. Many Zarduk still offer him some praise, even if not arcane magicians.

Bear is an alien god epitomizing concepts unknown to dwarves. Many see him as an Elven deity. The Landlord is one of those gods who sits uneasily with dwarves. His clerics are fine merchants, bringing in huge quantities of coin to the

coffers, but are always pushing for higher prices. Many crafters pay him lip service as patron of business, but dwarves in general prefer acts of charity to greed.

Fate Scribe is rarely worshipped but is not shunned. Most dwarves prefer not to know the future, believing that such knowledge forces them down a certain path and negates freewill. Battle Rager is shunned because his clerics do not work well with others and can lose sight of greater objectives in the pursuit of bloody combat. Boar warriors are likely to pay him lip service before battle, calling on him for strength and to harden their bodies against blows.

Dwarves have little wish to observe other cultures, even from afar, and frequent traveling weakens the bond one has with one's community, and so they ignore the Watcher. Storm Lord can shake the heavens all he wishes, but dwarves worship earth not air, and so have little use for his teachings. Theft is virtually unheard of in dwarven realms, and Risk gets few worshippers outside of infiltrators seeking his blessing for stealth. Clerics are seen as selfish, always trying to get something for nothing and usually at someone else's expense.

Lastly there is the Laugher. Despite enjoying a drink and a social gathering, the Laugher is too wild for most dwarves. His worshippers mood swings are disruptive, wine considered an elven drink, and most practitioners are a public menace. Some dwarves label him among the evil gods, but these are a minority.

Among the evil gods with an unhealthy interest in dwarves are the Corrupter, who leads them to covert metal rather than sacrifice it, the Overlord, who wishes to crush their community spirit in his iron fist, the Dark One, who wants nothing more than dwarves to become children of darkness and forsake the Eternal Lantern, and the Emperor of Scorn, who plays on dwarven mistrust and seeks to alienate them from the other races. Most other evil gods plague the dwarves to a lesser degree simply because they are good creatures.

Funerary Practices

Death is a natural part of life and comes to all dwarves eventually. Funerals are broken down into two separate stages. The body is taken to the dwarf's home where it is washed and dressed by family members. Prayers appropriate to the dwarf's faith are sung and if available a cleric visits to conduct a private ceremony. Small metal items are placed on the body as tokens of remembrance, but dwarves do not require grave goods.

Pallbearers then carry the body through the community. Clan members line the corridors and avenues, chanting prayers of departure appropriate to their faith and whispering words of farewell. Some place items on the body but it is not required. Close friends from other clans are allowed to partake in the ceremony and many consider it an insult not to bid their friend a final goodbye.

Beneath every realm is a series of vast catacombs, hidden behind secret doors of the most cunning design. Within these chambers are clan vaults. A narrow shaft leads to the surface and at sunset the dying rays of the sun penetrate the gloom, illuminating a stone plinth on which the deceased is laid. Dwarves hold that as the sun set *Resgad* takes the soul of the dwarf with her to the afterlife. The deceased is then placed in a communal vault alongside his ancestors and his name added to the long list inscribed on the walls. Here the dwarf will lie for eternity. Only kings are given personal tombs as a mark of respect to their authority.

Afterlife

As one might expect, mountain dwarves believe in a single heaven accessible to all dwarves who led a good life. *Rurok* heaven, known as *Galot Ara* ("Gilded Hall"), is a vast stone hall with walls of solid gold. Great fires illuminate the hall while *Resgad* is visiting the surface world, but when she has completed her daily passage she comes to the hall, her light bathing the hall through stained glass windows depicting scenes from dwarven life.

Here are all dwarves truly and are equal and want for nothing. Food, drink, and pleasant company are found in abundance and the atmosphere is one of peace, goodwill, and heavenly order, with law and chaos kept at perfect balance by selfless good. Clan divisions no longer exist and dwarves from across time and space mingle as one unified family.

Dwarves still work after death, but the work is enjoyable and never tiresome or boring. Crafters work in the celestial forges to produce goods for the heavenly community, soldiers patrol against evil outsiders trying to breach the hall but suffer neither pain nor death from their wounds, miners excavate metals of a purity never found on earth, and so forth. It is the perfect *rurok* community.

By contrast, dwarven Hell, known as *Ara Premklad* ("Hall of One"; lit. "Hall of No Family"), is a cursed place. The souls sent are those with no community spirit and they struggle to reach unobtainable goals, neither accepting nor offering assistance to the souls around them. Food and drink exist, but to reach them the dwarves must cooperate. Greedy miners try to excavate precious metals but can never clear enough spoil to actually reach their goal, crafters lament a lack of resources but are unwilling to dig for it themselves, and paranoid soldiers watch out for attacks but only to ensure their personal safety. Clan lines no longer exist here either; all the dwarves are wretched, lonely individuals looking out for themselves.

Important Ceremonies

"Community spirit can work the most powerful miracles."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Ceremonies litter the *nurok* calendar. The vast majority are communal rather than religious, celebrating the life of famous ancestors, the founding of the clan, marriages, births, and births. Only a small few are religious in nature. Because of this, only one new ceremony in which all dwarves participate is presented here. Mountain dwarves also perform the *Korke Janok* and the *Korke Helstra*.

Lokost Karasta

As with many things regarding Karasta, this ceremony began only recently. Known as the Lament of Karasta, it first began among the exiles and survivors. No one seems to know who created the ceremony, but it spread like wildfire through neighboring lands and within a decade had reached every corner of Tellene. That dwarves adopted the ceremony so quickly is remarkable, given that it usually takes centuries to get even the smallest change ratified by the disparate realms.

The ceremony begins at dawn at some point during the month *Thulke Jar*. Because Karasta was attacked several times before the final siege, the date is never set in stone. Like the inhabitants of Karasta, the locals can sense the coming storm but do not know when it will strike. A lone sentry near the entrance blasting out the horn signal to say enemies are approaching signals the start of the ceremony. Other dwarves take up the call, spreading the message rapidly through the realm.

The sentry is actually given a date to signal the attack by the king. The dwarves of Karasta did have warning of an attack and had already mustered gnome allies. In the weeks before the ceremony an ambassador travels in secret to the nearest rock gnome clans, inviting them to take part in the affair. Few refuse, for they lost many warriors that fateful day. A column of gnome warriors and clerics winds its way up the mountain face. When they arrive they bunk down in the visitor quarters. The dawn after their arrival marks the start of the ceremony.

The army gathers outside the entrance, standing shoulder to shoulder with their gnome allies. The king addresses the legion, repeating the very words spoken by King Ungrum of Karasta as he assembled his forces. For five days and nights the army stands guard, sleeping in shifts for only short periods.

Inside, dwarves hasten to the nearest warehouses, carrying with them weapons, food, blankets, and other supplies. Although symbolizing the community spirit that ran through Karasta at the time, these goods are actually donations. Once the ceremony is finished they are taken out of the realm and smuggled to rebels still fighting the Kalamarans. Some provisions travel thousands of miles. Not all goods make it to their destination. Some are intercepted by Kalamaran soldiers or bandits, or destroyed in accidents, but the guerillas are grateful for the support.

Once the five-day vigil is over, the army returns, their heads bowed low, their faces haggard by sleepless nights. The king and his entourage, accompanied by the senior gnome officer and cleric, travel the realm, calling out the names of dwarves and gnomes known to have died at Karasta. The roll call is remarkably accurate and stands as a testament to dwarven memory. Across the realm dwarves weep for the fallen, pray their souls reached heaven, and curse the Kalamarans for breaking the ancient trade pact. Even the gnomes are quiet and reflective, remembering their dead according to their customs.

At dusk on the final day the trumpet again sounds. Across the realm, the cry "Karasta shall be reforged!" echoes through the caverns for many long hours. By dawn the next day life has returned to normal, though Karasta is never forgotten.

Misconceptions

"Hiding all that treasure and not sharing? They're asking to be raided. I offered to help spread the wealth about, but they refused me."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

All of the misconceptions commonly applied to hill dwarves apply to mountain dwarves as well. In addition, mountain dwarves are viewed by many folk as being isolationists.

Isolationist

Mountain dwarves are an odd bunch. Among their own people they are thoughtful, generous, even outgoing, yet they shun unnecessary contact with other races. Many consider them to be isolationist, sitting in their great halls counting their vast wealth gained through their control of the metals market. Yes, where dwarves are concerned greed inevitably comes into the equation.

Rurok came to the mountains because they believed that life in the deep depths was destroying their race. Rigid adherence to tradition was proving to be a bane rather than a boon, and so they moved upward. Despite having been nearer the other races for millennia old habits are hard to break and they have great difficulty forgetting the strife caused by other races beneath the ground.

Less Traditional

It is true that *rurok* are less traditional than lowland dwarves and stone dwarves. They have not turned their back on the old ways, however. Despite being predominantly neutral good alignment, many have strong leanings toward lawful good. However, traditions should not be used to force dwarves to perform acts of good; that must come from within. Individuals are allowed to retain a sense of self-identity to act as they feel, so long as their behavior is not disruptive. Chaotic good dwarves still follow the traditions, but are more inclined to pick and choose the bits they like and act in accordance with their own beliefs, though again for the benefit of the society.

Neutrality toward law and chaos is a trait. Lawful neutrals tend to be sticklers for tradition regardless of consequences and chaotic neutrals believe in free expression at any cost. Both alignments tend to work against a unified society promoting good deeds for the benefit of all.

Dwarven Glossary

Although all dwarves speak the same base language, there are differences among the individual races. The words contained here are those used by mountain dwarves.

Alkinol	"Tree herders"; wild elves
Alspriki	"Tree talkers"; druids
Ara Premklad	"Hall of One"; dwarven hell
Aust Pomdak	"Week of Hardship"; test to determine if a dwarf is ready for adulthood
Baralak	"False"; prefix for any half-breed race
Barek	"Pretenders"; other surface elves
Balthuik	"Anti-social"; rogues with a criminal bent
Breidagan	"Honor crowns", also "honor nobles"; non-hereditary nobles
Breidaklad	"Honor family"; military unit led by an honor noble
Burdask	"Flawed copy"; gnomes
Dulthaj	"Foe haters"; rangers
Femsork	"Wheat heads"; amberhair halflings
Galot Ara	"Gilded Hall"; dwarven heaven
Gilli	"Aspirer"; the Coddler
Gloik	"Push back"; a physical children's game
Hoskwar	"Air grower"; an alchemical brew allowing breathing underwater or in gas
Karim	"Wanderers"; social group for classes not usually found in dwarven society
Kilamklad	"Sword community"; the military strength of a clan
Kildem	"Sword leader"; dwarf equivalent to a captain
Killklad	"Sword family"; smallest military unit
Kilmaklok	"Sword kingdom"; the military strength of a realm
Kirur	"The Herald"; Veshemo
Kled Spra	"Common Voice"; the council of honor nobles
Kulkel	"Black souls"; drow elves
Kursprik	"Metal talker"; shamans
Ledadem	"Appointed leaders"; dwarven equivalent of sergeants
Lokost Karasta	"Lament for Karasta"; ceremony marking the fall of Karasta
Lokthan	"Goat warriors"; brigands fighting against the Kalamarans
Mardo	"Wastrels"; bards
Mardsirk	"Wasted shields"; gladiators
Mathok	"Soft feet"; lightfoot halflings
Metaka	"The Helper"; Diadolai
Mirthel	"Forgotten ones"; adepts
Namleka	"Healer"; the Lord of Silver Linings
Nisakil	"Tranquility"; Peacemaker
Premkalesh	"Traitors"; humans of Kalamaran stock
Ramgad	"The Scout"; Pelselond
Relka	"Raised"; prefix to denote a temporary promotion
Resgad	"Lightbringer"; the Eternal Lantern
Roirak	"Selfless"; the Pure
Roirokhel	"Selfish ones"; brigands who turn to crime
Roirokmor	"Selfish thinkers"; monks
Rurok	"Earthen dwellers"; dwarf name for mountain dwarves
Sakhel	"Tutored ones"; members of the expert class
Sakrit	"Tutored swords"; members of the fighter class
Sirkmag	"Shield bearers"; social group name for soldiers
Thuk	"People"; generic term for the masses
Tirbar	"High followers"; clerics
Zaritek	"Heart thumper"; a powerful stimulant

Stone Dwarves

Anatomy

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Stone Dwarves and Language

Stone dwarves speak Dwarven, which has remained relatively uncorrupted despite the two exoduses. Unless otherwise stated, the hill dwarf glossary applies equally to stone dwarves and similar words are not duplicated.

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"Now this is how I imagine subterranean races. Chalky skin, big eyes, violent, and sullen."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

The least encountered dwarven subrace are the stone dwarves. They live far beneath the surface and rarely venture into the sunlight. In many ways they are totally different from their cousins now living nearer the surface, but they are actually the closest to the original dwarven race. Their Dwarven name, *durvalk*, means "deep seekers" and refers to their belief that dwarves were meant to stay in the earth.

Physiology

Durvalk of both sexes stand as tall as hill dwarves. Males weigh more than females, but overall their weight is comparable with hill dwarves. If anything, females weigh slightly more. More of their mass is fat, for food is in short supply and often they must rely on fatty reserves to see them through lean times. Truly fat dwarves are all but non-existent; there simply is not enough food to develop obesity.

Despite being fatty, their muscles are powerful and comparable in strength to those of a human. Their arms are as not as over-developed as those of deep gnomes, however. Their strong leg and back muscles allow them to remain standing when bull rushed but do little to propel them at any great speed. Contrary to misconception, stone dwarves cannot take root in the earth and are no more, or less, stable than other dwarves.

Poor diet and millennia without sunlight has taken its toll. Their skin is gray or chalky white in color, rough, and has the thickness of leather. As the dwarf ages, his skin can become tougher but does not alter in color or develop excessive wrinkles. They have more body hair than other dwarves, which serves to keep them warm in the depths of the earth. Hair and beards are almost universally black, which stands out in comparison to their white skin. One rock gnome wag described them as being the color of "reverse drow."

Their eyes are black, hard gray, or (rarely) cold blue but are slightly larger than those of other dwarves. Like all dwarves they can see in zero light conditions and unless cooking prefer to avoid lighting fires, which attract foes and predators. *Durvalk* are not used to sunlight and find it painful for several hours after breaching the surface. Fortunately, their sturdier constitution and dwarven heritage allow them to overcome this momentary weakness and operate without penalty.

They are an exceptionally hardy race, said even by other dwarves to have bones of stone. In truth, their layers of fat, dense muscles, and thick skin act as shock absorbers, allowing them to shrug off lesser wounds. The extra padding has enabled them to cope with life underground and they can sleep on hard rock without discomfort.

Dwarven stonecunning is more natural to these dwarves, who can discern different types of stone with great ease and little teaching. It truly is a sixth sense. It is said that *Suzek* granted them this ability, though obviously one cannot prove or disprove such claims. Although other dwarven subraces still possess the gift, they have to learn how to use it, having lost some of the instinct of the original dwarves. Those *durvalk* who bother to comment on this subject imply that hill and mountain dwarves are straying too far from the original path and will eventually lose the ability altogether.

Psychology

Like the environment in which they live, *durvalk* are harsh and unkind. Their whole lives are geared around survival and that leaves little room for friendship or feelings. While they do not happily sit by and watch others starve while they eat, they are selfish and will refuse to share food with those they feel are beyond help. Better one live dwarf than two half dead ones. Although this may be looked upon as an evil act, it is in fact neutrality at its best. A fuller argument on the workings of a neutral society can be found under *Government*.

Because so much time is spent surviving, *durvalk* rarely take up intellectual pursuits. Although considered by other dwarves to be stupid, their minds are simply focused on less abstract ideas. They possess wisdom, however, and a strong understanding of common sense, but tend to act more on instinct than rational thought or logical process. This underlying trait is not one based on alignment, however, but on necessity. Pride is also a rare trait, for it serves no useful purpose.

Most dwarves are laconic, but *durvalk* are reticent. Time spent talking detracts from hunting, uses energy, and attracts predators. Any conversation is kept to an absolute minimum and when hunting hand signals are used. Even religious ceremonies are quiet, with worshippers mumbling rather than singing or chanting. Dwarves who talk too much are shunned by their peers and left to fend for themselves. A common name for such talkative dwarves is *stadkelo*, which literally means "monster bait."

Durvalk have little use for intangible rewards, or even money. Favors do not put bread on the table. Payment for their services, even when living above ground, must come in the form of food, weapons, or other such provisions to be acceptable. Because of this, they are materialistic, but only for useful items. A gold necklace is worth less than a length of good rope in *durvalk* society. They do, however, consider oaths binding agreements and any one breaking an oath can expect a vengeful retaliation.

Social Structure

"Such small family groups. So ripe for plundering."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Durvalk society ranges from lawful neutral to true neutral. Social strata exist, but they are simplified to the bare necessity. Dwarves may fluctuate up and down the social strata depending on their profession, and even nobles are not exempt from working for a living. *Durvalk* actually lack a noble class, as detailed below, and the eldest dwarf in a community is accepted as the leader by dint of his age and accumulated wisdom.

Although there are vast numbers of *durvalk* living beneath the earth, there are no labyrinthine cities rivaling those of the other subraces. Indeed, even the dwarven equivalents of towns are rare. *Durvalk* live in small family groups centered on a patriarchal or matriarchal figure. These clans are only loosely bonded together and rarely interact save in times of war. Indeed, *durvalk* are territorial creatures and prefer not to share valuable resources with others of their kin.

A clan typically comprises around 50 adults divided into a handful of families. Each family exists as a semi-independent entity, though the bonds of blood still exist and tied to the patriarchal figure. All dwarves within a clan are related by blood in some manner, usually in a grandparent-parent-child pyramid. Families within the same clan are usually those of a dwarf's uncles, great uncles, and so on.

With a clan there is only ever one noble. Approximately two-thirds of the clan are warriors and hunters, 25% crafters, 5% are clerics, and a few percent follow unusual professions. Unlike other dwarven cultures, those practicing unusual professions are not considered a separate social class. Stone dwarves breed faster than other dwarves and children account for an additional 25% of the clan strength.

Stone dwarves run an egalitarian society. Women may follow any profession without prejudice. This comes from necessity rather than any sense of sexual equality. Unlike the other subraces, female *durvalk* are as numerous as their menfolk. Although they have hairy bodies, they do not grow beards.

Patriarch/Matriarch

The eldest dwarf is the de facto head of the clan, regardless of sex. They are not a separate social class and upon their death the next oldest dwarf assumes the mantle of power. As such, their children receive no special status, though naturally there is a certain amount of favoritism toward their offspring. *Durvalk* charity begins and ends in the home. The title patriarch, or *tharak*, means "he who decides." The female equivalent has an "i" in place of the last vowel to denote the female gender of the conjugated verb.

Patriarchs (we will use the male form for convenience) are not leaders in the sense they hold absolute power. They are expected to guide the clan, ensure the traditions are upheld, punish transgressors of the laws, and organize the defenses, but can be overthrown if their decisions are to the detriment of the clan. Unfortunately, death is the only way of removing a patriarch from power. Old age and combat are the usual methods, but enforced exile and resignation are known. The latter methods are detailed below under *Government*.

Dwarven society cannot afford to support wastrels and patriarchs (as with all dwarves) are expected to contribute to the clan in more practical ways. Some are hunters, others are clerics or crafters, but they all have a trade. What happens to those too old or infirm to contribute is covered under *Medicine & Healthcare*.

Warriors/Hunters

There is little distinction between soldiers and hunters in *durvalk* society. As with all social strata, one is not born a warrior, but chooses to follow the profession. Warriors and hunters form the largest social bloc and with good reason. Many dangers exist in the underearth, both sentient and bestial, and attacks on dwarven clans are frequent. Plentiful food is also a luxury and hunters must range far and wide to gather mosses or bring back meat.

Warriors are not organized into fixed military units, even in combat. They tend to gather into family groups, led by the oldest warrior. Despite this lack of formalized leadership, discipline among the class is strict. Hunters making too much noise may be deserted lest his racket attract foes, those who let prey escape may starve for their failure, and any who show signs of cowardice are exiled.

Warriors are expected to be able to work as individuals and as part of a group. Using individual hunters allows more ground to be covered, but large prey requires teamwork to bring down and haul back. Of course, prey can easily overwhelm an individual hunter, which is why stealth training is forced upon all dwarves in childhood. In times of great need even the clerics and crafters must draw arms and fight.

The *durvalk* term for any member of this class is *delk*, or "hunter."

Crafters

Crafters may be the second largest social group but there are still only ten or so within a clan. Clans prefer to be self-sufficient in essential goods rather than be reliant on others. Lacking an essential craft leaves the clan open to extortion. As such one finds a weaponsmith, potter, or leatherworker among every clan. Most crafters have at least to trades, and some as many as four. Trade does exist, however, but it tends to be less essential items rather than necessities. It also allows dwarves to mingle with other dwarves for the purpose of finding a spouse.

Apprenticeships are hard. An apprentice produces little yet still expects to be fed. As such, apprentices are expected to learn their trade and contribute to the survival of the clan, either by hunting or performing the essential but messy jobs, such as gutting animals and preparing food. Taking on this mantle leaves other dwarves, those with skills, to spend less time on chores and concentrate on helping the clan.

Durvalk call crafters *alduthuk*, which means "tool makers." As the name infers, crafters limit their activities to practical arts. Rather than present a list of which crafts exist and which do not, the DM should use common sense. Basic handicrafts, such as pottery and weaving, are far more likely to exist than more intangible crafts, such as calligraphy or sculpture. These might exist as hobbies, but few dwarves have the time to devote to such pastimes.

Clerics

Because clans are so small there are rarely more than one or two clerics in each. Naturally this limits the faiths available to most dwarves. Clerics are the most social of *durvalk* and transcend the usual clan boundaries. Within a geographic area covering a thousand square miles there may be a dozen clans, but not all will have a cleric of any given faith. Thus, clerics travel extensively, bartering their services for food and shelter.

Depending on the faith, a cleric can find work in a variety of roles. *Durvalk* are less inclined to give, and listen to, lengthy sermons, so clerics teach through practical application of their god's tenets. For instance, a cleric of *Suzek* may work as a blacksmith, whereas a cleric of Founder might seek employment as a councilor to a patriarch or a mason. Gods whose clerics have no practical skills are rarely worshipped. The *durvalk* name for a cleric, *arulek*, literally means "practical teacher."

Others

Whereas most dwarves place those not practicing a recognized profession in a separate social group, *durvalk* do not. Every dwarf must fit into one of the three main social groups or risk exile from the clan. This is not to say they cannot practice their primary profession, but they must temper it with the needs of the clan. A bard, for instance, might use his stealth skills to work as a hunter, only using his bardic skills at night around the cooking fire, keeping alive the old stories. On the other hand, a monk spends too much time meditating to be of much use to the average clan.

Classes

Adept

Adepts are unusual among *durvalk*, whose religion is based on the gods rather than mumbo-jumbo or primitive superstition. Minor clans cut off from contact with fellow dwarves for generations might find adepts among its number. In such cases they fill the same role as clerics and expected to work for their food. Adepts are usually referred to as *tekid*, or "trick workers."

Aristocrat

Despite being lawful (to some degree), stone dwarves lack the social system to support nobles. Traditionally, nobles own land and let others work it for them. Stone dwarves look upon any dwarf who expects others to provide for him as worthless. Aristocrats also operate in high society and fill hereditary roles, both of which dwarves lack. Even patriarchs are expected to contribute to society in a practical way. *Durvalk* are not completely isolated from other dwarves and know they have noble classes. The common view is that the other dwarves have opted to take an easier path through life, which will give them less reward in the afterlife. When used, the *durvalk* term for an aristocrat is *ursdros* ("extra mouth"), a derogatory term implying the person is of no value.

Barbarian

Barbarians are far more common than among other subraces but are still a minority. Despite following the ancient traditions, dwarves feel barbarians epitomize the constant struggle for survival against near overwhelming hardship. On the downside, they are more concerned with open warfare than stealthy ambushes or lightning raids and can be a liability. Excessive individualism (typically defined by chaotic alignment) can be bad for the welfare of the clan as well, for while chasing after drow may be worthwhile, it does not put food in mouths if you were supposed to be hunting. Stone dwarves call barbarians *ofeg* ("wild"), referring to the berserker rage and tendency to wander off to do their own thing.

Bard

Bards can be a liability or an asset, depending on how they use their skills and talents. Those who are accepted work as hunters or crafters by day and keep alive the legends and traditions by night. Bards who practice thievery can expect to be exiled, for stealing from a fellow clansman is the most serious crime in stone dwarf society. Diplomatic skills can be useful when dealing with outsiders or other clans, but diplomacy is not an everyday profession. *Durvalk* also tend to look upon arcane magic with more disdain than other dwarves, since it was not one of their original gifts. Bards are generically referred to as *talikim* ("lore keepers") in honor of their excellent knowledge skills.

Basiran Dancer

Dancing in any form is considered a waste of energy, serving no useful purpose. Most *durvalk* have never danced in their lives, for their religious practices never employ dances, even when such practice is common to the faith among other races. Combined with a general disdain for arcane magic in any form and limited surface world contact, this class is unknown among the vast majority of dwarves. The handful of dwarves who have traveled far enough to see this art in use refer to its practitioners as *gomkarok* ("food wasters").

Brigand

Brigands are an accepted class within *durvalk* society, serving as hunters and warriors. Their stealth skills and sneak attack talents make them ideal hunters, and their ability to overawe opponents has proven handy more than once against racial enemies. Whereas most brigands prefer to do little work for their reward, *durvalk* brigands are working members of society. With little to steal, they are almost never found as bandits. Brigands are known as *thule* ("masked face"), referring not to an article of clothing but their ability to protect a mask of intimidation.

Cleric

As detailed above, clerics exist both inside and outside clan boundaries. They are expected to be loyal to their clan, but dwarves know that the word of the gods must be spread and that all *durvalk* have a right to worship. All must practice some useful art, however, for being the servant of a god does not guarantee one a free meal. Clerics are the preferred diplomats of the race, no matter their faith, and often find themselves shoehorned into dealing with outsiders. The class name is identical to that of the social stratum.

Commoner

Technically as dwarves are commoners because they lack high social classes. In game terms, however, few dwarves ever follow this path. Shopkeepers and farmers are unheard of, blacksmiths and other "low" crafters are experts (they have to be in order to fulfill their clan obligations) and hunters are usually warriors. The patriarch or clerics usually handle mercantile activities within the clan. Commoners are also poorly trained combatants and no *durvalk* can afford such luxury. As such, stone dwarves have no name for this class.

Druid

Few *durvalk* have ever visited the surface of Tellene and even fewer care to make the dangerous journey. They rarely use wood, though they know its existence, preferring to trust in stone and metal, as the gods intended. Animals beneath the earth fall into one of two categories, prey or predator. Stone dwarves, while often displaying neutral tendencies, have no interest in maintaining any balance between good and evil or law and chaos. Daily survival means they take whatever steps are necessary to continue their existence. Stone dwarves have no name for this class and the basic principals are alien concepts.

Expert

The expert class is the domain of crafters, whether lowly potters or master weaponsmiths. With virtually no time or inclination to follow scholarly pursuits, sages, historians, heralds, and other intellectual types are unheard of in *durvalk* lands. Many experts take at least one level in warrior or rogue to give them some survival skills. The class name is used to describe crafters. Intellectuals, when encountered, are given the same name as aristocrats.

Fighter

For all their skill at arms and superior training, fighters do not farewell in the underworld. They lack the stealthy skills needed to get within striking range of prey and hide from foes, both vital to *durvalk* survival. Fighters are often trained in academies or standing armies, neither of which figure greatly among stone dwarves. Most fighters learn their art from an elder and thus follow a certain tradition of fighting style. Little time can be spared to develop and teach new styles. Despite

this, fighters are found in small numbers, though usually with a few levels in rogue or ranger to see them through. Those who specialize in this class are called *lazord* ("open stance") because of their general poor stealth abilities.

Gladiator

Warriors must train, but fighting for sport is a waste of energy and, in death matches, lives. Gladiators do exist in *durvalk* society but in few numbers and never as slaves or paid combatants. Most are simply fighters with a flair for quickly learning new weapons and styles. Their biggest limitations are that they are better suited to stand up fights and lack vital stealth skills necessary to the brutal cat and mouse tactics of subterranean warfare. Their ability to launch multiple attacks of opportunity does suit them to engaging against multiple foes simultaneously, which is of practical use. Showboating, however, quickly leads to death for the *durvalk*'s racial enemies are not impressed by the skill of the gladiator. Gladiators receive the same name as fighters.

Infiltrator

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Game Mechanic

Much has been made of how dwarves use infiltrators as explorers, scouts, and saboteurs, yet the basic abilities are better suited to life above ground. The following changes are suggestions on how to adapt the class to subterranean work. As always, the final word rests with the DM. The change to Woodland Stride should be given to rangers as well.

Woodland Stride: The character gains the Mountain Goat feat (see *Rules*).

Woodcraft: Change the bonuses to apply only when underground.

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The difference between rogues and infiltrators is slight, but it can make a difference in a life or death situation. Aside from moral differences, rogues are experts at finding and disarming traps, stealthy attacks, and avoiding harm. An infiltrator, on the other hand, is less adept at trap location but retains the sneak attack ability, a faster rate of speed (*durvalk* rarely wear much armour), the ability to cross rough terrain with ease, and bonuses to vital skills. To the *durvalk* there is no competition.

Although primarily hunters, infiltrators are also explorers, guides, scouts, assassins, and saboteurs. Many of their skills can be used to get them close enough to eavesdrop on enemies, and some are employed to infiltrate enemy lairs posing as slaves, either to rescue prisoners or get close enough to enemy leaders to slit their throats. Such work is extremely dangerous but often vital to the welfare of the clan.

Whereas all hunters are called *delk*, infiltrators have the prefix *pa*, or "quiet."

Monk

Stone dwarves may be lawful, the meditative requirements and extreme dedication required of a monk make them of little practical use in their society. Days are spent hunting or fighting (or crafting), and nights spent watching for foes or making repairs to items. *Durvalk* also know that only through hard work and the gods can one reach spiritual peace, not sitting around thinking or physically exercising. As usual with any class that does not serve as purpose, they are referred to by the aristocrat term.

Paladin

Devotion to a god is certainly a laudable profession, but food does not appear from acts of devotion. Their need to survive at any cost, defined by their neutrality, means few have the time to spare or commitment to the cause to take up this class. Fighting evil is not a desire among stone dwarves; it is a part of daily life. However, the class is not unknown and paladins can serve as both clerics and hunters if the need arises, but are not particularly good at either (in *durvalk* terms). The word for a paladin is *edoth*, or "narrow minded."

Psion

As with all dwarven subraces, psions are accepted so long as they fit in, despite their gift not being granted by one of the traditional gods. Few have the chance to learn their art from a mentor and tend to develop talents that will help them survive in the harsh land they inhabit. In areas bordering illithid lands, psions and psychic warriors are greatly prized assets, able to fight their foe on an equal footing. Of all the classes, psions are the most likely to work along deep gnomes, especially the fabled illithid hunters, who have shared their training with the dwarves in the interests of defeating a common and deadly foe. Stone dwarves use the *adurek* term *nedfalos* to describe psions.

Ranger

Ranger rank third in terms of preferred class, having the skills and abilities necessary to survive though with less emphasis on stealth and more on killing. As such, they rank among the elite warriors within a clan but are less versatile than infiltrators. *Durvalk* rangers rarely have animal companions; close relationships with animals are unknown to the race, who either kill or eat them. Fortunately few druidic spells deal specifically with plants, and dwarven rangers still have a good choice of spells. Rangers are universally referred to by the mountain dwarf term, *dultbaj*.

Rogue

Rogues are the second most populous class behind infiltrators, but only by a whisker. As discussed above, infiltrators have abilities better suited to the *durvalk* way of life but rogues are not without their advantages. Their sneak attack can reach higher levels, making them excellent for ambushes, they can locate traps, and they can avoid blows through quick reflexes. However, they receive no increased movement or ability to cross rocky terrain quickly, and the ability to duck and weave is of little comfort to dwarf being chased by a hoard of foes. As noted elsewhere, theft is the most serious crime a stone dwarf can commit and few engage in larcenous pursuits. Rogues are referred to by their social name, since virtually all are hunters.

Shaman

Durvalk understand that different types of stone have different properties, but only the most isolated clans have reverted to shamanism. Even those who follow the tradition never take animal companions or totems, relying totally on stone and metal spirits to guide their ways. Depending on whether they favor metal or stone, they receive either the hill or mountain dwarf name.

Sorcerer

Whether one is born with sorcerous blood or not cannot be controlled, for the taint of the Zarduk family still exists. Whether one chooses to follow the way of sorcery is, however, a conscious decision. Most dwarves consider sorcerers untrustworthy and of little practical use. Even those who adopt a craft are less skilled than an expert. A sorcerer usually leaves his clan, either through choice or being exiled, and may wander the underearth trying to find a home. Some end up living with deep gnomes, but most are killed by the terrible creatures they blunder across. Sorcerers are universally called *diskos*, which means "tainted."

Spellsinger

As with Basiran dancers, spellsingers are all but unknown. Racial songs are very few and far between among the taciturn dwarves, and the noise caused in invoking this art is likely to attract unwanted attention. Those who learn the art tend to do so from hill and mountain dwarves or from deep gnomes (who hardly excel at the art). A spellsinger also needs a useful trade if he wants to remain in his clan. Spellsingers are called *gramdros*, or "big mouths."

Warrior

Few dwarves take this class by itself for there are no standing armies or militias this deep beneath the earth. Most practitioners are crafters, who take a few levels to boost their combat prowess but without taking on the more dedicated talents of rogues or infiltrators. There is no specific racial term for warriors.

Wizard

When stone dwarves record their history in writing it is through carving not writing on paper or vellum. One cannot simply become a wizard in the same way as one can a sorcerer and any dwarf willing to follow the Zarduk way of life needs to travel far and wide to locate a teacher. Even if he learns the art, paper must be imported from the surface world at great cost. Few wizards have what it takes to survive the rigors of the underworld anyway, being almost totally useless in close range combat and hunting and lacking useful craft skills. *Durvalk* use the *adurek* term to describe wizards.

Government

"Survival first, friendship second."
Stone dwarf saying.

Lawful Neutral Society

Though many stone dwarves border more on true neutral, their society as a whole is lawful neutral. The law aspect applies to their belief in the ancient traditions of their race, which they follow as strictly as possible. As described in the *Player's Handbook*, neutrality on the good/evil axis means the person has "compunctions against killing the innocent" but at the same

time "lacks the commitment to make sacrifices to protect or help others." It then goes on to describe that neutral characters do form bonds based on family and friendship, but rarely extend these to strangers.

So what do we have? Firstly, we have a race who follow their traditions word for word, caring little for the harm or benefit they cause society. Indeed, few stone dwarves even question the traditions. That strict adherence works is clearly visible in the continued existence of their race despite endless hardship. A strong social order is also important, though with *durwalk* the order extends from ensuring everyone fulfills their daily role rather than having strict social classes.

As for authority, while the patriarch is considered to have the last word on any matter involving the clan, he is not in power through any divine or legal right, nor can he order people to do things for which they are not skilled. Wisdom is more important than a hereditary ruler and in this respect the dwarves lean more toward true neutrality.

Traditions do not cause moral judgments in dwarves, who have little sense of right and wrong when compared to matters of survival. As mentioned elsewhere, charity starts firmly at home. A dwarf will do little to help a starving stranger unless he can assure himself that an act of generosity will have no harmful effect on his family. If food is in short supply, the dwarf will allow the stranger to starve to death before his eyes without feeling pity or remorse. In modern legal terms, this could be construed as murder through indifference, but to *durwalk* it is simply a matter of survival and preservation of those closest to you.

How It Works

The patriarch is responsible for ensuring the clan has enough food and supplies to survive. Whatever his profession, he must decide where the hunters will search for food, what items the crafters must concentrate on, and when to make war on racial foes. How the individual clan members reach their assigned goals is up to them; each knows his responsibilities within society. While clan members may offer suggestions to the patriarch, he does not have to accept them.

By law, patriarchs can be removed from power if their decisions are causing hardship. In such cases the entire clan must support the decision and even a lone dissenter blocks the leader's removal. Most patriarchs, however, accept the majority verdict and resign. Staying in power against the wishes of the majority can lead to friction, and life is hard enough without the clan dividing.

For those removed from power there are three choices. First, they can choose exile, leaving their clan in the hope that another clan takes pity on them. Few do, however, for a leader that has failed his clan is obviously unworthy. Second, they can be forcibly exiled, which is effectively a death sentence. Only when the entire tribe rebels is this sentence carried out. Third, they can remain in their clan accepting a role as a common member of society in accordance with their skills. They may never assume the position of patriarch again, however.

No ceremony marks the promotion of a new patriarch. When the old one dies or is removed the eldest dwarf assumes the mantle. They may refuse, taking the third option listed above. In such cases the mantle is passed on until someone accepts it. In order to provide some stability, older dwarves sometimes ensure the patriarchal power ends up with a middle-aged dwarf, who has a few centuries of life ahead of him.

Culture

"Culture? They don't even sing. Not that I'm complaining. You ever heard a dwarf sing?"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Stone dwarves may sound like barbaric cousins of the other subraces, but their culture is no less developed. If anything it is closer to the culture of the original dwarves, and is therefore one of the most unadulterated cultures on Tellene. It is simpler, some would say purer, than that of other dwarves, but hardships have allowed the dwarves little time to concentrate on non-essential activities.

Cycle of Life

"Birth, survival, death. The cycle is complete."

Stone dwarf saying.

Childhood

With a near equal proportion of males and females one might think stone dwarves are more populous. The birth rate among *durvalk* is slightly higher than among other dwarves but natural predators, food shortages, and war keep the population in balance. At best the number of *durvalk* is steady, but it certainly is not expanding.

Children are a mixed blessing. On one hand they are the next generation, keeping the family line going. On the other, they are extra mouths to feed and dwarf children require a lot of food if they are to grow into healthy adults. Until they are old enough to walk they stay with in the family house, protected by their family. Once they can walk they begin to learn what it means to be a stone dwarf.

Children are expected to help from an early age, fetching and carrying small items, learning how to prepare food, watching the crafters at work, and so on. By the time a child reaches school age (approximately ten years old) it is already versed in basic language, traditions, and religion. School is less formalized than with other dwarves and more hands on. Family members teach the children, and non-practical knowledge, such as history, is taught through stories and parables. When the child first burns himself, for instance, he is taught how dwarves discovered fire and its uses.

By the time he reaches adolescence, the child is a helpful, if unskilled, member of the family and expected to earn his keep. Lazy children are quickly taught the value of hard work by receiving less food and warned of the dangers of not serving the goods.

Adolescence

Adolescent *durvalk* are taught the skills they need to survive as adults. Aside from geology and geography, as well as continuing lessons in language, tradition, and religion, children begin combat training. *Durvalk* prefer light weapons and are trained to fight with two weapons simultaneously. The warriors and hunters conduct training in the safety of the family home, and although expected to fight defensively should there be an attack, children are not permitted to join the hunt.

Durvalk have different racial enemies to other dwarves but are still taught ancient techniques for defeating these foes. Though fewer in number than the goblinoids and orcs that haunt the upper level so the underearth, the foes of the *durvalk* are considerably more evil. Children are taught to put aside thoughts of peaceful interaction and granting mercy in favor of quick kills. Giants are creatures of myth and never found this far beneath the earth. Despite hill and mountain dwarf claims, giants were not foes of the dwarves until the first exodus.

Fighting may be important, but there are times when stealth is the best option. Adolescents learn how to move quietly over rocks, and how to use natural formations and deep shadows to hide, and how to spot approaching foes, potential food, and mineral resources. Training is conducted in a practical manner, with the youngsters playing cat and mouse with adult hunters. Children who are caught too easily go hungry as punishment. This may seem harsh, but in adult life the dwarf would likely be dead, or worse, captured. Dwarves are also expert climbers and are expected to be able to climb even when heavily encumbered.

Once combat proficient, the dwarf may accompany the hunters on safe hunts, those not venturing near enemy strongholds. As well as honing skills, it helps them learn the maze of passages the dwarves call home, tell good food from bad, and makes them a more useful member of society. From now on, they must catch their food if they wish to eat.

Even warriors are expected to have some basic knowledge of a practical craft. Once the child can hunt, it is expected to learn a craft during the evenings. Adolescents work long days with little reward. All *durvalk* are taught how to craft stone and are without equal in such endeavors. Despite living a harsh life, *durvalk* do appreciate quality stonework.

Sometime after the age of 35, the child may be selected to undergo the *Rem Dolki* ("Test of Providing"). The dwarf cannot volunteer for the test but, as tradition states, must wait until the patriarch calls him. As one might expect, the test is practical. The young dwarf must demonstrate he is ready to fulfill his adult obligations by hunting and gathering enough food to feed his immediate family for a week, manufacture an item of use to the family, and, finally, take part in a raid on a

racial enemy and bring back the head of a foe killed in personal combat. While the first two tests are performed alone, the raid is conducted with other dwarves.

Only when all three stages are completed to the patriarch's satisfaction does the dwarf become an adult. Children who fail to reach the required standard by their 45th birthday and usually exiled from the clan. A fully-grown dwarf who cannot provide for himself and his family has no right to expect free handouts and must learn to fend alone or perish in the attempt.

Adulthood

Once a dwarf becomes an adult he can pick a profession. So long as it is useful to the family, as determined by the patriarch, the dwarf is apprenticed to a master. While learning his trade, the dwarf is still expected to be of practical help. Hunters and warriors learn on the job, whereas craft apprentices help out with domestic chores. Apprentice clerics must decide whether to work as hunters or domestic servants until they are ordained. Few families allow their young adults to train at a temple, when one can be found. It is part of a trained cleric's duties to visit students at home to conduct training.

The vast majority of *durvalk* remain with their family until they marry and leave home (see below) or die. Those who elect to become adventurers are frowned upon as forgoing the ancient ways of their people and putting themselves before their family. Despite being neutral to one degree or another, stone dwarves still hold their family as important, for no dwarf can survive alone.

While an adventurer is off on his travels, he is considered a temporary exile. When and if he ever decides to return, he must approach the patriarch and ask to rejoin the family. In order to do so, he must demonstrate his worth. Adventurers lead tough lives and most are skilled combatants. More than a few have learned a useful trade, and almost all are considerably richer than when they left. A returning adventurer is expected to return home with practical gifts for his family. In game terms, the total value of the gifts must be worth 100 gp times his current level. Obviously, bringing home a sack of coins is of little value, save to melt down into weapons.

Courtship

Courtship takes time, something the long-lived dwarves have in abundance. Unfortunately, courtship cannot be allowed to interfere with daily life. Thus, most courtship takes place at night. *Durvalk* are free to marry as they want but few have much choice. Whereas as other dwarves live in large, cooperative communities, the isolated nature of stone dwarves means a young adult is likely to know only a few dozen neighboring clans, each considerably smaller than those of other dwarves. Because they are already likely to be intermarried with his family, an adult must undergo a journey to find a bride. Most often this is done through trading expeditions or when the clans gather for war.

Depending on the distances involved, courting couples may not see a great deal of each other. Willingness to pursue a long-distance relationship is seen as a quality, however. Once the couple decides to marry, both patriarchs must be informed. Marriage, like children, is double edged. While one clan will be gaining an extra mouth to feed, they are also gaining a working member of society. The most important factor in determining where the couple lives is the clan's ability to support children. Whereas in most cultures the bride always joins the groom's family, this is not a requirement of *durvalk* society.

The patriarchs meet to discuss the marriage, usually in the presence of a cleric of *Manklim*. In accordance with tradition, each must list his clan's assets and ability to provide for children. Once all the cards are on the table, they reach a decision on which clan will support the couple. A cleric is often invited to the meeting to settle disputes, though he is a mediator rather than a decision maker. Sooner or later a decision is reached and the couple allowed to marry. Permission can be refused, but this is rare. An adult not procreating is not helping the race grow.

Whether the bride or groom, one of the dwarves leaves their clan and joins the other. *Durvalk* do not recognize clan ties, despite most clans being related in some distant way, and the partner who leaves his family severs all ties. From now on his (or her) new clan is treated as if it were their birth clan. The newcomer always takes the family name of the clan is he joining, casting off his old name.

Children always belong to the new clan and do not treat the family of the newcomer as relatives, just as fellow dwarves. Divorce is permissible, but rare. Should it happen, the newcomer is exiled from his clan. Most return to their original home, though they are treated as if they had been adventuring and not immediately welcomed back.

Advanced Years

In most cases old age means little to *durvalk*. Their bones may ache and their reactions slow, but they remain productive members of the clan. Regardless of actual age, when a dwarf can no longer function as a provider he or she no longer serves a practical use.

Food used to keep them alive does little to benefit the clan, when it could be used to ensure the healthy members are well fed. Rather than left to starve they are permitted a quick death. Some opt to commit suicide through poison or

fatal wounding, whereas others take their sword in hand and crawl off to die in combat, hoping to perform one last act of usefulness by killing a racial foe.

It could easily be argued that such an act of euthanasia is evil, but it is neutral in the strictest sense of the word. No malicious intent is intended. Dwarves care for their sick and wounded, but the nature of their surroundings means they simply cannot afford to support non-productive members. Many dwarves still live to a ripe old age, however, but regardless of when they die they are mourned.

Habitat

"Where are the fabled cities of gems?"

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Stone Dwarf Lands

No place above the surface is home to the stone dwarves. They populate large cavern systems under or attached to the Grottos, live in huge realms beneath the Dashahn Mountains, and mine deep beneath the Napalogo Hills.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Stone dwarves live far beneath the earth, deeper even than the most extensive mountain dwarf realm. Here, in a realm of perpetual darkness, they live, breed, work, and die in small family units. While they may share close living space, they almost certainly never share resources. Each realm, if such a word can be used to describe their settlements, is fractionalized except in times of total war.

Durvalk place little value on aesthetic works. Corridors and chamber are left natural, though they may cut steps or construct bridges for practical reasons. Tiled floors and walls are seen as waste of effort, not to mention a beacon to all racial foes that dwarves are in the area. Leaving a cavern in its natural state is both pleasing and defensive. This is not to say *durvalk* are no artistic. They produce fabulous sculptures, using a variety of rocks inset with precious stones, but with just one exception they are religious in nature.

Protection

The natural rock is the dwarves' greatest defense. While they do set traps of cunning design around their homes, almost always deadfalls and pits, they prefer camouflage and deception. Darkvision does not register body heat and can thus be fooled. Dotted throughout any realm are numerous statues of dwarf warriors, armed with real weapons and wearing armor.

These statues look almost lifelike, complete with facial expressions and beards; such is the skill of the masons. *Durvalk* are not lesser cousins when it comes to engineering either. Many statues are placed on runners and controlled by complex gears or counterweights, which allow the statues to "walk," as if patrolling. Of course, their racial foes are used to such tactics but the location of the decoys is changed regularly. When attack is expected, live *durvalk* mingle with the statues and attacking foes must take steps to ensure they statue they just passed will not suddenly spring to life and attack them from behind. As well as delaying them, it also leaves them open to missile fire.

Although it requires great effort, homes are given protection on a scale not seen among other dwarves. Almost always built high up in cavern walls, to prevent easy access, they can be reached only by stairs. Rather than use external stairs, as deep gnomes prefer, they are reached through stairs carved inside the cavern wall and concealed behind secret doors that appear as part of the rock face. Access to other houses belonging to the clan is through passages carved in the rock. Houses also lack windows, which the dwarves do not need. From outside, a cavern full of *durvalk* homes appears to be an empty grotto.

Clan Domiciles

Houses are usually part of a small complex of interconnected chambers. Houses are usually just a series of sleeping chambers and a small communal living area barely large enough to house the immediate family (spouse and children). Each family within a clan has a house. Some families have mattresses of moss or, rarely, fur, but most dwarves sleep on the bare rock. The heat from the central fire warms the entire complex and despite being regarded as cave-dwellers by some races, their homes are warm and comfortable (at least by *durvalk* standards).

Most facilities are actually shared among the entire clan, thus fostering close ties and cooperation. In a typical complex, the entrance stairs lead to a common room, large enough to house the entire clan. Stone benches line the walls and a fire pit dominates the center. As well as heating the entire complex, the fire pit is used to cook all meals. Families cook their food in communal pots and eat together rather than as individual family units. *Durvalk* burn smokeless coal, mined locally. Ash is removed daily and ground into a fine powder, some of which is kept for medicinal or craft purposes. Most of it is thrown into an underground river singled out as the clan dumping ground. During the day, while the hunters

are collecting food, crafters not requiring specialist workplaces and children use the room. The common room is thus the hub of clan life.

Each clan also maintains a storeroom, in which are housed surplus provisions, weapons and armor, rope, work tools, and other necessary items. Separate cupboards are used to house different goods and access is limited. The patriarch, for example, holds the key to the food stores, whereas all warriors hold a key to the armory. One should not think of keys as metal objects that fit into locks. Stone dwarf locks are usually complex stone devices involving weights and counterbalances, activated by pressing a series of glyphs, most cunning concealed, in the right order. The key is thus the knowledge of the correct combination.

Because stone dwarves rarely gather outside the clan, all communities have a small chapel. Each member of the main pantheon is represented with a small statue placed in wall niches. Lacking ready access to paper, common prayers are inscribed on small stone tablets kept in recesses beneath the statue. Worshippers are free to pray as they need and during all but holy days it is not uncommon to find several dwarves in the chapel, each praying to a different god.

At the back of the community is a series of small workshops. Many crafters share facilities, though a metalworker always has a separate workshop in which his forge is housed. Toilet facilities are not overly advanced, often being a bucket filled with ash. In some clans, a small shaft drops to a subterranean river, but most dwarves must carry their bodily waste to the dumping river.

As the family grows, so new sleeping chambers are carved and, if necessary, other rooms expanded. Dwarves never undertake such work unless absolutely necessary and it is therefore easy to spot clans fallen on hard times; they have more rooms than they can fill.

Additional Features

Stone dwarves do not go in for running water, preferring to gather what they need from subterranean rivers or lakes. Although capable of creating aqueducts, the end result does not warrant the extensive labor required. The same applies to elevators and other large engineering works. Hard labor never hurt the *durvalk's* ancestors, and it will not hurt the current generation. Such feats of engineering are also clear signs of dwarven habitation and likely to attract unwanted attention.

Virtually every family has access to a mine. Some are shared resources, typically being stone quarries and coalmines, whereas some clans own private mines, typically containing metal veins. Many mines are excavated by hand, and only a few have trucks to carry away spoil. Whenever possible, spoil is dumped far from the community.

Because of their more isolationist nature, *durvalk* communities lack communal warehouses, barracks, temples, schools, and other such structures. Within the community, each clan works as necessary to provide for and protect its own members and cares little for complex social interaction.

Recreation

"All work and no play makes stone dwarves very boring."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Stone dwarves do not devote much time to pointless recreational activities. Most dwarves relax by performing small chores, such as preparing food for the next day, cleaning and maintaining weapons, or carving small statues for children to use as toys. Singing, dancing, and music are virtually unknown, and even storytelling is limited among the reticent dwarves. What stories are told tend to be religious or historical parables used to teach youngsters. Adult conversation is usually limited to current events, where to hunt next, and so on. Compared to most races, *durvalk* are boring and make very poor socialites.

Children play at practical games; those that teach something. Many children own stone soldiers, carved to resemble dwarves and racial enemies. Adults use them to teach basic tactics and hunting patterns, and where to find weak spots. No actual rules exist (they are not wargames) and who lives and dies is based more on circumstance than on random factors. Children also play live action fighting, running around the community and attacking each other with replica weapons. Again, these are instructional and children are expected to move quietly. Being sent to bed without food is often the result is an adult hears excessive noise.

Younger children play with polished stone balls, similar to human marbles. As well as developing coordination, it teaches them to accept defeat and respect the talents of others. Many mimic hunters, either trying to move quietly and sneak up on adults or hiding from them. Adults consider this to be good training for later life and openly encourage such activities, so long as the children stay within the safety of the community.

Diet

"Carrion crawler tentacle stew served on a bed of fungus and washed down with cloudy water? I'd rather eat the dwarves."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

The diet of stone dwarves may not be very varied, but it is nutritious. The underground is a veritable larder, if one knows where to look and is not picky on the choice of foodstuffs. For *durvalk*, anything edible has become part of their daily diet, though they refrain from eating the flesh of sentient beings.

Meat comes primarily from fish and crabs, as well as centipedes, spiders, and other vermin. Some larger monsters are eaten, but many species are poisonous or foul tasting. Those that are edible are stripped to the bone, with the eyes, entrails, and brains eaten. More recognized meats, such as pork, beef, rabbit, and so on, are extremely rare and only available by paying extortionate import prices.

Typically meat is thrown into a stew or buried in hot ashes to bake. Most food is prepared and eaten the day it is gathered. If enough can be found to provide a surplus, it is dried over the fire and stored in the larder. Many clans keep live centipedes and spiders in stone vessels, both as snacks and as a reserve in case the hunting is poor.

Frying and roasting are not only cooking methods unknown to stone dwarves, they also produce too much smoke. Above ground, windows and doors can be opened to disperse the smell of cooking food; inside an unventilated community the smoke simply gathers near the ceiling. Opening the door to the outside is not an option; beneath ground the breeze carries smoke to the noses of predators and racial foes.

Along with meat, the dwarves also eat a wide variety of lichens and fungi. Most fungi are dried over the fire, giving them a slightly smoky taste, or dried with rock salts. They are rarely eaten raw, even the non-poisonous varieties, and are usually thrown in the stew to provide texture and flavor. Some dwarves grow their own fungi crops in a special room away from the warmth of the fire, but few produce a surplus.

Although few birds live below ground, *durvalk* are partial to eggs. Fish eggs are plentiful, but many species of animal also produce eggs. While many species would turn their nose up at the thought of eating umber hulk eggs, *durvalk* are less fussy. Most eggs are poached or hard-boiled when served with a meal. Dwarfven bread is a fibrous mash of fungus baked on the stones around the hearth. It is not the most pleasant tasting substance in the world, but it keeps well and fills otherwise empty stomachs.

Water is the common drink of adults and children. The mineral springs this far below ground are exceptionally pure and saturated with minerals. So much so that the water is cloudy. However, the minerals are a vital part of the dwarfven diet and substitute for those other races find in plant matter. Some alcohol does find its way down from mountain dwarf or deep gnome realms, but *durvalk* are the only dwarves who do not brew their own.

Meals are taken two or three times a day, depending on what is available. Breakfast is an essential meal, preparing the body for the rigors ahead. Mushroom porridge or eggs are the most common meal, served with mushroom flatbread and a flagon of mineral water. Hunters sometimes snack on food they have caught, during the day but most take only a few mouthfuls; everything they eat is less for the clan. The main meal is eaten at night, after the hunters have returned and their catch prepared. A thick stew of meat and vegetables is eaten almost every night, again served with flatbread and mineral water.

Clothing

"Why bother? No one ever sees them."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Clothing is usually made of animal hide, though rarely leather. Many species of subterranean creatures have thick hides, which are beaten and soaked in a mix of urine and potash to soften them. Once soft enough to work, the hides are sewn together with dried fibers from a specific form of fungi. Most clothes are homemade, though if the hunting has been good the clan may have enough hide to trade with their neighbors. Lighter clothes can be made from weaving dried fungi fibers dyed using powdered rocks.

Male and female fashions are remarkably similar. Both sexes wear sleeveless tunics and ankle length trousers. Boots are almost always knee high and crafted from hide, with thick soles to provide comfort and muffle sound. Gloves, hats, and cloaks are very unusual. Although the temperature is often near freezing, layers of fat and thick body hair provide all the insulation a dwarf needs. Extra garments are seen only as additional weight to be carried.

Despite favoring stone, *durvalk* are good metalworkers. Most often metal is worn in the form of belt buckles, for even *durvalk* favor wide belts, from which they hang weapons and tools. Some dwarves wear bracelets as jewelry, but for the most part they prefer to use metal for more practical purposes.

Medicine and Healthcare

"The weak are a burden."

Stone dwarf saying.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

New Alchemical Mixtures

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture (Dwarves/Non dwarves)
<i>Fanot</i>	17	20 gp/80 gp
<i>Noriedel</i>	21	40 gp/100 gp
<i>Zamil</i>	15	10 gp/35 gp

Fanot

The salve form provides 1d3 hit points of non-magical healing when rubbed around a wound. The potion variant places the patient in a paralytic state and is primarily used on patients requiring stabilization. The potion grants a +25% bonus to stabilization rolls, but its effects last for an hour. Taking multiple doses is dangerous and can lead to heart failure. The patient must make a Fort (DC 15, +2 per potion taken within the last hour) save or suffer 1d6 temporary Constitution. If the potion is fed to an unwilling victim, he may make a Fort (DC 12) save to resist the effects.

Noriedel

A snort of *noriedel* grants the inhaler a +4 bonus to resist of mind affecting attacks, including psionic and magic for an hour. It does not allow the inhaler to see through illusions or penetrate disguises. It protects the brain from attack but does not alter the senses.

Zamil

Zamil is usually used as a missile weapon, rather than smeared on armour or skin. Any non-troglodyte within 20 feet of the impact point (or wearer) is subject to the Stench ability of a troglodyte, as detailed in the *Monster Manual*.

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Durvalk healthcare is surprisingly advanced. There is a heavy emphasis on getting the sick and injured back on their feet as quickly as possible; lying in bed does not help the clan. Members of the clan carry out most nursing, though clerics of *Namleka* are sometimes hired if the patient has skills the clan has no desire to lose. Clerics of *Namleka* spend much of their time traveling from clan to clan, dispensing medicine and healthcare as they go. As such, payment for their services is usually room and board until the patient is healed.

Stone dwarves do not waste medicine or time looking after those certain to die from disease or injury. They might make them comfortable, but in honesty *durvalk* bedside manner leaves much to be desired. Any dwarf with a debilitating, contagious disease (lethal or not) presents a dire threat to the clan. If the clan loses too many members to sickness, it will not be able to support itself. In order to ensure the clan's safety, diseased members are temporarily exiled until they recover. If the disease is contagious and potentially fatal, such as plague or typhoid, the patient is permanently exiled. As the dwarven saying goes, "It is better to chop off a hand than lose an arm."

Few clans have an alchemist of skill and alchemical medicines are a popular trade item, both locally and imported from other races. Alchemists know little of the properties of herbs, but are adept at using minerals and the body parts of underground creatures to brew medicines. Their alchemists manufacture similar medicines to other dwarves and deep gnomes, though they have developed three unique concoctions. Two are not truly medicines, but they do provide beneficial effects.

Fanot, or "corpse dust," is a medicine made from carrion crawler tentacles. As one might expect, it is a paralytic. It comes in paste and potion form, each having a different application. The paste is rubbed around a wound to numb the area. As well as alleviating the immediate pain, it allows healers to tend to the wound without subjecting the patient to further agony. The potion paralyzes the patient's body, as if a carrion crawler had struck him. It has two main uses. First, to slow the patient's heart rate and reduce the chance of him bleeding to death, and second, to allow invasive surgery without the patient suffering throughout the procedure. In modern terms, it is an anesthetic.

The second alchemical concoction is *noriedel*, or "brain powder." Made from the powdered brains of mind flayers, it comes in the form of snuff. Exactly how it works is not fully understood, but it does give the inhaler resistance against the mind affecting powers of mind flayers, as well as other psionic and magic attacks. It is uncommon and usually only found in the possession of illithid hunters.

Troglodyte stench glands can be used to create a sticky paste known as *zamil* ("stench glue"). Although it can be smeared on armour or clothing, it affects the wearer as well. Typically it is thrown at opponents, causing them to be violently ill, exactly as if they had encountered a troglodyte. It is often employed against grimlocks, whose lack of vision forces them to rely on hearing and smell. As well as inducing sickness, it hides the odor of dwarves and often convinces the grimlocks they are fighting troglodytes.

Law and Order

Although fractionalized, stone dwarf society is well ordered. Law and order are not only actively pursued, they are paramount to their survival. Only by acting in accordance with the traditions, which cover every aspect of life, can survival be assured and a place in the afterlife guaranteed. Any disruption to the clan is detrimental to group cohesion, and crime, therefore, is severely punished.

Durvalk have only two categories of crime; those committed against your own clan and those committed against another clan (or allied race). The former is the most serious category. Despite being lawful and following lawful gods, the patriarch handles criminal justice. Only when the patriarch is charged with a crime is a cleric called in to adjudicate. The patriarch may call in a cleric to help settle the matter, but many clans hold this as a sign of potential weakness in their leader, who they expect to be well versed in the ancient laws.

Durvalk have no time to waste on lengthy trials. The accused is brought before the patriarch, witness statements heard, and sentence passed, usually within an hour. Obviously, all intra-clan disputes involve family members accusing their own flesh and blood. This means little to the dwarves when the laws have been breeched and survival threatened.

Sentences range from going without food for a set period for minor crimes, such as failing to fulfill one's daily duties out of willful neglect, to exile for food theft and crimes considered capital offences among other races. While personal possessions are few and far between, most items being communal property, food is carefully rationed. Taking more than your fair share, especially when it involves deceit, deprives other clan members and means the individual has put his own needs above those of his kin. For this reason, it is a very serious crime.

When a crime is committed against another clan or an allied race, the laws state that the clan to which the guilty party belongs must pay a fine. Again, laws are in place to dictate payment levels. Because of the risk of subterfuge and unfair trials, a cleric of a recognized lawful deity who belongs to neither clan must be present. The accuser's clan pays his fee. Technically the guilty party's clan could refuse to pay the fine, but it almost never happens. Life is hard enough without warring against one's neighbors.

His own clan usually charges the guilty dwarf with endangering them, for fines are nearly always paid in food or weapons, both of which are essential to survival. Punishments are severe, usually resulting in reduced rations for several weeks, with banishment reserved for those who bring on excessive fines.

Outlaws, those exiled from their clan, are never taken back. Their name is removed from the family history and never spoken again. Few exiles find home with another clan, having shown their true colors. Most perish within a few weeks, eaten by predators or killed by racial foes. Some band together to form brigand gangs, but their presence endangers the clans, who actively hunt down and kill roving bandits. Dwarves subject to a temporary banishment are allowed to rejoin the clan if they survive the period of exile. Few do, however.

Relations with Other Races

Stone dwarves distrust all surface races. Their ways are almost completely alien to stone dwarves, who do not even share a common language with them. Those races who venture into the bowels of the earth and considered interlopers in what is effectively a sacred dwarven realm. Most dwarves are content to show the strangers the way out, or at best the path around their home, in return for food. They do hire themselves out as guides for longer journeys, but rates of pay increase dramatically the longer the dwarf is away from his clan and his duties. Dwarves leaning toward evil are inclined to ambush and kill interlopers.

Even if a stranger is accepted as trustworthy and earns the respect of the dwarves, which usually requires acts of courage or knowledge of their ways, they will never be treated as equals. *Durvalk* legends and holy scriptures make no mention of other friendly races and the traditions do not encourage contact with outside influences. Dwarves were put on Tellene for a specific purpose and anything that leads them away from that goal is considered bad.

Other Dwarves

Durvalk may have different cultural and religious beliefs to other dwarves, but they still consider them to be kinfolk. Distant cousins who have lost the true way and succumbed to the temptations of the dark gods they may be, but they are still relatives. Most contact is through trade, which is not exactly a regular occurrence, though diplomatic missions do happen as well.

Stone dwarves remain reticent with their near-surface relatives but there is an unspoken bond between the races. Cultural and religious differences may stop the dwarves become bosom buddies, but *durvalk* automatically side with other dwarves over any issue. *Durvalk* appreciate the fine craftsmanship of mountain dwarf weapons, though they find them to heavy for their tastes.

Elves

Durvalk know of only one elven race, the drow, and they rank as one of their most hated enemies. Their sorcerous ways are considered a corrupting influence, and their taking of slaves abhorrent, not only because it enforces outside leadership on the captives but also because captives now serve the needs of their new masters rather than the clan. Drow also epitomize everything the dwarves stand against in terms of social order. Nobles lord it over lower class beings, who are expected to supply their masters with everything they need to save them having to work. Despite hating them, *durvalk* do not attack them recklessly. Drow have many strange powers and the *durvalk* cannot afford to throw away lives.

Surface elves, when encountered, are automatically assumed to be related to drow in the same way that hill and mountain dwarves are related to stone dwarves. Few bother to listen to the elves' protests, for drow are known to be masters of treachery.

No stone dwarf would willingly work with a drow, no matter the reward. To do so would be to go against eons of tradition and bring the dwarf's loyalty to his clan into serious question. At best, the dwarf will sign up with a party containing a drow simply to remove his enemy at the first opportunity. A surface elf, regardless of subrace, is viewed with intense suspicion and has very little hope of earning the dwarf's respect without slaying handfuls of drow.

Stone dwarves refer to drow as *emedrow*, or "white hairs." Surface elves are not encountered enough to have earned a separate name.

Gnomes

Relations with deep gnomes are, at best, neutral. Competition for resources is fierce, though neighboring tribes usually make non-aggression pacts to stop the competition devolving into bloody warfare. Both races share common foes, making them potential allies, but alliances only occur when both sides would benefit from the union. Individual friendships do occur, and deep gnomes train many of the dwarves' illithid hunters. Trade is not unusual, with the dwarves exchanging metal ore for cultivated fungus.

Little is known about rock gnomes, whom the *durvalk* suspect are the deep gnome equivalent of hill dwarves. Even if contact were frequent, the relaxed nature of rock gnomes and tendency to waste valuable time in meaningless japes would not sit well with the dwarves. Forest gnomes are a completely unknown race and, if encountered, are likely to be treated as some sort of woodland spirit.

A stone dwarf adventuring with a deep gnome shares a common bond. Both races are strangers to surface life and, while friendship is unlikely, they at least can talk together in Undercommon. Deep gnomes are more belligerent than dwarves, who prefer to pick their battles with more caution. Coming from a resource-deprived world, both races are likely to quarrel over the smallest reward, especially if of practical use.

Deep gnomes are referred to as *barijot* ("small beings"), whereas rock gnomes receive no racial name, being referred to simply as "wastrels."

Halflings

As a race, *durvalk* know nothing of halflings. Should contact ever be made, it is likely the *durvalk* would consider them an offshoot of deep gnomes, principally because of their size. Of course, lightfoot halflings are principally hard working and look after their own, something the dwarves understand. Still, halflings are more egalitarian and outgoing than dwarves, who would look upon overtures of friendship with a healthy dose of suspicion.

Halflings are by nature curious creatures and prone to wanderlust. Dwarves view this as both annoying, since they have no wish to engage in conversation with any race, and foolhardy, for strength lies in cooperation rather than individual endeavors. The halfling ability to find trouble is seen as endangering the adventuring family and stone dwarves take it upon themselves to punish frequent transgressors.

Whether lightfeet or amberhairs, deep gnomes have yet to give halflings a racial name. Most often they use descriptors such as "short one" or "talkative one" when referring to them in the third person.

Humans

Humans may be the most prolific surface race, but they do not live beneath the ground. Sporadic contact has been made with human adventurers, but the dwarves understand little of their alien customs. Those they have met run a gamut of alignments, and seem to have no common customs or beliefs, which dwarves find strange. Some have proven worthy of respect, but others have proven treacherous and cowardly.

Although the stone dwarves know of the fall of Karasta they do not grieve for its loss or hold humans responsible. Its construction should never have happened and its capture is proof that the surface world is not for dwarves. However, the word Kalamaran is now one associated with treachery and Kalamarans are treated with considerably more caution than other humans.

Humans and stone dwarves have little in common. Any friendship must come about by the human's efforts and such a bond is likely to take many years to develop. Because of their size and the dwarves' lack of understanding about true giants, *durvalk* refer to humans as *kempe* ("giants").

Hobgoblins

Goblinoids and orcs were never enemies to the first dwarves. It was only after reaching the surface that these multitudinous races became enemies to the hill and mountain dwarves. Despite not knowing much about hobgoblins, save what other dwarves have told them, it would not take long for the two races to become hostile. Hobgoblins are unlikely to view *durvalk* as any different to other dwarves, and the stone dwarves dislike bullies and slavers.

When adventuring together, the two races are likely to become enemies quite quickly, though not with the overt aggression common to other dwarven subraces. If the hobgoblin is brave enough and treats the dwarf with respect, a slight bond could develop as with humans. Such an event is unlikely, but not impossible.

Due to the almost non-existent contact between these races, stone dwarves have no racial name for hobgoblins.

Half Races

Half-stone dwarves are extremely rare. Those living with humans are considered exiles, whereas those dwelling beneath the earth are treated as kin. There is no middle ground. Other half-races are treated with suspicion because they are surface races, not because they are mixed race. As with hobgoblins, orcs have never troubled the stone dwarves and a half orc has as much chance of earning respect as a human, so long as his aggressive orc nature is not dominant.

Having little contact with pure breed surface races, *durvalk* cannot easily distinguish between pure and half-breed individuals. Racial names, if they exist, are based on the race the individual most resembles.

Non-Civilized Races

Durvalk interact with only three other subterranean races (aside from the drow), and never in a friendly manner. Illithids, or *nordresil* ("brain eaters"), rank the highest menace, for their unique culture disgusts dwarves. While open warfare is avoided, *durvalk* attack lone mind flayers and launch small raids to rescue prisoners. Mind flayer strongholds are simply too well defended to risk a mass confrontation. Illithids are never taken prisoner, but their brains are used to make an anti-psionic drug.

Serving the mind flayers are the grimlocks, a race of blind, primitive humanoids. They act as warriors for their tentacled masters and are encountered more frequently. *Durvalk* call grimlocks *orloki*, which means "blind servitors." It alludes to their lack of ocular sense and their total devotion. Of all the subterranean races, grimlocks are most likely to launch large-scale attacks on dwarf settlements. While they are not the brightest of creatures, they lack of sight means they rarely fall for the dwarven sentry statue trick. When forced to fight them, *durvalk* make a lot of noise and use noxious chemicals to confuse their keener senses.

Lastly there are troglodytes, known as *zamorg* ("stench beasts"). They see dwarves as food rather than slaves but lack the numbers, coordination, and bravery to attack a settlement. Instead they ambush small hunting parties, using their powerful odor to overwhelm the dwarves before the kill. Troglodyte skin is used to make clothing and their stench glands can be used to make a salve potent against grimlocks.

Trade and Tribute

"No thank you, I already have six very nice lumps of rock already."

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Trade is not an important part of *durvalk* culture, self-sufficiency being the watchword. Everything the dwarves need to survive can be found locally. Metal for weapons and tools, fungus fibers for rope, animal hide for clothing and armor, and much more can be found if one knows where to look. However, stone dwarves have things other races want, specifically metal (ore and in tool and weapon form) and stone (including precious stones). Both commodities are traded with other dwarven subraces and, to a lesser extent, the belligerent deep gnomes. In return, the dwarves accept foodstuffs, clothing, timber, and alcohol, in order of necessity.

Durvalk have no separate merchant class, for mercantile interaction with other races is not common. At most, each clan gets a visit once every few years, and often as much as a decade passes. Clans do trade among themselves, however, and clerics are often used to barter resources, though patriarchs are expected to be skilled negotiators. Rarely does one see trade caravans, and most trade is for small quantities of easily transportable goods.

Since no markets exist, trade, whether with neighbors or outsiders, is conducted with individual clans. Outside merchants are shown to a large cavern from here they can hawk their goods to the emissaries of the clans. Complex traditions exist detailing how much an individual clan may buy based on the quantity of goods available and the size of the clan. While being self-serving, the clans try to ensure everybody gets a fair share, lest it result in feuding over resources. Stone dwarves rarely send trading parties to other races or subraces, for the journey is long and they can ill-afford to waste manpower. If you want to buy *durvalk* goods, you must visit their lands.

Durvalk do not pay any form of tax or tribute, nor do they demand it from neighbors. With no central authority or community infrastructure to support, taxes serve little purpose. Each family within a clan is expected to work as necessary to keep the clan going. When a clan needs a service its members cannot provide, it barter with a neighboring clan. This is usually only for luxuries or an unusual item, for a clan that cannot provide the basics required for survival is doomed.

As stated before, *durvalk* do not have shops. The clan provides everything a dwarf needs to fulfill his duties free of charge. Technically. Payment comes in the form of the dwarf using his skills to help the clan. What good is a warrior without weapons? If a dwarf wants something unusual but feasible, such as a suit of chainmail, he can either barter for it from another clan or ask his clan armorer to make one. However, as a non-essential item, it takes he crafter away from essential duties and is therefore chargeable. Stone dwarves have little use money, which in itself is worthless. Typically payment comes in the form of food, which the warrior must find in addition to his regular quota.

Unless the game is set around a clan's struggle for survival and features only player character *durvalk*, the adventurous stone dwarf is an outcast. His property is his own, but it also costs standard prices. The clan-support system is not a way for *durvalk* characters to start with free equipment.

Calendar

"Ooh, it's time to harvest the rocks!"

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

No seasons exist beneath the earth and the *durvalk* do not bother with a calendar. Days, weeks, months, and years are all fairly meaningless concepts without something to reference them to. As such, the *durvalk* vocabulary has no words for measuring time as an abstract concept. The nearest they have to short term record keeping is *kapos*, which means "work cycle." It is a vague term encompassing what other races would call a day and refers to specifically to the period after waking. A stone dwarf saying he will meet you in three *kapos* means he will meet you at some point after waking on the fourth day but before he goes to sleep. Exactly when he will turn up is, therefore, quite variable.

Although a calendar could be kept by recording tally marks of *kapos*, stone dwarves have little to plan for. There are no crops to harvest, war takes place as and when one side decides it is ready, and the passing and recording of years is as meaningless to dwarves as they are the rocks they quarry.

Longer-term dates are based vaguely on the lifespan of the speaker or his immediate family. Events taking place longer than a few years ago (a thousand or so *kapos*) are never given specific times. Thus, a dwarf relates tales in terms of when his children were young, before he became an adult, shortly before or after the death of a loved one, and such like. This makes tying in events to a standard calendar all but impossible.

Durvalk celebrate the day a dwarf is born, but not annual birthdays. Religious holidays keep an approximate correlation to the surface races purely because the clerics have a sixth sense as to when to hold them. Some claim the gods speak to them in dreams, which is not unfeasible given their status as the gods' representatives under the earth.

Whereas the other subraces developed a calendar after reaching the surface and seeing the movement of the heavens, the *durvalk* lack even legends speaking of the celestial bodies. Few *durvalk* have ever seen the sky, as they claim the gods intended. That the other subraces have developed a celestial calendar is seen as a taint on the purity of their race and affront to the traditional gods.

Language

The *durvalk* dialect of Dwarven is more rudimentary than that of other dwarves. Given their reticent nature and tendency to discuss only a limited range of topics, this is not unsurprising. Their language lacks words for many surface features, such as trees, weather, celestial objects, calendrical notation, and such like. Trade with near-surface dwarves has introduced new concepts, but to a *durvalk* a piece of wood is a piece of wood regardless of the type of tree it came from.

They have a similar glossary of words for metals as hill dwarves but a greatly increased understanding of stone. As mountain dwarves have numerous words for metals based on type and state, so *durvalk* have similar words for stone. Words such as stalagmite, while conveying much to other races, mean little to *durvalk*, who have specific words for shape, length, substance, and so forth. When discussing gems, words are used to define size, quality, color, and texture as well as basic mineral composition.

A single word thus conveys an image of a very specific stone object rather than a concept based on one common principal. Telling a stone dwarf you want to buy diamonds has the same meaning as going into a grocers and saying you want to buy a vegetable. He has the basic knowledge of what you want, but needs to know a lot more before he can serve you.

Any race dealing with them, even other dwarves, is strongly advised to keep conversation to a minimum, avoid using surface terms, and never to try and discuss matters of geology. Failure to do so may result in the dwarf becoming bored and walking away, for unlike deep gnomes they have little sense of idle curiosity. Travelers to the underearth must

also remember that stone dwarves do not speak Merchant's Tongue. Undercommon, the subterranean equivalent, is taught from birth, and many know Draconic, Gnome, or Terran.

Names

Naming conventions are similar to those of other dwarves but family names are considered more sacred. Among the *durvalk* there are only the eight family names; no stone dwarf has ever bothered to start his own familial line. When dealing with non-Dwarves, they keep their given name but choose a surname based on stone or stonecraft or some personal ability. Thus, one finds Masons, Hardstones, Gemcutters, and Granitehands, as well as Swiftlegs, the Stealthy, and Foehammer.

Warfare

"Violence is the only option."

Stone dwarf saying.

Despite being a benign race, in that they are not interested in enslavement or conquering, stone dwarves are quite aggressive. Competition for resources is fierce and peaceful negotiation rarely an option. Raids and counter raids are a part of daily life, predators must be stopped, and resources gathered. By comparison the surface world, occasionally wracked by large-scale wars, seems positively tranquil. Their race lacks large armies, being centered on family units, but when riled the *durvalk* can muster large numbers of troops.

Weapons and Armor

"Mobility and speed are the best weapons."

Stone dwarf saying.

Stone dwarves are quite capable of manufacturing medium and metal armour but universally prefer to wear light armor. Most warriors wear chain shirts, which are light enough not to hamper movement yet affording reasonable protection. Its big drawback is its tendency to jingle, which can echo for many hundreds of feet in the quiet underearth. Unless expecting serious trouble, most are content to wear padded (thin layers of hide stuffed with fungi fibers), soft leather, leather, or even cord (tightly wound fungi fibers).

Warriors may own medium or even heavy armour, but for a race whose tactics favor mobility and stealth it is only ever worn in the direst of battles. If metal armour is not affordable, thick hide armour suffices. While it may protect the wearer from blows, it is less helpful if the dwarves have to flee. *Durvalk* do craft shields, but their preferred fighting style is with two light weapons, striking fast and then withdrawing to an advantageous position. A shield not only reduces the warrior to a single weapon, but makes hiding and climbing harder.

Durvalk have access to a variety of weapons, including those common to all dwarves, but prefer to use light weapons. As well as being less weighty, stone dwarves learn how to wield two light weapons simultaneously, effectively doubling the number of attacks they can make. Although each weapon causes less damage than a comparatively larger one, overall the flurry of blows can dispatch a foe quicker than with a single weapon. Any standard light weapon is thus very popular, but there is a preference for daggers, light maces, hand axes, picks, and short swords.

Unique racial weapons also exist, though the selection is not as varied as with other subraces. Many hunters carry a *durgrum*, a straight-bladed knife with a reinforced tip designed to puncture thick hide and armor. The *urgad*, on the other hand, is a thin bladed knife used for primarily attacking unarmored foes, as well as an eating implement.

When it comes to swords, paired short swords are very common. For warriors needing heavy armour, a heavy weapon is also preferred. The *formar* is a broad-bladed, double-edged sword used for slashing and piercing. It is a nonsense tool of war, easily manufactured, and relatively simple to wield.

The *fulzek* is a heavier sword and many dwarves consider them to be the first swords ever produced by their race. Blades are double edged at the top for piercing, but are primarily used for slashing. The pommel has a large spike protruding from the bottom, which can be used to dispatch foes or as a makeshift aid to climbing. Many blades are highly decorated with ancient runes telling of the creation of the first blades.

Lastly there is the *thel*. With its single edged, straight blade, it is a purely slashing weapon. Hilts are elegantly crafted and set on a carved bone grip. Owning one is considered the mark of a true warrior as the bone used in the hilt must come from a racial foe killed in single combat. Both the *fulzek* and *thel* are unusual in that they are the private property of the owner rather than communal weapons.

Ranged weapons are unusual underground, but *durvalk* do sometimes use them. Shortbows are the most common missile weapons, being light and quick to load and fire. Throwing axes, short spears, javelins, and daggers are also popular and form part of standard *durvalk* tactics.

Ranks

"Put your greatest trust in your own abilities."

Stone dwarf saying.

Warriors and hunters receive a title based on their experience as a fighter rather than because of leadership qualities or birthright. These are not true military ranks, but terms of respect and recognition. The lowest title is that of *delk*, which all warrior/hunters receive when they choose that profession. As well as symbolizing the dwarf's social responsibilities, it also means that he is not numbered among the experienced hunters within his clan.

Experienced hunters, known as *amydelk* ("senior hunters" or sometimes "great hunters"), serve in the same role as lieutenants in other armies. They lead small groups of hunters, who follow them not out of military duty or legal requirement but because the *amydelk* has more experience under his belt. They are mentors to less experienced hunters, competent tacticians, and lead by example.

The highest rank is *demadelk*, or "master hunter." Many other races refer to them as captains, but the title implies no actual military authority. Few clans possess more than two or three of these individuals. As with *amydelk*, there is no formal requirement for becoming a *demadelk*, save the recognition of one's clan. Few are younger than middle age and most are well into their second century of life.

Organization

"Large numbers make easier targets."

Stone dwarf saying.

The standard unit is the *delfor* ("hunting party"), which comprises two to four individuals. Leadership falls to the most experienced hunter, though he holds no title. The *delfor* is not affixed unit, in that members are assigned on a daily basis rather than serving with the same unit every day. As well as hunting, they serve a military role as scouting parties, strike teams, and guard patrols.

When multiple *delfor* work together they do so under the leadership of an *amydelk* in an *amydelfor* ("great hunting party"). Typically comprising between ten and twenty individuals, they account for a third to a half of a typical clan's fighting strength. One *amydelfor* is assigned for every five warriors, allowing the unit to function as a large force or several smaller ones. Ambushes are usually carried out by such groups, as are hunts for large or dangerous prey.

The largest recognized unit is the *wandelfor*, or "clan hunting party." Technically it is not a hunting party, for it comprises every adult within the clan, and often many adolescents. It comprises two or more *amydelfor* and is always led by the patriarch. A typical clan can muster 50 individuals, with the largest clans reaching double that number. Summoning the entire clan is a desperate act, for it means risking crafters and clerics as well as warriors.

Sometimes the various clans sharing a cavern must battle a common foe. Although the total military strength can number several hundred, there is no overall commander. The patriarchs meet briefly to discuss overall objectives, but individual clans are left to fight the battle as they see fit. Cynics point to this as being the perfect opportunity for a clan to sit back, let their neighbors get decimated, then wade in to claim the glory. True, this could happen, but it does not. Clans not pulling their weight in battle are open to legal repercussions, not to mention loss of honor, and almost certainly being cursed in the afterlife.

Since they lack supplies, supply lines are never a problem. Typically hunters do not eat during the day. When going to war, they are expected to forage for food. Since most are hunters, this presents little problem, though it does leave the non-warriors back in the clan to fend for themselves. Wise patriarchs never dispatch all their warriors to war, always keeping a few back to ensure the clan is fed. Although capable of surviving indefinitely on foraged food, warriors dislike shirking their duty to their families and few engagements involve leaving the army in the field for more than a few days.

Tactics and Strategy

"Movement is life."

Stone dwarf saying.

The geography of the underworld and clannish nature of *durvalk* means large-scale engagements are rare. Most warfare involves small units using hit-and-run tactics to inflict damage before they can be drawn into a prolonged, bloody engagement. Geography is perfectly suited to this mode of warfare, with rough terrain limiting mass charges, narrow passageways easily held by a few determined troops, and galleries and ledges allowing a bird's eye view of approaching foes.

Surface races dependent on light have never fared well in the underearth. Too many rely on disciplined formations, heavily armored troops, space to maneuver, and of course, well maintained supply lines. To them, the underworld is a hellish domain in which to wage war. To the *durvalk* it is simply home.

Ambushes

Ambushes are the great equalizer in warfare. Executed well, even the most disciplined and battle hardened troops can be cut to ribbons in minutes by only a small number of attackers. Above ground, most ambushed forces usually have the option of fleeing or counter attacking. Below ground, space is restricted. Sheer walls prevent counter attacks, passageways can be sealed with rock falls, small numbers of troops, or a few, well selected spells. Even forming a defensive formation is next-to impossible in most caverns, yet alone narrow tunnels.

The standard stone dwarf tactic is not to fight in small spaces, however, but to select large caverns with rough floors (preferably with stalagmites) and numerous exit routes. Fighting in a tunnel may restrict foes, but the magic of drow and mind flayers and the stench of troglodytes mean the terrain actually suits these races better; a spellcaster can disable large numbers of dwarves with a single spell.

When given enough warning, dwarves rig the caverns with deadfall traps designed to block access to more open areas, hamper movement, and, of course, kill. Such is their skill with stonework that few races can tell natural stone from a dwarf trap. Pits require periods of extensive work, and are usually shallow, designed to trip rather than send the victim plummeting to his death. Typical pits are four feet wide, seven feet long, and only two or three feet deep. Sharpened rocks are placed in the bottom to impale foes, and the whole thing covered with a *rekzaki* camouflaged to suit the natural terrain.

Whenever possible, dwarves position troops on both sides of the cavern and above ground level. Stone dwarves are excellent climbers and take full advantage of this trait. Placing them on just one side would give the enemy the chance to find cover from which to fire back. The start of the ambush is always a volley of ranged weapons; shortbows if range permits but javelins and throwing axes otherwise. As with most races, they target obvious spellcasters and leaders first, seeking to cause confusion in those vital first seconds.

If the enemy force is strong, the dwarves do not enter melee. Instead they retreat to another ambush point and repeat the procedure, slowly weakening the enemy. A weak force may be engaged, and the dwarves do so as quickly as possible, seeking to limit the effectiveness of spellcasters by mingling with enemy troops. Troglodytes pose special problems. Unless a supply of *trolkar* (see *Friend & Foe: The Gnomes & Kobolds of Tellene*) is available, close contact is avoided.

A favored tactic is for small groups of dwarves to trail and harass enemies with ranged attacks, melting away into cover when the enemy turns to fight. While there is a risk of being lured into an ambush, the dwarves are well trained in detecting traps and ambushes.

Underground Fighting

If forced to raid an enemy lair, *durwalk* favor speed and surprise over brute force and superior numbers. They are far from cowardly (not many races would enter an illithid city by choice) and simply lack the manpower to conduct full assaults. Whenever possible soldiers wear light armour. Direct contact is to be avoided and more often than not the dwarves must flee from superior numbers. All raids have a fixed objective and are never conducted just to kill foes; ambushes are better for that.

Warriors infiltrate enemy lines, quietly dispatching sentries and disarming traps as they go to form a secure line of defense. Any excessive noise usually results in the attack being scrubbed; the dwarves have little desire to engage an enemy of his home territory where he has the advantage of familiar territory and a ready supply of reinforcements.

Once inside the security perimeter the dwarves set up a rallying point. Small groups go in search of the targets while the main force guards the rallying point. Should the attack be detected, the scouting parties retreat to the redoubt, protected by ranged weapons from their comrades. From there, the entire force retreats, using staggered movements supported by ranged weapons to cover the withdraw.

All being well, the scouts find their objectives without being spotted. If the target is only lightly guarded, the dwarves attack in silence, hoping to fulfill their objectives and flee before the enemy can react in force. Heavy defenses force them to retreat and fetch reinforcements or draw the enemy away by tricks or sniping attacks. If the objective is important enough other groups cause diversionary attacks on other targets, drawing away defenders from the true objective. In modern terms, *durwalk* favor commando raids over frontal assaults.

On the rare occasion multiple clans band together, tactics are more akin to those of mountain dwarves, with heavily armored troops spearheading the main assault. While the shock troops create a frontline, the second line troops engage in looting, ferrying away supplies before the frontline collapses. Being heavily armored, the dwarves have little chance of sneaking away once the objectives are met. Instead, they retreat in an orderly fashion to an ambush point, where lighter armored dwarves harass pursuers to give the others time to make their escape.

Defending Lairs

The first line of defense around any community is a line of traps. Deep pits, shallow spiked pits, and deadfalls are placed along the widest point of ingress, leaving narrow tunnels as the only safe routes. Wary of being followed by enemy scouts, dwarves almost always choose the narrowest route home, hoping to fool any future attackers into assuming the route is trapped and that another route may be safer.

Behind the traps are the sentries. There is no organized system of watches and each clan ensures its own safety by placing guards. The sentries move in set patterns, blending in with the stone statues used to fool defenders. Their primary role is not to engage attackers but to alert the clan to their presence. Most clan domiciles are well concealed and whenever possible the dwarves simply hide in their homes, hoping the attackers pass them by. If any clan is attacked, however, the other dwarves surge forth to defend their kin. Resources may be scarce, but allowing foes to invade a dwarven home and not helping, in which there is a chapel, is tantamount to treason against the gods.

When forced to fight the dwarves do so without compassion, hacking their foes to death in retaliation for invading their homes. Warriors wear the heaviest armor they can find; endurance on the battlefield is more important than stealth and surprise attacks. Virtually every adult engages in combat, for if the battle is lost the dwarves will be homeless. Usually several clans engage in melee while the others harass foes with ranged weapons, drawing off troops to alleviate pressure on the most harassed clans and preventing the enemy from concentrating on a single target. No training is conducted in such maneuvers; the dwarves simply respond to the current situation as best they can.

Sometimes the dwarves lose and must retreat. Most times the enemy finds only one or two clan domiciles, which of course are looted, and then withdraws. Most clans give the raided clans a few supplies to see them through; thankful it was not them who suffered and knowing that one day the favor may be returned. Revenge attacks almost always follow, though the *durvalk* are patient and may wait years before enacting a brutal retaliatory strike.

Religion

"You have to love these guys for following an orc god."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Durvalk lack the central authority to construct large temples. Each clan has its own chapel honoring the main gods, and maybe a handful of clerics. Clans without a cleric to a specific deity must pay a cleric if they want any ceremony held. Most times they simply worship without one, showing devotion as they see fit in accordance with the traditions of their people. Individual stone dwarves do have favored gods, but usually show devotion through their work and way they live their lives rather than through prayers.

The Pantheon

"Even the gods hunger."

Stone dwarf saying.

Like other subraces, *durvalk* hold seven deities as important gods and accept others as lesser deities. Their pantheon shares many gods with that of their hill and mountain cousins, but *durvalk* claim theirs is the original pantheon. Of course, there is no way of proving or disproving this claim. The gods are listed in the order they granted their gifts in accordance with *durvalk* religious belief.

Hildal

The Founder's teachings appear to have reached the *durvalk* with some glaring omissions. He did indeed teach teamwork and cooperation, as is evident by the close-knit intra-clan bonds, but his teachings on cities are completely missing. While stone dwarf clans do congregate together for mutual safety, there is none of the central authority or group cohesion seen among other races. For all intents and purposes, each clan is a separate entity that happens to be living near some other dwarves.

Hildal's architects are among the best anywhere on Tellene, but their talents are rarely seen. The vast columned halls of mountain realms simply do not exist in the deep earth, yet *durvalk* are quite capable of crating, if not surpassing, such wonders. To create such beautiful works requires a level of cooperation not found among stone dwarves. Their greatest talent is actually in working stone to make it appear perfectly natural. The secret doors to a clan's domicile may be simple pivoted stones, but they are indistinguishable from the surrounding rock to any race other than dwarves.

Clerics find little employment either as architects or law keepers, though the latter domain is sometimes called into use. A cleric of *Hildal* can interfere in clan judgments if, and only if, the patriarch has disregarded the ancient laws. Most clerics work as stone crafters or trapmakers, even mining their own stone as required. Visitors to a *durvalk* realm are likely to interact with clerics of this faith; *durvalk* insist all visitors abide by their traditions and laws.

Hildal is patron of the Kerak family, whose specialty is diplomacy and ensuring the traditions are followed.

Manklim

Manklim is very popular with *durvalk*. Her domains of home and industriousness lie at the heart of stone dwarf life, which is firmly centered on the family. As such, virtually every dwarf pays her homage and a strong clan is a living embodiment of her beliefs. Many dwarves carry flat stones carved with her symbol to give them strength while engaged in tiresome or dangerous pursuits. The tokens remind them what they are working and fighting for, as well as comforting them with the knowledge that they have the closeness of the clan to protect them.

Virtually all her clerics are crafters. Many also work around the clan domicile performing any small chores that need doing. Of all the professions and faiths, clerics of *Manklim* make the best patriarchs, placing the needs of the clan above those of individuals. Since dwarves rarely have scrap lumber, dwarven clerics burn large fungus stalks in her honor.

She is patron of the Tukurz family. Again, scholars have commented that this is a strange choice, but the blessings of the gods allowed the clans to survive. Without the clans, there would be no one to follow *Manklim*.

Suzek

Despite her name, stone dwarves see the Earth Sister as encompassing all four elements. Earth is her strongest element because it is everywhere one looks. Water is second, being plentiful below ground, air third (remember the sky itself has no meaning to *durvalk*), and fire fourth. According to tradition, *Suzek* is not a single, defined entity but lives everywhere these elements can be found. As such, every rock is sacred to some degree of another. Gems, being rare, are her most treasured rocks.

Clerics spend much of their time working as crafters, with a particular lean toward stone and metalworking. They do have more religious duties, however, and are expected to appease *Suzek* with sacrifices to ensure rock falls and

earthquakes do not strike, water supplies stay pure, the wind that howls through the underearth blows, and lava flows do not alter course to endanger the dwarves. Each Corner has a particular area of specialty, but all are expected to be able to appease the other elements.

She is patron of the Damvalk family, arguably the best crafters among the race.

Tragrim

Durvalk place the greatest emphasis on the Old Man's tent that success is possible only if individuals unerringly place the welfare of the group above their own. This teaching all but defines the *durvalk* way of life, though group welfare stops outside the immediate clan. He is viewed as being a god who favors victory at any cost and is unrestricted by moral codes of chivalry or sportsman like behavior.

Tragrim's clerics serve primarily as warriors and hunters, taking infiltrator or rogue levels instead of fighter to increase their martial skills as befits their cultural bias. When not actively engaged in hunting they tutor adolescents in how to fight and hunt using their brains as well as their weapons. In some respects *Tragrim* is also a god of hunting. Docile creatures like rabbits and deer to not exist in the underearth; every creature can protect itself and there is no such thing as an easy meal. Against larger prey, combat can be as deadly as facing a seasoned drow fighter.

He is viewed as the patron of the Gunterm family.

Sunila

Known to others as the Watcher, *Sunila* ("Many Eyes") fills a strange place in the pantheon. Many dwarves treat him as a war god, for it was he who taught the dwarves how to use weapons to hunt and defeat their foes. *Sunila's* primary domain is that of wanderers. As any one who has been to the underearth can tell you, *durvalk* are not a nomadic species. Once upon a time, however, they were.

Back in the early days, the *durvalk* were more nomadic, traveling around the underearth, hunting and mining an area clean, then moving on to new pastures. Of course, back then there was only one species of dwarf and any large gathering of dwarves would soon devour all resources in a fixed area. It was only after the exodus that the clans, now being much reduced in number, were able to settle. However, *Sunila* had earned his place in the pantheon and there he remains.

Sunila still looks after hunters, who operate in small groups and sometimes spend long days away from home hunting down food. Some of his clerics follow this profession, but many simply travel around the clans offering their services at whatever task is required for a meal and somewhere to sleep. Being a jack-of-all-trades can be a liability at times, for it invariably means the cleric is not highly skilled in any one craft or profession.

Many have become a messenger service, carrying messages between clans. The content of the messages varies from diplomatic overtures to trading requests, and even marriage proposals. One should not think of this as an organized postal service, however. Clerics travel as they see fit and it might take a message many weeks or months to reach its destination. Urgent messages are entrusted to clansmen and take a direct route. The irony of the messenger service is apparent to those with any theological knowledge. The Watcher is a chaotic god, yet his clerics are working to bring the clan's closer together, which is a lawful act. The gods do work in mysterious ways.

Durvalk consider the Watcher to be patron of the Gramdal family.

Lasterm

Dwarven life is physically demanding, involving long hours of work, little food intake, and a strong sense of determination. His three tenets, mind, body, and spirit, are dutifully followed by most *durvalk* without conscious thought. His faith puts little emphasis on bedside manner and sick and injured dwarves are treated to get them back on their feet as quickly as possible.

Lasterm demands his clerics spend seven hours a day in meditation, but daily life allows little time for such pursuits. Instead, clerics meditate at night rather than sleeping. That they can survive on only a few hours actual sleep is great testament to *Lasterm's* power and their own physical well-being and strong spirit. Most clerics work as apothecaries and healers, hiring out their services whenever possible to bring in more resources for their clan. Many also serve as warriors, using their physical strength to overpower foes and using their time spent hunting to perfect their bodies. Given their wide range of knowledges and emphasis on intellect, virtually all serve as teachers at some point in their lives.

Lasterm is patron of the Telak family.

Gramlek

Although their culture seems primitive, *durvalk* have an understanding of mathematics, science, invention, and knowledge. They just place little value in them as essential skills. Why then did *Gramlek* bestow his gift to the Angklin family? In all honesty, *Gramlek* used logical process to determine that the dwarves would one day use his gifts. Unfortunately for *Gramlek* it was the hill and mountain dwarves who took the ideas to heart.

This is not to say that he is not worshipped, but he has virtually no clerics. Those that do exist usually turn their engineering skills to trapmaking. In actuality, every new invention, every logic thought, and every crafted item stems from his teachings. Without realizing it, gemcutters honor him by cutting stones into geometrical patterns, potters decorate their pots with traditional symbols, and sword and suits of chainmail utilize simple geometric shapes. Even the logic of social divisions is a reflection of his wisdom. That *Gramlek* has remained in the pantheon is attributed more to tradition than practicality, however.

Gramlek is patron of the Angklin family, whose numbers are few in the underearth.

Religious Beliefs

"Work hard and in heaven your belly will be full."

Stone dwarf saying.

Other Gods

The Knight of the Gods receives little worship in the underearth. Good deeds and ceaseless war against evil do not put food on the table. Chivalry is an unknown concept, and dwarves do what they must to survive. They sometimes do perform acts of kindness, but only when the circumstances suit them. The Speaker of the Word has his followers, but they are few and far between. Performing honorable deeds does not sit well with these hardy survivalists, who have little time to devote to such abstract concepts.

The True has some adherents but is seen as too restrictive. Stone dwarves happily lie and cheat to ensure their survival, but so without malice. The Eternal Lantern's teachings have never reached this far beneath the earth. *Durvalk* do not go looking for trouble, though they have no love for evil races. As with most surface gods the Raiser is an alien deity. Her realms of life and fertility belong more to *Manklim*.

The Peacemaker is another god with few followers. Dwarves are peaceful with each other but cannot afford to become complacent or reliant on treaties. Their many enemies have no concept of peace anyway. Dwarves do love and would die for their kin, but the Pure's requirement for selfless good deeds goes no further than the home. They also have no interest in other cultures.

Many dwarves planning on exploring pray to the Traveler for protection. However, few stone dwarves have ever seen a star and the Traveler's holy symbol is that of a pair of boots. Popular as a lesser god is the Guardian. Although dwarven society can be restrictive, it is not one of enslavement. Both drow and illithids take slaves and any former prisoners tend to flock to the Guardian's banner, becoming fierce opponents of these races.

Raconteur is wastrel and serves no practical purpose. Stories and legends are kept alive by clerics of the Powermaster and are never told purely for entertainment. The Shimmering Face is another unknown deity. A few hunters know of and follow the Great Huntress, but they a minority group. Missile weapons are rarely employed in hunts and few hunters bother to become marksmen.

Anyone teaching the Coddler's tenets is likely to be thrown out of the clan. A *durvalk's* sole aspiration is to survive, look after his kin, and achieve a place in the afterlife. Prompting a dwarf to reject his clan in favor of his own ambitions is simply unheard of among *durvalk*. Although riddles are not a popular form of entertainment among stone dwarves, the Eye Opener is a recognized deity. Many of his clerics have visited the surface world and are possessed of great wisdom on matters unknown to dwarves.

The Riftmaster has never been forgiven for the Zarduk incident and has few worshippers. Bear is unknown, as is the concept of nature as an entity. Even settled areas in the underearth are considered wild. With a culture based on self-sufficiency and limited bartering, the dwarves have no need for the Landlord. Fate Scribe is not welcome in most homes. As with the Coddler, dwarves know their destiny and anyone telling them otherwise is a threat to clan cohesion.

A few warriors follow Battle Rager and receive plentiful opportunities to show their martial skills. They are also the most likely to die first, preferring to get up close and personal rather than use conventional dwarven guerilla tactics. Thunder and lightning mean nothing to *durvalk*, so none worship the Storm Lord. As with many dwarves, Risk is followed only in his stealth aspect. Stealing is punishable by exile and making a challenge just for the sake of completing it is a wasteful endeavor. Which leads neatly onto the Laugher. Everything he stands goes against *durvalk* mentality.

Of the dark gods, two actually receive limited propitiation. The Dark One is offered sacrifices to stay away and leave the dwarves in peace, as is Locust Lord, who dwarves fear above all other evil deities. The Corrupter plays on their constant search for resources, trying to turn the dwarves on each other. The Overlord actually pays dwarves little attention, believing their own traditions are effectively enslaving them and keeping them downtrodden. Were they to unite as hill and mountain dwarves have done, his subterranean worshippers would have a deadly foe on their doorstep.

Any tight-knit community fears disease, and Rotlord finds the small communities of dwarves perfect for his vile mischief. Even a few infected souls can weaken a clan, leaving them ripe for plunder. The Vicelord, in his aspect of sloth, has tried any times to find an opening into dwarven society but has always failed. Lazy individuals are quickly exiled before they affect the clan and if stone dwarves have a vice it is that they work too hard. Hardly good material for the Vicelord.

Funerary Practices

Stone dwarves believe the body is temporal and the spirit eternal. As such, there is no need to waste time entombing the body, which is just an empty shell. Instead it is lowered (not thrown) into the deepest chasm the dwarves know of, down to the depths of the earth where the gods dwell. Few prayers are said for the dead. If the deceased did not meet his obligations in life there is little that can be done for his spirit. In all, a funeral service takes just a few minutes and carries little emotion. The dead will receive their reward in the afterlife; the living must continue the struggle of daily life.

Afterlife

Durvalk have a racial view on the afterlife as set down by the Founder eons ago. Even clerics believe in a common afterlife, though with additional boons from their deity. Reaching the afterlife requires a dwarf to live according to the traditions, to provide for his clan, and to honor the main pantheon of gods. On death, the Founder claims the soul, judging it against his laws. Assuming the dwarf has done his best, he is granted eternal life.

Stone dwarf heaven is a mirror image of daily life with three notable exceptions. First, there is abundant food. Second, there are no enemies to fight. Third, all the dwarf's ancestors live together in a large clan. The clans are still separated, but are much larger. Souls have more time to take up hobbies, perform engineering feats, and socialize. *Durvalk* refer to the afterlife as *xxxx*, or "Ancestral Land." It is believed to be the realm dwarves first inhabited on their creation, before the evil gods created the various woes that plague their society.

Souls found wanting are sent to the dwarven hell, *xxxx* ("Empty Land"). Again it mirrors daily life, but food is even rarer, enemies more numerous and vicious, and the dwarf's only relatives are fellow sinners. Being sinners, most are lazy or selfish, and intra-clan cooperation is almost non-existent. The soul is wracked with constant hunger, torn by wounds inflicted by his foes, unable to get support from his kinsmen, and cut off from the gods.

Important Ceremonies

"The gods have shown us the way forward but we must discover what lies at the end of the journey."

Stone dwarf saying.

Religious ceremonies are not communal affairs, and each clan is responsible for its own religious devotions. Even with the pressure of daily life, *durvalk* always take time to honor their gods. Since there is no calendar or celestial events to point toward holy days, clerics are responsible for ensuring holy days are respected at the correct time. Religious festivals are not holidays as they are in some cultures.

Stone dwarves perform the *Korke Janok* less frequently than other dwarves (mining is not so industrialized and seams last longer) and sacrifice more gemstones than metal during the *Korke Helstra*. Because *durvalk* have less free time, they have not created many new ceremonies. One common ceremony is detailed below.

Korke Gardros

The Rite of the Hungry Mouth is a special ceremony carried out daily by every clan. When the hunters return with their catch, the food is prepared for cooking. Before any cooking is done, the clan carries out the ceremony. A portion of the food, usually equal to the amount one adult would consume, is thrown on the fire and burnt to ashes. This is an offering to Locust Lord, given in the hope his hunger will be temporarily sated and the hunters will find more food tomorrow.

No prayers and hymns accompany the burning. The dwarves sit around the fire and silently watch as it consumes the food. Only when the last trace has been devoured does the patriarch single cooking to begin. To do otherwise is to invite disaster.

Misconceptions

"Hill dwarves live in hills, mountain dwarves live in mountains, so it follows that stone dwarves are made of stone."

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Selfish

Those who know just enough about *durvalk* society to be misinformed believe them to be selfish and greedy to an extent not seen among other dwarves. After all, would a truly civilized race allow strangers to starve while others feasted on copious amounts of food? Such social commentators often fail to look in their own backyard. Do humans not have beggars and humbled masses, scratching a subsistence living while a small, wealthy elite dine on expensive foods imported from across Tellene? At least with the *durvalk* their indifference to the suffering of others is not made through willful choice but hard necessity.

The underground can support life, but it requires hardship. *Durvalk* do not live in a vacuum; other sentient races seek the same food resources and even the animals that form part of the daily diet exist in a food chain. Everything needs to eat to survive. When food is limited, *durvalk* look inward, to the clan, and use their resources to ensure their relatives survive. Less fortunate clans starve. If there is a surplus of food, the clans are more generous, and do share resources. *Durvalk* may be indifferent, but they are not selfish or greedy.

Sunlight Aversion

A common misconception is that stone dwarves have an aversion to sunlight. Living so deep underground, it is only natural that the bright glare of the sun would harm them. After all, most non-civilized races living beneath the surface suffer a similar effect, so why not dwarves? Well, deep dwarves are no more affected by sunlight than the other subraces.

There are two reasons for this, one biological and one mythological. Dwarves use fire for cooking and in their forges, and there is no fire without light. The light given off is low intensity, but it is enough to require normal vision. Although sunlight is painful, the dwarves' eyes quickly adjust to the glare and can function as well as those of humans within a few seconds of exposure. They may squint or hood their eyes for a short while, but the affect is not harming.

Mythologically, the gods of good knew of the dwarves since their inception, though the celestial gods paid them little attention. When the first dwarves reached the surface world they were blinded. However, the Eternal Lantern saw that their hearts were pure and gifted them with the ability to function in sunlight. Not realizing their was more than one species of dwarf (his realm did not extend far beneath the ground), the Lantern's blanket gift affected the *durvalk* as well. Of course, the *durvalk* put no truth to this *ruvok* myth. Few ever reach the surface anyway.

Dwarven Glossary

Although all dwarves speak the same base language, there are differences among the individual races. The words contained here are those used by stone dwarves.

Alduthuk	"Tool makers", crafters as a profession and social group
Amydelfor	"Great hunting party"; military unit used in ambushes or hunting large prey
Amydelk	"Great hunter"; experienced hunter often called a lieutenant by other races
Arulek	"Practical teachers"; clerics, class and social group
Barijot	"Small beings"; deep gnomes
Delfor	"Hunting party"; smallest military unit, also used for daily hunts
Delk	"Hunter"; a social group encompassing several character classes
Demadelk	"Master hunter"; very experienced hunter often called a captain by other races
Diskos	"Tainted"; a sorcerer
Durvalk	"Deep seekers"; the stone dwarf race
Edoth	"Narrow minded"; a paladin
Emedrow	"White hairs"; drow
Fanot	"Corpse dust"; anesthetic made from carrion crawler tentacles
Gomkarok	"Food waster"; a Basiran dancer, also an insult
Gramdros	"Big mouths"; spellsingers
Kapos	"Work cycle"; vague measurement of time encompassing roughly 18 hours
Kempe	"Giants"; humans of any subrace
Korke Gardros	"Rite of the Hungry Mouth"; daily offering of food to Locust Lord
Lazord	"Open stance", a member of the fighter class
Noridresil	"Brain eaters"; mind flayers
Noriedel	"Brain powder"; anti-psionic drug made from illithid brains
Ofeg	"Wild", a barbarian
Orloki	"Blind servitors"; grimlocks
Padelk	"Quiet hunter"; an infiltrator
Rem Dolki	"Test of Providing"; test of adulthood
Stadklo	"Monster bait"; a talkative person
Sunila	"Many Eyes"; the Watcher
Talikim	"Lore keeper"; a bard
Tekid	"Trick worker", an adept
Tharak	"He who decides"; the patriarch or clan elder
Thule	"Masked face"; a brigand
Ursdros	"Extra mouth", a person of no value, often applied to aristocrats
Wandelfor	"Clan hunting party"; the assembled military strength of the clan
Zamil	"Stench glue"; foul smelling paste made from troglodyte glands
Zamorg	"Stench beasts"; troglodytes

Half Dwarves

Half-Dwarf Anatomy

"Half a dwarf? Isn't that the same as a gnome?"

Grag Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Adumark ("stone flesh"), or half-dwarves, are the result of a union between a hill dwarf and a human. The names *rurmok* ("earthen heritage") and *durovar* ("deep ") are used to describe half-mountain and half-deep dwarves respectively, though most races use *adumark* to describe every half-dwarf. Those who live among dwarves are treated as dwarves, whereas those who live among humans are considered distant kin at best. Some half-dwarves result from forced unions, usually resulting in

great shame for the dwarven family, but the vast majority are born from diplomatic alliances to wealth and powerful noble human families.

Physiology

Despite their name, half-dwarves are not short. Indeed, most stand between 5 and 5 1/2 feet tall, making them taller than their dwarven kin. Weight wise, they tend to weigh an average of just under 200 pounds, which makes them exceptionally stocky. Depending on their human heritage, they can be mistaken for Defohy (Dejy) or an unusually short Fhokki.

Skin color is usually light brown, much like the skin of a suntanned human, and weathers better in old age than dwarven skin. Peculiarly, half-dwarves take their eye color from their human parent, which can result in blue or green eyed half-dwarves. That said, they retain the darkvision of their dwarven ancestors.

Though sturdy of build, their constitution is not as strong as their dwarven kin, both *adumark* and *rurmok* retain a limited resistance to both poisons and magic. Their sense of balance is much reduced, however, and they are clumsy, as if the human side cannot adapt to the dwarven physique. They are, however, slightly faster on their feet than full dwarves, though their gait is somewhat comical.

Half-dwarves age faster than full dwarves, but less so than humans. Adulthood is achieved around 25 years of age, with death from old age occurring shortly after two centuries. As with many half-breeds, this means they find making friends in childhood difficult, for one race will either age quicker and move onto adult pastimes or be left behind in puberty when the half-dwarf leaves home.

Despite being half-human, the blood of the dwarven races flows strong in their bones. Even without formal training, half-dwarves possess certain racial skills common to their ancestors, though at a reduced level. Hill and stone dwarf half-breeds retain some resistance to poison and magic, whereas half-stone dwarves have an instinctive knowledge of how to move with stealth. Even if raised as humans, the ancestral knowledge can be accessed without conscious thought.

It is important to note that the union of a half-dwarf and a half-dwarf nearly always produces another member of the subrace. Half-dwarves mixing their genetic code with a dwarf or humans will produce a half-dwarf fifty percent of the time and a near-full blooded dwarf or human, as applicable, the other half. There are no quarter- or three-quarter dwarves, though certain features, such as eye color or stout build, can be found in children who appear full-blooded.

Psychology

Half-dwarves live in a world of their own, fitting neatly into neither parents' society. As a result, they tend to over compensate, becoming more gruff and reserved than the dourest dwarf or more flighty and outgoing than the most daring human. Rather than making them fit in, many half-dwarves stand out further from the crowd.

Their mixed heritage has given them a unique outlook on the world, and they tend to possess greater common sense and wisdom than either parent. Naturally, many question their existence, and this leads them toward a religious life. Which deity they end up serving depends on personal preference as much as cultural obligations.

Culture

"Would a half-dwarf half-gnome be called a dome or a gnarf?"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Half-dwarves do not possess a unique culture. Most adopt the culture of the race that raises them, but some try to blend both heritages together. Most half-dwarves have Kalamaran or Shynabyth human heritage. Those born out of peaceful union are often from noble families, the result of a marriage designed to promote peace, greater understanding, and sometimes increased mining rights. In most cases it is the human family that makes overtures toward a mixed marriage.

Other Races

As one might expect, half-dwarves get along best with dwarves and humans. These races might not feel overly enamored of the half-dwarf, but he shares common ancestry with both and has some understanding of their culture. They get along reasonably with hobgoblins, especially the sil-karg, but this can vary depending on how the half-dwarf was raised. Many human cultures hold no grudge against the hobgoblins, treating them with civility if not actual friendship. Dwarves, on the other hand, have a long history of hatred for all goblinoids and have never accepted the hobgoblins as a great race.

Gnomes and halflings, races with whom dwarves usually get along reasonably well, are tolerated but though of as children. Some of this comes from their smaller size, but much comes from their relaxed attitude to foreign societies. Both gnomes and halflings are adept at fitting into other cultures with the blink of an eye; half-dwarves, on the other hand, try to fit in by taking racial and cultural beliefs to an extreme in order to prove they fit in.

As for elves, it depends again on who raised the half-dwarf. Humans tend to accept elves as equals whereas dwarves hold their beliefs, and acceptance of arcane magic, to be against dwarven values. Half-dwarves raised by dwarves tend to be mistrustful of elves.

Language

All half-dwarves learn Dwarven. Even those raised among humans feel the need to understand the language in order to try and fit in with both cultures. Many speak Merchant's Tongue, which is not uncommon for wanderers and diplomats. Many half-dwarves see themselves as the link between human and dwarven lands, securing peaceful interaction and prosperity for both cultures. Dwarves raising the child fill it is their duty to teach the child his human parent's regional language. They too see half-dwarves as potential diplomats, and perhaps proof that humans can come around to dwarven thinking.

Religion

Many half-dwarves are wanderers, traveling across Tellene in the hope of finding somewhere to fit in, or perhaps researching familial lines to gain a better understanding of their heritage. As such, many are drawn to *Sumila* the Watcher, patron of wanderers and loners. Those who seek to promote greater understanding between their parents' cultures prefer *Nisakeil* the Peacemaker. Before the fall of Karasta there were many half-Kalamaran half-*rurok* diplomats working to secure closer ties. Many of these now strive to repair the damage caused by the Emperor's attack on the sacred city.

As loners, many half-dwarves tend toward a chaotic alignment but the sense of good common to dwarves runs deep. *Moimli* the Guardian, liberator of the oppressed, calls strongly to many half-dwarves. Some of those Kalamaran stock have become appalled at the treacherous attack on Karasta and the enslavement of their dwarven kin. Many have joined the rebellion to liberate the mountain fastness, some work to secure a peaceful release of their people, and a few are willing to take more drastic action and launch attacks against Kalamaran interests outside Karasta.

Most races have hopes and aspirations, and half-dwarves are no exception. Their unique racial heritage opens a wealth of opportunities not open to either parent race and *Gilli* the Coddler is only too happy to help them realize their potential.

Dwarves as Player Characters

"Half dwarves? That's just sick!"

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Hands up who has never played a dwarf? Well, even if you have, the **Kingdoms of Kalamar** is a unique fantasy setting and dwarves here are not your stereotypical fantasy types with long beards, a love of gold and ale, and a lust for warfare. Sure, they retain most of these traits, but there is also a unique feel and greater understanding of the psychology behind these traits presented in this book. Tolkien gave gamers dwarves; this book gives you Kingdoms of Kalamar dwarves.

In this section you will find everything you need to create and play a dwarf from Tellene. There are brief guides to roleplaying each of the subraces, new feats, and new prestige and professional classes. None of the new rules are written in stone (pun intended), and it is up to the individual Dungeon Master to decide what he will and will not allow in his game.

Role-playing a Hill Dwarf

Hill dwarves are the default elf of the *Player's Handbook*, fitting the standard alignment and personality notes of that race. As such, many gamers already understand their psychology and lifestyle. There are some differences between a generic hill dwarf and the Tellene variant, however.

Hill dwarves are sullen, yet less so than other members of their species. They have a mistrust of most other races and take a long while to make new friends. While seemingly withdrawn, they spend their time studying their comrades, learning their strengths and weaknesses, and deciding if they can be trusted in a life or death situation. When a hill dwarf has something to say, it is usually important, at least to the dwarf. Most times he can communicate with feelings with facial expressions and grunts.

Similarly, react with contempt toward flighty elves or joking gnomes. There is no need to verbally scorn them, but a few sour looks and "harrumphs" should do the job nicely. Dwarves cannot understand how frivolity helps a society grow, though they are sociable creatures. Time is better spent working than playing. Remember also that the dwarven race is ancient. What do humans, who are recent arrivals, know of the true history of Tellene? They are children in an adult world they little understand.

Only when drinking do dwarves tend to open up a little. If your character normally acts reserved when sober, suddenly blurt out a crude joke after a few drinks. Laugh and joke as if it is perfectly natural, then return to your reserved

self when the drink wears off and never mention the matter again. Remember, dwarves drink to relax after a hard day's work. The harder the day, the more relaxing one must do.

Stand tall in battle and never waver. Dwarves are brought up on the solidarity of warriors being able to overcome all opposition and prefer to mount a solid defense, or attack, than mess around with long-range sniping or complex ambushes. Call on comrades to form a shieldwall while spellcasters and missile troops do their bit. When overpowered, withdraw in an orderly fashion to a defensible position. Never run away in terror; it is not becoming of a dwarf.

Dwarves are renowned for their greed, yet this is a stereotype brought about by ignorance. While some dwarves do hoard for the sake of material wealth, most strive to reclaim much of the metal stripped away by other races so it can be returned to the earth. Go for coins over magic items. Sure, a magic sword is more useful, but a few hundred gold coins contain much more precious metal than a single steel blade.

Scavenging other metals is also important. Unfortunately, dwarves often suffer ridicule for taking weapons and armor off dead goblinoids, supposedly to "sell for a few coppers," but their belief the earth replenishes itself only when similar offerings are made runs to their core. Trees grow from seeds, so why not metals and stones? Do not bother trying to explain this to other races; they are ignorant of the old ways and would never understand.

Beards are not just facial extras, they help identify which social and occupational group a dwarf belongs to. They go to great lengths to keep it well groomed, even spending money to achieve the desired results. Any creature touching a dwarf's beard can expect to be rebuked; any creature damaging it can expect to be beaten.

Hill dwarves believe in equal justice for all and get riled when they see blatant cases of judicial bias or laxness. Criminals weaken the bonds of society and must be punished according to the law for the betterment of the masses. A dwarf may become a vigilante to bring a criminal to justice, but he tries to remain within the basic laws of the land and avoid turning himself into the criminal. When the judicial system really fails, vengeance can be swift and bloody.

Role-playing a Mountain Dwarf

Mountain dwarves are highly suspicious of other races and prefer to avoid unnecessary contact whenever possible. This does not mean you cannot talk or interact with the party. Indeed, a mountain dwarf will always question decisions made on behalf of the group by non-dwarves, suspecting ulterior motives not designed to benefit his new community. Sniff food someone else has cooked for you, double check appraisals on items valued for you, and generally make it clear that if they want to be your friends they will have to prove their loyalty.

Being predominantly neutral good alignment, mountain dwarves believe in an open and just society with strong moral obligations to help neighbors and do good deeds for other people's benefit. Once you've made a friend, try to share with them and stand up for them. Promote group bonding, both through tactics, sharing resources, and relaxing together.

Stand up for your colleagues when they get in trouble, never run away and leave them in a perilous situation, and be prepared to do small chores to help everyone out. Fixing an armor buckle or straightening a sword is as much a good deed as buying them a new sword or giving them all your gold to pay off gambling debts. Giving away magic goes against some player's methods, but what good is a healing potion in your backpack when a colleague is dying?

Mountain dwarves are less likely to bother with precious stones or items made of "temporary" substances, preferring their treasure to be metallic. Coins or swords, magical or mundane, metal items are ranked more highly than wood, paper, glass, or textile. Why bother with a magic cloak when you can have a magic ring? When given a choice make your decision based on the material, not the powers the item contains.

This may go against the standard gamer motto of "get what you can," but dwarves are meant to be a unique race with specific cultural views, not short humans with beards. Remember, mountain dwarves also sacrifice metal back to the earth, so grab as much as you can in whatever form you can; then throw it down a deep hole in the ground where it will never be seen again.

Racial pride runs deep in mountain dwarves. No insult to your race should go unpunished. Regardless of alignment, dwarves have a blind spot when it comes to vengeance. In the towns and cities your colleagues are protected by laws, but exploring a lost ruin of goblinoid lair is a different matter altogether. Being proud does not mean you will kill everyone who insults you! That is evil, not pride.

Role-playing a Stone Dwarf

Stone dwarves are the hardest of the subraces to portray well. For a start they are a race of few words; more so around non-dwarves. This naturally limits intra-party conversation and can result in you not really contributing to party discussions. Of course, this does not prohibit you as a player from speaking, but when you do it should be because you have something important to say. Try to speak only when you have good ideas and avoid banter.

Durvalk have little interest in material goods unless they serve a practical purpose. Their culture is based on bartering. Money especially is seen as a disc of metal with an inherent value based on what the metal can be melted down and used for rather than an abstract value used for purchasing goods. Copper, therefore, is more practical than gold as it can

be mixed with tin to make bronze. Magic items, except devices requiring arcane spellcasting ability, are always useful. Gems have a spiritual value to *durvalk*, being sacrificed to *Suzek* to ensure more are created. To summarize, go for magic items before gems and gems before coins. Whenever possible try to barter for goods and services rather than simply hand over coins.

Remember also that sharing with strangers is not a *durvalk* trait. Until your colleagues earn your respect do not go around wasting healing potions or other provisions on them. If they cannot look after themselves they have no place being adventurers. Stinginess is based on quantity of resources, however. A *durvalk* with more food than he needs or with a large number of potions is likely to share a little, but do not make this a habit.

Durvalk pick their fights based on survival needs. Attacking a dragon terrorizing a village may be a noble cause but glory and sackfuls of treasure are of little concern to stone dwarves. Do not be afraid to retreat from fights that will drain your resources, whether that be hit points or magic. Your racial skill bonuses are there to help you defeat foes through stealth; never go for the headlong approach if stealth is an option.

Also remember that regardless of alignment *durvalk* look after their own first. Non-dwarves may be respected but they are never counted as kin. Saving your own skin should be your top priority, especially at low levels. Once you progress a few levels you are likely to consider your colleagues as non-strangers (maybe even friends), and you might wade in to save them. Adventuring works better when the party cooperates, however, so some discretion must be used to avoid conflicts around the table.

Lacking the racial pride of mountain dwarves, stone dwarves cannot be easily goaded into reckless action because they have been insulted. You may get called a coward at times, but you can remind your colleagues that the dead serve no useful purpose while you are burying them.

Role-playing a Half Dwarf

Half-dwarves are not humans with beards and bad attitudes. They are a hybrid mix of dwarven and human ideals, though usually carried to an extreme in order to fit in. In some respects they are harder to play than dwarves, simply because they over compensate and carry things to an extreme. A half-hill dwarf following his dwarven heritage, for example, may be overly zealous in collecting metal for sacrifice, even going to far as to take unguarded metal items from their rightful owners in a bid to prove he is worthy of his dwarven blood.

As a half-race, they tend to be more open with other races, especially other half-breeds. As outsiders they even interact with hobgoblins, though naturally there can still be a certain animosity depending on which race raised the half-dwarf. Friendships are more likely to occur with non-dwarves, especially with humans, to whom the character shares blood. Since they age at a much slower rate than full-blooded dwarves they are likely to retain friendships into old age, and few live long enough to outlive more than two adventuring parties.

Other than that, there are few guidelines for playing one. Some covert material wealth, others are greedy; some prefer the comfort of their own race, whereas others enjoy socializing as much as possible, and some seek to fit into one culture whereas others revel in being born of two races. Whatever views they have, they are often extreme.

Racial Traits

The racial statistics from the *Kalamar Player's Guide* and *Dangerous Denizens* have been duplicated here for completeness. Hill dwarf statistics can be found in the *Player's Handbook* - only differences unique to Kalamar are given here.

Hill Dwarf

Racial Traits:

- Automatic Languages: Dwarven and Merchant's Tongue. Bonus Languages: Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Orc, Terran, and Undercommon. Hill dwarves are familiar with the languages of their enemies and subterranean allies.

Mountain Dwarf

Racial Traits:

- +2 Constitution, -2 Wisdom. Mountain dwarves are sturdy and untiring, but they have a hard time detecting deceit.
- Mountain dwarf base speed is 20 feet. However, their speed is not reduced even when carrying a light, medium or heavy load or wearing medium or heavy armor.
- Medium-size: As Medium creatures, mountain dwarves have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Darkvision: Mountain dwarves can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but is otherwise just like normal sight and mountain dwarves can operate with no light at all.
- Stonecunning.

- Weapon Familiarity. Dwarves treat dwarven waraxes and dwarven urgroshes as martial weapons, rather than exotic weapons.
- Stability. Dwarves gain a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not standing firmly on the ground).
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison: Mountain dwarves are hardy and resistant to toxins.
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell like effects.
- +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids (goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears): Mountain dwarves are trained in the special combat techniques that allow them to fight their common enemies more effectively.
- +4 dodge bonus to AC against giants: This represents special training mountain dwarves undergo, during which they learn trick previous generations developed.
- +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks relating to metalwork. Mountain dwarves are excellent smiths, and have a vast knowledge of metalworking.
- +2 racial bonus on Survival checks made in the mountains. Furthermore, Survival is always a class skill for mountain dwarves.
- Automatic Languages: Dwarven and Merchant's Tongue. Bonus Languages: Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Hobgoblin, and Orc. Mountain dwarves are familiar with the languages of their enemies.
- Favored Class: Fighter. A multiclass mountain dwarf's fighter class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Stone Dwarf

Racial Traits:

- +2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence. Stone dwarves have a toughness that impresses even other dwarves, but they focus their mental energy on survival.
- Stone dwarf base speed is 20 feet. However, their speed is not reduced even when carrying a light, medium or heavy load or wearing medium or heavy armor.
- Medium-size: As Medium creatures, stone dwarves have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Darkvision: Stone dwarves can see in the dark up to 120 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but is otherwise just like normal sight and stone dwarves can operate with no light at all.
- Stonecunning.
- Stability. Dwarves gain a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not standing firmly on the ground).
- Stone dwarves have no racial bonus when fighting giants.
- +1 racial bonus when attacking with a light weapon. Stone dwarves are adept at fighting in confined spaces, and small, quick weapons are easiest to use in such circumstances.
- Skirmisher. When wearing light armor and using two light weapons, a stone dwarf is considered to have the Two Weapon Fighting feat, whether he actually has the feat or not.
- Stone dwarves are hardy and have the Stone Bones feat (+1 Armor Class) for free.
- +2 racial bonus when using the Hide, Move Silently or Search skills underground.
- Stone dwarves climb a lot and receive a +2 bonus to Climb checks.
- +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when fighting dark elves, troglodytes, mind flayers, and grimlocks.
- +4 racial bonus on Craft checks relating to stone.
- Automatic Languages: Dwarven and Undercommon. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Gnome, and Terran.
- Favored Class: Rogue. A multiclass half-dwarf's rogue class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing. At the DM's option, the infiltrator class can be substituted for rogue. Its skills and abilities are better suited to the *durvalk* way of life.

Half-Hill Dwarf

Racial Traits:

- +2 Wisdom, -2 Dexterity: Half-dwarves have a greater understanding of the world but possess clumsy bodies.
- Medium-size: As Medium creatures, half-dwarves have no special bonuses or penalties due to size.
- Base speed 25 feet. However, their speed is not reduced even when carrying a light, medium or heavy load or wearing medium or heavy armor.
- Darkvision: Half-dwarves can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but is otherwise just like normal sight and half-dwarves can operate with no light at all.
- Dwarf Blood. For all special abilities, magic item usage and other effects, half-dwarves are considered dwarves.

- +1 racial bonus on saving throws versus poisons. Even half-dwarven blood is resistant to poisons.
- +1 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects. Even half-dwarven blood is resistant to magic.
- +1 racial bonus on Appraise and Craft checks related to stone or metal.
- Automatic Languages: Dwarven, plus the human parent's regional language. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Cleric. A multiclass half-dwarf's cleric class does not count when determining whether she suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Half-Mountain Dwarf

Racial Traits:

As above, but with no stonemasonry [[Editor: This is copied from Dangerous Denizens, but there is no stonemasonry listed for half-hill dwarves]], an Appraise check that focuses on metal rather than stone items, and a +1 racial bonus to Survival checks.

Half-Stone Dwarf

Racial Traits:

As half-hill dwarves, but with a +1 racial bonus when using the Hide, Move Silently or Search skills underground and a +2 racial bonus on Craft checks related to stone. Also, all half stone dwarves gain the Two Weapon Fighting feat as full-blooded stone dwarves.

Random Starting Age

Race	Adulthood	Aristocrat	Basiran Dancer	
		Barbarian	Cleric	Druid
		Infiltrator	Adept	Expert
		Rogue	Bard	Monk
		Sorcerer	Fighter	Shaman
		Spellsinger	Paladin	Wizard
		Warrior	Ranger	
Dwarf (any)	40	+3d6	+5d6	+7d6
Dwarf, half (any)	25	+2d6	+3d6	+4d6

Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Dwarf (any)	125	188	250	+2d100
Dwarf, half (any)	80	120	160	+4d20

Random Height and Weight

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Dwarf, hill, male	3' 7"	+2d4	120 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, hill, female	3' 5"	+2d4	90 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, mountain, male	3' 9"	+2d4	130 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, mountain, female	3' 7"	+2d4	100 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, stone, male	3' 7"	+2d4	120 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, stone, female	3' 7"	+2d4	100 lbs.	x (2d6) lbs.
Dwarf, half, male	4' 3"	+2d6	120 lbs.	x (3d4) lbs.
Dwarf, half, female	3' 11"	+2d6	87 lbs.	x (3d4) lbs.

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Dwarven Weapons & Armor Equivalents

The following table shows the standard D&D weapon and armor equivalents for the dwarven armaments introduced in *Goods & Gear*. In many cases these are "best matches" and not exact equivalents; many weapons have different damage and critical threat ranges and multipliers.

Tellene name	D&D equivalent
Borlarr, Gunderz	Club
Damak	Shortsword
Damrik, Fargrum, Formar, Fulzek, Gimzek, Gundmar, Kurzek, Ongar, Sabre, Dwarven, Thel, Zomburd	Longsword (Zomburd is two-handed)
Durgrum, Forakek, Urgad	Dagger
Gramduk, Lomduk	Shortspear
Grumli	Light flail (used two-handed)
Korderum	Light mace
Korli, Ulmed, Zormed	Falchion
Nelzuk	Warhammer
Pickaxe	Hand axe
Steelbow	Longbow
Talduk	Longspear
Ulbarek	Quarterstaff
Zarvalk	Battleaxe

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New Feats

Advanced Training [General]

The character has mastered special techniques for defeating racial enemies.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +5; must have a racial enemy.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 attack bonus against his racial enemies.

Normal: Dwarves get a +1 attack bonus against racial enemies.

Ancestral Blessing [General]

Dwarves place great belief that the gods blessed their race. Your character was born with a blessing bestowed by his familial ancestors.

Prerequisite: 1st level dwarf belonging to appropriate family.

Benefit: The benefit varies depending on the character's family name, as shown below.

Family Name	Blessing
Angklin	+2 to Profession (engineer) and Knowledge (architecture & engineering) checks
Damvalk	+2 to Appraise and Craft checks when dealing with stone or metal items
Gramdal	+1 bonus to attack and damage rolls with weapons of dwarvish design
Gunterm	+2 to Knowledge (military tactics) and Knowledge (military training) checks
Kerak	+1 to all Charisma based skill checks
Talek	+2 to Craft (alchemy) and Heal checks
Tukurz	+2 to Knowledge (religion) and Spellcraft checks
Zarduk	+2 to Knowledge (arcane) and Spellcraft checks

Honorable Lineage [General]

Honor is more important than birth rank to dwarves. The character's lineage is renowned for its honorable nature.

Prerequisite: 1st level dwarf only.

Benefit: The character gains a +3 bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks when dealing with dwarves who know his lineage.

Improved Darkvision [General]

The character can see much further in the dark than other members of his race.

Prerequisite: 1st level only; must have darkvision.

Benefit: The range of your darkvision increases by 60 feet.

Normal: Darkvision range is usually 60 feet for hill and mountain dwarves and 120 feet for stone dwarves.

Improved Endurance [General]

Dwarven feats of endurance are renowned among other races.

Pre-requisite: Constitution 17+, Endurance

Benefit: The character increases the modifier granted by Endurance to +8.

Karastan Refugee [General]

Many of the rebels of Karasta managed to take their womenfolk and children when they fled the stronghold. The character has been on the run ever since.

Prerequisite: Dwarf from Karasta.

Benefit: The character gains a +2 bonus to Knowledge (geography) checks. In addition, the synergy bonus for Knowledge (geography) applies to Hide and Survival checks. On the downside, the character begins play with only half the usual starting money.

Normal: A character usually only gains a Knowledge (geography) synergy bonus to Survival checks.

Mistrustful [General]

You are mistrustful of strangers.

Benefit: You receive a +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks. In addition, you begin play with one additional language, chosen from your race's bonus languages.

Mountain Goat [General]

Difficult terrain has been the homeland of your character since he was born, and he is accustomed to moving over it with ease.

Prerequisite: Dwarf.

Benefit: The character suffers a hampered movement penalty of only x1.5 (costs 3 squares of movement for every two moved) when crossing difficult terrain or obstacles underground or in hills and mountains. In addition, overland movement through hills and mountains is treated as plains.

Normal: The character suffers the effects of hampered and overland movement as per the *Players' Handbook*.

Mule [General]

You can carry more than your Strength would normally allow.

Benefit: Your carrying capacity is treated as if your Strength were two points higher.

Normal: Carrying capacity is determined by Strength.

Shield Wall Training [General; Fighter Bonus]

The character has been trained to fight in the shieldwall, the standard dwarven defensive formation.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +2; Shield Proficiency feat.

Benefit: The character receives an additional +1 armor bonus to AC when using a shield. In addition, the character may add his shield's armor bonus (including the +1 from this feat) to resist being bull-rushed or tripped.

Subterranean Fighter [General; Fighter Bonus]

The character has fought many foes below the earth and knows how to use terrain to his advantage.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: When fighting below ground in natural terrain (i.e. not carved tunnels), a stationary character gains the effects of cover. If already in cover, he adds +2 to his Armor Class from his understanding of how to use what is available to its full potential. The bonus is lost if the character moves during the round.

Vengeful [General]

The character is either an exile from Karasta or still resides there. Either way, he despises Kalamarans and all they stand for.

Prerequisite: Dwarf from Karasta.

Benefit: The character gains the Favored Enemy ability of rangers with respect to Kalamarans. The benefits do not increase with level, but do stack with those gained from taking the Dwarven Rebel prestige class.

Alternative Shaman Rules

Despite their rarity, dwarf shamans do exist. Players wishing to play one should use these new rules. Because they do not follow animal traditions, they are unable to gain benefit from the Animal Companion and Wild Shape class abilities, for their totem form does not allow these things. Replacements for these class abilities are given below.

Animal Companion/New Domain

A shaman with a non-animal totem must select one from the list below. As well as granting spells and certain other benefits (as a regular totem), the shaman also gains access to a domain not usually available to his class. As with regular shamans, this domain allows only the domain spell to be taken and does not grant the associated domain power. This domain replaces the Animal Companion ability usually gained at 1st-level.

The standard domains for a dwarven shaman are **Community, Earth, Law, or Metal**. All domains listed below can be found in the *Kalamar Player's Guide*. Players without access to domains listed here should ask their DM to approve a suitable substitution.

Wild Shape/Extra Domain Spells

Instead of gaining the wild shape class ability, the shaman gains additional domain spells. Each time he gains a level where he normally gains access to the wild shape ability, he gains the ability to cast an additional domain spell at a level equal to the number of times per day the wild shape ability can be used. The Wild Shape (at will) ability becomes, for these purposes, 9/day.

For example, a shaman reaching 4th level **exchanges** Wild Shape 1/day for an additional 1st level domain spell (making his daily spell allotment 5/3+2/2+1). When he reaches 12th level, he **swaps** Wild Shape 5/day for a new 5th level spell (thus being able to cast 6/4+3/4+2/4+2/3+2/3+2/1+1 spells per day). This latter example factors in the previous domain spell grants.

This additional spell may be taken from any domain to which the shaman has access.

Sample Non-Animal Totems

Sample Totem	Benefit	New Domain
Basalt	Shaman gains a 50% increase to darkvision range; Great Fortitude feat	Darkness
Bronze	Shaman gains +2 to any metalworking Craft; Artistic Crafter feat	Craft
Gold	Shaman gains +2 Charisma	Charm
Granite	Shaman gains the Stonebones feat (effects stack if already possessed)	Strength
Lava	Shaman gains +2 to Will saves	Fire
Limestone	Shaman gains +2 on Climb checks; Explorer feat	Cavern
Marble	Shaman gains Fearless feat	Cold
Mercury	Shaman gains +1 Dexterity	Celerity
Mithral	Shaman gains +2 Charisma	Nobility
Silver	Shaman gains Blessed feat; +1 to resist all spells	Protection

The individual DM should feel free to create his own totems. As a guideline when creating a new totem, the benefits should be (i) a +1 bonus to a single physical attribute, (ii) a +2 bonus to a single mental attribute, (iii) a +2 bonus to a skill and a related feat, or (iv) one skill bonus feat or two related non-skill bonus feats. Combat feats are not recommended; shamans are protectors, not warriors.

Prestige Classes

Detailed below are a handful of new prestige classes well suited to dwarves. Unless noted elsewhere, you must follow all the standard rules of multi-classing when you choose a prestige class.

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What Prestige Classes Can Dwarves Take?

Although a dwarf may take any prestige class for which he meets the requirements, there are some that are better suited than others, as presented below. Players should not feel limited by this choice, but should instead look on them as a natural extension of dwarven society. Others classes are perfectly acceptable within reason, but it is with these that dwarves feel most comfortable.

Letters in parenthesis refer to classes especially suited to certain subraces; (H) for hill dwarves, (M) for mountain dwarves, and (S) for stone dwarves. No annotation indicates all sub races favor the class. Again, these are only suggestions.

Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide: Warlord (S)

Villain Design Handbook: Brotherhood of the Broken Chain, and Veteran Officer (H/M)

Stealth & Style: Delver (H/M), Emancipator and Saboteur

Gnomes & Kobolds: Illithid Hunter (S)

Fury in the Wastelands: Deep Scout (S) and Runner (S)

Dungeon Master's Guide: Duelist (H), Dwarven Defender (H/M), and Loremaster (H/M)
Complete Warrior: Dark Hunter (S), Exotic Weapon Master (H/M), Justiciar (H), Ronin (H/M), and Stonelord
Defenders of the Faith: Church Inquisitor (H), Divine Oracle (S), Templar (H/M), and Warpriest
Masters of the Wild: Bane of Infidels (S) and Foe Hunter
Song & Silence: Dungeon Delver (S)
 XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Boar Warrior

Boar warriors rank among the elite soldiers of the hill and mountain dwarf clans. They are some of the toughest, meanest, most dedicated fighters a dwarven army can field. Their name comes from two sources, their standard triangular formation (known as the boar's head) and their relentless tenacity in combat.

As an elite unit given the dangerous task of punching through enemy ranks, the boar warriors accept only the best among their number. Training is rigorous and no holds barred; those that cannot take the pace are dismissed and returned to their normal duties. There is no dishonor in this; few make the grade. As with all dwarven military units, females are entitled to apply for membership. Those that join are usually widows, their hearts full of vengeance against the creatures that slew their spouse.

In return for their services, they are fed well and receive a monthly stipend of 100 gp from the king (few other nobles can afford to maintain a unit of boar warriors). Few live long enough to enjoy their wealth, and it is not without reason they are also called the Forlorn Hope.

Hit die: d10

Requirements:

To qualify as a boar warrior, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Attributes: Str 15+

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Push*, Shield Specialization**

Race: Hill or mountain dwarf.

Skills: Intimidation 8 ranks

* Replace with Cleave if you do not have the *Kalamar Player's Guide*.

** Replace with Improved Shield Bash if you do not have the *Kalamar Player's Guide*.

Class Skills

The boar warrior class skills are Balance (Dex), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (military tactics, military training) (Int), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Spot). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Steady, stipend
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Bull rush +2
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Damage reduction 2/-
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Improved steady
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Bull rush +4; two at once
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Damage reduction 4/-
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Keep going
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6	Bull rush +6
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	Damage reduction 6/-
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Explosive rush

Class Features

All the following are class features of the boar warrior prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: A boar warrior is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He is also proficient with all armor and shields.

Steady: A boar warrior that fails to beat his opponent's opposed Strength check does not fall over if pushed back into an occupied square.

Stipend: A 1st level boar warrior receives 100 gp per month from the king. In return, he swears total allegiance to the clan and agrees to fight unto death in defense of the clan.

Bull Rush: At 2nd level, the boar warrior learns techniques to make his bull rush more powerful. He gains a +2 bonus to opposed Strength checks to push back his foes. The bonus increases to +4 at 5th level and +6 at 8th level.

Damage Reduction: At 3rd level, the boar warrior has hardened his body and is able to shrug off a limited amount of damage from enemy blows. Subtract 2 from the damage he takes each time he is dealt a blow from a weapon or natural attack. At 6th level, the damage reduction increases to 4 points, and at 10th it is 6 points. Damage reduction can reduce damage to 0, but not below 0.

Improved Steady: A 4th level boar warrior that fails to overcome his opponent's Strength roll in a bull rush remains in the square in front of the enemy (i.e. he is not pushed back 5 feet as normal).

Two At Once: A 5th level boar warrior can bull rush two adjacent foes at the same time. The dwarf makes a single Strength check but each foe resists separately. Results are calculated as normal. It is possible for the dwarf to succeed against one foe and fail against the other. In this instance, the foe who failed is pushed back 5 feet as normal but the dwarf cannot advance with him. A double bull rush must be declared before the character makes his Strength roll.

Keep Going: A 7th level boar warrior may double his normal movement limit when pushing back foes using a bull rush attack, penetrating deep into enemy lines. Movement before the bull rush is made (such as a charge) subtracts from this allowance (i.e. a boar warrior could charge 15 feet and still move an additional 25 feet if his Strength roll were high enough).

Explosive Rush: Once per battle, a 10th level boar warrior can elect to double his Strength bonus for the purposes of making a bull rush attempt. This must be declared before the opposed Strength check is made.

Courage Noble

Courage nobles are the lowest echelon of hill dwarf nobility. Their position is not hereditary, but one earned by prowess on the battlefield or through acts of selfless bravery. Though most courage nobles are fighters, members of any class are eligible for the position, though like all dwarven leaders, the courage noble is expected to lead from the front and by example.

As a noble, the courage noble is accorded higher social status and is allowed to maintain an armed retinue. Though dwarves may swear allegiance to him, his loyalty always lies with the king (or highest ranking hereditary noble), and he cannot refuse to answer his liege's call to arms without dishonoring his family. Courage nobles may fly their own standards in battle. Courage nobles have less opportunity to go adventuring unless sent by their lord and also carry social responsibilities. The DM must determine if a character is allowed to take this class, but if he does, the player is bound to his lord by oaths of allegiance.

The children of courage nobles have a higher social status, but do not automatically assume their parent's position on his death. As such, dwarven families have risen and fallen from power numerous times over the generations. Although female courage nobles are rare, dwarven history contains examples of females that have earned this title and lead their troops into the heart of bloody battles.

Many courage nobles take levels in the veteran officer prestige class to further augment their martial abilities. However, they can only gain increased social status by taking levels in the courage noble class. Mountain dwarves call these officers honor nobles, but the principal remains the same; they are non-hereditary military commanders.

Hit die: d10

Requirements:

To qualify as a courage noble, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will, Leadership

Race: Hill or mountain dwarf.

Skills: Any three from Knowledge (art of war, military logistics, military tactics, or military training) 4 ranks

Special: Must be appointed to the position by the highest noble of the clan (i.e. receive the DM's approval).

Class Skills

The courage noble class skills are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (art of war, military logistics, military tactics, military training, nobility & royalty) (Int), Profession (noble, warrior) (Wis), and Sense Motive (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Gift, rank
2	+2	+3	+1	+3	Lead from the front
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Leadership bonus +2
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Inspired loyalty
5	+5	+4	+2	+4	Charisma
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Leadership bonus +4
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Art of war
8	+8/+3	+6	+3	+6	Bonus feat
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	Leadership bonus +6
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Renowned hero

Class Features

All the following are class features of the courage noble prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: A courage noble is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and all forms of armor and shields.

Gift: In recognition of his new status, a 1st level courage noble receives a suit of +2 *chainmail* from his liege.

Rank: At 1st level, the courage noble is given his rank. His Leadership score increases by +4. He automatically gains a personal retinue of fighters as dictated by his Leadership score (see *DMG* page 106) and may fly his own banner on the battlefield. As your Leadership score increases, so new warriors flock to your banner.

Lead From the Front: All dwarven nobles are expected to fight at the front of their troops. At 2nd level, your troops gain a +1 morale bonus to their attack rolls so long as their lord is in the front rank (and alive). Although his men may stand alongside him and retain the bonus, it is lost if any of them move ahead of him.

Leadership Bonus: At 3rd level, the courage noble gains a +2 bonus to his Leadership score. This increases by a further +2 at 6th and 9th levels. He automatically acquires new followers as his Leadership score improves.

Inspired Loyalty: At 4th level, the courage noble inspires his men to greatness. All troops under his direct command gain a +2 morale bonus to Will saves against fear, morale loss, or similar effects.

Charisma: A 5th level courage noble gains +1 Charisma. This is in addition to attributes gained every 4th level.

Art of War: At 7th level, the courage noble is a competent military commander. He gains a +2 bonus to all Knowledge (art of war, military logistics, military tactics, and military training) checks.

Bonus Feat: At 8th level the courage noble may pick any feat labeled as a Fighter Bonus feat for which he qualifies.

Renowned Hero: An 10th level courage noble's name and the sight of his war banner strike fear into his foes. Any enemy unit of 100 individuals or less must make a Will saving throw at DC 10 + Charisma bonus + his levels in this class, or be affected by a *fear* spell as cast by a 6th level sorcerer. Additional modifiers from the variant morale system in *Strength & Honor* may be used as well if that tome is available.

Dwarven Rebel

It is said among the dwarves of Karasta that the true strength of a rebel lies not in his cunning, strength or martial prowess, but in his spirit. Part rogue and part warrior, dwarven rebels have sworn to free Karasta from the iron grip of the Emperor if it costs their own life.

Trained in the use of ambushes and possessing an in-depth knowledge of the surrounding lands, rebels fight a guerilla war against the occupying Kalamaran forces. Lacking permanent bases from which to operate, they must live off the land and their wits, always struggling to remain one step ahead of their foe.

Not all rebels are fighters; many are crafters or low ranking clergy that escaped Karasta before the fall. Combat prowess is not an essential requirement, for open warfare is shunned over guile and stealth. The only requirements are that the prospective rebel can survive in the harsh mountainous wilderness and can remain undetected.

Hit die: d8

Requirements:

To qualify as a dwarven rebel, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Feats: Endurance, Run, Self-Sufficient

Skills: Craft (trapmaking) 4 ranks, Hide 6 ranks, Knowledge (geography) 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks

Special: Must be belong to a dwarven family from Karasta

Class Skills

The dwarven rebel class skills are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography, military logistics, military tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+0	+2	+0	+0	Improvised weapons
2	+1	+3	+0	+0	Ambush
3	+2	+3	+1	+1	Enemy +2
4	+3	+4	+1	+1	Extensive local knowledge +2
5	+3	+4	+1	+1	Trackless step
6	+4	+5	+2	+2	Enemy +4
7	+5	+5	+2	+2	Renowned leader
8	+6/+1	+6	+2	+2	No surrender
9	+6/+1	+6	+3	+3	Enemy +6, extensive local knowledge +4
10	+7/+2	+7	+3	+3	Remember Karasta!

Class Features

All the following are class features of the dwarven rebel prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: A dwarven rebel is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. In addition, he is proficient in light and medium armor and shields.

Improvised Weapons: Rebels do not have the luxury of being able to craft new weapons and must often use tools not designed for warfare. A 1st level rebel is trained to use improvised weapons and does not suffer the -4 penalty on attack rolls.

Ambush: Basic rebel training includes setting ambushes and guerilla tactics. He gains a +2 competence bonus to Craft (trapmaking), Hide, and Move Silently checks at 2nd level.

Enemy: Rebels receive extensive training in how to outwit and fight Kalamaran soldiery. A 3rd level rebel gains bonuses as per the ranger Favored Enemy ability with regard to Kalamarans but starting at +2 (page 47 of the *Player's Handbook*). The

bonuses increase by +2 at 6th level and a further +2 at 9th level. These bonuses stack if the character has Humans as his Favored Enemy but apply only to the Kalamaran subrace.

Extensive Local Knowledge: The rebels know the land surrounding Karasta better than the backs of their own hand. A 4th level rebel gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (military tactics), and Survival checks within 30 miles of Karasta. This bonus increases to +4 at 9th level.

Trackless Step: More than one Kalamaran soldier has referred to the rebels as "ghost fighters" for their seeming ability to disappear without a trace. A 5th level rebel leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Renowned Leader: By 7th level, the rebel has risen to become a leader. He gains the Leadership feat if he does not possess it already and receives a +4 bonus to his Leadership score.

No Surrender: A captured rebel can expect to be extensively tortured before being executed. Many would rather face death than be captured. At 8th level, a rebel that reaches 0 hit points or less while fighting Kalamaran soldiers may keep fighting as if he had positive hit points until he reaches -10 (or greater) hit points, at which point he dies. The character continues to lose 1 hit point per round, but may try to stabilize himself as a free action. The character also ignores all subdual damage.

Short of using magic, it is nearly impossible to take the rebel alive. Should the battle end while the dwarf is on negative hit points, this ability ceases and he succumbs to the effects of his wounds.

Remember Karasta! The famous war cry call of the rebels serves to rally flagging troops. Once per battle against Kalamaran soldiery, a 10th level rebel can give his allies (and himself) a second wind by calling on the memory of the dwarves' most bitter defeat. If the character makes a Military Tactics check (DC 15) while giving the cry (a full action), all rebel troops within 30 feet gain 1d8 + Charisma bonus temporary hit points (roll once and assign the total to all allies within range). Damage is subtracted from these temporary hit points first. There is no duration to this ability; the hit points last until removed by damage.

Professional Classes

Professional classes were first introduced in *Friend & Foe: Gnomes & Kobolds*.

The "common man" now has access to professional classes, a very limited form of prestige class. Each of these special classes is strongly tied to a single profession, has only three levels, and can be entered at low levels of experience. The abilities of these classes are never supernatural or exceptional in origin, generally being minor bonuses to skills and existing feats. If anything, they should be considered as a specialized form of NPC class. Weapon and armor proficiencies are as per the related NPC class, which is shown in parenthesis after the profession's name.

These professional classes do not raise NPCs to the level of player characters. An artilleryman may be able to fire a siege engine with greater accuracy, but he is not on par with a fighter in combat. The herald may speak for his lord and have easy access to him, but he is still a servant.

The classes presented here, while suitable for dwarves, can be found among the other civilized races of Tellene.

Artillerist (Expert)

Soldiers may be viewed as the heroes of the army, but without artillerymen to support them, many victories would not be possible. Dwarfven artillerymen are among the best on Tellene and those that choose to live among humans can charge high rates for their services.

Hit die: d6

Requirements:

To qualify as an artilleryman, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Attributes: Str 15+

Skills: Knowledge (architecture & engineering) 8 ranks, Profession (siege engineer) 8 ranks

Class Skills

The artilleryman's class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (architecture & engineering) (Int), Pantomime (Wis), Profession (siege engineer) (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Accurate targeting
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Ballista proficiency
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Coordinated ram

Accurate Targeting: A 1st level siege engineer receives a +2 bonus to firing rolls when using light or heavy catapults.

Ballista Proficiency: A 2nd level siege engineer has spent long hours practicing with the ballista. He suffers no penalty for size when using the device.

Coordinated Ram: A 3rd level artillerist can coordinate the users of a ram to produce a synchronized swing, and therefore more damaging blow. He adds his Charisma modifier to the damage inflicted by the ram. He must be part of the ram crew to use this ability.

Master Jeweler (Expert)

Dwarven crafters are renowned for their ability to work stone and metal. The master jeweler is multi skilled, being able to work with uncut gems and precious metals to make a combined item of great value. Jewelers make their money by buying raw gemstones and metals and turning them into exquisite works of jewelry. Their ability to shape and polish precious stones and form thin strands of metal into works of art makes them valuable crafters in any community, especially one with such a love of wealth.

Hit die: d6

Requirements:

To qualify as a master jeweler, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Attributes:

Skills: Appraise 8 ranks, Craft (gemcutting) 8 ranks, Craft (jeweler) 8 ranks

Class Skills

The master jeweler class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (gemcutting, jeweler) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Search (Int), and Spot (Wis). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Well polished
2	+0	+0	+1	+3	Long hours
3	+1	+1	+2	+3	Fit for royalty

Well Polished: At 1st level, the master jeweler learns how to make even the duller gemstone or metal shine like the sun. Any gemstone he cuts and polishes or piece of jewelry he creates can be sold for an additional 25% of its base value. This does not affect the price of the raw materials or the price of the item when making Craft checks - it is additional profit. If working on an item that has already been created, a day's work and a successful Craft (gemcutting or jeweler) check (DC 17) increases the value rises 10% through subtle tinkering and polishing.

Long Hours: The long hours a master jeweler spends at his craft hone his skill. He gains a +1 bonus to Craft (gemcutting) and Craft (jeweler) checks.

Fit for Royalty: A 3rd level master jeweler is indeed worthy of the title. Every item of jewelry he creates grants a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks for each whole 500 gp of value (to a maximum of +6). The wearer benefits only from the highest valued piece of jewelry he wears.

Miner (Commoner)

Mining is a dirty job, but the wealth of the dwarven realms relies on the work of the miners. Compared to human mines, the dwarven tunnels are works of art, designed with safety and ease of work in mind. That said, mining is a hazardous profession, and cave ins, pockets of poisonous and flammable gas, and flashfloods are constant dangers.

Hit die: d6

Requirements:

To qualify as a miner, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Attributes: Str 13+, Con 15+

Skills: Profession (miner) 5 ranks

Class Skills

The miner class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (miner) (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex). See Chapter 4 of the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities
1	+0	+2	+0	+0	Steady on your feet
2	+1	+3	+0	+0	Gas resistance
3	+2	+3	+1	+1	Quick worker

Steady on your Feet: At 1st level, the miner becomes accustomed to the dangers of working in the mines. He gains a +2 to Reflex saves to avoid slipping or falling.

Gas Resistance: Poisonous fumes and stale air are a constant threat to miners. At 2nd level, the miner gains a +2 bonus to resist poisons.

Quick Worker: By 3rd level, the miner has learned to get his job done in the quickest amount of time. Any task requiring the use of a Craft (typically carpentry or mason) or Profession (miner) skill check while in the mines is completed in three-quarters of the time it would normally take (minimum of one round).

Bestiary

Dwarves can be antagonists as well as protagonists, especially if adventuring parties go trampling through their lands unannounced. This section details a sample of typical dwarf characters that low to mid-level adventuring parties could encounter in dwarven realms. All bonuses from feats and class abilities have been factored in where they provide a flat, non-conditional bonus, such as the Alertness feat, as have synergy bonuses where they provide a blanket bonus. Armor check penalties are also included where appropriate.

Hill and mountain dwarves have very similar professions. As such, any hill dwarf template can be altered to a mountain dwarf one simply by adding two to Charisma, subtracting two from Wis (lowering Will save and Wis-based skills by one point) and swapping a few skill points into Survival, which is always a class skill. Other racial traits are usually specific to certain situations and have therefore not been included.

Hill Dwarves

Militia

Male hill dwarf, Com2/War1: CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d4+1d8+3; hp 14; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 17 (+4 chain shirt, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 [[+3 BAB, +2 Str, +1 feat]] melee (1d6+2/x3, handaxe) or +4 [[+3 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x2, throwing axe); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x3, handaxe) or +4 ranged (1d6+1/x2, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +5 [[+3 class, +2 Con]], Ref +1 [[+1 Dex]], Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any one) +3 [[3 ranks]], Intimidate +2 [[2 ranks]], Listen +2 [[2 ranks]], Profession (miner +3 [[3 ranks]], Spot +2 [[2 ranks]], Use Rope +2 [[2 ranks]]; Shield Wall Training, Weapon Focus (hand axe)

Possessions: Chain shirt, heavy steel shield, handaxe, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Professional Soldier

Male hill dwarf, Ftr1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d10+2; hp 9; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 18 (+5 chainmail, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 1, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 [[+1 BAB, +2 Str, +1 feat]] melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +2 [[+1 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +4 [[+2 class, +2 Con]], Ref +1 [[+1 Dex]], Will +2 [[+2 feat]]; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any one) +2 [[2 ranks]], Intimidate +3 [[3 ranks]], Jump +0 [[+3 ranks, +2 Str, 5 armor]]; Iron Will, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)

Possessions: Chainmail, heavy steel shield, battleaxe, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Sergeant

Male hill dwarf, Ftr4: CR 4; Medium Humanoid; HD 4d10+9; hp 31; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 18 (+5 chainmail, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 1, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 [[+4 BAB, +2 Str, +1 feat]] melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +5 [[+4 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +7 [[+7 class, +3 Con]], Ref +2 [[+1 class, +1 Dex]], Will +3 [[+1 class, +2 feat]]; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any one) +2 [[2 ranks]], Intimidate +3 [[3 ranks]], Jump +0 [[+3 ranks, +2 Str, -5 armor]], Knowledge (art of war) +2 [[2 ranks]], Knowledge (military tactics) +2 [[2 ranks]], Knowledge (military training) +2 [[2 ranks]]; Cleave, Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)

Possessions: Chainmail, heavy steel shield, battleaxe, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Courage Noble

Male hill dwarf, Ftr7/Courage Noble 2: CR 9; Medium Humanoid; HD 9d10+24; hp 72; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 21 (+7 +2 chainmail, +3 +1 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 1, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7/+2; Grp +9; Atk +12 [[+7 BAB, +3 Str, +1 feat, +1 axe]] melee (1d8+4/x3, +1 battleaxe) or +8 [[+7 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +8 [[+5 class, +3 Con]], Ref +3 [[+2 class, +1 Dex]], Will +4 [[+2 class, +2 feat]]; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (any one) +2 [[2 ranks]], Intimidate +4 [[4 ranks]], Jump +3 [[+3 ranks, +3 Str, -3 armor]], Knowledge (art of war) +5 [[5 ranks]], Knowledge (military tactics) +5 [[5 ranks]], Knowledge (military training) +5 [[5 ranks]]; Cleave, Endurance, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)

Class Abilities: Gift, Lead from the Front, Rank, Leadership Bonus +2

Possessions: +2 chainmail, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 battleaxe, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Combat Medic (Cleric of Powermaster)

Male hill dwarf, Clr3/Ftr2: CR 5; Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+2d10+10; hp 34; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 15 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 [[+4 BAB, +2 Str,]] melee (1d10+3, greatclub) or +5 [[+4 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +6 melee (1d10+3, greatclub) or +4 ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +8 [[+6 class, +2 Con]], Ref +2 [[+1 class, +1 Dex]], Will +5 [[+3 class, +2 Wis]]; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +3 [[1 rank, +2 Con]], Craft (alchemy) +4 [[4 ranks]], Healing +8 [[4 ranks, +2 Wis, +2 feat]], Intimidation +2 [[2 ranks]], Jump +2 [[+2 ranks, +2 Str, -2 armor]], Knowledge (religion) +2, [[2 ranks]], Spellcasting +1 [[1 rank]], Survival +4 [[+2 Wis, +2 feat]]; Brew Potion, Dodge, Power Attack, Self-Sufficient

Class Abilities: Aura, Turn Undead, Spells, Spontaneous Casting

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1): 0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic*; 1st—*cure light wounds**, *deathwatch* (2), *sanctuary*; 2nd—*bull's strength**, *delay poison*, *lesser restoration*, *status*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Healing (cast healing spells at +1 caster level); Strength (feat of strength)

Possessions: Chain shirt, great club, *potion of healing* (3), throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Boar Warrior

Male hill dwarf, Ftr6/Boar Warrior 3: CR 9; Medium Humanoid; HD 9d10+18; hp 69; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 19 (+5 chainmail, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +9/+4; Grp +12; Atk +12 [[+9 BAB, +3 Str,]] melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe) or +10 [[+9 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing a); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LG; SQ hill dwarf traits; SV Fort +12 [[+8 class, +2 Con, +2 feat]], Ref +4 [[+3 class, +1 Dex]], Will +6 [[+4 class, +2 feat]]; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +0 [[4 ranks, +1 Dex, -5 armor]], Intimidate +8 [[8 ranks]], Knowledge (military tactics) +4 [[4 ranks]], Jump +4 [[6 ranks, +3 Str, -5 armor]]; Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Power Attack, Push, Run, Shield Specialization

Possessions: Chainmail, heavy metal shield, battleaxe, *potion of bull's strength*

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Mountain Dwarves

Karastan Rebel

Male mountain dwarf, Ftr2/Rng2: CR 4; Medium Humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 30; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 16 (+4 chain shirt, +1 light steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 [[+4 BAB, +2 Str]] melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +5 [[+4 BAB, +1 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +5 ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL NG; SQ mountain dwarf traits; SV Fort +8 [[+6 class, +2 Con]], Ref +4 [[+3 class, +1 Dex]], Will +1 [[+1 Wis]]; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +4 [[4 ranks]], Hide +2 [[3 ranks, -2 armor, +1 Dex]], Knowledge (geography) +3 [[3 ranks]], Move Silently [[3 ranks, -2 armor, +1 Dex]], Survival +8 [[3 ranks, +1 Wis, +4 feat]]; Endurance, Karastan Refugee, Point Blank Shot, Self-Sufficient

Class Abilities: Combat Style (Two Weapons), Favored Enemy (Humans), Track, Wild Empathy

Possessions: Chain shirt, light metal shield, battleaxe, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Merchant's Tongue

Karastan Rebel Leader

Male mountain dwarf, Ftr2/Rng5/Rebel 4: CR 11; Medium Humanoid; HD 7d10+4d8+22; hp 79; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC: 17 (+4 chain shirt, +1 light steel shield, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +10/+5; Grp +12; Atk +12 [[+10 BAB, +2 Str]] melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +12 [[+10 BAB, +2 Dex]] ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe);

Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) or +12/+7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL NG; SQ mountain dwarf traits; SV Fort +13 [[+9 class, +2 Con]], Ref +7 [[+5 class, +2 Dex]], Will +3 [[+2 class, +1 Wis]]; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2 [[+2 ranks, +2 Str, -2 armor]], Craft (trapmaking) +6 [[4 ranks, +2 feat]], Gather Information +4 [[4 ranks]], Hide +12 [[6 ranks, -2 armor, +2 Dex, +4 feat, +2 synergy]], Knowledge (geography) +6 [[6 ranks]], Knowledge (military logistics) +4 [[4 ranks]], Knowledge (military tactics) +4 [[4 ranks]], Listen +5 [[4 ranks, +1 Wis]], Move Silently +12 [[6 ranks, -2 armor, +2 Dex, +4 feat, +2 synergy]], Spot +3 [[2 ranks, +1 Wis]], Survival +11 [[6 ranks, +1 Wis, +4 feat]]; Endurance, Karastan Refugee, Point Blank Shot, Run, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy

Class Abilities: Ambush, Combat Style (Two Weapons), Enemy +2, Extensive Local Knowledge +2, Favored Enemy (Humans), Improvised Weapons, Track, Wild Empathy

Possessions: Chain shirt, light metal shield, battleaxe, throwing axe (6)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Kalamaran, Merchant's Tongue

Stone Dwarves

Hunter

Male stone dwarf, Inf1: CR 1; Medium Humanoid; HD 1d6+2; hp 6; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC: 13 (+1 leather, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +0 [[+0 BAB, +1 Str, +1 racial, -2 two weapons]] melee (1d6+1/19-20, two shortswords) or +2 [[+0 BAB, +2 Dex]] ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6+1/19-20, two shortswords) or +0 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LN; SQ stone dwarf traits; SV Fort +2 [[+0 class, +2 Con]], Ref +4 [[+2 class, +2 Dex]], Will +0 [[+0 class]]; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4 [[2 ranks, +2 Dex]], Listen +4 [[2 ranks, +2 feat]], Move Silently +4 [[2 ranks, +2 Dex]], Profession (hunter) +2 [[2 ranks]], Search +2 [[+2 ranks]], Spot +4 [[2 ranks, +2 feat]], Survival +2 [[2 ranks]], Swim +3 [[2 ranks, +1 Str]]; Alertness

Class Abilities: Fast Movement (10 ft.), Sneak Attack +1d6

Possessions: Leather armor, two shortswords, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Undercommon

Great Hunter

Male stone dwarf, Inf4: CR 4; Medium Humanoid; HD 4d6+8; hp 22; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC: 17 (+4 master work chain shirt, +3 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +3 [[+3 BAB, +1 Str, +1 racial, -2 two weapons]] melee (1d6+1/19-20, two shortswords) or +6 [[+3 BAB, +3 Dex]] ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/19-20, two shortswords) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LN; SQ stone dwarf traits; SV Fort +0 [[+0 class, +2 Con]], Ref +7 [[+4 class, +3 Dex]], Will +1 [[+0 class, +1 Wis]]; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7 [[4 ranks, +2 Dex, +2 feat, -1 armour]], Listen +6 [[4 ranks, +2 feat]], Move Silently +7 [[4 ranks, +2 Dex, +2 feat, -1 armour]], Profession (hunter) +4 [[4 ranks]], Search +2 [[+2 ranks]], Spot +6 [[4 ranks, +2 feat]], Survival +4 [[4 ranks]], Swim +3 [[2 ranks, +1 Str]]; Alertness, Stealthy

Class Abilities: Fast Movement (10 ft.), Sneak Attack +2d6, Trackless Step, Uncanny Dodge, Woodcraft, Woodland Stride

Possessions: Leather armour, two shortswords, throwing axe (3)

Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Undercommon

Master Hunter

Male stone dwarf, Inf7: CR 7; Medium Humanoid; HD 7d6+14; hp 39; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC: 18 (+4 +1 chain shirt, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +6 [[+5 BAB, +1 Str, +1 shortsword, +1 racial bonus, -2 two weapon use]] melee (1d6+2/19-20, two +1 shortswords) or +8 [[+5 BAB, +3 Dex]] ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/19-20, two +1 shortswords) or +8 ranged (1d6/x3, throwing axe); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL LN; SQ stone dwarf traits; SV Fort +4 [[+2 class, +2 Con]], Ref +8 [[+5 class, +3 Dex]], Will +2 [[+2 class]]; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5 [[+3 ranks, +1 Dex, +2 racial, -1 armour]], Hide +9 [[6 ranks, +2 Dex, +2 feat, -1 armour]], Listen +6 [[4 ranks, +2 feat]], Move Silently +7 [[4 ranks, +2 Dex, +2 feat, -1 armour]], Profession (hunter) +7 [[7 ranks]], Search +2 [[+2 ranks]], Spot +6 [[4 ranks, +2 feat]], Survival +5 [[5 ranks]], Swim +3 [[2 ranks, +1 Str]], Use Rope +6 [[3 ranks, +3 Dex]]; Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Stealthy

Class Abilities: Fast Movement (10 ft.), Internal Compass, Sneak Attack +3d6, Trackless Step, Uncanny Dodge, Woodcraft, Woodland Stride
Possessions: +1 chain shirt, two +1 shortwords, throwing axe (4)
Languages Spoken: Dwarven, Undercommon

Goblins

History

"Welcome to my third lecture on the evil races of Tellene. In this lecture I shall be discussing goblins, a universally despised race. I spent many months studying this race from within the Great Library and have gleaned many useful facts."

Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

Anatomy

"Goblins are weak creatures. Why, my grandmother could wrestle one to the ground with ease. Yes, they are fast, but only when running away."

Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

Goblin Vocabulary

Goblins speak a dialect of Goblin that is more basic than that used by hobgoblins. Many Goblin these words appear throughout this text. The first time a new word is encountered, a translation appears next to it. A complete glossary of all the words used can be found on page XX, with a pronunciation guide in the Language section (see page XX).

XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Wherever one finds civilized races one can find goblins. Although they prefer hilly and mountainous terrain, which offers the best shelter, goblins are vermin and cannot survive without the civilized races from whom they steal what they need. Although goblins come in a variety of colors and sizes, there is but one primary species. A later section is devoted to one specific breed of goblins that has followed a different evolutionary path, but they are a unique case.

The goblin word for their species is xxxxx, which means "earth crawler." The word goblin is actually a Merchant's Tongue word and is synonymous with "vermin."

Physiology

Goblins are the runts of the goblinoid races. Whereas hobgoblins and bugbears possess impressive physiques, a typical goblin stands 3 to 3-1/2 feet tall and weighs only 40 to 45 pounds. Males and females exist among the race, with females accounting for perhaps a third of goblin numbers. Without stripping them naked, it is very difficult to differentiate between the sexes; goblin females possess two breasts, as with most mammals, but they are not as developed as with other sentient races.

The face of a goblin is flat, with pronounced brow ridges, a broad nose with large nostrils, big ears, and a wide mouth filled with small, sharp teeth. Beneath the brow ridges are two deep-set eyes, ranging in color from red to yellow. Although often said to have a feral look, their eyes are actually dull and often glazed, as if the goblin's mind is elsewhere. While not as sharp as those of elves in low-light conditions, they are adapted to working in daylight and zero-light conditions. Under most conditions their eyesight is as sharp as that of humans.

Their big ears are pointed and often stick out over the top of the head. Despite possessing large ears, goblin hearing is no more advanced than that of most other races. Unlike bugbears, their ears cannot rotate. Why goblins developed large ears is a mystery, though many scholars suspect that goblins once had improved auditory capacity but lost it when they began to explore the surface world.

In the centre of their face is a broad, flat nose. Seen in profile, the nose is nowhere near as pronounced as that of humans and in many cases protrudes no further than the level of the brow ridges. Wags have commented that the brow ridges are used as fenders, allowing the goblin to bump into rocks without risk of breaking his nose. They have two crescent shaped nostrils, spread further apart than with humans, and a much large fulcrum (the indent linking the nose to the top lip).

The face of a goblin is shaped very similar to a number eight. The upper part houses the brain and eyes, then angles in toward the nose, before expanding again to accommodate the mouth. A goblin's mouth stretches across his face level with the outer edge of the orbital socket, making it twice as wide as that of a human, in comparison. Within the mouth are two rows of teeth, one on the upper jaw and one of the lower. The upper teeth are sharp fangs, whereas the lower teeth are broader and flatter. When eating meat off the bone, a goblin clamps his mouth around his food and moves his bottom jaw from side to side, using the top teeth as a saw while the lower teeth hold the food steady. Despite the sharpness of the upper teeth, they are too small to be any real danger to prey larger than a rabbit.

Goblins do have body hair, but not to the same extent as bugbears. Tufts grow on the forearms and thighs, sometimes the tops of the feet, and on the head, though they never grow facial hair. Head hair is nearly always black, greasy, and hangs in long, thin strands. Other bodily hair is much shorter and coarser. As with many mammals, it provides some insulation against cold weather.

Goblin skin has the same texture as with humans but is drawn much tighter across the weak muscles, giving goblins a very gaunt look. Skin tones range from yellow to orange through to deep red with no apparent pattern save that all goblins within the same tribe have the same colored skin. No special link between geographic location and color exists, though it is possible that goblins were once several subraces now combined into a single race. As the goblin ages his skin tightens still further, giving him a pinched look.

The palms of the hand and soles of the feet are rough and leathery, perfect for clambering over rocks. Long nails protrude from the digits, but are ineffective as weapons or when climbing. Rather than being actual claws that evolved for a reason, it is more likely poor hygiene is to blame for these growths. Some scholars point to the bugbears' developed claws as proof that goblin claws once served a purpose, but there is no proof to verify such claims.

As noted already, goblins are not the strongest of races. Their muscles are designed for short, rapid movements rather than prolonged activity. As such, they are agile, graceful creatures but lack the power to be good climbers or jumpers. Their long legs allow them to move at a rate more common to larger races, and they can outrun gnomes and halflings. Although they exist primarily by scavenging, they do supplement their diet by hunting, and speed and guile are a goblin's favored weapons. Of course, the increased speed is also very handy for fleeing.

Psychology

Many races consider goblins to be stupid, lacking advanced cognitive capacity, and similar in overall intelligence to orcs. Sadly this is not the case; a typical goblin is as smart as a typical member of any of the great races (save certain elf subraces). It is true their ability to apply reason and logic is more akin to orcs, but such things matter little to goblins and are often indicative of a culture which prizes and rewards social order. Their brainpower is highly developed when it comes to guile and subterfuge. Goblins are expert liars, dangerously cunning, and totally immoral beings.

Goblins are not social creatures, however. Yes, they live in large tribes, but this is for mutual protection and out of fear of one's superiors rather than as a true society. Racial interaction tends to be through violence, or at least threats of violence, rather than politeness or etiquette. Their society is disorganized and without a constant presence of a strong leader soon devolves into anarchy and infighting.

Male goblins have a potent sex drive and seek to mate as often as possible. Grabbing a female and trying your luck is not usually the best way to get sex, however. Females are aggressive and must be pacified with gifts of food if they are to accept a sexual partner. Both sexes lack parental instincts, and once the young are born they are left to fend for themselves.

Being small and disorganized, it should come as no surprise that they are consummate cowards. Often bullied by larger goblinoids and orcs, they also practice inter-racial bullying and a goblin who stands out from the crowd is either a leader or viewed as a threat to the leader's position. Given that the latter is a death sentence, most prefer to hide among the masses and do as they are told. There is no word in the goblin dialect for coward and no concept of what it means. Running away and saving your own skin, even if it means leaving colleagues in mortal danger, is an accepted goblin trait. They care little for any creature and certainly possess no honor or devotion. Fear keeps the masses in line. Only at higher levels of society does running away become a danger, for lesser goblins make look upon it as a sign of potential weakness, ripe for exploiting.

They are also inherently lazy and unimaginative. While they possess the manual coordination and mental faculties necessary to craft tools and weapons, they prefer to take what they want by force. Of course, being cowards they must use overwhelming force or trickery but are loathe to attack strong foes unless the rewards are exceptionally good.

Goblins have little concept of beauty and place no value on works of art unless it has an obvious monetary or practical value. Thus, paintings are considered worthless, but jewelry is valuable as it can be worn as a display of wealth and power. Tapestries are often used as sleeping mats or hung to block drafty doors, but are never used as decoration. Goblin culture is based upon taking what you want rather than buying it, especially among their own kind. Leaders endeavor to keep all magic items and wealth for themselves, so denying those beneath them the tools with which to attempt a coup.

Social Structure

"Goblin social structure is even more primitive than that of orcs. Every goblin is at heart a jealous, petty minded, and immoral creature out to get what he can at any cost. How can a society be judged as anything but primitive when operating on such principals?"

Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

Goblins live in a tribal society ruled by the biggest, strongest, or smartest member. Several social divides exist, but they are not defined by birthright, but by skill and ambition. Any goblin can rise to become chief if he has the ruthless ambition necessary to remove potential rivals. Most goblins, however, are content to live out their lives without making themselves a target for persecution.

Their society does not practice sexual equality. Females serve only to produce more young, but are fierce creatures able to fight off unwanted sexual advances with a bloodthirstiness not found among males. Females have no hope of rising through the social strata, but this is not to say they lack power. Many goblins, especially those with any hold on power, have favored concubines, usually those who produce healthy litters, and these females can become subtle powerbrokers, whispering ideas into the ears of their lovers.

Tribal strength varies, and indeed fluctuates, considerably, ranging from 40 to 400 members. A typical tribe, one which has managed to avoid reprisals and infighting, usually number around 200 males. Within the tribe, around 1% are chieftains and other leaders, 5% spellcasters, 80% warriors, 10% crafters, and 4% slaves. All male goblins are expected to be able to fight, for survival depends on finding your own food. Females add another 50% to the tribal strength, acting as warriors only when the lair is attacked, and the number of children usually equals that of all the adults.

Chieftains

No goblin is born a chieftain, not will anyone give him the title. A goblin who wants to lead must be totally ruthless, completely immoral, and prepared to defend his position by any means necessary, for it is a coveted one. Although there is only ever one supreme chieftain, he has subordinates to help him maintain control of the tribe.

The highest rank is that of *xxxxx* ("long arm"), so called because his murderous hand extends to every level of the tribe. If he wants something done, there is always someone willing to perform the task to earn his favor. Since goblins are both bullies and cowards, the *xxxxx* is usually the biggest or strongest member of the tribe. However, a cunning mind can also win a goblin the title. Most goblins could not spot a political machination if it bit them on the hand, and a smart goblin can maneuver his way up the ladder. Staying in power through political means is far more difficult and requires constant work to fool others into thinking you are more powerful than you really are.

Being chief is risky, because everyone else wants the position, but not without its reward. Females are usually only too happy to mate with the chief, knowing that he will gift them with plenty of food, he claims the major spoils of war (using enforcers seeking his favor to take what others will not donate), and he can stay at home and let his warriors provide for him.

Of course, this is all a delicate balancing act. Throughout goblin history rival males have used females as assassins, only to have the assassin killed when the job is done. The spoils of war must be shared to prevent the entire tribe from rebelling yet withstand arming your rivals for a takeover bid, and failing to fight may convince others to assume you are weak and make an attempt on your life.

No matter how he gets there, no leader can hope to keep the entire tribe in order single-handedly. After purging the higher echelons of potential rivals, the *xxxxx* appoints a number of lieutenants, though most keep the number to a handful. Known as *xxxxx* ("long fingers"), they are the chief's enforcers, most trusted aides, and the biggest threats to his position. Their word is considered that of the chief, they impose his will on the masses, and they watch their master for any sign of weakness.

In most tribes the *xxxxx* appoints one or two *xxxxx* from the warriors and one from the spellcasters. Together they form a sort of council, making suggestions to their lord to further both his goals and their own. A wise chief keeps his lieutenants fighting among themselves for his favor, and thus diverted from planning his assassination. Many goblins are very happy never to seek advancement.

The position of *xxxxx* gives one the backing of the chieftain, ample access to supplies, a harem of eager females, and all without putting one's head on the block. There is some risk of murder from jealous rivals but only the chieftain can appoint *xxxxx*. Any goblin who murders a lieutenant to prove his worth to the chieftain has revealed his ruthless attitude to promotion and can never be trusted. Must such candidates are invited to talk to the chieftain in private, and then murdered and their remains hung up as a reminder to others who is in command.

Spellcasters

Goblins lump all spellcasters, divine or arcane, together until the title *xxxxx* (literally "one who has magical powers"). Within the stratum there is a pecking order; clerics sit at the top, adepts rank next, and everyone else comes last. Individual

character classes receive specific names based on the role they within the tribe serve rather than because they wield different magic.

Clerics hold the most power because they serve the gods. Goblins hold their faith more out of fear than open respect, and clerics, as servants of the dark deities, are therefore creatures to be feared. Since the gods speak only to them, whatever they say is treated as being of divine origin. Although all clerics must be trained warriors and serve with the army at lower levels, they wield enough power and respect to get their followers to find them food and treasure in return for protection, both temporal and spiritual. The higher one climbs up the spiritual ladder the less one has to do to be well fed.

Clerics hold important positions within society and are as devious and paranoid as the chieftain. Being senior cleric of a faith gives one great influence over numerous worshippers, enough even to challenge for leadership of the tribe. Underlings within the clergy covert the position of their superiors as much as they distrust those beneath them, and promotion can be rapid if one is prepared to make sacrifices (usually the lives of those above and below you).

The chieftain picks his spiritual advisor from their number, seeking to add divine backing to his tenuous position and limiting the high priest's own ambitions by giving him some say in how the tribe is run. Usually the senior cleric of the most powerful faith is assigned the role, but this can create jealousy among the other faiths.

Adepts are almost always found serving as warriors, using their unusual blend of spells to support the troops. More than one has gone on to hold important office. Some adepts ally themselves to a particular faith, seeking the protection of the church in return for loyal service. They can never become powerful church figures, lacking the direct contact with the deity, but there is safety in strength.

Of the other spellcasting classes, sorcerors are quite common, Basiran dancers and spellsingers uncommon, and wizards all but unknown. Most spellcasters double as alchemists and magic item crafters, and can earn rich rewards by supplying the chieftain with enough magic to ensure his position is unassailable. Of course, rivals also make promises of power and riches if they are similarly equipped.

Warriors

The term warrior is misleading when applied to goblins, for most of the soldiers rely on stealth rather than martial prowess. The name of the social class, *xxxx*, ("stealthy blade"), neatly sums up their attitude to fighting. The vast majority of the tribe serves as *xxxx*, raiding nearby settlements to gather food, treasure, weapons, and other supplies. They are not so much an army as a band of murderous cutthroats.

Goblins eat only if they hunt, and *xxxx* must spend much of their day hunting and pillaging. Capturing food and provisions does not give one any legal claim to it, however. Unless the warrior can hold onto his prize, someone stronger will come along and take it, either by stealth or by force. This extends all the way to the top, and unless the goblin wants a visit from one of the chief's assassins, he is advised to hand over a portion of his spoils to the boss.

Within the stratum are several character classes. As with spellcasters, individual character classes are named for their specific function. Rogues and infiltrators, not usually considered martial classes, are the most common, followed by brigands, warriors, rangers, fighters, and barbarians.

Goblin society does not place troops under the permanent command of sergeants or officers. To do so would risk creating a personality cult, and an individual with enough loyal followers could pose a threat to the chieftain. As such, warriors are assigned leaders on the whim of the chieftain. Goblin society is, in fact, very short on leaders, as detailed in the section on *Warfare*.

Females

Females, known as *xxxx* or "litter makers," hold a social status not much above that of slaves. While they are not expected, or allowed in many tribes, to follow a profession they are expected to serve the tribe. Their sole priority is to produce litters of healthy young as often as possible. They are not allowed to leave the lair except when the tribe is abandoning the position, and therefore cannot hunt. In order to survive, they must sell their bodies, accepting gifts of food in return for sexual favors. This does not mean they are harmless or submissive; more than one goblin has been killed for trying to take a female by force. In actuality only the best warriors mate regularly, for they can spare enough food to feed a female and sate their own appetite.

A pecking order exists among the females. Those mating with the chieftain are highest, then those mating with the *xxxx*, and finally the common females serving the warriors. Most use their higher status to demand food from lower status females, threatening them with their lord's displeasure if refused. Within any given group, the number of litters produced and the health of the runts determine one's exact status.

Slaves

Classes

"Goblins do not practice militaristic professions, being content to steal and then run away. As such, they pose no threat to the civilized races, though they are a nuisance."

Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

Adept

Aristocrat

Barbarian

Bard

Basiran Dancer

Brigand

Cleric

Commoner

Druid

Expert

Fighter

Gladiator

Infiltrator

Monk

Paladin

Psions

Ranger

Rogue

Shaman

Sorcerer

Spellsinger

Warrior

Wizard

Government

"A government run on fear of authority serves to prevent "
Roshnyr Karkyn, wizard-scholar of Dijishy.

Neutral Evil Society

Culture

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

Cycle of Life

""

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Childhood

Adolescence

Adulthood

Courtship

Advanced Years

Habitat

""

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Recreation

""

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Diet

""

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Clothing

""

Garg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Beards

Medicine and Healthcare

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

XXX BEGIN SIDEBAR XXX

New Alchemical Mixtures

Item	DC to make	Market Price per Mixture
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XXX END SIDEBAR XXX

Law and Order

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

Relations with Other Races

""

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Dwarves

Elves

Gnomes

Halflings

Humans

Hobgoblins

Half Races

Non-Civilized Races

Trade and Tribute

""

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Calendar

""

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Language

""

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Spoken

Names

Warfare

'''

Mountain dwarf saying.

Weapons and Armor

". "

Mountain dwarf saying.

Ranks

'''

Mountain dwarf saying.

or a lieutenant. Commanders are usually drawn from the next lowest rank, gaining a temporary promotion. When this

Organization

'''

Typical mountain dwarf battle speech.

Tactics and Strategy

"The true key to a good defense is teamwork and flexibility."

Mountain dwarf saying.

Ambushes

Pitched Battles

Religion

""

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

The Pantheon

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

Religious Beliefs

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

Other Gods

Funerary Practices

Afterlife

Important Ceremonies

""

Mountain dwarf saying.

Misconceptions

'''

Gragg Stoneskull, half-orc adventurer and self-proclaimed "sage of the people."

Goblin Glossary