

Pavis and Flintnail: Behind the Scenes

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The Cult of Pavis

By Ian Thomson and Greg Stafford

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I. Introduction

After the ghostly dragonewts broke down Wyvern Gate in 1539, the human survivors in the Big Rubble painstakingly struggled up from near-extinction, and were faced with an unfamiliar world. Since 1490, the presence of Thieves' Town outside the walls had offered some renewed human contact for the survivors, but the Cult itself maintained its enigmatic solitude. Then came the "Dragonewts' Dream", and the people of the old city watched with amazement as the best of the troll warriors hurled themselves at these specters, only to be thrown back and destroyed.

Although the troll domination had been far from complete, especially in the latter half of the occupation, the Pavic humans had existed in a state of siege within their own walls for three centuries. Even protected by Pavis' impregnable temple, without the help of the Flintnail dwarves they could not have survived as a community.

A decade after the Rubble was opened, Dorasar and his companions arrived, bringing friendship skills similar to Pavis' own. Ginkizzie, the dwarf leader, spoke for all the people of Pavis, and agreements were made. Pavis and Flintnail worshippers told outsiders of their lineage, and purposes, for the first time in generations. By now, the legends of the old city were barely recalled outside the walls of Pavis itself, and the survivors were free to paint the pictures as they saw fit. Wisely, they decided to obscure a large part of the true nature of Pavis and the reasons why he founded his city on this spot.

Dorasar learned some things about the local religions, as he negotiated to sanctify a new temple to Pavis, but even he only knew a fraction of what is revealed here. The Pavis Cult themselves claim that all their papers long ago provided the fuel for fragile cooking fires amidst the ruins, and the Flintnail dwarves say that their records were all destroyed when they collapsed their halls on

the invading trolls back in 1237. Even Mani's Clan can offer no help to the casual enquirer, patiently explaining that they have no need for a codified history, because the past shifts and flutters like dust on the desert winds.

II. Mythos and History

Pavis' parents were members of one of the many unusual organizations that were tolerated in the permissive Empire of the Wyrms' Friends (EWF). As well as the path to draconic enlightenment, many other secrets became available to the thinkers of the day, due to the expanded awareness that characterized that period of history.

The Green Age Revivalists were an elite collection of researchers and dreamers, who wanted to return the world and its peoples to the energies and relationships of that more harmonious time. Many saw them simply as idealists in search of an unreachable utopia, but it is undeniable that several of their experiments succeeded spectacularly.

Pavis himself was the result of arguably their most impressive project, the successful cross-breeding of a human with a dryad. As he grew, although he appeared human, it became obvious that he was a most unusual being. With his family (father and human step-mother), Pavis relocated from the Empire to Adari, a place from where it would be easy for him to interact with aldryami, and explore both sides of his heritage.

Pavis' youth was brought to a horrifying ending in 809, when nomads sacked Adari. Whilst Pavis himself escaped, his father was slain and his mother disappeared, and Pavis resolved to continue his father's work. He returned to the Empire, where other members of the Revivalists welcomed him with open arms. Soon it became clear that he was blessed with a unique breadth of insight, and could intellectually synthesize seemingly irreconcilable philosophies. He quickly became a champion of the Green Age cause.

Under the leadership of Pavis, the Green Age Revivalists entered a period of public popularity. Many people traveled to hear him speak, and amongst them was Flintnail the Mostali. The two became close friends, and a partnership was formed that would have powerful consequences.

Pavis became fascinated with the geographical and spiritual remnants of Genert's Garden. This interest had evolved during the decade he had lived in Adari, as he had traveled not just to visit his aldryami relatives, but also out onto the Praxian plains. Strange ruins and the peoples he met there left an indelible mark upon his soul.

Over the next few years Pavis and Flintnail organized and led a variety of expeditions out into Prax and the Wastes, seeking spirits and forgotten lore that might help them bring about their dreams of a new Green Age. The Horse People of Joraz Kyrem, whom Pavis knew through cult connections, usually assisted them in these ventures. Joraz was an ambitious Khan who was only too pleased to challenge the nomads.

Eventually their explorations uncovered a great secret. On the banks of the Zola Fel was a surviving fragment of Genert's Garden, preserved by a Green Age Hero and his followers. Unfortunately, these people were in hiding, due to the presence of the nomads and giants occupying the ruins of Robcradle.

Encouraged by his friend Flintnail, and by Joraz Kyrem who wanted to re-establish his own people in Prax, Pavis devised the Green Age City Project. This was not a course of action decided on lightly, and several years of questing and securing allies followed. In 830 ST they were ready.

Marching first to the Faceless Statue in Dagori Inkarth, Pavis here proved his mastery over stone, and reanimated this God Time relic. Riding atop its shoulders, and trailed by their followers, Pavis and Flintnail entered Prax and made history. The new city that later also became known as

'Pavis', was founded in 831, and Pavis used his heroic abilities of negotiation and reconciliation to forge a fragile, but nonetheless impressive, peace.

Although Pavis' main focus was creating a center for exploration of many long forgotten 'Green Age' projects, he was also an extremely charismatic and inspirational civic leader. Throughout his life, the city seemed to expand all on its own, with settlers arriving from many different places across the continent, adding their own ideas and energies harmoniously. Even so, the sheer time and energy required to govern and co-ordinate a city of such size and vitality was overwhelming, and eventually Pavis bowed to the wishes of his peers and devised a formal system of Government. He created the 'Council of Seven', each member of which was given a special 'Speaking Mask' to signify their authority.

Between 831 and his apotheosis in 860, Pavis co-ordinated a huge number of experimental ceremonies. His own daughter, Shelbaris, arrived at the city soon after her father, and was found to be almost as gifted as he. She worked principally alongside the dwarves of the city, eventually assisting in the greatest successful quest of that period. Without her contribution, it would be fair to say that the dwarves of Flintnail would not be half of what they are today.

Evidence of another aspect of the city's origins may still be noted, although most people overlook this even though it may sometimes be literally before their eyes. Pavis and Flintnail shared an understanding of sacred geometry, and based the shape of the city, and the location of major buildings and amenities, on ancient diagrams. They held the firm belief that this would assist their work through harnessing the powers of the elemental Earth. The unusual written language of glyphs, which is known by the inner circles of the Pavis Cult, was also evolved from this tradition.

It was not clear at the time, even to their colleagues, how much Pavis and Flintnail inspired the work, nor how their personal skills, and personal associations with Green Age myths, powered the ceremonies. Even after Flintnail departed, his spirit inspired and drove the dwarves in their joint activities of city construction and mythical explorations. Pavis, with his apparently boundless energy, was able to provide enough motivation for the other citizens, but in the end even he tired.

In 860, aged in his seventies, after giving a great speech in front of the citizens, Pavis entered his temple for the last time. With the assistance of the Priests of Mani's Clan, he took his place alongside the great spirits of Prax, the country which had become his home.

As arranged, Joraz Kyrem became civic leader, ruling the council wisely, but amongst the various factions were those who sought a greater share of authority. Most outspoken amongst these was a group from amidst the followers of the City Magician, who took advantage of the awe in which all sorcerers were held.

During the life of Pavis, it had been unthinkable to interfere with the passing Cradles, and Robcradle's 'Great Basher' had stood idle. This all changed in 863 when, to the horror of the citizens, these sorcerers halted a Cradle with their magic, and looted it. The other Magicians were too wary of the might of their fellows, the fledgling Cult of Pavis was too weak to act decisively against these sorcerers, and Joraz Kyrem feared their powerful magic. Great was the pillage, and the baby was slain. The looters claimed that its death was an unfortunate accident, but their selfish motivations seemed only too clear.

The terrified citizens waited, but nothing happened immediately as a result of these events, and life went on as usual. Whilst most of the inhabitants were initially against stopping the Cradles, none were strong enough to oppose the renegade Magicians, and in truth the lure of Cradle goods was tempting to all. In 867 another Cradle arrived and was plundered, and yet another in 869. The first sign of trouble came in 870, when Thog the giant led some smaller members of his kin, and many trolls, against the city. On this occasion they were repulsed easily, with the city's network of sorcery towers providing as effective an aid to defence as the Magicians had claimed they would.

For a time, these rogue wizards gained popular support, and two more Cradles were looted, one in 872 and another in 875. Then Thog returned, accompanied again by other giants, and by an entire army of trolls. A band of mindless, brutish, constructed giants called Jolanti further enhanced the attackers, and this time they proved unstoppable. Even the aerial defence network of the sorcerers proved inadequate, and several towers were smashed down. Trolls quickly occupied the city, giants guarded its perimeters, and for two years the citizens were enslaved. During this time, the last two Cradles passed safely down the river and out to sea.

As history tells us, Joraz Kyrem escaped to Dragon Pass and returned with several regiments of Sun Dome Templars, and other more unusual allies, from the armies of the EWF. Thog and his forces were crushed, and Pavis the city entered its second dynamic era of vitality. After the city was liberated, Lord Kyrem and his new friends forcefully reorganized the power of the sorcerers, who were never again able to force their wills onto others in such a way.

Soon after this time, the Cult of Pavis evolved into a powerful entity dedicated not only to the gradual recreation of Pavis' own mythical ambitions, but also to governing the city. The Cult quickly gained three of the seven council positions, and was normally supported without question by Ginkizzie the dwarf, the incumbent holder of the fourth position.

This age of prosperity lasted until 940 ST when the nomad hero, Jaldon Toothmaker, ate a hole through the walls, and the city was sacked by Bison Riders, supported by Impalas. Over the previous years, the city had been almost completely isolated from the EWF, and Jaldon's forces had defeated three relief armies from the Empire. In this year, the Arrowsmith Dynasty was destroyed, and all contact with the Empire was lost.

After Jaldon's invasion, which killed or enslaved more than half of the population, the city fell understandably into decline. Even though it rallied enough to drive off several further aggressors before the devastating attack of Toras Joran in 1150, the benefits of civilization slipped away, and the people slowly reverted towards barbarism. Green Age Revivalism had already been sidelined in favor of other activities more necessary for sheer survival, especially since the fall of the EWF. As time passed, the Revivalist movement became merely a series of intriguing legends as far as the human survivors were concerned

III. Nature of the Cult

Upon the cult's founding, masonry skills were encouraged, to expand and maintain the city. Later these same skills were transferred readily to the greater needs of erecting and repairing forts, hideouts, traps and other defences that could resist the nomads and the trolls. They remain valued by the cult as symbols of their hope to one day rebuild their ruined home. Similarly, the Great Axe proved a staunch weapon against the trolls particularly, and was adopted as a heroic symbol of resilience, although many of the survivors actually used swords or spears. The ways of Plants was always close to Pavis' own interests, and he had spent much time designing public green space within the city. The ways of plants became a ritual lore embedded within cult teachings.

Although it has devolved into a simple city cult, at least to outward appearances, things are not always as they seem. Invaders have never breached the enormous original Temple, and within its echoing halls are contained artifacts and texts that reflect the glories and purposes of old. Even with the knowledge of the dragons having been torn away, much remains here that would feed an inquiring mind.

However, this Pavis Temple is not open to casual browsers, and the Priesthood long ago set up circles within circles amongst the Cult membership, to decide how much could be revealed, and to whom. The few remaining relics of the old city were sealed up for protection and for secrecy, and over time the emptiness of the chambers and passageways became seen as normal by those few allowed to wander around them without supervision.

Especially in New Pavis, the Cult appears as a social network, acting as a typical city cult should. The Priests are very careful that things remain this way. Everyone knows, of course, that you have to be a Pavis initiate to vote in elections or stand for civic office, but people don't usually think of this as a religious or ritual obligation. (Certainly not one in which some of the Priests and Initiates have a mythic agenda of their own to pursue.)

Back in the old city this social function has a different flavor, as the Cult has also been the focal point for knife-edge survival these last centuries. Few traditional residents treat their religion as a mere social club. For them it is a great deal more. Amongst these families, many stories are known about the old city, some true, and some fanciful distortions of history. Nonetheless there is profound respect for the traditions of the city and the cult.

IV. Organization

The worship of Pavis the Founder functions in all ways akin to that of a regular city cult, providing useful magic and social functions. This branch of the cult is joined by regular worshippers in New Pavis, and also by any child born to the surviving people of the Old City. Worship of Pavis the Overseer grants further knowledge and magic, and is open to the Priests and City Administrators. The other main subcults are: Opili (warriors), Flintnail (dwarves), and Joraz Kyrem (Zebra Cavalry). Flintnail and Joraz Kyrem also function as patron deities of their own people.

Most outsiders, and many junior cult members, believe that below the 'Son of Pavis' the Cult has only three ranks: Communal Worshipper, Initiated Worshipper, and Priests or Daughters. However, there are a variety of hidden organizations within the cult. The existence of these "inner circles" has remained well concealed through the ages. Moreover, obtaining initiation into the Cult of Pavis is rather more difficult than it at first appears.

Prospective initiates must have been born inside the old city or in New Pavis, although exceptions are sometimes made by symbolic adoption of foreigners. This rule protects the cult from the casual membership of those who wish simply to avail themselves of its services, and who have no real love for the city.

Worshippers of the city cult form of Pavis the Founder will be typically New Pavis residents who desire to support the cult of their home. Through piety and hard work they may eventually progress from Communal Worshipper to Initiate, and are taught the outer traditions, including Masonry, Great Axe, and Hammer. They are also eligible to vote on mundane cult and civic matters.

Devotees of Pavis the Founder are most likely to be from the families of the old city, whether living in New Pavis or the Rubble. Many of these worshippers within the Rubble reside in the Real City, although others live in Manside and Zebraside. Their religious services include even more unusual traditional activities, such as the Priests speaking at length in remnants of Auld Wyrnish, and wearing headdresses and cloaks of ancient design.

The City 'Marshals' (and the more senior 'Champions') of the Pavis Cult were originally worshippers who commanded different levels of the Cavalry or Foot, and most often (after the turn of the millennium) were from the Opili sub-cult. Currently there is no Champion, but the first Marshal in more than three centuries has recently been appointed.

V. Divine Intervention

As with most city cults, Pavis may intervene on behalf of his favored followers within or adjacent to his traditional territory, the old city itself, and across Pavis County. Exceptionally, he can also provide limited assistance to his followers performing special duties on behalf of the city anywhere within the region that was formerly Genert's Garden.

VI. Relations with other Cults and Groups

Aldrya: Common knowledge is that Pavis was somehow related to aldryami, although if the cult is questioned, they obfuscate this connection by suggesting that it is one of close association rather than kinship. The truth, of course, is that Pavis is of crossbreed heritage made possible by the experiments of the early Revivalists. The Aldryami have a presence in this city still, and have done since Pavis invited them here long ago. Back at the height of the old city, elves and runners were relatively common sights, tending the parks and gardens. The only evidence of this still seen is when a procession of elves arrives from time to time at the Real City and sings to the plants and trees.

Black Fang: Dark rumors of close relations between these two cults are merely that. The Pavis Cult and Black Fang share an uneasy co-existence at best. The assassin cult is less than 200 years old, and throughout the troll occupation was nothing more than a violent, and self-serving, gang of daredevil bandits. Even after the founding of New Pavis, calls for their special services were limited for quite some time. Only since active Lunar interest in Prax have they become a political force; increasing their skills and gradually altering their style to embrace more refined methods. The Pavis Cult prefers to use its own members to mete out any internal justice that may be required, although on very rare occasions the Fang's services have admittedly been arranged through a discreet middleman. Recent disharmony between cells of the Black Fang has been caused by an attempted Lunar takeover. Although such information is known to few, the inner circle of Pavis is well-informed, and guards itself.

Flintnail: The cults of Pavis and Flintnail evolved side by side, each revering their own founder in ways resembling both ancestor worship and city cults. Although the Pavis Priests do not like to talk about such things, the Flintnail dwarves have saved the humans of the city, time and again across their dangerous history. In return, the Pavis worshippers who know better willingly support the general misconceptions that the Flintnailers are a harmless and industrious people, who have nothing more than forges and machine shops in their underground lairs beneath New Pavis and the North Quarry. Whatever other relationship the inner circle of the Pavis Cult has with the most senior dwarves remains a mystery. Conspiracy theorists claim that the dwarves provide various opposing groups (including some of the Pavis Priests) with access to secret tunnels under New Pavis and the Rubble. Surely if this were true someone would have found at least one by now and exposed it to public scrutiny?

Mani's Clan: Relations have always been cordial with the occupants of this Fort in the Old City. From time to time, members of the Pavis Cult travel to Mani's Fort for short or long visits, attempting to reconstruct some of the history of the old city from the Clan's vague recollections. They do this through listening to folk tales, and by joining in the ritual dances and chants.

Opili: He is mainly remembered as the general of the Old City who devised the scheme of many small forts spread throughout the ruins, and is the only one of the Seventeen Foes of Waha known to be currently worshipped. (Although worrying rumors of a revival of the 'Sons of Estangtang' have recently surfaced.)

Zola Fel: The people of Pavis have always maintained good relations with the Zola Fel riverfolk. After all, without the river the city could not exist. Traditional Riverfolk are often part of Pavis Holy Day celebrations, making ritualized donations of their catches in return for gifts of city-made items. The Theist form of Zola Fel's worship, which is practiced within Riverside (New Pavis), the Old City, and certain towns in Pavis County, is seen as most odd by the majority of traditional animist worshippers.

The Dwarves of Pavis

By Ian Thomson and Greg Stafford

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Common Knowledge

To the residents of New Pavis, the sight of one or two dwarves wandering along a street is not something to be overly surprised at. Before the arrival of the Lunars, such an encounter was almost an everyday occurrence for someone whose activities took them frequently around town. For some reason, the dwarves have withdrawn noticeably from New Pavis in recent years, although they still maintain a trading post under Dwarfside, and "Goram's Sturdy Weapons" still operates its sales office overlooking the main city square.

For those new to this city, their first glimpse of a dwarf, or even a small group of them, going about their business, can be most startling. After all, typical dwarves who venture above ground have immense difficulty relating to human cultures, and most often travel in large, self-contained groups, equipped with their own unfathomable arms and equipment. They act as if they are traveling through an alien environment; which is of course how they view it. On the rare times they can be communicated with, exchanges are complicated by the dwarves' most unusual views of the world, and their total focus is on a single specific role, or group of responsibilities.

If a newcomer to New Pavis is from Northern Sartar, they may have had dealings with Isidilian the Wise and his Openhandist followers at Dwarf Mine. Even there, only the dwarves who are in charge of trading operations have made a reasonable attempt to understand their customers. The over-riding feeling when associating with Isidilian's dwarves is still one of great strangeness, but at least they seem content to deal with other races in relative goodwill.

The Pavis dwarves are more unusual even than their closest fellows at Dwarf Mine, and seem to have settled into living alongside humans very well. Presumably it is their long association with the Pavis Cult and the human survivors of the Old City that has brought about this familiarity. Should you have cause to engage a Pavis dwarf in conversation, whether they are out purchasing supplies, or welcoming you into their office behind Dwarf Street, you will surely find it surprisingly easy to understand one another.

This is not to say that the Pavis dwarves are just like their human neighbors, they are not. Often their manner, and tendency to assess priorities according to unknown dwarvish criteria, can remind a person very quickly that they are not dealing with one of their own kind. Even so, visitors with knowledge of dwarves have commented that those in Pavis are like no other dwarves they have ever met, or even heard of.

Those inquisitive enough to delve further into the origins of these unusual beings may be treated to a recounting of the history of the city. Apparently, Flintnail himself was one of the last Mostali, and came out of Dragon Pass with Pavis to help found this city. When the city was completed,

Flintnail vanished from history, but his dwarven followers remained and have been here ever since. Some time during their association with their Mostali leader, the dwarves developed a relationship with him that has turned to worship, and now they revere him in the same way that a human might revere a hero or an ancestor.

For some years after the founding of New Pavis, the few dwarf experts amongst the knowledge cultists thought that the Flintnail dwarves were immortal heretics, who had remained followers of Mostal as well as worshipping their former leader. However, when they began to request audiences with the dwarves in order to write a coherent history of the old city based on first hand experience, Dorasar himself asked them to restrict their investigations. This act, plus the oddness of their manner, now leads sages to presume (more or less correctly) that the dwarves are fully apostate, and thus mortal.

The dwarves, when pressed, declare that they are very happy here, making metal goods, and excelling in masonry. This, they say, is what they live for, to work as the Maker did and add to the order and restoration of the world by their labors. Whilst they are reluctant to discuss points of mostali spirituality, it is likely that the Pavis dwarves are the last fully Individualist colony still in existence.

The Cult of Flintnail

What even your good friend Goram the armorer won't tell you

I. Mythos and History

Flintnail, as is documented by historians, was an unusual Mostali. He did not follow his kin when they withdrew from contact with other races, and is believed to have taught many groups of humans the secrets of working with metals. He came to the old city with Pavis, and he and his dwarf followers were closely involved with constructing the city whose ruins are these days known as the 'Big Rubble'.

Little else is known in any detail, although much has been subject to speculation. What follows are secrets known in their entirety only to the dwarves of Pavis themselves, and much of this knowledge is carefully managed in its distribution even amongst their own. Due to their long and close association with the dwarves, the innermost circle of the Pavis Cult also knows some of this lore. It is classified by this Cult as equal in importance to its own most precious secrets, and shared only with the most trusted of its members.

Flintnail came out of Dragon Pass with a substantial group of dwarf followers. They were not just any dwarves, but individualists and other unusual heretics who saw Flintnail as the only Mostali who could guide them in their search for fulfillment. At that time the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends provided a tolerant society where many more unusual groups existed. Flintnail and his dwarf associates were welcomed wherever they traveled, and sold their skills in the working of metal and stone.

During this period, Flintnail encountered Pavis and other members of the sect of the Green Age Revivalists, and was drawn to their ideas of restoring the peace and understanding that formerly existed between the races. Whilst in no way the idealist that Pavis was, Flintnail nonetheless saw a great opportunity to restore the old ways of the dwarves, and balance what he saw as an unfair domination of his kind by such conservatives as the Nidan Decamony.

Consequently, Flintnail gladly followed the call of the Green Age City project, and led his dwarves through Shadows Dance and into Prax as part of Pavis' army. It was he that had taught Pavis about the Faceless Statue, and together they brought it back to temporary life. The ruins of Robcradle were taken from Waha and Paragua, and after much diplomacy a tentative peace was

established and construction of the new city began.

In this new city, the dwarves were happy in their labors, striving not only to create a harmonious and progressive settlement, but also to aid Pavis and his fellow Revivalists in many powerful projects and rituals both beneath the ground and on the Hero Plane. After the year 850, once the city began to flourish without their help, they started to charge for their work in masonry and metals. For several decades many dwarves lived aboveground in a part of the city then called 'Dwarfstown' and now called 'Smalltown'. (Once the nomad threat became impossible to ignore, they abandoned these buildings in favor of their more easily protected tunnels.)

Around 850, the Nidan Decamony declared 'Individualism' a complete heresy. Only a few years later, Flintnail gave himself up to the most powerful of Green Age magics that he could access. He danced his way into the myth of Genert's Garden, and from there walked into the realms of the spirits of Prax, successfully claiming his own place within the mythic framework. In doing this, he preceded his friend Pavis onto the Godplane by several years. By the time of the destruction of the EWF, worship of Flintnail had become the Pavic dwarves' primary religion. The ways of Mostal, although remaining inspirational, were relegated to the status of being just another set of tools, and the dwarves of Pavis became apostates.

Over the first of the tragic centuries of the old city, Flintnail's dwarves were crucial to the survival of the local humans. Whether defending against nomads or trolls, the dwarves had their secure tunnels, large stocks of food supplies courtesy of obscure Green Age growing rituals, and limited quantities of effective and unusual weapons to back them up. The most well remembered example of human and dwarf co-operation during this time occurred under Opili's leadership, when the Pavis forts were constructed. There were, however, many other examples of heroism and self-sacrifice on both sides, which have left a great bond between the dwarves and humans of the old city.

The greatest challenge to the dwarves themselves came with the troll invasion, when their homes and laboratories beneath the south part of the Rubble were compromised. Showing that their resourcefulness matched that of their more traditional kin, the Flintnail dwarves had a great surprise for the trolls, and made a supreme sacrifice. They collapsed the entire complex, along with several main tunnels, onto the heads of the invaders, as well as setting deadly traps in their other tunnels.

The surviving dwarves moved north, and began a new center of operations based around a secondary refinery on the south west edge of the North Quarry, and the New Flintnail Temple in the Rubble now marks its entry point. Since this time, the dwarves have been slowly regaining their former strengths, although at first merely repelling the trolls took all their time and energy. Luckily for the Flintnailers, troll tenacity does not always match dwarf determination. Whilst the trolls remained the ruling force in the Rubble until the Dragonewts' Dream, their actual numbers diminished fairly quickly after the first few decades, as they settled down to mainly squabbling amongst themselves.

The arrival of Dorasar and the other Sartarites at long last re-opened major opportunities for the dwarves, and they eagerly began selling their skills and products once again, in exchange for money and goods to aid them in their projects. Beneath the Rubble, the Flintnail dwarves continue with much more complex activities than merely the manufacture of superior products. Above ground they pose as harmless workers in metal and stone, but the areas below ground, which most humans believe are storerooms and workshops, are actually very much more.

II. Nature of the Cult

The Cult of Flintnail exists merely to provide the spiritual home for a group of hard-working dwarves. At least this is what the dwarves want any people who examine their affairs to believe. In truth, the Cult of Flintnail is also a secret organization dedicated to pursuing goals that they have held for almost 800 years. The Pavis dwarves have very long lifespans in human terms, and

also very long memories.

Once the city's social and practical infrastructures were laid, the Green Age Revivalist experiments were also established. With the invaluable aid of Mani and his Clan, Flintnail, Pavis, and their principle followers, began carefully experimenting with the myths made accessible by the affinity of this region to the Green Age. One of their experiments was extremely successful, and had far-reaching consequences for the dwarves of Pavis. This dwarf colony is now intrinsically tied to the Green Age, in ways few others can comprehend, and beneath the Rubble they are slowly and painstakingly recreating what they can.

Flintnail and Pavis' daughter, Shelbaris, were the individuals in charge of the greatest experiment that the city ever attempted. It was to be the forerunner of an entire series of great enterprises, but sadly only this one was ever completed. These magical experiments were along the same lines as those that produced Pavis, but with a slightly different goal: that of creating a dwarf/human hybrid. First out of the pot, so to speak, was an animated youngster named Ginkizzie, and over the following decades came Prokinizzie and various others.

Despite their astounding lineage, these half-dwarves look identical to regular dwarves in the perceptions of other races. Even the most obvious differences, such as a slight increase in size, are simply not detectable by the untrained eye. One remarkable thing about them, which the Flintnail dwarves discovered early on and have kept completely to themselves, was their ability to happily procreate in a very non-dwarvish way. Without this adaptation, the chances of their extinction would have been greatly increased.

Over the centuries since the collapse of the old city, the breeder dwarves have replaced their vat-matured fellows as the older generation has died out, but unfortunately it seems that only the first of this genealogy have been gifted with enormously enhanced longevity. Whilst a typical half-breed dwarf lives two centuries or more, Ginkizzie and the other founders have watched several generations come and go, as they themselves endure.

On the occasion that a particularly observant Lhankor Mhy historian pointed out that Ginkizzie was mentioned to have been present around the time of Pavis, the dwarves were quick to 'explain' that "Ginkizzie" is an honorary title, applied in turn to all of their leaders. So far nobody has noticed that the Mask of Altomis, which Ginkizzie wears occasionally at ceremonies, resembles his own face. In this the dwarves are protected by the fact that, to other races, they all look the same.

Most people believe that there are around 200 dwarves currently living beneath Dwarfside, including the ones stationed at the Flintnail Temple, and those observed in the Real City. The true number of dwarves living in Pavis is closer to 600, and growing all the time. Beneath Manside and the northern quarter of the Rubble they have an underground complex where they live their peculiar lives, and raise their young. Under the inspired leadership of their unusual elders, they continue to conduct odd ceremonies, all but forgotten by the descendants of the human citizens of the old city.

III. Organization

Although the dwarves are said to claim that their main underground temple is somewhere in Dwarfside, it is actually much closer to the structure known commonly as the New Flintnail Temple. This mistake probably originated from a dwarf, in response to a question, pointing at the entrance to Dwarfside and saying: "The temple is through there".

The Pavis dwarves work as a harmonious unit, and this is one of the few ways they reflect their traditional relatives. In this case, the history of close co-operation has been fostered by their isolated position, first as heretics, then as apostates, and lately as victims of what was virtually a centuries-long troll siege. These dwarves do not operate in rigidly defined social, or task-defined, roles in the same manner as a typical mostali colony. Instead, each dwarf is encouraged to

pursue the skills at which they excel, and which give them most fulfillment. Although every dwarf is also trained in the arts of tunnel fighting, and specialist melee weapons, as even now troll attacks are to be expected once in a while.

The Flintnail dwarves live in a 'collective', where each individual is considered to have value and certain rights. Regular dwarves of other regions live in workgroups where their personalities are considered a liability, but in Pavis the dwarves value each other's differences, and have codified the rights of the individual. These include participation in the various community councils, and the right for one's grievances to be heard. Even Ginkizzie and the other leaders are fully functional members of this peculiar society, and subject to the laws that they themselves helped to devise.

Their society has, however, been explained to outsiders in ways easiest to understand, reflecting an artificial 'standard cult format'. The reality is that Ginkizzie and the other elders retain the positions of highest authority, whilst also appointing the wisest and most experienced of their shorter-lived kin as specialist advisers.

IV. Communal Worship

Other than incidentally through worship of Pavis, direct communal worship of Flintnail is open only to Pavis-worshipping humans, who are readily trained in the arts of masonry and metalworking. No dwarf of the colony is ever a Communal Worshipper for longer than it takes them to squeeze into the world, and then they are initiated immediately.

Whilst these human lay members can pay for training at reduced cost, they are also required to work in the employment of the Flintnail Cult, and thus generate income for the dwarves. No communal worshipper is ever privy to unusual knowledge about the cult.

V. Initiate Membership

Whether it is with the Rubble Trackers, or working in the smithies or on building gangs, dwarf and human initiates are renowned for their skills, and rightfully require high payment for their services. On the surface all seems equal, however most human initiates are in the outer fringes of the cult, blissfully unaware of any hidden agendas.

Unless they are also members of the Pavis Cult inner circles, human cultists remain in this outer level of initiation permanently. These humans are actively discouraged from spending time in the dwarf complexes, and the disadvantages of the low ceilings and cramped quarters are cited as the reasons for this discrimination.

Some years before the Lunar occupation there was also a group of ducks in the city that claimed they were Flintnail Initiates. These gangsters, led by a notorious 'conduct' named 'Bigbill', managed to collect a small fortune in advance payments before their fraud was discovered.

VI. Associate and Subservient Cults

Pavis – In sheer numbers, there are more dwarves than humans with significant knowledge of the real history of the city. At the major Pavis ceremonies in the old city, dwarves make up a significant proportion of all congregations. All of the Flintnail dwarves revere Pavis as co-founder of the city, and are at least Lay Members of his Cult. Many dwarves are also Pavis initiates although their cult requirements for Pavis are mostly subsumed within Flintnail duties. This is not reciprocated in a like fashion, and only members of the inner circles of the Pavis Cult are automatically accepted as honorary Flintnail Cultists.

Shelbaris – The name of Pavis' daughter has often been used to threaten worshippers who betray the cult through action or inaction. Amusingly, there is no such entity attached to the cult in this manner. Presumably it is the dwarves themselves, or perhaps stealthy nilmergs, who remove the tools of offenders and generally make their lives a misery until they repent or leave town.

VII. Divine Intervention

Flintnail, as a minor yet potent Pavic deity, still walks the tunnels and ruins, protecting his charges. He may come to the aid of initiates anywhere within, or adjacent to, the Great Walls of Pavis, and also anywhere along the route to Throne, in Shadows Dance, or along the way to Dwarf Knoll. Devotees on sacred quests may potentially access this assistance anywhere in Prax or the Wastes. Records show that human cultists have found that when their call is answered, the intervention works with total effectiveness only half the time. Dwarves do not seem to suffer from this same problem. Usually, Flintnail will produce an item of mechanical or alchemical potency in response to a successful call, although the item will cease to function once the immediate need is over. After this, his most common method of aid is by using the elemental forces of the earth to protect the worshipper(s) or transport them short distances through the ground. If necessary these forces will clear a safe path for escape, throwing up barriers or opening pits to delay pursuers. Flintnail is also capable of repairing the broken bodies and limbs of his own people.

VIII. Miscellaneous Notes

The Vats - Of the various other unique or unusual activities that the dwarves own, but keep to themselves, they retain a working series of the old maturation vats. These have been carefully adapted to repair dwarves who have been injured, and are capable of healing the most grievous wounds, and even regenerating limbs.

Flintnail Doors – Using a combination of exceptional skills and magical assistance, the Pavis dwarves camouflage their tunnel entrances as parts of the surrounding scenery. The exact difficulty of finding and opening such a door depends upon its importance, and from time to time one of the lesser doors has been discovered accidentally. (These lesser doors never lead to areas of current dwarf habitation, as the highest level of technical complexity protects such places.)

Relations with the Aldryami – In the old days of the city, dwarves and elves were able to co-exist in harmony, and some few even worked alongside each other. Since Pavis fell, the Aldryami have retreated to their Garden and rarely come out. The old spirit of tolerance is currently clearly evidenced only by the fact that the elves and dwarves of Pavis feel no need to attack each other, preferring to expend their energies against other foes.

Public Demeanor – The Flintnailers have carefully developed the habit of behaving more like orthodox dwarves, and suppressing their human tendencies. Their subterfuge mainly involves speaking only of simple concepts, and replying directly to questions without volunteering extra information. With the people of the old city, the dwarves are more prone to relax these precautions, and the unusual sound of dwarf laughter may sometimes mix with that of other patrons, as it bellows from the 'Real Inn' at the Real City.

Growing Stone

One of the Green Age projects still under exploration is the long-term experiment of revitalizing stone. Since Stone the deity (Mostal's greatest brother and companion) was killed, all rock lost its vital abilities, which included its movement, communication, and exuberant life-force. Close to the Flintnail Temple at the North Quarry, a group of Lhankor Mhy archaeologists (who studied the area between 1590 and 1610) noted that the rocks appeared to be regenerating, albeit at an infinitesimal rate. Their reports were not treated seriously, and the Lunar invasion ended the research.

The Food Caves

Under the Rubble, some sections of the complex are reserved for food production. Tended by dwarf gardeners, numerous plants grow edible tubers or sprout nutritious shoots. Another relic of

Green Age magic, the food caves were never completed to dwarvish satisfaction, and much processing is required to make these vegetable products edible. Nonetheless this capability was important for dwarf and human survival when the city's enemies cut Pavis off from the rest of the world.

Reactions to Foreign Dwarves

The few foreign dwarves who arrive at Pavis create great consternation amongst the Flintnailers. The local dwarves always make great pains to welcome such newcomers, are very nervous until it is clearly established that the visitor is at least an Individualist or Openhandist heretic. The Pavis dwarves fear their distant kin more than they do the trolls, and the reason that their original complex was rigged to collapse on command was not due to the nomad threat, but rather due to concerns of a possible attack from fanatical followers of Mostal.

The 'Rubble Trackers'

Common Knowledge

The Flintnail Cult maintains several squads of mercenaries who are for hire as horse guards, guides, or explorers in the Rubble. Their cost is high, but their skills are undeniable. These groups are composed mainly of dwarves, but may often also contain human auxiliaries who are Lay Members, or even Initiates, performing their Cult requirements.

True Objectives

The Trackers are a good source of income for the Cult, and they also gather intelligence about the Old City as they go. Each squad is briefed to observe closely and to report back in great detail. Each mission usually also gives the dwarves and their companions a chance to practice their combat skills and reduce the numbers of trolls, outlaws or chaotics in the Rubble. The group that has hired their services effectively funds this on-the-job training for them.

Standard Terms of Service

Cost of Hire

Term of service is classified as either from dusk until dawn or from dawn until dusk, each at its own costing rate.

Exceptionally, fractions of such a period may be negotiated, and longer-term rates are available on application.

This table is a guideline only, and rates will be arranged on application.

CHARGES	Dawn to Dusk	Dusk to Dawn
Rock (Class 1) Mission	150L	250L
Tin (Class 2) Mission	250L	350L
Iron (Class 3) Mission	350L	450L
Rescue Insurance	+40L/person	+60L/person

Sections of the Rubble

'Rock': Manside, Zebraside, Furner Fields, North Quarry, N. part of Big Grazing, Huntlands during daylight only

'Tin': S. section of Big Grazing, Huntlands during darkness, Outer Troll Stronglands during the day, Devils' Playground and Ogre Island during daytime, Yelmatio Hill during darkness, Blind King's Hill

'Iron': Inner Troll Stronglands during the day, Outer Troll Stronglands at night, Devils' Playground and Ogre Island during darkness, Yelmatio Hill during the day, Temple Hill during the day, area around the Dragonewt Temple

Not available: The Garden, Inner Troll Stronglands at night, Puzzle Canal

Terms of Hire

- 1) The Clients will engage the services of an experienced Squad, fully armed and armored. No less than nine Trackers will be provided, and a squad will usually consist of 12. (Contrary to rumor, undersize squads are not a sign of ineptitude, but rather a sign of above average competency.)
- 2) Each Tracker will be armed with a broadsword, battleaxe, or warhammer in which they can demonstrate superior ability. Additionally, a minimum of six Trackers will carry blunderbusses or crossbows in which they hold professional competency.
- 3) On a 'Rock' mission, serious melee is not expected. The Squad's duty is to protect the clients from incidental attacks, and guide them through the Rubble to any location in the Class 1 areas. Additionally, the Squad will await the return of the clients until a prearranged time, and after this time the squad will return to base. In the event of major assault, the Squad will withdraw and will offer all possible opportunity for surviving clients to join them in this withdrawal.
- 4) Missions of Classes 2 and 3 ('Tin' and 'Iron') are considered duty during which serious melee is likely. In addition to the duties and restrictions detailed above, the Squad will be prepared to support in an assault against a prearranged foe, or against any chaos, trolls or bandits. Additionally the Squad will assist the Clients in any fighting retreat that may become necessary.
- 5) The exact nature of the exploration in which the Trackers are to be involved must be detailed beforehand. This includes proposed route, estimated duration of expedition, and the details of any known or suspected foes. Once these details are logged and payment made, the Flintnail Cult will offer any suggestions it considers will aid the success and survival of the expedition.
- 6) The Flintnail Cult extends a guarantee of secrecy around any unusual or valuable discoveries made, however requires 20% of the value of any such treasure which the Trackers protect during transportation to a place of safety.

General Restrictions

- 1) Trackers will not enter any unknown underground complexes beyond initial entry halls and chambers, with the single exception of an attempt to retrieve lost clients who have paid their Rescue Insurance.
- 2) No member of the squad will be required to sacrifice themselves against superior forces, and the senior surviving squad member is expected to order a fighting retreat in such circumstances. Once again, surviving clients will be offered every reasonable opportunity to take part in such a retreat.
- 3) The squad will return to base on expiry of their paid time, unless Rescue Insurance has been paid in full. Squad commanders are permitted only cursory searches for missing clients before departure if this Insurance has not been arranged.
- 4) Credit or cost exemptions are permitted in only one situation - where clients (or potential clients) assist any Rubble Trackers in defending against superior foes and removing themselves to a place of safety. In exceptional circumstances refunds may be offered for such actions.

Options

- 1) On 'Rock' and 'Tin' missions, the Client may pre-purchase dwarvish incendiary devices at the discount rate (availability permitting). In the event that these items are returned intact to the Cult, a full refund will be given. Only under exceptional circumstances will clients be permitted to operate such devices themselves.
- 2) Rescue Insurance entitles the Clients to confidently expect a search and retrieve mission for survivors and bodily remains, if they fail to return to a rendezvous by an appointed time. The Squad will exercise all possible efforts in such an attempt, barring attacking obviously superior forces, but including entering unknown underground complexes should such action be judged to be within tolerable safety limits. If necessary, the Squad Commander is also authorized to open negotiations as to exchanging ransoms for captives.
- 3) In the unlikely event that a Client saves, or significantly protects, the life or body of a member of the squad, whilst exposing themselves to risk, a credit note of 350-850L (dependent on the boldness of their actions) will be made available to them on return to the Cult.

Rubble Tracker Equipment

Standard Gear: rope (strong, 50ft); climbing mallet (with safety strap); metal pitons (box of 50); pulley fitting (for use with rope); Type IIb 'Helper' (metal crowbar, 1.5 ft long); warhammer or battleaxe; chain armor (+1AP dwarven); plate helm; Type IVb 'Sparker' (Flintlock firelighter); MIIe 'Dining Tool' (Tin-opener/spoon); and sufficient tins of dwarf food for each standard meal break during the mission.

Non-standard Gear: Type VIIf 'Adjuster' (monkey wrench); Type XIIa 'Longviewer' (telescope); musket; repeating crossbow; pistol; Type IIIc 'Investigator' (6ft long wide metal rod that telescopes out to a 15ft implement suitable for prodding out potential dangers); Type IIa 'Facilitator' (4ft long sturdy metal rod useful as a lever or for just hitting things); box of 6 emergency flares of assorted colors; 20ft coil of sturdy wire (for setting traps); Type IIc 'Snipper' (a pair of springloaded handclippers used for cutting wire); Book of Nilmerg commands.

Purchasing Goods from the Dwarves

Availability:

The Flintnail Cult has strictly limited amounts of dwarf goods for sale (as indicated by the high prices they are able to command), and the details that follow should in no way be taken to mean that they operate a chain of stores for explosives and projectile weaponry. Nor are they a ready source for musket-wielding, grenade-hurling stormtroopers. Their skills and devices are always employed only after due consideration (and of course appropriate payment). If adventurers, or dwarf adventurers, approach the Cult to buy or hire such items, the Storyteller should restrict availability to a limit that will not imbalance play. All 'black powder' items have only recently become available again in any case, since the Flintnail dwarves have re-opened relations with Isidilian's folk at Dwarf Mine. (The Flintnail Cult does not discuss their suppliers or modes of transports, and so outsiders are unaware of any relations between the two colonies.)

There is a dwarf adventurer in my campaign, and once the adventurers had amassed some wealth, and things got tough, it was necessary to codify the potential resources he had available. Dwarf goods will always be rare and expensive, even when the dwarves of Pavis sell things to their friends. The entire Pavis area is a frontier town, and someone visibly carrying dwarf gear is obviously extremely wealthy, or else supported by someone who is. I may inadvertently present this information in a way that suggests some kind of ready availability of dwarf goods. This is inaccurate, and normal adventurers will have to pay through the nose, as well as joining at the back of the sales queue, which may be many weeks, or even a Season, long. Bartering rare goods or interesting items with the dwarves, or performing a dangerous mission for them, is probably a quicker way of obtaining dwarf items.

Dwarf Food: The first purchase of this commodity must normally also include the acquisition of at least one MIIc 'Tin-opener', a flanged and rugged hand-held implement that is designed to remove the tops from the tins. Its cost is 15/30/40L. Without this item the tins might still be opened, but require a solid pointed implement and precision stabbing. Such efforts often result in damage to the stabber or to the contents. There are a great variety of dwarf foods, however the Flintnail Cult only markets two forms of standard rations: one to dwarves (DFDIXb), and one to humans (DFHVIIc). The dwarven variety tastes of dirt to humans, and is unpalatable by them except in small quantities. The human version, which tastes and feels like some kind of fowl to humans, is almost as distasteful to dwarves, but they can live on it for a while if they must. The greatest benefit of Dwarf Food Tins is that their contents keep indefinitely, often being discovered in serviceable condition after centuries. Thus the market in Pavis is mostly amongst well-financed expeditions heading into the Rubble, the Wastes, or across Prax. As with most dwarf goods, discounts are available for bulk purchases. (Although bulk orders need booking in advance as they may take a long time to fill.) Each tin provides enough food for one day, and when opened the contents normally keep for the whole day (reduced to only a few hours in intense heat).

Item (all subject to availability)	Discount	Partial Discount	Standard Rate
Tin of Food	6L	8L	10L
Repeating Crossbow	600L	700L	800L
Repeating Crossbow (superior)	700L	800L	n/a
Repeating Crossbow (deluxe)	800L	n/a	n/a
Flares (6 Pack - various colors)	120L	170L	200L
Rocket-powered Scaling Ladder	200L	250L	300L
Blunderbuss	500L	n/a	n/a
Pistol	450L	n/a	n/a
Musket	550L	n/a	n/a
Grenade	300L	400L*	500L**
Bowling Ball	350L	450L*	550L**
Disorder Keg	400L	500L*	600L**

"Discount" Rate is for Dwarves and extreme Dwarf friends

"Partial Discount" is for Dwarf friends and bulk orders

"Standard" rate is for general purchasers

* *Only available if the purchaser is a dwarf-friend, and dwarf operators must still also be hired*

** *Only available if dwarf operator(s) also hired*

Standard Repeating Crossbow - 7 shots

Superior - 9 shots

Deluxe - 12 shots

(All crossbows come with a spare clip that takes one round to reload.)