

Dust



Map valid AU21

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Dust can quickly be described as a dry, arid, desert land buried under constantly shifting sands. Once, this was all it was, but since the union of the Shards the climate has gradually improved. This land is home to Arabian, Sumerian, and Egyptian style cultures, with a backbone in commerce and trade.

More than any other land great upheavals have recently changed this land forever. Many lost regions have been found, passes opened up, earthquakes have raised and lowered mountain ranges, rain has even fallen in the deserts.

GEOGRAPHY

Dust is a dry land, the majority of which is desert. Those that are lucky enough to dwell alongside the oases and the river courses work hard with animals to make those regions fertile. Even in the deep desert, the occasional monsoon storms that sweep in from the mountains can coax life from the sands. Toward the coast there are even some areas of jungle where the humidity of the sea has not yet been blasted away by the relentless sun.

The land mass is large but lightly populated, even in the fertile regions. Recent events have led to the discovery of many lost lands. Where once there was only the oasis of the Thousand Tears of Nia, now there are many more regions to explore and discover.

In the centre of the continent lies the Oasis of the Caliph once known as the Thousand Tears of Nia. South of this lies the lands of Juanogre, home of the Ogres and further south still lies the Valley of Nia. To the north are the lands of the Serpents known as Apep and to the South west the newly discovered lands of the Anunna and to the northeast across a mountain range are the Lost Valleys.

To far west lies Thieneland. Once part of the main continent but damaged by events in AU19, this is now a separate land mass with its very northern edge a walled off region known as the home of the Architects of Iron.

Only the hardest or most desperate would attempt to survive in the deepest deserts, where the sands, djinn and efreet combine to make travel extremely hazardous hampering any exploration effort.

POLITICS

Although the politics of the well known regions are fairly well established, that of the newly discovered area is, for the most part, unknown. Dust politics tends to monarchies and theocracies in stable areas. Smaller areas or nomadic bands tend to fall into more of a tribal structure.

HISTORY

The Shard of Dust was once a fertile land, so legends say, but was scorched dry and turned into a desolate arid waste under the God Arak's unrelenting insane fury. After this, Dust was a dry and sun blasted land. Boasting sand aplenty, with arid mountain ranges poking through the deserts and a few clusters of oases, holding the precious water of life.

After the Shards fused to form the new world and Arak died. With Arak dead, his temples sacked and his wealth redistributed to those strong enough to hold it. A political storm driven by commerce has washed over the populated towns found clustered around the oases. Dust, along with all of the Shards was changed forever, but with the sands only now beginning to settle, how far those changes go on Dust have yet to be seen.

New lands have been found as mountain passes opened up, where once only a portal could get you to Dust, now ships have found its coast.

Along with lands, new political struggles are starting. Dust's culture is much in flux, the return of lost religions and the spreading of new ones create even more complications. Some good news, however, is that the army of undead that was surrounding the populated Oasis seem to have retreated and are only now found in the area that leads to the Deep Desert to the West.

REGIONS

OASIS OF THE CALIPH

This area was once called the Thousand Tears of Nia indeed it is still called that by some. But this area was named after actions of the now dead god Arak and the Caliph wants Arak and memories of his legacy to be banished as a forgotten thing of the past.

The oasis was traditionally home to people suited to desert living, with the majority of the population living in towns clustered around oases such as Mubarak Abar. These areas offer little shelter from the burning sun during the day or the freezing desert nights.

Trade between settlements relied on caravans which slowly track across the ever shifting sands, following well established trade routes.

Here money is everything, slavery is the norm and theft is a legitimate business tactic - provided you don't get caught. In this culture wealth should be displayed, as wealth opens doors and the deal is what matters.

The Temples and Shrines of the former Gods Arak & Nia have been stripped of their wealth by the band of cutthroats known as the Sable Veil and they now work to try to rule Oasis from the shadows.

The official ruler of the region is the Caliph. He remains in power despite the Sable Veil, theories abound about this. Some say he is their puppet, others that his is their leader, but maybe he just pays them enough to leave him alone. None truly know.

The Caliph's power lies in his control of the Mentary, a group of academic mages that have developed their skills into technology that allows them to enslave elementals to do their bidding.

With the loss of Arak and recent wars, the old religions are rarely practised. The majority of people here follow the Gods of the Lost Valleys, although in truth, most follow the worship of wealth above all.

ETIQUETTE, LAWS, TRADITIONS AND SOCIAL TABOOS OF THE OASIS OF THE CALIPH

Women once had no standing in these lands and older or more conservative types may prefer it to still be thus. But with many wars and the rise of new gods, women now have equal status under the law.

Do not use black powder weapons.

Thieves have their hands cut off unless they are wealthy and can pay the Caliph.

Murderers are beheaded unless they are wealthy and can pay the Caliph.

(The majority of people believe they are the chosen and thus their life has more value than any outsider's. Effectively a weregild system is in place. If there are any deaths they can be

assuaged by the payment of blood money. The price of a local is at least twice that of the noblest foreigner. If this is paid there is no beheading. Unless of course a foreigner is to be beheaded then it is the best entertainment to be had.)

The culture frowns upon the delivery of bad news. This develops into the approach of deliberate untruths about anything that might upset someone. It took one family a year to inform their father that their mother had died.

Business arrangements can be very interesting, as the buyer will inform all the sellers that he will buy from them. When in fact, he intends business with only one (to avoid saying no to and thus disappointing anyone). Even when the business deal has gone through it is bad form to tell the disappointed contacts. Better to tell them that it was someone else's decision, or that they will get the deal next time.

Personal space is much closer for the people of Dust. Cultures from the other Shards consider them to be far too familiar. They are very tactile and often hold hands and put their arms around each other and their favoured guests. Their timekeeping is atrocious. They will demand that you abide by a definite time and place and then arrive hours late. They are too polite to say they have to leave.

Workers will agree that they understand you perfectly because to ask a question would cast doubt upon your choice of words.

Slavery is a common practice and is legal. Slaves fulfil many roles, house servants, labours, gladiators etc they have monetary value, only the Caliph can grant freedom to slave.

Politeness - People are generally polite to each other all the time, swearing of any kind is never well received.

Praise - Praising people for any reason in the most effusive manner possible is to gain their respect and if done exceptionally well will gain the admiration of those who overhear the praising.

Generosity - The giving of gifts is central to all the cultures of Dust and gifts are always offered for the smallest of reasons. People of other Shards often think of them as bribes. The people of the Oasis thinks of them as lubrication and an indication of respect. No powerful man would dream of dealing with a stranger without some monetary inducement carried out through a subordinate who also requires his dues.

It is always wise to remember though that on Dust every smile hides a desire, every gift hides a curse and every praise a hidden meaning.

Bad decisions are rarely challenged because that would question the judgement of the leader.

Wealth should be displayed as blatantly as possible as an indication of how much you are blessed by the gods.

VALLEY OF NIA

This valley is well protected by mountains and by its people: the Children of Nia, who spent many years fighting Arak but now seem to have found peace.

The Children dress to conserve waters and no culture anywhere on the world is more skilled at getting the best out of the land and finding water than the Nians.

The Nians know how to weave a material that is in much demand as it is cooling in the heat and warming in the cold nights. They have developed ways to filter waste for precious water, screens to collect condensation and masks for extreme conditions that can even collect the water vapour in their breath.

The Nians do not keep slaves, they hold no land and to a certain extent they have nothing and want nothing but the clothes they wear, the tents they live in and a few always useful trinkets.

The Nians were a persecuted race, those that followed Arak tried to wipe them out. It is for that reason they have little trust of strangers, yet many people from other regions tell stories of how a Nian saved them from something. The Nians know what it like to be called filth, unwanted and have a in built need to want to help others.

Until a Nian gets to know someone they will always hide their face by wearing the turban desert style with the end of the cloth wrapped over the lower part of the face so you can only see their eyes.

They keep herds of animals which they move monthly from pasture to pasture as the land and water supplies decline.

They are allies to the Efreets and Magi.

They follow the Goddess Nia - Goddess of the Moon.

They are a nomadic people, tough survivors and trackers, they look after the land only taking what it's prepared to give. They seek a quiet life and love to tell stories around a warm fire in cold desert evenings.

It is said the Nians hide the secret of a pass leading to a much more verdant land.

THE LOST VALLEYS

The Lost Valleys are a recently discovered set of regions with dry, arid and stony lands between the mountain ranges, but these Valleys have rivers that provide lush fertile land on their banks. The people are well fed and generally happy, freedom however does not exist, they live in fear of the Gods displeasure, and send their children to built great monuments.

The culture and costume of this region mostly resembles ancient Egypt

STRUCTURE

Hat-a-Mun - The region is ruled by Hat-a-Mun a cruel, unkind heartless pharaoh, she rules, her word is law and if she dislikes you, you will die.

High Priests - Below her are her family who are all High Priests or Priestess of one of the Gods of lost valleys. These High Priests/Priestess have total freedom to do as they please and are above the law and command in her name.

Priests - Below the High Priests are other Priests, minor family relations or other favored people, they travel, may carry weapons and can gives orders to those below them that don't countermand orders given by those higher, they live, die and receive their wealth at whims of the High Priests/Priestess

Marked Ones - Below the Priest sit the Marked Ones - Mostly scribes and other skilled crafts people or perhaps merchants, they have no authority but may travel freely. They may carry weapons for personal protection.

Military - Alongside the Marked ones sit the army, slaves conditioned to follow instructions without thought, they carry weapons, they are so conditioned that they will kill themselves without argument on command for the Gods have willed it.

Shaduf/Slaves - At the bottom sits rest the people The Shaduf, they are for all intents and purposes slaves they Gods says they must obey the priests or the rivers will run dry, the land turn to dust, their children will die, they will all die of disease. The Shaduf either toil building great monuments to Hat-u-mun and the gods, toil in fertile land providing food or other items. Unless chosen/given in tribute to build great monuments or become part of military they never leave their own village.

Her people follow the Gods of Lost Valleys

BASTET

Among the Lost Valleys are the Bastet a race of Cat Beastkin that follow the Lost Valleys God Bast, they are rebels among the people, but are left alone by High Priests in wild areas of the land for reasons unknown. The Basted dress in a similar style to rest of Lost Valley although they will more wild and may be dressed in rags, furs and other animal skins.

Players may come from this region. Players cannot be high priests.

JUANOGRE

Juanogre is the home of Ogres. It has formed around an Oasis between two mountain ranges which protect its southern, western and northern borders.

Juanogre is a principality of the Oasis of Caliph, its ultimate sovereign is the Caliph. Its dress and style are very much similar to this land but is run by a King with a more forward thinking agenda. King Langstrom, leader of Ogres, does not believe in slavery. But otherwise much of the culture of the Oasis of Caliph exists within this land. Juanogre is tasked by the Caliph to guard the Great Portal and all Ogres consider it their sacred duty to do so.

The Ogres have within their number Magi who dislike the Caliphs love of the Mentary, who enslave elementals. Since Magi were termed rebels, the Magi in Juanogre are called the Gifted Ones when they are talked about and keep themselves well away from the eyes of Caliph.

The Ogres of Juanogre may follow the Gods of the Lost Valleys and Nia, although predominantly they follow the teachings of the Star Mother.

ANUNNA

This is newly discovered land, not much is yet known about it. Only the name has travelled with the nomads out of the new passes along with new trade goods.

Players cannot come from this region

APEP (SERPENTS CRADLE)

Apep was discovered in AU13. Until AU19 it was only accessible by a hidden portal, but now with great upheaval to the land, passes have opened up meaning it is now accessible.

This is the home to race of humanoid sized and shaped serpents, peaceful ones, unusual since most other known serpent races seem to hate humanity and other races.

The Apep culture has developed in line with guidance from their God, the Star Mother and a long war with a race of Cat people that have since left the region.

Little more can be said so far about them.

Players cannot come from this region

THIENELAND

Thieneland is a land with a mix of jungles and savanna. It is one of the newly discovered lands first found by ships around AU8 and is relatively unexplored apart from its coastline.

The region near the southern coast has been raided by Salem, Dust and Thunders for slaves which are easily acquired as the region is very primitive, disorganised and most of the people found there are easily influenced.

A chief of the region is called "Skywalker" but none have met them. They are said to rule from an area to the south of a mountainous region called Skytop although without roads or any apparent army their rule is suspect at best.

The natives call themselves the Cloud People and are roughly fifty percent Humans and the rest are best described as Goblins, but these are not anything like the Goblins that can be found in Faerie, they have ancestral knowledge of machines, even though the region apparently has none and so they are much prized by slavers for capture.

They follow the 5 Gods of The Cradle.

ARCHITECTS OF IRON ENCLAVE

To the North of the Thieneland region is a large area that is walled off. The wall is ancient and its gates well protected by magic. The Cloud people call this the home of great Architects, the home of Iron and Steam and a place you do not go.

Players cannot come from this region

RACES/CREATURES

Below is a bit of information on the creatures and races of Dust, it is by no means complete or accurate.

Playable Races: players who choose to play a characters with Dust origin can pick from these races, Human, Ogre and Ogryn Bloodlines, Cat Beastkin, Thieneland Goblins and Human Elementals.

Any other race listed are for Dust background information.

HUMANS

Humans make up 95% of the population of Dust.

OGRES AND OGRYN

Ogres and Ogryn can be played by characters from Dust

OGRES

Ogres are an ancient race of large humanoids. They are very strong, tough and a little slow thinking, but should not be classed as dumb as they will get there eventually. Otherwise they are very human like. They do not mix well with Humans and have their own region called Juanogre.

OGRYN

Ogryn are basically like Ogres, but Ogres and Ogryn dislike each other.

The Ogryn are a Bloodline race, they are different to Ogres in they have 2 small horns on their forehead. The Ogryn can be much dumber but sometimes stronger than Ogres. The bloodline is hidden at birth, you start Human, your Ogryn side only comes out later in life. You physically change, although the change is gradual, you slowly take on the attributes of the Ogryn, the stronger you get the dumber you get.

Ogryn have no fixed abode, they tend to work for Sable Veil and other criminals, their strength is a useful tool and their slow minds makes them easy to manipulate.

PLAYING OGRE/OGRYN

Anyone wishing to play an Ogre or Ogryn must take the talents Potency and Fortitude, otherwise they are free to chose any ability a Human can pick.

When playing an Ogre in particular players should wear costume to bulk themselves up, they are meant to be large and muscular. Ogryn can get away with less while they are still changing from basic Human to Ogryn. New Ogryn should have 2 red circles on their forehead to represent the horns that are growing, these should be replaced later with 2 small horns.

THIENELAND GOBLINS

Thieneland Goblins are a race apart from anything you would normally expect of Goblins. They are smart, have an affinity with machines and a desire to collect things.

Thieneland Goblins still have green tinged skin, players wishing to play this race can choose this as their Racial Heritage. They are found mainly in Thieneland, although some may be found as slaves in workshops around the world.

HUMAN ELEMENTALS

Human elementals are creatures that are part human and part elemental they are part of the 4 elements, Earth, Air, Water and Fire, players can chose Elemental as their Racial Heritage.

Human Elementals look Human and blend in with the population, they may come from any of the regions of Dust.

THE BASTET

Players wishing to play a Bastet or Cat Beastkin should choose appropriate skills from the Beastkin Heritage.

Bastet are generally warriors, tribal, few have any learning, some may be priests and all follow the Lost Valley's God Bast.

MUMMIES

Mummies are not a playable race.

Mummies are powerful undead, important powerful beings raised from the dead, sometimes wrapped in bandages, they are intelligent and can command other undead and raise armies of skeletons.

DJINN

The Djinn are not a playable race

The Djinn or Genies are creature of magic, they have no masters but capture one and they will grant wishes within their magical limits. Every time a Djinn uses their magic to grant a wish they give away part of themselves so they do so only when the need is great or they are bound to do so. The Djinn spend most of their time playing small tricks on people, they can turn to vapour and disappear, they can shrink and fly and unless bound to someone or something are generally harmless.

EFREET

The Efreet are not a playable race

The Efreet are the dust name for the larger elementals, those that are large enough to be intelligent, fire, earth, air and water, although most efreet you will encounter in Dust are fire, while water ones are very rare.

APEP

The Apep are not a playable race

The Apep are a human size and shaped intelligent reptilian race also known as Serpent people. They are strong and wise, one Serpent warrior can fight ten Human warriors and win. They should not be confused with Sutekh or Saurons, their numbers are small, they cannot mimic Humans nor do they have acidic blood.

COSTUME

COSTUME OF THOSE FROM OASIS OF THE CALIPH, JUANOGRE AND APEP

The costume of this area is ancient turkish and arabic. They commonly wear fez, turbans, and hijab on their heads. Both men and women will wear a dishdasha, jilbab a long dress like as the main garment, which is then covered by a cloak, kaftan or more colourful outer robes. Belts can be leather but much more commonly they are wraps of brightly covered fabric.

Wealth is important here so is displayed by the wealthy who wear many rings, amulets and cover what they can in fine embroidery, gold and silver, even the less wealthy will still try to find something to show their worth.

Any search under ottoman empire or arabic costume will bring up the look we are after.



COSTUME OF THE NIANs

The Nians wear a Bedouin style of costume, with loose layers of cloth covering them head to foot, turbans, Jihab, It is nearly always light colours, plain white is common, but creams, oranges, light blues can also be seen. Any search under Bedouin costume will bring up the look we are looking just avoid blacks, dark colours and keep it simple with no patterns



COSTUME OF THE LOST VALLEYS

The peoples of lost valleys wear the costume associated with ancient Egyptians, mostly made of white linen, they wear short dresses and white blouses, often pleated, black wigs are common as is jewelry with large stones, black makeup is used to accentuate the eyes, and red adorned the lips and as eye shadow this is worn by both men and women. Any search under ancient egyptian costume will bring up the results we are looking for.



COSTUME OF THIENELAND

The peoples of Thieneland wear costume associated with african tribes such as the Zulu's grass skirts they may wear little else in hot weather, in colder weather they will wear animal skins, those of carnivorous beasts are given greater status than those of prey animals.

No photos available

ORGES AND ORGYN



BASTET



THINGS TO NOTE.

NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE

- **Caliph Khalil** - Leader of Oasis Of the Caliph
- **Vizier Shihab Zaki** - Head of Mentary, elemental enslavers working for the Caliph
- **Langstrom** - King of Juanorge
- **Mirage** - Man hating Queen of the Shadow Bandits resides with her warband of ladies in the Fortress of Shadows.
- **Skywalker** - Leader of Thieneland
- **Nadia Karyeh** - A mystical woman who is rumoured to roam the deserts with a crystal hammer.
- **Father Hawk** - originally an archivist. Reader of the actual Wissen - powerful in True Faith
- **Hat-a-mun** - Pharaoh or Queen of the Lost Valleys

GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

- **The Sable Veil** - The Sable Veil are a gang of cutthroats and thieves, said to rule the Oasis
- **Mentary** - A group of academic magic users that have the technology to enslave elementals
- **Magi** - A group of mages sorcerers and conjurers
- **The Hashashin** - A group of assassins said to be insane from drugs
- **The Shadow Bandits** - A small warband led by Mirage, predominantly female, they can be found in the Fortress of Shadows.

GODS

NIA

Arak scorched the land so that only his own hard working people would survive. It was a holy purge.

The purge was not completed, however, as some of the other gods survived. All these other gods were banished from the heavens except one, Nia. Arak searched for Nia, goddess of the moon, but could not find her. Always she would hide during the day and only come out when Arak was asleep. Then she would weep for the other gods and their lost children. Her tears would fall on upon the earth so that Arak's rage would be held back for another day. Every morning Arak would rise, see the mark of Nia upon the world, and become even angrier.

So Arak said the faithful of Arak must help their Lord and seek out those who are not truly human and purge them. The children of Nia must suffer worst of all.

Nia is the Goddess of the moon, and all those that follow her will find water when their need is greatest

THE GODS OF THE CRADLE

Spiker - The God of Metal - followers believe in learning, science and growth, they want freedom of information and end to wasteful wars.

Junk - The God of Scrap - followers believe nothing should be thrown away, items, ideas, rubbish, sewage, use and re-use everything, collecting is a good thing

Tapist - The God of Memory - followers are story tellers, law keepers, they want order, they want laws, they want records to be kept, .. monks of this order are the only people in this land able to read and write.

Bester - The God of Win - followers believe in striving to be best, to be top of the bunch, they think war is good it thins out the weak, shove your enemy's face in the mud and gloat, tell everyone how good you are they need to know. Fear nothing, laugh when friends die, its not sad its funny because its not you.

B'Grain - The God of Feast - followers believe in tending the land, looking after others, they want the world to grow, have sex make babies, eat lots and fart, healers should be treated with respect. followers tend to be laid back and lazy.

THE STAR MOTHER

The Star Mother calls her people the Star Born and her guidance is that of freedom of will, everyone is free to make their own choices, they are not to be bound by anyone. The strong protect the weak and survival of all is key.

THE GODS OF THE LOST VALLEYS

Meretseger - Meretseger was known as the guardian of the ways , the doorkeeper to the spirit realms with the ability to move souls or to keep them locked away. Known to be reclusive and private by her very nature. Patron of all things that slither, and most Lizards.

Bast - Bast, Goddess of the Home and patron of felines, prayed to by many homemakers to protect the home and goods within and also Patron of craftsmen

Sekhmet - Sekhmet is a god of combat. Incredibly skilled with all things violent, is famous for her short temper. Daughter of a god who tricked her into drinking pomegranate wine (which she believed to be blood) after she had killed his champion in anger. Drunk on the wine/ blood when she returned to her father he quoted "Daughter, you have come back peaceful" and from then she was Transformed into Hathor - goddess of motherhood.

Hathor - Goddess of motherhood, legend says that she was the drunken reincarnation of the war goddess Sekhmet.

Geb - God of the earth. Created at the same time as Nut, the sky goddess, from the primordial chaos, they shared an incestual relationship (creating Kephri) before being banished to remain apart forever. Geb often looks up with longing at Nut, creating mountains in a vain attempt to reach her.

Nut - God of the sky. Created at the same time as Geb, the earth god, from the primordial chaos, they shared an incestual relationship (creating Kephri) before being banished to remain apart forever. Nut is the mother of Kephri, the sun god, whom she swallows at sunset and gives birth too each morning.

Kephri - Kephri is the son of Nut and Geb, a product of their incest. He is reborn every day at sunrise, pushing his way from his mother's womb. His is the incarnation of the sun, carrying and protecting its light across the sky to be swallowed again by his mother in the evenings.

Bes - Bes is a happy, jolly god of partying and patron of the Brewers, Artists and all those who need inspiration.

Thoth - Thoth is the wisest of the gods and a powerful spellcaster, known abilities have included magical resurrection. He has often shown man the error of his ways and values intelligence above all else. Those who anger Thoth are likely to incur complex problems to solve or even suffer a lack of wisdom at a critical moment.

Ma'at - Ma'at is the goddess of justice and truth, who uses a feather to judge souls passing to the afterlife.

Anubis - Anubis guides the souls of the dead through the seven gates and the hall of judgement to the afterlife. Patron to the morticians.

Amut - Amut is the goddess of Love and Beauty, who is known to be very wise and capable of great feats of magical healing. Despite being the wife to Osiris, she is known for her chasteness and purity.

Osiris - Osiris is the Patron god of Kings and leaders, known for his abilities to keep people calm and creating unity. Over time he also became a patron to farmers when the river which united the upper and lower kingdom created fertile farming plots.

NOTES

It is important to know your continent of origin and many of its features, since certain in game effects may target people from certain regions.

If you are not sure of origin because of your back story then inform a ref and one will be allocated.

The colour of Dust is Red, red signifies Strength, Fire and Healing.