

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup> 2nd Edition



## Earth, Air, Fire, and Water

### Credits

Design: Shane Lacy Hensley  
Editing: Doug Stewart  
Project Coordination: Dori Jean Watry  
Cover Art: Diesel  
Interior Art: Tom Baxa and Brom  
Graphic Coordination: Sarah Feggstad  
Art Coordination: Peggy Cooper  
Cartography: Diesel  
Typography: Gaye O'Keefe

Special Thanks to: Randy Patton, Steve Gillespie, Steve Smith, Jay Kyle, Michelle Hensley, and Jeff Lahren.

TSR, Inc.  
POB 756  
Lake Geneva  
WI 53147  
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.  
1 20 Church End  
Cherry Hinton  
Cambridge CB1 3LB  
United Kingdom

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# Chapter I: The Elemental Powers

In a world with no gods, how, what do priests serve? *Earth, Air, Fire, and Water* is designed to reveal to the player and to the DUNGEON MASTER™ (DM™) exactly how priests function on Athas. Clerics are one of the most important character classes in the DARK SUN® campaign world—and, perhaps, the least understood. *Earth, Air, Fire, and Water* is also a valuable source of knowledge about the strange and mighty powers associated with each subclass of cleric.

This book begins with an explanation about the nature of the elemental planes in the wake of Athas's devastation and its effects on those mortal champions who are the Athasian priest class. Later chapters deal with elemental clerics, paraelemental clerics, druids, and templars. Their system of power conjunctions and shrines, and their unusual relationships with the powerful elementals they serve are also revealed. The transformation of clerics into advanced, elemental beings, the terrible duties of high-level clerics and druids, and the hidden aspects of the elemental planes about Athas are presented here for the first time.

Finally, this book has more than 50 new spells for clerics, druids, and templars that can be used in any DARK SUN campaign! Dungeon Masters may choose to allow their players immediate access to the new spells, or gradually introduce them into the campaign as desired. A complete list of all of the spells available to priests in a DARK SUN campaign setting is included in a special appendix.

## The Priest Class

The clerics and druids who inhabit the wastes of Athas are very different from those of a standard AD&D® campaign. They do not pray to patron deities, for they have no deities. Priests beneath the dark sun pledge themselves to the very powers that dwell on the elemental planes.

Like the Athasian deserts, the elemental powers are neither benevolent nor malevolent, caring only that their natural forms are preserved in the material world.





## The Elemental Powers

This is the source of their power, and the impending ecological collapse in this realm has created an unusual and dynamic power struggle on the inner planes of the elementals. The priests of Athas are the pawns of this titanic struggle.

Resisting the efforts of the clerics and druids are the templars. The templars are men and women who have become the minions of the sorcerer-kings. They enforce the dictates of those willful tyrants with fanatical fervor in exchange for small scraps of personal power. The kings and queens they serve are the greatest wizards Athas has ever known.

Tales of the ancient priest class are woven into the fabric of life on Athas—tales of power and greed, and wanton, wasteful destruction.

Jurgan, an earth priest who lives in the shadow of Hamanu of Urik, understands the nature of these titanic struggles all too well. . . .

*Jurgan, the mad priest of Urik. That's what some call him, behind his back. A screaming lunatic practicing on about days so long ago they are far beyond the years of even the most ancient elf. The templars ignore him as harmless—his ramblings too ridiculous even for the children who gather around him like awed little rasclinn.*

*Still, his rants are ominous. And sad. And he tells one tale that will shiver the spine of any man.*

*"Listen well, my children," Jurgan said as he sat by the well and watched the blazing sun slide toward the horizon under an olive sky. "Once there was a time when men like myself were as common as injustice is today. Men and women, pledged to the earth, or to fire, or water, or the caressing wind, roamed the green fields of Athas in large numbers. Few are left now, a desperate and scattered few vainly trying to pump the lifeblood back into the dried-up well of our world.*

*"Hamanu; the others, Kalak, Nibenay, Lalali-Puy, all of them, were but sandmites compared to the real power. Compared to the power of the earth and the sky. Then one*

*day, they discovered a terrible, dark secret. They fixed their little spells to feed from the energy of the elements, and they magnified their power a hundred-fold! The land and every living thing in the land fed their vile sorcery. And the land and its creatures were sucked dry by their defiling magic.*

*"Elemental clerics and the mysterious druids banded together to oppose their blasphemous power, but it was too late. The dark sorcerers and their sniveling minions slew priests by the score, and the deserts ran red with blood. It would be the last such drenching our parched world would know.*

*"A few clerics remained when the slaughter was over—they were fortunate compared to the druids. The defilers knew as little about them as we know about the thoughts of a thri-kreen. The defilers did know that druidic power was derived from the land, and they assumed the druids were in competition for the same resources. This was not entirely true (no one knows more than I), but the sorcerer-kings and the thousands who now followed them saw the druids as a threat, and they became as kirre fighting over the same herd of erdlu. That which they did not understand they had to destroy.*

*"Some hunters went into the wastes in search of the druids, but they met with little success. After years of fruitless searching, the sorcerer-kings began to ravage the land, knowing that the druids must come out of hiding to do battle or allow their lands to wither at the defiler's touch. The tactic worked; the guardians emerged from their hiding places.*

*"The years of frustration wore heavily on the defilers' brow, and the druids paid for their elusiveness in flesh and blood. When the winds of Athas no longer bore the screams of its defenders, the sorcerer-kings returned to their citadels." Jurgan sighed and paused, a distant, sad look creeping into his ancient eyes.*

*Finally, he continued, his voice hoarse and troubled. "The druids are no longer hunted in force. The kings believe there simply aren't enough left to threaten them.*

# The Elemental Powers



But the templars, and even some elves I know, have been well rewarded for delivering the heads of wasteland druids.

“As for the elemental clerics, some say we are mad—driven insane by the chaotic beings we serve. But others see the gleam of patience in our eyes, and know that one day the clerics and druids of Athas will throw off the yoke of oppression and return the flowing rivers and the sprawling forests to our withered lands.”

A templar walked by Jurgan and his assembly. He patted the obsidian sword at his side and shot the madman a disapproving look. Jurgan suddenly screamed at the heavens, and the sorcerer-king’s watchman moved on, apparently content that the old priest was indeed a raving fool. Jurgan smiled and tiny sparks of light flashed in his earthy eyes.

—Jurgan’s Tale

## The Wasting

To the elemental beings of the inner planes, the raw condition of natural elements on Athas is fodder—food and sustenance. The earth provides the inner planes with power as precious water, mighty winds, and all-consuming fire feed their own. On most worlds, these elements are plentiful and rich, and the elemental creatures are well fed. On Athas, while most of the elements can still be found in abundance, they are barren and lifeless, like the heart of a sorcerer-king. Imagine being given a choice between a stale loaf of dried bread or a piece of rich, moist cake. This is Athas today compared to the world it once was. It is not hard to understand why elemental spirits are upset with the meager fare being set before them.

The Plane of Fire celebrated when flames consumed vast





## The Elemental Powers

forests or the mighty cities of mankind on Athas, and its denizens drew their energy from the massive destruction and purification of the cleansing inferno. Now, Fire is afraid to consume what remains for fear of depleting these reserves forever. The power that once consumed anything in its path now lives in tiny campfires, frantically trying to escape these maddeningly small prisons.

The Plane of Air has also suffered from the Wasting. Cool breezes once circled Athas in constant song. Racing through green trees and up valley walls, air lunged from terrific oceans to form terrible typhoons. Now, the once magnificent wind sighs lethargically in the still heat, and only rarely does it scream its rage in a violent sandstorm of destruction. Where once the wind sang of its freedom, it is now a harbinger of doom—Athas's doom.

To earth elementals, the rich soil that once fed the plane with power was beyond imagining. Today, the lifeless dust and sun-baked rock is little more than prisoners' fare. The Plane of Earth still draws immense power from the towering peaks and vast expanses of desert that cover Athas, but even that power is a meager fraction of what it once was.

Of all the elementals, the Plane of Water has suffered most. There are scant few havens in which this element can be found in any quantity. Some say that mighty waterfalls once poured over Athasian soil, and that the elementals which drank of this power were the most carefree and content of all. Now, these beings are much more grim, more desperate, and vengeful than their happy, babbling ancestors. Power for the Plane of Water lies in isolated pockets of stagnant liquid, constantly in danger of the encroaching silt and the relentless sun.

Unfortunately, the remote and chaotic elementals realized Athas's impending doom far too late. Most sages agree that the planet's spiraling decline has become irreversible.

Regardless, these beings have deigned to forge a pact of Earth, of Air, of Fire, of Water, with a few selected beings of the Prime Material Plane. Through these few clerics and druids, the elemental powers hope to replenish the decaying

planet of Athas and return to the ancient, carefree days of power.

### The Pact

The pacts forged by the elemental beings with the mortals who serve them are strange and terrible contracts. The elementals demand nothing less than the entire lives of the clerics, spent in total service and obedience to the planner entities. In exchange, the elementals bestow what powers they have to give upon their priests. Some are great, some are small, but all of them demand the clerics' total commitment.

The pact is "signed" during the priest-candidate's initiation, if he or she succeeds—failure means insanity, death, and occasionally even worse fates. Violations of the various pacts are dealt with quickly and without pity.

### Pawns

The clerics and druids who do the elementals' bidding are a strange and varied lot. Some teach crop rotation in order to protect and restore the earth of the harsh planet. Others command the power of flame for little more than vengeance's sake. Whatever their motivations, each priest is bound and sworn to preserve his or her patron element in the physical world—the Prime Material Plane. Few ever renounce the solemn agreement—to forsake the Pact is to incur the wrath of beings who possess the raw power of the elements.

But even the great power of these elementals is limited and dwindling, like sand draining through an hourglass, and so they grant this boon—this burden—to a very few. Because of this, priests are unable to recruit vast numbers of followers, nor are there mighty cathedrals or lonely monasteries dedicated to the worship of their lords. Only through the subtle lessons taught by campfire tales and in isolated, secret shrines can the desperate message of preser-