



# Hail the Heroes

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Sample file

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# Introduction

Welcome to *Hail the Heroes*. This adventure takes place in the MYSTARA™ campaign setting, in the Kingdom of Karamaikos, but can readily be adapted to other settings. It is compatible with both the FIRST QUEST™ game rules and also the more complete rules for the AD&D® game found in the *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*.

*Hail the Heroes* is designed for a group of three to six player characters (PCs) of 1st to 4th level. If there are fewer characters, or all are 1st-level, or if the players are new to the game, you as DM might want to reduce the number of monsters (or their hit points) in certain encounters. Since this scenario is constructed as a mystery, and it is often easier for a large group to generate ideas than it is for a small group, you may want to make some clues more obvious or expand the roles of helpful nonplayer characters (NPCs).

This adventure sends player characters searching for an ancient artifact whose very location is hidden and forgotten. The rest of this introduction offers tips for using the CD included with this scenario, explains the background of the adventure, and summarizes the plot.

*Only you, the DM, should read further.* You should read the entire adventure before play begins. Part I: "Setting Up" (pages 6 to 11) describes the personalities the player characters will meet. Part II: "Getting There" (pages 12 to 21) traces the heroes' steps as they attempt to locate the dungeon. Part III: "The Lost Temple" (pages 22 to 32) details the dungeon itself. Encounters are given in the sequence in which they are most

likely to occur. The adventure need not be run in a single gaming session; indeed, it probably works best if played over a period of several days. You should feel no obligation to use every encounter provided but instead may pick and chose, skipping some encounters and adding others as befits your group.

Thus, if your players would not enjoy the intrigue involved in Part II: "Getting There," provide this information to the PCs through their employers and move directly into the action of the later encounters. And, by the same token, focus on interaction with this adventure's many complex NPCs if your players love to role-play.



and in the  
final battle  
with the  
beast-

men, mighty King  
Halav did smite the  
Beast-King.

—Excerpt from the  
Song of Halav,  
modern prose  
translation by  
Barris of Mirros



Sample file

## Using the CD

This adventure includes an audio compact disc (CD). While the adventure can be played without the use of the CD, it is not recommended, as care has been taken to select sounds and music that enhance the enjoyment of the adventure. By using the CD and the art in this adventure, the DM can provide a complete audio-visual experience for the players.

The CD holds four types of tracks:

- ❖ **Encounter Tracks:** These interactive tracks make up the great majority of the tracks on the CD. Meant to be played at specific times during the adventure, they provide clues or descriptions. Generally, you describe the scene a bit (reading aloud any indented text\*), show a picture if one is available, and then play the track to present the sounds heard in that encounter, whether these are voices or simply background noises. In some cases (noted in the text), you should start the CD track before describing the area.

When it is time to play an encounter track, the following symbol appears; play the track with the number shown inside the box:

**TRACK 99** *A summary of the track's contents appears in italics beside the box (like this), along with advice on how to handle the players' probable responses. You might want to pause some tracks partway through, to wait for player character reactions (for example, to give players a chance to respond to questions they have just been put to their characters). Once the players have finished speaking, you should usually continue playing the rest of the track unless the PCs' actions (for example, killing the speaker) would prevent them from receiving the rest of its message.*

- ❖ **Listening Tracks:** Most should be played whenever the PCs stop and listen in a hallway or at a door in the Lost Temple. Some hold audio clues and serve as transitions into Encounter Tracks. Notations in the text indicate which track is appropriate for each area of the Lost Temple; a complete list of all the listening tracks appears in the box on page 7.

- ❖ **Event Tracks:** These are keyed to specific events, such as when a character or monster dies or when a special trap is sprung. A complete list of all the event tracks appears in the box on page 7.

- ❖ **Background Track:** This track (Track 89) holds music that can be played in the background during this or any other adventure, when other CD tracks are not in use. You might wish to repeat this track during long searches or combat encounters.

- \* **Indented text:** When text is indented and appears between symbols like those shown here, read it aloud. This text describes a particular scene for the players.

**TRACK 1** *Note: Track 1 contains a dramatic presentation of the battle of King Halav versus the beast-men. Play it to set the stage for the adventure, if you'd like.*

## Monsters

The adventure naturally contains monsters for the PCs to encounter. All monsters for *Hail the Heroes* can be found in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* and in the *FIRST QUEST* game, except for the Guardians of the Shield, who are described in the encounter in which they appear. When an encounter calls for a monster, information about the creature is presented in the format below. The saving throw entry has been included for those familiar with *FIRST QUEST*; DMs using the full AD&D rules should note that the listed saving throw (ST) is that used by the creature against *spells*, and standard saving throws should be used for other types of effects. The entry for morale is new to players of the *FIRST QUEST* game, who can ignore it.

**Name of Monster (number encountered):** INT (intelligence); AL (alignment); AC (Armor Class); MV (movement rate); HD (Hit Dice); hp (hit points); THAC0 (number required to hit Armor Class 0); #AT (number of attacks); Dmg (damage per attack); ST (saving throw vs. spell); SA (special attacks); SD (special defenses); Size; ML (morale); XP (experience reward for defeating the monster).

## Background

Please note that some information in this background, as well as later in the adventure, comes from the novel *Dragonlord of Mystara*. While it is not necessary for you to have read the novel, doing so would lend extra color to the adventure.

The Kingdom of Karameikos is home to many Traladarans, a light-skinned and dark-haired peasant folk. Most Traladarans revere King Halav, an Immortal (a deific, once-mortal being who has ascended to a level of power and influence similar to that of the gods of other realms). Halav was a king and great hero of the region about 20 centuries ago. He and his companions Zirchev the Huntsman and Queen Petra stopped invading gnolls from conquering all the humans of the land. Halav's legend was passed orally from generation to generation in an epic ballad called the *Song of King Halav*.

Hundred of years after Halav, the neighboring Thyatian people came to the region, and their priests finally wrote down a version of the *Song of King Halav* some 600 years ago. Though the song had helped unite the Traladarans before that time, having it written down helped even more, and a regular church devoted to Halav began to grow in popularity.

Approximately a century after the *Song of King Halav* was first written down, a human nation came into conflict with dragons. This nation, known as the Highlands, was located far to the north and west of the Traladaran lands, in an area known in modern times as the Principalities of Ganntri. During this war, a young hero named Thelvyn helped save the Highlands from destruction and became known as the Dragonlord.

Thelvyn was aided in his quest by several notable individuals. Two of them, Perrantin the mage and Solveig White-Gold (pronounced SOLE-vay; a warrior of no little skill), later traveled to the Traladaran lands. Solveig became a hero of the Traladaran people by finding a relic: a magical bronze shield supposedly used by Halav, appropriately known as the *Shield of Halav*.

Because of its religious significance, the shield helped bring the Church of Traladara to some prominence. The legend of the shield, and of Solveig's quest for it, became well-known. Though Solveig later returned to the Highlands and gained great fame there, the mage Perrantin stayed in the Traladaran lands.

There, he helped construct the Temple of the Shield to house the artifact. Perrantin also wrote a history of the dragon wars of the Highlands and placed a copy in the temple, so those who visited would know all about the heroism of Thelvyn and Solveig (and Perrantin and their other companions). The mage also created statues known as Guardians of the Shield, animated statues that looked

like Solveig White-Gold. In addition, Perrantin placed several permanent *magic mouth* spells in the temple to help spread bits of the *Song of King Halav*.

For many years, the Temple of the Shield was quite popular and aided in bringing people to the church. The small town of Zadreth even grew up around it. Eventually, however, a rumor grew that the shield had not really belonged to Halav, and the temple's popularity decreased dramatically. At about the same time, a plague wiped out most of the people of Zadreth; this was seen as a sign of Immortal displeasure and caused even more people to stop believing the legend of the *Shield of Halav*. The survivors of Zadreth moved away, one by one, as did the clergy of the Temple of the Shield. Eventually, only one cleric was left at the temple.

This man, whose name has been lost in the mists of time, maintained the temple for many years, while others began to forget its existence. Eventually, the old cleric felt his death approaching and decided to close the temple. He believed that faithful followers of Halav would one day return to the Temple of the Shield, and he wanted to protect all that it contained for those future generations of believers. He went about the temple setting traps that could be bypassed easily by the faithful but would be much more difficult for others. The old cleric closed all the doors, tidied up a bit, and lay down to die.

People ultimately forgot about the temple and the town of Zadreth; only a few obscure references remained in old books belonging to sages or shrines. Those who later learned about the temple referred to it as the Lost Temple, because no one remembered where it had been located.

The Church of Traladara survived and remains popular today, in modern Karameikos. However, the last several decades have seen the rise of a rival church, the Church of Karameikos. Though most popular with ruling-class Karameikans of Thyatian descent, the power of the Church of Karameikos has steadily grown. The church's beliefs have become popular, including the notion that purification is always possible after one has committed acts of evil.

Another recent development has been the emergence of the Cult of Halav. These extremists believe that Halav has been returned in mortal form as King Stefan Karameikos to lead the Traladarans to a period of renewed greatness.

The growing popularity of the Thyatian-dominated Church of Karameikos and of the radical Cult of Halav has caused a steady loss of membership for the old Church of Traladara. Seeking guidance through a study of history has led the elders of the Church of Traladara to believe that the *Shield of Halav* could serve to draw people back to their church, just as it served a similar purpose some 500 years ago. Unfortunately, despite a few scattered references, the elders had no idea where the Lost Temple was located.

This situation changed recently when a hand-drawn adventurer's map fell into the church elders' hands. This map and the accompanying notes and doodles scribbled in its margins seem to be of an ancient temple that the elders believe to be the Lost Temple, the Temple of the Shield. The notes were sold to the church by another adventurer, who said she found them in a market in Mirros and thought they might interest the church elders. The map, said to have been found on the banks of a river, shows signs of water-damage and other stains. Attempts to find out more about its discovery ended in failure: its point of origin is unknown, as is the fate of the map-maker.

## Plot Synopsis

The heroes begin the adventure in Mirros, capital of Karameikos. Answering a call for adventurers puts them in contact with Desmik and Barris, two clerics of the Church of Traladara, who ask the heroes for help in finding an ancient relic. Assuming the PCs agree, the clerics fill them in, telling them their mission: find the *Shield of Halav*, and ferret out all possible information about Solveig White-Gold and the Dragonlord. The PCs may be dismayed to learn that nobody knows exactly where the old temple is, but Desmik and Barris will gladly share any information they have (old legends and the like) and warn the characters against the Cult of Halav.

Once the PCs have definitely agreed to help the Church of Traladara in its efforts to recover the shield, Barris gives them the hand-drawn temple map and a copy of the *Song of King Halav*. Desmik then leads them first to a collection of books and scrolls from the church library, likely to contain references that might help them locate the Lost Temple, then to another library in the city to search for further clues. The characters must conduct their own research, put together the clues, and discover the site of the Lost Temple. While the PCs engage in such scholarly pursuits, the opposing forces (described in Part I: "Setting Up") who want the *Shield of Halav* for their own purposes throw every possible obstacle in the heroes' way.

Once the site (in the ruins of Zadreth, either near or beneath the modern-day town of Threshold) has been determined, the PCs must journey there, confirm that the temple still exists, and find an entrance into it. The other interested parties follow them, waiting for an opportunity to strike. All these events are covered in Part II: "Getting There."

After the PCs find an entrance to the Lost Temple, a room-by-room search of the shrine follows as they try to find the shield. This part of the adventure is described in Part III: "The Lost Temple." To make the PCs' task harder, the temple is filled with traps designed to discourage looters. These traps are not meant to harm followers of the church, so clues on how to avoid them—clues based on the teachings of the Church of Traladara—are scattered throughout the dungeon.

After not one but two climactic discoveries in the Lost Temple, the PCs can depart with both the *Shield of Halav* and a history of the Dragonlord of Mystara. To complete their mission, the PCs must return these items to the clerics of the Church of Traladara; the agents of the other churches will each make one last attempt to stop them.



## The Shield of Halav

A historical artifact of great age made from ancient bronze, this relic appears to be in good condition, if a little battered (even the two leather straps on the back have been magically preserved).

In game terms, the item is a *shield +1*, although its symbolic significance makes it worth much more to the Church of Traladara (and other religious factions) than its enchantment implies. Normally player characters will surrender the shield at the end of the adventure. You may, however, decide to let a PC who is a devout follower of the Church of Traladara keep the shield. Such a decision requires a personal interview with Aleksyev Nikelnevich, the patriarch of the church.

If the petitioner is deemed worthy (and only a character truly devoted to the Church of Traladara and its teachings will be) "Father Niki" can declare that character "the Champion of Halav" and allow him or her to keep the shield. A paladin is the most likely candidate for this, though clerics and fighters will be considered as well. If Aleksyev decides to release the shield, the Church of Traladara holds a special ceremony to recognize its new champion, invoking its blessing on both the character and the shield.

This ceremony activates the *Shield of Halav's* special powers, raising its magical bonus to equal with the character's level, to a maximum of +5 (for example, in the hands of a 3rd-level character it acts as a *shield +3*). When the character gains a level, the shield's bonus increases by +1, until the maximum is reached. The shield will never be anything other than a simple *shield +1* in the hands of a character who does not go through the ceremony, or one who ever betrays the teachings of the Church of Traladara.

## Part I:

# Setting Up

The Church of Traladara, the PCs' employer, is not the only group trying to locate the *Shield of Halav*. Aside from miscellaneous monsters and NPCs who have their own agendas, two organized factions will try to stop the PCs: the Order of the Griffon and the Cult of Halav.

## The Order of the Griffon

A military branch of the Church of Karameikos, the Order of the Griffon is a prestigious society of warriors and priests. Its members are constantly adventuring, going on quests to help the Church of Karameikos, the kingdom, and the ordinary folk of the land. Though the Church of Karameikos is not openly hostile toward the Church of Traladara, their traditions are different. All members of the Order of the Griffon are strict adherents to the beliefs of the Church of Karameikos, and they think everyone else should be too.

Members of the Order of the Griffon recently found out about the Lost Temple, and the artifact it supposedly holds. The Order believes (correctly) that such an artifact could, because of the popularity of the legends of Halav, draw people away from the Church of Karameikos, back to the Church of Traladara. Hence the Order would like the shield to quietly disappear, as if it had never existed.

To this end, a few members of the Order of the Griffon are trying to find the Lost Temple before the PCs do. Their goal is to beat the PCs to the Lost Temple and spirit the shield away. Failing this, they will seek to persuade the player characters to give the shield to the Order.

None of the members of the Order encountered in this adventure are evil or chaotic. They want to prevent the recovery of the shield, but they are not bad people. They try to impede the PCs' progress in various ways—intimidation,

hiding clues, getting there first, and so forth. If the Order members fail, they accept their failure. Members of the Order



**he fol-  
lowers  
of Halav  
are**

**simply interested in  
helping Halav with  
his glorious task, that  
of leading the  
Traladaran nation  
back to greatness.**

**—Andros Levinik,  
member of the  
Cult of Halav**

**The Cult of Halav is a  
dangerous collection  
of lunatics.**

**—Sir Brefrick of  
the Order of  
the Griffon**



Sample file