

THE LOST TEMPLE OF ANAX AROGEION

FOR 4 PCS OF
3RD LEVEL



A 5E WARLOCK MIDGARD ADVENTURE
BY MIKE SHEA, AKA SLY FLOURISH

THE LOST TEMPLE OF ANAX APOGEION

“No one knows what goes through the alien minds of the Great Old Ones. The Cult of Anax Apogeion thought they knew how to find out. Instead, they found starvation and death in a temple lost in the sands of the Western Wastes. With them lies the scroll of Anax Apogeion, supposedly lost for all time. But I know where it is. I will uncover it. I will find the song that sings to the Great Old One.”

Introduction and Background

Three centuries ago, in the mountains of the Western Wastes, a small cult now long forgotten built a temple to the Great Old One—Anax Apogeion. The leader of this cult possessed a scroll said to allow one to speak to the ancient horror. To protect and study the scroll, the cult secluded themselves in the temple and dragged an enormous idol of Anax Apogeion in front of the temple’s only entrance, sealing themselves in. They soon starved and died, whispering strange prayers to their uncaring patron with their last breaths.

Until recently, the temple lay hidden behind the huge idol whose very appearance filled those who looked upon it with nightmares. An enterprising wizard of the magocracy of Allain, named Nathryn Yelles, found the only piece of evidence describing the lost temple. Stealing a flesh golem

from the vaults of the magocracy, he used it to tip over the massive statue and reveal the lost temple. Filled with hubris, the wizard entered the temple and never came out again.

The Black Goat’s Flock, a demon cult of chaos, soon became aware of the vault’s discovery through their sand goblin spies and sent their own expedition into the temple. They seek to recover the scroll of Anax Apogeion and add it to their Viridian Codex.

GM Note: This adventure contains material on the Black Goat’s Flock from *Demon Cults and Secret Societies*, although this book is not required. When a creature’s name appears in **bold**, that’s a cue that its stat block appears in the *Monster Manual*. If the stat block appears in the *Tome of Beasts*, it is noted as such.

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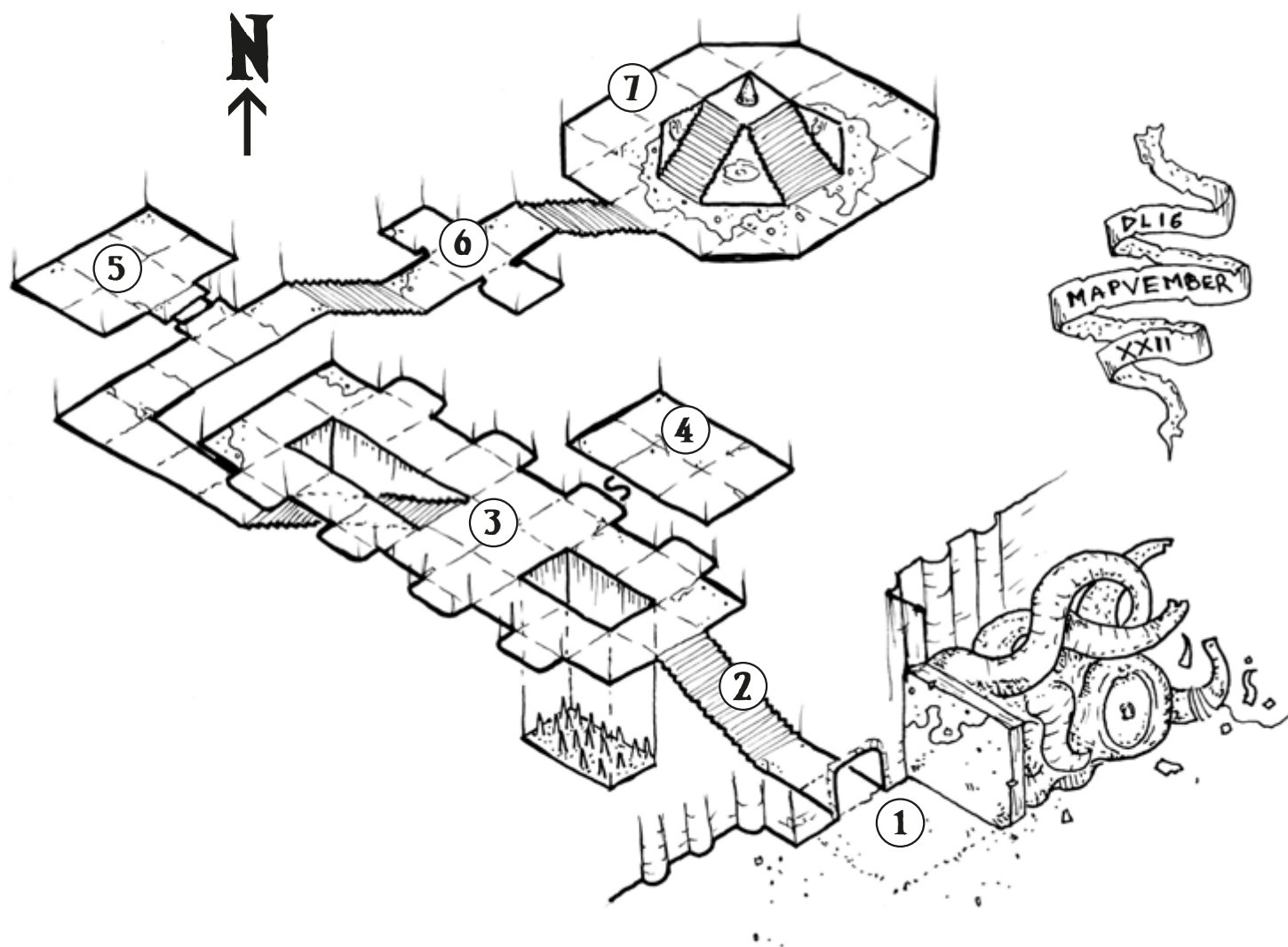
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Adventure Hooks

Use any of the hooks below or create your own to bring your characters to the temple of Anax Apogeion.

Prophecy of madness. One of the characters has a vision of the awakening of a horrifying, tentacled monstrosity floating over a dead city. The character sees the disturbing image of the toppled idol and, with some investigation, learns of the temple of Anax Apogeion.

Coincidental discovery. While traveling through the Western Wastes, the characters spot the toppled idol and feel both the horror of the Old One's temple and the mystery contained within it. One of the characters might recognize the idol to Anax Apogeion, but none know of the secret temple sitting behind it.

Hired by the Magocracy. An agent of the magocracy of Allain, Finnius Kalarex, hires the characters to learn the fate of a mage who stole a flesh golem and headed to an ancient idol in the southern Western Wastes. Along with

the fate of Nathryn Yelles, Finnius seeks the recovery of an ancient scroll said to be within the temple behind the fallen idol.

Secrets and Clues

As your game unfolds, Drop in the following secrets or clues whenever they make sense. Characters might discover these secrets and clues in conversations with NPCs or through skill checks while investigating the lost temple.

- Anax Apogeion is one of the Great Old Ones lost in the Western Wastes. Anax Apogeion itself hangs above the last ancient city it destroyed hundreds of years ago.
- Anax Apogeion cared nothing for the cult that followed it but they revered it as a god.
- The Black Goat's Flock knows of the lost cult of Anax Apogeion and seeks the scroll they once possessed.
- The cult of Anax Apogeion buried themselves along with the scroll in their temple.

- The cult of Anax Apogeion had uncovered terrible secrets that allowed them to whisper to the horrors from beyond the realms of mortals.
- Members of the magocracy of Allain seek the scroll because they too want to understand how to communicate with the Great Old Ones.
- The Black Goat's Flock, a demon cult of chaos, seeks to complete the Viridian Codex, the forbidden litany of the Goat in the Woods.

1. ENTRANCE

The massive, toppled idol of a tentacled abomination reveals a carved tunnel leading deep into the rockface of the mountainside. The statue's huge single eye stares out across the lands. A hulking humanoid of stitched patchwork skin stands next to the fallen statue, its mismatched eyes following your movement.

Two Black Goat **cultists** stand guard at the exposed doorway of the temple. They warn any approachers to leave at once or they shall release the golem. This is a ruse. The flesh golem was commanded to wait here for Nathryn Yelles who lies dead inside. The **flesh golem** accepts no other commands and will stand here until the elements shred it to the bone.

If they are not heeded, the cultists attack. The cultists wear silver necklaces around their neck of a five-pointed star formed from stalks of wheat. A DC 14 Intelligence (History) check identifies these necklaces as symbols of the Black Goat's Flock. They were ordered to guard the doorway and do not know what happened to their companions who entered.

Examining the massive statue of Anax Apogeion is fraught with risk. Any who examine the statue must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or take 7 (2d6) psychic damage. Further, any physical damage to the statue releases a **death butterfly swarm** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 71) trapped in the idol and feasting off of the idol's dark energy.

Treasure: Within the idol, deep in the stone, is a single large black diamond worth 500 gp. A DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the diamond is not of this world. The amulets of the Black Goat cultists are worth 10 gp. each though selling them gains the attention of the leaders of the Black Goat's Flock.

2. THE STAIRCASE

Shining torchlight illuminates this steep cracked stairwell leading up into the mountainside. Dozens of skeletons lay upon the stairs, many dressed in ragged gray robes. Two husks lie in less tattered black robes, silver pentagram necklaces around their necks. The carvings of hundreds of eyes and thousands of tentacles decorate the walls of the stairwell.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the older skeletons are nearly three-centuries old. The other

corpses were more recently killed and wear the garb of the Black Goat's Flock.

A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that some of the eyes on the wall pulse with energy. A DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the energy as necrotic. A DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check can disrupt the necrotic energy of the walls and allow safe passage down the stairs.

Unless disrupted, when any living creature walks halfway down the stairs, a number of eyes begin to gleam with violet light. All creatures on the stairs must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d10 minutes. Black ethereal tentacles then reach out from the walls and attempt to drain the life out of those who fell asleep, draining them for 2d6 (7) necrotic damage. Damage from these tentacles will not wake those who sleep but any other damage they take will awaken the sleeper and cause the tentacles to whip back into the walls.

3. THE RELIQUARY

Disfigured husks stand in alcoves in this long hallway. The twisted and pierced bodies of two cultists, recently killed, lay at the bottom of the twenty-foot deep spiked pit in the front half of the room. Another staircase descends deeper into the temple on the far side of the chamber.

A DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that some of the husks appear to be moving.

As the characters move into this chamber or if they attack any of the husks, four of the disfigured husks emit a horrifying screech. All creatures in the chamber who can hear the screech must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or fall under the effects of a *fear* spell. On their turn, characters under this effect must flee the chamber and must roll 1d6. On a 1 or 2, they run into the spiked pit and take 7 (2d6) piercing damage and 3 (1d6) poison damage from the mold-covered spikes at the bottom of the pit. If they do not fall into the pit trap, they might run back into the sleeping trap in the previous stairwell. Creatures under the *fear* effect can make new saving throws at the end of each of their turns.

After the screech, four **skin bats** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 87) tear themselves away from the skeletal remains they use as their roosts and attack those who do not flee.

A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that a breeze seems to blow from the thin rock wall behind the corpse of a dead cultist on the right-hand side of the chamber. Breaking through the wall reveals the lost vault.

4. THE LOST VAULT

A stone slab sits in the center of this untouched chamber. A skeleton in tattered robes lays on the slab. Four hulking statues sit in the four corners of this room, each with a single eye and twisted tentacles for arms wrapped around their bodies.

Despite the grim statues, there are no traps in this room. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that the room has not been touched in over three centuries.

Treasure: A careful examination of the skeleton on the slab reveals that the *bracers of armor* it wears still shines as though recently polished.

5. CHAMBER OF THE SECOND

Violet torches glow in sconces along the walls of this chamber. A figure wrapped in cloth lies upon a stone platform in the center of the chamber. The body of a Black Goat cultist lies on the floor, its face contorted in agony.

Should anyone enter the chamber, the **mummy** on the stone platform rises and attacks.

Treasure: A +1 scimitar, called “Dust”, once held by the mummy lies on the floor. As an action, the wielder of Dust can cast *fog cloud*. Once this action is used, it can’t be used again until the next dawn.

6. THE HALL OF SCREAMS

Two wrapped corpses sit in alcoves on the sides of this hallway. Stairs on the far end of the hallway continue down deeper into the temple. Tattered robes lay in a pool of blood on the floor. A black wasp crawls its way out of the gaping mouth of the corpse on the left side.

Should any living thing continue into the hall, two **swarms of insects** (black wasps) flow from the mouths of the corpses and attempt to devour those within the hall. A DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check reveals that these wasps are not of this world.

7. THE ALTAR OF V’ATLUS

An octagonal stone ziggurat rises up from the center of the floor. Stairs rise to the top of the ziggurat, flanked by a pair of large carved eyes of deep black. Violet light arcs out from a swirling portal in the ceiling of the chamber above the ziggurat. A corpse in gold and violet robes lies nearby, its head missing. Another figure stands near the top of the ziggurat, a large scroll is open in his hands.

Korresh the Whisperer, a **cult fanatic** of the Black Goat stands on the steps with a large scroll open in his hands. He finishes his last dark incantation and smiles. “It is done”, he says to the characters. “Anax Apogeion hears me!”

A **dorreq** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 124) then falls from the portal above and lands on Korresh, snapping his head off with its huge beak as it twists the cult fanatic’s body with its tentacles. The scroll falls down the steps to the sand below. With the cultist slain, the dorreq attacks the characters. For the first two rounds, the dorreq uses its bite to chew up the

body of Korresh. On the third round, it will begin using its bite attack against characters it already has grappled.

The corpse of Nathryn Yelles lies on the ground. A *wand of secrets* remains on his person.

Conclusion

When the characters defeat the dorreq, the portal snaps shut and the chamber grows quiet. The characters can choose the fate of the scroll of Anax Apogeion. Given to the Black Goat’s Flock, it helps them complete the Viridian Codex. Returned to the magocracy of Allain, it disappears into their vast libraries for further study. Destroying the scroll could bring on the wrath of both the magocrecy and the cult. The choice is up to them.

Dorreq

These twitching balls of tentacles surround an inhuman face dominated by a squid-like beak.

Servants of the Void. The dorreqi are servants to ancient horrors of the void and realms beyond human understanding. They are guardians and sentries for such creatures, and they swarm and attack any creatures approaching too close to the elder aberrations they serve.

Death from Above. Dorreq prefer to drop on their victims from above, pinning them in a grapple attack with their many tentacles and biting them with their large chitinous beaks.

DORREQ

Medium aberration, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 93 (17d8 + 17)

Speed 20 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	19 (+4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	8 (–1)	6 (–2)

Saving Throws Dex +6

Skills Intimidate +2, Perception +3, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances acid, cold, lightning

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Void Speech

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The dorreq’s innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 10). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

3/day each: blink, dimension door, haste, shatter

Wasteland Stride. This ability works like tree stride, but the dorreq can use it to sink into and appear out of any sandy or rocky ground, and the range is only 30 ft. Using this ability replaces the dorreq's usual movement.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dorreq makes two tentacle attacks and one bite attack. If both tentacle attacks hit, the target is grappled (escape DC 14).

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If both tentacles hit the same target in a single turn, the target is grappled (escape DC 14) and pulled within reach of the bite attack, if it was farther than 5 feet away. The target must be size Large or smaller to be pulled this way. The dorreq can maintain a grapple on one Large, two Medium, or two Small creatures at one time.

Entanglement. Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of a dorreq must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw each round or be restrained by the dorreq's tentacles until the start of its next turn. On its turn, the dorreq can ignore or freely release a creature in the affected area.



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