

# CITY OF THE CARREG

AN ADVENTURE-FILLED SETTLEMENT BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

## THE SITUATION

When the underworld sea drained away, it left a vast depression full of unbreathable air—the Ur-Menig. Near its center is Sifoon, city of the **Carreg**.

Once a great trading hub, the dwindling **Carreg** have been unable to hold Sifoon's districts against the endless tide of external and internal enemies.

For years, their hold over the city has been only a few neighbourhoods near the **Port**.

## THE CARREG

Carreg have smooth, clay-like skin. They are calm, resolute, and speak in low, mumbly voices. Fearing iron, they use weapons of bone or oil-hardened leather.

To them, the surface is mythical—to speak of it means you intend to break promises and flout their laws.

Speaking aloud of what all can see is how they establish trust.

Unlike surface-dwellers, they can breathe the deep air of Ur-Menig.

## THE ROCKS OF SEPHUS

Despite its high altitude above the sea bed, the air of Ur-Menig is only barely breathable. Each neighbourhood had a Rock of Sephus—a barrel-sized sphere of porous rock resting in a fat, iron brazier. When heated, each produces an omnidirectional draft of breathable

air. These were created for the benefit of visitors, but the braziers have gone out in all districts but the **Port**, gate area, **Plaza**, and **Uspire**.

In other districts, a deathless sleep takes hold in 20+d20 minutes.

remember the time before the sea drained, and float over the inky depths at the original sea level. Ancient sails or oars propel them.

Visitors brought to Sifoon by friendly Carreg will awaken in the low guard tower, lying on fungus mats.

## GATE AREA (AIR)

Carreg ballista crews watch over the bridge from

## PLAZA (AIR)

Though philosophers keep loiterers out of the holy plaza clear with long rods, the two curving galleries are filled with families and merchants' stalls. With so many districts lost, they sleep in their stalls sprawled on their wares. The crackle of frying **delicacies** fills the air.

## LOST DISTRICTS

The Carreg have retreated from the other districts. Roll (see over) for what occupies them.

The Carreg avoid these areas, and have no fresh news of them.

## GRETZB

The lavish tenements of wealthy philosopher families, now abandoned. Hidden servant doors connect the buildings on most levels. In one of the eight is an **artifact**.

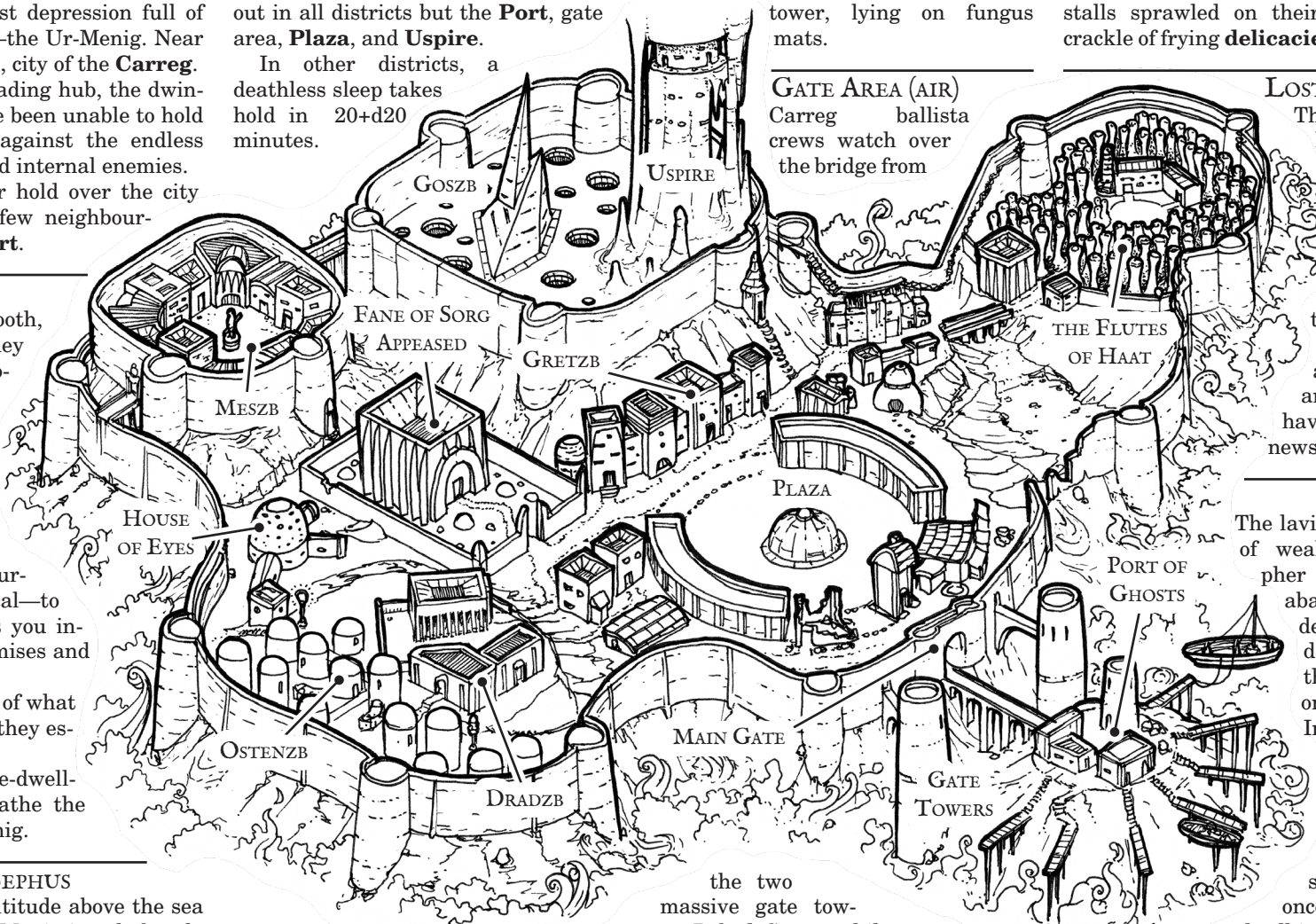
## DRADZB

Three large structures once formed a dradkin enclave,

the two massive gate towers. Robed Carreg philosophers boldly opine on visitors' anatomy, hoping to sound smart and get laid.

Except for a few prominent guards, the towers and barbican have been converted to housing for displaced citizens.

years before hostilities began. Before they were expelled, chimeramancers began breeding **Heilan gorgons** to release. All three buildings contain rows of incubation jars, filled with



# TRILEMMA ADVENTURES

d6 Port & Plaza Notables	
1	d12 armed & scarred Carreg returning with <b>delicacies</b>
2	Carreg warriors (bow/knife), buying smoked ghost eels
3	Jorn (whiskered troll) merchants selling flammable wood for the Rocks of Sephus
4	Foreign Carreg merchants
5	Tearful reunion as someone emerges from a lost district
6	Workers cleaning a minor rock fall from the street, or a roof-top drip-water reservoir.

d6 Visitor Motive	
1	Hire deniable thugs to rough up or assassinate a merchant
2	Hire a team to recover an <b>artifact</b> from a random district
3	Discover new trading options with endless questions
4	Sell information about the city and its visitors to dradkin spies
5	Hire mercenaries to relight an airless district's rock of sephus
6	Buy martial skill or magic to improve city defenses

sour-smelling ichor and a preserved gorgon pup, one in ten still viable. One is twenty is a cave wyvern larva.

One building contains an **artifact** surrounded by giant, dissected insects.

## THE FLUTES OF HAAT

The neglected fungal flutes of this estate have grown to titanic size. When the breeze blows, they hum eerily. The wild-eyed Carreg groundskeeper claims that they speak on behalf of Ur-Menig itself. Now a natural, holy place (if rather alien), any who sleep here have nightmares of the cataclysmic draining

of the sea, or (1 in 6 chance) of sites of interest (e.g. shipwrecks) somewhere on the dry sea floor.

## OSTENZB (OS-TEN-ZUH-BUH)

The "groaning district" is filled with the granaries of the Jorn. They shudder and creak under the pressure of moisture-expanded puzel seeds. Some have burst open explosively, showering the streets with crunching debris. Others might yet.

## MESZB (MESS-ZUH BUH)

The wealthiest merchants of Sifoon lived in the twelve tenement houses of this walled district. Each house has a demon spirit, originally bound to serve its owners.

d6 Meszb Demon House	
1-3	Tidy, pleasantly scented
4	Walls vibrate or even shake
5	Transformed into an extra-dimensional labyrinth
6	A carnivorous death trap

## HOUSE OF EYES

The House of Eyes is a dome pierced with hundreds of spy-holes. Three Menaka (man-sized spheres covered in wart-like chameleon eyes) dwelled here for a century before mysteriously incinerating themselves. Their bodies are ashen but whole, but collapse into clouds at the slightest touch (but slowly reform over a few hours) One contains an **artifact**.

## FANE OF SORG APPEASED

A dredger's mystical vision prompted her to found a religion, devoted to ridding demons of their atavistic hungers.

The fane itself is a huge room divided into lanes, alternating white marble and black basalt. They are worn down

from attempting to recreate the **lost-dance of hungers**.

Magic performed on the white lanes has the opposite of the intended effect.

## USPIRE (AIR)

Tall Uspire houses a scholarly order. Though most rooms contain only echoes the lower levels are bright with fluted oil lamps, cheerful conversation, and scroll-copying.

## GOSZB (GOSS-ZUH-BUH)

The walled district of Goszb is one of the great wonders of the underworld. The courtyard of pale stone is utterly clear of fallen rock, swept by twenty holes that slide in constant motion.

The holes are made by void worms (giant worms with bodies of emptiness), whose heads are anchored deep below the plateau.

The angular "temple" has 3 floors above and 3 below ground. The scholars of Uspire learned long ago that it is a conveyance capable of reaching the moon. Until a generation ago, they kept its gardens and larders stocked, now it is overgrown with plants, fungus and large insects.

Lost within is an **artifact**.

## CAVE WYVERNS

These limbless beasts have only a three-taloned grasper at the end of their strong tails. They glide on leathery wings in the upper reaches of

d6 Lost District Occupier	
1	d2 <b>Cave wyverns</b>
2	d20 <b>Rust Cultists</b> , d8 dying
3	d20+20 <b>Meebs</b>
4	d2 <b>Heilian gorgons</b>
5	<b>Dradkin infiltrator band</b>
6	<b>Shadow Bohka</b>

Ur-Menig, seeking prey with heat-sensitive pits all along their oily bodies.

They use wounded prey as territory markers. Attacking wyverns will swoop down and leave prey crippled with beak and talon attacks, then leave it to crawl around unless they are hungry (2 in 6 chance), or something (e.g. rescuers, another predator) interferes with it.

## RUST DESPERANTS

Believing they are all that stands between Sifoon and its enemies, this breakaway martial cult has embraced iron poisoning to toughen themselves.

d6 Lost District Rock of Sephus	
1	Centrally located, intact, unlit
2	Centrally located, no fuel
3	Brazier tipped over; the rock has rolled d100 paces away
4	Brazier and rock have been moved to an under-level of a nearby building
5	Separated, d100 paces apart, and each coated in d3 <b>meebs</b>
6	Smashed up for <b>sephus masks</b>

## d6 Lost District Encounter

1	Encounter appropriate to this district's occupier
2	d4 Carreg, tapping rooftop
3	Giant whip scorpion, having fallen from the distant ceiling
4	The dreaming green sorcerer appearing as a robed apparition
5	d2 mindless Carreg, dumbstruck by the Heilian gorgon
6	Dradkin infiltrator, spying



Their skin is broken and weeping, but covered in metallic scabs, and their limbs grow painfully long (but strong).

They mount occasionally effective raids into lost districts, striking at Sifoon's enemies. They do an equal amount of harm by kidnapping of healthy Carreg from Uspire and the plaza district, to shore up their dying numbers.

#### MEEBS

When undisturbed, these glassy slimes spread out large and thin, looking like wet stone or puddles. If awakened by light or sound they draw up into keg-sized blobs over a few minutes. Once a minute they can leap surprisingly far, grappling their victims to dissolve them in acidic juice.

Meeb-infested districts will be thick with them, d10-5 in each structure. They are most vulnerable to cutting weapons and fire.

#### HEILIAN GORGON

A great cat of the underworld, with a lion-like mane of asps. Its yellow eyes transfix with a stare. After thirteen heartbeats, the gorgon steals the wits of its victim, leaving them struck dumb.

Gorgon-occupied districts will have kills of various ages, and the odd dumb-struck Carreg.

#### DRADKIN INFILTRATOR BAND

A pious-caste family of d8 capable fighters and d4 hardy porters; the children are hostages back in dradkin lands. They have metal blades, kinleather armor and paralytic javelins. They have infiltrated Sifoon ahead of a larger Dradkin attack, crossing Ur-Menig using **sephus masks**. They will kill anyone who threatens to reveal them.

#### SHADOW BOHKA

The Carreg say that Bohka is the wretched offspring of demon and

sorcerer. He carries a lamp that casts darkness; surface dwellers produce brightly glowing 'shadows' which dance as he moves.

He can snatch the bones from your arm with his thieving touch. These he takes and sews into his great coat.

He is invisible in his shroud of darkness, but his bone-lined coat rattles as he moves. He can be seen once injured, for his blood glows like molten iron.

He carries one of the **Books of Undibol** and reads it regularly.

#### THE DELICACIES OF SIFOON

Carreg dredging bands find all manner of delicious foods on the sea bed.

**Dredgeleaf**—nutritious staple, moist, mildewy smell

**Sand nuts**—fist-sized tough husk, starchy, floral smell

**Isopod**—only the juice from the legs is used (the rest is poisonous to Carreg)

**Flutes**—man-sized fungus; the fibrous rind is mashed for a buttery oil

**Ghost eel**—rare memories of sea life past caught with ancient harpoons

**Emberries**—taste citrusy to surface dwellers, but dyes their faces purple

#### ARTIFACT—SEPHUS MASKS

These cumbersome masks make Ur-Menig's air marginally breathable. Each minute the wearer exerts themselves, the masks fail for d6-3 minutes.

#### ARTIFACT—BOOK OF UNDIBOL

Undibol's five-volume opus isn't really about anything, or so the preface claims. It meanders aimlessly for several pages before launching into a detailed description of whoever is reading it. After this, it describes the last person to read each of the other four volumes. After another dozen pages of drivel, it begins describing the thoughts of anyone currently reading any of the other volumes.

If the book is put down or if any part is skipped or skimmed, it begins anew.

At least two volumes are very far from Sifoon.

#### ARTIFACT—SANTHA'S BOX

This small box of polished blue beryl is hinged in ivory, and the lid is lined with small, flat teeth. Anything placed inside crosses to the ghostly world of the dead. Engravings show former owners paying ghosts with silver. If the bearer can see into that world, it could be used to bring small things back.

#### ARTIFACT—TESTAMENT OF MANY

A tablet of dark glass, etched with crude, rectangular lettering. It is the first-person account of 'Atummo', apparently a gestalt being that emerged from the primordial rock of creation. Upon seeing the 'lights of heaven' (perhaps the stars), its wonder divided it into many beings, one to appreciate each one: thus were born the Carreg.

Anyone meditating upon it divides into d2+1 separate, identical beings. This is a priceless cultural artifact to the Carreg.

#### ARTIFACT—VOID-CATCHER'S ROD

A short silver rod, etched end to end with fine, random-seeming grooves. It is a Jorn (whiskered troll) tool, used for finding void worms. When placed against stone, it vibrates if there is an airy space beyond, violently if it is near.

#### ARTIFACT—SHAPER'S SPURTLE

A short, blunt wand of stone, wrapped in many layers of felt and leather. With a touch of the wand, any flesh it touches is reshaped like soft clay. Just grabbing it firmly distorts the fingers.

This is a tool of dradkin chimero-mancers, and with effort it can even be used to extrude new limbs (or to blend existing ones down to nothing).

d8	Random Artifact
1	d3 Sephus Masks
2	d2 Books of Undibol
3	Santha's Box
4	The Testament of Many
5	Void-Catcher's Rod
6	Shaper's Spurtle
7	d2 Lightning Balls
8	Spider Cloak

Anyone but a practiced sculptor will produce irreversible, alarming results.

#### ARTIFACT—LIGHTNING BALLS

Originally a pair of brass balls, tightly wrapped in a leather pouch. If either is tapped sharply on a hard surface, an electric bolt flies toward its twin.

If the balls are touching, the only evidence is a loud crack and an ozone smell. A hand's breadth apart, the bolt is powerful enough to burn skin and start fires. A few paces apart, it stings but does no lasting harm. At greater distances, the hair-thin bolt is barely visible and delivers little more than a static shock.

#### ARTIFACT—SPIDER CLOAK

A long, gray cloak of dradkin kinleather, ending in long, matted tassels. If the wearer ever panics, the tassels stiffen into numerous legs and scuttle the wearer to safety, maybe up the wall.

#### ARTIFACT—DANCE OF HUNGERS

A long strip of fabric, painted with steps. If they are followed, they reveal the dance of hungers. Anyone enacting the dance has their hunger transformed into a powerful longing for (d6) 1-2: the comforts of home, 3-4: intimacy, 5-6: solitude.

If it is danced by a skilled dancer, the effect applies to d6 observers.