

A Visit to Rabbonkar

Rabbonkar turned over the last of the papers, sat back in his chair, and looked across his cluttered worktable to the young ranger he had come to know as "Lukas."

"Fascinating," said the scholar, "and most unusual. One does not think of demons as literary types. Yet I feel sure that these papers are authentic. I am fortunate indeed that you brought them here to me in Soldain."

"You mean that Dreax wrote them himself?" asked Lukas.

"No, no, not with his own hand." Rabbonkar replied. "From what I know of the Candle Spell, I feel sure that the demon is not equipped with pen and ink, let alone paper and a writing desk. In fact, demons do not read and write at all, in the sense that we know reading and writing. No, they were probably written by one of Dreax's necromancer or hibliss servants, and left in your camp by a lesser slave—perhaps a wolvinga?"

Lukas nodded. "Yes, we met a wolvinga patrol the day after we found the papers." He remembered them well, and the two zorlins leading them. That encounter had cost the companions four healing potions and a Resurrect spell.

A sudden frown settled onto Rabbonkar's face. "You realize, of course, what the mere fact of these papers means? If the Magic Candle were intact..."

"... Dreax could never have instructed his slaves to write and deliver the papers." Lukas finished Rabbonkar's sentence. "The Candle Spell must be seriously weakening. I'd rather you had declared the papers to be forgeries, all things considered. But, if they are authentic, are they reliable?"

"Oh, yes," said the scholar. "Dreax's arrogance and anger leave little room for subtlety. And to trap you with lies in a challenge like this would spoil Dreax's little game. But some of the language is archaic, and some of the information may be obsolete—after all, Dreax has been trapped in the flame for thousands of years.... I'd better go through these papers and make some notes for you."

Rabbonkar turned the stack of papers over and dipped his pen in a bottle of ink. Lukas settled down for a long wait.

-- CORRECTIONS --
1) To Shendy from Vocha ... B1E
2) To Trilliad from Shendy...A4E
change to: To Uberion from Shendy
3) TO YBERTON FROM DERMAGUD...D2S

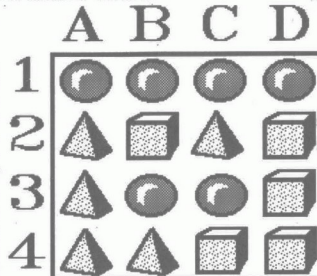
Teleportals

You must be as eager as I for our final confrontation. To allow you to avoid travel delays, I am providing this list of the magical objects required to activate the teleportals in and under Deruvia.

To Bay of Meric from Pheron ... B2SE	To Pheron from Dermagud . B1SE
To Bihun from Thakass ... C4W	(cont'd) from Kherbel ... B3E
To Dakland from Shendy ... B3N	from Sargoz ... C4W
To Darvale from Sudogur ... B2E	from Sudogur ... B2SE
To Fisestar from Shadrum ... D4W	from Thakass ... C3NW
To Fubernel from Crezimas ... D3NW	from Shendy ... D4NW
from Kherbel ... A4NE	from Khazan ... A1E
from Khiriss ... D1S	from Bedangidar . D2W
from Meardom ... D3NW	from Pheron ... A3E
from Sargoz ... A4E	 B1SE
To Hidden Vale from Kherbel ... C4W	To Selderad from Crezimas . A1S
from Pheron ... D4N	from Dermagud . D2W
from Sargoz ... B1E	To Shendy from Bedangidar . D1W
To Ice Plains from Vocha ... A3E	from Khazan ... A2E
To Isles of Ice from Dermagud ... A3NE	from Khiriss ... A2S
To Isle of Giants from Shadrum ... C1W	from Vocha ... B1E
To Kendar from Meardom ... B4N	To Shertuz from Khiriss ... C2W
To Khiriss from Thakass ... A4NE	To Shiran from Shadrum ... A2E
To Knessos from Meardom ... C2SW	To Sumruna from Sudogur ... A4N
To Marmaris from Sudogur ... C3W	To Trilliad from Crezimas ... A2SE
from Shadrum ... B1SE	from Khiriss ... C1SW
To Meram from Pheron ... C3N	from Shendy ... A4E
from Vocha ... D4N	from Bedangidar . A1S
To Merg from Kherbel ... D2S	from Meardom ... D3N
To Pheron from Bedangidar . C3W	To Yberton from Dermagud . D2S
from Crezimas ... A3NE	from Khazan ... B3E

Rabbonkar's Notes:

A clever device. The last column contains directions for reading the table of objects. For example, "To Bay of Meric from Pheron" says "B2SE." Starting at the cube in column B, row 2



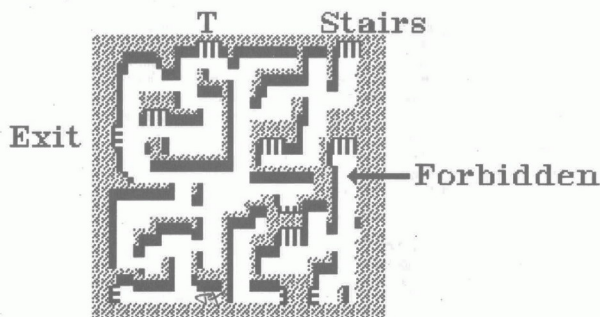
of the table, and reading in a southeasterly direction, one finds the sequence "Cube, sphere, cube," which, as everyone knows, is in fact the combination required to teleport from the teleportal house in northern Pheron to the Bay of Meric.

Dermagud

The latest conquest of my minions is Dermagud, an old mine in eastern Uberion under Lake Brelleht. A few years or decades ago, the forces of Darkness evicted the abhorrent little dwarves who were working the mine. They report that they have installed a portal area and a time trap, and have set guardian snakes to prevent access to the forbidden corridor.

My minions report that there are several signposts scattered throughout Dermagud, written in an incomprehensible language. The southwestern area is partially submerged, due to seepage from the lake.

The western exit opens onto the western shore of Lake Brelleht; the north-eastern stairs ascend to the eastern shore. The same three magic words raise both gates. There is a teleportal chamber at the north edge of Dermagud.



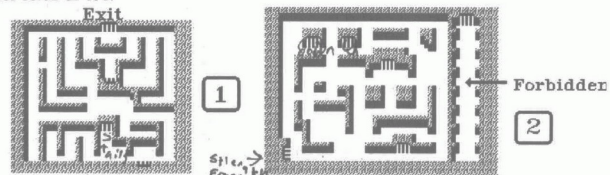
Rabbonkar's Notes:

The signposts are written in Old Dwarvish. I have a few dictionaries for sale.

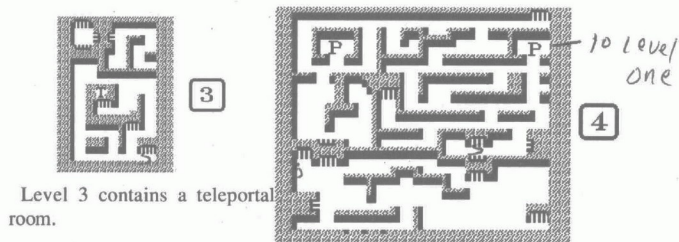
The "forbidden corridor," according to dwarvish reports, leads to the sleeping god Valon. The forces of Darkness are "forbidden" to approach the gods—you have no such restriction. I will attach some notes about gods and temples.

Vocha

Many of my orcish forces make their home in Vocha, a series of caverns under the Isles of Ice.

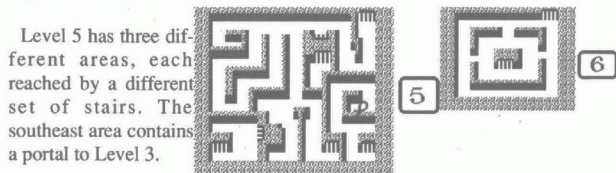


The forbidden corridor on Level 2 can be reached only from a portal area on Level 4.



Level 3 contains a teleportal room.

An underground river flows through the southern part of Level 4. In the northern part are two portal areas: one leads back to Level 1; the other leads to the forbidden corridor on Level 2.



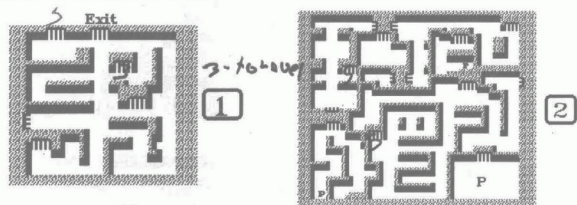
Level 5 has three different areas, each reached by a different set of stairs. The southeast area contains a portal to Level 3.

Level 6 is very important to the orcs, and is heavily protected by energy fields.

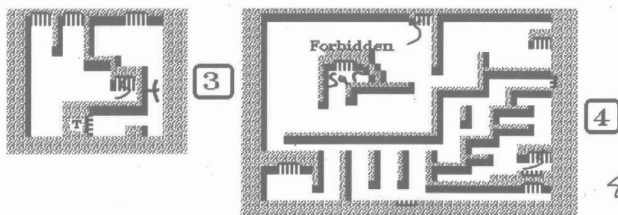
Sudogur

The caverns of Sudogur, beneath the disgusting little village of Lymeric, are cold and damp. A perfect place for my minions to cultivate their gardens of parasite moss.

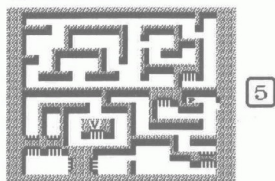
Level 1 has three stairways leading down. A complete tour of Sudogur requires that all three be used.



Several portals and stairways are needed to visit all four sections of Level 2. Level three has two sections. The eastern part, which includes a teleportal room guarded by a time trap, can be reached directly from Level 1.



The ruins on the island on Level 4 have a powerful aura, preventing my minions from close approach. The stairs in the northeast corner go upwards, but lead to the end of the tour.

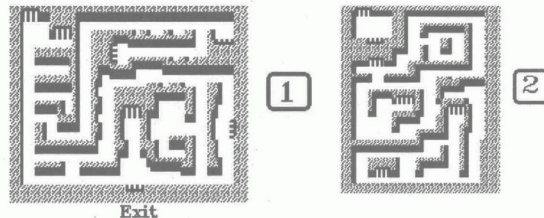


The north half of Level 5 is not yet settled. The south half contains a securely locked vault and a portal back to Level 1.

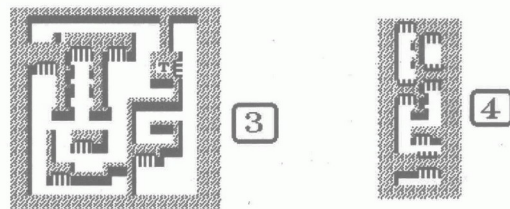
Sat. 10AM
Howlry Meardom

Meardom

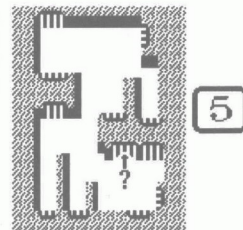
My minions have even invaded the cellars of your liege lord, Rebnard.



Levels 2 and 3 are both divided into two parts. Portals as well as stairs are needed to reach all the areas, including the teleportal chamber on Level 3.

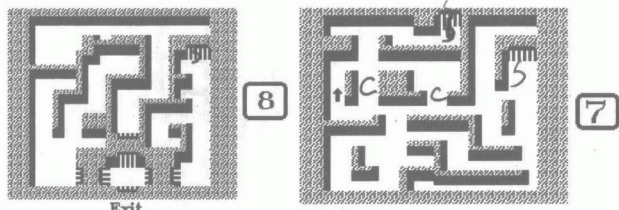


06013K #1
My advance forces in the west are unable to identify the mysterious pointed object in one of the Level 5 chambers. When my lieutenants arrive, they will investigate it and destroy it.

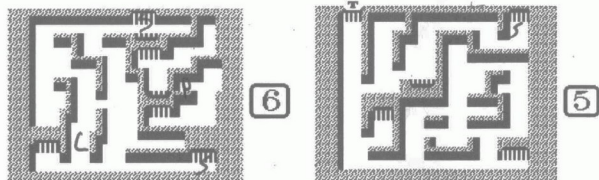


Thakass

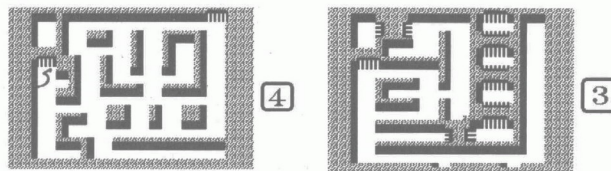
Some of my forces have taken up residence in Thakass, the tower of the Mad Wizard on Wizard's Isle. Only the strongest of them have managed to penetrate the wizard's defenses—chutes, energy fields, portal areas—and to reach the upper stories.



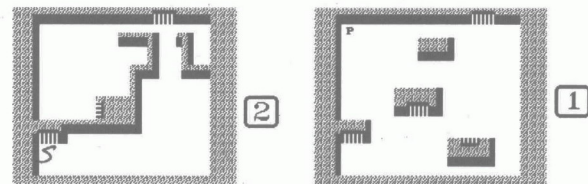
The exit from the tower of Thakass is on its lowest level (Level 8). The safe passage on Level 7 is not wide enough for three to walk abreast.



The portal area and the chutes on Level 6 are easily avoidable. It is on Level 5 that the Mad Wizard's defenses begin to shift from chutes to energy fields. The teleportal room on this level is of particular interest.



Beware the chutes in the northern and southern parts of Level 4. Level 3 has several comfortable rooms, occupied by many of my stronger minions.



The Mad Wizard appears to have used Level 2 for practice in constructing energy fields.

The top level of Thakass is nearly empty, save for the Mad Wizard himself, a few of my more powerful servants, and a portal area that leads conveniently back to Level 5 and the teleportal room.

Rabbonkar's Notes:

Little is known of the "Mad Wizard," not even his name. What story there is says that, centuries ago, he began to engage in experiments of a very unusual, and apparently useless, nature. When he approached his colleagues for advice and assistance, they refused to waste their time on him.

Highly offended, he decided that, if everyone else refused to listen to him, he would refuse to listen to everyone else. He moved to Thakass and filled it with traps and obstacles, as Dreax indicates.

If you should manage to confront the Mad Wizard, remember that it is centuries since he has listened to anyone. Be persistent.

1- ambush
Crezimas

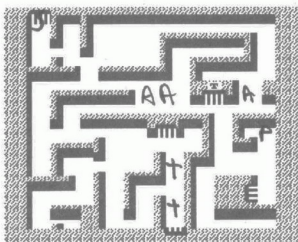
The cellars of the Crystal Castle in Yberton lead to the ancient crystal mines of Crezimas. My minions find Crezimas a satisfactory place to live: although they do not work the mines themselves, they are glad to have the occasional visiting miners for supper.



1

My minions have been busy installing time traps in Crezimas. You will begin to notice them on Level 2.

Below Level 2, the lava has begun to flow into Crezimas. Soon, the depths of Crezimas will be completely flooded with lava—a suitable place for me to visit.



3

- 3 Ambushes

Level 3 contains a teleportal room and a portal back to Level 1.

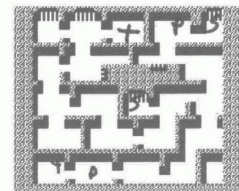
Two stairways lead down from Level 1: one to Level 2 and one to Level 3. The second can be reached only by way of a portal.



2

1 Ambush

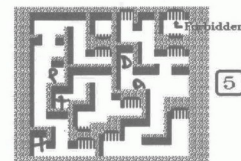
11 Vest of tomb
treasures & treasure



4

clean

The Hall of Ancient Dreams is found on Level 4. I mention it because my own ancient dreams are soon to come true.



5

2 Ambush

On Level 5 are portals up to Levels 3 and 1, as well as a chamber forbidden to my minions.

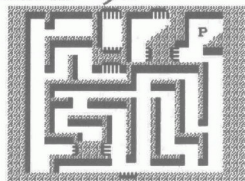
Rabbonkar's Notes:

The Crystal Mines of Crezimas are the only source of crystal dust I know. You would be doing a great service by cleansing them of Dreax's minions. Confer with the Queen at the Crystal Castle.

If Dreax is correct about the lava flows, you will need to buy heat-resistant boots for your party.

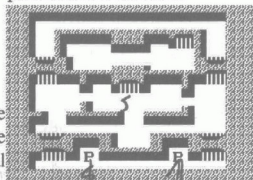
Bedangidar

Bedangidar! Site of my greatest victories! How pleasing to know that all the troublesome little dwarves have been removed, and that my forces are gathering in Bedangidar even now, preparing for the final conquest of all the Deruvias! *5 up*



3

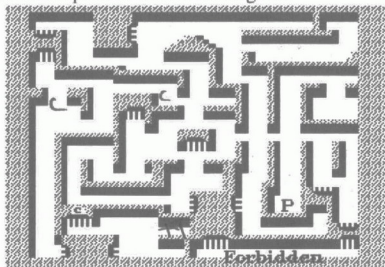
The exit from Bedangidar is on Level 3. At the north end of Level 3 are stairs leading up and down, and a portal area to Level 2.



2

The stairs up from Level 2 can be reached only by way of a portal in the southern corridor. There is also a portal back to Level 3 there.

Level 1 is well-equipped with chutes and time traps. In the southern area are a portal to Level 4, a forbidden passage, and a staircase leading up to a prison cell carved out of the peak of Mount Bedangidar.

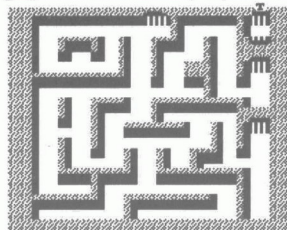


1

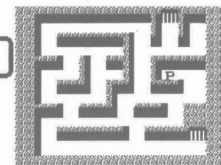
Rabbonkar's Notes:

I have heard reports that the famed sorceress Somona of Theldair has been captured by the forces of Darkness. The prison cell in Mount Bedangidar seems the most likely place for her to be held captive.

Level 4 contains a teleportal chamber. The stairs leading down from Level 4 go past Level 5, directly to Level 6.



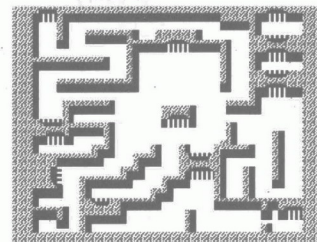
4



5

On Level 5 is a portal to the main exit. My minions also report a chamber which they claim to be unable to enter.

The bottom level of Bedangidar has many pools of water and patches of parasite moss. The stairs up to Level 5 are in the southeast corner.



6

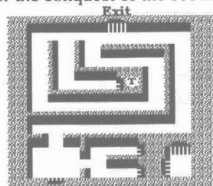
Rabbonkar's Notes:

As you know, Zilbann's mighty sword Brennix was abandoned in the mines of Bedangidar when Dreax was first captured. It is possible that you will find it in the chamber on Level 5.

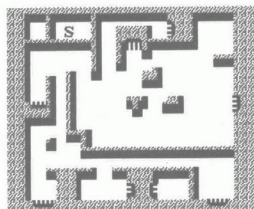
Khazan

30
37,93
Fyberpal + heavenly hegen/x

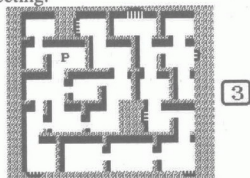
The long-abandoned undersea caverns of Khazan are no longer vacant. My forces have discovered the unguarded entrances, and are readying themselves for the conquest of the southern islands.



Level 1 of Khazan contains a teleportal room.

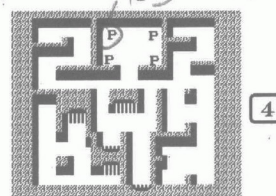


Two staircases in the south wall of Level 2 lead down to Level 3. A room in the north contains four signs—reading them will help speed our final meeting.

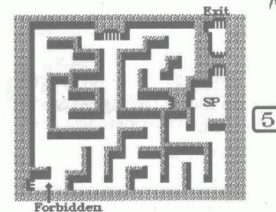


An island on Level 3 has a portal to the Sign Room on Level 2.

Khazan is slowly being flooded by water from the sea above and lava from the earth below. I look forward to witnessing the destruction when the two elements meet in force.



There are no stairs leading down from Level 4. Level 5 can be reached only through one of the portals in the northern hall.

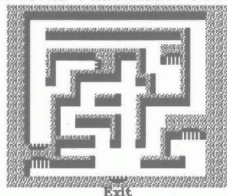


Beyond the Snake Pit on Level 5 is the long stairway leading up to the island of Heavenly. At the opposite corner is a forbidden chamber.

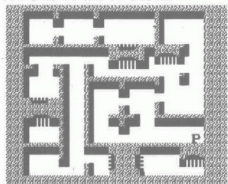
Shadrum

The Black King of the Ogres rules the tower of Shadrum. My ambassadors report that negotiations with him are proceeding splendidly, and that his forces will certainly join mine when I am released from this flame to lead the powers of Darkness to victory.

The entrance to Shadrum is on the bottom level (Level 7). You will immediately see the first of the energy fields that the Ogre King uses to protect his stronghold. He is also fond of snakes, chutes, and trick portals. I regret that I do not have information on the exact locations of all of them.

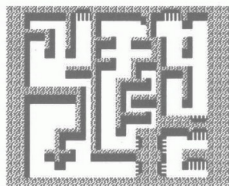


7

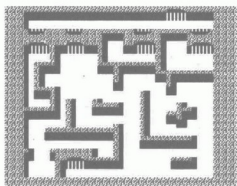


6

The key to reaching the stairs up from Level 6, in the southeast corner, is the portal area directly north of them. The Ogre King seldom allows success to those who use direct approaches.



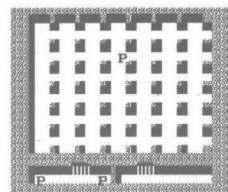
5



4

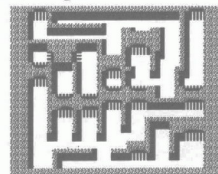
The stairs leading up from Level 5 are in the north wall.

Level 4 is abundantly trapped with chutes. It also contains a portal back to the bottom level.



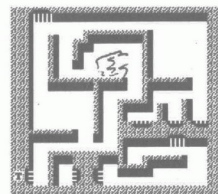
3

From the entrance to Level 3, you must take a portal into the great hall where my minions engage in combat training with the vassals of the Ogre King. From there, you must take another portal to the stairs that lead up to Level 2.



2

The final staircase is in the northwest corner of Level 2.



1

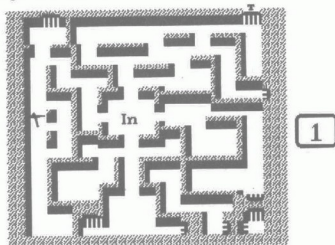
bubble scroll
Hall of No Return -
Reach East Wall, 90'

The top story of the Tower of Shadrum contains the Ogre King's own chamber, as well as the renowned Hall of Venom, Hall of Black Ray, and Hall of No Return. There is also a teleportal chamber in the southwest corner.

Sargoz

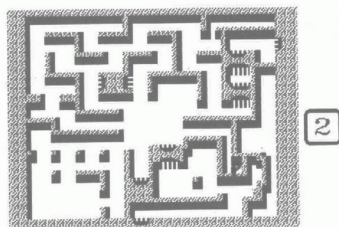
The subterranean dungeons of Sargoz are the supreme stronghold of Darkness in Deruvia. They can be reached (and departed) only from teleportal chambers. How I long to see them again!

I am sure you will want to admire all the wonders of Sargoz—its lakes, its lava flows, its time traps, snakes, energy fields. . . . My pets and minions will be glad to welcome you, in their own way.

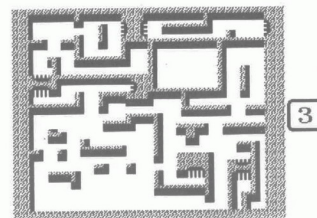


Should you need to leave early, there is a teleportal chamber at the north of Level 1.

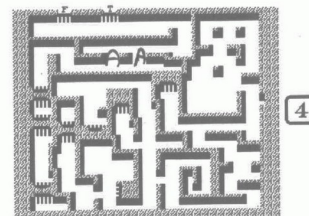
There are no stairs or chutes in Sargoz. Travel between levels is all done by portals. The portal from Level 1 to Level 2 lies beyond energy fields, parasite moss, snakes and water.



On Level 2, you will certainly want to marvel at the bubbling, sulphurous waters of Lake Grool in the southwest. A portal in the northwest takes you back to Level 1. The portal onward to Level 3 is near the chamber containing a fountain.



Level 3 of Sargoz contains still more wonders. Lava flows in the north, an underground river in the south . . . The islands in the river are the original breeding grounds of my guardian snakes. A portal back to Level 2 can be found in the northwest corner of Level 3. The portal onward to Level 4 is on the river-bank.



Level 4 of Sargoz! Home, sweet home! I know you will find it difficult to say farewell to all its splendor. The Furnace of Hades, of course, is in one of the northern chambers. (The other is a teleportal chamber, should you ever desire to leave.) But before the furnace, you simply must take an extended tour of Lake Kumalis. In its depths, heated by the nearby lava, my Hibliss sorcerors are conducting the most interesting experiments—a pity that you cannot see them from the surface. A floating portal on Lake Kumalis leads to the west edge of Level 4.

Matters and Persons of Importance

My spies are everywhere! They know the questions that will be of concern to you, and they know who can answer them for you.

Matters

Amulet, White	21
Ashes of Shir-Aka	23, 41, 69, 73
Awareness, Ritual of	58
Bedangidar	40
Blue Ring	48, 50, 67
Books, Magic	3, 22, 29, 64
Bowls	14
Brennix	27
Bubble of Captivity	38
Charisma	6, 16, 37, 71
Circlet	20, 23, 34, 69
Crezimas	61
Crystal Dust	28
Demaro	29
Dermagud	8, 9
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Elven Cloak	51, 59
Furnace of Hades	36, 46
Gate Keeper	31
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Green Ring	6, 67
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Ishban	64
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<u>Sherro</u>	11, 25, 43, 75
Shir-Aka	23, 41, 69, 73
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Sudogur	31
Sunken Isle	35, 42, 47, 58
Teleportals	43, 65
Temples	6, 8
Thakass	76
Unicorn	6, 19
Vocha	54
White Wolf	77
Words of Will	24
Zirvanad	6, 57
Zoxinn	22
Zukkamear	38, 39

Persons

1 Argelb	2
2 Atlan	6
3 Azidamus	25
4 Baelin	28
5 Banas	19
6 Belazar	19
7 Beratt	19
8 Bhardagast	19
9 Bordal	18
10 Bullon	21
11 Bundi	4
12 Buzbazgut	16
13 Dagbunbagtur	16

14 Denkar	25
15 Dinera	22
16 Dinge	19
17 Dolomar	6
18 Dundar	22
19 Efenor	20
20 Emin	22
21 Farhad	26
22 Fizkreto	24
23 Freyapkin	24
24 Genevar	5
25 Gilondo	28
26 Glenli	2

ASK About Nian call

Zilmaeron

Ruhon

27 Gnetra	24
28 Gournay	27
29 Hextaris	28
30 Hokando	25
31 Hosan	7
32 Hubantatur	16
33 Hupson	15
34 Jem	22
35 Kabuck	9
36 Kahir	3
37 Kebo	6
38 Kemkezar	24
39 Koldan	9
40 Kurek	9
41 Leam-fr	20
42 Librarian of Delkona	4
43 Librarian of Keof	7
44 Librarian of Port Avur	17
45 Lokhan	14
46 Marumas	2
47 Meliso	1
48 Mimosh	11
49 Minky	22
50 Mokaram	23
51 Museum Curator	13
52 Nef	28

53 Nimmet	1
54 Numbar the Wise	6
55 Obuan	27
56 Okdark	25
57 Orbonn	17
58 Pindalf	2
59 Pugar	27
60 Pupin	5
61 Queen Crystyn	2
62 Queen Fay	28
63 Rabbonkar	25
64 Remulda	12
65 Rimfiztrik	19
66 Ruknet	14
67 Rumba	26
68 Shagar	9
69 Shekya	24
70 Somona	28
71 Tonton	1
72 Truk	2
73 Tuten	1
74 Valoda	9
75 Wein	8
76 Yetmishi	24
77 Yodan	25
78 Zeke	12

Locations

1 Bondell
2 Crystal Castle
3 Delkona
4 Delkona Library
5 Delkona Tavern
6 Keof
7 Keof Library
8 Keof Tavern
9 Kharin
10 Knessos
11 Knessos Tavern
12 Lymeric
13 Merg
14 Merg Tavern

15 Port Avur
16 Port Avur Jail
17 Port Avur Library
18 Port Avur Tavern
19 Rebnard's Castle
20 Roads of North Trilliad and Bihun
21 Roads of Northwest Deruvia
22 Roads of Shendy and Fubernel
23 Roads of Southeast Deruvia
24 Shiran
25 Soldain
26 Sumruna
27 Sumruna Tavern
28 Theldair

Rabbonkar's Notes

Ah! I see my name! The matter of "Old Dwarvish" refers to number 63; I am person number 63, living in location 25, right here in Soldain.

24449 mpc. 500061

Magic Words

How disappointing it would be if you were unable to reach our final meeting because you did not remember an important chant. I have therefore had my Hibliss sorcerers make a list of all the magic words they know, with a guide to their pronunciation.

D-1 Achunne ah-SHOON	C9 J Facy FAY-eeey
C-2 Akamur ACK-uh-mur	S-2 Firtarafa
Astamisto AST-uh-MIST-oh	FUR-tah-RAH-fah
Begone be-GAWN	Frymh FREEM
Behsaim BEH-sah-EEM	W2 Fydelia fie-DEEL-ya
P-2 Benivo beh-NEE-voh	A3 Gangamurt GANG-guh-murt
P-4 Benna BEN-nuh	Ghrelifix GRELL-oh-FIX
Blastabl BLAST-uh-bull	Gwilly-Oh GWILL-ee-OH
Boo BOO	Haxobez HACKS-oh-BEZZ
Broxx BROX	P-3 W3 Heb HEB
Carato kah-RAH-toe	V-1 Hokde HAWK-dee
Chormal CHO-ro-e-MALL	Hox HAHKS
Copto-Facy KOP-toe-FAY	A-2 Hoy HOY
Cziyung SIGH-YOUNG	W-1 Idelioz E9.3 ih-DELL-ee-ozz
S-1 Damlaz DAM-lazz	Iomitar YO-mih-tar
C-3 Darda-Iym DAHR-dah-IMM	E9 Ishthyam ISH-the-YAM
Dehuble dee-HOUB-luh	Iymarentom
A-3 Dumanfir doo-MAN-feer	IMM-ah-REN-tom
Dymurghoz DIE-mur-gahz	Jalmomo jawl-MOH-moh
D-3 Ebitonagzi	Jop-Stemio
W-2 EB-it-oh-NAHG-zee	JOP-STEE-mee-oh
S-1 Efftah EFF-tah	U-2 Kafth KAFF-ulth
Ekburamitral	Kefluem KEFF-loo-EMM
eck-BURR-uh-MITT-rull	B-3 Kemt KEMT
R-2 Eklem Kenek ECK-lem KEN-ek	Khizzik KHIZZ-ick
K-1 Eksam ECK-sam	Kizzikh KIZZ-ikh
R-3 Elatir Gnassar	H-4 Kuramdafur
ee-LAT-eer NASS-ahr	koo-RAM-duh-fur
Eudaramax YOU-duh-RAM-acks	Laximorital
Exiteralmisto	LAX-ih-MOHR-ih-tahl
ECKS-ih-tur-AWL-miss-toe	Loftenek LAHF-teh-neck
O-2 Ezberekene	Lugerig loo-GAIR-ig
EZZ-burr-ECK-eh-nee	Maeslem MAY-slem

W- Wolf God

S9 - Sun god

P6 - Purple bird god

C9 - clover
god

SW - sword god

(P-11, 11, 11, 11) E9 - El-god

Mortnth MOHR-tunth	T-2 Tevalato
Nastrimok NASS-trih-MAWK	TEH-vah-LAH-toe
Nezbur NEZZ-burr	W-4 Tharimo thah-REE-moe
E9-4 Obotem oh-BOE-tem	B-2 Tifgaramo
Olm OHLM	tiff-GAW-rah-moe
Pastarabe PASS-tah-RAH-bay	Tiz TIZZ
S9-1 Pehriz PEH-rizz	Trumm TROOM
V-3 Pokandajo POE-kan-DAW-joe	Tuem TWEMM
Queredimus	Tykob tie-KAHB
kweh-renn-DEE-muhss	Uako-Uamaio
Quix-Omu KWICKS-OH-moo	WAHK-oe-wah-MAHN-oe
Qup KWUP	C9 Ude OOH-deh
A-2 Rattabl RAT-tuh-bull	Vestiborox
P-1 Rehtem Verek REH-tem VAIR-eck	VESS-tih-BORE-ox
T-3 Rekmetrek reck-MEH-treck	O-3 Vrakkalamhir
D-2 Reshiptar RESH-ih-PTAR	VRAHK-uh-luh-MEER
Rosaan roe-SAHN	W-1 Vreamen vree-AH-mehn
Samaid SAH-mah-eed	Vymoxigor
Samandax sah-MAN-dacks	vie-MOX-ih-gore
O-1 Sastamounu SAH-stuh-MOE-noo	Wallo WALL-loe
E9-2 Serman SURR-mee-ann	Westhen WESS-thenn
C9-1 Shaerad SHAY-uh-rad	Wrixx RICKSK
H-1 Sherro SHARE-oh	S-3 Yaklamatofar
Stavanos stah-VAHN-ose	YACK-luh-muh-TOE-far
Suman Kestem	P-1 Yenna YENN-uh
SOO-mahn KESS-tehm	Yiz YIZZ
C-1 Tefk TEHFK	S-3 S9 Yolimdar yo-LIMM-dar

C- bumble cap O-oble is4
tivityb- bed Angidgr, 1, 7, 3 words
f- the kass - wizard IS/p

K - kha297 - frequently + fubecnal

V. Vocng

h-high call/unicorn

S-shadchun

R - Ritual of
Awareness

D-dermagud

Gods and Temples

Rabbonkar scribbled a final note on Dreax's documents as the sun rose over the mountains east of Soldain. He looked up to see the first sunbeams through the window strike the sleeping Lukas square in the face. Lukas jerked his eyes open and grabbed for his sword—then laughed, and began to stretch.

"Good morning, my friend," said Rabbonkar. "I trust you slept well . . . Oh, my! That chair cannot have been a comfortable place to sleep! I simply did not think to offer you a bed. Please accept my apologies."

"No apologies needed," Lukas replied. "If you had spent the last month catching naps in the places my companions and I have, you would sell all your books for such a comfortable chair!" Rabbonkar gasped. "Well, a few of your books, at least," said Lukas, "and I must apologize in turn for being such poor company."

Rabbonkar interrupted a yawn with a chuckle. "As you say, no apologies are needed. I needed no company this night, other than these documents you allowed me to examine. There is matter in here that has been lost to Deruvian knowledge since the eldens departed! You cannot imagine the value of this information!"

"Fair enough," said Lukas. "I laugh at your stacks of books, and you accuse me of a lack of imagination. We can consider ourselves even up on insults." Lukas began to thumb through the papers. "But I can certainly imagine that, with your help, we have here the information we need to complete our quest!"

"My most fervent hope!" Rabbonkar considered rising to embrace Lukas in celebration, then considered lowering his head to the table for a short catnap.

Lukas glanced up from the documents. "My friend, you must be exhausted! I will leave you to your bed, and return to my companions. Again, many thanks!"

"No, no! There is more I must tell you!" Rabbonkar shook his head and rose to his feet. "The gods and their temples . . ."

Lukas rushed to Rabbonkar's side and returned him to his chair. "All right, let me brew up some sermin tea, and you can tell me about them." Lukas moved to the stove, pulled a mushroom from his pouch, and began to prepare the teapot.

"Dreax avoided the subject of the gods," Rabbonkar began, "either from choice or, more likely, because the forces of Darkness simply cannot stand anything to do with them. But the gods can, as I understand it, help you greatly in your quest."

"Each god has a temple in Deruvia. In each temple is an altar with four words engraved upon it—the words cannot be read without a magnifying lens. Above the altar is the symbol of the god—a bird for Sur, a flower or cabbage or some kind of plant for Valon—is the tea ready yet?"

"Almost," said Lukas. "What are the altar words all about?"

The sermin tea was beginning to smell very good indeed. "The traditions say that when a worthy person approaches a sleeping god and chants the four words from that god's temple, the god will awake and grant a boon. A legend here in Soldain tells how King Thorin awoke the god Valon in Dermagud mine, then drank from the fountains in its chambers, and became the strongest and quickest of all the dwarves.

"There are eight gods . . ."

"Eight?? I only know of four," interrupted Lukas as he poured two cups of sermin tea. "Valon and Sur, of course, and I've heard that they worship a sun god in the southern islands, and then there are the legends of Heru, who gave the great sword Brennix to Zilbann. Tell me about the others."

Rabbonkar took a sip of tea. How refreshing! He took another sip. "Well, my friend, it would probably be a good idea to tell you what I know about all eight of the gods. By the way, I must compliment you on the tea. If you have another mushroom, be prepared to brew another pot.

"Valon, as we all know in western Deruvia, is the god of harvests, plants, growth, the soil, and all sorts of productivity and fruition. His temple is situated between Lake Brelleht and Lake Donduk and, as far as I know, can only be reached through the mines of Dermagud. It has long been reported that Valon lies asleep in Dermagud, and Dreax's papers appear to confirm the reports.

"The other god generally worshipped in western Deruvia is Sur, the sky god who watches over all, who protects the helpless and punishes those who abuse their power. Sur's temple lies in the middle of the Shertuz desert. His monks maintain a sanctuary northwest of the temple. Sur's own whereabouts are unknown. However, I believe that most gods sleep close to their temples, and, from Dreax's documents, I would guess that Sur sleeps in the caverns of Sudogur, on the underground island forbidden to Dreax's minions.

"As you say, the folk of the southern islands worship the sun god, Nexis. Among their forests and glaciers, deserts and swamps, the god of the weather, the wind, and of all sudden changes is of utmost importance. As befits the god of paradoxes and contradictions, his temple is located in the searing heat of Kuskunn, and his abode is beneath the freezing cold of the Isles of Ice."

Rabbonkar waved his empty cup to the south. "My, I'm feeling eloquent. Would you please pour me some more tea?"

"I'll pour you half a cup," said Lukas, "but you've already had enough to keep you awake for three days and nights. Be careful, friend."

"Careful? Of course I'll be careful . . . Oh, my! You're using sermin mushrooms in the tea, aren't you?" Rabbonkar sat down. "I wouldn't want to get used to sermins instead of sleep, like some wizards I've known, would I?"

Rabbonkar stood back up. "And that brings us to the god of the wizards of Shiran. **Kalb**, the god of secrecy, privacy, and protection. The god who wears a mask. I know little of Kalb. I believe that both his temple and his resting place are in Upper Deruvia, not far from Shiran.

"The other god who rests above ground, according to the monks, is **Pax**, the god of struggle and sacrifice. Pax is the only god whose temple is far from his resting place. Both are said to be hidden deep in treacherous swamps. The symbol of Pax is an open eye, filled with tears."

"That leaves Heru and two others," said Lukas.

"Yes," replied Rabbonkar. "Well. Of the two others, I cannot tell you much. They are worshipped only beyond the Blackrock Mountains. One is the moon god—or goddess—whose name might be **Paladin**. The other is **Hissen**, who is either the snake goddess, the lord of the dead, or the god of buried secrets. Perhaps all three in one. Both of their temples are reported to be near the desert of Kherbel. From the papers I have examined this night—*last night*—I would guess that one sleeps in Crezimas and the other in the mines of Bedangidar.

"And, as you say, the eighth is the war-god **Heru** of legend. Heru has not been generally worshipped since the Battles of Bihun and the departure of the Eldens. However, I have recently heard rumors of a new sect in the besieged town of Delkona devoted to Heru. Although I had believed that Heru vanished with the Eldens, these papers allow me to hope that he might sleep in the caverns of Khazan."

Lukas rose and clasped Rabbonkar's hand. "My deepest thanks, good friend. And the thanks of my companions, as well. With your help, we *will* subdue the arch-demon once again."

"Farewell, good friend," said Rabbonkar as he opened his door for Lukas. Fare very well indeed, he prayed to all the gods as he watched the young ranger lope across the dew-covered grass toward the gates of Soldain.