

Kobalt Mountain Caverns

The tiny volcanic island of Zariq in the Equine or Frigid Ocean of Nibirum is home to a tribe of around 200 small, cold-blooded, egg-laying, blue-scaled, lizard- or miniature-dragon-like humanoids, who call themselves Kobalts. They average around three feet tall (about 0.9 metres), and are similar in nature to the Kobolds of D&D. Their home is a complex series of tunnels and caverns beneath Kobalt Mountain, a rugged, rocky peak that rises only about 300 ft (90 m) above sea level in the central part of the island.

The Kobalts

Kobalt society is a meritocracy, in that those with aptitudes will become warriors, hunters, crafts folk, miners, magic users and so forth, such that everyone has a role to play - even where that may be simply watching over the eggs to stop someone standing on a nest accidentally. They have a single ruler, who tends to be an older, thus in general more experienced, wiser and stronger individual, who may also have magical abilities (if so, they tend to be especially revered). Beyond that, in common with others of their kind found elsewhere, their greatest reverence is for dragons, to whom they are very distantly related. Their lineage means that a Kobalt can live for well over a century, though it is rare for any to live much beyond thirty years. Consequently, those older than this are always respected within the tribe. Kobalts tend to be individualists within these boundaries, forming no lasting relationships beyond loose friendships. Eggs and young hatchlings are cared for equally by the community, although even new-born young become quite independent within a few days of hatching, and reach adult maturity at about six years old. At need, should the tribe require it, for example, Kobalts can change sex over the course of half a year or so to ensure the tribe's survival.

Kobalts are good with their hands, particularly for tunnel and cavern excavation, along with mining (a by-product of their cave-building, in essence), and creating reasonable to good-quality crafted items in metal, wood, skin and textiles. Such things tend to be functional rather than stylish or elegant, if often with intriguing, attractive minor adornments, such as adding precious metals and gemstones found during their tunnelling. Most wear some form of jewellery, commonly inlaid into their scales, while the living areas in the Caverns often have small caches of gems and unworked precious metal nuggets lying around in each individual's sleeping hollow or alcove.

Their tunnels are forever being changed, yet all Kobalts have an excellent knowledge of the current layout, and an almost instinctive understanding of the route to the nearest escape tunnel. They can easily work out an alternative route quickly if a tunnel is unexpectedly blocked by a collapse, say. They also know where their own traps are, and will trigger them, or introduce elements such as new ceiling collapses, on enemies if necessary. In each living or working area, at least two Kobalts always have allocated responsibility for collapsing an escape tunnel against any pursuers, after the last Kobalt has passed them along it. Kobalts favour self-preservation over combatting better-armed creatures, until the chance for an ambush, or an opportunity for a later revenge attack with better odds, should present itself.

Quite how the Kobalts got to Zariq, some 470 miles (750 kilometres) off the nearest Errynor coast after all, is unclear. They are not sailors, and none - now at least - are winged. Their own legends about this vary. Sometimes the tribe is said to have begun as a small winged group fleeing from persecution; or a group that flew too high, were caught in a terrifically powerful aerial river and dropped here by chance; or they were always

wingless and were banished here magically by a great sorcerer; or some variant incorporating one or more of these themes. Where the tale has them winged, subsequent generations have always bred wingless. Their arrival was always a vague “many generations ago” in the tales, with the implication of “we’ve always been here”, something clearly not the case. Their numbers remain quite low, as despite the volcanic warmth of their tunnel home, the northerly clime is not conducive to their survival. Despite the cold, they have a relatively good lifestyle here, with no predators beyond the occasional large seabird attack on a lone young, or injured, tribe member.

The Kobalts’ “Pets”

While not strictly pets in the accepted sense, the Kobalts do have two types of creature that live alongside them for their mutual benefit. These are around 30 large, brown-furred rats (larger than a normal rat, they are roughly the size of a medium domestic cat), and some 40 or so brightly-coloured, flying, venomous, winged snakes, which grow to be about as long, nose to tail-tip, as a Kobalt is tall (3 ft; 0.9 m). Either of these animals may be encountered in ones or twos almost anywhere on Zariq, or in somewhat greater numbers anywhere there are Kobalts nearby.

The rats have been selectively bred to be larger than normal by the Kobalts, from a small pack of shipwrecked ordinary brown rats. Smaller rats are killed and used as food, meat being too precious to waste here. They are used a little like Humans would use dogs. The rats are too small to be ridden by any other than the younger Kobalts and hatchlings.

The Kobalts have no memory of where the flying snakes came from. The snakes are a tropical species, surviving here only thanks to the Kobalt tunnels. They can and will obey simple commands by tribe members, and will happily come to food offered them by anyone small and blue-coloured. While they will defend themselves and any tribe members they were near when attacked, self-preservation is their higher priority.

The Caverns

The map shows the current layout for the tunnels and caves beneath and close to Kobalt Mountain, most of which have been dug-out by the Kobalts over time. Much of the earlier-excavated rock was dumped some way off in and around Crater Range on Zariq, where it has been long buried by subsequent lava eruptions there.

The intricate interweaving makes it difficult to discern from inside, but the whole tunnel system gradually, if inconsistently, rises in height from the lower right of the map (the southeast corner) to the upper left (NW corner). The lower-lying parts, roughly those southeast of the line of largely natural caverns where trap numbers 13 to 18 lie (visible only when the Traps toggle is active), lie below the hill symbol on the Zariq map just southeast of the Kobalt Mountain one, while those areas northwest of these caverns are set below the mountain symbol itself, culminating in the tower shown on the peak’s upper northwestern slopes, which equates with the multi-level, approximately circular, feature by the map’s northwestern top edge, where the Tower Guards symbols are on this map. Arrowed lines within the complex show places where the ascending slopes are at their most obvious (the arrowhead always points upslope).

Naturally the tunnel sizes match that of the Kobalts, so are no more than 4 to 5 ft high at most (*circa* 1.2 to 1.5 m). The majority of the cavern ceilings are of comparable height, with any exceptions noted in the descriptions below. All are cut into the volcanic bedrock, which is primarily a fine-grained black basalt. Its colouring varies to dark green in places, and it can be paler and glassy in texture occasionally as well. In the darker rocks, there are sometimes fine, scarlet mineral veins, that may be more rarely white or

blue-green, and still less commonly, there may be veins with small, raw diamonds in, albeit such uncut gemstones are not obvious to an untrained eye.

Away from the entrance and the outer ends of the escape tunnels, much of the complex is warm to hot in places, thanks to the volcanic magma pipes running through the surrounding rocks. There can be smoke and fumes in the caverns at times too, and many areas are at least slightly humid. These conditions are ideal for the Kobalts and the winged snakes, while the rats take advantage of the cooler air toward the floors to remain comfortable in their fur. Larger humanoids will find the tunnels cramped, and for those used to the generally cold to cool temperate climates of outdoor Errynor, uncomfortably warm.

In general, there is no light within the tunnels, except where noted below. However, occasional thin bands of palely luminous rock are sometimes uncovered, and quite a lot of the fungus grown by the Kobalts is palely self-luminous too, fragments of which may be found lying around in parts. Crevices can let the red glow of volcanic magma into some places at times as well. The Kobalts do not need light, though they will use torches and other light sources from time to time, especially when they wish to see colours, or if carrying out fine craft works.

Specific places within the caverns are discussed next, in alphabetical order as listed on the map's Key, followed by notes on the various traps visible when the Traps toggle is active. A 3 ft square grid has been added across the map to aid in estimating distances in the tunnels (to a first approximation, this is about the same as a metre, but for precision, it is actually 0.9 m), along with two longer distance scale-bars in feet and metres respectively. The grid can be shown or hidden using the toggle.

Cavern Keyed Features

Craft Workshops

These usually have a single purpose each, such as making pottery or metalwork, or plant- and fungi-based ropes and textiles, crafts that typically need space or involve noise, extra heat or fumes. Fires for kilns and forges are cleverly vented to the outside so the smoke mingles with that from nearby volcanic chimneys, and are constructed so as not to become access routes when the fires are unlit. Smaller craftwork, such as gem cutting, preparing textiles for wearing, jewellery making and similar quieter tasks may be carried out in the Living Areas as well. Glow from the fires may be seen into the adjoining tunnels, and the workshop areas themselves can also be lit quite well as a result.

Dragon Shrine

A partly natural cavern that has been altered in places by the Kobalts. The ceiling here is much higher than elsewhere, reaching about 11 ft (3.3 m) above the Shrine's main focus, a more or less life-size, carved stone dragon's head, its scales painted blue, like its eyes, with its jaws half opened as if about to bite or use its breath weapon. The muzzle and teeth are sooty. This carved head is fixed at the neck to a foot-high (0.3 m) dais atop the 6 ft (1.8 m) platform that fills much of the northern half of the cave. It can be seen clearly from all parts of the Shrine. Two other, smaller, bas-relief-carved, front-view dragon faces, also painted blue, again with sooty teeth and open muzzles, project slightly from the front of the otherwise sheer, polished, platform, about halfway up it, and around six or seven feet from the centre of the platform on either side (1.8 to 2 m). Two narrow, wooden, ladder-like sets of steps lead up to the top of the platform, each about five feet (1.5 m)

away from the nearest of these platform-front dragon faces, towards the cavern walls. Both ladders are fixed in place, and are designed to break if under the weight of more than two Kobalts at any time. The upper platform edge has no rail, but there is a shallow, east-west elongated, oval hollow on the top in front of the main dragon's head icon, roughly six feet long and nearly three feet wide at its widest (1.8 x 0.9 m). The hollow is heaped full with many small offerings, including teeth, carved animal bones, precious metal nuggets and uncut gemstones.

The floor here is smoother than most of the passages and other caves, thanks to the regular use of the Shrine over a very long period by many feet. Often just one or two Kobalts will be here, usually briefly, perhaps only to make a ritual deposit of some new-found small item. Small, informal ceremonies with half a dozen priests and officiants on the platform, and other Kobalts in the lower part of the cave, happen at least once a day. Larger ceremonies happen only a few times a year, celebrating a variety of special occasions.

The Shrine's walls have been carved into vertical flutings, which while passing as natural forms at first glance, become more reminiscent of draconic claw trails the longer they are looked upon. Over this rippling surface are numerous shallow bas-relief scenes of dragons engaged in different activities, often with Kobalts in attendance in servant-like roles, assisting or looking-on at the dragons. These low-relief carvings have been carefully painted in lifelike colours, blues predominating among the Kobalts and dragons alike. The Shrine is normally in darkness, except during ceremonies, when flames from the main dragon icon's mouth, and those of the two platform-front dragon faces light the whole chamber.

When the Traps toggle is activated, the traps here, marked as "24", can be seen, highlighting the dangers of the ladder-steps and the sharp drop at the platform's edge. In addition, the main icon and the two platform-front dragon faces can be made to shoot their fire across the whole Shrine chamber. The platform faces can shoot down to floor level at any part of their respective indicated arc, while the main dragon's head can be rotated about its neck to shoot across the cavern to any part of it at or above the height of the platform. This can be accomplished magically by any attending priests or officiant Kobalts anywhere in the Shrine, or physically by any Kobalt in direct contact with one of the dragon carvings. Anyone else trying to do so must work out how to do so first, something that is not obvious. The fires are powered by natural gas from a nearby volcanic vent, lit by a simple mechanical sparking mechanism just inside the mouth of each dragon carving.

Entrance

The only way into the complex is by this tunnel, which opens in the hills southeast of Kobalt Mountain. It is quite well disguised from the outside with natural rocks and outcrops, as there is no nearby significant vegetation in this part of the island. The general lack of predators on Zariq has though made the Kobalts a little careless, so any experienced land tracker should be able to locate it with little difficulty. It is similar in height and nature to the bulk of the interior tunnels.

Escape Tunnels

Kobalts are naturally wary creatures, and like to be sure they can escape from any situation, so every adult knows the quickest routes to all the Escape Tunnels, and all the routes to those nearest to where they usually live and work. Every Escape Tunnel is trapped along its entire length, as indicated when the Traps toggle is active, such that

they can be collapsed at any point for the whole of that marked length on top of, or to block the access of, any pursuers. The outer ends of the Tunnels - not shown on the map - all become very narrow, so to actually get out, even the smaller Kobalts have to squeeze through. However, until one is in use, these outer ends remain sealed with a thin layer of uncut rock and soil so as to be undetectable from outside. Escaping Kobalts can easily punch through this covering from the inside, as it is rigged to do so. All the Escape Tunnels are labelled "32" when the Traps are visible.

Food Stores

These storage caves are chosen as being cooler and drier than those elsewhere, and are often below the level of other nearby caves and passageways. Sometimes these effects are applied, or enhanced, magically. Each stores a variety of foodstuffs, commonly dried or preserved in sealed jars, prepared against times when fresh food is less plentiful. Such foods include fungi, fish (commonly smoked), poultry meat, vegetables and fruits from the woods outside. Other, rarer, meats tend to be consumed while still fresh (the Kobalts don't believe in wasting food, so there is no Kobalt burial ground, for instance).

Freshwater Pools

Only two are large enough to feature on the map, but there are smaller ones scattered about in many of the larger caverns, often where the humid air condenses on a wall, and then runs down it. The two larger pools are used when more water than this is needed, such as during metalworking or other craft processes, carried away in fungus-leather buckets quite typically. Both pools are deep and well-like, fed by subterranean aquifers. It would be easy for a larger air-breathing humanoid of average human size, say, to drown in one.

Fungus Farms

Kobalts are not natural farmers, but they are able to tend and harvest numerous types of fungi that grow underground. The caves where the fungi grow are always warm, and more humid than anywhere else in the complex. They are normally lit by a pale, bioluminescent glow from the fungi too, as are the adjoining passages. The walls, floors and ceilings in and near the Fungus Farms become slick with fungal slime as well, so anyone not a Kobalt will find all tasks involving surface-contact movement in the Farm areas more difficult than normal. In addition, those creatures with a relatively soft outer skin surface, such as most non-scaled humanoids without an exoskeleton, will find themselves infected with fungal spores if they spend any substantial time there. These spores usually cause redness and itching of the exposed skin in patches. Sometimes this irritation will clear up in dry air and sunlight, though it may sometimes need medical or magical treatment to resolve. Scratching the affected area will only make the infection spread quicker.

The fruiting fungi ready for harvesting include classic mushroom-shaped bodies of various sizes. The largest grow to be about five feet (1.5 m) tall, and are used chiefly for their leathery outer skins, as they are unpleasant to eat. They only occur in caverns large enough to host them, primarily in the wider areas of those, where the ceilings have been cut deliberately higher, commonly to between 7 and 8 ft (2 to 2.5 m). Other forms include several branching, puffball and bracket types, including an unusual blue-coloured, serrated, bracket fungus that grows vertically up from any flatter surfaces, sometimes reaching a foot or so tall (0.3 m), looking like a thick cock's comb. It is known as Dragon's Crest, and is particularly favoured as a Kobalt delicacy, partly as it dries well, yet retains its rich, smoky flavour.

Guard Chambers

The two caves closest to the interior of the Entrance always have a group of able warrior Kobalts in each, protecting the Caverns against intruders. They will make full use of all the available traps nearby, including the narrow wooden Bridge that crosses the Stagnant Pool (marked as “1” when the Traps toggle is active). This Bridge is rigged to break in its middle section if more than two Kobalts’-weight is on it at any time, a collapse which can be triggered from the interior side by guard Kobalts in the northwestern cave as well. The guards in the cave north of the Pool wait concealed behind a low raised edge-wall on the open platform overlooking the Pool there. They will use this as cover from which to shoot across at invaders using slings, bows and thrown javelins, or even rocks at need. Those in the northwestern cave have some missiles too, although they rely more on hand weapons, including spears, axes, swords and volcanic-glass-spiked wooden clubs.

Ladders & Sharp Drops

Aside from those discussed under the Dragon Shrine earlier, only one other ladder is present, along with several sharp drops, in the largely natural caverns marked by numbers 13 to 18 inclusive when the Traps toggle is active. These cavern ceilings reach up to 13 ft high in places (4 m), while the sharp drops are sheer, often glassily-volcanic rock, surfaces, each around 8 ft tall (2.5 m). With no guard rails, the slippery rock surface near the drop edges is unsafe, even for an unwary Kobalt, while the sole ladder (Trap 14) is, as usual, narrow, and liable to break, here if more than just a single Kobalt’s-weight is on its mid-section at any time. In the caves marked as 13 and 15, which are also Fungus Farms, the floor and wall surfaces are still more slickly dangerous. In addition, the profusion of fungi in both areas makes the drop edges hard to see.

Latrines

Small caves, ordinarily used by Kobalts from the nearest living or working areas, these are places with several deep, narrow floor holes leading into rock-cut tubes that drop down to where there is live magma. Occasionally superheated steam, smoke or rarely flames, may shoot up from one or more of these, which the Kobalts think is a great joke should anyone be singed!

Living Areas

These caverns are where Kobalts spend much of their time when not working at their assigned tasks elsewhere. Each Living Area has sleeping spaces, a mixture of shallow wall-alcoves and floor hollows, for from ten to thirty Kobalts, depending on the cavern’s size. The sleeping berths tend to be clustered together away from the more often-used tunnel entrances, to avoid disturbing the sleepers. As largely subterranean creatures, Kobalts may be active at any time of surface day or night equally. Here, they wake, sleep and routinely work on a loose shift pattern, meaning roughly one-third of the tribe is liable to be sleeping at any given time.

There is space in the Living Areas too for sitting, eating, conversing and carrying out quieter craft tasks, while these caverns double as egg-hatcheries, the more wakeful Kobalts having responsibility to protect the shallow-pit nests, ensuring they are kept warm. As the Living Areas are as warm as other places in the Caverns, this means normally just a light covering of dried grass is used over the nests, as much to highlight where they are on the floor as to keep them warm.

Magma Pipes

Only some of the more prominent magma tubes that pass closer to the Kobalt Caverns are shown on the map, and then only to indicate their relative proximity to the nearer parts of the Caverns. Other pipes run at different angles around and between these, sometimes passing over or below the Kobalt tunnels and caves. The Kobalts have an innate sense of where these pipes run, so are never in danger of accidentally breaking into one. Equally, in an emergency, they would be able to rapidly open an access way into one, as a means of destroying any powerful attackers threatening the Caverns. (Trap 12 shows one such mechanism where six pre-weakened channels into a magma pipe have been made by the Kobalts.) Not all the pipes are active all the time, and some may contain more gas, smoke and fumes than molten rock, while just a few break the surface to produce some minor lava eruptions from time to time.

Mines

As the Kobalts expand and alter their Cavern complex, any fresh areas opened-up become mines, from where any useful finds, such as metal ores, pleasing rock types or gemstones can be removed, along with suitable rock for minor construction tasks elsewhere. Sometimes such caves will be used later for another purpose, while others will be filled with rubble from new excavations, to be sealed-off once full. Some remain in use as mines, so long as especially useful items continue to be uncovered.

Slopes Up

As noted under the introductory section to The Caverns earlier, these arrowed lines indicate places where the tunnels have their most obvious slopes, the arrowhead always pointing upwards. Normally, there is no difference to the floors of tunnels or caves nearby in such places. However, in the Tower at the northwest corner of the map, the slope there represents a deliberately-constructed spiralling ramp that allows access to and between the four ascending levels of that feature.

There is also one area among the more natural caves, marked as Trap 16, where two naturally-raised rock platforms (Traps 15 & 17) slope down to meet the floor of their cavern. The Kobalts have built a trap here by weakening the floor where the slopes flatten out, such that any creature passing over the area, and weighing more than a Kobalt does, will cause the floor to collapse at that point, dropping around 8 ft (2.5 m) down into the tunnel that passes directly beneath it. This collapse will not fully block the lower tunnel, at least, not for Kobalts.

Stagnant Pool & Bridge

Some aspects of these, especially the Bridge's form and trap usage, were discussed above under the "Guard Chambers" section. The Pool is of similar nature and well-like vertical depth to the "Freshwater Pools" also detailed earlier. Here though, the water is far from fresh, contaminated by volcanic gases and whatever else the Kobalts have chosen to deposit in it over the years. Its scent reaches to the outside, which alone deters many would-be animal visitors. It is however comparable to a number of other unpleasant odours found in parts of Zariq where volcanic fumes are prevalent. The Bridge is about 9 ft (2.7 m) above the water's surface, so anyone of typical human size or smaller falling into the Pool will struggle to get out again, due to its vertical sides, without help from above. The stench will wash and air out of clothes, skin and armour eventually, though anyone ingesting any of the Pool water will need medical or magical help to recover from its effects. The area is in darkness.

Throne Room

Like the nearby Dragon Shrine, the Throne Room cavern is a partly natural space, further enlarged and developed by the Kobalts. It is the largest chamber in the entire Cavern system. The tribe's leader, when present and holding court, sits in a carved stone throne set on the low rock dais (about 1.5 ft, 0.45 m, high) to the cave's northeastern side. The throne is of black basalt shot through with some of the brightest and thickest blue-green mineral veins seen anywhere in the Caverns. Its high back is topped by a large sculpture of a dragon's head, in form, though not size, that of the Dragon Shrine's, that is, facing forwards with mouth agape. The rest of the cave is used as a Living Area, including by the leader, their guards, priests and other Shrine officiants, as well as some ordinary tribe members. Much of the cave's content is as detailed under the Living Area descriptions above. There are also several lit torches scattered about the chamber, sometimes suspended from wall or ceiling brackets, sometimes in free-standing metal tripods, and in the approximate centre of the cavern (in the area occupied by the symbol used to indicate the Throne Room on the map) is a roughly six-foot diameter (1.8 m) rock-edged fire pit, used for various tribal feasts and celebrations through the year. There is normally a small fire going in some part of the pit at any time. The ceiling is higher than in many other parts of the Caverns, if often irregularly so, up to about 9 ft (2.7 m) above floor level. Over the fire pit is a chimney vent of similar size to the pit, which rapidly narrows as it ascends, and then changes to a series of increasingly narrow pipes, typical of those used to vent fire-smoke from the Craft Workshop kilns and forges to prevent access from outside, until they reach the surface to look like any other volcanic fume outlets there.

Tower Guards

These markers are only shown in the four vertically-separated levels of the Tower in the northwest corner of the map. The Tower was built to look like just another volcanic chimney on the upper northwestern slopes of Kobalt Mountain, to be used as a lookout post. Each level has a number of small openings to the outside for this purpose, dotted irregularly around the walls. Two or three guard Kobalts are in each of the four chambers at all times, on constant watch for ships, surfacing Sea Devils (Kachaya), returning migratory seabirds in spring, or anything else unusual and potentially useful for, or dangerous to, the tribe. A sloping ramp connects all four levels. The walls are constructed to let volcanic smokes and fumes run up channels through them, helping keep the rooms warm (as most are not underground), while aiding the illusion that this is merely one more volcanic feature to outside observers. At need, it would be possible to break straight through the Tower wall from any level to use it as an additional escape route.

Traps

The following is a complete listing, in numerical order, of the traps visible when the Traps toggle is active. The Kobalts know them all, and will use them to their best advantage against invaders, while taking no harm from any themselves.

1) A narrow wooden bridge over a deep, well-like, pool of stagnant water that will break if more than two Kobalts'-weight is on its central section at the same time. See also the "Guard Chambers" and "Stagnant Pool & Bridge" notes above.

- 2)** Three falling-block traps that only the Kobalts can trigger, one in each indicated passageway. Each completely blocks their respective tunnel.
- 3, 4 & 5)** Once triggered, a near-floor tripwire at each place will sound a gong in the nearest Living Area, alerting all there to incoming danger.
- 6)** A series of very sharp, steel caltrops, partly embedded in the two passage floors, are scattered along the indicated tunnels. Too large to cause problems for the Kobalts, larger humanoids will find them a painful distraction.
- 7)** The rough, partly natural, steps here are uneven and hard to climb for non-Kobalts. Pots of oil are stored at the top, ready to be tipped down and possibly set alight (if simply making the steps still harder to negotiate seems not to be enough of a deterrent).
- 8)** Concealed floor-plate triggers in both tunnel entrances to the cave labelled “8” will cause the collapse of both marked sections of passageway into it, trapping the unwary in cave 8 itself.
- 9)** A concealed floor-plate trigger in the tunnel causes the collapse of the indicated stretch of passageway, which sound alerts the Kobalts in the nearby Living Area to approaching danger.
- 10)** A series of near-floor tripwires along this tunnel causes up to five falling-block traps to trigger, as highlighted, one per trigger. Any of these is enough to block the tunnel, if in it, though not that in the Fungus Farm cave.
- 11)** A near-floor tripwire sounds an alert warning gong in the nearby Living Area.
- 12)** The lines running from the magma pipe here show a series of prepared, but still sealed, channels through the intervening rock, any one (or more) of which can be opened quickly, allowing magma to flow into the connected tunnel or cave area. This will cause superheated steam to erupt from and around the Freshwater Pool should any magma pass into it. Once opened, a channel cannot be closed until it blocks itself with cooling lava.
- 13)** The air in the Fungus Farm cavern is as moist as usual (see under “Fungus Farms” above), which with the natural fungal slime on floor, walls and ceiling, help make the rough, irregular, partly natural, steps up to the raised platform in this largely natural cave especially hazardous for non-Kobalts. The platform rises about 8 ft (2.5 m) from the floor in a sheer face (see the “Ladders & Sharp Drops” section earlier), whose upper edge is particularly hard to see when on the platform, due to the nature and density of the fungal growths.
- 14)** The platform here is a continuation of that described under Trap 13, and is identically problematic to cross. The ladder up to its eastern end will break if more than a single Kobalt’s-weight is on it at any moment (again, see under “Ladders & Sharp Drops” above).

15) Another largely natural Fungus Farm cave with a raised platform, whose nature and difficulty in crossing are the same as those around Trap 13. The natural caverns continue from here to the Trap 18 area.

16) Where the platforms from Trap areas 15 and 17 slope down to meet the cavern floor, the floor has been weakened such that if more than a Kobalt's-weight crosses any part of the marked zone, that spot will collapse down about 8 ft (2.5 m) into the underlying tunnel. For Kobalts at least, this will not completely block the lower passageway. (See also under "Slopes Up" earlier in these notes).

17) A narrow wooden bridge crosses the gap between the two sheer-sided platforms, which are much like that described under Trap 13 earlier, having the same 8 ft/2.5 m drop. Although there is no heavy fungal growth here, the platform and bridge footway are still slippery with fungal slime. More than two Kobalts'-weight on the bridge's central section together will cause it to break.

18) The rough, uneven, partly natural steps here are similarly slippery to those of Trap 13. A near-floor tripwire at the northern exit partway down the steps, and another at the foot of the stairs, sounds a warning gong in the nearby Living Area.

19, 20 & 21) Three concealed pit traps. Each is the width of its respective passageway, is 9 ft (2.7 m) deep, and contains a series of long, sharp, up-pointing, metal spikes. The spikes are regularly re-coated with a fungal poison. Each pit triggered causes warning bells to sound in the Throne Room. A single Kobalt's weight is too little to trigger the pits, even when running or jumping.

22 & 23) Four identical pit traps to those of Traps 19-21, though here the warning bells sound in the Dragon Shrine instead of the Throne Room.

24) Flames can be triggered to shoot from the two dragon-face sculptures on the front of the 6 ft (1.8 m) high platform in the Dragon Shrine, and from the mouth of the life-sized dragon's head sculpture atop the platform. For details, see under the "Dragon Shrine" description earlier.

25, 26 & 27) There are multiple groups of snares hidden along the designated floor areas, intended to catch and hold feet or hands that tread on them, causing falls or halts. The Kobalts just jump over where they know them to be.

28) A near-floor tripwire sounds a warning gong in the adjoining Craft Workshop.

29) A near-floor tripwire sounds a warning gong in both nearby Living Areas.

30) A pair of concealed 8 ft (2.5 m) deep poisoned-spike pit traps, like those of Traps 19-21, but no alarms sound when they are triggered.

31) Two similar concealed pit traps to those at Trap 30, except these are each 9 ft deep (2.7 m).

32) Escape Tunnels. Each is rigged to collapse along its marked length when triggered by a Kobalt. See the “Escape Tunnels” section earlier in these notes for more details.