

# Nexus Points and Aether Gates

Here there be monsters

The many gates and portals constructed in the multiverse to allow passage from plane to plane were built by a succession of builder races, and then added on to by Mages, Seers, and Engineers of every imaginable race. A hardy explorer can never be sure what lies beyond the next gate. It could be a wonder, a horror, or the long dead relics of a race gone from the planes for untold millennia. What they have in common is that they were all built to allow the passage of space-faring craft from place to place, by means of enormous gates, without the need to sail the deeps of the void.

The sages of many worlds have been studying the Nexus Points, as they call them, for generations. The Elder Races built Nexus Points, vast chambers and other constructs with portals to places scattered across

the spheres, including the Nexus Points of other races. How this was accomplished is a mystery. No Archmage in thousands of years has succeeded in creating a new gate, never mind an entire Nexus Point. Most Nexus Points are what would more properly be called Demi-Planes, mostly fragments of the Ethereal Plane somehow split off and hung, jewel like, across the depths of the void. At least, that is the best guess of the Sages.

One benefit of the formation of Nexus Points from the Ethereal Plane is that Aether is breathable by most sentient races, so within the constructs, one generally need not worry about shielding a craft from poisonous atmosphere.

There are two features shared by all portals and Nexus Points. One, the runes that identify a given portal, assumedly by its destination, are roughly the same in every instance. Two, those portals are opened and closed by means of a device called a Aethric Orrery. These devices commonly look like

complex models formed of interconnected rings, each ring limned with lines of runes. The Orrerys function something like keys in that when they are aligned properly within a short distance of a gate, they cause the gate to either open or close. However, explorers must beware, not every Orrery contains all the runes necessary to open every gate. Some Orrerys are far simpler than others and while they open common gates, or the gates of specific builders, they do not open every gate. There are rumours of Master Orrerys that do contain enough runes to open every gate, but an example has never been seen by a reliable commentator.

## The Elder Races

No one knows the names of these races, nor their heroes or gods. They are usually referred to by the character of their Nexus Points. Through careful study, we have some knowledge of which came before the other, but that is all.

## The Seraphim

First, and oldest, are the **Seraphim**, so called because their constructs are built of iridescent marble and characterized by soaring columns and vaulted ceilings. There is evidence that these may at one time have been graced by verdant gardens and graceful pools and fountains, but those are a memory. Now, the constructs of the Seraphim are mostly ruined, their columns shattered, and their vaults laid bare to the grey of the Aether. Many of the Seraphim constructs are infested by a queer luminescent green fungus that houses spores poisonous to most races. The constructs of the Seraphim uniformly bear the scars of terrible conflict, waged with weapons beyond the ken of men today.

## The Jotuns

Nest oldest, and far more common, are the constructs of the **Jotuns**, names for the Giants of myth and legend. These are enormous constructs built of grey stone and

on a huge scale, set with thick pillars and platforms of tightly fit stone, hard as iron. Constructs of the Jotun are usually laid out on a single plane, with vast hallways and corridors linking rooms of Gates. The air in these constructs is frigid, and they all bear evidence of destruction wrought by great fire. The walls are blackened and soot covered, and the vast floors of the constructs are concealed by dunes of ash, deep enough to consume a ship. These dunes are peppered with fragments of ancient ships, twisted and meted by unimaginable fire.

The halls of the Jotuns are lined by immense statues of creatures that look somewhat like men, but with a feral and martial aspect. The scale of these statues is hard to judge, as fragments of hand weapons of gigantic proportions have been reported found in several constructs.

## The Arthropoi

Somewhat contemporaneous, or at least overlapping the Jotuns, are the Arthropoi. These constructs are organic in nature, spun or excreted from chitin and web, obviously by some sort of insectoid race. The constructs of the Arthropoi can be perilous, as they have numerous narrow and branching corridors, barely wide enough for a ship in some cases, and many have sheets of sticky web, stronger than steel, strung from wall to wall, almost as bridges. It is speculated that the fleets of the Arthropoi consisted of large creatures rather than ships, creatures flexible enough to navigate these corridors without issue.

The construction materials of the Arthropoi constructs is dark purple or green in colour, and most still retain a dim luminescence, a stark contrast to the dead black of the Jotun constructs. There is a strong acidic stench that lingers in the Arthropoi constructs, and some reports of illness and death have

been recorded, although these are rare. The constructs are also riddled with much smaller winding corridors and tunnels, the use of which escapes us, as their orientation suggest use by creatures that were either capable of flight or fantastic climbing.

## The Deep Ones

The constructs of the Deep Ones are rare, thankfully, as they are disturbing in the extreme. They are formed of semi-translucent crystal, and the geometry of their construction is wrong, somehow. The angles are wrong, and all sense of direction seems to disappear after an hour or two spent in their confines. There is a dim light in these constructs, usually a sickly yellow-green, that seems to emanate somehow from beyond the crystal walls. Explorers report that paranoia and madness are common afflictions for crew who spend extensive time in Deep One constructs, and there are numerous reports of half-seen movement, seemingly behind the crystal walls,

that is only ever glimpsed for a moment. There are no floors to these constructs, only sluggishly flowing rivers of deep black liquid that seem to flow from nowhere to nowhere. The constructs of the Deep Ones smell pervasively of salt water and the sea, although the liquid within them is certainly no salt water, as it is instantly fatal to most sophonts. The primary decoration of these constructs are immense altars and plazas, generally buried beneath unimaginable carpet of bone, and centered on altars of unspeakable depravity.