

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



## Ruins of Adventure

### CREDITS

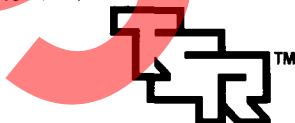
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*Ruins of Adventure* is a module that allows players of the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game to enjoy the same adventure as players of the AD&D® computer game, *Pool of Radiance*, produced by SSI, Inc. *Ruins of Adventure* uses the same plot, background, setting, and many of the same characters as the computer game. In fact, players of *Pool of Radiance* will find useful clues to the successful completion of their computer mission in this module.

*Ruins of Adventure* is set in Phlan, a small town on the northern shore of the MoonSea in the Forgotten Realms. Anyone running a **FORGOTTEN REALMS™** campaign will have no trouble fitting this module right into their game. While this module is designed for beginning and low-level characters who will grow in power as they take on bigger and bigger challenges in the ruins of Phlan, it is also flexible enough to accommodate player characters of nearly any level.

The module is divided into many separate episodes, some taking place inside the city of Phlan, and some occurring in the wilderness around the area. Some episodes are crucial to fulfilling the ultimate goal of the adventure—freeing Phlan from the evil forces that have held it for 50 years—and others have no specific tie to the goal at all, and are in the adventure for a change of pace. Many of the episodes will also lead off into tangents of their own if the DM wishes to develop them, giving a party of adventurers many choices throughout the play of the module.

The DM should read through the various episodes carefully. Also, pay attention to the descriptions of Porphyrys Cadorna, Tyranthraxus, and the various “stock” NPCs that appear later in this introduction. Use these NPCs liberally to encourage the player characters to tackle the various challenges of *Ruins of Adventure* only as they become strong enough to handle them. The PCs should not go after Valjevo Castle first, for example, and if they seem intent on it, find an NPC that can guide them to an adventure

more to their initial level.

Many of the episodes in this module can be lifted whole from the Phlan setting and used in an ongoing AD&D® campaign in a completely different fantasy world. This is especially true of the wilderness adventures.

So take the elements you like out of this module, leave the rest, and structure an adventure that best fits your preferences and your players. And most of all . . . Have fun!

## Background

It has been 50 years since the city of Phlan was a small but growing city on the shores of the great MoonSea. Trade sailed into to Phlan, past the fortress of Sokal Keep where the watch scanned the sea for pirates, into the small harbor at the mouth of the Stojanow River. Galleys, pinks, cogs, and schooners came from the merchants to the south, braving the sea to this small northern port. Townsfolk off-loaded pungent spices, dark woods, reptilian leathers, filmy cloth, gnarled barks, hammered steel, veined marbles—the riches of the southern shores. From the north came thick-bearded men—men of the bitter plains, granite mountains, and icy swamps beyond, leading caravans burdened with silky furs, heavy wools, rare ores, straight-beamed woods, and the ivories of beasts long-forgotten in lands further south. Slowly, with patience and endurance, the caravans plodded to Phlan meeting others, friends in the dwarves of the Dragonspine and elves of the Quivering Forest, foes in the orcs who came from the Tweenhill gap or the reptilian race of the swamps. In Phlan northman and southerner met, haggling, cheating, lying and drinking. Phlan was well on its way to becoming a prosperous trading town.

And then the dragons and their armies came. At first the men of distant villages stopped trekking to Phlan. No trader came back with tales of new discoveries. The distant outposts slowly disappeared. Then refugees began to arrive. At first they were soli-

tary survivors straggling in to lose themselves in the maze of the slums. Then families arrived perched on plodding wagons. They told stories of neighboring villages set to the torch, the humans slaughtered—or worse. Trade dropped off. Fewer caravans arrived. Fewer ships came to collect the scanty cargoes. The merchants were concerned. Scouts were sent. They returned telling of hordes of orcs, goblins, ogres, and giants doing what they had never done before—marching as armies with order and discipline. It was the fear of their commanders, fearsome dragons, that held them together. Towns closer and closer to Phlan fell, the stream of refugees increased. Cautious merchants packed their goods and left. Greedy merchants hurriedly amassed fortunes from the frightened people while keeping one eye always on the door. The Council fretted and fussed. Some wanted appeasement, some favored an army, and still others poured money into the walls of Phlan. But no strategy was ever agreed upon.

When the armies finally came, Phlan was simply not prepared. For a day the Council watched the lines drawn up outside the walls—ranks of leering, skull-painted beasts dragging obscene machines of war. They could not surrender, for they knew there would be no mercy from these cohorts. Valiantly, but futilely, they mustered their men. Their spearmen were ready to meet the charge.

From the start of the attack, the humans were defeated. They were out-numbered, out-fought and out-generalled. The first wave struck from the air—wheeling flights of dragons after dragons swept over the rooftops, setting ablaze vast portions of the city. As the flames licked over the chimneys, the attackers charged into the trapped militia. The Battle of Phlan was a massacre.

In 50 years, however, the dragon armies have flowed and ebbed, leaving behind pockets of despair and desolation. These isolated domains cannot withstand the unstoppable



flood of human dominance. Men have returned north of the MoonSea and are determined to reclaim their lost homes.

Such is the case in Phlan. Although the city proper—its districts and its fortresses—are still held by the twisted offspring of the original conquerors, good men have managed to gain a foothold in the ruined city. Fired by the feelings of destiny and progress, they have set their sights on reclaiming all of Phlan and restoring it to its former glory. To this end, they are backed by a new Council, a consortium of the children of the original merchants of Phlan and new, eager speculators.

## The Plot Overview

The basic story is very simple. The player characters are hired to help clear the ruined city of Phlan of the evil creatures that have overrun it. The reward will be cash, although property can be taken instead. As the player characters begin the task of block-clearing, they hear rumors and threats about the “Boss”—the master brains behind the uneasy confederation of evil creatures. It is clear that this “Boss” holds some special great power over the goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, and others of the city, binding them to his will. All of them speak of him with hushed awe and fear, but none know exactly what his hold is. At the same time, Porphyrus, the son of Cadorna the Cloth Merchant (one of the old families of Phlan), becomes curious about this “Boss” and the source of his power. Using his position on the council, he begins to send the characters on different missions, ostensibly to clear the city, but also to gain secret knowledge for himself. As the characters complete these missions, they bring back more information about the nature of the Boss’s power. Gradually, the son of Cadorna (and hopefully the players) learn of the Pool of Radiance. This pool supposedly confers great power and leadership on those who bathe in its waters. However, the location of the pool is

unknown. The location of the pool is a lost secret, now only known to the Boss. By now suspicious of the motives of the player characters, Porphyrus leads his own band of adventurers on a mission to extract the Boss’s secret.

However, reaching the boss is not an easy matter. It is known that he uses the fortress on the hill as his base. The only landward approach is heavily fortified—a small army would be needed to penetrate the main gate. Along the river, the ground rises in steep cliffs (though not insurmountable). Worse than this, the Barren River (once known as the River Stojanow) prevents anyone from reaching this side. This river is a seething current of acid and poison. Somehow the water is steeped in acids so powerful they can destroy a boat (or person), even if the deadly toxins don’t kill first. As if these two were not enough, horrible unknown creatures crawl the banks, looking for prey. Until the river is cleansed, there is no way to reach the fortress of the Boss.

However, the Boss has not been blind to what is happening. As the player characters become more successful, the Boss tries to organize better defenses for the tribes under him. When these fail, the Boss goes about gathering new recruits. He makes a point of having his agents avoid contact with the player characters, if at all possible. The player characters will become aware of these movements as they deal with those outside the city and they pass information on to them.

In the final confrontation, if the party succeeds in reaching the Boss, they discover the evil leader is a Bronze Dragon. However, bronze dragons are not normally evil. Instead the poor creature has been possessed by a terrible and powerful being—the Pool of Radiance was not all it was supposed to be. When the dragon bathed in it centuries ago, a thing lurking there seized its mind. Boring into its skull, the creature has controlled the dragon and through it the forces of the city.

However, the creature is not immortal and must find a new host quickly if

the dragon is slain. Thus, at the same time as the player character arrives, so does Porphyrus and his party. A battle may break out. If the player characters concentrate on defeating Porphyrus, the dragon/thing will use the diversion to escape. If the characters concentrate on the dragon, Porphyrus will try to stop them (since he does not want the dragon killed). One way or another, the spirit possessing the Bronze dragon will transfer to another character (Porphyrus, unless he is defeated, or another non-player character) and, in a massive demonstration of new power, make its escape. The dragon, confused, will continue to attack, believing (perhaps rightfully so) that its life is threatened by the player characters.

With their leader gone, the evil inhabitants of Old Phlan will become divided, disorganized, and easily defeated.

## Porphyrys Cadorna

Central to the story of the Ruins of Phlan is the rise to power (and treachery) of Porphyrus Cadorna, the last scion of the Cadorna family. Although acting primarily behind the scenes, he is one of the central antagonists and motivating factors in the adventure.

Given here is a complete description of Cadorna, both his abilities and background. After that is a description of how Cadorna would like to orchestrate the reclamation of Phlan, and how he will try to manipulate the player characters and the other key NPCs to get his way.

### Porphyrys Cadorna

Normal Human

Strength: 7  
Dexterity: 13  
Constitution: 8  
Intelligence: 15  
Wisdom: 9  
Charisma: 13

(Although statistics are given for Cadorna, they should not be impor-



tant to the adventure. Cadorna never advances in level, gains additional hit points or improves his abilities. His power is measured more in influence and importance on the Council and in the resources he has at his disposal.)

Hit Points: 3  
Armor Class: 10

**Weapons:** A dagger is concealed under his robes and another worn openly at his waist as is common for the time.

**Equipment:** Robes, brown or orange in color, and a house in the settlement. No magic items or other equipment of significant importance.

**Appearance:** Porphyrys Cadorna is a short, gaunt young man of about 22 to 27 years of age. His hair is dark black, thick and straight. His cheekbones are well-pronounced and his nose is sharp and pointed. His brilliant green eyes sparkle with a keen intelligence. When he speaks, he speaks softly yet his voice is penetrating. A sarcastic wit and urbane tone give his words impact.

**Personality:** Here is a man not be trusted, except that no one has figured this out. At his core he is grasping, venal, and obsessed with the idea of achieving the glory his family once held. Thus he has rationalized all manner of excuses for the failure of his family. The blame is always placed on others; conspiracy and treachery, he thinks, have robbed him of his birthright. Outwardly he appears intelligent yet lackluster, clever enough but a lazy dilettante. Others consider him harmless yet not perfectly trustworthy. However, this fault they ascribe to his lack of diligence rather than any direct malevolence on his part.

**Background:** Porphyrys Cadorna is the son of Eugenia Cadorna, once master of the Cadorna cloth merchants. Before the collapse of Phlan, the Cadornas had been masters of the leading cloth guild. But even by the time of Eugenia, their power had been on the wane for some time. Then came the invading armies. Eugenia and his family fled, taking enough of

their wealth with them to live in comfort elsewhere. The rest they carefully hid, thinking the hordes would shortly pass and they would return. But this was not the case.

During this exile, Porphyrys was born and raised. All through his youth he listened to the bitter stories of his father—stories of the stolen grandeur of the Cadornas, stories that made excuses for Eugenia's failures. Eventually his father and mother died, poorer than they had been, though by no means poor. Their dreams of restored glory died unfulfilled. Thus, Porphyrys has inherited their cup.

Then opportunity came as the recovery of Phlan began. Using his funds and the influence of the Cadorna name, Porphyrys returned and claimed a seat on the Council. But it is a far cry from the old days. His position is minor and his advice seldom sought. Porphyrys is determined to change all that.

### Cadorna's Plan

When the characters first approach the council, Porphyrys holds the least significant position.

Porphyrys' first ambition is to regain the lost fortune of the Cadorna family. He must find strong and capable adventurers who can do the job for him. He supports the missions of the Council as a way of testing applicants. The first mission of significance to him is the clearing of Sokal Keep. If player characters accomplish this, other missions (that meet his ambitions) will be offered. If the player characters return to the Council without clearing the island, he will be quite sarcastic and galling ("So, a bunch of frogs were just too much for you?," etc.). He votes against allowing any more missions to the PCs until the island and keep are cleared.

Once the characters clear the keep, Porphyrys will decide they are capable of tackling the Textile House. This mission will be offered, with the stipulation that payment will not come until the block is settled and not before. Therefore the characters will have to

clear the intervening blocks also. The rest of the Council will offer other, lesser missions. Cadorna will actively support the player characters in discussions with the Council. His stock with the other members will rise slightly.

If the characters have found information on the Pool of Radiance, Cadorna will become interested in their faint clues. He will hire a thief to steal any materials on the subject that the characters may have.

Once the characters clear the Textile House, Cadorna will move in and demand extra protection. This he gets in the form of extra watchmen. These watchmen quickly become a private army and reactions to all strangers in the area are unfriendly. He also uncovers the lost family treasure and begins to use it buy influence. By this time he has moved up a notch or two on the Council's ladder.

By now, Cadorna is greatly interested in the Pool of Radiance and wants to learn its location. Under the guise of saving the city's historical treasures, he offers the player characters the mission to the Library. There, they are to gather various books and materials and return them to him. Cadorna hedges his bets by buying several NPCs in the town, such that at least one new NPC in the player character party (if there is one) will secretly be in the service of Cadorna. This NPC is to make sure that nothing is kept from Porphyrys and that certain books are taken without the player's noticing.

After the characters have gathered the information from the Library, Cadorna decides he has no further use for them. He believes he knows the location of the Pool and now wants any possible complications out of the way. At first, he attempts to get rid of the characters by having the Council only post the most dangerous missions—the storming of the gate, the cleansing of the river, etc.

If these fail, Cadorna will hire a party of NPCs (of equivalent level to the player characters) to track and kill the party. To avoid being implicated, he



sends the characters on a wild-goose chase. They are to act as emissaries to an outpost of Zhentil Keep on the far borders of the lands of claimed by Phlan. This gets the characters out of town. Cadorna can now prepare to pursue the Pool unhindered and have the NPC group hunt down the characters. Just to hedge his bets, he includes a message in the diplomatic papers the characters are carrying to Zhentil Keep that as a sign of good faith, the soldiers of the outpost should slay the messengers (that is, the PCs) and return their heads.

By this time, if they're still alive, the characters should know that Cadorna is up to no good. He has become the Head of the Council and is ruling the settlement. When the characters attempt to return to the settlement, they will be treated as criminals (hunted, attacked, and maybe arrested). Thus, they must return by stealth. Now, their mission (without being assigned one) is to track down Cadorna and expose him to the others. They should have the evidence from the outpost (and more will be at Valjevo Castle if necessary). They must reach the Council chamber alive and reveal the evidence before the Council. If they do this, Cadorna will flee. It is very important to the story that Cadorna escape. However the characters, if they have not seen it already, will find Cadorna's evidence on the Pool of Radiance.

## Tyranthraxus

Tyranthraxus is the leader of the evil forces occupying Phlan (the Boss) Unknown to the players at the beginning, their main enemy is a dragon. However, the dragon (which is named Srossar) is not the true enemy, for it is possessed by an evil spirit from the Pool of Radiance—Tyranthraxus. Thus, Tyranthraxus has control over both it and the dragon's abilities.

## Srossar

### Ancient Bronze Dragon

Hit Dice: 9  
Hit Points: 72  
Armor Class: 0  
No. of Attacks: 3  
Damage per Attack: 1-6/1-6/4-24  
Size: Large

#### Abilities:

*Lightning bolt* (100' x 10') or *repulsion cloud* (20' x 30' x 30') three times per day (damage of *lightning* equal to current hit points).

*Infravision* 60'.

*Detect hidden and invisible things* 80'.

*Fear* aura (as per *Monster Manual*).

Gains -1 on enemy chances to hit and damage caused from water-based attacks, but does not suffer any extra damage from fire-based attacks (due to Tyranthraxus).

Saving throw as a 18 HD creature.

*Polymorph self* at will (no system shock roll needed).

#### Spells:

*Charm Person*

*Sleep*

*Invisibility*

*Hold Person*

*Protection from Normal Missiles*

*Monster Summoning II*

*Polymorph Other*

*Darkness* 15' radius

## Tyranthraxus

### (the possessing spirit)

Statistics do not apply to Tyranthraxus, so there is no hit dice, hit points, armor class or damage. However, Tyranthraxus possesses a number of special abilities that can appear through Srossar.

*Fiery Aura:* As a sign of possession, Tyranthraxus normally surrounds his host in an aura of flame. This flame does not hurt the host but causes 2-20 points of additional damage to anyone hit by Tyranthraxus.

*ESP:* Tyranthraxus has *ESP* to a radius of 150 feet. Thus he cannot be

surprised under normal conditions.

*Transference:* Being a disembodied force, Tyranthraxus can attempt to abandon his current host and leap to another body, provided that target fails its saving throw vs. death.

*Magic Resistance:* Being extraplanar, Tyranthraxus bestows a flat 20% magic resistance to its host. This is not varied according to the level of the caster.

*Background:* Nearly a century past, Tyranthraxus first appeared in the Forgotten Realms, much to the misfortune of Srossar the Dragon. Deceived by agents of Tyranthraxus (who were in turn deceived), Srossar bathed in the Pool of Radiance believing it would give him greater wisdom and understanding of the metaphysics of the universe (something bronze dragons find intensely interesting). It didn't. What it did do was allow Tyranthraxus to possess Srossar, for the Pool of Radiance was a portal to one of the darker planes (which one is currently unknown). Immensely pleased with his powerful new host, Tyranthraxus slaughtered his agents so that the location of the Pool might never be found.

Then, using the immense power of himself and his host, Tyranthraxus set out to fulfill his ambitions—to reduce all of the Forgotten Realms to wasteland or enslavement. Amazingly enough, he has found willing victims for enslavement in the hobgoblins, orcs and other creatures. Believing themselves to be free, they are nothing more than his lackeys. So far his wishes and theirs have worked together. But there will come a time when even they must be destroyed or chained.

With his armies raised, Tyranthraxus has swept out of the icy north and stormed into Phlan. Here, the Moonsea posed a new difficulty while the forces of Zhentil Keep have held his hordes at bay. For 50 years he has labored, slipping agents into the out-



posts of the keep and coaxing pirates in hopes of carrying him across the waters of the Moonsea.

But the resettlement of Phlan has taken Tyranthraxus by surprise. Before he could marshal his forces, the colonists had claimed their foothold on his city. Now, he must destroy them before he can proceed. While this is not an unpleasant task, it is a delay of time.

### Tyranthraxus' Plan

Tyranthraxus has its own priorities in the conquest of Phlan. Here is how it is likely to react to the various actions of the player characters:

The module begins with the settlement already established, but little more than that. The colonists can only move safely by sea, as the old roads in and out of Phlan are controlled by Tyranthraxus and his minions. While it is possible to enter and leave the city by land, it is very dangerous.

Fortunately for the settlers, Tyranthraxus' power is far from absolute. Currently, the chieftains of the various tribes have fallen to squabbling. Thus, no coordinated action can be taken yet. However, Tyranthraxus has not been idle. He has placed a number of NPCs in the settlement to act as spies. These can be hired to join the party and will also keep Tyranthraxus appraised of the general progress of any adventurers. Initially, these NPCs will only report. However, if accidentally hired by the party, they can be used later by Tyranthraxus.

Once the characters have raided their first chieftain's stronghold, Tyranthraxus will send new emissaries to the remaining chiefs. These emissaries are unique from those found in the area—fire giants: AC 3, MV 12, HD 11+, hp 57, #AT 1, Dmg 5-30, THAC0 10, throw boulders 200 feet for 2-20 points, immune to fire. (Some other suitable creature can be substituted depending on the DM's wishes.) These giants will then be found in the different chieftain's strongholds. Each carries messages

(in the language of that chieftain) demanding "...obedience or death. Unite with your brethren against the outsiders or come into my presence and explain your behavior." These papers are signed by Tyranthraxus.

After the characters have cleared 3-5 blocks around the settlement, Tyranthraxus will order an attack. However, his minions will respond only half-heartedly. The chance of a random encounter will be doubled in all monster-held blocks adjacent to the settlement, but no attack will occur.

It doesn't take long for Tyranthraxus to become vexed by the success of the player characters (provided they have had any). He will order one of his NPCs working for the party to lead them to the graveyard for a mission. Here he hopes the characters will meet their end among the fearsome undead. Naturally, he will alert the inhabitants of the graveyard in advance. Furthermore, the NPC has orders to betray the party in a crucial combat.

After Cadorna flees the settlement, he is captured easily by Tyranthraxus. Tyranthraxus demands a ransom for Cadorna (although he has no intention of turning him over). If the Council agrees, the characters are hired to deliver it to Valjevo Castle. This is, naturally, a trap.

If the characters have survived all Tyranthraxus' other attempts and have continued to make progress, Tyranthraxus launches a final assault on the settlement. The attack is made at the front gate by 100 orcs and 200 goblins. Tyranthraxus assists the attack from the air. He zeroes in on the player characters and the main gate. If wounded to half his hit points or less, he flies back to the castle to lick his wounds and heal. This is where the player characters will find him for the final mission. If Tyranthraxus defeats the player characters, the settlement is conquered by his hordes. The reconquest of Phlan has failed.

The final encounter with Tyranthraxus is described in the "Valjevo Castle" listing.

## "Stock" Non-Player Characters

There are many occasions in this adventure that a DM will need a quick NPC to sit at the bar, work behind the counter, or even meet in a dark alley. Here's a list of NPCs, with short descriptions, ready for the DM to use:

### Dwarves

**Dwarven cleric:** Doral is a 7th-level dwarven cleric that was trapped here when all the boats of Isonzo shipyard were burned. He has stayed behind to help the groups of dwarves that are still in the city. He is a force for good, especially towards dwarves.

**Dwarven fighter:** Stonal is a fierce 9th-level dwarven fighter who was also stranded by the burning of the port. He, on the other hand, has taken to leading a small resistance group against the forces of evil in the city. He uses a magical dwarven throwing hammer in battle.

His group could very easily encounter the PCs in battle, but after one round of fighting the dwarf could ask for a truce, since he looks like the foes he is facing aren't the "usual sort."

**Dwarven thief:** Phanal is a 12th level dwarven thief. He is high in the ranks of the thieves guild. He has a great deal of information about the town, but charges in gold for the telling.

**Dwarven assassin:** Shanal is a 9th-level dwarven assassin. He has been hired by the forces of evil to seek out powerful dwarves in adventurer's parties. He challenges them to a duel in which he uses two poisoned magical daggers.

### Elves

**Elven cleric:** Silvanestri is a 7th-level cleric charged to get into the library of the city and acquire some valuable elven parchments that were loaned to the city before the attack. He