

Living Constructs of the Realms

When the *Eberron Campaign Setting* was released, players were introduced to some interesting new character races. Of these races, the shifters and the changelings are perhaps the most easily modified for use in non-Eberron campaigns. Both races have racial backstories that can be used in any campaign with very little modification, if any at all. The new race that is perhaps Eberron's most iconic, the warforged, is not as readily ported to other campaign settings. The warforged racial origin is more deeply tied into Eberron's history, and their iconic nature also strongly ties them to the setting.

In this article, an alternative type of living construct is presented. Eidelar were created as a psionic version of warforged. They were inspired in part by psicrystals and in part by the B'omarr monks from Star Wars. Eidelar are presented in very small numbers; it would not be appropriate to the setting to introduce them in larger numbers, and few DMs would be interested in such an approach, anyway.

This article is edition-neutral. The existing rules for warforged, whether 3.x or 4.0, are suitable for use with livegolems, elfbane golems, and eidelar. Due to their small numbers and backstory, however, many warforged feats and components would not be appropriate – only in the Eberron setting are living constructs numerous enough to justify the use of alternative construction techniques or magical items created specifically for constructs.

Eidelar

Perhaps the most unique type of golem in the Realms, the eidelar is a living construct fashioned in a manner utterly unlike any other. Most constructs are fashioned by physical means, and then animated by magical ones. Unlike other constructs, the crafting of an eidelar's physical frame is done purely by the mental abilities of the crafter, with alchemical treatments strengthening the crystalline construct. Similarly, rather than magical animation, an eidelar's controlling intelligence comes from its creator, a shard of his own intellect duplicated in a non-living body.

In the ancient days of the Realms, Jhaamdath stood on the shores of the Sea of Fallen Stars. After forging their nation by strength of arms, the people of Jhaamdath eventually turned towards the mastery of the mental arts. A nation once known for its military prowess became a nation ruled and populated by those stronger in mind than in body.

Among the inhabitants of Jhaamdath was a priest of Auppenser named Eiden. Born in the First City of the Sword, Dhinnilith, in -4620 DR, Eiden was marked for his psionic ability from a very early age. A true psionic prodigy, by the time he was an adolescent, Eiden already showed a mastery of the mental arts rivaled by few people three times his age. It was only natural that such a gifted individual would feel himself called to serve Auppenser as one of his priests. Before his thirtieth winter, Eiden had ascended to the upper ranks of the priesthood, and his experiments were furthering the development of psionic abilities.

The young psiarch eventually decided that his understanding of psionics could only be deepened by experience outside the walls of the temple. Eiden journeyed beyond Jhaamdath's borders, seeking whatever the wider Realms would show him. His travels lasted for many years, taking the priest from the shores of the Shining South to the depths of the darkest forests of the North.

As he traveled, Eiden saw miraculous wonders and experienced horrific threats. He encountered intelligent beasts and savage peoples. He saw great things created by mortal hands, and saw other great things thrown down by sorcerous might. Each new horizon showed the psiarch vistas he had never before imagined.

Of the many sights Eiden beheld, one of the ones he found most intriguing was an iron golem, crafted by an elven wizard. Ponderous and slow, the golem had no will of its own, but was capable of acting within broad parameters supplied by its crafter. From his own experiences with psionically-crafted items, Eiden realized he could improve upon the concept. With psionics, he could craft a golem that would be far more intelligent, and it would be capable of independent action in a wider range of circumstances than those that limited arcanelly-forged constructs.

Returning at long last to his homeland, Eiden began designing his psionic golem. He spent six years experimenting with various substances, determining the best combination of materials for harnessing the energies of the mind. He eventually chose a blend of crystals and gemstones, with sapphire comprising the larger portion of the mixture. The cost of the materials was staggering, but the monetary wealth he'd inherited held little appeal for Eiden.

No mortal hand touched the gemstones Eiden used. Escorted by dwarven miners, the priest willingly descended into the lightless depths so rarely seen by men. With the strength of his mind, Eiden coaxed the lifeless stone walls to give up their bounty. The psiarch gathered his materials from a variety of locations, personally choosing and extracting every ounce of crystal and every gemstone that would go into his creation.

After collecting sufficient material, Eiden returned home. He began the forging of his construct by sinking into a deep, meditative trance. After more than a day of meditation the priest turned his mental energies towards the task of creation. Still in a trance, he brought together the gemstones and crystals, slowly fusing the precious stones into a single mass. Stone flowed like a viscous liquid, intermixing and smoothing out sharp edges, before finally assuming the shape of a man.

Only after the body was formed did Eiden leave his trance. Rising before his creation, he anointed it with a number of alchemical extracts, all formulated to strengthen the crystal and reduce its brittleness. After the body was treated, the psiarch used his psionic abilities to fuse steel bands to it, further strengthening it and forming a kind of armor. An ornate helm was placed atop the golem's head, one that left its nearly featureless face bare.

Eiden rested for three days before completing his mind-forged golem. Sinking once more into a trance, Eiden expanded his awareness to encompass the body of his creation. The priest let his consciousness fill every portion of the crystalline body, feeling the smooth lines of its limbs, the heavy strength of its body, and gazing from the eyes that were the only feature in the golem's face. After a time, Eiden slowly withdrew his senses, letting his awareness return to his own body. He felt the awakening of a new mind in the body of his golem – the time Eiden had spent in his creation's body left it with an intelligence of its own, a sliver of his own mind now occupying the body he had crafted for it.

Eiden called his creation a mind-wrought golem. In little time, it became regarded as a pinnacle of psionic crafting. Within a few months, most of the major temples of Auppenser were crafting their own mind-wrought golems. The golems were considered a gift from the Master of Thought, and were used as both guardians and as visible manifestations of the god's will. Only the largest, wealthiest temples could afford to create such a wondrous device, and it was also regarded as a symbol of prestige.

It was that prestige that caught the attention of some of Jhaamdath's wealthiest and most powerful ruling elite. Several of them crafted their own mind-wrought golems, showcasing both their wealth and their own mental prowess. These golems were used as guardians and bodyguards, utterly loyal and tireless servants. Each mind-wrought golem was unique, reflecting the tastes of its owner, and many had additional abilities – some could even use psionic powers of their own.

Those in the temples were not pleased with this development, seeing it as a self-aggrandizing effort and something of an affront to Auppenser. Though the continued improvement of the golems was pleasing to the Serene One, the reasoning for it was not. Those in the temples sought to distance their own mind-wrought golems from those of the ruling elite, and so chose a new name for them: eidelar, a name that honored the golems' inventor.

Ironically, it was the unrestrained proliferation of mind-wrought golems that led to their demise. In the Fourth City of the Sword, Gharrent, a mind-wrought golem was crafted by Parethal Naavus, a wealthy psionicist whose skill was greatly outmatched by his vanity. Parethal made some mistake while imbuing his golem with intelligence, and the crystalline construct ran amuck as soon as it was animated. Parethal was the first to fall victim to his flawed creation, and nearly a dozen more Jhaamdathans fell before the rogue golem was destroyed.

Almost overnight, the practice of creating mind-wrought golems came to an end. Many who had created the constructs confined them to their homes and estates, and a large number of them were destroyed. Only the church of Auppenser kept its eidelar active, though even those were usually only found within the innermost chambers of the Serene One's temples.

Eiden himself soon moved into other areas of study, seeking always to honor his deity by delving ever further in exploration of the mind's abilities. For the next three decades,

Eiden quietly conducted his studies and carried out his research. He developed many new talents, several of which spread throughout Jhaamdath. He also worked further on his own mind-wrought golem, investing in it so much of his own mental energy that it became a formidable psionist in its own right. His golem chose for itself the name Jhorren, and was ever-vigilant in guarding the man who'd created it and given it a mind of its own. Neither Jhorren nor Eiden ever used the word eidelar, feeling it was too presumptuous to assume such an honor.

As old age began resting heavily on Eiden's body, the priest became increasingly aware of the limitations the physical body placed upon the mind. Eiden already knew that the mind did not require a mortal body – Jhorren was excellent proof of this. The priest realized that a body such as Jhorren's would last for millennia. An immortal body, free of the constraints of an organic shell, could last forever, and the mind in that body would have infinite time to explore the depths of psionic ability.

Eiden spoke to no one of his plans. Using Jhorren as his intermediary, the priest once more gathered the materials to craft a mind-wrought golem. Once all the necessary ingredients had been gathered, Eiden disappeared from the temple that had been his home for more than half a century, never to be seen or heard from again. It was quickly assumed that like the legendary Laszik Silvermind, he'd ascended to the right hand of Auppenser and become a divine servant of his deity.

In truth, Eiden had left his mortal shell behind, and was now occupying his own crystalline body. Eiden withdrew from the world, finding an isolated place where he could research without interruption. He'd left his physical needs behind, and chose to remain apart from the physical world. Eiden may still remain active, in some forgotten corner of the Realms, studying the mysteries of psionics that have always captivated him.

Meanwhile, in Porrenath, the Second City of the Sword, another psiarch had realized the potential immortality of an eidelar. Maeryd Colnath was, like Eiden before him, nearing the end of his life. Maeryd wanted to remain in the Realms and continue to serve the needs of Auppenser's faithful. Unknowingly following in the footsteps of Eiden, Maeryd crafted a new eidelar for himself, and placed his consciousness in it, forever leaving behind his mortal existence.

Several others followed Maeryd's lead, though not all had such pure motives. By the time the Killing Wave inundated the Twelve Cities of the Sword, more than a score of psiarchs had crafted immortal bodies for themselves. A few powerful nobles had achieved a similar immortality. More would have certainly followed, but the High Magic of the elves ended such plans. Thousands of Jhaamdathans, ambitious or innocent, bladelord or commoner, were lost in the destructive retribution called forth by elven magic. It was a blow to psionic arts from which the Realms has yet to recover.

Despite such near-total annihilation, a few eidelar survived. Some escaped destruction by chance, others by virtue of their rugged construction. Whatever the means, a handful of eidelar are known to remain, scattered across the Realms. One occupies the ruins of

Inixrien, the Tenth City of the Sword, and it is believed another is hidden among the monks at Candlekeep. A third resides somewhere in Cormyr, watching over the Forest Kingdom for reasons unknown to any. A crystalline warrior sighted a few times in Undermountain may be an ancient Jhaamdathan psiarch, though it may also be a surviving mind-wrought golem, or some unique creation of the Mad Mage.

It is also believed that several eidelar have been crafted since Jhaamdath's fall. According to the few sages educated in such matters, the rare psionic primer *Sharpening the Unseen Blade* contains coded references to the exact means of forging the body, and other passages reputedly describe the recipes for the alchemical treatments. One sage in matters psionic, Dheskin Amathar of Waterdeep, has offered ten thousand gold pieces to any who can provide him with an intact copy of this book.

With Auppenser slowly stirring from his centuries-long slumber, the Realms may yet see more copies of Eiden's creation walking among mortal men.

Eidelar are intended to act purely as NPCs, ideally as mentors for psionic PCs. Alternatively, an eidelar can serve as a sage, focusing on the history of lost Jhaamdath. It is also possible that an eidelar could manipulate people and events towards the eventual goal of Auppenser's waking and the rise of psionics in the Realms.

Kemral, Master of the Shrouded Academy

Somewhere in the Great Gray Land of Thar, an academy dedicated to the study of advanced psionics lies hidden. Only the academy's few students have seen the outside of the building, and even they cannot locate the concealed structure on a map. The academy rarely has more than a dozen students, who have come to refer to the unnamed school as the Shrouded Academy.

Access to the Shrouded Academy is controlled by its master, an eidelar named Kemral. His institute is concealed from all forms of detection and divination, through means unknown to the students. Several have speculated that the academy is obscured by a combination of both magic and psionics, though whether this was done by Kemral or some prior agency is also unknown. All that is certain is that no one finds the Shrouded Academy unless invited by its master.

A native of Lirremar, the Sixth City of the Sword, Kemral was one of the few eidelar to survive Jhaamdath's fall. In his youth, Kemral had served as a soldier, but later realized his psionic potential and joined the church of Auppenser. Kemral faithfully served the Lord of Reason at his temple in Lirremar, until the ravages of old age stole his vitality and confined him to his chambers. Wanting to reclaim his lost mobility, Kemral crafted a new body for himself and became an eidelar.

No longer bound to his chambers, Kemral ventured forth to see the Realms – something he'd wanted when he became a soldier, but had never been able to do. He set out with no particular destination in mind, intending to let Auppenser guide him. Kemral left his

hometown for the first time, not realizing he'd never again see the Cities of the Sword. Mere months later, as Kemral was studying wildlife in Cormanthyr, the Killing Wave struck Jhaamdath, wiping out Lirremar and her sister cities.

Struck by the tragic loss of his home and the subsequent weakening of Auppenser, Kemral dedicated his existence to spreading the use of psionics. He spent the next several centuries traveling from city to city, seeking out those who could learn the Invisible Art. Many notable psionics first learned how to harness their abilities under Kemral's tutelage, particularly the half-elf Naera Summergold, one of the last defenders to quit Myth Drannor ere its fall in the Weeping War. In addition to psionic instruction, Kemral also introduced his students to Auppenser's faith, helping to preserve the fallen deity.

The eidelar also penned a number of tomes on the mental arts, under a variety of names. Some sages have noted the similarity between various treatises on psionics, and theorized the existence of a common, long-lived author, but none suspect the true nature of that suspected author. Kemral is unconcerned about such speculations; he simply wants to further expand the use of psionic arts.

It was some four decades ago when Kemral discovered the ruined building that became the Shrouded Academy. Kemral gathered a small group to restore the structure; these builders became the first students of the new institute. Since that time, several score students have studied under the eidelar, and many of them have risen to further prominence after leaving, including the heroic halfling mind mage Willen Wildfoot. Some of Kemral's current pupils are the children of prior students, advised by their parents how to seek the hidden school.

Other than Kemral, no one has ever found the building without assistance. Kemral considers this a boon for his school, but he has created a method for prospective students to locate the Shrouded Academy. His method is the only known way to access the school, even for former students.

Scattered around the Great Gray Land are a series of crystal obelisks. The obelisks are roughly five feet tall, and a foot across on each side. The obelisks, appearing to be made of milky quartz, are usually found in ruins, but sometimes on open ground. The locations of the obelisks seem to shift, over time, though there is no known pattern for this.

Surrounding each obelisk are a small number of what appear to be crystallized skeletons. The skeletons are not undead, and resist attempts to be *raised*. The skeletons only animate if someone attacks the obelisk; they will fight until destroyed, but will only pursue attackers a few dozen feet before returning to the obelisk. If even a single skeleton is destroyed, they all crumble to dust, and the obelisk explodes, sending out a cloud of shards.

Prospective students activate the obelisks by psionically contacting them. The obelisk responds to their mental communication, advising the would-be pupil to meditate at the foot of the obelisk for a day. During that time, the student's mind is probed by Kemral or

one of the instructors at his academy. Those considered worthy are teleported to the academy. Anyone found wanting is instead left at the site of the obelisk, and is free to try again later, though the obelisk itself crumbles away and a new one must be found. Someone trying to reach the academy with hostile intent is instead slain, and their skeleton becomes one of the guardians of the obelisk.

Most students remain at the academy for a five-year span. The schedule primarily consists of psionic instruction, with additionally time spent in practice or meditation. Students at the school also serve as non-educational staff, with alternating shifts spent cleaning or maintaining the school and its grounds, cooking, or otherwise keeping things orderly at the academy. Older students are also expected to spend time mentoring the younger students, both to assist the instructors and to deepen their own understanding of psionics. Additionally, Kemral leads twice-weekly worship services dedicated to the Master of Thought.

It is Kemral's deepest desire to see the Invisible Art return to prominence in the Realms, and to see Auppenser return to his former strength. The Shrouded Academy may be just what it takes to accomplish these goals.