

# Ernest Gary Gygax Jr.'s **The Hobby Shop Dungeon**

A GP ADVENTURES CASTLE AND CAMPAIGN



## **MARMOREAL TOMB** Campaign Starter **GAME MODULE**

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## PREFACE

# THE DUNGEON HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON

In 1975, in the town of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, the new game of Dungeons & Dragons was already starting to change the fortunes of a number of avid gamers who had started a company to produce it: Tactical Studies Rules. The game was so innovative in so many ways its popularity was bound to explode well beyond the boundaries of the war gaming market. The audience of the game was fast growing, and with it, the methods of distribution had to change and evolve with the times.

With the expansion of the original mail order company, sprung the idea of an actual face-to-face location to buy TSR games in Lake Geneva. In the fall of that year, the Dungeon opened its doors at 723 Williams Street in Lake Geneva. The location of the Dungeon would change over time, but the store remained a fixture and a point of contact between the gaming population, TSR employees, and the gaming community at large. This was not just a place to buy dice and miniatures, but a place to meet like-minded people, socialize and play games. And when you think of a game store with a name like “the Dungeon”, who wouldn’t think the place ought to have its own legendary labyrinth to explore?

The work on the Dungeon’s dungeon was started by Terry Kuntz, who designed a few starting maps and gave them to a teenage Ernest Gary Gyax Jr. when he arrived to work at the game store. “Take these. See what you can do with them.” Ernest took ownership of these first few maps, envisioned all manners of traps and inhabitants, expanded and tweaked here and there, and ended up growing the dungeon with an enormous sixth level of ungodly proportions, a unique challenge to all manners of players and characters, up to this day.

The Dungeon’s dungeon was partially based on what Ernest remembered of the aesthetics of his father’s dungeon and campaign, which involved labyrinthine levels, the ruins of a keep, and a wilderness around that open to exploration by the player-characters. It served as a base camp where player-characters could recover and bring back their treasure for safety and experience points, trade, gather information, and train between sessions. It also kept in mind the demands of the context in which the game was to be run, which shared more than a few similarities with disparate groups of gamers that had explored his father’s dungeon after he, Robert J. Kuntz and Terry Kuntz had their fill and reached the bottom slide to China. For like the many aficionados that would

come to game with the folks that made TSR in the early days, in the basement of 330 Centre Street and beyond, the pool of gamers who would ultimately explore the Dungeon hobby shop dungeon would involve not just regulars, friends, family, and TSR employees, but also visitors, from the occasional soldier on a leave to the college kid in search of a new game to play, sometimes changing the makeup of the party completely from one week to the next.

Nowadays, with the prevalence of games centering around a specific cast of characters on a series of scripted adventures, having different players show up from one week to the next could be a serious challenge. It can stop a game dead in its tracks, introduce a hiatus that lasts for weeks as schedules and obligations don’t match, and ultimately kills a campaign for good. This wouldn’t happen with the Dungeon hobby shop dungeon, for the game play centers around the exploration of the world itself, as an ongoing stage that evolves with the actions of any particular group in any particular corner of the world, and each new cast of characters from week to week explores and influences potentially different places in that ever-changing context. Characters can die, they are replaced by new adventurers who go on from there, maybe having to recover the remains of those who were lost, or maybe ignoring or not knowing anything about the fate of the previous parties, leaving on their own adventures to explore the world’s dungeons and wilderness anew.

A key component of this flexibility of the campaign lies in the articulation of a single game session, where it begins, and where it ends, in order to allow changes in party make-ups at any point in the campaign, as well as the involvement of multiple parties simultaneously active in the world. Let’s look at a typical game session to see how that works.

### TYPICAL GAME SESSION

Dungeon hobby shop dungeon games would take place at the game store, often after hours, during the evening, up to the early hours of the morning. Whoever showed up selected a character from their stable (i.e. the characters of different classes and levels they already play in the HSD campaign) or created a new one, from an upgraded hireling, a henchman becoming player-character, or a brand new concept. The new comers would create their characters from scratch, which, with the TSR rules of the time, wouldn’t take more than half an hour.





The idea at this stage was for the characters in the party to form a relatively coherent lot, with no character being so powerful over the rest that the visitors and newcomers would be left holding the candle for the “heroes of the game”. That would be counter-intuitive to the spirit of the game and a complete waste of everyone’s time. Discrepancies of up to three levels of experience are generally alright. Beyond that and the power difference starts to become noticeable.

Beginning characters for visitors and newbies are usually created within the first three levels of experience, and are then matched with available characters in the stable of the veterans, with the idea to create a coherent adventuring party. The party then sets forth, explores some area of the dungeon known to this of that character via previous sessions, or finds some rumors worth investigating in the wilderness, or accepts a new job at the village or home base. If the players themselves do not come up with an objective, e.g. a character with a specific task, a handout from the dungeon, knowing some area left unexplored or a question needing answers, then the referee spins a new reason to send the party on its own adventure.

The game would always start at the “home base”, usually a camp, village or inn which would serve as a place of rest and gathering of all potential player-characters

in the game, and where the loot found in the dungeon would have to be brought back to count as “being safe” and therefore count as experience points. Players who do not bring back the loot at the village or home base at the end of the session do not benefit from experience point from any of the coin and items they found during the next game session.

In order to benefit from experience points, a party has to start at the village, travel to the dungeon (which usually takes the form of a couple or more days back and forth with potential encounters in the wilderness both ways), explore until satisfied, or until they spent their critical resources and have to retreat, or found significant loot along the way, and then make the travel back to the home base to secure its gains and make them count.

The exploration unfolds verbally, with a volunteer taking on the mantle of mapper for the party. The referee indicates the dimensions of the rooms and corridors, ceiling heights and important features, and the mapper keeps track of this information in order to be able to detect patterns of architecture, the presence of secret rooms, get back to an exit or investigate sections skipped over when coming back to explore more of the complex in later sessions. Referees should not hesitate to add ambiance, atmosphere, and use all five senses in their descriptions, describing what the characters would feel and see and smell in the situation, from a first person point of view.

For complex shapes and descriptions, the use of blank sheets of paper or a small white board can be very helpful, but we recommend one to keep this use to a minimum. The mystery derived from not seeing the map of the dungeon as it is, but as you record it from the referee’s description, is something that can add a lot of ambiance to game of exploration like the HSD and Marmoreal Tomb. Using the shortcut of a visual representation or sketch might defeat the purpose, and is best kept as a last resort for the referee. Better to enrich one’s vocabulary and precision when describing decor, from this standpoint, than remain dependent on a board or game mat to describe anything. The players and referee engage in a question-answer back and forth to learn more details, examine specific areas, and on, as the examples of play of the advanced version of the game or our own *Player’s Guide to the Eastern Duinnsmere* describe.

Likewise, players ideally should not ever see an entire layout of the dungeon represented in 2D or 3D in front of their eyes. Both Ernie Gyax and his co-author are fond of the use of miniatures and decors in the game, but they are used sparingly, often planned from one session

to the next when knowing in advance there will be a central set piece or objective of the party, and thus the use of such miniatures and props is generally in the context of a single main climax area to engage in full tactical combat, the rest of the session consisting of verbal exchanges and maybe the use of figures to indicate marching orders and the characters' positions in relation to one another.

Perhaps a little more than one hour before the end of the session in real time, the characters leave the dungeon, travel back through the wilderness to the home base, and separate the loot between themselves, sell items together, with this or that character trading items to keep, distribute the coins and gems evenly, and catch up on the events and rumors that transpired in the village while they were away, perhaps inspiring or changing future objectives. The session ends, and the participants are free to pursue this same avenue of exploration, or another, next time they play.

Running the game this way takes a little bit of a learning curve, knowing when to call it a day in the dungeon, what is best mentioned out loud at the table and negotiated with the rest of the group when the hour comes, and learning when to retreat from more than one can chew and cut out losses to make it back to town. This method is immensely rewarding, and solves one of the greatest problems with a lot of modern campaigns falling apart, since it solves the issue of continuity through form, i.e. the structure of the session discussed here, and chosen focus of the campaign, this being the world instead of a specific cast of characters.

## CAMPAIGN SCALE AND CONTINUITY

If the players of last week do not show up this week, it is a non-issue: their characters having left the dungeon, the dungeon keeps doing what it does when they are not around: monsters heal, the dead are devoured or moved by new inhabitants, some traps are reset, others are not, vacuums are filled, situations change over time. The player-characters of last week are just not here, perhaps busy elsewhere in the world, resting, taking care of a relative, who knows? If a player missed a half-dozen sessions and the original character's level has become so low compared to the levels of the characters he first adventured with that it would seem unwise to continue with this particular bunch, then this character can join or be joined by lower level characters instead, whether that means characters created by newbies and visitors to the game, or veterans, including the ones who played the original group the player was with, adding new alter-egos in their own stables of characters.

**Example:** Harvey, Bob, Stella and Jen play the characters Arvey, Trebor, Anastasia and Cyrce in the Hobby Shop Dungeon campaign. They all start the same night, with their characters generated at level 1. Harvey and Stella go on to play regularly, whereas Bob and Jen drop out after a few sessions, with their characters still level 1, and don't show up for a few months. When they come back, Harvey's ranger, Arvey, and Stella's magic-user, Anastasia, are now both level 6 and 7 characters, respectively. Meanwhile, having not played, Cyrce the druid and Trebor the Barbarian are still level 1. It would be inappropriate to just run these characters all together. Stella proposes to play her newfound apprentice introduced last session as a cohort, Olbert the Tall, a level 2 magic-user. Her main character Anastasia learned of a secret passage in the dungeon that has not been checked out yet, near the main entrance, and she thought that Olbert could be sent to scout with new recruits and see if further explorations are worthwhile. The DM thinks this is a fine idea, so they just roll with it. Harvey meanwhile creates an entirely new character having no relations with his main one, an elf mercenary, fighter level 1, going by the name of Elwyn Mescaryn, just showing up at Olbert the Tall's offer. Cyrce, Trebor, Olbert and Elwyn are ready to roll this session, starting at the village, and will check out this new section of the dungeon for Anastasia.

It is important to not restrict the players to a certain number of characters. Part of making this "whoever shows up plays and the world goes on" setup work at the game table is predicated on a certain adaptability of the referee when it comes to the cast of characters for each particular game, with the addition of a little bit of juggling of backgrounds, events and objectives to make things work from one session to the next. This might seem scary at first, and some referees out there might wonder how many dozens of characters end up in the regular player's stable of characters. All said and done, players who rarely miss a session will have around four-six characters to choose from at any one point, if that. One will usually be the original character, the "main character", with the highest level and capability, and the others will be hirelings of the main who became PCs along the way, or NPCs that became player-characters, or completely made up concepts at one point or another of the campaign. It rarely gets out of hand beyond this, because of the gamut of levels of the game which make characters appropriate to adventure with one another within rough four levels of one another.

The scale of power could be seen, from that point of view, as comparable to the original rules of miniatures war gaming, with their equivalencies in men, and categories of heroes that form different brackets on a scale of power beyond mundane men, thusly:



**BEGINNER:** from 1st to 3rd level broadly are veteran mercenaries and students of magic, but beginning explorers. Given the lethality of the first edition game, the bulk of characters in the campaign will be found there at first, unless there is a steady group of regulars, in which case this will move to the heroic levels instead.

**HEROIC:** between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> are the heroic characters. Most adventurers will operate in that bracket. It is relatively easy for the competent player to get there after a half dozen or so first level characters died of various mistakes, and learn from their experiences.

**SUPERHEROIC:** 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> the superheroes and wizards, and beyond, are major player-characters in the regular campaign, and these face often overwhelming odds and dangers that could end their lives summarily or bring them back down the scale for a while, talking about saving vs. death, level drains and other such nastiness that becomes common at that level of play. Characters reaching such heights tend to stay there for a while, as their activities become much more diverse in and out of the campaign, from clearing out a bunch of hexes to build a castle to politicking with neighboring regions and adventuring on occasion as local lords and people of notoriety.

**CHAMPIONS:** 12<sup>th</sup> level and beyond usually denote truly unique characters from the world's point of view, potential legends of both good and evil, law and chaos, in the history of the world, champions traveling the planes or facing such overwhelming odds the fates themselves could be in the balance – such characters are rarely used in regular campaign play, and come to retire to become figures and faction representatives of the world, only to be used by their original players when specific challenges arise.

As long as players have a character in their stable that fits with one of these broad categories or brackets of adventuring, they end up being able to play with pretty much any party configuration.

Create new characters when they are needed at the beginning of a session, and not artificially out of the game thinking “I must have a character for each bracket to cover every possibility before play begins”. This is not how this is supposed to work at all. To benefit from the richness of the natural development of the game in play, this needs to happen gradually, as the main characters live and die, grow and are replaced, new players show up, and natural discrepancies in character levels in the campaign start to appear. Playing with henchmen and hirelings helps a lot towards that kind of natural development and selection of new characters on the spot: veteran players don't have

to think too hard and can just elect to play one of their main character's servants at a moment's notice.

It is possible to play in this type of campaign with one or two characters for long periods of time, and never really have a “stable” or collection of characters to choose from. It depends how many regular players show up for the game from one week to the next, and how many players are one-offs, gamers from a abroad, only play odd week-ends, visitors or people who are just here to try and see what the game feels like. Maybe you just have a few regular players and one might be missing in and out. Then the regular players will not have that many characters created over the long run. But if you are running tables of a dozen to two dozens of players as it regularly happened with Ernie at the Dungeon hobby shop, then the campaign has a lot more chances to have character levels all over the place as the campaign blooms and takes a life of its own.

### ROLE-PLAYING THE WORLD

Since the players, characters, and party compositions can change dramatically from one session to the next, their activities can seem disjointed at times.

Imagine following different crews of miners in a reality TV show, and jumping from one team to the next, with each episode being a specific expedition inside the mine. Blue team in episode 5 finds the aftermath of a cave-in that happened to red team way back in episode 2, and they decide to investigate what might have caused the cave-in, going deeper in the mountain, while red team has given up after losing three of its members and is now, as of episode 4, investigating a hunch for veins of minerals on the other side of the valley. It feels a bit like this: what parties did in the past affects the dungeon and the surroundings of the adventure sites they visit, and other parties and characters can later come in contact with the aftermath and consequences of these actions. This keeps the world moving under the direct and indirect influence of the players, past, present and future, and makes the campaign milieu feel like a living and breathing place.

The focus on the world frees referees from the burden of building pre-scripted narratives and try to herd cats through a storyline they don't want to follow and will inevitably step away from. The game being structured from the get-go with the idea that one session is one expedition to and from the dungeon and wilderness around the camp, all the players have to do when beginning play is decide what they want to investigate during the present game session. The game in fact is at its best when the actions of the players themselves drive such

decisions, from a group of explorers following up on its own encounters and clues gathered through play, to information being passed on the food chain by other characters and NPCs of the world.

**Example:** *Anastasia the Magic-user passed on information to another character of the same player, Stella, in the form of Olbert the Tall, to investigate a section of the dungeon they had not explored yet in our example a few paragraphs above. This is an example of players driving their own objectives through their own past actions and between their different characters and parties involved in the world. It reinforces the feel this is all taking place in the same world, and actions have consequences down the road that affects all parties adventuring around the area.*

Referees generally have to produce the first push towards the adventure, and occasionally from there, add a mission, side-quest or specific scenario here and there, either organically as the player-characters explore the world and meet its people and situations, or when the game slows down and needs a little bit of a help to get back on track. It is therefore not only possible, but encouraged to “plug-and-play” scenarios and other modules into the framework presented here. Since this campaign starter is not an adventure in itself, but a campaign starter, a canvas where multiple such adventures can happen through play, game modules that would describe themselves as “adventures”, missions to rescue X and Y, save the village from the orcs, retrieve item Z, whatever the case may be, and even entire sites and more “old school” location-based modules, can be retrofitted into the framework of the Midlands and the Marmoreal Tomb without much of an issue.

The main task of referees from there is to keep the world alive and spinning around the player-characters. Great efforts should be made to keep track of what various adventuring parties do in and around the dungeon, especially if it impacts the environment and its people in visible ways, and extrapolate developments between expeditions from there, so that the environment remains impacted by their actions and the world responds to their initiative. This creates the “on camera” feel that the world is consistent, that whatever was played prior did have a lasting impact on the rest of the game. This is immensely rewarding to players who come to discover the consequences of their own actions several sessions down the road: The site of a fireball explosion might have been reconverted as a shrine to the flames by primitive humanoids; humans responsible for big changes, upheavals and mayhem may be remembered for a long time by groups of cave-dwellers who never see the light, and im-

portant NPCs and creatures that have been killed might later become known from their friends, family and associates, each with their own future agendas.

Secondly, referees must keep track of the NPCs and factions gravitating around the player-characters, their goals, and what they are doing to accomplish these goals, whether they are currently in contact with the player-characters or are acting in the background instead, which then could have a domino effect adventuring parties could notice indirectly during the game. When players and factions come in contact in the game, referees must role play the world and its response to the player-characters to the best of their and the NPCs’ abilities. Some people become friends of the party, others rivals. Some groups might be smarter than others, and confront the player-characters on different levels, burning different resources available to the party as a result.

Thirdly, referees must have an idea of what’s going on broadly in the world, outside the region, and the big schemes at work around it. After they check out the *Introduction* of this campaign starter, referees will know that the giants of Krassus are moving through the Midlands as parties explore the Marmoreal Tomb. *The Wilderness* expansion details how the Knights Immaculate have set foot in ruined city of Khrag An Mor and intend to spread the rule of Law from these boundaries into the lawless region of the Midlands. The Beggar King is using his contacts to smuggle and scheme through it all. Referees can create news and events that occur way beyond the scope of the player-characters’ influence and make it to their camp via town criers, rumors at the inn and proclamations placarded onto the walls of the local temple: e.g. a battle pitting a whole family of hill giants against Gaelish forces has ruined the entire region around Red Stone and the Bridge of the Twelve Mermaids to the north; there are talks of Barbarian invasions in the East, of unrest as the populations are forced to move or submit in their path, and of tribes of Kholduns being assembled under a single, enigmatic black banner; news of several isolated farmsteads west of Thorpe indicate the sinister overlord of Zunsk Forest might be testing the defenses of men. These far away events might lead to later happenings which could involve the player-characters with the greater march of the world around them and provide them a richer context playing in the background of their own successes and failures. As some of them rise in level and experience, the characters could see themselves petitioned to take part into this larger picture and broader events which suddenly would seem more personal and immediate, and provide mutual depth in the game.



Dedicating a note book or homemade digital files to the detail of past explorations, the lasting consequences and changes introduced by the players in the environment, the actions and movements of the NPCs and factions out of the reach of the player-characters during and between game sessions, the events unfolding broadly in the wide world around the campaign, as well as notes and ideas for further developments, is a very good idea.

Using the established setting, referees concentrate on the coherence of the world and role play it carefully. They provide the hooks and scenarios the game requires to keep on going, and let it all coalesce around the players as they determine the objectives they wish to concentrate on. The world responds to their courses of actions, and the cycle repeats itself throughout the campaign, with the referee keeping track of context, factions and goings-on around the player-characters as well as outside their sphere of influence. The world becomes an engine in perpetual motion, and in so doing, perhaps counter-intuitively, it frees the referee's imagination to concentrate on the situation at hand in the game, as familiarity breeds cycles of repetition, repetition habits, and habits subconscious actions and reactions, which together bring back the focus of the game on what's actually going on in the role-playing game session.

## THE HOBBY SHOP DUNGEON

There is no doubt that some of you reading this will be in familiar territory. This is fantastic, as our efforts to bring back these types of games will need referees to showcase it in the community and spread the word letting gamers far and wide know that this is a thing and there are, in fact, different ways to play the game other than the single-party narrative adventure path that has been obliterating other play styles this past decade.

Revitalizing this type of game for those who like the original modules and the campaigns bring back some of the aesthetics left on the wayside as the game evolved, and reveal this play style to those who cannot get a single cast of characters game to run for long, and those who have ceased gaming because of it, is a priority in our minds.

It is our conviction that not only the first edition game, but the game as a whole, thrives when it supports as many ways to play and enjoy it as possible. Being familiar with this *Hobby Shop Dungeon* style of campaigning, now eclipsed by the rise of the story-driven and tournament-driven game adventures, it seemed only natural to use this campaign starter as a vehicle to establish some foundational base, provide all the elements we think lead to an exciting game,

help referees grow their campaign, and from there, expand and create more content in the future.

The *Hobby Shop Dungeon* series, however, aims at more than revitalizing this play style. Given the adaptability of the modes of play of the original and advanced games that birthed many of the play styles we know now, and we've seen how, for instance, the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* series set up can incorporate mission and objective modules in its midst, it was important to us to emphasize this by making the world and dungeon modular and able to be used using various techniques of role-playing. Whether referees plant a McGuffin in the dungeon relevant to their grand ongoing epic adventure narrative with a single cast of characters, or they favor episodic game play with the "mission du jour" agenda, the Marmoreal Tomb and the Pass around it can become recurring locations in the campaign, in whole or in parts, as the referee wishes.

From this standpoint, we desired to present this work not as a terse product, but as a set of personal notes, a compilation of the material that exists and we used, and bundle it in a way that feels organic, lived through, and give it to referees to do with it as they please. Everything within these pages tries to emphasize this point: from the penciled art style to the layout, from the handouts to the tone of the advice and the various degrees of freedom and focus given to different maps and areas within those maps, the *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter* is meant to present, not a single narrative or story, but the framework or canvas on which all manner of stories and adventures can unfold.

Lastly, we wanted to keep a promise made a long time ago to present a full Lake Geneva game setting to the world, and publish it for all to enjoy. Various attempts have been made over the decades, and all of them have failed in some fashion or another, whether the series was never finished, or not a single volume saw the light of day in the first place, or schedules impaired the original content and necessitated short cuts to publication. Given the ancestry of the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* and its relationship from 1978 back to the earliest campaigns the game has ever known, it seemed to us the material in our care was in the running to fulfill this promise.

## THE MARMOREAL TOMB CAMPAIGN STARTER

The *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter* has been built from the ground up to present the play style and campaign, introduce it to broad audiences, present its approach and specificities gradually, and involve the referee in the content in different ways depending on the areas and maps being discussed. It progressively builds

a relationship between us authors and you referees that will help create the best possible combination of our imaginations and skills at the game table.

*Nester's Folly*, *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* itself, is the subject of our second work after this campaign starter. The Marmoreal Tomb is a locale set about 80 miles away from Nester's Dungeon, and if the Marmoreal Tomb certainly is designed to be autonomous and the single lynchpin of an entire campaign lasting years, its combination with *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* will prove to be beneficial and create a symbiotic environment, or superior alloy, where the two dungeons mirror and respond to one another throughout the campaign, offering a near infinity of possible adventures.

With all that in mind, let us delve into the contents of the *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter*.

## CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK

Within these pages you find everything you need to run a campaign centered around the ruins of Grunn Galeb: the Marmoreal Tomb of the Stone-cutter dwarves, including a description of the area; the immediate surroundings of the ruins of Grunn Galeb, the details concerning the settlement itself; and the burial vaults of the stone giants that lie beyond, deeper under the Eurth.

**Preface:** This preface you are reading here introduces the referee to *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* play style and series, and the design goals and contents.

**Introduction:** The introduction explains how to start the game. It describes the legend of Grunn Galeb and recent events, and gives a brief overview of the surroundings of the Viper Head Pass. Also, it details special rules applying to character generation, game openings, and rumors about the dungeon to give the characters.

**Chapter 1 – The Viper Head Pass:** The beginning chapter presents the greater six-mile hex around the Marmoreal Tomb, including the groups and factions of inhabitants in a broad fashion leaving room to the referee for interpretation and further personalization over time.

**Chapter 2 – Environs and Cave System:** The next chapter details the immediate surroundings of the Marmoreal Tomb, on a map mixing exterior and underground rivers, as well as specific encounters next to broader camps and sites, including ruins that could be extended based on the main dungeon of Chapters 3-5.

**Chapter 3 – Grunn Galeb:** This chapter describes the ruins of the settlement of the Stone-cutter dwarves, and

the inhabitants that are just starting to call this place home before they evolve into an organized ecosystem threatening the world outside.

**Chapter 4 – The Burial Vaults:** This chapter presents the tombs of the Stone Giants of the Kingdom of Aktum, and the guardians, traps, and remaining inhabitants therein.

**Chapter 5 – The Crypts:** The final chapter details the sub-level closely tied to the Vaults above, where all the humanoid servants of the giants and the builders of the tomb were buried together for eternity, now jeopardized by obscure forces of Chaos seeping up from the depths of the Eurth and corrupting everything and everyone in their path.

**Appendices:** Lastly, this section compiles the new monsters encountered in the dungeon in standard first edition format, along with the NPCs, additional rules of the campaign, new spells, handouts, referee cheat sheets and more.

## THEMES

The underlying themes of the Marmoreal Tomb are those of history, memory, oblivion, and remembrance, how we derive our identities and places in the world from the past, out of change and revolutions, as well as the effects of Chaos both as a physical, natural parameter of reality and as a magical, cosmic force of the multiverse in this game. Most of the inhabitants around the Tomb essentially fall on the side of nature or corruption, which are two traditional sides of a coin associated with the powers of cosmic Chaos: change, holy or unholy, fertile and fruitful, or rotting and decaying, natural or unnatural cycles of birth and rebirth, construction and invention, or death and entropy.

The Marmoreal Tomb itself has been left untouched since it was looted by Krassus the Cambion, and has been forgotten by the world until now. The dead still litter the floors and corridors of the settlement. Humanoids destroyed everything in their path, leaving trash that now serves as tools and resources for the vultures entering the tomb wanting to build power and strength from the devastated place.

The Lythic Kingdom of Aktum has been lost to memory, too, with its greater kings remembered for their betrayals and bad deeds, rather than the good they did in their time, and the lamer ones remembered for being good, rather than the witnesses of their own destruction. The corrupting matter of Chaos down below bubbles up, retools the substance of undeath inhabiting the crypts, and slowly



creates something new out of the old and obsolete.

Referees will find that many key NPCs, even some of the more prominent intelligent magical swords that can be found along the way, struggle with their memories, post-traumatic disorders, and the effects of drains and curses, damaged and in need of change and evolution in some way. All these various elements slowly blend into one another, until confrontations occur, and conflicts grow into natural climaxes. They mesh with this module's design as an open world and campaign. What will follow these great battles and climaxes? How will the Marmoreal Tomb evolve in the world from here? The seeds of evolution and conflict are spread throughout the module, but it is for the referee and player-characters to ultimately find their own answers as they play the game. This book is a starting point, not an end onto itself.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Here are but a few of the titles which either inspired some elements or informed discussions that ultimately led to a richer Marmoreal Tomb, from the point of view of their authors. May such readings and viewings bring you as much entertainment as they did us.

**Poul Anderson** was the first source we discussed when fleshing out the setting around *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*. The fay, the medievalism of the fantasy world, the decision to have an archetypal "Franks versus Britons" focus on the world, the nature of Chaos, the identities and spirits of the Swords of the Duinnsmere, and the effects of iron on the fay. All these elements owe to our desire to bring back the flair that gradually fell by the way side with the original game.

- *Three Hearts and Three Lions*

- *The Broken Sword*

**E. Gary Gygax** expressed the first edition feel through fiction. We are lucky to have the novels of the master in print, and they are shock full of interesting ideas, splendid characters, and adventure. It is recommended reading for anyone who loves the first edition rules.

- *Gord the Rogue* adventure series

**The Masks of God** by Joseph Campbell give academic treatment of the motifs that mattered in Primitive and European medieval societies, and how the motifs evolved over time and why. This is essential stuff for heroic development dealing with belief, religions and Jungian archetypes.

- *Primitive Mythology*

- *Occidental Mythology*

**From Hell**, a graphic novel by Alan Moore, discusses, among other things, the nature of the fourth dimension and how it affects culture, events, architecture, and game design.

**Foucault's Pendulum** by Umberto Eco. The nature of conspiracies gave birth to a number of factions, including most notably the Knights Immaculate, which are like trademark NPCs showing that the nature of Law is not necessarily kind or helpful, and can have greater ramifications of evil than just a dictatorship. Whereas the Golden Branch explores a cult that can't decide what it is because its ultimate sources are so occult no one really understand what they mean. The Pendulum is all about belief taking a life of its own despite evidence and history, and it played a part in the construction of the beliefs around the Duinnsmere in that sense.

**Kull of Atlantis** by Robert E. Howard. In particular, some of the most important aspects of the cosmology and villains of the world were derived from these classic stories: the Obsidian Realms; the Yiggite Empire; the snake folk and the Shadow Kingdom; Yllonnoc and his magic mirror; and more.

- *The Shadow Kingdom*

- *The Curse of the Golden Skull*

- *The Striking of the Gong*

- *The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune*

**HP Lovecraft**, especially The Dreamlands corpus of stories. Not so evident in this particular module, but the idea of parallel dimensions and Earths and the matter of one physical plane being declined in another more symbolic reality, with entities beyond comprehension able to switch in between, not to mention the Mi-Go, which led to our creation of the Ohminids and allowed us to link back the Obrachaeans to the substance of Iyuggoth, this has been a great source of inspiration throughout.

**Elmer and Bugs Bunny**, the classic cartoons. Lake Geneva games always involve a little bit of a fourth wall, a self-conscious sense of humor to them. The game doesn't have to be super serious and self-referential all the time. It benefits from nods the players can understand.

**Red Cliff I/Red Cliff II**, epic Chinese movies directed by John Woo. These movies inspired some of the look and

aesthetics that went into the giants of Aktum, along with the sense of an epic past buried in the Eurth.

**Sammi Zowa versus the Duelling Dragons**, Ernest G. Gygax Jr., Nerissa Montie, and Simon Todd. It is based on the bed time stories Ernie heard as a kid.

**The Eternal Champion series** by Michael Moorcock. In particular the Hawkmoon and Corum cycles, and Moorcock's treatment of Chaos as a corrupted force, along with the insane personalities that make up its pantheon.

**Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition** by Mary Douglas, is influential at a design level and the relationship between the Marmoreal Tomb and *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* as a whole in game play.

**The Dying Earth**, by Jack Vance. Probably one of the most seminal sources of the original game, with Poul Anderson, that was instrumental to the building blocks that make the world feel familiar to the Lake Geneva gamer. Yet it remains different as we chose to emphasize different parts in different ways in the making of the world and setting around *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* and the Marmoreal Tomb.

**The Star Wars**, Dark Horse comics based on the first drafts of *A New Hope*. Spinning the traditional Hero's Journey in a different way, this was helpful to try to tread some of the same ground but from the point of view of a non-linear game design, which to our knowledge had never been done before.

**Cobra**, Japanese manga and anime series by Buichi Terasawa. For some treatments of villains, and the characters with shits that help their personalization, a great series overall.

**The Mummy** (1930), with Boris Karloff in the title role. For the feel and creepiness of undeath, the commanding role-playing of Karloff in the role, And the zombies and mummies. As soon as you have tons of undead in your game, consider watching this to try and reproduce it verbally at the game table.

**Flash Gordon**, both the spoof 1980 movie ("Gordon's Alive!"), and the feature-length cartoon **Flash Gordon: The Greatest Adventure of All** (1982) by Filmation (which went on to produce He-Man in 1983). Derivations on the themes and structures we were looking at regarding design, and the type of over-the-top fantasy that sometimes pierces through in the module. Used as condition, gonzo fantasy can be extremely effective.

**Le Horla** by Guy de Maupassant. An absolute classic sto-

ry, and one of the first of the genre, describing an encounter with a truly alien presence and spirit. Inspired the namesake in the module, Maupassant wrote several versions of the same script, and each variation is worth reading and comparing to the others.

We also took great pain to reminisce and study what we would call the **Matter of the Great Kingdom**, which directly led to the first Lake Geneva campaign setting, attempted to get back to the same sources of fantasy and derive from them a different world and substance that would constitute this "Eurth" you are now discovering.

The medieval poet Jean Bodel divided all literary cycles he knew into three broad "matters": The **Matter of Rome**, which encompasses the epics of Troy, the Hellenic wars and conquests of Rome down to the destinies of historic leaders like Alexander the Great and Julius Cesar; the **Matter of Britain**, which covers the rule of the legendary King Arthur and his knights of the Table Round; and the **Matter of France**, which is made of the chanson de geste recounting the rule of the very real Charlemagne and his Paladin knights, including the famous Song of Roland. While the Matter of Rome was an influence on the background of Danthium and the early empires of men, the bulk of the inspiration that went into the Frankhs came from the Matter of France, as did the Prytons from the Matter of Britain. All of them seen through a different prism, with key stories and beats distorted and reorganized to fit the fabric of the Eurth. All these sources deserve to be discovered and cherished, including the Matter of the Great Kingdom.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Since the original Lake Geneva play style from which *The Hobby Shop Dungeon* emerged birthed the variants of structures and game plays we know today, from the tournament module to the adventure path narrative epic featuring a single cast of characters going through a journey to save the world, it stands to reason that a module specifically designed around this premise can be adapted for use with many of these later structures and play styles. This campaign starter is not a script, rarely describes a narrative of events, and isn't meant to be construed as such. Instead, it presents locales of adventure at a certain point in time, explains the dynamics between the various inhabitants there, and develops a set of broad conjectures giving advice to referees to react and role-play the world when the party comes in contact with these elements and creates the adventure by its own actions through the exploration process. Referees could plug or develop their own scripts, missions and scenarios within this framework, just like they could incorporate

this material into a larger campaign structure that would not necessarily fit what we refer to as the Lake Geneva or *Hobby Shop Dungeon* play style.

The rest of this volume covers the locales of the Marmoreal Tomb and its surroundings, along with specific advice to run it with its original play style in mind. It assumes the dungeon and its dependences are all located in the same timeline, on the same shade of the Eurth, and the same geographic location, so we will skip directly to its possible use in other play styles and contexts.

**One Shot, Convention-Tournament game structure:** Referees are free to ignore much of the matter of chapters 1 and 2, unless they have a specific hook or mission in mind for the player-characters to serve a Non-Player Character or faction around the dungeon, compete with, or sabotage the efforts of others, and perhaps lead to a climax of the game session outside the dungeon after a delve to find this or that thing or person the NPC was searching for. The basic scenario would confine itself to Chapters 3-5, with the default hook to see how far the player-characters can get before they have to head back to camp.

**The Mission-Episodic game structure:** If the role-playing game or variant referees use includes an adventure format that essentially works like episodic two-to-four sessions scenarios or missions to complete, the Marmoreal Tomb becomes a place of legend that could be occasionally visited to find some McGuffin useful to solve the episode du jour. Whether an artifact or witness is needed to solve the intrigue, whether the help of a tribe of head hunters or traditional sages apply, whether a treaty needs to be negotiated, or a diplomat rescued from this or that faction within the dungeon, the Marmoreal Tomb is a place that evolves in the background of the adventures of the player-characters and can hold some item or figure of interest at any one point of the campaign. The player-characters can then regularly head back to the site and see what's changed in between.

**The Adventure-Epic campaign format:** The single cast of characters on a grand adventure is a tried and true format of role-playing games that has been around at the very least since the days of *Dragonlance*. In this particular context, the campaign centers around the player-characters, the one cast that must save the world and it is rare in those instances when one particular place holds them back on their way to defeat the great evil of their time. Like the Mission structure, the Marmoreal Tomb may be a recurring location, perhaps linked to one or several of the big bad guys of the campaign, where McGuffins can be found at different stages of the narrative to help them on their way to victory.

**The Political PVP format:** Some games focus more on the day-to-day evolution of political situations with the main player-characters being often allies and adversaries across the chess board meant to control an empire, a nation, or a series of fiefs thereof. In this type of context, the Marmoreal Tomb is one of these dangerous places located in a strategically important area of the Midlands that can be the stage of confrontations between rivals, become a hot spot to find a McGuffin that will guarantee victory of one conspiracy over another, or secure control over key territories of the Midlands giving power players capital to spend in their political activities. Who controls the Pass and Tomb becomes the key question of such games.

**Mass Warfare/War Game format:** Who controls the Pass and the Tomb becomes front and center in campaigns that focus on mass warfare as well, with the player-characters grunts, scouts, or leaders on the battle field. The Tomb is set up with the potential for massive clashes, factions that can coalesce into big numbers with opposite objectives, and the wild cards like the giants, the Chaos deep under the earth, and the possible intervention of forces from outside the region add elements of surprise sure to shake up a military campaign with a goal to control the Pass over the mid-long term of a full-blown war.

**Modular use of the setting:** Referees should not underestimate the potential in using the different maps and levels of the dungeon as independent locations spread throughout the campaign world. They can even be duplicated to become numerous places to explore, based on the fact the architectural structures presented in this book could have served as templates to the giants of Aktum to construct multiple sites using the same templates. The similarities between the Tombs of Garn Patuul (the Marmoreal Tomb), Ur Pa Kraat and Amun Paal (in Chapter 2 – *Environs and Cave System*), establish the existence of this architectural template.

To use the different levels and sub-levels as separate yet linked locations, just repurpose the five shafts (which are keyed at areas **L1-15 (1-4)** and **L1-8** on the first level of the dungeon, Chapter 3 – *Grunn Galeb*), and instead of interpreting them as chimneys, they become teleporters. Area **L1-15 (1)** is not vertically aligned with **L2-22** anymore, but teleports from one location to the other, wherever the Burial Vaults are located. It could be that such teleporters from Grunn Galeb each lead to the same Burial Vaults somewhere away along the Bitter Peaks or well beyond, in another part of the world, or maybe each teleporter links to one different set of Burial Vaults built on the same model, and that there are in fact five different Burial Vault levels scattered throughout the world,



including the one described in Chapter 4, and all these Vaults lead back to the one Grunn Galeb used to access them. Maybe the same Crypts exist simultaneously under all five versions, or all five versions have their own set of Crypts leading to the matter of Chaos below. The reverse setup is entirely possible; perhaps there are several sites similar to Grunn Galeb, using the map described in Chapter 3 tweaked to have different inhabitants and environments around them, each with teleporters leading all to a single version of the Burial Vaults (Chapter 4) hidden somewhere underground and the Crypts (Chapter 5) that go with them. This also means of course that the referee's own levels can be inserted between the levels of the dungeon proper, another aspect of the modularity of the module we wanted to make as painless as possible for the prospective game master.

**GYGAX MAGAZINE:** A previous version of Chapter 3: *Grunn Galeb* was published by TSR Games in its Vol. 1, Issue 3, of the winter of 2013 magazine as its own independent site adventure. The content of the Chapter in this book still contains the same text, albeit with a few corrections and additions thereof, most notably the connections with the lower levels, the Forgettable Room, and the presence of Osmandius in these grounds, along with a few other things. Referees who have run this module might run this one full adventure site here as an extension of the original, assuming the aftermath of their exploration involved some form of campaign development where the mine became the property of new interests, with the player-characters helping in the acquisition, during the transition, or becoming the new owners dealing the marble to the surrounding states' entities and securing the road of deliveries themselves. If so, don't change anything, and just assume that the Vaults remained quiet and dormant all this time, and that for some reason, perhaps related to new tremors shaking the pass, only now the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum wakes up and the procession of giants gets going. This opens up one or more shafts leading down to the Burial Vaults, and lets the current inhabitants of the mine deal with the change, or call the player-characters for help.

**Shades of the Eurth:** Another possibility would be to treat the events of the *Gygax Magazine* version as having occurred on a different shade of the Eurth. The Wilderness and Underworld expansions delve deeper into this concept that makes your own campaign canon per our cosmology of *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*. Suffice to say, there is an infinity of prime material planes stacked on top of one another like a huge tower of warm pancakes. Sometimes, the pancakes are so warm that two

or more of them can sort of stick to one another, or even sort of meld into one another. The shades of the Eurth are a little bit like this, and sometimes two realities that are very close to one another just collide and create something new.

What this means in concrete terms is that the events that happened in the magazine version of the Tomb could have taken place in one shade, and suddenly, for a reason or another, perhaps a tremor or perhaps the Norns ringing the chimes at the top of the mount, the reality of the magazine Tomb shifts and blends with the shade where the Tomb described here exists. The bodies the party had long laid to rest reappear in the corridors. The pile of rubbish of the Ogre reappears, and the rest of the dungeon seemingly goes back in time as if the party had not explored it a first time! Make sure to change a few of the inhabitants of the dungeon to keep the party on its toes and the game exciting, and you can enjoy the whole of the module anew without having to discard the entire contents of Chapter 3.

**Think of it as a tool kit or a LEGO set:** Referees embracing this campaign starter as a tool kit and taking the opportunity to shape the site to their own personal liking and expectation, especially when they deviate from the written word, might get the most out of it. Great pain has been spent looking at every specific map and area wondering how much detail should be provided, when it should be provided, where it should be provided, and how it should be provided. We have tried to assemble a large number of combinations in the descriptions of the keys in order to jolt the imagination of all manners of referees, incite them to use the opportunity and insert their own creativity in the milieu to make it their own through and through, with whatever degree of change, addition and subtraction this might individually mean. You, referee, are a partner and equal in this endeavor. We merely provide a starting point. Make the game yours, and enjoy it.

## AREAS AND MAPS NUMBERING

The Marmoreal Tomb follows a fairly traditional method of room and area numberings, allocating numbers and sometimes letters or sub-numbers to main areas, then declined per level abbreviation, often one letter or two simply indicating either the level of the dungeon and depth thereof, or the nature of the map otherwise. Thus, Area E-06A would be sub-letter A, the Tower of Lament, of area 06, the Isle of the Watchers, on the map of the Environs and Cave System (E) of this main module. L1-15 (1) indicates the first sub-number or

branch of the main corridors (area 15) of Grunn Galeb (Level 1 of the dungeon).

The main codes for the maps and levels of the Marmoreal Tomb and expansions are:

**H:** Hex of the Viper Head Pass

**E:** Environs and Cave System

**L1:** Grunn Galeb

**L2:** The Burial Vaults (core and extended)

**LC:** The Crypts

**L3:** The Hearth of Chaos

**SJ:** Shoko-Jumi area

**M:** Mellifluous Shrine

**U:** Hiveworld of Ur-Shamath

**CC:** Crom Caemloch (village)

**CT:** Tunnels of Crom Caemloch

**O(y):** Outdoors map (Specific map variant)

**T:** Twin Tankard Inn

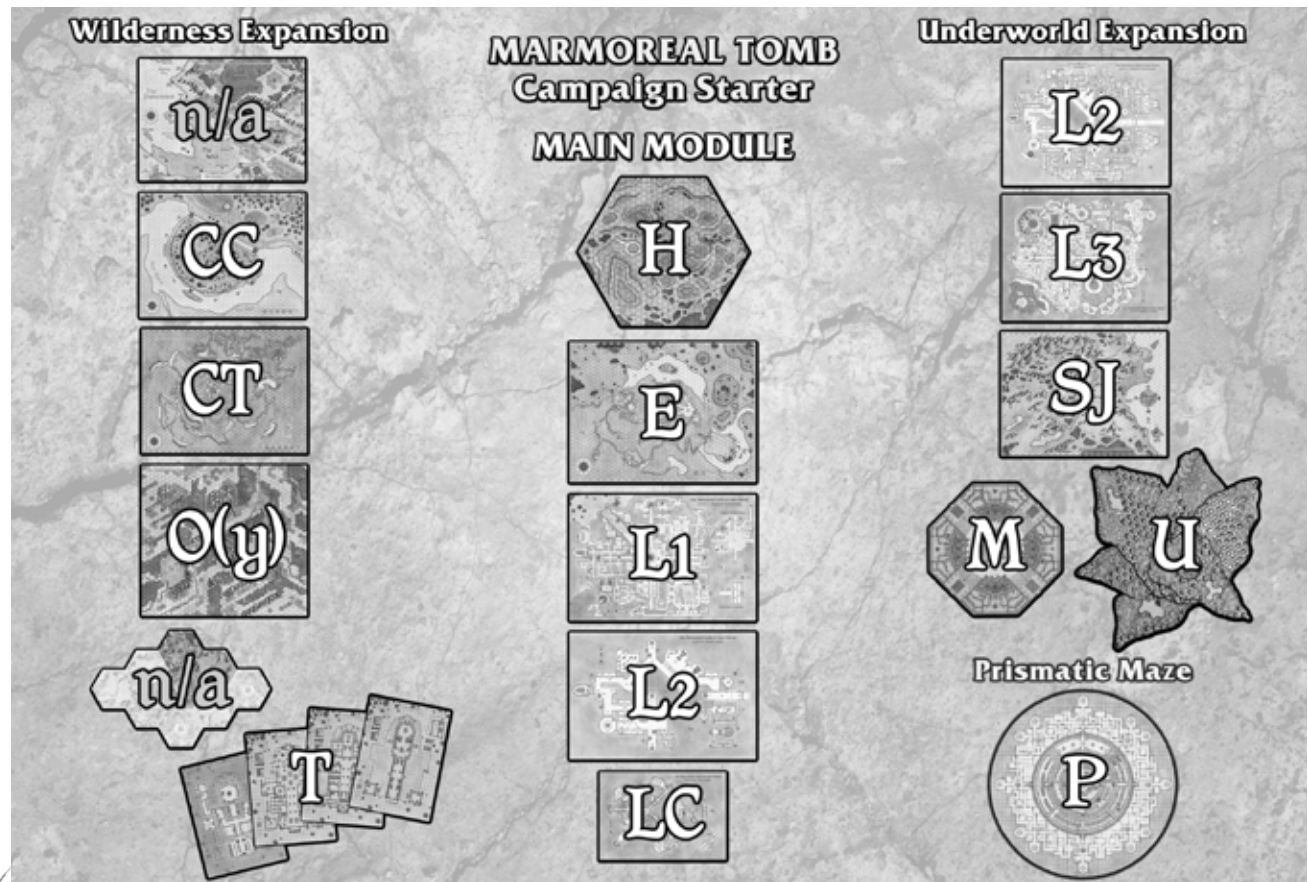
**P:** Prismatic Maze

## THE WILDERNESS EXPANSION

The Wilderness expansion of the Marmoreal Tomb is meant to add context and material around the Viper Head Pass proper. It describes the Lower Midlands, its people, patrons, figures and factions, the areas of note in the region, as in a gazetteer format, introduces the village of Crom Caemloch meant to serve as home base to the adventuring parties around the Tomb, as well as the Twin Tankard, a complete inn that can serve as an alternate home base and be placed wherever the referee desires on the campaign map. Also included are the generic outdoors map which is a re-creation of one of the very first maps used for role-playing games. Here, it is used to simulate the shades of the Eurth and pocket planes around the Midlands – the three generic Midlands hexes that can be used to set random encounters in the Wilderness or develop other locations in the Pass's vicinity.

## THE UNDERWORLD EXPANSION

The Underworld expansion of the Marmoreal Tomb adds more adventure content to the whole package. First, it develops the Burial Vaults beyond the collapsed passages into a full extended map. It includes what is referred to as the matter of Chaos in this module, the





dreaded Hearth of Chaos that sends all these energies up to the surface of the Eurth, an insane labyrinth where anything less than super heroic characters could have a very tough time to survive. Lastly, it describes a variety of pocket planes and shades attached to the substance of the Hearth, like the Mellifluous Shrine leading to the Hiveworld of Ur-Shamath, of the Shoko-Jumi area, and the coastal area of Nippon where the story of *Sammi-Zowa versus the Duelling Dragons* unfolded.

### OTHER CAMPAIGN AIDS AND SUPPLEMENTS

The *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter* along with its two expansions, *Wilderness* and *Underworld*, are the core of this experience. Look for other game aids and complements, such as our *Player's Guide to the Eastern Duinnsmere* and the *custom first edition editable character sheet*, to expand your game play experience even further. You can get in contact with the authors on Facebook, search for our *Hobby Shop Dungeon* and *GP Adventures* pages, or join the *GP Adventures Old School Roleplaying Group* on Facebook to meet Marmoreal Tomb gamers, socialize, share experiences, find groups, and we'll be happy to point you in the right direction. See you there!

### ONE LAST PLEA

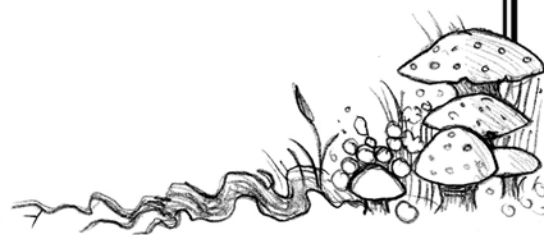
Any and all game masters should reserve the right to change or ignore the result of any particular roll of the dice. It is part of the powers and responsibilities be-

stowed upon the referee of the game. However, as it pertains to this particular set-up and play style, please refrain from fudging (changing or ignoring) the results of the dice as much as possible, especially to save the player-characters, except in situations where it is made explicit the referee can do so, as in cases of triggering tremors, specifics of random loot and values, and wandering encounters, where there should always be a healthy dose of choice on the part of the referee.

The inhabitants of the dungeon, its challenges and treasures, the stables of characters we just mentioned, are all predicated on fairness and the eventuality of failure. It means that, by first edition rules, especially at low levels, characters are going to die.

Many of them will. Some in less than glorious ways, just like what happens in a war theater.

**Let it happen.** Let the players learn to run when they need to run, and plan when they need to plan. Let them organize their resources, hire some help in the form of henchmen and hirelings, and build a personal history with this place, in and out of the game. This isn't a place that is meant to "clean up" with a single party of characters. It's a place meant to last throughout the campaign, and a place meant to challenge the players and their characters to the point it will become special and the source of many game stories to be told later on. Don't rob them of this experience. Thank you.





# INTRODUCTION

## THE STORY OF THE STONE-CUTTER DWARVES

Two centuries ago, a small band of dwarves with no home and no name of their own wandered along the mountain range now commonly known as the Bitter Peaks. These dwarves strenuously fought for their lives, winning many battles, but losing whatever ground they held over and over, their settlements repeatedly destroyed by the savage humanoids roaming the land.

This state of constant flux came to an end when they met the fabled arch-mage Nester De Guyx, whom some call the Eurthwright for his command over the materials and minerals making up part of the essence of the world. The mage hired them to excavate long tunnels, lairs, laboratories and mazes under the foundations of his keep by the Duinnsmere, the Great Lake central to the early civilization of Men upon this continent.

For over a century they toiled in the depths of the Eurth, digging what has since become known in legend as *Caer Caeladon*, *Nester's Folly*, the *Dungeon at the edge of the Wild*. The mage rewarded the dwarves, providing them with waggon loads of valuable supplies, weapons, and armors to equip each dwarven warrior twice, as well as several chests of treasure. He then pointed them in the direction of new territory and new veins of marble they could quarry. It thus came, some years ago, that the dwarves of the Stone-cutter Clan travelled to a cliff by the Bitter Peaks, within the *Viper Head Pass*, where, they were told, they could find new veins of an incredibly rare variety of many-hued celadon marble whose colour varies by the hour, if not by the minute, as exposed to the light of day, from the depths an emerald green to the aerial lightness of a soft turquoise. The arch-mage had only one warning for them: they should concentrate on mining the marble, and ignore the ruins lying beneath, for the past is laid to rest for a reason and is better left undisturbed.

The dwarves found the veins and progressively carved a home for themselves, *Grunn Galeb*, out of the rock around them. They covered the shafts they found leading deep into the ground, and were careful not to investigate further. While prospecting around for new areas to quarry, they discovered a few additional locations of interest, including a set of stairs leading to a series of corridors unknown to them, a well, and a burial chamber. They rebuilt the stairs to conceal the way down. The well, or sinkhole, as it were, plunged down to a subterranean lava flow, and was the lair and breeding grounds of a supernatural Firebird using molten

metals to create its nests. Harvesting the nests provided the dwarves with additional revenues they immediately spent in growing and somewhat fortifying their settlement. The burial chamber hosted the remains of an ancient lord of the giants who had been entombed beyond the walls of the cliff aeons before the dwarves came to live there. This is when greed, or perhaps the corruption deep beneath the Eurth, got the better of them: *Belenor*, the leader of the dwarves, ordered the tomb to be pillaged. A tremor shook the tunnels as the dwarves lifted the sarcophagus's lid open. They discarded the gigantic bones and found within a magical hammer which became *Belenor's Pride*. With these discoveries, the Clan's place among the greater Dwarven Folk would be assured. Or so the dwarves thought.

Unbeknownst to them, the tremor which shook their home was felt at a great distance by a number of stone giants attuned to the movements of the Eurth. One of them, a teenager going by the name of *Young Krassus*, a *Cambion* born out of the unholy union of his mother with a demon from the lower planes, chose this opportunity to rally what giant allies he could find, along with their lesser slaves, and travel to the tomb to recover the artifact they felt had been found.

*Young Krassus*, two other immature giants and a horde of creatures including swarms of goblins, a handful of gargoyle, and a pack of bugbears mounted on dire wolves joined forces with an eastern anti-hero and his ogre sidekick as they marched towards the source of the quake. Together, they finally reached the cliff by the Bitter Peaks and stormed *Grunn Galeb* by might. Boulders rolled down the great hallway leading up to the dwarves' market place; gargoyle invaded the guard posts, while the melee went on between the Stone-cutters and the goblins. The great marble doors could not stand *Young Krassus's* charge as he rammed his way through. The dwarves were undone, most of them slaughtered in front of the waterfall outside their home as they tried to flee away from the invading forces. *Belenor* died a heroic death at the hands of *Krassus* himself. The *Cambion* ripped *Garn Patuul's* great hammer from his hands as he drew his last breath. But a few of the dwarves did escape using a secret passage south of the firebirds' well.

The last survivors of the Stone-cutter Clan ultimately would make their way back to *Nester's Folly* and settle there from then on, but such is not the subject of our tale. The forces of *Young Krassus* moved on, while the site of the dwarves'

*demise became a silent marmoreal tomb where but a few humanoid inhabitants remained. The place's location, and its very existence, was soon forgotten by all but a few.*

A band of adventurers just now reaches the gates of the ruined settlement. Whether by chance, or by fate, they might not even know themselves. They will have to step forward, answer the call to adventure, and explore what lies beyond to find out.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

It has been years since Young Krassus pillaged Grunn Galeb, but he is now back in the area. Far away into the north, by Jotun's Wall and the vast Plains of Jonnt, the Cambion pursued the life of a conqueror and warlord, and has not much changed since his younger days, except for the healthy dose of restraint and maturity that comes with age. Now a regicide, Krassus the Usurper leads the stone-giants towards a second invasion of the lands of men.

Krassus is animated by evil desires, a thirst for revenge against the world of man, the demi-humans who back them, and most of all, a hatred of his own kin, whom he sees as inferiors who need to submit to his infernal ancestry. Now that Krassus has defeated and displaced the Aiwad of Jonnt, the traditional Sorcerer King of the humanoids of the plains, nothing stands against him and the Midlands, except the metropolis of the witches of Yggsmouth, over the river Dahud.

With them, the Cambion bargains, for he needs their help and their infrastructure to secure supply lines and be able to pass through the city and the ruins surrounding it unscathed. He first attempted to coax the other sovereigns of the giants to join in his cause, but they remained deaf to his pleas. He heard rumours of secret alliances with dark elves, of elder eyes and ancient magic, of schemes the giants did not want to upset, but Krassus did not care. If they would not submit to his plans, they too would be crushed, in time. Through his alliance with the Witches, Krassus is now part of a much wider conspiracy involving death knights, ancient undead overlords, and lycanthropes from the shades beyond, but he has not been petitioned yet, and intends to profit from their resources for as long as he can without committing his troops too deeply into conspiracies he himself did not originate.

Krassus the Cambion is now moving vast amounts of troops through the Midlands, with as much discretion as he can muster. The cohorts have invaded the western edge of the Grim Wood, with the Elemental Ruins and Floating Groves now controlled by their allies of the Black Fang, and the numbers of giants, gargoyles,

humanoids, evil humans and more slowly trickle down south, to be swallowed by the Tor of the Hierarchs close to the Viscounty, and not return. So far, the human fiefs of the Viscounty of Poy to the south have only learned of troubles with some giants, of unusual movements of tribes in the wilderness of the Midlands, but the Viscountess has no idea as to the gravity of the situation.

This brings us back to the Marmoreal Tomb. With the proximity of Krassus and his wielding of Belenor's Pride, the Hammer of Aktum, the Burial Vaults of the giants and the matter of Chaos beneath them have been stirring again. It started with a few minor shakes, but now the earthquakes are becoming more intense and more frequent. The inhabitants of the Tomb today are a loose collection of goblinoids and independent agents searching for a refuge and some protection in these lawless lands, but they know when something is out of place. The ruins of Grunn Galeb are not yet controlled by any one specific group. As the matter of Chaos wakes and pushes onward, towards the surface, greater tensions and conflicts are sure to erupt. Who will end up controlling the Marmoreal Tomb? Only time and the actions of our parties of adventurers will tell.

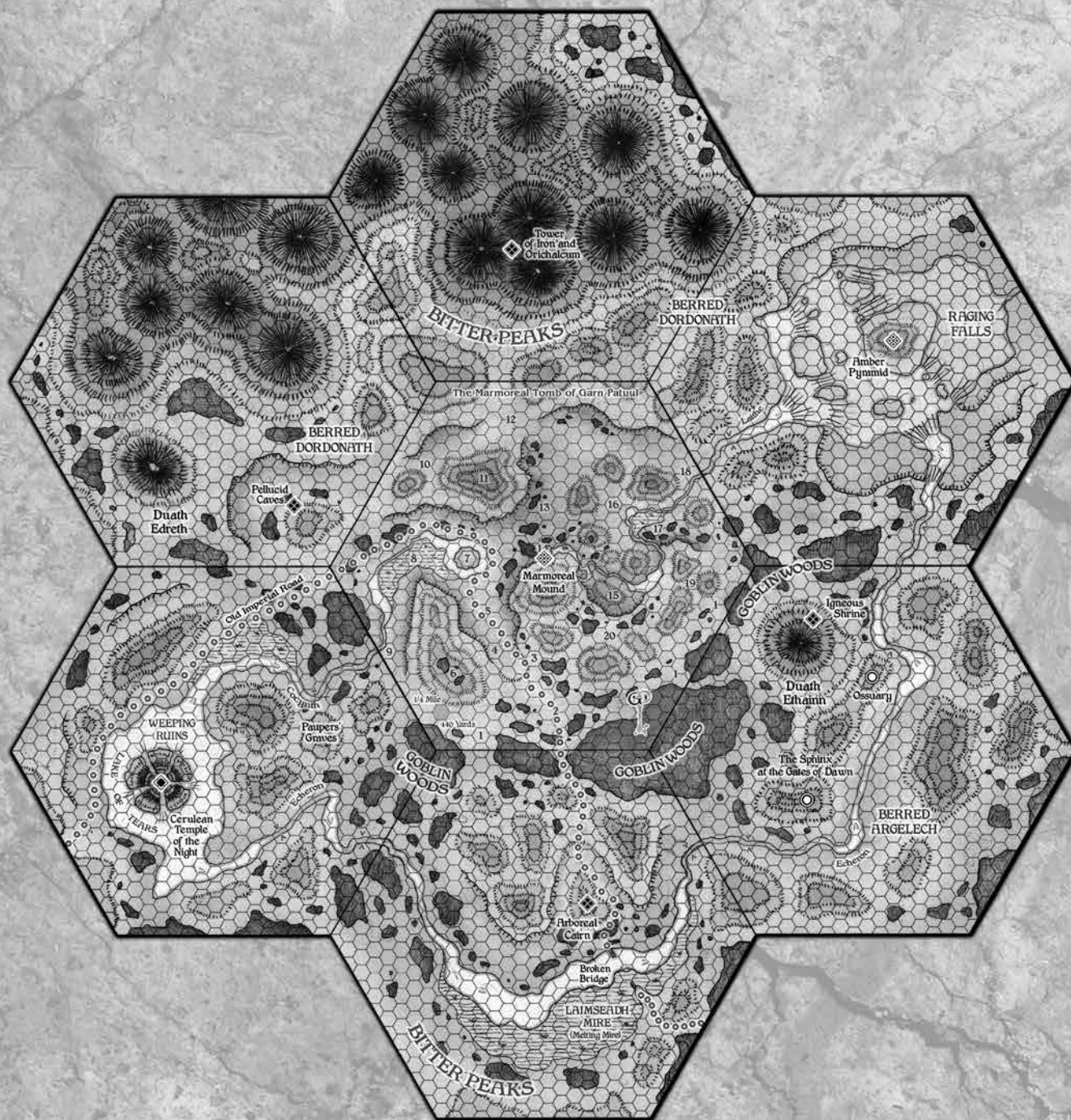
## SURROUNDINGS OF THE VIPER HEAD PASS

The Erydian Vale is the name generally given to the entire area between the Bitter Peaks both to the north and south hosting the Viper Head Pass. The terrain is difficult, consisting mostly of lightly forested hills (the areas depicted on the map as woods being dense). Three separate streams form two distinct river beds and valleys flowing south-west to north-east, from the Lake of Tears to the Raging Falls, where all the water accumulates and flows off the map for a few leagues before cascading down the bowels of the Eurth at the edge of Zuns forest.

The first stream flows from the Weeping Creek of Cocynth, flowing from the Lake of Tears all the way to the ancient fort of the dwarves at H-7, where the waters gather and seep through the Eurth, down to the depths of the Dark Under. The second is the flow that emanates from the Marmoreal Mound itself, the Slithering Brook of Laithe, which twists and turns on its way west to the Raging Falls. These two streams share the same valley, along with the Viper Head Pass itself. The third stream, flowing directly under the shadow of the southern Peaks, is on the shallower side of the plateau crowned with the Goblin Woods at H-1. It is the larger river of Echeron, which flows from the Lake of Tears to the south of the Goblin Woods plateau, between the burial mounds of Berred Argelech, and finally turns north to join the Raging Falls, east of the map.

# MARMOREAL TOMB

## ERYDIAN VALE





The rare merchant caravans and few mercenary companies who dare to travel through the Vale stick to the southern shore of the Echeron, preferring to deal with the treacherous terrain and swamp critters of the Melting Mire than going all the way around through the Viper Head Pass. This alternate way for great numbers of men and riders has been dug through the ground by usage over the past decades, but it isn't safe by any stretch of the word. It is just safer than flirting with tribes of orcs and gnolls and hill giants directly on their turf.

**Main sites around the Pass:** We will dig deeper into their significance and possible usage with the material to be found in the *Wilderness* and *Underworld* expansions to this work, but it seemed pertinent to at least mention them here and let referees include them for a brush with adventure outside the Pass, when needed, and to ease references within the text of the module thereafter.

**Amber Pyramid:** The Amber Pyramid is a 200 feet high structure apparently shaped out of a single block of fossilized resin. It has a square base and lacks its top pyramidion. There doesn't seem to be anything trapped or floating, no visible openings or corridors, no chambers or tombs within the amber, which by sheer volume is cloudy in its centre and becomes deep orange or yellow depending on the weather and time of the day. The Pyramid is surrounded with eroded limestone buildings still used by gnolls keeping this area secure on behalf the Bisefalus, Canon of Gaugamoth at area H-7. This is part of a line of defence and control of the valley including the gnoll fort just off the map, a league south-east of the Raging Falls and a league and a half full east from the Duath Ethainn.

**Arboreal Cairn:** This is a millennia old tree where the ancestors of the Gaelish people would expose the dead to the elements. Through this practice of excarnation, the organs and viscera of loved ones would be cleaned and washed away by the natural cycle of life and elements in the vale. The bones would be later gathered by climbers, and then buried under dolmens, around megalithic circles and generally lend cultural value to the holy sites of the people of Anu. The tree is still here today and still used by the Ada-Maku of H-19. Fruits, birds, vines, webs are all wildly out of proportion high in the foliage of the Cairn. Canopies form levels of dungeons criss-crossing with large branches and tunnels dug into the bark and the heart of the tree. It is a site of adventure in and of itself hiding many natural treasures.

**Berred Argelech:** This plateau has been excavated many times over in the ancient past. Now, several high hills remain on each side of the Echeron as it makes its way to

the Raging Falls, each of them containing tunnels dug up by the Gaelish, Troglodytes, Goblin slaves of the Giants of Aktum, and more. Some of these ancient tunnels still lead to immense graveyards, while others are now inhabited by all manners of wild life from all around the Vale, including bears, owlbears, wolverines and more. The tunnels of the Sphinx at the Gates of Dawn, the site known as the Ossuary and the Duath Ethainn all were part of the original plateau.

**Berred Dordonath:** The plateau at the foot of the northern range of the Bitter Peaks, it is often visited by ogres, cyclops and hill giants scouting from the mountains above. Herds of goats and zautes (like goats, but boar-sized, with their head entirely encased in a single hard horn plating) are sometimes spotted wandering alone on the slopes of the Bitter Peaks, though some of them might have shepherds, such as the aforementioned giant kin, or some the wraiths and spirits of the past people who walked this land long before them.

**Broken Bridge:** One of the most last remnants of the Old Imperial Road that used to go through these hills, the bridge linked the loop that encircled the ancient Danthean fort at H-7 with the southern lands beyond the vale. The Bridge was a mile-long, and sustained an entire community in its heyday with buildings that grew as part of the overall stone structure and out of the sides of the road, sometimes joining over it with multiple arcades and roofed passages along the way. Now, most of these buildings have fallen off into the river with the rest of the structure of the bridge, but a few are still there, with their elongated, angled faces standing on single pillars of stone, like storks on one leg fishing off the waters of the Echeron. These ruins are sometimes used as camps and watch towers for brigands ready to ambush travelers intent on crossing the Echeron.

**Cerulean Temple of the Night:** Most of the surface inside the Caldera of the Weeping Ruins is flooded with five streams of waters flowing from five distinct openings in all directions around the volcano. In between these openings, five towers of basalt have been carved directly out of the lip of the volcano. Rumour has it they are the domain of Stympthalian man-eating birds with beaks of bronze, sharp metallic feathers they can launch at their victims, and poisonous, acid dung able to carve their own tunnels and lairs into hard surfaces. An island carved out of the matter of the caldera summit dead centre of the volcano is linked to each piece of land around it by enormous bridges all of the same piece. The island thus seems to float above the bubbling waters that constantly erupt from the chimney of the volcano directly

under it. The island itself has been exquisitely detailed to form multiple towers and vast buildings where the basalt turns into shades of translucent, night blue obsidian, and ballets of lights and shadows created by the movements of the sun, stars and Stymphalian birds dance endlessly along the walls and corridors of a city that has been left completely inhabited.

**Duath Edreth (Mount of Bereavement):** This lone peak was once the lair of Lagertha, an ancient blue dragon who was an ally of the Kingdom of Ournst and was mortally wounded during the invasion of the Frankhs that resulted in the creation of the Grand Duchy of Hernst (modern Archbarony of Hartst and Viscounty of Poy). Lagertha has not been seen for four centuries, but the lair was so impressively camouflaged and defended by various minions and magic, it protected the hoard of the dragon for a very long time after its disappearance. Tales about this place usually point out the caves are now empty and serve as the lairs of various humanoids and monsters deep below, but rumours persist that this is precisely what the dragon wants the world to believe.

**Duath Ethainn (Mount of Chieftains):** This peak secluded from the rest of the Bitter Peaks is in fact a volcano with a few secondary vents open on the side and allowing access to its pyroclastic tunnels and labyrinth around the main shaft. The Ada-Maku of **H-19** patrol this area and centaurs of **H-6** try to keep intruders away from the secondary vents' openings. The Gaelish tribes of the area have great respect for this place, and treat it as a cave where immense challenges and enlightenment can be met by very few and select people chosen by fate.

**Igneous Shrine:** The inside of the Duath Ethainn was the site of a very old cult of devoted to the Element of Fire and the arcane techniques of metallurgy that existed before the age of man, and before the dwarves changed allegiances to serve Law in the ancient past. This is an alchemical dungeon with many sealed vaults and creations that are best left undisturbed. It is also the secret lair of the adventuring party known as the Marauders of Ayoun, one of the groups that could be used to manage the searches of the village ruins at **H-16**, The Marauders can find refuge here, forge weapons, create new servants and regroup, when necessary.

**Lake of Tears:** The Lake gathers the waters accumulated from the Weeping Ruins before they flow down to **H-7** and the Raging Falls via the Cocynth and Echeron, respectively. It is rich in wild life, fish, shell and crustacean animals, as well as fresh river crabs. A giant octopus or giant-sized fish might occasionally lurk here, so caution

when treading with those waters is always advised. The northern shore of the Lake flowing into the Cocynth is very wet and swampy. Several Danthean stone structures can be found there half sunk into the ground. The shore used to be much more straight and regular, and followed the Old Imperial Road towards the fort at **H-7**. The Lake fed an irrigation system from there that sustained a small hamlet, the ruins of which have been now all but swallowed by the swamp and thick woods within the river bend.

**Laimseach Mire (Melting Mire):** This vast marsh is five-to-six miles patch of wetlands about a mile to mile-and-a-half at it thickest, rolled around the Echeron river just south of the plateau of the Goblin Woods. It is also a zone of dangerous geological hazards made plain to the traveller with the presence of geysers and intense geo-thermal activity within. The waters of the mire are warm, and the entire biological ecosystem changes to more tropical species of small, flesh-eating fish, poisonous snakes, and large bright crustaceans and like creatures. It is possible the Mire hides some ruins of interest, but getting around the marsh without being blasted by a sudden geyser eruption or some crab men or other is a discouraging prospect with no specific rumour to go on.

**Old Imperial Road:** This road used to link Iylum (modern Yggsmouth) to the Arx Aquilonis (modern Villenor) of the south via the Viper Head Pass, and was originally built a thousand years ago by the kingdoms of Deybrah and Merydion, before the Great Eldritch War of Danthium and Iyathar ravaged the land and its entire people. The remnants of the road can be spotted all over the place, but they consist mostly of small pieces of pavement, a stone indicating a mileage to a now unknown location, or some small shrine or camp for travellers along their way. There are no sections of the road left intact for more than a few feet at a time. The rest has been long reclaimed by pillages, time, nature, and the cycle of the elements.

**Ossuary:** This location of the Berred Argelech (q.v.) is topped by a large sunken graveyard shaped like a cross. The graveyard compound includes a main mausoleum, several smaller dependences, and a distinctive well. Rumours about this location and its curse going back several hundred years back abound, but they change depending on the teller: who built it, why, what kind of dark cults or monsters lie in the depths? The fact remains that the site has claimed a few adventuring parties, and hides a large network of tunnels inhabited by all manners of creatures, and not just the undead.

**Pauper's Graves:** This area of small hills, cairns and barrows might have originally served as the place where the inhabitants of the hamlet north of the Weeping Ruins (q.v.) used to be put to rest. At first seemingly peaceful, it turns out the barrows feel haunted, and that there are forces here that come and go between the hills at the dead of the night. Whether there could be tunnels, lairs, even an entire dungeon level with a long history connecting these burial sites down below, is entirely up to the referee. There certainly are remains here better left undisturbed.

**Pellucid Caves:** This network of caves under a lone hill by the Berred Dordonath is pregnant with magic and filled with enormous crystals of all sizes and shapes. The environment deeper into the caves isn't forgiving to mundane life, but hosts a number of aberrations and elemental creatures such as xorns, crystal golems, and some say aboleths in the flooded portions of the complex. The crystals are known to be alive in their own right, and the Adepts of Annod know of this location to find votive gems necessary to their evolution into full Halcyon Knights.

**Raging Falls:** The waters flowing from the depths of the plateau of the Goblin Woods and the Weeping Ruins west of the vale gather here in powerful waterfalls separated by a few rocky islands, including the main body supporting the foundations of the Amber Pyramid (q.v.). The entire basin of the falls is about four miles long and three and a half miles at its widest. It can be separated in three steps or terraces each with a set of cliffs about 100 feet high each. Competing tribes of kobolds are known to lair in troglodytic habitations concealed by the waterfalls all along the basin's cliffs.

**Sphinx at the Gates of Dawn:** A 200 foot long, 70 foot high, and 60 foot wide statue of a stone giant gynosphinx stands guard at the very top of this plateau, and stares directly west at the incoming rising sun. It wears the head-dress of King Ur Pa Kraat, has the lean straight facial features generally associated with stone giants, but is quite visibly female, from the eyes detailed with cared makeup to the large rear haunches and generous bosom it presents to its occasional visitor. Many suspect this Sphinx hides the entrance to a tomb, or series of tombs, dating back to the stone giant kingdom of Aktum, but no one has been able to find a door, riddle, or entrance mechanism yet.

**Tower of Iron and Orichalcum:** This bizarre tower shares some similarities with the Cerulean Temple of the Night (q.v.) in that it is carved of a single block of black, basaltic rock suspended hundreds of feet off the ground and anchored to three equidistant peaks by enormous bridges of the same. Each of the three peaks have their

own sets of tunnels and levels ultimately leading to the bridges above, but the way is treacherous, for it seems the place has become an amalgam of both extreme Law and extreme Chaos clashing in the depths of the mountain forevermore. Golems, constructs of Law and extra-dimensional entities spewed out of the planes of Order clash against demons, aberrations and things born out of the matter of Chaos down below.

**Weeping Ruins:** A tall and flat island rises sharply above the waters of the Lake of Tears. It is in fact a volcano from which multiple streams of fresh water are flowing in all directions. The slopes of the volcano are covered with the ruins of stone habitations directly carved from the basaltic rock, and abandoned a long time ago by a race from before the known history of the Duinnsmere. While some troglodytes have taken possessions of the ruins as their lairs, the caldera is mostly left alone, in reverence for the spirits that provide the water that keeps the valley fertile for all.

## CHARACTER GENERATION

For information pertaining to the culture of the Eastern Duinnsmere, the folk, their traditions and backgrounds, a brief history of the region and how various classes and races of player-characters fit in it, as well as a character sheet to record all important game stats during the campaign, we advise the use of the *Player's Guide to the Marmoreal Tomb*, in the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* collection of game aids and supplements.

**Default:** It is advised to generate characters using Method I, 4d6 drop lowest, and then allowing the sacrifice and permanent lowering of a statistic by two points to raise one by one point, also permanently, and allow the use of Pivot Points (PP), as detailed below, to bring the final touch to a player-character. Per first edition advice, if a character does not have at least two scores of 15 in its array, it is recommended to scrap the entire array and generate new numbers entirely.

**Hardcore:** Another way of getting a campaign running is to roll three characters with 3d6 in order per player, consider them level 0, 6 hit points plus constitution modifier. They roll their profession randomly as the traditional rules explain, with the understanding they own a tool or implement that could serve as a weapon and some utility item that is related to what they do in life. They are considered to be mundane folk who are desperate, have banded together and decided to hit a legit site of adventure to strike it rich or die trying. From there, the adventure begins. Those characters who survive a first session become level 1: the player chooses a character



class for the character, the referee then makes them roll their hit points for first level. If the result is superior to their hit points at level 0, it replaces them. If the result is inferior, they remain at 6 plus constitution modifier hit points. They level up normally from there. This is the hardcore difficulty level of first edition rules, essentially, with three characters per player creating initial buffer for character death and a potential start to a stable of alternate characters in the campaign as it develops, a chance to build more unique, distinct personalities for each character and go from there.

**Nightmare:** Playing one single level 1 character generated with 3d6 in order is never advised outside of the original rules of 1974, but we have had parties demand it as the nightmare difficulty level of the first edition game, on occasions. Note that by rolling stats 3d6 in order with first edition rules, you will get mostly original edition characters, fighters, magic-users, clerics and thieves. Rarely will be generated rangers, illusionists and paladins. If your players know what they're getting into and how insanely tough this is likely to become for them, let them do it. Some people genuinely love this mode of play and thrive when the odds are stacked against them; we know a few of them ourselves. If, however, the referee detects the slightest hint one player will not like it if he or she dies outright at any point of the game, they should decline this option politely.

**Funds and equipment:** Characters start with the usual allotted funds. The items they buy are considered to be of common usage, barring the use of a PP to upgrade a specific item to a family heirloom or whatever the case may be. Those items which in other fantasy worlds would be considered made of iron or steel are here considered to be forged of the lower, common kinds of alloys around the Duinnsmere, i.e. ferrum, mundane iron and mundane steel. Check Appendix B, *Additional Rules*, for more information about metallurgy around the Duinnsmere, and the particularities of mundane iron versus True Iron.

### SPECIAL RULES: GNOMES

Gnomes are the only original race or class of the first edition game that saw a little tweaking to fit the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* campaign. Gnome characters, in addition to standard level limitations for PH Gnomes, can also become Druids. In an *Unearthed* and *Advanced* campaign, level limitations shift: Assume Gnomes can become Druids using the same column as Clerics in the *Unearthed* reference manual, and Barbarians using the same column as fighters therein.

Gnome Barbarians are learned adepts at boar riding and owlbear hunting. They usually are proficient with spears, lances and short riding composite bows. Gnome Barbarians also understand illusions and phantasms in a cultural context, due to upbringing and natural heritage. They therefore are not angered or indisposed by the use of such magic.

For more cultural information about the Gnomes of the Duinnsmere, see the *Player's Guide to the Eastern Duinnsmere*.

### SPECIAL RULES: VULNERABILITY TO IRON

The Fay and the creatures with a strong link and allegiance to Chaos have an innate vulnerability to mundane iron, including steel, as well as meteoric iron and the aligned variety known as true iron. True iron is never found naturally, but crafted by specific lawful rituals that change the alchemical composition of the metal while it is mined. True Iron can then serve as a prototype to greater alloys, such as Adamantine, also known by the Franks as True Prismatic Steel.

Elf player-characters are seriously affected by iron, while halfling, half-orc and half-elf characters are mildly affected. Human, gnomes and dwarves are not affected by iron. Humans because of their singular role in the cosmic struggle between the forces of law and chaos, dwarves because they switched allegiances and are now both servants of law and the main providers of true iron in the world, and gnomes as well, for they are direct descendants of the dwarves on Eurth.

For more information about True Iron and its effect on monsters and player-characters, see Appendix B: *Additional Rules* at the end of this volume.

### SPECIAL RULES: PIVOT POINTS (PP)

Pivot Points, also abbreviated PP at the game table and on our character sheets, are a new resource available to players of the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* series. It symbolizes in world a combination of luck, willpower and perseverance on the part of the character, as well as the hand of fate and the Powers beyond the Eurth favoring this specific individual as an instrument of the cosmic battle between Good, Evil, Chaos and Law among the planes.

For this specific reason, only primary characters can use Pivot Points. A primary character is generally the most played, original, or advanced character in the player's stable – see our preface for an introduction to the concept of character stables in a *Hobby Shop Dungeon* game and campaign. PP in that sense became a marker that this

specific character, among the player's many that can be selected at the beginning of a session at the home base, is the primary character the fates see as becoming a hero or superhero, and an instrument of cosmic power later on. Although it does not always pan out, it works like a bet among the forces of Good, Evil, Law, and Chaos, an investment of a sliver of power to grow instruments for the battles to come.

As long as one character in the stable of a single player owns Pivot Points, no other character in that stable can benefit from them. They are all considered allied, related, or characterized by their enmity with that core character at the center of the web of relationships within the stable of a specific player at the table. In that sense, then, the player represents that web of relationships from a cosmic point of view in the game itself, the archetype from which all the characters in the stable descend, which is metaphorically appropriate to simulate to some degree.

Pivot Points are generally acquired at character generation, when the very first character is rolled to play a *Hobby Shop Dungeon* game. This allows for the expenditure of PP directly at character generation, possibly influencing stats and equipment of the character before play begins. This character *ipso facto* becomes the primary character of the specific player rolling him or her. The player rolls 1d4 + 2, and the character ends up with 3-6 Pivot Points.

Another method is to create multiple characters for the first session, roll 1d4 + 2 Pivot Points apart from them, and then play the game. Whenever the first Pivot Point is spent on any one of these characters, the specific character that benefits from that first PP becomes the primary character of the stable. This sometimes can take a few sessions to happen, especially in Hardcore difficulty games with characters rolled with 3d6 in order. The players will run their multiple characters simultaneously, get a feel for them individually, and see how they develop over the course of a few sessions, and then finally help one survive at one point or another thus selecting them as their primary character in the campaign.

**Using PP:** Pivot Point are meant to be used broadly and openly as determined by the referee and players of the game. They can be used during character generation and during the game as well, to affect results and the fundamental rules of the game in various, usually beneficial ways.

At character generation, 1 PP can be used to increase a stat by 1 point, up to a maximum of 18. For extraordinary, percentile scores beyond 18, 1 PP will buy an increase

of 10% of such an extraordinary potential. A character could spend 1 PP to create a background that creates a strong bond of trust between the character and a faction or an NPC of the world before play begins, or to possess an heirloom, or having found a special item recently that could translate to a minor +1 magical bonus item, or an item made of a particular substance like silver or true iron (see Appendix B, *Additional Rules*, for more on this).

Benefits can be discussed between referee and player, and involve some downsides to balance them out. This character could start the game as a member of a filthy rich family, but his father hates him and he's got to go through back channels and relatives to get letters of credit and benefit from the family wealth. That character could have the ability to touch items and feel past events through them (psychometry), but the effects could be random, or there could be a chance to attract the attention of unwanted spirits who would fool the characters with lies and illusions. It is possible to create very rich characters very fast with this method, or to just maximize the stats of a character to satisfactory level and get to the game immediately.

During the game, 1 PP can be used to re-roll a saving throw or any roll, be it to hit OR damage, not both, a stat check, anything, as long as the referee agrees to it. 1 PP can be used to make a successful roll a critical hit or a critical failure a simple failure after the fact.

1 PP can be used to affect chance and create moments of sheer luck: "*what are the odds the gnolls would look elsewhere while we sneak in front of the gate their guarding?*" (Player passes a note to referee telling him he spends 1 PP to make that happen) Referee: "*Well. It so happens that, just as you were pondering the question, the loud sound of an avalanche comes from the slopes of the mountain nearby, and the gnolls all turn around to check out what that was!*"

1 PP can affect the reaction of creatures and NPCs toward the party, affect chances of encounters, make unlikely meetings occur between friends or foes, create new contacts and opportunities for specific characters and their parties, or even change the weather or create supernatural events in the campaign. This all depends on the referee and how "meta" he and the players want the use of PP to be in their game. This is ideally discussed on the onset, before actual play begins, when the mechanic of PP is first introduced so that everyone understands what limits the referee wants to set to the use of Pivot Points in his or her campaign.

Characters who are instantly dead beyond -10 HP can be saved and stabilized at -9 HP with the use of 1 PP; char-

acters unconscious and below 0 HP can become conscious again at 1 HP with the use of 1 PP; but these sorts of use have to come from the injured character him or herself, unless the character trying to heal them already has healing skills of some type (like a cleric or a paladin).

The balancing factor is that finding such a broad resource again is its rarity. It should be nigh impossible to regain Pivot Points, especially at low levels. There are ways to regain Pivot Points, but they should never be divulged in advance, and ideally should be a source of surprise, like suddenly gaining a character level in the game. Some specific, heroic actions beneficial to the fates and Powers beyond the Eurth (the forces behind the eternal struggle between the cosmic alignments) could be rewarded with the gain of 1 Pivot Point. There is a Libram in this module that bestows a Pivot Point to its reader. Such circumstances and items are very rare and significant – they attract the favor of the Powers beyond the Eurth to empower a specific potential champion with a piece of their own power, or change a mundane character into a primary pawn in the cosmic struggle of the multiverse. This sort of reward should not be taken lightly.

We have just scratched the surface, and we hope referees and players make good use of this open resource. Use your imagination, and come up with new ways to influence the game at key moments. In our experience, it is especially awesome and special when it means something “meta” to the game, in regards to Powers beyond the Eurth, and the cosmic battles taking place beyond the planes. This makes some events of the game feel important beyond the immediate situation and when articulated and roleplayed by a character in the game, “*HEAR ME YE UNCARING GODS, AND WITNESS THE MIGHT OF MY CONTEMPT!*” This can be really amazing.

Only one (1) PP can be typically spent on a single action, element or die roll. 1 PP can be used by an opponent to cancel the use of another PP on the same action, element or die roll in the game. Whether NPCs and villains can have PP is entirely up to the referee. Given they are a resources originally bestowed by the Powers beyond the Eurth onto their representatives in the great cosmic war of good versus evil and law versus Chaos, there is a strong argument to be made for NPCs serving as such pawns in the multiverse to benefit from Pivot Points as well.

**VARIANT – PUTTING PP TO A VOTE:** This variant pushes the meta-role-playing aspect of the Pivot Points as the Powers beyond the Eurth affecting the fates in favor of their pawns in the conflicts of the multiverse. When a PP is used in play, and only during play, a player

can declare the use of a Pivot Point to change the outcomes of the game or elements of the world thereof. The referee then puts the use of the Pivot Point to the vote of the players. The players at this moment are role-playing the archetypal entities at the source of their stable of characters, the Powers who pull the strings in favor of their protégé’s on the material planes. If a majority of the players agree, then the Pivot Point takes effect. If the majority refuses, the Pivot Point does not take effect and is not spent at all. In case of a tie, the referee casts the deciding vote.

This variant opens up all sorts of questions about the nature of the role-playing world and the entities “beyond the Eurth”, what they are and how they affect the conflicts of Good and Evil, Law and Chaos, and for what purposes. This is not for everyone, and does not reflect the original game play of the *Hobby Shop Dungeon*, but it might be enticing to some game tables.

## GAME OPENINGS

**DEFAULT OPENING:** The player-characters are independent adventurers who hear about the Marmoreal Tomb having been found in the wilderness somewhere by the Bitter Peaks. They hear about the story of the Stone-cutter dwarves (see above). An innkeeper or village elder puts them in contact with a dwarf who can tell them a little more about the place, being the last survivor of an expedition that made it there not long ago.

*“I was told you wanted a word.*

*Yes, that’s right. I’m one of those dwarves who still hang around the Bitter Peaks. Got no clan or family. Just an old fool who made a pittance risking his life is what. One of the few who could guide you through those trails none one knows about, except perhaps those Nu’ana who make it their business to tread those heights.*

*Been guiding parties through the whole area. Got my foot chopped off for it, as you can see, so that adventuring business, it’s a thing of the past for me, see, but I did send the poor bastard who cut it off back to those slimy pits he came from, and with interests at that!*

*See this? Yeah. Those are real Blood Tusks alright.*

*What? I was guiding a group through Viper Head Pass, that’s how. That group of star dusters — elves, man. All Mother of All Ales! — they didn’t know when to back down. That “hero disorder” thing, you know? Bloody hells. Got them all killed for it. Right in front of the Gates of Grunn Galeb. The Tomb yes.*

*I remember. The huge gate carved right off the rock. The giant slabs of green marble. The tall statues with the shields and runes of the stone-cutters. Bodies, pieces of armor and equipment everywhere. Even after all this time, the goblins, the Gaelish barbarians, the orcs... none of the scavengers has come close to clean up the place yet. Only the waterfall pouring from the cliffs and the occasional ring of the chimes atop the mound break the silence of this place.*

*Look. I'll take your gold and draw you a map, but you have to promise me: don't go there alone. And don't go there thinking you're going to engage in some grand heroics. That's what got those elves killed in the first place! That stump doesn't look pretty eh? Remember it! It could be you next. So if you get into trouble, by the All-Mother, retreat to fight another day. Don't be stupid like they were.*

*Yes. Pass me that piece of parchment. Now here's how you get there..."*

From there, the player-characters can ask a few questions of Goffin Gorgol, the dwarf who just recounted this tale. The referee may agree to let them roll on the Rumors Table hereafter once or twice with a D30, things Goffin heard but couldn't establish as fact himself. From there, hand them over the **Handout** of his sketched map. The player-characters are free to gather some equipment, ask around for more information, thus triggering rolls on the Rumor Table assuming the person they are talking to has any chance of having heard anything relevant about the Viper Head Pass. The party is then free to leave on an adventure, and seek the Pass.

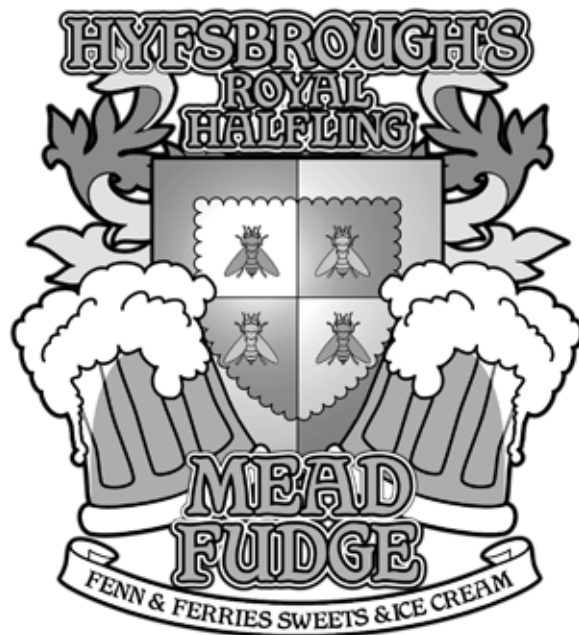
**ALTERNATE OPENINGS:** These alternates essentially involve intermediaries or direct contact with groups and factions who have specific agendas that can add onto the core premise and motivation of "exploring the place to hit some treasure and strike it rich" that is the essential to the default opening. A full gamut of factions covering all alignments, political entities, races and classes in the region can be found in the *Wilderness Expansion* section "Figures and Factions". Each faction comes with a few scenario ideas including those concerning the Marmoreal Tomb directly. A few more examples are given here for thereferee to use at their discretion:

**(1) Agents of Brennen:** The player-characters are hired by a local lord or representative of the closest civilized states around the Marmoreal Tomb. They have a personal motivation on top of hiring the group to scout the Pass and check out whether the rumors about the Tomb becoming a center of humanoid activity are true or not. The Baron Leopald von Brennen has lost his grandchild, Iyerom of Brennen, somewhere around the Tomb as he

travelled through the Viper Head Pass with a trusted escort. The Baron suspects the rumors of the awakening of the Tomb might be related, and asks the party to investigate. The situation with the family of Brennen is a tad more complicated. See Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, specifically the sections pertaining to Iyerom and Sygmar of Brennen, to have a more complete understanding of what's going on.

**(2) Agents of the Palehorn:** The player-characters are hired by the dwarves of Cwl, under the Palehorn, by the Vale of Ynil. They want a party of adventurers to explore the Tomb, assess the risk and get rid of the current inhabitants if at all possible. They can keep all the loot they find, with the understanding the Dwarves of the Palehorn will take possession of the mine once it is secure for exploitation.

**(3) Agents of Gawkstane:** Mox Mag Mofynn, the owner of the Oaken Vault inn in Gawkstane, as well as the Fenn & Ferries producer of sweets and ice cream including such popular items as the Bulette Banana Surprise, Mord and Kainen's Macademia Adventure, the Gummy Owlbeats, and the Unseen Sherbets, acquired a copy of the map handout #1 and is willing to put the party in contact with the survivor of the default expedition. They are hired to explore the Tomb, keep all the loot they can get, and gather all manners of bizarre food, body parts, organs, and jellies they find along the way, to bring them back to Mox's alchemists who will then try to find a way to commercialize these rare and wild extracts.





(4) **Agents of the Vellum Society:** The party is hired by one Parmel d'Argiquais, Esquire, from the city of Villenor. The Sire d'Argiquais is a renowned magic-user, alchemist, tyromancer and historian. He wants the party to travel to the Viper Head Pass, explore the Tomb and all the ancient ruins they can find, and report to him through his aid at the Twin Tankard, Ektor Hoerg. Any piece of consumable, especially cheeses, meats and organs of exotic creatures Parmel could divine with, would be greatly appreciated. So would any stella, figurines, reproductions of writings and any record of unknown history the party would find along the way. What will not be told to them is that Parmel already sent some agents in the Pass and has not heard from them in a while. See Chapter 2, *Environs and Cave System*, area E-18, for more about this.

(5) **The Ozmi Apocryphon:** The third and last living shard of the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc escaped Grunn Galeb and area LI-34, and was later caught by the party of adventurers investigating the ruins at H-16. He eventually escaped, and ran for his life ever since. This opening presupposes the party is on its way to Crom Caemloch from civilization, possibly escorting the clerics of the Blazing Light from an alternate opening (7) below, and the caravan of merchants they are a part of is essentially meets the Ozmi Apocryphon being hunted down by the followers of Iyonidas and the Lone Tower. Ozmi loses consciousness some time during the intervention that saves his life. He has no idea what connection he has to the bit of mirror that was found near to him. And from there the game unfolds. See Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, for more information on Ozmi, Iyonidas, the Lone Tower, and this entire set up.

(6) **The Seven Mercenaries:** The party is hired at an inn by a trio of villagers who are at the end of their rope. Their village, Lech Lomonn, a small Gaelish hamlet about 20 miles full west of the Viper Head Pass, is regularly attacked by wolves stealing their children, destroying their crop and led by an awful hooded figure who takes whatever supply he wants from them on his way in and out. The villagers have no idea how to defend themselves. They once hired seven mercenaries to help them out, but they bailed and never came back. The villagers are back in town and want to find adventurers willing to stick around, track the hooded figure and end the threat from there. The trick here is to mix the obvious homage of this opening to the Seven Samurai, train the village to defend itself, fortify it and dig up trenches and on, and then later hunt down the threat by tracking it to find out this is the Veneur of the Marmoreal Tomb, at area LI-17 and 17A. From there, the party should understand there's a greater picture with the Tomb that must be dealt with, sooner or later. Let it unfold from there.

(7) **Escort for the Blazing Light:** In Villenor, the clergy of the Church of the Eternal Illumination of the Global Faith of the Blazing Light hires the party to escort the first set of clerics who will run masses and rituals from area CC-5 of the Crom Caemloch map, in our *Wilderness expansion*. This party will include Lembach, a geriatric Lama of the Blazing Light (Cleric 7) who can only perform his best spells in a temple and under the influence of soothing drugs and meditation, as well as a Prefect (Cleric 5) named Nobius, who would take charge of the day to day functioning of the temple, and two priests (Cleric 3), Ulfraed and Wulfgar, who are Gaelish brothers seeking to save their souls from the traditional, unholy ways of their people. Once the party arrives in town, the clerics take possession of CC-5 and the key to the settlement works as written. Alternately, the referee might hold off on describing a full Blazing Light settlement at Crom Caemloch, and trigger this escort from Villenor when the party seeks to exchange and buy advanced goods from the city.

### RUMOURS (D30)

**Roll D30** or choose whenever the party asks an opinion from an NPC who might have heard something or could have an opinion on the subject, at a market, an inn, as a store owner for exploration supply, as mercenaries, or people who would rub shoulders with survivors of the area. Quoted passage relays the rumor. It is followed by paranthetical information strictly reserved for the referee, indicating the truth of the matter. Do not reveal to the players.

1. "Who controls the Pass controls the destiny of the Midlands. This is why the land is without Lord. As long as the conflicts continue within the Pass, there will be no peace to the land." (There is no mythological justification behind this rumor, but the Viper Head Pass has been a disputed area in pretty much every conflict since the rise of Danthium. Its control is essential to get beyond the Bitter Peaks, any which way).
2. "An arch-mage controls the pass, controlled the dwarves before their demise, and his spirit still lingers behind." (False. The combination of pieces of information – Nester was the patron of the dwarves, and he wasn't the arch-mage recently active here. The arch-mage was Osmandius, whose presence is still around, but not as a spirit per se).
3. "Humanoids compete for control of the ruins in the area, most of which goblins versus orcs, who are not friends with one another." (This is true).
4. "The marble of the place is magical, and grants powers in the form of beads, and trinkets." (True. Not in

- the form of beads or trinkets, but the substance of the marble is magical).
5. "The Head-hunters living near the Tomb are cannibal followers of Xarbathon the Devourer." (Not true, though they are head-hunters, they are not cannibals, nor subservient to Chaos or Evil).
  6. "Many fruits and plants growing in the Viper Head Pass are unique of the area." (This is true).
  7. "A dragon is prisoner of the depths of the Pass. When it moves, the ground shakes." (Not literally true, but if one interprets the matter of Chaos as a dragon, then metaphorically, yes).
  8. "Death cultists control the goblins of the Tomb." (Not true, but they are sitting directly on top of an ancient cult of the dead).
  9. "The orc presence in the valley is relatively new, but growing. A dark power is backing them." (That's true, and goes along with the potential creation of a coven of hags in the area).
  10. "There isn't just one Tomb in the area, but several and they are far older than the dwarves would have you believe!" (This is true. See the Tombs of Ur Pa Kraat and Amun Paal).
  11. "The towers around the Tomb are haunted by spirits that lure explorers to their death with their magical songs." (Harpies, actually, but close enough).
  12. "The Tomb is a holy site of beings before men arose. It hides ancient secrets best left undisturbed." (True: Stone giants and the builders of the Hearth before them).
  13. "The Tomb is a test of the fay, to see if a warrior is worthy of accessing the dwarves' many treasures, including Belenor's Pride." (False. The Vaults were used for tests of piety by giants worshipping Zuun, the memory of Aktum in ancient times).
  14. "The magic of the Marmoreal Tomb can bring back people from the dead, but those who are brought back are never quite right in the head again." (Inside the Tomb, not really, aside from being brought back as an undead, perhaps, but outside of the Tomb, the Font of Life guarded by the Centaurs could in theory raise the dead).
  15. "The dwarves still have mountains of gold given by Nester the arch-mage stored somewhere within the Tomb." (This isn't true – the treasure remaining is what escaped the looting of the forces of Krassus the Young. The heaps of gold given by Nester had long been invested into the construction of the settlement).
  16. "People regularly disappear when travelling through the Viper Head Pass. This is not a secure area for civilized people to tread. Setting up camp near the Tomb could be very dangerous." (This is true).
  17. "Weird alien beings from other shades of the Earth visited the Pass in the days before the world of man. They gave conscience to humans at this spot long ago. They've come back now, and kidnapped my cousin to experiment! He's back now, but has never been the same again." (Not accurate, but hints at a deeper truth. The giants were born from the matter of Chaos. The first humans birthed them through their experiments with magic – see *Underworld expansion*).
  18. "Danthium and Iyathar fought for a long time over the control of the Pass. They dug tunnels of their own among the ruins of the dwarves, giants and all those who preceded them here. The tunnels are now alive and want freedom from all the wars that created them." (This is true, but for the conscious rebel tunnels bit, unless this indirectly alludes to Ohminids/Mholes in the area).
  19. "A beautiful lady of the old Pryton rule sleeps in some enchanted woods, waiting to be freed by chivalrous knights. She is trapped by the corruption of the forest, and is very hard to find, but she would be of help to the pure of heart." (False: Alludes to Grunhyld, the Lady of the Lake, who is in fact a Green Hag and the source of the corruption in the Withered Grove).
  20. "Giants sometimes walk through the Pass and perform silent rituals throughout the night. They skulk like shadows, and do not interact with strangers at all. Their true purpose is unknown." (True. This is referring to the Norns at the top of the Marmoreal Mound).
  21. "The Marmoreal Tomb is overrun with dark elves. The goblins are just the faces they put out to trick intruders and hide their true activities underground." (False, the dark elves of the Haunted Fen are isolated and do not cooperate with anyone in the Tomb as of yet).
  22. "The Pass is haunted. Packs of wolves are particularly dangerous, and werewolves are never far behind. The woods around the pass are inhabited by dangerous spirits." (True, to some extent. Between the werewolves of the Night Legion, the Veneur having his lair in Grunn Galeb, and the goblins in the woods, this one can be counted as a fair warning).
  23. "An aboleth rules over the rivers running underground under the Marmoreal Mound. It

will send its enforcers to take over the Tomb, sooner or later.” (False, though the Obrachaeans which are loosely related to Aboleths are one of the three main presences in the cave systems that might get the upper hand and infiltrate the Tomb at some point later in the campaign).

24. “The Beggar King has a solid influence within the Pass, and uses it to smuggle goods around the Bitter Peaks.” (True, Besifalus the Canon of Gaugamoth is his agent and the fort of Gnolls by the Raging Falls are allied to them both).
25. “Nester the Arch-mage made the dwarves hide some of his magical secrets and guard them for him. These magic items are the cause of the death of the dwarves.” (That is entirely false).
26. “The dwarves just left the Tomb behind as a giant trap for their enemies in the region. Their true settlement is hidden in the Bitter Peaks. They just reveal its presence now to get rid of the competition.” (Completely false, the surviving Stone-Cutters are refugees currently living in the dungeons of Nester’s Folly, Caer Caeladon, by the Duinnsmere).
27. “The Knights Immaculate are very interested in the Pass and will invade the Tomb to take control of the place very soon. Staying in the area would be put-

ting one’s self in their path.” (Not true, at least not for now. The Knights Immaculate are just now becoming aware of the existence of the Tomb. They might take great interest in the area if they discover the influence of Chaos deep under the Eurth, which would tempt them to send a punitive expedition to delve into the dungeon and destroy the source of Chaos down below, but this is a possible event later on in the campaign).

28. “The Pass is magical, and has been the site of unholy rituals perpetrated throughout by all manners of dark wizards and creatures throughout history. Beware of polished stone! There are even gates leading to other worlds under the Eurth.” (True, and not just under the Eurth).
29. “The Old Imperial Road used to join Iylum (Ygg-smooth) to the north, to Aquilon (Villenor) to the south. Many Danthean legionnaires lost their lives protecting this area. Their graves are still scattered among the hills.” (True).
30. “The Marmoreal Tomb is just one place worthy of exploration in the Pass. There are ruins of dwarven forts, Frankhian fortifications from the Crusade, and even more ancient structures that could be investigated all around.” (True).

## GAME START

Once the party is ready, it leaves through the wilderness for the Marmoreal Tomb. Leaving at dawn, with some demi-humans or portly, encumbered humans with a 90 feet movement rate, this means that the first day is spent mostly on the road, north-west from Crom Caemloch, turning north after three squares and camping for the night in that first square of hills at the feet of the Bitter Peaks. The second day is likely spent on the open plains on the northern side of the hills in the morning, and then north east towards the Viper Head Pass, ending the day well into the hilly terrain surrounding the Bitter Peaks. The third day, the party has to choose whether to force the march to arrive at the Tomb during the first half of the night, or spend a third night out in the wilderness, and then enter the Viper Head Pass on the fourth day, at dawn. A 60 feet movement rate with dwarves and encumbered halflings or gnomes would further reduce the land speed of the party, and add another day and night spent in the wilderness to this schedule.

The *Wilderness Expansion* to the *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter* include tables of random encounters in the wilderness specifically relevant to the region and game material. You can also use the general wilderness en-

counter tables your preferred version of the game favors. Pay attention to the rules pertaining to terrain type and frequency of checks to see if encounters occur, and determine whether and when the party makes an encounter on the way to or from the Tomb.

When running the first few sessions with the Marmoreal Tomb, after the initial trek to the Pass, it is advisable to directly get to the ruins of *Grunn Galeb*, Chapter 3, and skip the hex, environs and cave system of Chapters 1 and 2 for now. After a few expeditions inside the Tomb, the referee might want to start checking if an encounter is made on the hex. He might also involve some group or faction around the Tomb and let them explore the ruins of *Grunn Galeb* as well. The orcs of the Blood Tusks, for instance, or the Ada-Maku (see Chapter 1). Then bit by bit the player-characters could hear more rumors about the other locations in the Pass, or get interrupted by to inhabitants curious about them. The material of the hex, environs and cave system will more of a challenge for heroic types anyway.

The reason for this initial skip is that we want the players to take the initiative at first, and take it at the right

# MARMOREAL TOMB

## DIAGRAM

### THREE DAYS AND TWO NIGHTS TRIP



White lines and dots between Crom Caemloch and the Viper Head Pass indicate one optimum path traveling at a 90 feet movement rate. Lines indicate days of travel, and dots pauses for the night to rest.

place, the dungeon itself, as the core of the exploration. Then, we will broaden their choices and opportunities when the game starts to slow down a bit. What we want to avoid with this is just throw too many options and choices at once with map after map in the players' faces, and see them choke on the first sessions because of confusion and too many choices.

#### SPECIAL RULES: TREMORS AROUND THE PASS

As parties of adventurers visit the Tomb and explore the Viper Head Pass, they will trigger some tremors from the ground. The matter of Chaos beneath the Earth

reaches out and exploits the changes in the makeup of the balance of alignments and magical energies around the pass. This includes geological changes, but also changes in the well-being of heroic and super heroic figures imbued with cosmic force and magical powers, anything that Chaos can latch on to create unnoticeable "grooves" in the fabric of the Pass, and pull itself up towards the surface.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of actions that either might, or will trigger tremors around the Viper Head Pass. The referee is absolutely free to trigger tremors when dramatically appropriate, and when additional elements



added later on in the campaign make sense in the context developed initially.

Also consider that when the player-characters themselves reach Heroic (4th) and Super heroic (8th) level range, the matter of Chaos will be connecting to their spirits, listening to their thoughts and changes in their behaviors. Rage or bouts of madness actually might start triggering tremors themselves. Chaos could reach out to them and want to subtly, perhaps in the guise of a friend, encourage such risks and behaviors on the part of the player-characters to help it grow and reach the surface world that much faster. It's up to the referee to decide how to manage the many possibilities offered by such a scale beyond the basics of this module.

### SOME EVENTS TRIGGERING TREMORS AROUND THE PASS

- Digging from area **E-II** down to the Giant's Burial Vaults. 1-in-6 chance per turn.
- Snake eyes on random encounters checks underground: one tremor.
- A Beat of the Black Heart of Amun Paal **E-24**: 50% chance of a tremor.
- Searching the piles of area **LI-8** and **LI-15**: specific area loses 3 points of Structural Integrity (SI) on first search, and triggers one tremor with it.
- Passing through area **LI-16A**: one tremor. Also frees the Cubes and Jellies on the level.
- A heroic creature or character (HD 4+) is slain inside the ruins of Grunn Galeb: one tremor.
- A heroic creature or character (HD 4+) is slain within the vicinity of the Tomb (Environs): 60 % chance of tremor. Super heroic (HD 8+): one tremor.
- A heroic creature or character (HD 4+) is slain within the greater area of the Tomb Hex: 30% chance of tremor. Super heroic (HD 8+): 60% chance of tremor.
- A heroic creature of character (HD 4+ is slain in the Burial Vaults: 30% chance of tremor. Super heroic (HD 8+): 60% chance of tremor (the closer you are from the source from the surface level the less effect it has on the substance of Chaos).
- A super heroic creature (HD 8+) is slain in the Crypts: 30% chance of tremor.
- Something changes dramatically in the balance of powers around the Tomb: a major faction leaves the area for good or joins in for the first time, a major

NPC has been slain, a group is now completely dominated by another or wiped off the map: one tremor.

- The trap door to the Tomb of Garn Patuul at **LI-12** is re-opened: one tremor.
- For each (4) candle lit by the Chaplain of Evil upon activating the Procession: one tremor.
- Each time Zuun is defeated on level 2: one tremor.
- For each Vitiates of Chaos defeated in the Crypts: one tremor.

### CONSEQUENCES OF TREMORS

- Wakes the Chaplain of Evil and initiates the parade leaving the Tomb (4 Tremors).
- Undead start rising in Grunn Galeb (12 Tremors).
- Clears vertical shafts and opens the Burial Vaults for exploration (see below).
- Clears clutter and opens the extended Burial Vaults for exploration (see below).
- Opens the Hearth of Chaos for exploration (see below).
- Awakens the Mhole at **H-15** Fortifications. Mhole awakens (3 tremors), can use basic illusions (6), psychic abilities, telepathy, telekinesis (9), then communicates using major projections (12).
- Increases opening of the portal at **E-7** Red Cave by 10% with each tremor.
- Allows creatures from the lower levels down to the matter of Chaos to climb up to the upper levels of the Tomb, rarely at first from the Crypts, and then more often as shafts have been cleared by PCs or tremors.

Each shaft going down the levels is obstructed by clutter, boulders, beams and various remains. Each area can be searched per the **Rubble Search** table, and this in itself makes the pile lose 3 points of integrity initially for the first search, and triggers a tremor with it. Each of these areas has a Structural Integrity (SI) Rating associated to it. One tremor subtracts 3 for one random area and triggers an immediate Structural Integrity (SI) check to see if the pile collapses and the shaft clears up to the next level: roll d20, if the result is more than the SI of the area, the pile collapses and the passage is revealed; if the result is under the SI rating, the pile is weakened (noticeable if visited before), but still obstructing the way. Each point of Integrity can be cleared in 1 turn of intense labor with 6 workers (3 turns with 3 workers, 6 turns with a single worker). It is critical to check for random encounters if the party chooses to partake in such labor-intensive activity in the middle of the dungeon.

## TREMOR (GRUNN GALEB) ROLL D6

### Result loses 3 SI

- (1) **L1-15 (1)**, SI: 14, leads to => **L2-22**.
- (2) **L1-15 (2)**, SI: 14, leads to => **L2-15**.
- (3) **L1-15 (3)**, SI: 14, once collapsed, leads directly to => **LC-5** and door to **L2-7** in between.
- (4) **L1-15 (4)** (Tremors have no effect because of statue, rat nest needs clearing after opening). Leads to **L2-32**.
- (5) **L1-8**, SI: 16, leads to => **L2-30**.
- (6) Two areas affected (re-roll).

Reducing an area to 0 SI means the clutter collapsed and the way down to level 2 is now open to adventuring parties. If the referee uses the *Underworld expansion*, or devises a level 3 of his or her own, once an area is clear, its result on the former table now affects the area directly under it, as represented by the following table (i.e. the clutter pancakes one level down, between levels). A result on the **Burial Vault** tables can only be affected if its corresponding area above on the Grunn Galeb table has been reduced to 0 SI and cleared first.

## TREMOR (BURIAL VAULTS) ROLL D6

### Result loses 3 SI

- (1) **L2-22**, SI: 10, Way down obstructed by bioluminescent fungi (-3 SI if removed forcefully, which might trigger effects from the fungi table at **L2-3**; can only be affected with collapse from the clutter above).
- (2) **L2-15**, SI: 12.
- (3) **L2-7**: No effect, passage is clear once the clutter of Grunn Galeb above has collapsed and goes directly down to => **LC-5**.
- (4) **L2-32**, SI: 12 (cannot be affected until the statue above has been triggered open).
- (5) **L2-30**, SI: 3, Way down to => **LC-16** obstructed by bioluminescent fungi (-3 SI if removed forcefully, which might trigger effects from fungi table at **L2-3**, can only be affected with collapse from the clutter above).
- (6) Two areas affected (re-roll).

Reduce SI from the areas above on the Grunn Galeb table first. Areas on the Burial Vaults table cannot be affected if the corresponding area on the Grunn Galeb table still has points of SI left. When any of the areas on the table of the Burial Vaults has a SI reduced to 0, the way is free to climb down to the Hearth (if using the *Underworld expansion*) and the matter of Chaos below.

If the referee uses the *Underworld expansion* and its Extended Burial Vaults, or grow the Burial Vaults beyond their original boundaries, the tremors also affect the collapsed passages around the level presented in this main module. Once the Queen's procession leaves the Vaults, tremors will affect these collapsed passages and trigger the roll of d20. A roll of 1 to 19 means the rubble of the collapsed passage associated with that number on the map of the Burial Vaults (circled in brown) has further collapsed or cleared to allow passage beyond. A roll of 20 means two rolls instead of one. Any other roll of 20 adds two rolls to the bunch. If a given passage has already been cleared, the die is rolled again. E.g. If the initial roll is 20, two new rolls are made, and the results are 16 and 20. Collapsed passage 16 circled brown on the map is now clear, and two more rolls are made, with results 5 and 16. 16 is already clear so is re-rolled and becomes a 17. Passages 16, 5, and 17 are now open to exploration.

## CHAPTER 1

# THE VIPER HEAD PASS

*"The Viper Head Pass. The name itself is an invitation to extreme caution. It is a curse upon the race of men that made this area so dangerous and yet so strategic in the conflicts of this world. The neighboring peaks are home to all manner of monsters and giants, but there is lost in those hills a more ancient, worrisome evil that barely sleeps, and bids its time through centuries of corruption. Who would be foolish enough to wake the doom and help us understand its hunger before it fully awakens? Grave robbers and would-be heroes, of course."*

Due to its position in the Lower Midlands and the natural break it represents in the Bitter Peaks, separating them from the lands of Poy and beyond, the Viper Head Pass has always been a hotly contested area. The landscape today reflects this history, with extremely old ruins such as the remnants of the Ancient Fort at **H-7**, the fortifications at **H-15**, and the village site at **H-16** being but a few places hinting at the many conflicts that arose and the many kingdoms that tried to take control of the Pass, though never for long. Giants, elves, dwarves, the forces of old Danthium and Iyathar, the Prytons, and the Frankhs, all tried to claim control of the Pass at one point or another. Today, wilderness has reclaimed the region, and the ruins developed through time bear witness to the follies of past civilizations.

The Viper Head Pass is home to a variety of groups which are not meant to be put into play all at once. This map's key is looser than the others, in that it indicates the location of lairs and settlements rather than the specific positions of creatures at any one time. The referee must be careful and introduce these groups progressively throughout the campaign. It is advised to begin play directly in front of the Tomb's gates (see *Introduction*), only to reveal the inhabitants and their conflicts with one another progressively, as a spice between trips to and from the dungeon, rather than altogether, until the decisions of the players lead them into new directions. This will give adventuring parties room to explore and grow to know the area, giving them a heightened sense of choice while not being confined to one adventure site. They will discover new actors and locales to interact with. Confrontations, bargains and adventure will follow.

The referee can let the arrangement of random encounters do the trick, or bring about a key encounter at the opportune moment after a few expeditions inside the Tomb. Role-play the world as a living, breathing organism, and let it take a life of its own.

There are two main amorphous factions at play in the Pass. One is the forces of corruption, consisting of the orcs of the Blood Tusks at **H-10**, the Haunted Fen at **H-8**, and the Withered Grove at **H-13**. They are very loosely aware of one another as play begins, but together intrinsically disturb the order of the second faction, the forces of nature. The Gaelish Ada-Maku at **H-11** and **H-19**, Marhorn the Druid at **H-20**, and the Font of Life at **H-9** are each separate agents of this order.

The Norns of **H-21** remain aloof, at the top of the Marmoreal Mound. And a few wild cards could sway either way depending on the party's actions and the continuous growth of chaos under and around the Marmoreal Tomb at **H-14**, the Canon of Gaugamoth at **H-7**, the Troglodytes keeping to themselves at **H-4**, the alien Mhole at **H-15**, and the adventuring party the referee selects to inhabit the village ruins at **H-16**.

As the adventurers get to meet some of these groups, the others will take notice and might come into contact with the adventurers as a response. The referee should use them as pawns to disrupt the status quo around the Pass, or treat them as proxies to explore the Tomb on their behalf. Interactions between these groups independent of the player characters will follow, and alliances and oppositions will occur. The resulting developments will bring a sense of life to the environment around the Tomb itself. See *Developments* at the end of this chapter for more advice on this front.

Most of the groups keep to themselves. Some bandits in service of the Canon of **H-7**, the Blood Tusks orcs of **H-10**, and the head-hunters of the Ada-Maku at **H-19** are most likely to be met first. Referees should check for random encounters daily. A roll of 1 on a d8 indicates a random encounter. If an encounter happens, roll 2d6 and consult the following table.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTER (TOMB HEX) (2D6)

- 2 - Agents of Krassus the Cambion (Hobgoblins, Ogres or Hill Giants)\*\*
- 3 - Goblins (2d6) travelling through (see **H-1**)
- 4 - Orcs (2d4) of the Blood Tusks (**H-10**)
- 5 - Head-hunters (1d6) of the Ada-Maku (**H-19**)
- 6 - Animals (Giant Wolverine, Bear, Owlbear, Mountain Lion)



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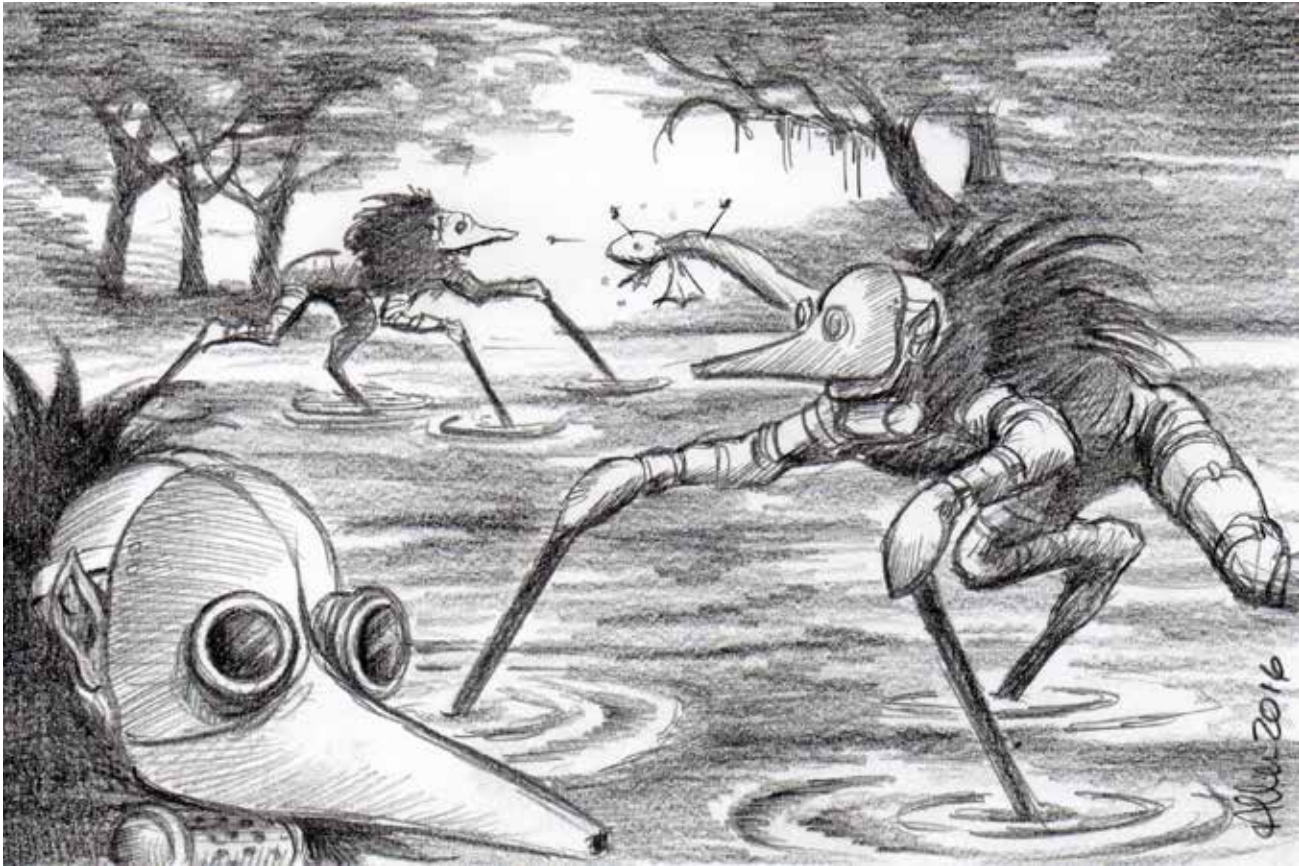


# VIPER HEAD PASS

## TUNNEL NETWORKS



Dots indicate points of entries to the underground network outlined by the white lines. Area codes in circles refer to accesses to Chapter 4, Burial Vaults, inside the shafts, above the secret doors and level proper.



stretches around the southern side of the Viper Head Pass from the banks of the Weeping Creek at **H-9** in the west to the Slithering Brook at **H-18** in the east. The thickest portion of forest is about two miles wide.

The woods are inhabited by a number of goblins who only recognize the authority of a shadowy 'Goblin King' no one has ever seen. These bands of goblins are scattered throughout the woods and quite disorganized. Each leader tends to claim only he knows the truth about the King. The goblins scare others away using sets of small traps and wind chimes made out of branches and pieces of bark they hang from the trees at the edge of the woods. The Ada-Maku at **H-19** believe the woods to be haunted, as do most humanoids in the region.

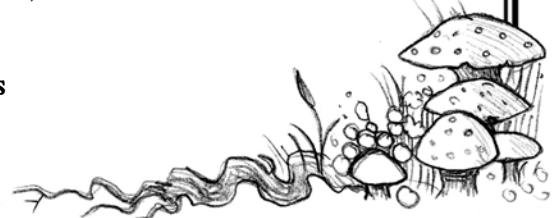
The goblins rarely venture outside the woods. They fear retaliation from the groups of humanoids around the Pass. They hide and observe adventurers traveling through the area, unless a random encounter occurs. In that eventuality, the goblins either ambush the party or engage in negotiations. The goblins can be bargained with and will be content with a few gold pieces in return for safe passage through the woods.

The goblin scouting parties usually involve around 7-10 individuals plus a group leader. They hail from different families living in suspended huts or burrows within the woods. Such families count around forty (40) individuals each, with about five (5) leaders and a chief among them. The goblins' overall population fluctuates depending on goblins killed, as well as those groups migrating to and from the Bitter Peaks, with three (3) to six(6) families generally living within the Woods at any time.

**GOBLIN:** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; HD Less than 1; HP 1-7; AC 6; #AT 1; D 1-6. Goblins generally carry scraps of little value; low quality weapons like a bone sword, leather armor a shield, and 3-18 SP.

**GOBLIN CHIEF:** SZ M; MV 90 ft.; HD 1; HP 7; AC 6; #AT 1; D 1-8. Leaders carry weapons, rusty swords, studded leather or leather and shield, 2-12 EP each, and perhaps (50% chance) a couple of gems worth 20 GP base value each.

**2. NIGHT LEGION AND THRICE-HEADED CHILD OF IYON.** On the edge of the Goblin Woods, the traveler can spot the remnants of an epic battle of the ancient past. There, amidst the shrubs and bushes





spreading throughout the area, stand human-sized statues of legionnaires carved out of the blackest of volcanic rock. Only a dozen statues remain complete, with fragments of many others scattered throughout the uneven terrain.

If the statues are inspected, it can be deduced that they are all staring through the vegetation at a specific spot nearby. A small mound may be found there with, at its base, a ten-foot tall statue of alabaster representing a monstrous, three-headed werewolf wearing a circlet on each one of its heads. It stands on a bed of rock that has been carved with the armorial coat of the Night Legion: three spears crossed under an antique-looking helmet.

The Thrice-headed Child of Iyon was blasted by a powerful spell that petrified it as well as the legionnaires nearby during the Imperial War of Danthium and Iyathar. By way of magical backlash, as the creature froze, the curse of lycanthropy rebounded onto its slayers and petrified them as well. The legionnaires now individually have a chance of reanimating on a roll of 1 on a d8. They turn into a werewolf and rampage in the wild during nights with a full moon. The werewolves get back to their original spots by the end of the night, and turn into statues of legionnaires at dawn, until they change again.

Using *Stone to Flesh* on a legionnaire will bring him back to life. By the next full moon, the soldier will turn into a werewolf and try to make its way back to his place of origin, at **H-2**. If unable to reach **H-2**, the legionnaire will be petrified for a full lunar cycle, change on the next full moon, and continue his way back to **H-2**. This cycle will repeat until the legionnaire is back at his original spot. The legionnaires are all 2 HD Warriors, but for the Centurion (4 HD) and Optio the lieutenant (3 HD).. All have a sense of being cursed but have a hard time remembering the particulars. Recounting the events of the battle would be most difficult, and could trigger a lycanthropic transformation (roll of 1 on a d8). Or it could reveal how to free them explicitly as described below. Or, the legionnaires could join the party as henchmen or mercenaries if the choice is offered to them.

Using *Stone to Flesh* on the Thrice-headed Child of Iyon will free it permanently. It will turn back into a living, circlets-wearing, grey-furred, three-headed werewolf who will try to escape and defend itself. If the Child is slain, the legionnaires will be turned back to flesh permanently, but still suffer from lycanthropy. The Child of Iyon will quickly disintegrate into ashes, in a matter of minutes, and only the three circlets that adorned its heads will be left behind. These circlets are valuable, but

could lead to even greater rewards and free the legionnaires from their lycanthropy at **E-8**.

**LEGIONNAIRES OF THE NIGHT LEGION (10):** SZ M.; MV 90 ft.; HD 1; HP 8; AC 3 (Banded Mail and Shield; #AT 1; D 1-6 silvered pilum, 1-6 gladius, 1-4 dagger. Equipment includes a helmet, cape, and banded mail, a tall rectangular shield with the insignia of the Night Legion, weapons, belt, and clothes including sandals, 2-16 Danthean GP, and one dose of belladonna. If the legionnaires are killed while not in werewolf form, they die permanently, though they could be raised or brought back to life by usual means.

**CORVUS SEPTIMUS AQUINA, LAST OPTIO OF THE NIGHT LEGION:** As Legionnaire, but with HD 3 (16 HP), STR 17, +1 banded mail (AC 2), +1 gladius (+2 to hit with STR, D 3-8), 40 GP and 30 PP, two doses of belladonna and a ornamented rod symbolizing his rank and authority (worth 200 GP).

**ALBUS MAURITIUS, LAST CENTURION OF THE NIGHT LEGION:** As Legionnaire, but with HD 4 (24 HP), STR 18/50, DEX 16, +2 banded mail (AC -1), +2 gladius (+3 to hit with STR, D 6-12), 30 GP and 50 PP, 2 doses of belladonna, and a magical rod of leadership (as rod of rulership but considerably less powerful, 27 charges remaining, but commands up to 100 HD or levels instead, with creatures beyond 1 HD allowed a saving throw vs. magic; one charge lasts for one round) symbolizing his rank and authority.

**WEREWOLVES (CURSED LEGIONNAIRES):** SZ M.; MV 150 ft.; AL CE, Surprise 1-3; HD 4+3; HP 19 avg.; AC 5; #AT 1; D 2-8; Can only be hit by +1 or silver weapons. If a victim suffers more than 50% of their HP total in damage, they risk becoming lycanthropes themselves (q.v.). When the legionnaires are slain in this form, their bodies quickly decay, eaten by worms. A few (2d8) body parts, organs, or a pelt may be left behind, each of these items being worth 2-800 GP to the right acquirer (alchemist, magic user able to brew potions or create magic items). These worms erupt from the ground at dawn at the legionnaire's initial spot near **H-2**, agglomerate and petrify to reform the statue of the legionnaire once again.

**THE THRICE-HEADED CHILD OF IYON (AVATAR OF IYORTHAR):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; heads are always alert: surprised only on a 1; HD 8+4; HP 48; AC 2; #AT 5 claw, claw, bite x3; D 1d8+3/1d8+3/2d6/2d6/2d6; can only be hit by +1 or silver weapons. If a victim suffers more than 50% of their HP total in damage, they risk becoming lycanthropes (werewolves) themselves.

The Thrice-headed Child of Lyon wears three circlets, one on each of its monstrous heads: The Ebonite Circlet, Orichalcum Circlet and Silvered Circlet. Each circlet can absorb three spell levels. If a player targets a specific head with a spell, have the spell-caster roll d20 + caster level. If the result is 14 or above, the Child of Lyon is affected by the spell; if the result is 13 or below, the spell fails and its energy is absorbed by the Circlet up to three spell levels or "slots". As long as the Circlet still has free "slots", it can absorb spells. If the level of the spell cast at the Child is greater than the remaining free slots of the Circlet targeted, it will fail to affect the Child unless specifically targeting the Obsidian circlet (see below), but will only fill those free slots remaining and no more (i.e. the Circlets will never contain more than three spell levels ready to be discharged).

The wearer of the **Ebonite Circlet** can release stored spell levels either as eldritch blasts dealing Xd6 of damage at a single target where X is the number of levels discharged, or a blast dealing Xd4 damage in a 20 foot radius for each spell level discharged instead. The **Orichalcum Circlet** stores spells as a ring of spell storing; the very spell cast at it can then be cast by the wearer of the Circlet. If the spell cast cannot be entirely contained within the remaining free slots of the Circlet, it affects the wearer normally and the slots remain free. Lastly, the wearer of the **Silvered Circlet** can discharge stored spell levels to grant +X to hit and damage per level discharged to the wearer's melee or ranged attacks, for X number of rounds dropping of -1 to hit and damage each subsequent round, e.g. 2 spell levels discharged add +2 to hit and damage the first round, +1 to hit and damage the second round, and then nothing.

**3. COLLAPSED DUNGEON.** This location looks like an archaeological dig, with the rooms and corridors of an ancient dungeon complex unearthed a few feet below ground level and partially exposed to the elements. About half of the labyrinth is exposed, while the other half remains under the ground, with many of a tunnel or store room collapsed with the passing of time. Whenever the party enters this area, make a random encounter check. A roll of 1 on a d8 indicates a random encounter. If an encounter is triggered, either roll on the random encounter table, or roll for a random dungeon Monster Level III. The corridors underground connect to long tunnels winding their way west to the Troglodyte Cave Dwellings at **H-4**, east to the Giant Fortifications at **H-15**, or north to the Marmoreal Tomb itself at **H-14**, with the entry at **L2-32**.

**4. TROGRODYTE CAVE DWELLINGS.** A number of holes can be seen on the cliff sides by any exploring party

travelling through the Viper Head Pass at **H-5**. These indicate the presence of a network of crudely excavated rooms and corridors climbing from a single opening upwards inside the hill to a troglodyte lair. The opening at the base of the cliff is camouflaged by a large boulder which can be found by examining the area. Twenty troglodytes, including fourteen (14) males and six (6) females, inhabit the caves led by four leader-types.

**TROGLODYTE:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; Chameleon skin grants surprise on 1-4 unless angry or already emitting their repulsive odor; HD 2; HP 8; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1 javelin, +3 to hit; D 1d3/1d3/1d4+1 or javelin (2) 2d4; Revulsion odor (save vs. poison or lose 1 STR per round cumulative for 1d6 rounds. Loss of STR lasts 10 rounds in duration). Females fight as 1+1 HD monsters. These troglodytes carry baubles of no great value, but six of them will have crudely carved ingots of unrefined silver and gold hanging from their loin cloths, for a total value of 30-60 GP each if brought to a professional able to extract it, such as a blacksmith with a forge.

**TROGLODYTE LEADERS (4):** As Troglodyte, except HD 4; HP 19/16/16/25. Each troglodyte leader owns a different, particular weapon, that is also a symbol of their leadership: stone pickaxe (D 1d8), stone hammer (D 1d6+1), stone club (D 1d6) and obsidian sword (D 1d8). Each weapon is valuable, studded with nuggets of precious ore, except for the sword which has a handle decorated with carved electrum. They are each worth 300 GP individually, but will break on a roll of 1 on a d10 if an unmodified attack roll of 19 or 20 is made.

The treasure of the troglodytes is concealed within a pit covered with a deer pelt in one of the rooms inside the network of tunnels. The pit contains 4,000 CP, 3,000 SP and 2,000 GP, as well as a sealed tube of ivory containing a **magic scroll** inscribed with *sleep*, *levitate* and *stinking cloud*. The cave dwellings connect via natural underground corridors to the Blood Tusks Lair at **H-10** and the Ancient Fort at **H-7**.

**5. VIPER HEAD PASS.** This is the Pass proper. Remnants of the Old Imperial Road linking the edge of the Ancient Fort's moat of **H-7** to the Goblin Woods at **H-1** and beyond towards the south are concealed here and there by the tall grass. Roll for the possibility of a random encounter with one occurring on a roll of 1 on a d8.

**6. FONT OF LIFE.** A small grove of healthy trees is heavily guarded by a group of centaurs atop the hill. The centaurs are universally feared by the other inhabitants of the Pass, and generally left alone as a result. The group includes ten (10) males, twelve (12) females, and eight (8)



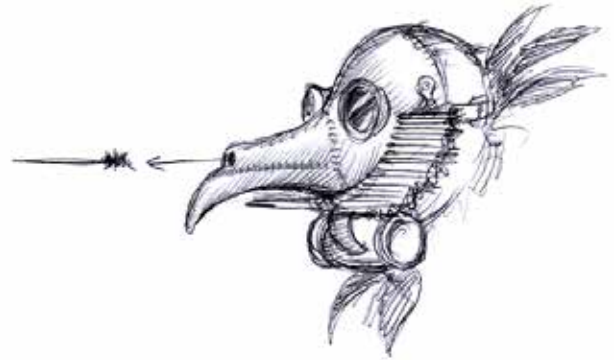
young. They do not carry great treasure, but keep a Font of Life generated by the energy of Chaos emanating from underground at the center of the grove. The centaurs will usually drive strangers away, unless they take pity on the party or need some help (to free the Withered Grove at **H-13** of corruption, for instance). The Font can be used to regenerate limbs, heal the effects of mummy necrosis or the fungi of the Altar of Ashes at **L2-3**, restore drained character levels, heal ailments such as blindness and deafness, even turn stone to flesh, with time, but the cost of access to the Font means being indebted to the Centaurs, who will later petition the party to go on a quest of the referee's choosing which will aid the centaurs. See *Developments* at the end of this chapter in the section regarding the Forces of Nature.

**CENTAURS:** SZ L; MV 180 ft.; AL TN; HD 4; HP 22; AC 5; #AT 3 ( 2 hooves and a weapon in melee); D 1d6/1d6 and 1d8 club. The females of the group are just as strong as the males and fight with them. The young have 2 HD. Six of the centaurs use composite long bows with 20 arrows each for D 1d6/1d6 at 240 ft. range. Another six are the leaders of the group, AC 4 with shields and lance D 1d8 or 2d12. Each centaur wears 1d6 pieces of jewelry worth 1,000 GP each (silvered with gems).

**Arkepios**, one of the leaders, will usually do the talking with strangers. He represents the powers of the Tree, the Balance and the Wheel, and aspects of the alignment of Neutrality (natural order, balance, and perpetual motion of all things, respectively). See The Wreath, Figures and Factions, *Wilderness expansion*, for information specific to the Duinnsmere. In the lair close to the Font of Life the Centaurs guard a treasure including 4,000 GP, 8 gems of 100 GP base value each, 1d10 jewelry pieces each worth 1,000 GP, a +2 **leather armor**, a **scarab of enraging enemies** with 21 charges left, a **potion of animal control**, a quiver of (10) +1 **silver arrows**, and a couple of clerical **scrolls**, one containing *slow poison* x2 and *cure disease*, the other *remove fear*, *augury* and *remove curse*.

**7. ANCIENT FORT.** The mossy fragments of extremely old and thick fortifications sit at the top of this island exposed to the elements. The waters of the surrounding moat are twenty feet deep at the most. They rush from the Weeping Creek at **H-9** and seep underground via natural openings all around the island. These openings include a few that are man-sized, but the tunnels beyond are treacherous and very hard to navigate. The passages lead to the old underground level of the Fort which still connects to the ruins above via a couple secret doors.

The passages are now the lair of Primus and Secundus Besifalus, a two-headed Ettin cleric, a Canon of Gaugamoth.



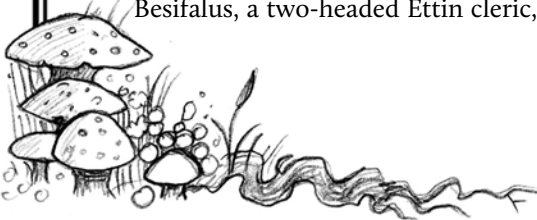
moth. Primus and Secundus are served by Purple Gnolls and a rotating cast of about two dozen drifters they use as muscle and messengers in and out of the Fort premises (treat as Bandits ). The drifters are used to connect with the Beggar King (see Figures and Factions, *Wilderness expansion*). The same underground level has side passages connecting to caverns and corridors eventually leading to the Troglodyte Dwellings at **H-4**, the Haunted Fen tunnels at **H-8**, the Blood Tusks Lair at **H-10**, and the Marmoreal Tomb at **H-14** leading to **L2-22**.

Besifalus is not interested in wiping out an adventuring party needlessly. He prefers to use them to explore the Tomb on his behalf, and bring back any valuable artifacts they might find, especially if they are related to the worship of Gaugamoth (otherwise known as Demogorgon). He will otherwise expect one share of treasure as a form of tax to let them explore around the valley.

**PURPLE GNOLLS (12):** SZ M; MV 90 ft.; HD 2; HP 10; AC 5; #AT 1; D 2d4 or spear 1d6. Purple Gnolls differ from normal Gnolls in that they have a natural immunity to toxins, poisons, and 20% Magic Resistance. One of them is a leader type with HD 3 and HP 16 and uses a +1 **halberd** (D 1d10+11) gifted to him by the Ettin. All gnolls each carry 4d6 EP and 3d4 GP.

**BANDITS/MEN (24):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; HD 1; HP 6; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1D6 (various weapons). Haggard drifters and bandits with some fighting ability. Each carries 1d10 SP. One carries a Halfling sized cloak brooch with elaborate "MM" initials carved into it.

**PRIMUS & SECUNDUS BESIFALUS (ETTIN, Cleric 6th):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL CE, STR 19 (as Hill Giant), INT 15, WIS 16, Heads always alert: only surprised on a 1; HD 10; HP 55; AC 3; #AT 2; D 2d8/2d8; Primus and Secundus Besifalus form an unusually smart, composed Canon of Gaugamoth. Both heads can cast spells at the same time, or one attack with its related arm while the other casts a spell. Spells (5/5/2): Command, Cure



*Light Wounds x2, Protection from Good, Remove Fear, Chant, Hold Person, Know Alignment, Snake Charm, Spiritual Scimitar (as Hammer), Animate Dead, and Dispel Magic. The Ettin wears the **Writhing Bracers of Gaugamoth**, one on each arm, both of which can animate 3 times per day into magical snakes with special attacks. The bracers allow the Ettin to wield the snakes as weapons at +2 to hit for 1d6+2 damage each. One bracer changes into a python (AC 3, 49 HP) and on a successful hit will engulf the victim on the next round inflicting 4d10 damage by constriction. The other turns into an adder (AC 5, 20 HP) that, upon a successful bite, injects poison into its victim (save vs. poison or suffer an additional 2d6 damage). The Ettin also wears a **ring of mind shielding** (blocks ESP, know alignment and detect lies).*

The personal treasure of Besifalus, hidden in the lower levels of the fort, includes 12,000 GP, a +2 **shield** he has no use for, a half dozen (12) +1 **arrows**, two (6) +2 **arrows**, a couple (2) **potions of water breathing**, a **potion of hill giant strength**, a wizard scroll containing the spells *enlarge*, *darkness* 15' radius, *explosive runes* and *fireball*, and a clerical scroll containing *resist fire*, *speak with animals* and *remove curse*.

**8. HAUNTED FEN.** This flooded and misty area was once dry, with the Weeping Creek flowing around it. Cave openings between the few trees growing in the area led to a small network of tunnels which ultimately conjoined to form a large room with a gate leading deeper to the realms of the Underworld below. Dark Elves used to come to hunt down creatures of the surface, but then they met the dwarves of Grunn Galeb (The Marmoreal Tomb). After a few skirmishes, the dwarves blew up the side of the southern hill, which in turn collapsed the underground tunnels and flooded the entire area. With the gate to the Underworld suddenly gone, a few of the Dark Elves of House Adhar found themselves trapped on the surface. When Agrak Adhar, their leader, tried to reopen the gate, he was captured by Elisedd, the daughter of Grunhyld, the Lady of the Lake at H-13. Under the tutelage of the vicious hag now calling the flooded tunnels her home, they adapted to the new leadership and became like ghosts haunting the area, hulking shadows walking on stilts wearing leather masks to spook intruders from afar and hunt prey for their mistress. The Dark Elves will first try to present themselves as such: scary, huge monsters lurking through the mists in the distance. If that is enough to turn away the intruders, the Dark Elves will not pursue. If a party insists, however, they will move to use the blow guns integrated into their aggressive, bird-looking masks. The Dark Elves will

not leave the fen under any circumstances.

**DARK ELVES ON STILTS (10):** SZ M (Appear Huge); MV 120 ft. on stilts, 120 ft. on foot but subject to fen terrain penalties; HD 2; HP 9; AC 4 (Chainmail and thick fur); #AT 2 (stilts, standing on two legs) or 1 (blow gun); D 1d6+1/1d6+1 stilts, 1d3 barbed darts (wounds from the darts continue to bleed for 1d3 HP damage each round until the wound is bandaged or healed; each elf has four such darts) or 1 point of damage plus save vs poison or suffer the effects of a *Slow* spell for 10 rounds (each dark elf has two such darts). If the poison is not treated, the target makes a saving throw vs poison each time the character engages in intensive physical activity, such as combat, thereafter. The effects of a failed save again are the same as above for the same duration. If after a week the poison is still not treated, the lethargy and slowness become finally lethal, and the victim turns into an alder tree. Dark Elves can cast *dancing lights*, *darkness* and *faerie fire* at will.

**DARK ELF LEADERS (2):** Both male. Statistics as underlings, with HD 4, HP 21, 28, AC 3 (+1 Chainmail) and 1d6+2/1d6+2 damage with stilts (greater strength) instead. Each of them use two graveworms as their horrific hounds in the swamps.

**GRAVEWORMS (4):** SZ M; MV 90 ft. all surfaces; 120 ft. swimming; AL N, Surprise 3-in-6; HD 2; HP 9, 12, 14, 11; AC 4; #AT 3 tentacles or 1 bite or special; D 1d4/1d4/1d4 or bite 2d4 but bite is automatic if two tentacles hit a single target or regurgitation (as detailed below either a cone expelling decayed remains causing D 1d4 damage to all in the path or or 2 HD of undead hurls forth and attacks. A graveworm's bloated stomach usually contains 2-8 remains of organisms, though giant specimens have been observed in the Wild with even more. These remains can be expelled to produce a 30-foot long 5 ft. wide cone of decayed plasma remains (only three remains can be expended per round in such a way), or they animate as 1 HD (skeleton) or 2 HD (zombie) undead (three remains per round expended on HD per round maximum). While not technically undead themselves, the graveworms are susceptible to be turned as ghouls because the remains within them react, and the pain is enough to make them back off away from the Cleric confronting them.

**ELISEDD (SWAMP HAG), SPIRIT OF THE FEN:** SZ M; MV 90 feet, 120 feet swimming; STR 18/90, AL NE, Surprise 4-in-6 in swamp, 5-in-6 from fog; HD 5; HP 32; AC 4, 0 in water; #AT 2; D 1d6+4/2-d6 claw and bite, or 1d6+4/1d6+4 claw and claw plus grab for 2d6

automatic damage next round if both claws hit; Magic Resistance 50%, Ugly Appearance (Save vs Magic or suffer from fright: act at half strength for 1-6 turns), spells (3/day as an 8<sup>th</sup> level Magic User): fog cloud, ventriloquism, mirror image, and dimension. Treasure: 3,000 EP, 3,000 GP, six (6) gems of 50 GP base value and two (2) gems of 100 GP value each are found within her lair. She keeps +2 scale mail and a +2 mace of Agrak Adhar, whom she killed shortly after his capture (the Dark Elves suspect it but could see their loyalty swayed by confirmation). Elisedd carries a **Wand of Animate Dead** she can use as an 8th level Magic User. If used within the confines of the Haunted Fen, the corpses animated will most likely be old dark elf remains, so emphasize the dramatic effect by describing their armors' remains melting in the sun light filtering through the fog as they rise from the waters; the alien look these undead might give off that might not be readily identifiable as elvish due to decomposition and more.

**9. WEEPING CREEK OF COCYNTH.** The waters of the Weeping Creek flow from the Lake of Tears west of the hex, towards the east, all the way to the moat of the Ancient Fort at H-7 where the waters pool and flow underground via the various natural openings around the island. A roll of 1 on a d8 indicates a random encounter.

**10. LAIR OF THE BLOOD TUSKS.** Orcs dedicated to the protection of the Black Sow, an eight-legged demonic black hog monstrosity they regard as their supernatural mother and guardian, live underground in this area. There are three different entrances crudely camouflaged on the surface with shrub and great boulders. They are easily identified for what they are once the large boulders are inspected. The smell emerging from the caves is musky, pungent, a mixture of rot and mud and pig stuff offensive to the nose and the eyes (-2 to hit and damage while remaining inside the lair).

The three corridors gather to form a series of alcove-like rooms around a main area (the orcs might have prisoners here, ideal to introduce a potential NPC such as a Knight of lyosephe). The main area is 60 feet wide, circular, with a 20-foot high ceiling and a concave floor with a pool of mud dead in its center. The Black Sow rests there with her piglets.

**ORCS (60 avg.):** SZ M; MV 90 ft.; HD 1; HP 5; AC 6; #AT 1; D 1d8 melee weapon or 1d6 spear; 2d6 EP carried each.

**ORC LEADERS (2):** As orcs except HD 2, HP 12 and 14. Each carry 2d6 GP in a purse around their neck, along with finger bones and mementos from their victims (10% chance of a random ring). One of the leaders has a hol-



low **Stygian Dagger** filled the Sow's blood which poisons its victim on a failed saving throw (make another saving throw vs. poison every round for 2d4 rounds; failure means the character follows its most primal urges and frenzies). The other leader wields a +1 **glaive-guisarme** (for D 2d4+1) of ancient Danthean making.

**THE BLACK SOW (Demon):** SZ L; MV 60 ft.; HD 5; HP 31; AC 0; #AT 4; D 1d6+2 /1d6+2 /1d6+2 /1d6+2 digit-like hooves, if two attacks hit a single target the Sow hugs the unfortunate victim against its chest and attempts to bite it for 2d6 damage as an extra attack. The hug squeezes milk from the Sow, which is acidic and bestows additional 1d6 damage to the victim upon a failed saving throw and automatically inflicts a permanent -2 to AC to any type of mundane armor worn. The Sow's black blood instills nightmares and weakens the will, making a victim surrender to his baser instincts – extended exposure (drinking blood every day for a week) could break one's mind and transform any human or demi-human victim into an orc permanently; even a single exposure to the sow's blood triggers a saving throw vs poison to avoid the development of black tumors which will ooze black blood themselves, potentially contaminating other people, water sources and communities. The Sow is assisted by six (6) **demonic piglets** the size of hogs (HD 2; HP 8; #AT 1; D 1d6+2 on a charge, 1d4+1 bite afterwards).

If the body of the Sow is properly transported (in whole or in large pieces) to a competent butcher, it is possible



to extract several interesting parts from the demon. Examples, at the referee's discretion, include: the **eyeballs**, which could be candied and eaten to benefit from the effects of *true seeing* for a turn, a saving throw versus magic being necessary to avoid hallucinations that feel real (per *phantasmal force*) to the viewer (400 GP value each); the **cheeks** if properly cooked and eaten as a meal would double the speed of recovery of wounds and HP recovery with suitable rest (10 meals worth, 40 GP base value each); the **viscera** could be dried and weaved into a rope almost invisible to the eye that cannot be burned through natural means (200 GP value); the **liver** could be used alone (4 doses worth, worth 80 GP each) to create a paste granting a +2 modifier to savings throws versus toxins for a day, or in conjunction with the viscera to create additional sausages granting the same (4 additional doses/sausages worth, worth 80 GP each); the eight (8) **mammary glands** of the beast could be dried to become powerful bait for orcs if exposed to moisture again (single use, the gland being wasted afterwards, worth 40 GP each); and the **demon's heart** could be used by a magic user to give back life to the dead, but only once (the heart would crumble to dust after such usage, worth 1,200 GP), and with the consequence of living a second, cursed life under the control of the Chaos entity responsible for the creation of the Sow, Shuub Iyarath. (3,240 GP total with the viscera rope or 3,360 GP with sausages instead).

The surroundings of the main area contain various caches of the orcs containing various possessions, including a total of 3,000 CP and 4,000 SP, and a variety of clay pots, some containing the Sow's blood (4), others individual potions of **growth**, **delusion** (cursed) and **levitation**. Two **ointments of extra healing** are also to be found there (each equivalent to a potion). The mud pit contains 20 gems of 50 GP base value and 6 gems of 100 GP, if searched thoroughly. The belly of the Black Sow contains a large Star Ruby of a 1,000 GP base value, a **brooch of shielding**, and a **ring of free action**.

**II. BONE HILL OF THE ADA-MAKU.** This strange hill formation, about a mile-wide at its base, looks like a pile of gargantuan hip bones, or a series of joints all put together haphazardly to resemble a semi-spherical shape with countless curves and protrusions where multiple giant limbs could attach. Whether this is the remnant of an enormous beast or some preternatural formation of Chaos is unknown. The anomaly sits on top of the plateau north of the Ancient Fort at **H-7**, and serves as the retreat of the Sages among the Ada-Maku, a particularly violent tribe of Gaelish head-hunters whose village and cairns are located at **H-19**.

The Ostrakon is the leader of the Sages. All wear transformation masks and participate to a single symbolic mind with the Ostrakon serving as their collective voice. Camulos, the chieftain of the Ada-Maku, sometimes makes the trip to the Bone Hill to get auguries and advice on matters he would seek to handle carefully. The Sages then look to the Norns and the Great Chimes at **H-21**, and draw their counsel from their observations.

What the Ada-Maku do not know is that the current Ostrakon is not himself one of the Galish, but a man who emerged from the Marmoreal Mound a few months ago. The man had lost most of his memories, and found protection among the Sages who quickly realized he was a magic user of great potential power. The man soon regained some of his sense of identity, but played innocent and quickly took over the whole group. The Sages know him as a benevolent magic user, a force sent from the heavens to help the Ada-Maku, when his true intentions are much different.

The Sages are not interested in wiping out an adventuring party. They will however defend the domain of the Ada-Maku, and want respect from explorers they will consider foreigners in their lands. The Sages will be interested in any piece of historical or magical knowledge that might be brought back to them, and might petition visitors to act on their behalf to push back against the Blood Tusks at **H-10**, or investigate the Haunted Fen at **H-8** or Withered Grove at **H-13**.

**ADA-MAKU TRIBESMEN (GUARDS, 11):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; STR 17, DEX 16; HD 2; HP 8; AC 7; #AT 1; D +1 to hit with D 1d8+1 stone battle axe (breaks 1-in-10 on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20 to hit), or, +2 to hit with D2d4+2 after chewing the red leaf, or, +1 to hit, D 1d6 with spear; each Ada-Maku tribesman carries a dose of specially prepared red leaf which, when chewed, grants them infravision and sends them in a combat frenzy that adds +1 to hit and +2 damage. They carry spears, stone battle axes, crude painted shields and loin cloths. One of them is a leader type, HD 3, with the same stats and equipment.*

**SAGES OF THE ADA-MAKU (6, CLERIC 3rd):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; HD 3; HP 14; AC 2; #AT 1; D 1d6 quarter-staff; Spells (2/1): All of them have a Cure Light Wounds memorized, and some first level utility spell. The second level spell varies with one usually having Hold Person ready, and another couple Spiritual Hammer, the others preparing a Chant at least, one Augury, and maybe a Slow Poison last. The Sages have transformation masks linked to their own souls and psyche (see below).*



**THE OSTRAKON, VOICE OF THE CHIMES (ILLUSIONIST 6):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft; AL TN, INT 18, DEX 17; HD 6; HP 21; AC -3; #AT 1; D 2-5 +1 dagger.* The Ostrakon can memorize spells from both the Magic User and Illusionist spell lists as an Illusionist (4/3/1). One usual combination: Color Spray, Magic Missile, Hypnotism, Detect Magic, Improved Phantasmal Force, Mirror Image, Fireball. He's recorded the few spells he remembers on thin sheets of velum hidden inside the caves of the Bone Hill. The Ostrakon carries the real treasure of the Sages: **Bracers of Defense AC 4**, a **Ring of Protection +2**, and a **Ring of Fire Resistance**. His **Transformation Mask of Life and Death** allows him to assume a gaseous form and generate a 'moon in the mist' appearance instead of a standard shape-shifting ability. It keeps his body between life and death, ready for regeneration by Gaelish shamans if he is reduced to 0 HP or below, and keeps his mind from shattering as he recovers his memories. It could have other hidden abilities as decided by the referee. This Mask alone is worth well over 10,000 GP to the right acquirer. Lastly, the Ostrakon is in possession of a **+1 Sun Shield**, which does not interfere with spell-casting, and sheds an aura of strong magic. It looks like half the disk of the sun, and must be reunited with its other half to unlock the full power of its dweomer. The second half of the shield can be found in the Crypts at area LC-5.

The Ostrakon, in reality, is the partially reassembled body and mind of Osmandius, the lost Figure and leader of the Black Fang. This coherent part of himself crashed in this reality from a different shade where his shattered mirror was put back together: He was allowed to come back from the Netherworld, but remains a broken entity shattered between dimensions. He will likely seek the help of the party to put himself back together (see *Developments*).

**MASKS OF THE ADA-MAKU:** These items are gifted by the Norns to the Sages when they go through the ritual that makes them members of this group. They are created specifically for their owners, and cannot be used by anyone else. Each of the six sages has a particular mask linked to a spirit animal: eagle, frog, bear, wolf, salmon, and elk, together serving as the parents and guardians of the Gaelish. Only the mask of the Ostrakon differs, since it symbolizes the cycle of life and death. Each mask grants the ability to shape-change into the spirit animal associated with the mask, and to accomplish extraordinary feats compatible with it: *flight* and *sight* for the eagle, *jump* and *swallow whole* for the frog (hit 4 above AC), *strength* and *crushing hugs* (D 2d6) for the bear, *swimming* (150 ft MV) and *water breathing* for the

salmon, and *running* and *charging* (D 2d4 x2) for the elk. The referee should think of the metaphor behind the animal, and interpret further abilities from there. If a player insists and consults sages, the referee might consider the possibility of going through a ritual of bonding, a vision quest or riddle with Gaelish elders to attune one's spirit to a mask. This could lead to further adventures. Compatibility between a character's personality and the animal spirit must be taken into account – in that case, assume the mask bestows a shape-changing ability and two extraordinary abilities besides those above. The Masks are extremely valuable works of art worth 1d6 x 1,000 GP each, depending on the acquirer.

**12. NORTHERN PEAKS.** Venturing further north leads to the Bitter Peaks. Check for a random encounter, or attract the attention of a couple of Ogres serving the Hill Giants of the Peaks. If opting for the ogres, the two oafs will try to follow the party around and assert their strength. They will only attack if they believe they can win quickly. The ogres will otherwise wait until the party camps. They will try to abduct an isolated party member to loot, cook, and eat the adventurer at the earliest convenience.

**HOGUS AND POGUS (OGRE TWINS):** *SZ L; MV 90 ft.; HD 4+1; HP 17, 13; AC 5; #AT 1; D 1d10; Hogus carries 47 GP in a pouch at his belt. Pogus has 77 GP: he's been shaving off a gold piece here and there off their shared loot for a while now. The pouch sizes are significantly different.*

**13. WITHERED GROVE.** This close-knit collection of dense copses is the first victim of the influence of Chaos slowly seeping from deep beneath the Eurth under the Marmoreal Mound to the surface. Grunhyld, a green hag, has been taking advantage of this and trapped the Dryads of the grove inside cursed willow oaks by a small lake she now claims as her lair. As the trees around the grove grow corrupt, so does the life around them. The woods are trying to fight back, but the presence of Chaos and Evil are chocking them to death.

A party investigating the Grove will meet a variety of creatures there: crazed, confused animals at first, such as wolves, boars and bears, as well as critters feeding on corruption like giant ticks, spiders, and boring beetles. As the corruption of the area evolves, supernatural encounters will become likely: stirges, shambling mounds, and korrigans in the wake of the witches' influence over the Pass (see *Developments*). Undead and other less savory things will be encountered later on as the Chaos under the Tomb awakens.

Those approaching the lake will first notice the shriveled oak trees hiding it from sight. The dryads of the grove have been imprisoned in their own trees by Grunhyld. The trees are now their ironwood maidens, their torture chambers. Once the dryad inside the tree dies, the oak ceases to live. Already three of the six trees surrounding the lake have died. The three remaining dryads will follow soon, and with them the rest of the forest. In the meantime, they can be animated and controlled by Grunhyld: they then act as 4 HD treants, AC 2 with D 2d6 per attack.

Grunhyld is likely to try and use the party for her own advantage, posing as the last remaining dryad of the Grove through a combination of *invisibility*, *change self* and *charm person* if necessary. She could use explorers to slaughter some last remaining good creatures in the woods, like a unicorn, or the father tree of the grove, claiming they use evil magic to appear pure. She also could ask them to retrieve magic from the Marmoreal Tomb to help grow her strength and “fight back against the corruption of the land”, spy on her competitors, and much more beyond the scope of this map and module. Adventurers figuring out the stratagem and finally freeing the dryads of the grove should be handsomely rewarded, starting with the hag’s possessions. They might be offered extremely long life too, as long as they do not venture more than four hexes away from the grove’s father tree. They will have made some strong allies in the long run, including Arkeprios and the centaurs of the Font of Life at H-6.

**KORRIGANS (2-12):** SZ S (as halflings); MV 120 ft.; HD 3; HP 15; AC 6; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 claws; Magic Resistance 20%. The Korrigan are degenerated humans, corrupt fay vulnerable to iron. They are able to teleport through plant life like bushes, tree trunks and barks, as well as fresh earth and stone boulders (treat as dimension door at will). They can animate wood and stone through hysterical, ritual dances (treat as an animate object spell).

**GRUNHYLD (GREEN HAG), LADY OF THE LAKE:** SZ M; MV 120 feet, 120 feet swimming; STR 18/00, AL NE, Surprise 5-in-6 in foliage, 19-in-20 if invisible, only surprised 1-in-20; HD 9; HP 45; AC -2; #AT 2; D 1d2+6/1d2+6; Magic Resistance 35%, infravision and ultravision, Mimic ability, audible glammer, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, change self, speak with monsters, water breathing, weakness, all at will. Treasure: 20,000 GP, 800 PP, twenty (20) gems of 50 GP base value each, a **Glass Jar containing the severed head of a Dryad** (if held against the forehead staring into the dead eyes for one round, the owner can use *charm person* or *dimension door* each once a day) and a **potion of gaseous form** can be found in a small lair accessible through a tunnel concealed by weeds at

the lake’s waterline. This chamber also connects deeper to a network of natural caves leading to the Marmoreal Tomb at L2-15. Grunhyld uses the **Sword of the Lake** to fool knights to approach or doom themselves to an untimely death if they accept the charge of the blade.

**SWORD OF THE LAKE:** +2 Longsword, INT 17, EGO 17+. AL Neutral Evil. Abilities: *Smite* (+2d6 damage) 2/day, *Strength* 1/day, *Detect Invisible* in a 10-foot radius, *Water breathing* and *Swim speed* 120 ft., *Speech* and *Telepathy*. Languages: Nurduk (Alignment), Sarnathi (Snake folk), Frankhian, Pryton, Gaelish. Deception: The Sword makes a point of letting itself be wielded by individuals of any alignment, and will be particularly favorable to Lawful wielders, in fact.

The Sword of the Lake presents itself as a blade of destiny fit for extraordinary knights and kings. It is beautiful, shining of a faint inner light, with a mysterious emerald reflection in the mirror-polished purity of the blade, and yet isn’t burdened with an excess of engravings or decorations. The sword will want to convince its bearer it can become a hero of legend. Though not cursed per se, the sword wants to be praised and recognized. It calls on its owner to get into increasingly dangerous situations to shine and become renowned. From the sword’s point of view, either the character is bold enough to wield it and give it the glory it deserves, or it is useless. In the latter case, it will try to engineer the wielder’s death, or advise courses of actions that will ultimately lead to the same, so it can switch owners and repeat the process with a new recruit.



**14. MARMOREAL TOMB.** When reaching this area, transition to the *Environs and Cave System* around the Tomb (Chapter 2), or *Grunn Galeb* directly (Chapter 3).

**15. GIANT FORTIFICATIONS.** Oversized boulders and cyclopean wall sections are all that remain from the enormous watch tower that once stood atop this sharp, tall hill in the days of the Lythic Kingdom of Aktum. A ten-foot wide hole lies open like a gaping mouth in the center of the ruins. It still surrounded by a few stones, like it might have been a well, or a vertical connection to a different, subterranean level of the structure now collapsed. The shaft goes straight down for about one hundred (100) feet before emerging in the ceiling of a 30-foot wide, half-circular room. The room has been plundered a long time ago, and is now entirely empty. A passage leaves this area south and west and runs for about 2 miles before emerging in the ruins of the Collapsed Dungeon at **H-3**.

Half-way down the main shaft, a passage branches off, running slightly downward in a northwest direction, towards the Marmoreal Tomb. This mile-long passage ultimately merges with the mine-like tunnels running from the lyathari Temple at **E-8** to the Burial Vaults at **L2-7**, but it is currently obstructed and leads about one hundred feet down into the gaping mouth of a Mhole, a psychic being not unlike a giant tardigrade. The creature looks like a fat worm with tiny paws, or a hairless mole with a round, tubular mouth armed with stylets it can stretch out and use to cover large areas to suck dry. The Mhole found this place an acceptable lair, and simply plugged its mouth to the passage, as a normal continuation of it.

**MHOLE:** SZ L (Huge); MV 90 ft./150 ft. burrowing; HD 16; HP 84; AC 5; #AT 3; D 2d10/1d10/1d10 bite and two claws, 2d4 acid inside the stomach (save vs poison for half damage); Swallow whole on a bite if the Mhole hits 4 above the target's AC. After being swallowed, acids in the stomach will begin to inflict -1 AC to suits of armor, -1 to weapon damage and inflict 2d4 automatic damage to all ingested. Every three rounds the contents of the stomach must make an additional save vs. poison or die. Victims can try to climb back out of the stomach (requiring two successful strength or climbing checks), or if the Mhole awakens, cut their way out by hitting AC 9 with their weapons. The Mhole digests gems very slowly: its stomach contains two (2) 500 GP base value gems, and ten (10) 100 GP base value gems. **Two scrolls** encased in an opaline crystal tube (itself worth 600 GP) and protected by a poison-needle trap also managed to survive: One contains the spells *cure serious wounds*, *raise dead* and *true seeing*, the other *hold person*, *lightning bolt*

and *monster summoning II*.

The Mhole is an intelligent, psychic creature using the memories it has digested from its victims as words in telepathic "sentences" to communicate with lesser life forms, or phantasmal forces as means to speak a plain language most humanoids would understand. Despite its current state of hibernation, the Mhole can communicate basic wants and desires to intruders, such as "get out", or "please bring back my spawn" (see *Developments* for more). Some of these memories are unconsciously granted a will of their own and may possess the "listeners".

Additionally, as the Mhole awakens with the tremors shaking the Pass (see *Special Rules*, Introduction), it will be able to shift and let player-characters accepting its bargain climb against its body and the face of the rock to reach the rest of the tunnel leading to map **L2 at 7**. The Mhole will develop more psychic abilities, and ultimately will be able summon shades, images and entire phantasmal scenes to communicate with others. See Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters* for more on the Mhole.

**16. VILLAGE RUINS.** This site was once a village of either pre-humans or monstrous humanoids dating back to the kingdoms of Deybrah, Merydion and Meruhar, and perhaps even earlier. It is a flat terrain following the Slithering Brook and surrounded by artificial, man-made hills, possibly ancient cairns. In the dead center by the Brook (where the area numerals are written on the map), there are a few exposed wall remnants, an excavation site currently investigated by a rival group of adventurers using hirelings from the Ada-Maku. It is assumed the Marauders will be used here, though the Lost Company could be inserted instead, or take over the site later on. See Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, or introduce your choice of a recurring cast here.

**17. SINKING MONOLITH.** This swampy area is mostly left alone by the animal life around it, but for the occasional lamprey or pack of stirges. The exception lies close to the Slithering Brook, at the spot roughly facing the ruins of the village at **H-16**. There, a 75 foot high, 250 ton obelisk of lyathari making is slowly sinking into the mire around it. The obelisk is covered with a translucent vine with red leaves, crimson buds and tangerine flowers not unlike snapdragons which exude a dizzying sweet smell covering the general stench of the area. The slightest contact or brush with the plant causes it to eject a 20-foot radius cloud of pollen which causes those who fail a saving throw vs. poison to want to drink a gallon of water immediately. When that happens, the victims are instantly attacked by Muck-dwelling Bottom Feeders

(see Appendix A: *Monsters and Characters* for more).

**MUCK-DWELLING BOTTOM FEEDERS (6):** SZ M; MV 180 feet; *Surprise* on 1-5, 95% concealment in the water, INT varies: low on an empty stomach, average on a full one; HD 4; HP 22 each; AC 6; #AT 1; D 2d10. The Bottom Feeders are addicted to the Blood Vine and rely on it to give them occasional prey. They will attack anyone affected by the pollen of the vine, which will then spread blood in the water, attracting 2d4 lampreys to the area in 2-5 rounds, and stirges after that who will feed on whatever remains alive above the water line.

The Vine feeds on the blood spilled in the water. Leaves, buds and sap of the vine are all valuable. The leaves of the plant can be chewed or smoked, and grant infravision for a day when thus consumed. The red buds are worth 300 SP an ounce, for they grant extraordinary powers of vision, dream-like auguries and a certain sharpness looking at crystal balls and other scrying devices in addition to the infravision effect. Both leaves and buds are quite nutritious, exceedingly addictive and deadly when consumed regularly. The sap of the plant can be collected and used as a food seasoning; not unlike cayenne pepper, it can be used as a preservative to coat foodstuff and increase its preservation up to eight times longer, thus increasing its market value threefold.

**18. SLITHERING BROOK OF LAITHE.** Originating under the Marmoreal Mound (see *Environs and Cave System*, Chapter 2), the brook flows westward from the Laithean Lake at map E-4 towards the Raging Falls beyond the hex. A roll of 1 on a d8 indicates an encounter.

**19. CAIRNS OF THE ADA-MAKU.** The village of the Gaelish head-hunters is surrounded by very large mounds of rough stone each vaguely shaped like a humanoid of titanic proportions. In the center of this man-made arrangement, a very real yet dead stone giant sits on an enormous weathered granite throne surrounded by huts covered with bones and hides to protect families from the elements.

The Ada-Maku are head-hunters in the sense that they are hunting for one particular head: the head that will revive the giant in the center of their village and allow them to be worthy to the Norns at H-21. They preserve the severed heads of their enemies in brine and enlarge them to giant size to try and produce results with the help of the priests and elders, but they have been unsuccessful so far. The Ada-Maku could enroll a party of adventurers to bring back interesting specimens from within the Tomb, anything outside of the normal gamut of humans, demi-humans and humanoids might qualify.

They could trade potions of growth and diminution for outstanding specimens. After a couple such exchanges, this could be upgraded to *potions of giant strength* (hill, then stone giant). The rarer the specimen is the better to them. See *Developments*.

**THE ADA-MAKU (40):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; HD 2; HP 8; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1d6 spear, 1d4 silex knife. If the Ada-Maku are expecting an attack, their druids and priests could prepare potions together to make them much tougher.

**ADA-MAKU LEADERS:** The tribe also includes four elite fighters (3 HD), four sub-chiefs (4 HD) and three female clerics who are the wise-women of the group (3rd level clerics, 2/1, with healing spells usually memorized), and two elders (each 4th level druid, 4/2/2, one usually with detect magic, entangle, pass without trace, shillelagh, barkskin, heat metal, call lightning and neutralize poison, the other with animal friendship, entangle, predict weather, speak with animals, cure light wounds x2, call lightning and cure disease) serving as advisors to Camulos.

**CAMULOS, CHIEFTAIN OF THE ADA-MAKU (FIGHTER 5th):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; STR 18/70, DEX 17, CON 17; HD 5; HP 45; AC 3; #AT 1; D 1d8+5, magic battle axe adding +4 to hit total. Camulos is a seasoned warrior wearing +2 gryphon-feathered, studded leather armor enchanted with a permanent feather fall effect and a dweomer of flight that can be activated twice a day, a +1 round shield, and a +2 battle axe and the Thunder Spear of the Ada Maku (+1 weapon that is +3 versus giants, inflicts 1d6 lightning damage, and zaps back into the hand of its thrower as lightning once it hit a solid surface, to reform as the spear into the thrower's hand). Also carried are **potions of growth, diminution and stone giant strength**.

There are six huts total, each constructed using two ivory tusks as their front frames (ivory tusks are worth 1,000 GP each, but require two men each to be carried away). In addition to a range of **potions** (rolled by referee), gold nuggets can be found among the crude jewelry and possessions of the Ada-Maku, for a total of 30-80 nuggets at any given time, each with a 5 GP value. A few rough gems can also be found, 40-70 of them, with a 10 GP value each. An additional 10 gems will have a base 50 GP value.

**20. MARHORN'S ABODE.** A small cottage built with stone walls, wooden beams and a thatched roof can be found in this area. It has a stout, roofed tower covered with moss and hay blending in its forested surroundings. Marhorn lives here with his two hounds, Oudou and Varadia, as well as his wife Sefania, who knows all of his past.



Sefania often patrols the wilderness around the Pass, but they both cultivate a genuine love for this place and its plot of land, growing fruits and vegetables, taking care of a small orchard adjoined to a small barn aside from the main structure of the house, and generally keeping to an isolated yet comfortable lifestyle of their own making. Marhorn is aware of the corruption spreading from the Withered Grove at **H-13**, and could be indebted to a party resolving the matter. He would make sure the adventurers could handle it first, however, and warns inexperienced parties to let it go for the time being.

The couple made friends with both the Centaurs of the Font of Life at **H-6** and the elders of the Ada-Maku at **H-19**. They keep the goblins of **H-1** at bay, and try to stay away from the troubles and turpitude of the world.

**MARHORN THE DRUID (DRUID 4th):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, STR 12, INT 14, WIS 18, DEX 16, CON 10, CHA 15; HD 4; HP 25; AC 1; #AT 1; D 1d6+1 club, 1d4+3 or 1d4+1 sling bullets (see below); identify plant and animal types, purify water, and +2 to saving throws vs. fire and lightning. Marhorn speaks Hill Giant and Treantish. Spells usually memorized (6/4/3): Animal friendship, entangle x2, faerie fire, invisibility to animals, speak with animals, charm person or mammal, cure light wounds x2, trip, call lightning, neutralize poison, and tree. Marhorn usually carries with him his sling, a half dozen +2 bullets, a dozen silvered bullets and about 20 mundane bullets in a series of pouches around his belt, his +1 Gaelish silverwood breastplate, a +1 black ironwood club (damages the fay as true iron), plus 24 GP and a six (6) 20 GP gems to bargain with humanoids and avoid a fight if necessary.

Marhorn can call upon Grindenbough, a 10 HD middle-aged Treant friend of his, to assist him. Marhorn is in fact the double of an adventurer who previously died in the depths of the Marmoreal Tomb and was created back from the Maw of Chaos in the Wild. He wandered the world and ultimately met Sefania, with whom he got a grasp on his identity and finally decided to make it back to the Pass. He only remembers fragments from his previous life. Some might become useful or spawn adventures for the party later on.



**SEFANIA THE RANGER (RANGER 4):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; Half-Elf Female; AL NG; STR 17, INT 14, WIS 10, DEX 17, CON 16, CHA 15; HD 4; HP 38; AC 0; #AT 3/2 ranseur or 1 melee weapons or 2 long bow; D 2d4+5/2d4+5 or 2d4+5 with ranseur at +3 to hit; 1d8+1 broadsword at +1 to hit; 1d6+2/1d6+2 with long bow at +4 to hit; or 1d6+1/1d6+1 long bow at +3 to hit with silvered and mundane arrows. +2 **Ranseur** with oriflamme to the arms of the Grand Duchy of Hernst, **silvered broadsword**, +1 **composite long bow**, +1 **arrows (12)** and **silvered arrows (10)** as well as normal ammunition (20), +1 **Gaelish silverwood breastplate**, and a **cloak of elvenkind**. Like Marhorn, Sefania will usually keep a few GP and gems with her in case she needs to bargain or avoid an unnecessary fight.

Sefania has contacts with the servants of Emain Athras and personally knows its Emerald Mage (see *Wilderness Expansion, Figures and Factions* for more about Emain Athras). She longs for a reunited Duchy of Hernst allied with the forces of the Grim Wood and Gael Norath, a goal which seems all but impossible to accomplish at this juncture. So she keeps to the compound and patrols the area where she can directly and practically help instead.

Both Marhorn and Sefania could be great assets to a party aligned with the forces of Weal or Neutrality. The real trick is to persuade either of them to get involved. Marhorn and Sefania have left the adventuring occupation and have no intention to start initiating changes in the Pass that could make them targets or destroy the life they built here. They have found their place and a precarious balance among the folk of the Viper Head Pass. They want it to stay that way.

**LOUDOU AND VARADIA (HOUNDS, 2):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; HD 2+2; HP 12, 11; AC 6; #AT 1; D 2d4 bite. If Oudou or Varadia meet their demise, this might open a connection between Marhorn the druid and Caer Canis by the Black Abbey, as the Lords of the Anunekki have taken note of the hounds' loyalty and accomplishments, and would present figurines of wondrous power to the druid if they were to pass on (for more on the Anunekki and Caer Canis, see the *Wilderness expansion, Gazetteer of the Lower Midlands*).

**21. GREAT CHIMES.** At the very top of the Marmoreal Mound, a tall, natural arch with thin fins and vertical rock faces stretch out to the skies. Three long, vertical blades of obsidian hang from the top of the formation. Together they form incredibly huge chimes rubbing against one another in high winds and creating eerie sounds spreading throughout the Pass.

The base of the formation is hollow, with an underground cave serving as the lair of the black clad, stone giant entities only known as the Norns. The Norns live their lives in silence, and go about their mysterious activities. They sometimes pray to the skies. Sometimes, they ring the chimes. Other times, they climb down to perform some pointed task understandable to them alone.

The Norns and chimes seem to have been part of this landscape since time immemorial. Their age is unknown. So are their origins, motivations, plans and rituals. They are a complete mystery to the inhabitants of the Pass. The Ada-Maku see them as semi-divine oracles and guardian spirits, looking to them from afar for guidance and inspiration. Orcs and goblinoids fear them instinctively. The Centaurs understand them as they do the animals, trees and rocks of the Pass, as part of its natural balance and tapestry. Everyone seems to steer clear of them, especially when they climb down the mound, always with a purpose.

**THE NORNS (STONE GIANTS, 3, DRUID 12):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, STR 20, WIS 20; HD 12; HP 102; AC 0; #AT 1; D 3D6 or Hurling Rock 3D10 or sickle 1D4+11 at +5 to hit. The Norns are both 12 HD Stone Giants and Druids of the same level. With such high Wisdom, the Norns are immune to a number of spell effects, including charm, fear, command, friends, hypnotism, forget, hold person or monster, ray of enfeeblement and scare. Spells usually memorized (8/8/5/7/3/2/1): Animal friendship, detect magic, entangle, faerie fire, invisibility to animals, pass without trace, predict weather, speak with animals, barkskin, charm person or mammal, cure light wounds x2, heat metal, locate plants, produce flame, trip, call lightning x2, neutralize poison, stone shape, summon insects, call woodland beings, cure serious wounds x2, dispel magic x2, protection from lightning, speak with plants, commune with nature, control winds, transmute rock to mud, transport via plants, wall of thorns, control weather. Bear in mind this is just one possible combination, and there are three Norns. Individual selections will likely vary, especially with high level spell slots, including conjuration of elementals and the like.

The Norns also have all the benefits of druids of their level, including shape-change, which can translate in gigantic versions of natural animals such as bears and birds of prey. Each Norn wears a **priestly robe of Aktum**, which acts as a cloak of elvenkind but with a focus on caves and natural rock surroundings (switch probabilities between wilderness surroundings and other), a **ring of elemental command (Eurth)**, and a +2 **round hand sickle** of the darkest obsidian taking full advantage of their giant strength.

The treasure of the Norns includes many scattered antiques belonging to different eras of (pre)history, from Frankhian and Pryton weapons and armor to Danthean banners, lyathari sarcophagi and mummification supplies, potteries, statues, and works of art. In all, there are about two dozen items, some bulkier than others, with values varying from 500 to 2,000 GP a piece or set. They possess the following coinage: 10,000 CP, 8,000 SP, 5,000 EP, 4,000 GP, all mixed (would take some time to separate currency based on value). A half dozen (6) gems of 100 GP base value each, a few (4) pieces of jewelry worth 2,000 GP a piece, a **ring of feather falling**, a **necklace of adaptation** and a **potion of stone giant control** can be found after a thorough search of the lair. On a wall well in evidence hangs the round bronze surface of the **Resonant Shield of Aktum**, which resizes for its wielder and acts as a +3 shield, can be used with razor sharp round edge as its own weapon +1 (base damage d6), produce a *shockwave* when struck with a magical blunt weapon using the wielder's HD as level, and an *improved shockwave* thrice a day if struck by a similar magical weapon. If used in conjunction with the Hammer of Aktum, the Resonant Shield's shockwave damage changes from d4 to d6. There are rumors of even more powerful abilities unlocked when the shield and hammer of Aktum are used in tandem, such as the opening of rifts in space and access to the elemental plane of the Earth, but these will be left to legend and extrapolation on the part of the referee.

## DEVELOPMENTS

As play begins, the parties of adventurers will travel back and forth exploring the Tomb. At some point they will most likely come into contact with one of the groups moving around the Pass: the Blood Tusks **H-10**, the bandit couriers of **H-7**, or the Ada-Maku of **H-19**. The orcs form a straightforward threat and lair of baddies which, if dealt with early on in the campaign, will start a process that brings together the corrupted forces of the hex. Both the bandits and the Ada-Maku, unless antagonized, are open to some form of deal where the party explores the Tomb on behalf of these groups.

**THE FORCES OF CORRUPTION:** The Blood Tusks are not meant to be easily wiped out, but a confrontation and ultimate destruction of the Black Sow is likely to occur. Sometime will pass before orcs come back to the tunnels at **H-10** and rebuild their strength, this time under the protection of an Annis Hag known as the Queen of the Swine, Iyliudd Inaptra. Unlike Elisedd, the Spirit of the Fen at **H-8**, who is the lesser spawn of a mating of the Lady of the Lake at **H-13**, Iyliudd was conceived among

giantkin and became strong and respected among them. When Iyliudd becomes the leader of the Blood Tusks, she will bring the influence of ogres and giants from the Bitter Peaks along with her, and this will create a push forward which will ultimately bring the hags together into an organized coven known as the Twisted Thorn. The Thorn growing in influence, it will in turn be brought into the control of the Witches of Yggsmouth, and try to make contact with the Chaos rising from the Eurth at the Marmoreal Tomb: depending on their success, the undead and other emanations of Chaos around the Pass might cripple the Thorn's efforts, or join forces with them. The mother of the Lady of the Lake, by extension the progenitor of all three hags of the Pass, will project herself via dreams and take control of the operations. This Night Hag, a powerful sorceress going by the name of Iyeselda d'Ayltheia, is a prime mover and shaker of the Lower Midlands: see *Wilderness expansion, Figures and Factions*, for more about her. Alternately, the referee may wish to connect the coven to an evil faction of his own creation or choosing.

**IYLIUDD INAPTRA (ANNIS HAG), QUEEN OF THE SWINE:** SZ L; MV 150 feet; STR 19, AL CE; HD 7+3; HP 38; AC 0; #AT 3; D 1d8+8/1d8+8/2d4+1, if all three attacks hit a grapple effect is automatic next round causing all three damages as if all hit; 100% immunity vs. all illusion/phantasm magic, fog cloud 2/day, change self 2/day, iron-hard skin as plate armor with -1 damage from edged weapons, +1 damage from blunt weapons. 5,000 GP, 6 gems of a 50 GP base value, a headdress made of gryphon feathers, a **bracelet of goblin teeth and mummified eyeballs** (teeth which can be thrown as +1 darts, and eyeballs which can be freed and float as extra autonomous eyes for the hag), a **necklace of black pearls** (which if freed can turn into each pearl into a black piglet similar to the Black Sow's - HD 2, HP 8, D 2-6 on charge), and a **ring of the blackest obsidian** (resurrects and teleports the wearer to a place of refuge once if killed), the **Libram of the Fates** (granting 1 free Pivot Point to the reader), the **hag's ornamented paddle** (which allows water walking, water breathing and flying if ridden like a broom, and functions as a +2 longsword if wielded as such), a **vial containing the preserved blood of a holy man** (which turns into holy water in presence of undead, and turns back to thick blood if no undead are present in the vicinity) and a **potion of diminution** are all part of her treasure.

**THE FORCES OF NATURE:** Similar connections are likely to coalesce the natural factions around the Pass. The Ada-Maku of **H-11** and **H-19** are already connected,

and will offer to rewards to parties bringing back heads and magic from the Tomb. The mystery of the Ostrakon, its link to Osmandius and the mirror of **L1-34**, and the second half of the Sun Shield to be found at **LC-5** will further the parties' exploration. Through the Ada-Maku, or perhaps because of a last minute wilderness rescue involving Sefania, parties will sooner or later come into contact with Marhorn the Druid at **H-20** and ultimately the Centaurs of the Font of Life at **H-6**. The Centaurs might ask friendly parties to hunt down specific aberrations of Chaos for them, to investigate the corruption of the Grove at **H-13**, to provide an escort for characters of the outside world to use the Font, and might even be petitioned to purify the Font when the influence of Chaos starts to grow in the Pass, having to catch a miraculous in the underground cave system of the Environs (see Chapter 2).

**THE WILD CARDS:** Of the elements caught between the two main forces coalescing around the Pass, the legionnaires of the Night Legion at **H-2** are likely to align with whichever party manages to destroy the Child of Lyon and brings the circlets to the Iyathari Temple at **E-8** to then confront the avatar of Iyorthar manifested there. The troglodytes of **H-4** are irredeemably evil, on the other hand, but would keep to themselves unless forcibly recruited by the Spirit of the Fen at **H-8**. Besifalus, the Canon of Gaugamoth at the Ancient Fort **H-7**, is chaotic and evil as well, but is also the vassal of the Beggar King (an outside party vying for the control of the Midlands in the context of the Duinnsmere, perhaps some bandit or thieves' guild in the context of the referee's own campaign). He might feign an alliance with the hags, or sabotage it, or might create his own alliances, especially if the evil adventuring party is involved from **H-16**. The choice of a particular party inserted in this latter location might have profound effects on the future dynamics of the hex. Ideally, referees will make their choice after a few sessions, to get a feel of the player-characters' sensibilities and where the party likely goes in terms of potential foes and allegiances, and try to foster conflicts that will profit to the ambiance and entertainment of the game as a whole.

The Mhole of **H-15** and the Norns of **H-21** are perhaps the more alien characters to comprehend. The Mhole will try to communicate with an adventuring party and use them to retrieve the fossilized Ohminid eggs that can be found on the second level of the Tomb at **L2-24** and other specimens at **L2-28A** and **LC-9**. The Mhole could later become a conduit animating the ground around it in the ruins of the fortifications, and even commune

with the will of the ancient dead giants, perhaps wanting to help the party stop the possible rise of the Hearth of Chaos to the surface, if the Underworld expansion is fully into play, or the rise of some other cosmic horror inserted along with homebrew dungeon levels by the referee. The Norns are a personification of the weight and unknowability of the ages, agents of cosmic forces physically hanging over the Pass and moving about at the edge of the party's field of vision. They would only get involved after the awakening of the Hearth or some other major, cataclysmic event in the campaign. They would remain mysterious entities in the background, used as a way to nudge a party of adventurers into action but they will not become actors themselves.

As the exploration of the Tomb proceeds, tremors will be triggered (see *Special Rules*, Introduction for more about them). These tremors will in turn open up the lower levels of the complex. Chaos energies deep under the ground will slowly seep through and influence the entire region. Inhabitants of the dungeon might escape via the tunnels connecting to the surface, and/or join with corrupted forces on the surface. It is likely that the Font of Life **H-6** will be assailed sooner or later by the forces of Evil. If resistance is needed, allies from the region, including the forces of the Wreath, the Grim Wood or perhaps the Knight of the Wheel himself, might show up for such a showdown. A reverse scenario could see the Marmoreal Tomb at **H-14** become an uncontrollable nexus of Chaos and Evil which would trigger full blown retaliations against it. The conflict could escalate at mid to high levels with giants of the Vile Legion taking over the entire Pass, and armies from the Viscounty of Poy being mobilized to wipe them out by force, some large scale battle becoming inevitable from there.

Depending on the parties' actions, the player-characters might end up on either side of any given conflict. The more neutral factions in the Pass may have to choose a side as well. The Ostrakon might betray an alliance meant to defend the forces of Nature. Besifalus might make a deal to go against the hags and their growing domination over the area. The possibilities being wide open and nearly endless, it is hard to predict beyond the first few steps set up with the key of this map, but the referee should be able to manage from here, and encourage the world to interact with the picture of the Pass and affect it. The referee role-plays the world to the best of his ability, and ideally uses the moving parts of this chapter to generate conflict and create a perpetual motion of growth and destruction which will in turn feed the campaign events and keep it alive as long as necessary.



## CHAPTER 2

# ENVIRONS AND CAVE SYSTEM

*"The massive stone faces carved in the sheer surface of the cliff remain silent after centuries of contemplation. The great chimes of volcanic glass ring enigmatically overhead, but their council cannot be heeded. The tombs lay dormant. The towers stand as remnants of stronger days and better defenses. The Lythic Kingdom of Aktum ceased to be eons ago, and the world moved on to countless other wars and calamities. Our origins and histories have been lost. Traces abound everywhere you look: the ancient fort of men, the forlorn temple of the gods who were not meant to be worshipped, the paupers' fields of ages past. But the faces of stone remain silent, and the waters of memory keep on flowing. It is a risk to try and piece it all together."*

Much like the pass around it, the immediate environs of the Tomb reflect the long succession of events that took place in history, recent and otherwise. In present day, the various inhabitants of the area tend to fend for themselves, and try to establish a stable pecking order. Adventuring parties will likely nudge this or that group of inhabitants, and initiate reactions on the part of the environment through the referee who will keep an eye towards the evolution of the dynamics of the whole. Weakened groups will seek allies and reinforcements, vacuums will be filled, either by a neighboring force nearby waiting to spread its influence outwards, or by groups outside, on the hex and beyond, who will want to become more and more involved as adventuring parties keep coming to explore the Tomb.

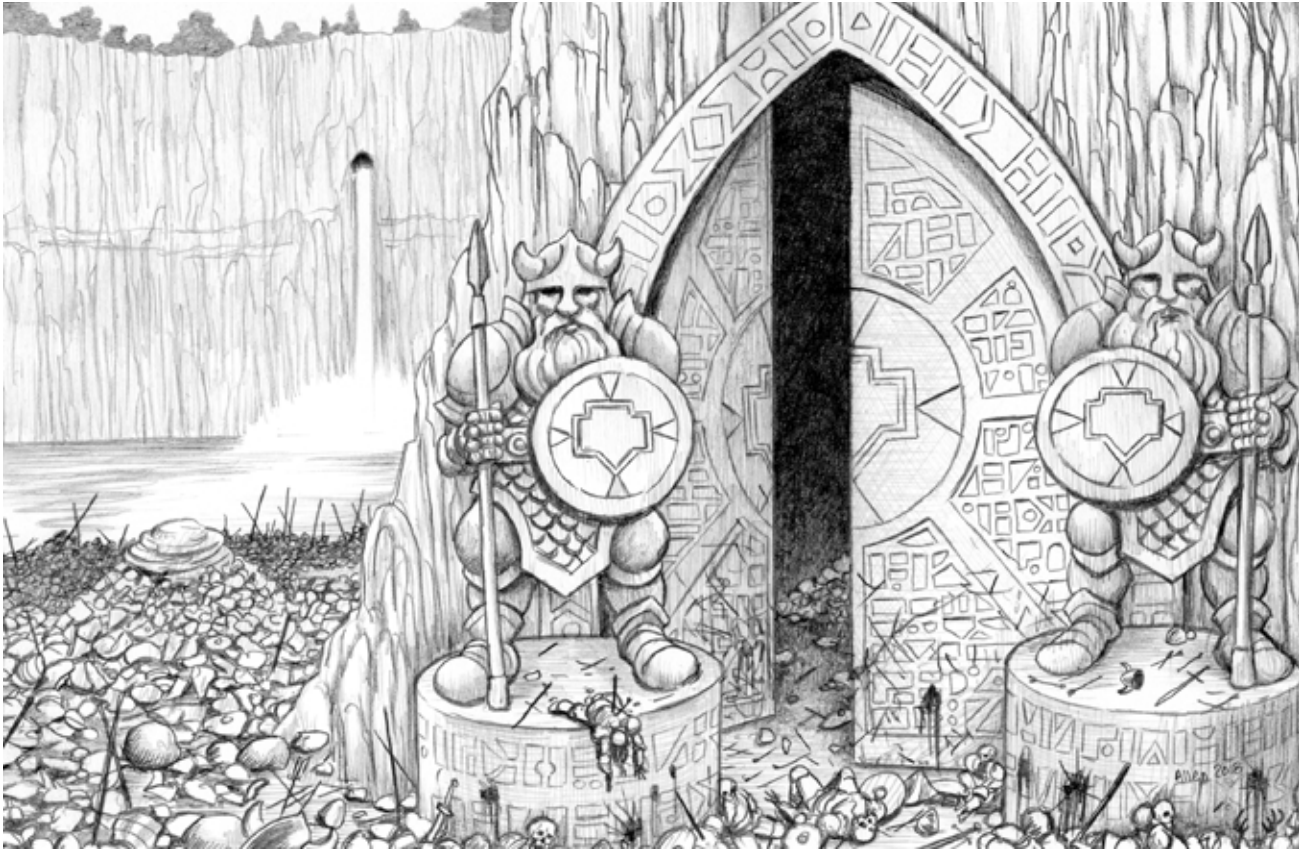
The map of the Environs can be seen as a mix of exterior and underworld exploration. Roughly one side, areas **E-1 to E-12**, deals with the terrain and features surrounding the Marmoreal Mound itself. The other half, areas **E-13 to E-28**, describes the network of rivers and underground tunnels ultimately connected to the Tomb at **E-28**.

As the campaign and exploration ideally start at level 1 and the Tomb itself (*Grunn Galeb*, Chapter 3), the starting players will go through their first few sessions of exploration. The routine then may be disturbed as desired with the introduction of the Hex (Chapter 1). The player characters gain their first few levels, and ties begin to form between them, the dungeon, and the wilderness around them. When the party will be close to have explored the level in its entirety, they will probably gravitate around the heroic (4th) level range. The first, or "Environs" half of this chapter's map, is meant to introduce more complication and detail around this time, whereas

the second or "Cave System" half addresses more powerful factions that will likely challenge even super heroic level (8th) characters and play into the end game of the entire region. Whomever gets the upper hand will likely expand its influence, either inside the Marmoreal Tomb itself, reintroducing some measure of danger and development there long after the first expeditions, as well as outside into the surroundings, allowing a clash between these new foes and the inhabitants of the Hex.

Whatever level of interest the exploring parties express in interacting with the surroundings of the Tomb, the referee must keep in mind they do not stay static. Changes happen over the course of the campaign. Count Aorll will exit the Brown Hill sooner or later. The Green Men of Tax Tarkhan from **E-7** will make it outside and start exploring themselves. The harpies of **E-6** may run into trouble, first with the Red Apes of **E-9**. The Isle of the Watchers could be taken over by another master, like the growing corruption of the Withered Grove at **H-13**, or the orcs of the Blood Tusk at **H-10** may grow their territory eventually invade the Tomb and take on the forces of Grosh the Great at **LI-21**. What would be the reaction of the Ada-Maku of **H-19**, or the Centaurs of the Font of Life at **H-6**? What if the Marauders of **H-16** took control of the Isle? It is up to the referee role-playing the world to find out, and to consider all sorts of other possibilities and goings-on like this. The Environs and Cave System are part of the same living, breathing place, and if the party does not come into contact with this or that element of the world immediately, it does not mean events and situations won't change over time. They will. They will just do so without the direct input of the characters, and will catch up with them at a later date.

Several areas have been designed with an eye toward further developments by the referee, most notably the towers and tunnels under the Isle of the Watchers at **E-6**, the lyathari Temple at **E-8**, the tower of the Red Apes at **E-9**, and the Tombs at **E-17** and **E-24**. Each has been described with different and increasing levels of detail, and can be dealt with the usual abstract and verbal exchanges common to most role-playing interactions as they stand. Alternately, they could be detailed further with their own maps and multiple levels, even become their own fully fleshed-out dungeons and expansions to the adventure. The referee must keep this in mind, carefully go through all the areas, and decide what to do with them when it becomes relevant to the adventuring parties in the campaign.



When the party explores outside, check for random encounters every half day or so, if not prompted otherwise. A roll of 1 on a d6 indicates an encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll 2d6 on the following table:

#### RANDOM ENCOUNTER (ENVIRONS) (2D6)

- 2 - Special (referee's discretion) or Random Encounter (Tomb Hex) in Chapter 1.
- 3 - Men of the Ada-Maku (1d4+2), or Yellow (2d4) or Green Men (1d3) fresh out of the gate at E-7.
- 4 - Herd of Deer led by powerful Stag
- 5 - Cougar or Giant Wolverine
- 6 - Congress of ravens, wake of vultures
- 7 - Bear or Owlbear
- 8 - Herd of Wild Horses led by dominant mare
- 9 - Wolves (2d3) of the Veneur (E-9)
- 10 - Red Apes (1d3) of Lyon (E-9)
- 11 - Harpies (1d3) (E-6)
- 12 - Giant hawk diving for prey (E-3)

Inside the underground tunnels beneath the Marmoreal Mound, encounters should be checked every exploration

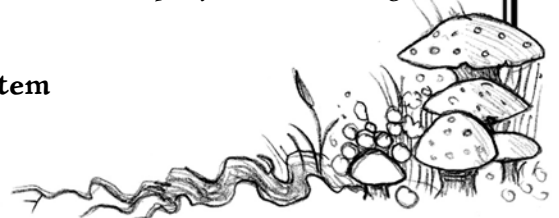
turn with a roll of 1 on d8 indicating an encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll 2d6 on the following table:

#### NATURAL CAVES AND TUNNELS (2D6)

- 2 - Tremor and Partial Collapse. Saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage. D 2d6
- 3 - Cadaverous Caterpillar\*
- 4 - Chak-Ta (1d4) (Bat men)\* (E-21)
- 5 - Utluz (2d4) (Frog men) (E-14)
- 6 - Utukku (1d6) (Puffer Fish men)\* (E-23)
- 7 - Troglodytes (1d3) (E-15)
- 8 - Obrachaeon Skirmisher\* (E-17)
- 9 - Lizard Man (E-24)
- 10 - Catfish Worm\* (E-22)
- 11 - Special (Giant Cray Fish, Giant Lamprey, Crab or similar fresh water predator)
- 12 - The Gem Frog (E-16) or Outsider (roll or select from Environs or Hex random encounters)

#### KEY OF THE AREA

- 1. OPEN FIELD. Whenever the party ventures through



this area, roll for the possibility of an encounter with a roll of 1 on a d8 indicating such. Long grass and small bushes cover this wide expanse of seasonal peatlands. Never quite flooded, the plain is difficult to tread, especially after heavy rains (as determined by the referee or randomly on a roll of 1 on a d3). The ground becomes muddy and sucks in every step, changing the process into an ordeal for men and beasts of burden alike. Movement is halved, and dexterity modifiers to AC are negated in all weather conditions. After heavy rains, combat situations additionally turn the soil into the equivalent of a *Web* spell, which magic items like a ring of water walking or similar effect might circumvent at the referee's discretion.

In the aftermath of hectic movements like combat, 1d3 remains may be discovered as having been swallowed and conserved by the peat a few feet below. Roll d12 on the table:

#### RANDOM REMAINS

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 1-4 - | Remains wear tattered clothes and their equipment is useless.   |
| 5-8 - | Remains belong to a soldier with item(s) of use Roll a d4: 1-3 humanoid; or 4 dwarf., Then roll a d6: 1-2 weapon; 3-4 armor; or 5-6 both.   |
| 9 -   | Remains belong to a dwarf cleric. Roll a d4 to determine <b>potion</b> carried: 1 cure disease; 2 cure blindness; or 3-4 cure wounds.   |
| 10 -  | Chunk of a giant or gargoyle. Examine to possibly find an uncut gem of a base 50 GP value having grown like a wart as part of the creature.   |
| 11 -  | Recent remains of an evil magic-user. On a roll of 1 on a d6 the magic-user still carries a minor magic item or a poison needle trapped tube containing a <b>scroll</b> with 1d3 spells levels I-III.   |
| 12 -  | Recent remains of a mercenary. Might be a known NPC or someone an associate of the party might know (use for potential complications or adventure). The remains still wear wax plugs in their ears - an allusion to and a warning about the harpies of the Isle of the Watchers at E-6. |

**2. MASS GRAVEYARD.** The main battle of the forces of Belenor and the Stone-Cutter dwarves of Grunn Galeb versus the horde of Krassus the Cambion occurred here ten years ago. The vegetation here is barren, with a few bushes here and there. Discarded tools from the mine, stripped bones of many a creature, dwarf, goblin, hob-

goblin, wolf, as well as the earth-like remains of a few gargoyles and stone giants, can be found here and there, some gathered to form small mounds, others protruding from the ground and slowing the prospecting parties' progress. The place is eerily quiet, and leads to areas **LI-1** and **LI-2** of the Marmoreal Tomb.

**3. CLIFF.** A rough, vertical rock face separates the slopes of the Marmoreal Mound **H-21** from the Environs described here. The cliff represents a 100-foot drop from the plateau down to the valley. It can easily be negotiated by a trained thief, or other characters with the proper climbing equipment or abilities. There is a chance, 1 on a d8, to attract the attention of a flying predator when climbing out in the open. If it happens, the creature will be a (1) harpy, (2) a red ape, or (3) a giant hawk searching for prey (roll 1d3). Harpies will land at the top of the cliff and use their song to attract prey and bring them back as prisoners to be consumed later at their lair **E-6**. The red apes will be more direct and use their nets to trap climbers and take them away for a similar purpose at **E-9**. The giant hawk will dive to grab a climber and take its prey away.

**GIANT HAWK:** SZ M; MV 30 feet/400 feet flying; AL TN; HD 3; HP 15; AC 8; #AT 2 dive claw/claw or 3 claw/claw/beak; D 2d4/2d4, +4 to hit on both attacks on a dive and if both attacks hit then damage changes to D 3d4/3d4; D 1d4/1d4/2d4 on a normal claw, claw, beak routine. If taken, a prey will be taken back to the nest at the top of the Brown Hill at E-7. If the giant hawk is hit by its prey during the first round after being caught, the hawk will just drop the charge, which in this specific circumstance translates into a 50-foot drop for D 5d6. The referee may allow Strength or Dexterity checks from other climbers to catch the falling character, and rule whether the ropes and pitons become a problem, how complicated the rest of the climbing becomes, and how the situation can become more exciting from here.

**4. LAITHEAN LAKE.** The shore facing all around the Isle of the Watchers at **E-6** is lined with a variety of shrubs and bushes, buttonbush, red stemmed dogwood, ninebark and others, feeding on the waters of the lake. One particular species which could be found by an investigating party is the blossom windchime, which grows delicate flowers vibrating in the slightest breeze. These flowers in natural conditions provide a background noise that provides a +1 saving throw against the song of harpies and similar sound-based charms. If branches of blossom windchime are harvested (requiring an active search of one turn minimum to find), the flowers will remain crisp enough to provide protection for a full day, after which they will soften and become useless. The stems of the plant are incredibly

resistant. Shaking a branch back and forth while moving or engaging in combat activity will provide a +2 bonus to the saving throw, or +3 if the branch is shaken violently and eschewing all forms of actions, including movement, during the melee round.

The waters of the lake are populated by trout, pike and other game fish. Linger near the shore for an extended period of time will likely attract the attention of some predator, either from the environs (roll for random encounter), or from the lake. Possibilities include a water silk spider (3 HD, see area LI-3), a giant pike (4 HD), the giant hellbender salamander of area E-5, or even the "giant snapping turtle" of the lake (see area E-6A).

**5. FRANKHIAN FORT.** These fortifications were once part of the Frankhian defenses deployed during the Crusade against the Giants some three centuries prior. Today, the moat, main gate and barbican have all completely disappeared but for a shallow ditch, a wall section or boulder here and there. Portions of the curtain walls and towers still remain, with half the courtyard now submerged under the waters of the Lake.

An investigative party will find the remains of a recent camp fire within the courtyard perimeter, as well as an improvised shrine built inside the ruins of the western tower still standing on solid ground. The camp indicates the presence of four persons here to anyone experienced in the outdoors or able to track.

The shrine is dedicated to the Last King of the Frankhs, Abelrik IV, who died at the end of his Crusade against the Giants. Chalk graffiti have been scrawled all over the mossy tower wall, around a carved stump of ironwood heavily stained with blood. The chalk symbols praise the King, while others feature the barbee cross symbol of the Knights Immaculate (See Figures and Factions, *Wilderness expansion*). The stump displays many cuts and slashes on its broad, flattened edges. It served as support to cut off the heads of bandits caught by the Knights and slaughtered here in reverence of the King's Law.

By the shrine lies a corpse still wearing the delivery of the Knights Immaculate. His sword is broken on the ground. The decomposed body still has large plugs of wax stuck in its ears. A pouch still attached to his belt contains four doses of **Ash of the Supplicants** (which heals diseases contracted by wounds including lycanthropy if mixed with water and applied within 24 hours of infection). A few feet away from the shrine, a small recess is concealed by a loose stone in the tower wall. A poison needle trapped box remains hidden within. It contains an edict

by the Knight Sepulcher outlawing the Order of the Gray and its affiliates (see Handout), as well as 40 GP, 40 PP, and two gems of 500 GP value each.

*Two of the four knights who camped here were snatched by the Giant Hellbender Salamander nesting in the submerged portion of the courtyard, among the large debris and boulders underwater. The third is by the shrine, and the fourth has been taken by the harpies at area E-6B. The salamander has learned to wait and hunt for prey patiently. It will wait, and suddenly leap out of the water at incredible speed, up to 120 feet away from the shore, targeting a single individual or creature in the process. If successful, the salamander will immediately retreat in the water. If not, it will fight for a few rounds, attempt to be lucky, and retreat either way after a while. The salamander will not leave the confines of the courtyard, even in pursuit of escaping prey. It identifies the ruins as its own domain and wants to stay to protect its progeny.*

**GIANT HELLBENDER SALAMANDER:** SZ L; MV 120 ft., 120 ft. leap out of the water, 240 ft. swimming; Surprise 3-in-6 on a leap; AL CE; HD 5; HP 28; AC 4; #AT; D 2d4 + swallow whole on 16-20 roll, 1d4/1d4/1d6 paw, paw, tongue (reach 20 feet, tongue punches like a fist and is coated with sticky saliva, swallow whole next round if saving throw vs paralyzation is failed; unglued if successful), 2d4 tail swap in a 20 foot range and a 60 degrees radius, or 2-d6 heat burst (see below).

The giant hellbender salamander stays in the water unless it hunts for prey. When it does, it leaps 120 feet (40 yards, one hex) out of the water to reach a specific target and swallow it whole. If successful, the salamander then retreats in the water. If not successful, it will try to grab a victim first, spend two or three rounds trying to swallow, perhaps swapping its tail to isolate a particular target first, and then withdraw back into the water. If the salamander is wounded and reaches less than ten (10) HP, yellow patches previously invisible on its rugged brown skin will light up and exude extraordinary heat as a defense mechanism. The air will shimmer around it and it might actually, briefly catch on fire. The heat inflicts 2d6 damage to anyone within 10 feet of the creature as the salamander attempts to retreat into the water as fast as possible. It is only able to generate such a burst once, for one round, when the creature hit points are reduced to a single digit.

The rubble in the water is relatively hard to navigate (half movement). Giant leeches are lying in wait and will attempt to attach themselves to passing prey. Bone and skull remains, as well as rusted suits of armor and the like are strewn between the boulders. About 10 feet off





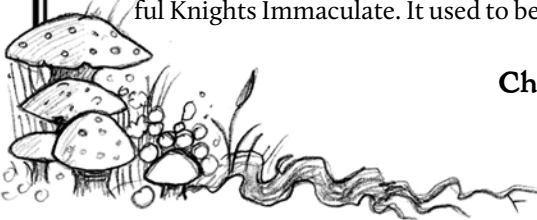
the shore, the party will find 3d4 eggs belonging to the Giant Hellbender Salamander, relatively fragile balls the size of a human head filled with jelly and a dark nucleus. Each egg is very valuable, especially as a traditional food for the Gaelish, including the Ada-Maku of area **H-19**. They will pay 50 GP per egg, if given the chance. It is possible to carry them in a net or a large sack, but these would pop and become useless if subjected to harsh movements like running or combat situations.

Amidst the skeletons and various animal remains in the water, the corpses and coats of two Knights Immaculate can be found stuck under some boulders close to the eggs. One of them has a heavily damaged set of full plate armor which could be repaired by a competent smith for half of the normal price. A shield is still around, as well as a well-crafted longsword etched with the emblems of the order, worth well over 100 GP. A large two-handed sword (base damage 1d10) with a square-tip blade also can be found. This is the **Executioner's Sword of Saint Luuk**, Standard Bearer of the Kings. It is made of true iron, enchanted with a +1 dweomer against any opponent, +3 vs undead. It has been redeemed by the order, meaning its original magic was purged, destroyed the mind of the sword, and made it pure for use by the lawful Knights Immaculate. It used to be much more potent.

Also in possession of one of the knights are the **Grog-nan's Golden Spurs**, which if worn allow a knight to dispel fear and charm effects from a mount with a kick, allow the mount to temporarily (1d6 turns) add 40 feet to its movement rate twice a day, and gain +2 to hit on a mounted charge.

**GIANT LEECHES (1d3 per character):** SZ S; MV 30 ft.; AL TN; HD 1 or 2; HP 4 or 8; AC 9; #AT 1d4, 1% of being aware of each attack until out of the water; D 1 or 2 points blood drain per round, per leech attached, 50% chance of a bite causing disease, fatal in 2-5 weeks. Roll for the number of leeches per character submerged (1d3), then roll a d6 for each leech (odd result the leech is 1 HD, even result the leech is 2 HD). Roll for each attack in secret (1% chance of being aware of each attack), and then compute damage secretly until 50% of the character's HP have been lost, or the character comes out of the water. Leeches will come out of the water and attack characters at night within 30 feet of the shore in a similar manner.

**6. ISLE OF THE WATCHERS.** This lightly forested land-mass can be observed from the shore of the Laithean Lake (see harpies art piece). Two towers dominate the view: the smaller on the western shore of the island, and



the larger at its eastern point. A mix of both deciduous and coniferous trees covers the landscape of small, rolling hills in between.

Somewhere close to the center of the island (at the spot indicated by the “6” on the map), a cave opening leads down to two large caverns connected to a network of tunnels slithering their way between the two towers underground. The caverns are home to a couple of owl-bears who will fight intruders if necessary.

**OWLBEARS (2):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; HD 5+2; HP 32, 34; AC 5; #AT 3; D 1d6/1d6/2d6; Hug on 18+ on a hit from the paws, for an additional D 2d8. Each owlbear has 30% chance to be in the lair at any time. If one of the adult owl bears is around, two (2) cubs are also in the lair. The second adult has a 60% chance to show up within the next turn with two (2) more cubs in tow. Cubs sold to proper trainers in a city like Villenor would be worth 5,000 GP each, if unscathed, but half that value if they are sold to the Shaman at Crom Caemloch. They will resist capture, fighting like 3 HD creatures with #AT 3, D 1d4/1d4/2d4 and hug ability for 2d4. It is unlikely they will survive, unless the party specifically plans to trap them beforehand. Bringing them back unarmed to civilization would be a challenge in itself.

If the two cavern lair is thoroughly searched, the party may find three (3) eggs concealed behind a pile of rubble, each is worth 2,000 GP a piece. There are also giant pellets scattered throughout the area. One of them contains the remains of Brombur “Brom” Mag Mofynn, brother of Mox Mag Mofynn, owner of the Oaken Vault of Gawkstane, and uncle to Neb Mag Mofynn of the Twin Tankard (see The Twin Tankard, *Wilderness expansion*, for more information about Neb and his family). Brom still carries **leather armor +1**, a **quality trap removal set** adding +10% to the thief skill of the same name, a bag of very fragrant smoking weed of the Osterlinch variety, a blend grown by dwarves and halflings together clearing the mind of all natural and supernatural forms of *fear* and *confusion* when consumed (6 doses remaining, worth 120 GP all together), a **very fine, long pipe** blending carved ivory and electrum for a total value of 600 GP, and a pouch of **Fenn & Ferries’ Halfling Mead Fudge** (4 doses remaining, 24 GP value) which if consumed adds +1 HP to natural recuperation per day. The body has been digested and partially mummified as part of the pellet. The remains are not recognizable in and of themselves, but Brom started drafting a map with notes to his nephew Neb at the Twin Tankard (see **Handout**). If these effects were brought back to him, it could make the party friends of the extensive Mag Mofynn family, who will gladly re-

pay the items’ value, and grant them aid and refuge in the future with inns and taverns in several towns and cities of the region, including Gawkstane and Villenor.

**DEATH FROM ABOVE:** The surface of rolling hills is hard to navigate, in large part because the island is known to volts of vultures slightly evolved by the influence of Chaos, and acting as the spies for the harpies at **E-6B**. A group of 2-6 vultures will spot the party sooner or later (3-in-6 per turn of exploration). When that happens, treat them as 1 HD monsters flying at 90 ft. speed. They attack with two claws (D 1d4/1d4) and inflict an additional 1d4 damage if both hit. They then stay attached to their prey and continue to inflict 1d4 damage automatically, unless hit and damaged, in which case they resume their flight. If half the vultures are defeated, the remaining birds will fly back to the Tower of Vision and inform the harpies of their discovery.

**6A. TOWER OF LAMENT.** This giant tower is mostly ignored by the harpies who use its uppermost level to keep watch on the area, rest there for a moment, and fly back to their lair at **E-6B**. They believe the lower levels are home to a fierce giant snapping turtle, the creature who spawned the eggs currently stored in area **L1-29** of the Marmoreal Tomb, but it actually died some time ago.

A renegade group of Utluz, frog-men, now lives incognito at the base of the tower. They escaped the control of the Brethren of the Deep (Obrachaeans, see **E-17**), and found the remains of the turtle in the lower levels. They then started to use the shell and mummified turtle’s head to discourage any hope of pursuit: Once every couple of days, they swim around the lake with only the shell and head of the snapping turtle peeking out of the water periodically. They scare inhabitants and visitors just enough to keep the charade going, and make sure everyone believes the monster is still alive. Everyone seems to have bought it and has been avoiding the tower’s base ever since.

**UTLUZ (6):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./30 ft. jump/120 ft. swim; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1; D 1d2/1d2/1d3 or spear 1d6 (2d6 on a jump charge); 2d6 GP carried.

The Utluz have no real treasure to speak of, aside of the few gold pieces they carry. They managed to steal two (2) eggs from the breeding grounds (see **E-13** for more information about the eggs), but that is not enough to give them a future. Their dream is to free more of the eggs from the breeding grounds, and if left alive could ask for the help of the party via pantomime and broken words of the tongues of men. They consider the Utluz who stayed be-

hind in the service of the Obrachaeans a lost cause, and hope to start fresh away from the dungeon with a new batch of eggs. They know of the Obrachaeans' interest with the ruins of the giants and the gem frog that haunts the tunnels around them. One or the other could possibly be used for a diversion which could get the kobold sentries of E-12 away from the waterfalls back inside the tunnels.

**6B. TOWER OF VISION.** *This is where the harpies have chosen to nest. Volts of vultures fly around the place, and sometimes assist the harpies in their dealings with intruders (1-in-6 chance for a group of 1d6 vultures to show up and randomly attack intruders if the harpies start a fight; see Death From Above at E-6 for more information).*

**HARPIES (8):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./150 ft. flying; AL CE; HD 3; HP 12; AC 7; #AT 3; D 1d3/1d3/1d6; Songs compel victims towards the harpy (save vs. magic to resist), touch has a charm effect (save vs. magic to resist). At least half as many harpies as the party will be present in the lair. Roll for chance in lair (25%) for the remaining members of the flock to be there as well.

The nest is located in the upper chamber of the abandoned tower. Just above it, under the roof covering the crenellations, is located the area where the harpies accumulate their loot and refuse. Various types of coins, from different eras are present, from the Danthean dinari to the kingdom of Deybrah, to the modern golden suns, silver moons and copper shields of the Frankhian empire (total value 442 GP, 139 SP and 42 CP). Mixed in with the refuse lies a single magic item, the **Executioner's Hood**, which complements the blade found at E-5. The hood grants the use of *scare* 2/day on its own; with the **Executioner's Sword of Saint Luuk** in hand, the blade gains +1 damage, and the wielder can use *hold person* once a day, as cast by an 8th level magic-user.

Next to the pile lies a man just barely alive, his open wounds barely covered by the shreds of a white cloak the warrior wore. This is Kleon Reyns, a trusted Knight Immaculate and protégé of Aylot Jonsell, the very Knight Consular in charge of the operations at Khrag An Mor (see *Wilderness expansion* for more details on Khrag An Mor and the Knights Immaculate). His equipment is gone, but for the Cowl mixed in with the refuse. He managed to almost swallow his signet ring when captured, and it almost killed him. An examination will reveal the redness of his neck and bloated wind pipes. Traces of bleeding in and around the mouth should lead to a discovery of the ring, which can be retrieved with two fingers, and would help Kleon survive his wounds.

The signet ring is engraved with the Knights Immaculate insignia and the name of its owner, Kleon Reyns, on the inside. It also contains a hidden compartment with a thin slice of folded parchment inside. A message on the parchment reads: "To Lord AJ at Khrag. Grey birds' nest located, per instructions. Awaiting orders. Currently staying at WW Thorpe. Ask for Roderick. Have payment ready. BMX."

The "grey birds' nest" is the camp of the Order of the Gray, which can be found between Yaergg's Massif and the Forest of the same name. The Order of the Gray being declared heretical by the Knights Immaculate per **Handout** at E-5, the expeditionary force at Khrag An Mor is likely to dispatch a number of Knights to eliminate it completely. Kleon Reyns was on his way back from the inn of the Waking Wench in Thorpe to bring the message to Aylot Jonsell at Khrag An Mor.

If Kleon Reyns is brought back to the care of clerics, he might survive, but it will take weeks before he is brought back to consciousness – his spirit will even resist the pull of the divine, just as his wounds heal under the power of clerical spells. Bringing Kleon or the signet ring to the Knights Immaculate, with or without the message within, would be rewarded by Aylott Jonsell with 1,200 GP if alive, or 800 GP if the signet ring alone is brought back as proof of the Knight's death. Lord Jonsell might or might not decide to use the party as agents to make contact with "BMX" in Thorpe. The party could, on the other hand, choose to investigate who the spy might be on its own volition, and decide to stop the plans of the Knights Immaculate. Whatever the case, there is no "Roderick" at the Waking Wench. Whoever asks for him will be observed by the mysterious "BMX", who would almost certainly take steps to either contact the party or kill them via intermediaries. Where to take these events from there is up to the referee.

**7. RED CAVES, BROWN HILLS.** This vaguely circular hill hides an entrance to a tumulus on its eastern side. The walls are made of slabs of red polished stone, and the passage winds down in circles interspersing slanted sections with sets of worn stairs to a roughly hexagonal room about 40 feet across, with a domed 30 foot ceiling overhead. A large stone portal is carved out of the rock in the western wall. It almost reaches the ceiling, and is about 15 feet wide at its base. What should be an open doorway is filled with wet clay. The clay can be touched, but hardens a foot or so in as one plunges a hand or implement into it. If messed with, the surface gradually reshapes itself to become smooth and pristine, as it was originally found, in 1 to 3 melee rounds.

This structure is a portal to the Red Shade of Lyon, a parallel dimension of this Eurth's moon which is inhabited by sentient humanoids and has been drained of its resources from various points in the multiverse, including the Weeping Ruins feeding the Lake of Tears and the rivers flowing around the Tomb (see the *Introduction* Chapter of this module, and the *Underworld expansion* for more on the locations around the Hex of the Tomb).

The doorway opens irregularly. It has a 3% chance of being opened when the campaign begins. The chances change over the course of the game, depending mostly on the evolution of the Tomb and the forces of Chaos trapped in its deeper levels. Keep tabs on the action of the party within the Tomb: each time they trigger tremors potentially opening up new areas of the dungeon, add 10% to the chances of this portal being opened when the party ventures in the Red Caves again. If you are using the *Underworld expansion* to this module, and the Hearth of Chaos is finally opened to the party's exploration, assume the doorway remains permanently opened, with more denizens from the Red Shade stepping through and exploring the region, ultimately creating a camp, importing the rivalry between Yellow and Green Men, and getting into various conflicts or arrangements with the Pass's inhabitants.

When the party first visits this location, they will find the unconscious body of a tall, muscular human warrior who is bald with a bushy black beard and wearing thick furs for cold weather. He can be mistaken for a Norseman but his skin is bright yellow, intense as the ripest lemons of Vhenella, nothing like that of any human group on Eurth. Around him, three corpses of humanoids with green skin, four arms, two legs and curved tusks coming out of their mouths have been brutally murdered, as if killed in a fight with a savage beast.

Count Aorll, a Hero of the Yellow Men who live in domed cities north of the Red Shade of Lyon, barely survived the Battle of the Brown Hills against the forces of Chaos on the other side of the doorway. He was battling against the Green Men led by his archenemy Tax Tarkhan, under orders from the Giant King, Verdumyr of the Dead Seas, when he was swallowed by a magical vortex from above. When Count Aorll emerged from the vortex, he found himself in this room, standing in front of a barbarian of this world. Aorll describes him as wearing travel gear, leather armor, a bow, spear and a small blade at his side; he had dark hair, was badly shaven, and looked like a drifter or trader of some kind. Aorll and the barbarian had no time to talk before several of the Green Men followed through the vortex. They had to fight for their

lives. Aorll lost consciousness in the melee that followed, and just woke with the help of the party. The human who was there when he arrived is nowhere to be seen.

**COUNT AORLL:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL LG, STR 18/46, INT 14, WIS 9, DEX 17, CON 15, CHA 14; +2 INIT/Surprise; HD 4+4; HP 26; AC 1; #AT 2 or 1, +4/+4 to hit with hooked swords, +6/+6 on first attack on any opponent; D 1d4+7/1d4+7 hooked swords, 1d12+1 beam rifle. Count Aorll went through the portal in the middle of a melee during the Battle of the Brown Hills. He only has his furs on him (AC 4), a +1 beam rifle (non-magical, scientific device which will not work on this world), and a **potion of extra healing**. He usually fights using the twin +2 hooked swords (base damage d4, +2 magic) he specializes in. He suffers no penalty from dual-wielding, and the swords' making grant them a natural +2 to hit with the first attack, hit or fail, made against any new individual opponent.

Count Aorll will have a look around and find out his **Silvered Sword** enchanted with the power of Law he was wearing during the Battle of the Brown Hills is missing. He will do what he can to get it back, and insist the human he fought in this room could not have gone far, given the ferocity he knows of the Green Men. He doesn't know how these three were hacked to pieces in such a brutal fashion, though he admits after a few seconds the fight became so savage he could have inflicted these wounds himself. (The truth is much different: The character Aorll met when arriving in this room was Lukhan, a werewolf servant of Lyonidas of the Lone Tower, who killed the Green Men, stole the Enchanted Blade, and proceeded to the Marmoreal Tomb where he confronted the Veneur, the leader of the wolves nesting at area LI-17A).

Count Aorll could be left to his own devices, or allowed to adventure with the party as a henchman or non-playercharacter. Regardless, the doorway will not remain closed forever, and will, sooner or later, bring Tax Tarkhan and his Green Men to this world, or other Yellow Men sent to search for Aorll. The doorway so far only works one way: from the Red Shade to our Eurth. Once the party unlocks the vaults under the Tomb (see *The Burial Vaults*, Chapter 4), the doorway starts working the other way around, and could allow the party to visit the Red Shade of Lyon. Whether the doorway at any given moment functions one way, or the other, or both, is left to the referee's discretion. If the referee is allright with opening the vistas of the Red Shade of Lyon for further exploration, we advise the use of the excellent oe/1e compatible *Warriors of the Red Planet*, by Al Krombach.



**YELLOW MEN OF IYON:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL LN; HD 1+1; HP 5 avg.; AC 4; #AT 1, +2 to hit on first attack on each new individual opponent; D 1d4+1; These warriors look like muscular humans to the people of this Eurth, but for the bright lemon-yellow color of their skin. They usually have black or deep red hair and beards. The Yellow Men, accustomed to cold, trying climates, wear thick protective furs. They fight with hooked swords and bucklers in hand, the former of which gives them +2 to hit each time they attack a new individual opponent for the first time, hit or fail.

**GREEN MEN OF IYON:** SZ M; MV 120ft.; AL TN under the banner of Chaos; HD 4+4; HP 20 avg.; AC 5; #AT 2 or 1; D 1d8/1d6 long and short swords, 1d12 beam rifle (does not work in this world), 2d4 tusks. The Green Men usually carry hides, necklaces of shells, bracelets of beads, precious metals and stones, pendants with teeth and other such trinkets with cultural value, giving them pride and rank. Each Green Man will carry 1d4 such special pieces of clothing and/or jewelry, each worth 1d4 x 100 GP.

**TAX TARKHAN, THE ANTI-HERO OF CHAOS:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, under the banner of Chaos (see the Iron Egg below), STR 18/74, INT 17, WIS 12, DEX 14, CON 16 (+2), CHA 16; HD 6+6 (+12 CON); HP 50; AC 1; #AT 2 or 1 or 1; D 1d8+4/1d6+3 long and short swords, or 1d12+1 beam rifle or 2d4+3 tusks. Tax Tarkhan has four arms and two tusks, like all Green Men. He carries with him the thick magical +2 fur cloak of the Banthe native to the Red Shade of Lyon, has a non-magical yet superior (+1 equivalent) beam rifle which will not work on Eurth (the balance of law and chaos does not allow for its use on this shade), a +1 longsword (which, unlike usual swords on Eurth, does not have a soul), and a finely crafted short sword to accompany it in combat. Tax Tarkhan is specialized in the use of his +2 Heavy Lance, and prefers to fight mounted on a Thoar, a six-legged reptilian creature that is traditionally domesticated by his people. He carries five pieces of jewelry: a necklace with the ritually dried ears of the beasts he has defeated as a hunter, two series of thin brass wristbands with the name of the allies and enemies he has made as a warlord, and a pair of finally carved greaves in the semblance of the wives and children whom are the source of his power as a father and a chieftain. Each one is worth 500 GP.

**THOAR (MOUNT):** SZ L; MV 180 ft.; AL TN; AC 2; HD 6; HP 36; #AT 1, D 1d6 Bite, 2d6 tail, or 4d4 trample.

**TAX TARKHAN MOUNTED:** #AT 1 or 2, +5 (+2 STR +2 Lance +1 Specialization) to hit on a normal attack, or +5/+5 on two opponents closely side by side, or +7 Charge; D 10-16 (2d4+1, +3 STR, +2 Lance, +2 Special-

ization) + 4d4 Trample, or 2d4+8/2d4+8 on two separate targets, or 20-32 [(2d4+8)x2] on a charge, or 30-48 [(2d4+8)x3] on a charge with thrust and dropped lance on the charge.

Tax Tarkhan is a noble warrior of his people. He is controlled by the Ring of Mentalists serving Verdumyr of the Dead Seas via the **Iron Egg of Krepsys** (an egg-shaped stone the size of a grapefruit which contains the unborn fossil of very powerful psychic race that went extinct on the Red Shade eons ago). It confers a prescient +2 to AC to Tax Tarkhan; if the campaign uses psionic abilities in his game, the Egg might confer some other psychic abilities, such as *mind blast*, *telekinesis* and *telepathy*, at the referee's discretion. Hiding the Egg from Tax Tarkhan could free him from the influence of Verdumyr. Destroying the item would be a quest, in and of itself. It is indestructible by mundane means. If the egg were to hatch, something never seen in current memory on the Red Shade, a powerful evil creature would be let loose on this world.

If Tax Tarkhan lives to become a force to reckon with in the Midlands, he and his steed will quickly become talked about in the tales surrounding the region. The Knight Errant of Brennen would surely take him on (See Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, for more about him), and might become a prisoner of the Green Men worth rescuing on behalf of the baron of Brennen (by the Palehorn Pass) if the joust does not go his way. The baron would be ready to pay for ransom, if need be. Let it come to the party when they are in a village or inn, through one of the baron's messengers, and let them choose whether to take on this assignment from there.

**8. IYATHARI TEMPLE RUINS.** The centuries-old tunnels under this hill date back to the Great Eldritch War between Danthium and Iyathar. Sages know the Hierarchs of Iyathar occupied the Pass during the later stages of the conflict. About seven hundred years ago, they used this area to station troops and build temples to supply their forces with men and magic as they ventured forth to the Great Library of Asksalkhaton (Khrag An Mor) and destroyed it utterly. This event in turn provided the Hierarchs with thousands of prisoners they sacrificed in the Pass to get favors from the Thousand Gods of Entropy they worshipped.

The substance of Chaos sleeping deep under the Burial Vaults of the giants took notice, and decided to respond. It made itself known to the Hierarchs through Lotus-infused dreams. Their response was immediate: They decided to dig deep under the ground, discover the source of the power communicating with them, and vowed to find a way to exploit it and win their war against the



Danthium. The Chaos of the Tomb welcomed them, and erupted through the exit they had created. The backlash was catastrophic, and most sorcerers died as a result of their hubris.

What remains of these experiments today is up to the referee. The tunnels may be as short and straightforward, or as complex and convoluted, as the referee desires. The Ancient Temple map of *Appendix F* may be used to introduce a full dungeon level at this location, with entrance (A) A-1 being the main link to the surface at E-8, and A-50 standing for the Shrine of Iyorthar.

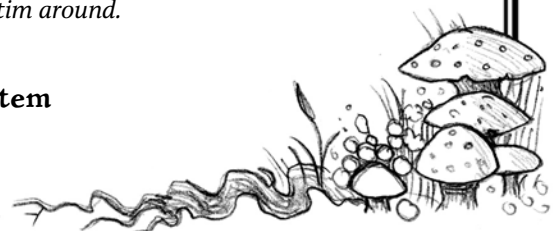
**SHRINE OF IYORTHAR:** A series of tunnels lead eastward to a room with statues of werewolves (not actual werewolves) interspaced between scenes carved into the walls with hieroglyphs of Iyathar: on the north wall, the sorcerers destroy a large city at the edge of a vast body of water (the Great Library of Asksalkhaton) with demons and spells; on the south wall, the sorcerers are being rebuked by a host of legionnaires with square shields and pilums seemingly assisted of celestial beings or ancestral spirits coming to join the fray from the heavens; and on the eastern wall, surrounding a large, three-headed statue of a massive werewolf, sorcerers preparing potions and praying and casting spells around the statue, as if to summon it to life.

Both northern and southern walls hide secret doors. The northern door leads to a series of rooms including the Iyathari's old barracks, resting areas and laboratories. If the referee wants to make things a little more entertaining, a cadaverous caterpillar might lair here, or some other critter that could have dug its way to this place. The southern wall opens on a slope downward that quickly turns right in a south-west direction for about a third of a mile. There, it joins a Y intersection surrounded by a few storage rooms. The second branch of the intersection leads south-east towards the giant fortifications of H-15 and currently obstructed by a Mhole. The third branch of the intersection goes full west, and on for another third of a mile to a dead end, where the tunnel collapsed. If the party clears the rubble away, a task that would take two or three days, they will discover the tunnel emerges in the vertical chimney just above the Burial Vaults at L2-7.

Finally, searching the eastern wall will reveal a switch in the carvings that will move the large werewolf statue menacingly forward and open a secret passage behind. The secret passage leads to a series of tunnels where alcoves have been carved into the walls, and the bodies of the soldiers and bodyguards of the Hierarchs were set to guard the place forever. Even the ground is made of the crushed remains of the slaves and servants of Iyathar. Every step crunches loudly as the party advances into the darkness. Up to a dozen (2d6) undead of the zombie and skeleton types will be generated each time the party visits this area. In addition, there are six (6) ghouls, the personal assistants of the priests, who still roam around these parts.

If the party gets through all this, they will finally arrive to a long corridor going east with polished walls and glass-like sections indicating this tunnel has been subjected to very high temperatures at some point in the past. Two alcoves, one on each side of the corridor, contain the horribly melded remains of the priests of Iyathar who, by casting the final spells that closed this passage to the world, changed themselves into the amber-cast wretches guarding it forever. They will animate one after the other, and be joined each time by 1-8 lower undead generated by the alcoves from the corridors left behind the party (from the previous paragraph).

**BUNDLED AMBER MUMMIES (2):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL LE; HD 6+3; HP 31, 38; AC 3; #AT 2; D 1d12/1d12 on different targets. If one of these attacks hit, roll again to hit for another 1d12 damage, and a third time again if the second roll hits as well – these are extra arms slamming the victim around.



The bundled amber mummy is an absolute horror, a mass of linen, amber, oils, perfumes and body parts bonding several evil spirits together in unlife. It functions in most respects like a mummy, causes a *rotting disease* by touch, is only hit by +1 weapons or better, for only half damage, triggers *fear* and *revulsion* in any creature. The amber mummy possesses the same particular spell immunities and vulnerabilities, but for one thing: fires alone, mundane or magical, will heal an amber mummy, cold will harm it, and both in rapid succession will be lethal to the creature: Torches will heal the amber mummy for 1d3 HP; flasks of oil will heal for 1d8 HP during the first round, twice that amount on the second. Magical fires will heal the amber mummy for the amount of damage they inflict.

Cold spells are the bane of the amber mummy: They slow it 50% in addition to their normal effects, and make it vulnerable to blunt weapons for full damage. Worse yet, hitting it with fire immediately it has been the target of a cold spell, during the same melee round or the previous one, would make the fire deal damage instead of healing the creature, as the amber cracks under the influence of the cold and the diseased flesh of the undead is briefly exposed. Magic weapons enchanted with cold damage will hurt an amber mummy at +1 per die of damage; those rare magic weapons enchanted with both cold and fire will inflict +2 points of damage per die rolled.

The whole ordeal up to this point is meant to warn the party of what awaits beyond the burning-red iron door at the eastern end of the mummies' corridor, and send those who are not ready on their way. The door is not, in fact, warm at all. It is ice cold to the touch. The door is locked with a poison-needle trap, and *wizard-locked* as well. Undoing the dweomer will trigger a *dispel magic* in a 30-foot cube right in front of the door before it gives in.

The door opens into the eastern wall of a large 50' x 50' room, the Shrine of Iyorthar, with, on the opposite side, a 30-foot wide alcove containing a 20-foot golden pedestal on which stands a gigantic, repulsive, life-like but immobile demon, a mismatch of four different sets of limbs belonging to different species all attached to a bloated humanoid shape crowned with a three-eyed wolf head. There are three little 5' tall altars in the dead center of the room, between the door and the alcove with the demonic figure. One is dark as night, made of an alloy of ebonite; another is finely crafted out of a huge block of silver; and the last is made out of rich, bronze-like orichalcum.

Creatures and monsters cannot be summoned within the boundaries of the Shrine. Attempts to *dimension door*,

*teleport* and *plane shift* will fail. The creature, an Avatar of Iyorthar, the Old One, the Child of Lyon and one of the Thousand Gods of Iyathar ruling over the domains of ancient secret knowledge, magic and chaos, will not leave the area of the Shrine and will not pursue the party retreating into the corridor. If the party retreats, the red-glowing door will close again, and its *wizard lock* will reset.

Disturbing the altars or the golden pedestal will cause the demon to animate and try to slay the interlopers. If slain, the demon will disappear completely, leaving no treasure behind. It will instead reappear the following night on the golden pedestal, completely immobile and unscathed. If, on the other hand, the three circlets of the Thrice-headed Child of Lyon from area H-2 are placed on each of their respective altars, the demon will then animate and a *magic mouth* above the alcove will say: "Are you here to pay respects to Iyorthar the Ancient, the Child of Lyon, Keeper of Secrets best left buried by the sands of time, or are you here to challenge His image?"

Being deferent and paying respects to the demonic presence will instantly strip any paladin from the group of his status and special abilities. It rewards the group with the *blessing* of the Avatar, which will mark the party as agents of Chaos to all who *read alignments* or use *true seeing* until the next moon wanes completely. Other favors may be granted, such as *raise dead* and similar clerical interventions, but all of it would come at a price, and demand allegiance from the party.

If the party declares a challenge, the Avatar takes them on, and will fight to the death, this time leaving behind its remains and the treasure associated with it if defeated. The legionnaires of area H-2 will be free from their curse when the Avatar is challenged and defeated.

#### THE THREE-EYED DEMON, AVATAR OF IYORTHAR:

SZ L (10' tall); MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 8+4; HP 53; AC ; #AT 7 (2 gorilla arms plus possible stretching, 2 crab pinchers with chance of severing limbs, 2 octopus limbs plus grab and either punch from crustacean arm or bite, 1 automatic cause wounds from its amber eye); D 1d6/1d6 with gorilla arms, plus 2d4 damage of stretching if both arms hit a single target, D 2d4/2d4 with crab pinchers, sever a limb on a natural 20 from either attacks, D 1d4/1d4 octopus limbs, grab if hit, immediately attack with one of the tiny crustacean arms for additional 2d4 punch damage and save vs paralyzation to not lose consciousness OR bite for 2d6/2d6 damage, and finally cause wounds D 1-8 to one target from its amber eye; The avatar can cause fear, polymorph self, levitate,

mirror image, and telekinesis 4,000 GP in weight. It also has the ability to summon demons Type I and II at 50%, Type IV at 40%, and type VI at 30%, all of which is useless in this area. The avatar of Iyorthar is immune to all natural damage, takes only half damage from silver and iron, and full damage from true iron, magical weapons and sources.

The demon's three jeweled eyes are special, and can be preyed from the body: One is an **Ebonite Eye** which absorbs eight spell levels before saturating, and then being able to release an eldritch blast around the caster for D 4-32 (8d4) in a 20 foot radius (When a spell targets the wearer of the ebonite eye specifically, have the spell-caster roll d20 + caster level: if this number is above 15, the wearer is affected by the spell; if the result is 15 or below, the spell fails and its energy is absorbed by the eye); the **Amber Eye** causes wounds for 1-8 damage when fixed upon a target (only usable by neutral or evil characters, 6 charges left once the demon is defeated); finally, the clear **Moonstone Eye** allows *true seeing* at will for the demon, and can be used by a character once defeated with 4 charges remaining. The tiny **Crustacean Pinchers** can also be recovered from the body. The exoskeleton is impractical for plate armor, but the very fine tips can be used as excellent thieves' tools adding 10% to lock picking attempts.

Once defeated the altars in the center of the room move towards one another and magically fuse together. Only one altar of stone remains present. The circlets are gone, a single, ornate silver horn resting on top of the altar. When blown, the **Horn of the Wolf** emits a low, powerful howl and functions like a silver horn of Valhalla, calling forth Berserkers of the Tribe of the Wolf to fight for the character holding it. There are three slots where gems can be inserted on the side of the Horn. Each eye of the demon inserted in the gem slots makes them gleam and allows the horn to work as one degree higher on the table of the horns of Valhalla, e.g. With one eye, the Horn can function as a silver or brass horn; two eyes allow it to be blown as a silver, brass or bronze horn; and all three allow the Horn of the Wolf to be blown as a silver, brass, bronze or iron horn of Valhalla, calling forth 2nd, 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> level fighters, at the character's discretion.

Any time the Horn of the Wolf is used within the Hex of the Viper Head Pass, there is a 2-in-6 chances the Veneur of area **LI-17** will become aware of its existence and start to seek it for himself. If the Horn is used in the direct environs (this map) of the Tomb, the Veneur will know automatically, and will start preparations to ambush the party at the most opportune time.

The **golden pedestal** on which the Avatar stood is very heavy, but could be moved once the demon has been defeated. It is actually hollow, worth 3,000 GP and that heavy as well.

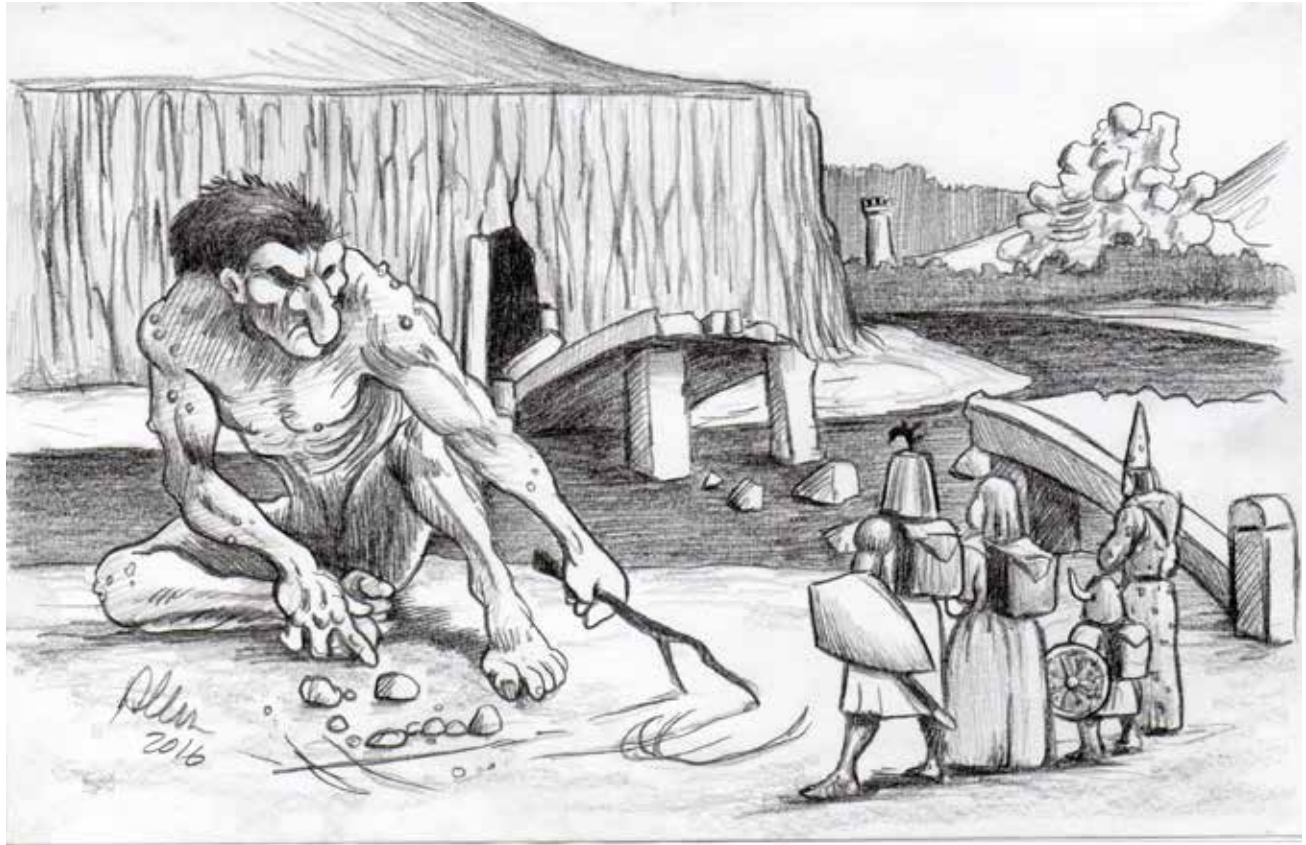
**9. HAUNTED WATCHTOWER.** This abnormally large tower was part of the series of fortifications including the ruined fort at **H-15** and the Towers of the Lake at **E-6**. The giants of the lythic kingdom of Aktum are long gone, and now these ruins are home to new inhabitants, alien red apes who escaped from one of the random openings of the gate at **E-7** and found refuge here while they try to get along and mate with the harpies of the Isle of the Watchers.

**RED APES OF IYON (6):** SZ M.; MV 120 ft./150 ft. leaps; AL CE, HD 3; HP 12 avg.; AC 6; #AT 2 or 2 or 2, +3 to hit on bludgeoning attack on a leaping charge, +2 to hit on fists attacks on charge, and +1 to hit on normal attacks; Net throw\* and D5-15 (2d6 +3) to a single target on a leaping charge, OR 3-8/3-8 on a charge on land, OR 1d6/1d6 regular combat. The red apes favor a leaping charge first, during which they throw their net at a target (no bonus to hit) and then pummel it with their fists when landing. Once on the ground, they can charge normally if they have the room to maneuver, or attack normally their targets with their fists in melee. \* A successful net throw pins the target down and prevents returning attacks against the red ape until a Strength test is succeeded to break free from the net (the red apes are specialists with their weapons: a net would have to be used by a humans and demi-humans with two hands to pin a target, then use weapons on the next round).

The red apes have purple faceted eyes like those of a fly, large, bat-like ears, and tiny vestigial bird wings in their back. They otherwise look like huge, 7' tall apes covered in dark red fur from head to toe. It seems the red apes are the male counterparts of the harpies of Lyon, and they consider the specimens of this plane to be just as desirable to them. Following their instincts and mating rituals, the apes have to catch their females to hope to prove they are worthy of their attention. They know of the harpies at the Tower of Visions at **E-6B**, and try to raid the place every few days.

The ear canals of the red apes include **magic-resisting membranes** that purges sound-based dweomers, including those of the songs of harpies. These could be extracted and stuffed into a human or demi-human ear to protect an individual temporarily (1d6 days) from sound-based magic effects, before they dry up and becomes useless. The **tiny vestigial wings** in the back of the ape look exactly like extra-large chicken wings. The halflings of Gawkstane and Neb Mag Mofynn of the Twin Tankard





would love to get their hands on those, and would pay good money (50 GP) for them.

If the party searches through the repulsive piles of refuse accumulated inside the tower, they will eventually find the remnants of a broken sword, torn apart chainmail and the surcoat of a mercenary of the Rattle and Spear, a group of mercenaries affiliated with the Order of the Gray (See *Wilderness expansion, Factions of the Duinnsmere* for more information). They will also find an undamaged round shield, which will upon inspection turn out to be a **+1 Shield of the Ram**. The Shield summons a 4 HD Giant Ram (MV 150 ft., AC 4, AL TN, HP rolled first time wielded, #AT 1, D 2d6, double on a charge) who will be sympathetic to neutral and good wielders especially. It will turn against evil wearers. The Ram gets in and out of the shield on a command word, and can stay out once a day for an extended period of time, up to 12 hours before it gets back to the shield. If the Ram is slain while out of the shield, it will not be able to be brought back for one full week. If combined with the *Axe* or *Cloak the Ram* (see the Vines at E-25 and Beyond the Antler Gate at the end of E-24), the shield becomes +2 to AC, and the creature will gain 1 HD on the spot. **The shield becomes +3 to AC and the creature gains yet another 1 HD if all**

**three items are combined.**

If treated particularly well, the ram might, after developing a bond with its wearer, gain additional HD through daring feats and heroic actions, at the referee's discretion.

**PORTAL TO THE CRYPTS:** If the party overwhelms the Apes they will discover, in the depths of the tower, two statues of bugbears holding a large mirror with a dull brown and wet surface similar to clay. Walking through the mirror leads to area **LC-24** of the Crypts under the Burial Vaults of the Giants of Aktum. It would be premature for a starting party to explore the Tomb from the bottom, but a life-saver for a party trapped in the crypts to find their way back out, to the surface. See *The Crypts*, Chapter 5, for more information.

The lower levels leading to the large mirror are occasionally inhabited by a great number of rats, and sometimes even were-rats. These actually hail from the Crypts, at area **LC-22**. They use the tower as a way to connect with the outside world. The Red Apes accept their presence, in exchange for access to the Crypts, where they can occasionally hunt, prove their mettle, and engage in various acts of barbaric nature.

**10. COLLAPSED BRIDGE.** This large construction was once the main exit of the Burial Vaults under the Marmoreal Tomb. The thick pillars and entire frame of the edifice could sustain enormous amounts of weight, including stone giants, their mounts, servants, treasure and more. Now, only a few broken pillars remain, with large chunks of the bridge slowly sinking into the silt here and there. The area is still flooded by the Laithe, the stream gathering from the Laithean Lake and the subterranean waters flowing from the Marmoreal Mound to the Raging Falls east of the pass. The river around the broken bridge is shallow, and can be crossed on foot.

An abnormally large and very stupid troll going by the name of “Thudd” calls this place home. If asked about his name, Thudd will recall this is what he used to hear when his mother dropped him repeatedly as an infant. “Thudd”. He assumes this is what his mother called him. His memories aren’t very clear about it.

Thudd is a tranquil, placid creature who loves this place and the nature around it. He tries to live a proud life as a troll... the only problem is that he is too stupid to understand what that even means. Like a thoroughly selfish and violent child, Thudd spends his time near the bridge, fishing with his bare hands, kicking the wolves and dismembering the bears trying to eat him. He is happy being his enthusiastic, bonhomous, chaotic evil self. Thudd never ventures very far from his lair. He finds most of the other inhabitants of the pass are mean and unappealing, especially the intelligent ones. They make fun of him.

If intruders show up, Thudd puffs up his chest and challenges them to games of riddles or tic-ta-toe. If they win, they get to use his bridge to cross as reward; if he wins however, he gets to eat them. A party that crosses through the shallow waters after hearing his challenge would win by default: Thudd would be amazed of not having thought of it, and would begrudgingly let them be.

If left alive, and if someone manages to remain very patient with him, his broken speech pattern, grumbling, pantomime, badly formed words and sentences, Thudd could become an informant and asset to the party. He will never leave his area, but he sees things, and pays attention to the moods of the beasts around him. Thudd will protect his freedom and independence. If he is *charmed* or otherwise violated by magical means, his revenge will be formidable, and insanely violent.

**THUDD, HUGE TROLL:** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL CE, INT 4; HD 6+6; HP 52; AC 4; #AT 3; D 1d4+4/1d4+4/2d6; Thudd regenerates like any normal troll. He owns hal-

fling-sized teddy bear named Swinnie which he keeps hidden under the remnants of the bridge. The toy contains four (4) gems of 50 GP base value, four (4) gems of base 100 GP value, and one (1) gem of a base 500 GP value. It also contains two silver tubes, one containing a scroll inscribed with chant, snake charm and neutralize poison x2, the other a scroll with charm person, forget, and invisibility, as well as a **wand of self-delusion** (produces audible glamor and phantasmal forces with a range of self, 27 charges remaining) which he uses as a source entertainment. He has a hard time telling the difference between the images the wand submits to his mind and reality.

**11. TOMB ENTRANCE.** This used to be the main entrance of the Burial Vaults at the time of Garn Patuul and the lythic kingdom of Aktum. Since then, the passage has completely collapsed, and the dwarves who came thousands of years later created their own entrance and level at E-28.

The passage is wide open, the stone doors long gone. It is about 40 feet wide, with blocks of stone of varying sizes gradually obstructing the way for war. Obvious spider webs stretch between the blocks of stones. Two giant spiders are nesting within the last 20-foot section near the dead end, about 100 feet beyond the opening of the corridor. One is a male lurking on the ceiling who will drop on the party with 30-foot wide web to protect its female and young hidden behind a pile of boulders and near the collapse obstructing the passage. If these webs are set aflame, they will not reach the nest in the back of the tunnel. When the male is at 50% hit point, it will retreat in the back, beyond the mound of the boulder, to be with its female. If the party backs off, they survive and the spiders won’t pursue. If they go for the kill, then the female will join the fight, and with her, the swarm of young she carries on her back.

With the spiders disposed of, it would be theoretically possible to dig through the rubble. It would take about a day of 12 work hours for men to excavate one hex. One hex and a half a day would be possible with dwarves assisting during the process. There are about twelve (12) obstructed hexes to excavate, and (7) free hexes along the way. Whether the latter include guard stations or subterranean critters having constructed their own nests along the way is for the referee to decide but the tunnel ultimately will reach the wizard-locked doors of area L2-8.

There is a 1-in-6 chance each day of labor digging through the tunnel will trigger a tremor in the area. See *Special Rules*, Introduction for more about these tremors, and the consequence they have on the dungeon.

When the ceremonial guard of Garn Patuul and his Queen leave the Burial Vaults, they will clear the passage as they progress to reach this area and exit the Mound for good. See the introduction of *The Burial Vaults*, Chapter 4, for more about this. If the party is digging here when this event happens, they will be directly in the path of the stone giants. The referee must go with it and describe the procession as they move the rock and dissolve it with spells on their way out. Be very clear about the number of giants present, and the never-seen-before, awesome force they represent all together. Hopefully, the party has the presence of mind to backtrack as quickly as possible and hide. If not, the stone giants will slap them around like the nuisance they are.

**GIANT SPIDERS:** SZ L; MV 30 ft./120 ft. in web; AL CE; HD 4+4; HP 21 male, 32 female; AC 4; #AT 1; D 2d4 and poison; the poison of giant spiders is deadly, save vs. poison or die, within a turn for the female (her poison is weakened by her tending care to her young). The swarm of young clings to the back of the large female. If she is hit, the swarm jumps at the attacker, with dozens of tiny bites accumulating to 2d6 damage, half on a successful saving throw vs poison.

The spiders' lair contains the equipment of a magic-user who wanted the spiders as his pets and underestimated their intelligence. A poison-needle trapped brass tube contains **two magic-user scrolls**. One contains *hold portal*, *locate object*, and *gust of wind*. The other *identify x2*, *detect invisibility*, and *clairaudience*. Two (2) **vials of antidote** against spider venom are also stored here (effective for 3 hours once imbibed), as well as a leather pouch containing 100 GP and four (4) gems of a base 100 GP value.

**12. FACES OF THE STONE KINGS.** The faces of the four great kings of Aktum have been carved into the sheer surface of the cliff. They all clearly bear the linear, long features and strong brow of stone giants, with notable differences between them. They can be identified by deciphering the fine runic designs used to hatch their individual crowns, and read, from left to right, east to west, as we face them from the southern shore of the Isle of Watchers:

**UR PA KRAAT**, Gatherer of Stones, Builder of the Pyramid of the Rising Sun.

**AMUN PAAL**, Slayer of the Beast of Meridion, Conqueror of the Black Heart.

**AMAL KHAS**, Watcher of Septentrion, Cursed of the Seven Gates of Annod.

**GARN PATUUL**, Usher of the Setting Sun, Defender of the Beryline Throne.

**KOBOLDS (3-8):** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE; HD 1/2; HP 2; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d4. Each carries 1d6 GP and 1d6 SP. One kobold will run to warn the sentries at **E-15** if they see something suspicious they can't take care of after two melee rounds.

**13. UTLUZ BREEDING GROUNDS.** A number of frog-men (15) keep their distance from the Bedulbloop within this large natural area. They serve the Obrachaeon, but reluctantly, out of fear rather than loyalty. Their priority is to protect their progeny, a dozen (12) eggs concealed between rocks at the bottom of the stream to avoid the current.

Utluz eggs are fragile, fist-sized soft balls of jelly, but they could transported within a loose net or large leather bag. Any shock could pierce their outer membrane and destroy them (no saving throw). While their eggs are prized traditional food for some Gaelish tribes like the Ada Maku of **H-19** (20 GP a piece), the Utluz are not inherently evil: If kept wet and unscathed for a few weeks, the eggs will hatch. The tadpoles could eventually be raised to become hirelings for a party so inclined. Every month is the equivalent of a year and a half of human growth for a frog-man. The tadpole phase usually lasts three months. The creatures then reach full maturity around a year after they hatched. The eggs could alternately be given to the care of the centaurs of the Font of Life at **H-6**, an act which could create an overture between them and the party.

**UTLUZ (15):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./30 ft. jump/120 ft. swim; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1; D 1-2/1-2/1-3 or spear 1d6 (2d6 on a jump charge); 3-18 GP carried.

**14. UTLUZ SENTRIES.** These frog-men are on watch duty in the subterranean tunnels. One of them will retreat and warn the sentries at area **E-15** if they see trouble coming and they are in over their heads. The same individual Utluz will likely make its way to **E-13** afterwards, in order to warn his brethren and protect the eggs there.

**UTLUZ (5):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./30 ft. jump/120 ft. swim; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1; D 1-2/1-2/1-3 or spear 1d6 (2d6 on a jump charge); 2-16 GP carried.

**15. TROGLODYTE SENTRIES.** The troglodytes allied to Bedulbloop and the Brethren of the Deep (**E-17**) have established a camp consisting of a half dozen mud huts along the banks of the subterranean river. They are assisted by a number of kobolds they treat like dirt, but that is perhaps a step above from the Utluz, the frog-men,

whom they regard as little more than food. The Utluz and kobold report to the troglodytes, and the troglodytes to the Obrachaeans. If they are warned of an intrusion, the troglodyte will set up an ambush in or around the camp, using their camouflage ability in order to surprise the party.

**TROGLODYTE (6):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; Chameleon skin grants surprise on 1d4 unless angry or already secreting the repulsive odor; HD 2; HP 8; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1 javelin, +3 to hit; D 1-3/1-3/2-5 or javelin (2) 2d4; Revulsion odor (save vs. poison or lose 1 STR per round cumulative for 1d6 rounds. Loss lasts 10 rounds). 3-18 GP carried.

Their leader, seventh of the group, has 3 HD (HP 18), and uses a massive bludgeoning weapon made of a long humanoid femur slammed into a horse's skull (D 3-8). He wears a necklace mixing frog bones with pearls and uncut semi-precious stones – 120 GP value.

**KOBOLDS (12):** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE; HD 1/2; HP 2; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d4. Each carries 1d6 GP and 1d6 SP.

**16. FROG LAKE.** The walls of this large subterranean cave are covered with moss partially covering the constant flow of water dripping from the 100-foot high ceiling to collect in this area, adding to the waters flowing rapidly from E-18.

The waters here are tranquil, flowing slowly north and west towards the waterfalls of E-12. On the south-eastern side of the cave, a group of small islands formed from stalagmites partially hide the ruins of a large complex or level not unlike the upper level of the tomb of Garn Patuul at E-28, but for the work the dwarves added to it recently. The ruins of E-17 were always meant to connect with this gigantic cave, and have been left unscathed for eons.

The Frog Lake is so-called because it has been a breeding ground of the Utluz for generations. But it is also the place where one of their gods or totem spirits, a highly supernatural creature resembling a huge frog made entirely of multicolored gems, likes to hang out the most.

The Gem Frog, as it is known, haunts the entirety of the network of subterranean rivers described here from area E-12 to E-28. It is extremely tough, nearly impossible to hit, and has the ability to teleport at will within the caves under the Marmoreal Mound. It cannot escape outside, and would in fact die if it was taken out of its habitat by force. The animal keeps to itself and does not like company. It is very easily frightened, and teleports whenever it feels threatened. Likewise, when wounded, or when-

ever one attempts to rip one of the gems off its body, the frog vanishes to reappear somewhere else within the network of caves under the Mound.

Bedulbloop is fascinated by the creature and would love to capture it. It orchestrated a few hunts to that effect, but his servants have not been successful so far, and are unlikely to ever be, as far as this endeavor is concerned.

**GEM FROG:** SZ L; MV 30 ft./80 ft. jump; AL TN, Surprise 1-4 (on a d6) if it decides to teleport in range, for whatever reason; HD 8; HP 48; AC -6; #AT 1; D 2-10 (1d4+1d6) on a crushing/cutting leap landing on a single target, or D 2d4 mouth; The Gem Frog has a 55% Magic Resistance. It is immune to mind-affecting magic and effects. The Gem Frog can attack at +4 to hit with its sticky tongue to draw prey to its mouth; if struck, a target can choose to hit the tongue (AC 7): if the tongue is hit, the frog withdraws and will not attack this target again. If the tongue attack is successful, the target is brought to the mouth of the frog the second melee round and takes 8 points of automatic damage. The Gem Frog swallows whole on a natural 20, with no chance to escape and cut one's way out, since the creature's skin is literally made of gems. It can leap up to 80 ft. to attack, but will only do so as a last resort, to escape, because of its natural instinct of conservation.

The Gem Frog can teleport without error and become invisible at will. If it feels threatened, is hit or wounded by an attack, with surprise or not, it will teleport without error within the confines of the tunnels and streams under the Marmoreal Mound, and become randomly invisible, usually for 1d6 melee rounds (sometimes longer, especially if it is wounded). Each time the frog is hit, there is a 2-in-6 chance to break a gem apart from its skin – determine the value of the gem randomly. In the unlikely event the Gem Frog gets killed, the gems covering its whole body will lose their shine, and most of them their value. If all rocks are plucked off the frog's body, the killers will be able to retrieve 1-12 gems of a 10 GP value, 1-8 gems of a 50 GP value, 1d6 gems of a 100 GP value, and 1d4 gems of a 500 GP value.

**17. TOMB OF UR PA KRAAT.** These ruins, carved from the face of the rock along Frog Lake's eastern shore, are extremely ancient. The symmetrical blocks of stone are polished, worn out by the passage of time. Waters dug deep and left their horizontal marks all over the sedimentary rock formations. Stalagmites and stalactites keep on growing, while the original statues that adorned this place are barely recognizable in shape or origin. The colors, beauty and grandeur of the murals covering the walls of



the place are but memories and pale outlines almost invisible to the eye, while the rich engravings around the door frames, the bas-reliefs circling pillars and vault ceilings have long faded into smooth waves of nothingness.

This complex has a layout and architecture similar to the Tomb of Amun Paal at E-24 and the settlement of Grunn Galeb (the Marmoreal Tomb) at E-28. The original builders in all three cases were the same: the stone giants of the ancient kingdom of Aktum. The main 20' wide corridors, as well as the main 100' x 100' plaza marked by an asterisk on the map, have been left relatively unscathed by the passage of time. The clusters of rooms spreading between the main corridors have not been so lucky: while some are still intact, others have collapsed, and some sections are entirely impassable today.

**KING UR PA KRAAT OF AKTUM:** King Ur Pa Kraat, the Gatherer, was the first king of Aktum. This extremely resilient Stone Giant rose to prominence following the apparition of giants on Eurth and the conflict that opposed their different kin immediately after. The Hammer of Aktum, the very same hammer stolen from the Tomb of Garn Patuul ten years ago (see *Grunn Galeb*, Chapter 3), was the symbol of rulership over the Stone Giants. After gathering his nation around him, Ur Pa Kraat engaged in another devastating conflict against the Fire Giants. The forces of Ur Pa Kraat won again, and this time they took control of the Amber Pyramidion, which allowed the victor to combine the magic of Eurth and fire during his reign. The construction of a subterranean mausoleum for the Pyramidion seems to have been the original impetus to build this place, which later became the Tomb of the First King. It seems this site had enormous importance to the Stone Giants, and that they tried to find or conquer realms buried deep below by force. This may have been the source of Ur Pa Kraat's demise.

**CURRENT INHABITANTS:** The Obrachaeon now bossing the troglodytes and Utluz around originally came from Nester's Folly via area E-19. They set up their headquarters in the plaza in the middle of the Tomb complex. Unlike its sister area at L1-8, this 100' x 100' plaza hosts a pyramidal structure on a 60' x 60' square base with one entrance, and no capstone at the top. The corners and top of the pyramid are guarded by six (6) troglodytes, while the four (4) obrachaeans and their leader Bedulbloop lair inside the structure, trying to discover its mysteries. The four (4) remaining troglodytes usually keep the kobolds scattered in the rooms around the main plaza in line.

Two main entrances at the base of the pyramid, located on the eastern and western sides of the structure, lead to a flight of stairs 10 feet down that ends in a 40' x 40'

room with various objects and artifacts stored around the finely carved walls, and a 10' x 10' bronze pedestal in the center. A 10' x 10' vertical chimney directly above the pillar splits four ways, each at a 45 degrees angle, each in one of the four cardinal directions, towards concealed one-way trap doors in the center of each one of the triangular faces of the pyramid. Usually, only three Obrachaeans are in this chamber resting or studying some of the bits of potteries or stelae they recovered from the ruins. The other two are either patrolling or taking care of their troglodytes and frog-men followers.

Among the most valuable items the party can retrieve from the clutter of this room, a puzzle box is protected with a trap cutting finger tips (-10% permanent penalty to lock picking, pick pocket and manual trap disarm attempts, if not magically regenerated): inside the box, a 500 GP base value gem and the **skin of salamander (scroll)** inscribed with the spells *magic missile* x2, *web* and *flame arrow*. Works of art include an exquisite **grail of red marble** decorated with six blood garnets and six fire opals on its rim (worth 1,500 GP whole, but delivering 12 gems of 100 GP base value each, if taken apart), the gorgeous and very fragile **effigy of Ur Pa Kraat** the Stone Giant carved of clear aquamarine (1,000 GP value), and a fossilized **round cheese of plain granite** weighing three (3) stones, or 42 pounds, which by itself would be completely useless but could be sold to tyromancers for up to 2,000 GP – Parmel d'Argiquais being one such magic-user, see E-18 for more information. One of the tablets of Ur Pa Kraat (see below) is stored here, and depicts the Stone giant king defeating larger yet fewer fire giants, taking from the biggest among them a triangular shining shape not unlike the Amber Pyramidion and capstone depicted on the other stelae.

The 10' x 10' bronze pedestal is affixed to the floor by powerful dweomers. The top surface of the pillar is covered by a half-spherical dome of glass. Inside, the spotless miniature of a golden citadel seems to float on a dark liquid hard to identify by the light of torches and spells. The glass is unbreakable, and the pedestal cannot be unfastened. Attempts to do harm or separate the work of art from its location result in 5-30 (5d6) fire damage to the primary offender(s) on a successful saving throw versus magic, and instant death as the victim(s) spontaneously combust on a failure. Two melee rounds later, slabs of stone fall on both sets of stairs, trapping whoever remains in the room within. During the third round, a *delayed blast fireball* detonates for 16-56 (8d6+8) points of damage, huge flames rising up the chimney through the openings around the surface of the pyramid, crowning its top entirely in flames. On the fourth round, the slabs

of stone free the stairways and mechanically reset and retract back up inside the ceiling. The key to the golden citadel is the Amber Pyramidion described thereafter.

**ENCOUNTERS:** The tablets Bedulbloop is searching for are carvings depicting the history and achievements of Ur Pa Kraat as sovereign of the giants of Aktum. Putting together this historical record may reveal something of the function of the Amber Pyramidion and the power of this area. The tablets are also valuable in their own right, and could be sold to sages and historians for a fair amount, depending of their condition, whether the carvings are faded or damaged. They are thus valued in the same way consumables are, at a 800 GP base value.

When exploring the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat, check for random encounters normally, 1-in-6. There is also a 1-in-3 chance to find a tablet of significant meaning regarding the history of this area, immediately followed by another chance for an encounter 1-in-6. This can be combined as one roll of d6: (1-2) tablet found, roll again d6, random encounter occurs on a "6", (3-5) nothing happens, (6) a random encounter occurs.

#### UR PA KRAAT TABLETS AND BAS-RELIEFS

- 1 - Ur Pa Kraat is the Gatherer of Stones. He forges the Hammer of Aktum deep under the Eurth. He then lifts it to the sky, under a rising sun, and a host of stone giants assembles behind him.
- 2 - Ur Pa Kraat is represented here assembling his kin by lifting his Hammer under a rising sun. The host joining him emerges from a great battle involving all the known types of giants.
- 3 - Ur Pa Kraat is seen removing the shining capstone from a large pyramid standing on flooded land. As the Giant King removes the capstone, the waters recede from the world, and the kingdom of Aktum can grow.
- 4 - Ur Pa Kraat installs the shining capstone on top of a different, much smaller pyramid built in a cavern underground. The pyramid sits on top of a city buried underneath.
- 5 - Ur Pa Kraat sends his troops of giants under the earth, by a great spiked throne, and the giants become horned cyclops or demons of some sort.
- 6 - Ur Pa Kraat is depicted dead and buried inside a small pyramid with a shining capstone. The Hammer of Aktum floats above the pyramid.

If an encounter occurs, roll d6 here instead of the *Natural Caves and Tunnels* table of the Environs:

#### RANDOM ENCOUNTER (UR PA KRAAT)

- 1 - 1d4 kobolds discard a corpse or other charge away from the pyramid
- 2 - troglodytes 1-3 lead a frog-man or one of their number away to execute him.  
Obrachaeen skirmisher looks around for a meal; eventually finds a frog-man tadpole nearby if left alone and unaware of the party's presence.
- 3 - Obrachaeen skirmisher and two troglodytes pass by. This is a patrol.
- 4 - Bedulbloop and one Obrachaeen skirmisher look for a specific tablet pertaining to the pyramid.
- 5 - Outsider - use random encounters, *Natural Caves and Tunnels* (in this chapter's introduction) to determine the nature of the encounter.
- 6 - Obrachaeans may or may not (50%) already be aware of their presence. If aware, they are either watching/spying, or are actively in pursuit.

**KOBOLDS (15):** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL LE; HD 1/2; HP 2; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d4. Each carries 1d6 GP and 1d6 SP. One kobold will run to warn the sentries at E-15 if they see something suspicious they can't take care of after two melee rounds.

**TROGLODYTE (8):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; Chameleon skin grants surprise on 1d4 unless angry or already secreting the repulsive odor; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 5; #AT 3 or 1 javelin, +3 to hit; D 1d3/1d3/1d4+1 or javelin (2) 2d4; Revulsion odor (save vs. poison or lose 1 STR per round cumulative for 1d6 rounds. Loss lasts 10 rounds). 3d6 GP carried.

**OBRACHAEAN SKIRMISHER (4):** SZ M; MV 60 ft. (land), 180 ft. (swimming); AL LE Surprise 4-in-6 skin camouflage; AC 5; HD 2+1; HP 10 avg.; #AT 2 ranged or 4 melee; DMG 1d3/1d3 or 1d3/1d3/1d4/1d4, damage on one melee attack may be exchanged for D 1-2 constriction, then on next melee round attack at +4 to hit while grabbed with D 1-2 + 2d4 (beak), with D 1d4 chewing each round after that; 4d10 GP owned.

**BEDULBLOOP, OBRACHAEAN WARRIOR (1):** SZ M; MV 60 ft. (land), 180 ft. (swimming); AL LE; Surprise 4-in-6 skin camouflage; AC 4; HD 4+4; HP 28; #AT 2 ranged or 4 melee (+2 to hit for the sword); DMG 1d4/1d4 projectiles OR one sword, two tentacles, and one vestigial twin bite 4-7/1d4/1d4/2d4 (then chews for D 1d4 on that last attack), damage on one tentacle attack may be exchanged for D 1-2 constriction, then on next melee round attack D 2d6 automatic bite, with D 1d6 chewing each round after that. Bedulbloop uses a magical +2 spined blade of the anglerfish, an ancestral weapon of the Troglodytes looking like a curved and articulated blade made out of the spine of the gi-

ant variety of the fish. The weapon inflicts D 4-7 on a hit (replacing one tentacle attack), D 6-9 two-handed (replacing two, with a melee routine 6-9 sword/1-2 constriction / 2d4 bite, for instance, with a grab attempt and vestigial twin bite, which would result in 2d6 bite and 1d4 chewing additional automatic damage on round 2, then 1d6 and 1d4 chewing on round 3).

Bedulbloop also has in his possession the **Conch of the Deep**, a sea shell the size of a horn which can be blown as the same once a day, except by an Obrachaeon who can use it 3/day. Each individual use of the conch can: (1) calm rough waters in a one-mile radius, thus dispelling water elementals and water weirds, (2) panic marine creatures of animal intelligence, causing them to flee, or fight at -4 penalty to hit for 3-18 turns if they make their saving throw vs. magic, or (3) call agents of the Deep, such as 2d6 lacedon ghouls (1-2), 3d6 troglodytes (3-5) or 1d4 kopocinth gargoyles (6), if the conch is blown into a body of water were such creatures are to be found. The sounding of a Conch of the Deep can be heard by all Obrachaeans in a league's radius. The Conch of the Deep is the key to open the portal to Nester's Folly at area E-19.

**THE AMBER PYRAMIDION:** This special magic item looks like a translucent, square-based pyramid made entirely of amber the size of a fist. *Detect magic* spells will show intense radiations emanating from the item. *Identify* will only reveal some of the basic functions of the item, first of which is the fascination it casts on the person holding it and looking through it. The Amber Pyramidion bestows *Fire Resistance* on its owner at all times. It can also be used to benefit from the effects of *Protection from Fire* twice (2) a day as cast by a 12th level druid. These two powers can be cast by anyone. With practice, the Pyramidion can be mastered by clerics and druids only. It then can be used to cast a *Fire Charm* once a day on those individuals within ten (10) feet of the wielder. Lastly, once a week, the Amber Pyramidion will be able to summon a *Wall of Fire* or a *Flame Strike* as cast by a 12th level druid.

**STUDY OF THE PYRAMIDION:** Researching the subject of the Amber Pyramidion with sages, lore masters and associated quests will reveal it to be a minor artifact crafted well before the rule of man upon the Eurth. It is closely associated with the worship of the element of fire, and is said to have been carved out of the forests of amber rumored to have covered vast swaths of the Red Shade of Lyon in ancient past. The Pyramidion is part of a greater whole, a crown of unfathomable power, and a key to different planes and shades of this Eurth. It resonates on multiple levels of existence. Its powers are vast, beyond what any single spell or dweomer could provide.

**USES OF THE PYRAMIDION:** If the party studies the tablets they can find while sneaking around the area of the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat, they might figure out that the Pyramidion has to be resized to fit the pyramid in the middle of the plaza. A single *enlarge* spell is sufficient, as the artifact is itself dweomered to respond to the spell. When the structure is crowned with the Amber Pyramidion, the miniature of the golden citadel floating on flaming oil within the dome comes alive. The tiny metal roofs wave and dance evasively as the flames lick in the inside surface of the globe, like a sea of fire that could stretch for many miles beyond the fading walls of glass anchored to this here and now. If someone touches the surface of the glass, anyone in the room will be teleported inside the golden city's pocket dimension.

**THE GOLDEN CITY OF URYUM ATALA:** The party will materialize inside an ancient arena surrounded by three concentric rings of stands filled with hundreds of smoky, humanoid outlines, the shades of the people who originally built this place. A covered section looms over the field. The sky is turbulent, clouded and ochre. One of the shades will step forward and ask: "What brings you to our city, strangers? May you be heard and the price henceforth decided."

Uryum Atala is an ancient city of pre-humans who built civilization out of the ashes of revolts against the Serpent folk. They protected themselves, or rather the memory of their own selves, through the creation of this miniature city. It was at one time in the possession of ruthless fire giants who abused the population of the city. When these same giants were defeated by the armies of Aktum, the citizens of Uryum Atala welcomed Ur Pa Kraat as a liberator. The King created a physical refuge for their city, and in turn, they offered to harbor his remains upon his death.

The shades of Uryum Atala are, by all intents and purposes, spirits of a neutral alignment able to syphon Wisdom out of their victims to further confuse them and help them let go of their own sense of self within the confines of the city. They can receive visitors from the outside world, and act as sages to consult on a variety of topics, with specialties including magic and the history of pre-human, pre-Danthean events, alchemy and pre-sciences, the entities active during their era of existence. Their knowledge of ancient languages would be mostly useful for pre-human or non-human purposes, as would any information pertaining to specific locations, or the geography of the Eurth: they know the world they left behind, but no knowing of the modern world.

The fees of the Sages of Uryum Atala must be paid in gold and magic items. The party may refuse to pay, and

instead should agree to entertain the shades of Uryum Atala, which usually means fighting a wide array of creatures within the confines of the arena. The referee can choose random encounters per dungeon level to gauge the threat equivalence to a question or request to the shades of Uryum Atala. The deeper, more secret or specific the question, the greater the price, the more threatening the equivalent challenge. Each time the party comes back to this place, challenges will become increasingly more dangerous to keep the shades entertained. Creatures touched by or native from the elemental plane of fire may be favored by the referee, but the shades can also reach through the planes and find all manners of adversaries to keep things interesting.

Once the price has been paid or the shades feel suitably entertained, they will answer the question asked by the party. They will then send the lot of them on their way. The party will materialize back into the room inside the pyramid, free to leave and come back at a later date. For more about Uryum Atala in its further potential in the campaign, see *Developments* at the end of this chapter.

**TALISMAN OF THE VESTIGIAL TWIN:** With this magical amulet, Bedulbloop can form a secondary, smaller warrior head at the end of one of his tentacles, which immediately inflicts bite damage (D 2d4) on a single hit and automatically chews (D 1d4) after that, leaving his own mouth free to do the same. If slain, the same talisman will let him expel a atrophied version of himself (not unlike an infant) which, if it can access water and is allowed to heal, will grow and become Bedulbloop own twin in 1d6 days, with the memory of the events that led to its brother's death. This last dweomer of the talisman only works once, and shatters the magic item upon activation.

The magic of the amulet, a beautifully decorated flat piece about black jade the size of a fist depicting two octopuses' heads and tentacles facing left and right from the same joined head, will react very different to human or demi-human owners. Instead, it can create a parasitic twin to protect its wearer from willpower-based dweomers.

It is the wearer's choice to deflect a given **mental form of attack involving the power of will (as per high wisdom)** with a saving throw versus magic. This action will first spawn the vestigial twin, usually around the host's abdomen. Then, once a day, the wearer of the talisman can decide to make a saving throw versus magic to deflect one such attack from his person to the vestigial twin before after any rolls of magic resistance, but before any other saving throws, have been made. Each time the twin absorbs magical energy, it will grow and become

more conscious, showing first a face in the abdomen of its host, then one small vestigial limb at a time.

Once it has absorbed five spells, the twin will make a saving throw versus magic at the same level, same class as its host each time it absorbs a new effect. If it fails its saving throw, the twin becomes conscious, and able to separate itself from its host. As long as the twin remains part of the host, the amulet continues to function and redirect effects towards it. Once the twin decides to leave, it will wait for the host to be deeply asleep or unconscious to separate itself from the host. The ordeal leaves the host helpless for 1d6 rounds, with no memory of what transpired from the entire experience, and results in the existence of a very rapidly growing double of the character with the same class, experience and HD, but an evil alignment in any case, the exact variety of which is likely to be the opposite of its host (E.g. A lawful neutral character would generate a chaotic evil twin, a neutral evil character a neutral evil twin, a chaotic neutral character a lawful evil twin, etc.). The amulet will have ceased to function for this particular host. If it is later acquired by a new human or demi-human, it will start forming an evil twin for that new host the same way.

The twin can telepathically communicate with its host. It might not want to separate itself from the body immediately. Some twins might remain silent and observe their parent host for a while before deciding it is time for a separation. Others might decide to reveal they exist and start a dialog with their host. Sooner or later, the twin will leave and become its own individual. When that happens, it is advised to not make the twin NPC reappear immediately. Let some time pass, until the moment the twin is but a memory of past adventures, a note on the character sheet. Then, bring back the NPC as a surprise with an agenda: The twin met other NPCs and factions in the meantime, perhaps created his or her own adventuring party, whatever the case may be. Some evil twins might need their original host to strike a bargain, assist one another on a difficult task, resolve some unfinished business, or kill one another to get some closure. Make sure to squeeze the most role-playing and shenanigans out of this to tie the party further into the world and campaign around them.

**18. UNDERGROUND WATERFALL.** The walls surrounding this 700 foot long and roughly 180 foot wide cavern are constantly flowing with water trickling down from the 100 foot high ceiling and the myriads of hanging stalactites obfuscating it from view. A 300 foot wide waterfall further separates the upper and lower parts of this cave on a south-west to north-east axis.





The upper cave is a battleground between the various inhabitants of the underground river tunnels. The troglodytes and obrachaeans know of the threat the Utukku, or Puffer Fish Men, represent, and beyond, the greater threats of the Black Heart of Amun Paal west of this cave, and the Bat Men to the north. Thus, the followers of the Herald of Woe are all but happy to let the Utukku keep control of the western part of this area. They only fight them to keep them at bay, away from the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat, keep access to the Crustacean Well at E-19, and sometimes to try and catch the Gem Frog, if it appears in the vicinity.

The lower cave gathers the waters flowing from the tunnels onward to the side of the Tomb Entrance at area E-10. The broken corpses of lizard men, Utukku, troglodytes and frog-men litter the river bed at the foot of the waterfall.

Primitive weapons and shields may be acquired, as well as the occasional piece of jewelry (do not forget to check for random encounters if the party decides to search thoroughly), but the most interesting find here is the fresh corpse of an explorer who died accidentally from falling rocks at the south-eastern exit of this cave, by the river flowing towards E-10. The position of the remains is betrayed by a glow in the water. The man is in advanced decomposition, and most of the samples and consumables

he was carrying are long gone, but his leather robes are intact, as well as a plant that grew from one of the fruit he was carrying, which currently bears one juicy luminescent fruit comparable to those found at area E-27 (40 GP base value). He carries a piece of parchment (see below), as a member of the Vellum Society of Villenor, a partial map of the underground river tunnels (see **Handout**) that might be of use to the party, and instruction on how to filet the sides of an Utukku without risking poisoning (something which thieves could then replicate). The man, Luca, rolled in the water and held tight to something as he died. It might easily be mistaken for the fabric of a potato sack, but he is still holding on tight to a **bag of holding** pressed against him. Most of the samples he had gathered have spoiled a long time ago, but it still contains his spell book, with the spells *read magic*, *dancing lights*, *feather fall*, *magic missile*, *Nester's expert appraisal*\*, *Nys-tal's magic aura*, *rope trick*, *shockwave*\*, *web*, *haste*, *protection from normal missiles* and *slow*. His other useful magic items have long been stolen from his corpse.

The piece of parchment says: "Dear Mestre Luca, please consider yourself part of our little society. Remember to try and be as stealthy as you can, for dangers abound around the Pass. Any samples artifacts, bits of historical records, engravings and statues would be more than welcome by

our members, as previously understood. The latter kind of produce, especially samples of meat and organs of legendary creatures that could be raised to art pieces through the alchemy of cooking, would be of personal interest. I fancy myself something of a tyromancer, and can also divine, albeit more rudimentarily, from entrails and all manners of organs. Please find my faithful servant Ektor Hoerg waiting at the Twin Tankard for appraisal and specific instructions. He is my liaison for hunters and brothers in the area. Yours by the Vellum, Parmel d'Argiquais, Esq. Villenor."

**THE UTUKKU, PUFFER FISH MEN (1d6):** SZ M; MV 90 ft./120 ft. swimming; AL TN; HD 2+1; HP 9 avg.; AC 4; #AT 1 range or 1 melee or 1 burst; D 1d4 plus saving throw vs. poison, or D 1d6, or burst of 12 quills – saving throw vs. breath weapon or 1d4 hits in any direction, each D 1d4 damage, plus saving throw vs. poison with an initial modifier of +2, and a negative modifier of -1 per quill hitting after the first; Poison induces lethargy and semi-loss of consciousness (somewhat aware but can't act) for 1d6 turns.

**19. CRUSTACEAN WELL.** The relatively calm waters of this naked cave serve as the locus from which the Obrachaeans can travel back and forth to and from the Hidden Wash House of Nester's Folly (Area **HSD-L1-16**), a dungeon built at the edge of the Wild, by the shore of the Duinnsmere, about 80 miles away from this location. The Conch of the Deep (see area **E-17**) needs to be blown at this spot, underwater, for the portal to open for one (1) turn, and the waters to be congruous with both areas simultaneously.

An Obrachaeon Warrior and his pet crayfish guard this area from intruders. The warrior will let the giant crayfish have his fun first. If the crayfish loses more than half its hit points, then the warrior will cease to be amused and enter the fray.

**GIANT CRAYFISH:** SZ L; MV 60 ft./120 ft. swimming; HD 4+4; AL TN; HP; AC 2; #AT 2; D 2d6/2d6; Surprise 3-in-6. The giant crayfish wears a brass barding courtesy of its Obrachaeon handler. It is decorated with fine scenes of tentacles horrors devouring people and ships on the Duinnsmere, and as a whole is worth 2,000 GP. The flesh of the crayfish can be harvested as well, but its value, per pound, is poor compared to other consumables in the area (10 GP per pound, fixed value, which is nice, but not as nice as most food items and organs the party could harvest along the way. The entire crayfish could weigh as much as 1,500 pounds, but getting out and back into camp with this creature's intact body would be quite an adventure in and of itself. No one beyond Villenor would buy the crayfish in one piece, but it

could be prepped with the help of local people and sold progressively over a few weeks, to individual families, the Twin Tankard and more).

**OBRACHAEAN WARRIOR (1):** SZ M; MV 180 ft. (land, ring), 180 ft. (swimming); AL LE; Surprise 4-in-6 skin camouflage; AC 4; HD 4+4; HP 20 avg.; #AT 2 ranged or 4 melee; D 1d4/1d4, or D 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4, damage on one melee attack may be exchanged for D 1-2 constriction, then on next melee round attack D 2d6 automatic bite, with D 1d6 chewing each round after that; 4-40 GP owned. This warrior wears a **spiral ring of earth-walking**, which allows him and the people of its kind to walk at high speeds on land. It looks like a metallic spiral rolled against one of its tentacles. The dweomer will have no effect on humans or demi-humans, but could be sold for study to magic-users and alchemists, including the Vellum Society. The warrior will use the power of this ring in case the Well is lost to intruders and he has to run back to the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat **E-17** to warn his brethren of the attack.

**20. INTRICATE STATUES.** The walls of this tunnel will gradually become covered with thinly bioluminescent green vines as the party progresses. The vines are very healthy, with flaming red buds ready the hatch and long sharp yellow thorns releasing droplets of golden light floating in the dark. The droplets are not dangerous, but the green slimes the vines hide from view are very much a concern for any living being venturing through.

If the party manages to get through the green slimes dropping from the ceiling to feast of their flesh, and someone clear this entire area of their presence or shield themselves from their presence, they will find **five statues of nephrite jade** at the very end of the tunnels, where it becomes too narrow and oblique to explore further.

The very old statues depict five stone giants trying to pin down and keep control of a sixth, gigantic figure chained to the ground. It is trying to break free from their embrace. This awesome giant wears the crown of a king on its brow, has long saber-toothlike fangs, and the wings of a bat growing on its back. There is a sense of immense power and dread emanating from the scene and its monstrous king. Each statue is very heavy, about three (3) stones each (42 pounds). They are worth 200 GP individually, 1,600 GP together.

Characters in the ancient language of Aktum have been carved around the flat surface where the statues' rest, which if translated by sages learned in giant languages would translate as: "Beware the resting place of Amal Khas, the Watcher of the Skies, Seeker of the North, He who

*touched the Sun, Most Cunning Warrior burned by the revelation of the Seven Gates, wounded the eternal tree, and fell down the pit to his eternal doom to be reborn by the broken word of Vekne. Most Holy and Unholy. Blessed and Cursed by vision and courage. Amal Khas forever awaits, lolled by the crawling Eurth that birthed him, navigating nightmares on leathered wings of hate, feeding off the blood and tribulations of the living. Master among the wild creatures of the night, he is most hailed and most disgraced amongst kings. Do not venture forth, for the evil there does not sleep, and waits to wreak havoc upon this world."*

*This is a warning to anyone who would want to proceed down the Chiropteran Well of E-21. Amal Khas was King of the Stone Giants of Aktum, rose to become much more, and because of his ambition fell that much harder to become an undead and a vampire.*

**GREEN SLIME (4):** SZ S; MV 0 ft.; AL TN; HD 2; HP 8; AC 9; #AT 0; D nil. Green slime attaches itself to living flesh and turns a creature into green slime in 1d4 melee rounds (no resurrection). It eats at wood slowly (1 inch thickness/hour), but through metal very quickly, wasting a shield in a single round, and destroying plate armor in three (3).

**21. CHIROPTERAN WELL.** The waters from the tunnels tumble down to this area and drop in a free fall in the abyss below. The entire cave is plunged into complete darkness. The splashing of water down below is clearly audible to the human ear from the southern ledge of this area. It is hard to ascertain the depth of the drop by the light of conventional torches and lanterns alone. In fact, such light sources will flare brightly, almost die, and then flare again randomly. This is a warning, as the walls of this entire cave are covered with thick, highly inflammable guano.

A whole colony of bats lives in this well. Most of the individual bats and bat-men are hanging from the roof of the cave, concealed by the darkness, while the Gravespawndwell at the bottom of the pit, far from intruders and preying eyes. Both the colony above and the Gravespawndwell below are out of range of the guano explosion that would result from entering this cave with open flames. The people in the cave, hanging from ropes, climbing or levitating at the level of the ledge, would receive full damage (8d6) on a failed saving throw vs. paralyzation, half on a success. Individuals standing on the ledge would also make a saving throw vs. the same, for half damage on a successful saving throw and none on a success.

Such a commotion would enrage hundreds of bats which would take flight and pin the party in place for

1d6 rounds as they rush through the exit of the cave. Meanwhile, the bat-men will attack and try to get rid of the intruders. The Gravespawndwell will only get involved if the party dispatches the bat-men and tries to climb down the well. If the party does so, a strong scent of rot and decay will assault their senses, as if heaps of carrion were waiting for them, trapped at the bottom of the pit. The Gravespawndwell will hide, and wait for the party to reach the bottom before attacking them. The bat-men still alive from the ceiling will come back to the well and join in to tear the intruders apart.

If the bat-men and Gravespawndwell are all dispatched, a new colony will come back to this place within two weeks, as the spirit of Amal Khas will call for new guardians to protect his resting place.

The waters gather at the bottom of the well about two hundred (200) feet down from the ledge. There, they seep through a three-foot wide opening running all along the northern cave wall further down into the ground. The temperature drops dramatically once one reaches the bottom. If the bottom of the ice-cold basin is investigated, the party will have a tough time. The ground is shifting and uneven: It is in fact littered with decomposing corpses, mostly humanoids snatched by the gravespawndwell. Searching thoroughly, the party can find the remnants of ancient Danthean armors including **+1 Chainmail**, **two (2) daggers of ironwood** which, though not magical, could pierce the heart of a vampire as a stake, a **+1 tower shield** wearing the arms of the Kingdom of Ournst, two **+1 Lucerne hammers** which once belonged to the hirelings of Iyerom d'Ajax, and last but not least, **Temeraire**, the ancient sword of the paladin himself.

**TEMERAIRE:** +2 longsword, INT 16, EGO 10 (14+), AL LG. Abilities: (Holy Avenger: In the hands of a paladin, it becomes a +4 longsword, 40% magic resistance and dispel magic in a 5-foot radius, +8 damage to CE opponents). Cure light wounds 2/day, shockwave 2/day. Speech. Languages: Aodhian (alignment), Danthean, Pryton, Frankhian, Iyathari. Temeraire is a well-used military longsword of true iron. It lacks the shine and beauty of a weapon of apparat, but is sharp and efficient.

Though the primary purpose of the blade is to protect civilization and destroy the evil that threatens it, Temeraire has all but forgotten its purpose. The sword's last wielder was a paladin of great renown, Iyerom d'Ajax, knight banneret of the House of Gaax, who came to the Tomb with a host of men to destroy the threat that Amal Khas represented at the time. The vampire had risen, some five hundred years ago, and was working out schemes which ultimately would bring upon him the

wrath of the Kingdom of Ournst. The last confrontation with the monster was a complete carnage. Not even the Iyerom d'Ajax survived to tell the tale. The heroes mortally wounded the vampire and crippled it enough to force it back into a dark slumber, but none of them made it back to the surface. They all died in the tunnels next to the ultimate lair of the beast. The only thing that legend mentions is that they gave their lives for the realms of the living. They were never heard from again, and their whereabouts has remained a mystery to this day.

When picked up, Temeraire will remember little of all this. It will have a sense of its identity and will try to get its bearings first. After a while, it will reveal it can talk, perhaps asking a question « what year is this ? », having no knowledge of the Crusade against the Giants and recent events in the world. Sages and *identify* spells will establish it to be a +2 sword, which it is. Each time Temeraire fights evil and faces a cathartic experience, it has a 30% chance to remember something about its past. It will start by healing its wielder. Then, it will express an interest in chivalry, and virtuous wielders. When it changes hands and finds a paladin is when the sword will have a chance at an epiphany. With each mile stone or challenge that would fit its purpose and bring back its memories, it will remember one of its holy avenger abilities, starting with *dispel magic*, then the magic resistance, then the awesome +4 to hit bonus it still has, and ultimately its +8 damage to CE opponents.

The **guano** covering the walls around the ledge of the cavern could be harvested and serve as a very potent fertilizer or slow-burning light source worth 20 GP per pound of the stuff (fixed value).

The stench emanating from the long and very narrow opening all along the north wall of the cave is barely breathable, overwhelming and unclean. Crawling for hundreds of feet into the freezing water and making regular saving throws vs. poison to not choke or develop diseases would be the only way to go any further down this way. Giant scarabs, millipedes, and similar critters thrive in these tight spaces, waiting for a fresh meal. If the party is insane enough to follow through, check out the *Developments* at the end of this chapter, where the subject of Amal Khas and his potential in the campaign is fully discussed.

**CHAK-TA, BAT MEN (10):** SZ M; MV 90 ft./120 ft. flying; AL LE, Surprise in flight 3-in-6, Intelligence Low; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 6; #AT 2 melee and 1 bite if both hit; D 1d4/1d4, followed by bite 1-8 if both wing claws hit; Bat Men can fly, and have the ability to sense their surroundings by echolocation.

**CHAK-TA, GRAVESPAWN (5):** SZ M; MV 90 ft./120 ft. flying; AL LE, Surprise in flight 3-in-6, Intelligence High; HD 4; HP 16 avg.; AC 4; #AT 2 melee and 1 bite if both hit; D 1d4/1d4, 1-10 if both wing claws hit, followed by blood drain D 2d6 and temporary loss of 1 STR if both wing claws hit; The Gravespawn bat men are superior to their mundane cousins. They are also more closely related to vampirism and the undead. They cannot drain levels, but drain blood, hit points and strength. The loss of strength is regained at a rate of a point per full 8-hour period of rest.

**22. STILL WATERS.** The waters gathering from the Utuku cavern at E-23 and flowing onward north-west to the ruins of Amun Paal at E-24 and north-east to the Underground Waterfall at E-18 are especially cold and quiet. Carvings in the stone by the opening stretching north-west and immediately opening into the complex of the Tomb of Amun Paal make it extremely clear (in the Utuku script, a variant of merfolk anyone with a knowledge of water languages could decipher) that this area must be crossed underwater for about 200 yards, and that poking the head out of the water could trigger an attack.

A predator catfish worm lairs at the bottom. A long, fast predator in the water able to climb walls and ceilings with its tiny vestigial limbs for up to three (3) melee rounds before needing to breathe underwater, the catfish worm has a distinctive, fish-like bearded face with huge black eyes and four pseudopods surrounding a small gaping maw. Its anguilliform body is dark grey-green, spotted black on the top and sides, and pale grey on the belly. The catfish worm is insulated from harm by the Utuku's quills, due to the thick layer of fat covering its entire body. The Puffer Fish Men adapted and semi-domesticated the animal, delivering prey to the worm whenever possible. The worm is happy with the arrangement, and guards the way to the underground cavern at E-23.

**CATFISH WORM:** SZ L; MV 90 ft./240 ft. swimming; AL TN; Surprise 1d4 in the water; HD 6; HP 44; AC 4; #AT 2; D 1d4 pseudopods around the mouth, and D 5-20 tail slap; If the pseudopods around the mouth hit, the d4 used for damage also indicates the exact number of pseudopods burrowing in the flesh of the victim for d4 damage each on the next melee round, and until hit on the head to release its prey (attack at -4 to hit for the prey itself). The catfish worm is virtually invulnerable to blunt and piercing weapons due to the very thick layer of fat covering its body. Its skin secretes an acid corrosive to metal which destroys such weapons in 1-3 rounds. Slashing weapons do half-damage and essentially pop some of the underlying layer of fat under the worm's skin out to



the open, like popcorn bursting out on a hot stove. Keep track of the number of cuts the worm sustains during a fight: it is the maximum number of d6 fire damage the creature can take in a single melee round. The fat can be set on fire for D 1d6 damage by torch and similar mundane flames, taking full damage from fire spells and natural explosions from flaming oil and the like.

At the bottom of this area, there are **blue crystals** growing under water which absorb magical energies and turn them into a food source. If harvested, these crystals can be used to build magic items using charges, such as rings, rods and wands, for two thirds of the price. There is approximately ten pounds of the stuff available at the bottom, with one pound worth 1,200 GP base value. The **catfish's glands** can be harvested to produce acid, (2) pieces of 400 GP base value each, and the **fat of the catfish** is an amazing commodity, equivalent to jelly-like flaming oil that can be applied to all sorts of surfaces, produces 3d6 damage on impact and 1d6 splash damage, but it is unstable, and should be moved and stored with caution. It is worth 20 GP per pound, but since it's just about the only way to slay the creature for good, there will be about 40 to 240 pounds (4d6 x 10) remaining of the stuff when all is said and done.

**23. UNDERGROUND CAVERN.** This 700foot long by 250foot wide basin holds calm waters gathering from the waterfall flowing on the south-eastern section of the cave wall, then flowing gently out via a south-western tunnel to area E-22.

About twenty (20) male Utukku hang out here at all times, with about a dozen females and young. They are not aligned to any particular group or faction in the area, and want to remain free. So far, they have had a few skirmishes with the Obrachaeans, but nothing more, as the envoys of the Herald of Woe focus primarily on the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat for the time being.

This cave is the Utukku's main lair. They feed on a large group of Freshwater Black Pearl Mussels growing in the fine gravel underwater. When the lair is attacked, adult males defend the community while the fry hide beyond the cracks atop the waterfall, away from potential predators. There, they will hide for a while and come back later to try and repopulate the area. The female Utukku divert the attention of predators by swimming wildly around the males. They join the melee when the males incur 50% of losses or more.

The Utukku, like certain species of puffer fish, mature using a form of sexual dimorphism: the fry have a hard shell that protects their limbs as they grow, and are not

initially biologically male or female. When the Utukku's shell cracks off and the limbs become functional, hormones are secreted within the body, which then determine the permanent sex of the young adult. The determination is usually based on the situation of the community, what it needs to biologically survive and reproduce. This instinct guarantees quick population growths and adjustments against external threats, hence the overwhelming number of males likely present in this area when the party arrives.

**THE UTUKKU, PUFFER FISH MEN (20):** SZ M; MV 90 ft./120 ft. swimming; AL TN; HD 2+1; HP 9 avg.; AC 4; #AT 1 range or 1 melee or 1 burst; D 1d4 plus saving throw vs. poison, or D 1d6, or burst of 12 quills – saving throw vs. breath weapon or 1d4 hits in any direction, each D 1d4 damage, plus saving throw vs. poison with an initial modifier of +2, and a negative modifier of -1 per quill hitting after the first; Poison induces lethargy and semi-loss of consciousness (somewhat aware but can't act) for 1d6 turns.

Females are (12) use the same stats as their male counterparts, but with AC 6, HD 1, 4 HP avg. The young (12) are AC 2 on the top and back (protective shell), 6 on the front, HD 1 with low HP.

It is worth noting that the **flesh of a Puffer Fish Man** is edible, and can be used to *neutralize poison* per the spell, if sliced and prepared right. Mishandling the process leads to contaminated flesh which, if ingested, leads to a much more potent version of the toxin coating the quills of the Utukku, triggering straight saving throw vs death. Only expert cooks, especially those who might have had contact with the Nipponese culture, would know the proper steps.

Searching the bed of the underground lake in this area will reveal the presence of the **Black Pearl Mussels** hidden beneath the gravel. It takes about one turn to find two pounds of the stuff (between 16 and 20 mussels per pound), which is edible and valued at 5 GP a pound by skilled innkeepers and food professionals. Once every six turns of continuous plunging and digging, a roll of 1 on a d10 results in the party finding a black pearl worth 500 GP. Do not forget to check for random encounters. Leaving the mussels alone after a full harvest lets them breathe and reproduce. If more than 25 pounds are harvested in one go, the decline of the colony will be irreversible.

**24. TOMB OF AMUN PAAL.** The temperature rises noticeably as one approaches this area. The naked rock gives way to oppressing thick tropical foliage bursting out of the ruins on both sides of the underground river. Hanging vines, lianas and a lone stone bridge spread across the river and link both halves of the Tomb

of Amun Paal. The size of the features and bas-reliefs, the blocks of stone and archways all confirm this must have been built by the same giants who built the resting place of Ur Pa Kraat at E-17 and the original structure of Grunn Galeb at E-28.

The 20-foot wide stone bridge crossing the river is an extension of one of the main corridors spreading from the central plaza in the south-western half of the ruins. The clusters of rooms surrounding the plaza are hard to navigate, with the thickest bushes and fast-growing trees overtaking the terrain. Olmecan Pygmies hide in such tight spaces. Stirges are buzzing around constantly. Cries of wild animals can be heard echoing in the background, somewhere down a passage way, or behind a wall. By comparison the main 100' x 100' plaza ("B" on the map) is relatively clear and spacious (it is similar to area Li-8 in that regard). The Cochlean Beast and cadaverous pillars lair close by. The 20foot wide corridor marked on the map and stretching south-west from the plaza is surrounded by an enormous gate made out of hundreds of black antlers. The corridor goes on like this, entirely made of antlers, on the inside, as if they had all grown out of the stone until they concealed it completely, for about 50 feet before closing abruptly. This is the Antler Gate, marked with an asterisk (\*) on the map. The northeastern half ("A" on the map) is also rife with jungle life, but is under control of Melisedek, a lizard man who decided to stay and resist the chaos emanating from the Black Heart.

**KING AMUN PAAL OF AKTUM:** King Amun Paal, the Slayer of the Beast of Meridion, was one of the earliest kings of Aktum. Perhaps the direct successor of Ur Pa Kraat the Gatherer, Amun Paal was the sovereign who pushed the Stone Giants to conquer land outwards and grow Aktum into a proper kingdom. Amun Paal is remembered on the engravings of this tomb as an extremely charismatic yet brutal warrior, a tireless general, and a great leader and conqueror during his time on Eurth. But his successes came with a price, and his confrontation with the last of the Yigite Empire led him to the Obsidian Realms in order to find the last refuge of the Snake Men. He found the Olmecan jungle and slaughtered Typhon, an avatar of Ssess, the Scaled One, but his heart and soul were corrupted in the process. Mortally wounded, the stone giant died in victory. His heart was brought back through the gates of the Obsidian Realms to Aktum, where it was buried close to the remains of Ur Pa Kraat under the Marmoreal Mound.

But the Black Heart of Amun Paal would not rest forever.

**CURRENT INHABITANTS:** The Black Heart developed a malevolent conscience, and created an extension of its

nightmares in the form of the Cochlean Beast over the next centuries. It sculpted a body for itself, using its own cursed blood and the memory of Amun Paal. It peeled off its skin down to the raw muscles, disarticulated the bones of its entire body to be able to move unexpectedly and at bizarre angles, grew antlers, and secreted hormones that would ultimately attract gastropods to perpetually feast on its flesh. The husk became the Cochlean Beast, a hungry, walking nightmare haunting the Tomb. The Heart began its unnatural life cycles eons ago. Through multiple periods of slumber and activity, it seized control of the area, and opened a portal whence it came, to the Olmecan jungle of the Eurth.

With each life cycle, the Black Heart's rate begins slowly, a few weeks passing between each beat. It progressively accelerates, up to a few days between each major beat, then plateaus at about a beat a day, and then slows down until it stops for its next phase of dormancy. The Black Heart's silence can last for years, decades, even centuries, before the next life cycle begins. When the Heart ceases to beat, the Cochlean Beast gets back to its Stone Shell inside the Antler Gate, and the corruption sleeps. Then, when the Black Heart resumes its activity, the cycle begins again, usually for a few months or years at a time, before dying again.

The Antler Gate loosens and opens up at the end of the tunnel with each beat from the Black Heart. Creatures and people from the other side, get lost in the forest, and emerge from the tunnel marked (\*) beyond the Arch. This is how Melisedek and his lizard men arrived here. When they confronted the Cochlean Beast, Melisedek's father, Sedek, sacrificed himself to let his people live. They fled through the underground network, exited the area entirely, but ultimately realized they were the only ones, under the leadership of Melisedek, to be able to contain the corruption of the Heart. They made their way back to the Tomb of Amun Paal, and with great sacrifices, slowly gained control over the north-eastern part of the ruins ("A").

The setback the rebellion of Melisedek represented for the Heart at the beginning of this life cycle was corrected by the calling of more malleable beings from the other side. First, the Olmecan Pygmies helped keep the lizard men at bay. Second, the crew of the Brazen Buccaneer joined the fray and submitted to the Black Heart immediately. The pirates keep to themselves and have set up camp in the southernmost part of the complex (marked "C" on the map). The Black Heart knows of the pirates' double-crossing nature, but they are more useful free-willed, for now.

If your adventuring parties decide to intervene, let them figure out the lay of the land. If they are impressed by the adventurers' resistance or given strong guarantees of an alliance with the lizard men, or a way to make it out of these tunnels alive, the buccaneers of the Triumphant could possibly switch sides. The Black Heart would almost certainly respond with a beat and call for more creatures or humanoids from the Olmechean forest, and it is in the hands of the referee to choose what could make the game more entertaining from there. Predators, dinosaurs, reanimated snake-men, take your pick of your favorite creepy jungle critters and use them.

**ENCOUNTERS:** As in the case of the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat, the party can investigate the cluster of rooms and corridors that make up the bulk of the Tomb of Amun Paal. When spends a full turn investigating the area, check for random encounters normally, with a 1 on a d6 indicating such. There is also a 1-in-3 chance to make some sort of discovery of historical significance, immediately followed by another chance for an encounter 1-in-6. This can be combined as one roll of d6: (1-2) tablet found, and roll again d6, random encounter occurs on a "6", (3-5) nothing happens, (6) a random encounter occurs.

#### HISTORICAL DISCOVERIES ON AMUN PAAL

- 1 - Amun Paal grieves with the stone giants and encourages them to look up and forward. This engraving is hidden by heavy vegetation covering a Pygmy or Lizard Man booby trap. It swings, and the pointer for the party rolls d4. This is the number of wooden stakes that hit him for 1d4 damage each.
- 2 - Tomb of one of the lieutenants of Amun Paal the conqueror. Opening the sarcophagus reveals a mummy holding a shield with engravings showing Amun Paal the glorious general gathering the armies of the Stone giants of Aktum on one half, and on the other half Amun Paal the Cursed as three stone giants wearing robes together hold a strange crystal made of cubes fused into a single item (a giant salt crystal) sending him into submission and melting away.
- 3 - A bas-relief is found covered with the sap of a withered root covering the carvings entirely. The sap turns into glue when it is tepid, and stone when it is cold. Heat will melt it progressively, triggering another roll for a possible encounter, and if the glue itself is gathered, it can be applied to hands to climb sheer surfaces and is worth 60 GP base value. The bas-relief itself represents a massive battle of the stone giants versus monstrous snake folk. Amun Paal is represented behind the lines of giants pushing them to fight,

his arms held high, his hands brandishing what looks like a crystal or rock made of multiple cubes fused together (a giant salt crystal) as he casts a spell cursing them forward. The giants turning back seem to turn into pillars of graining stuff, and they disintegrate to the winds (they turn into pillars of salt).

- 4 - A secret room's door has been busted by the supernatural jungle growth. Inside, a stone reliquary may be recovered, but the trap defending it will malfunction, and the walls and ceilings of the room will collapse. Save versus death or die. Inside the reliquary, a golden snake idol is found wearing ancient jewelry from the times of Amun Paal. The idol itself is worth 1,200 GP, and the piece of jewelry 1,000 GP.
- 5 - A plaque embedded at the bottom of a column shows Amun Paal falling down a well surrounded by a swarm of snakes, holding what looks like a wyvern's or dragon's jaw wide open with one hand, and ripping its heart out with the other, as they fall together into oblivion.
- 6 - Amun Paal defeats the Typhon of Olmech, an enormous snake monster, in the first panel of this triptych. In the second panel, Amun Paal is seen ordering the slaughter of all who aided Typhon, organizing what looks like Tartarus on Eurth. In the third panel, Amun Paal is held by other stone giants, as a stake is driven through his heart by a bloated, irregular figure with a lean and long face: Zuun, the Unborn, a representation of the legacy of the kingdom of Aktum.

Each main item (engraving, shield, bas-relief, plaque and triptych, respectively) in this table is a consumable worth 800 GP base value, unless otherwise indicated.

#### RANDOM ENCOUNTER (AMUN PAAL)

- 1 - Lizard men face a constrictor snake. 1-in-6: it is the constrictor snake of E-26.
- 2 - Lizard men are being hunted by pirates.
- 3 - Pygmies are being hunted by Lizard men, or vice versa.
- 4 - A jungle predator shows up (tiger, stirges, up to a full blown dinosaur)  
Pirates are studying some carvings and the history of the place (maybe they found something 1-in-6 chance of rolling on *Historical Discoveries* table).
- 5 - Battle royal involving pirates, pygmies and a shocking appearance of the Cochlean Beast against the Lizard men, or some extraordinary encounter or event.
- 6 -

The referee should feel free to substitute this table for a jungle encounter table instead. The assumption is that whatever is rolled was spewed by the Antler Gate into the complex recently, and is still getting its bearings, whatever it ends up being. Alternately, the referee could roll on the random encounters table for the rivers and underground network of this chapter, mixing things up once in a while, and making thing up at it goes.

**LIZARD MEN (30):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./120 ft. swimming; AL TN; HD 2+1; HP 9 avg.; AC 4 shield; #AT 1 range or 3 melee; D 1d4 barbed dart or 1d6 javelins, or D 2d4/1-2 and prone/1-8, lizard man club, shield bash and bite; Lizard men usually carry around a semi-precious stone of value, base 10 GP value, and a significant piece of jewelry that could be worth around 20 GP altogether.

**ENOSH AND KYANAN, MELISEDEK'S BROTHERS (2):** Not literal brothers, but more like bodyguards, these are extraordinary Lizard Men armed with +1 Narwhal horns they use as swords D 3-8 (1d6+2) on the ground and lances D 4-10 (2d4+2) in the water (magic modifier included). Treat the brothers as each 4 HD Lizard Men (HP 27, 29) with AC 2, casting shamanic spells as clerics of the fourth level. Usually memorized (3/2): cure light wounds x2, detect evil, chant, speak with animals. They both wear +1 bungleweed vests which protect as chainmail and are completely weightless underwater. If out of the water for more than a day, the vest dries and becomes useless until it becomes wet again.

**MORDOK, LIZARD MAN SHAMAN (CL7):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./120 ft. swimming; AL TN; HD 7; HP 21; AC 0; #AT 1; D 1-8 lizard man club. Clerical spells usually memorized (3/3/2/1): cure light wounds x2, detect magic, chant, resist fire, speak with animals, cure disease, dispel magic, neutralize poison. Mordok is an old lizard man, the last shaman of Melisedek's tribe. He acts as a mentor and surrogate father to Melisedek, but his days are counted. Despite being protected and cared for by the whole tribe (he too wears a +2 bungleweed vest for his own protection) Mordok knows he will soon pass. He can feel the brush of the spirits of the dead beckoning to him from afar. He doesn't know what the lizard men are going to do when he and his connection to the ancestral spirits are gone completely. He worries a great deal about it.

**MELISEDEK, LIZARD MAN CHIEFTAIN:** Treat as a 7 HD Lizard Man with AC 0, since he wears a +2 bungleweed vest which if kept fresh functions as chainmail but weightless in a water environment. Melisedek has an extraordinary strength for a Lizard Man (18/78) and fights #AT 3/2 with a +1 bone morning star for a total of +3 to hit and 7-13 (2d4+5) damage on each strike. Melisedek is on a path of discovery that could

make him a legendary Lizard Man.

Melisedek is a prototypical hero and has the potential to rival the greatest leaders of his kind, if given the chance to survive. He wants to see his tribe survive, but is also torn by the legacy left by his father and the responsibility he has in avenging his death and destroying the Cochlean Beast. These two goals are at odds to him, and though he could find something of an arrangement with the Utukku east of the Tomb, he feels isolated in his fight against the corruption of the Arch. It will take some time for the chieftain to trust humans or demi-humans, but if he thinks they can make a difference and affect the balance of the conflict in his people's favor, he'll take it, come what may.

**TREASURE OF THE LIZARD MEN:** A hiding spot of the Lizard Men, hidden under a tile in the 20' x 20' room close to the letter "A" on the map, northeastern half of the Tomb, contains the few valuables left to the tribe of Melisedek. These include a dozen (12) **grenade-shaped fruits** filled with a thick resin (treat as flaming oil), a beautifully **handcrafted scarab shell on a string** made of a smooth rock and stuffed with an arrangement of quartz fragments which, if swirled around the head, can attract and fascinate reptiles (save vs. paralyzation to resist, value 1,200 GP), three (3) 5 pounds bundles of **bungleweed**, which could each be used to create implements such as pieces of armor acting as chainmail, ropes that are as tough as metal in water, or could be used all three together to build a raft (these are non-exclusive examples). **Bungleweed** is tough as steel and completely weightless underwater. It is heavier, as wet clothes (relatively the same as normal armor), on the surface, and if out of the water for more than a day, the weed dries up and becomes useless until it is plunged in water or becomes wet again. The Lizard men also keep there some **ancestral effigies**, pieces of polished stone which they carved in the image of their ancestors, each little works of art of their own (eight pieces, worth 120 GP base value each to historians and collectors of exotic cultural items), and a diadem made of teeth of various predators that acts as the crown of the tribe, a unique collection of specimens worked as a stunning work of art worth 2,000 GP.

**CREW OF THE BRAZEN BUCCANEER (12):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL LE, DEX 16 avg.; HD 0 HP 1d6 (4 avg.); AC 6 (leather and DEX); #AT 1; D by weapon. These pirates are the last survivors of a jungle expedition led by Baldassar of Brehan, the Brazen Buccaneer and captain of the Triumphant, which was meant to secure some treasure in gold and enslave the native population. Instead, the pirates ended up defeated, lost in the jungle,



hunted down by the local tribes, and somehow found their way through the Antler Gate to this Tomb of Amun Paal. Of the fifteen crew remaining, four (4) carry light crossbows (D 1d4), four (4) hand axes (D 1d6), and four (4) others spears and short swords (D 1d6).

**PRINCESS, THE FIRST MATE (F4) :** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; STR 18/00, DEX 17; HD 4; HP 21; AC 2 (chainmail and DEX); #AT 1, +5 to hit melee, +4 ranged with axes; D 8-13 hand axe, both melee and short range, 4-9 beyond; +3 to hit, D 7-12 (d6+6) short sword when both of his +2 hand axes (2) have been used. Princess is a 6'4" mountain of a man, tall and large, of Ghurundi descent with dark complexion, brown eyes and long, charcoal hair running down his back. Princess was mocked very early on for being so big. He was called many names, and all of them proved inefficient to shame him. The last was of course Princess, which didn't seem to faze him much until he ripped the throat of his bully out with his bare hands. He then owned the name and turned it around against wouldbe loud mouths. If a big man like this doesn't mind being called "Princess", what can faze him? Baldassar saved Princess's life more than once, and he will stand by his captain to the end.

**NEM'RU (MU6) :** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; INT 17, DEX 17 ; HD 6; HP 19; AC 3; #AT 3 ranged, darts; D 1-3/1-3/1-3 base damage, plus magic or poison, depending on the ammo being used. Nem'ru owns two (2) +2 darts and three (3) +1 darts which she generally uses first and then takes back from the corpses of her victims when the fight is done. She wears **bracers of defense AC 6**, a **ring of swimming**, and a **wand of lightning** (8 charges remaining). Her **travel spellbook** contains the spells: (L1) read magic, charm person, sleep, magic missile, spider climb; (L2) hold person, invisibility, water blast\*; (L3) fireball, dispel magic. Usually memorizes (4/2/2): charm person, sleep, magic missile x2, invisibility, water blast\*, fireball, dispel magic. Nem'ru is a beautiful, exotic woman with violet eyes, an athletic body, dark, almost black-red hair, and a metallic copper skin that reflects her lyathari heritage. She is skilled in diplomacy, and loves to con imbeciles, especially loud-mouths trying to impress her with words, which she finds extraordinarily insulting to her intelligence. She was freed from slavery and given a choice to stay or leave the crew of the Triumphant by Baldassar. This earned him her loyalty, to a certain extent. She cares for the Brazen Buccaneer, but her own instincts of preservation will always prevail, ultimately.

The lieutenants, other first mates, as well as the vast majority of the crew (a hundred or so pirates devoted to Baldassar) stayed aboard the Triumphant with its Chaplain,

Arbases, a high priest (15th level) of Leth-lyathan, the Whale of Chaos. They currently have no contact with the crew within the Tomb, but could become involved later on, if another expedition led by one of Arbases's underlings found its way here.

**BALDASSAR OF BREHAN, THE BRAZEN BUCCANEER (F7):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL LE, STR 17DEX 18; HD 7; HP 33; AC -1; #AT 2, falchion, +4/+4 to hit (+ 1 STR + 2 magic +1 specialization); D 7-12/7-12 (1d6 + 1 + 1 STR + 2 magic + 2 specialization). Originally 12th level, Baldassar was level drained by the Cochlean Beast upon arrival through the Antler Gate. A fighter of some skill (here assumed to specialize with his falchion sword), Baldassar wears + 2 **chainmail** under his thick long coat and loose poet shirt. He completes the set with tight breeches and boots, with a thick belt and brass buckle where hangs the lawful evil falchion **Sanguinaire**.

Baldassar is the Brazen Buccaneer and the Captain of the Triumphant, the ship left beyond the Antler Gate, in the Olmechean forest away from this tomb. Once a force to reckon with, he was known as a fine strategist, a cruel and demanding leader, especially when it came to his men and the cargo they carried. He was fair in his own mind, with a code of his own, could respect a deal and work his connections skillfully. Despite his alignment, which makes him a naturally selfish and violent person, there will always remain something honorable within him, as long as Sanguinaire doesn't completely take over. Now weakened by the Beast, with few of his crew remaining, he finds himself in a precarious position: stuck here, inside the Tomb, having sworn allegiance to a monster to save his skin, knowing full well this arrangement will not last forever. Facing the Beast, even with the help of the lizard men, seems like a pipe dream. Newcomers upsetting the status quo could change this, especially if they secure the aid of other factions like the Utluz or Utukku, but any alliance he would strike would be temporary at best. If Baldassar can ever gain possession of the Black Heart of Amun Paal, he will take immense pleasure in what he will see as a moment of reckoning. He will torture the spirit of the Beast for years, and make an example of it his crew will remember as long as they live.

**SANGUINAIRE:** +2 falchion of wounding, INT 17, EGO 16+, AL LE. Abilities: Wounding (victim bleeds 1 hit points per melee round for ten rounds after being struck by the blade, wounds from the blade cannot be regenerated or healed by any means other than natural rest), fear (for 1d4 rounds upon being struck by the blade, saving throw vs magic negates, when used to dominate, humiliate and otherwise torture sentient beings), de-

*termine directions and depth 2/day, detect good, detect gems, kind and number in a 5-foot radius. Speech and Telepathy. Languages: High Sarnathi (Alignment), Frankhian, Pryton, Orc, Giant and Goblin.*

Sanguinaire is a dark and long falchion (base damage 1d6+1) with a golden, heavily decorated cup-hilt figuring the head of a fish or sea monster wrapping its mouth around the hand holding it, and bordered with the stylized teeth of the fantastic beast ready to bite the wrist off its wielder. This is in fact exactly what Sanguinaire does to those who try to wield it without its consent (saving throw vs death to not lose a hand, plus D 3d6 regardless of the saving throw result). The blade is etched with the abstract representation of bodies screaming and Nurduk symbols cursing the flesh it bites and feasts on. Sanguinaire wants to dominate men and humiliate them. It is truly evil, and psychotic, but it is not stupid. It can play coy, appear to be helpful and wise, and can enjoy perverting the pure of mind and spirit, leading them slowly down a path of apathy, torture and madness.

**TREASURE OF THE BUCCANEERS:** The crew of the Triumphant hides its loot inside a large chest hidden in a cut out wall section near their quarters around the letter "C" on the map. The chest is trapped, with a lethal needle trap (save vs poison or death), and a nervous gas trap spreading 20 feet around the chest (save vs poison or have a seizure resulting in loss of consciousness for 1-3 round and causing nerve damage with the permanent loss of -2 DEX) triggered when the chest is opened.

The chest contains 323 PP, 578 GP, 223 SP and 71 CP, a rough map of the Olmechean forest, a **glass eye** worth 10 GP, a **leather spy glass** dweomered as a set of **eyes of the eagle** (q.v.), six (6) **bottles of spicy rum** worth 80 GP each, three (3) **rolls of expensive silks** from Iyakhara worth 2,000 GP a piece, a bag of rough, black tobacco worth 40 GP, the **fur of a taurc** (a large animal with the stature and pause of a grizzly bear and the face of a wild boar) worth 2,000 GP, a dozen **vials of fish oil** that are worth little more than 10 GP a piece but extremely flammable (a quarter the quantity of fish oil produces the same explosion and splash damage as flaming oil), a half dozen (6) bags of **spices** from Iyakhara and beyond including local varieties of curry, saffron, sumac, cardamom, coriander and galangal, each worth about 400 GP a bag, and an **authentic curved blade from Nippon** which would likely perform as a normal long sword in combat melee situations, but is worth 2,000 GP as a work of art of its own. Last but not least, it contains a fist-sized, semi-translucent crystal not unlike quartz that looks like white, clouded cubes inserted into one another as an irregular solid of a single block, an

overgrown, **magic salt crystal** similar to those depicted on various art work inside the Tomb of Amun Paal (see table of *Historical Discoveries* in this area). It can be used to transform 1,000 cubic feet of still water into saline water, or deliver 1d6 damage if used as a melee weapon to hurt creatures sensitives to salt, like the Cochlean Beast. It can also be used to make water spells such as *water blast\** and *water fall\** spray out saline water which would be devastating to the Beast, giant slugs and the like. If ever submerged in running water for more than four melee rounds, the crystal will be dissolved permanently. (13,010 GP in goods, 16,841 GP and 1 CP total)

**OLMECHEAN PYGMIES (15):** SZ S; MV 90 ft./180 ft. jump; AL CE; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 5; #AT 1; D 1d4 spear in melee, D 1d4 sling ranged, or D 2-6 antlers on the back, on a jump. The Olmechean Pygmies who made it through the Antler Gate are all under the sway of the Cochlean Beast and the Black Heart of Amun Paal.

**THE COCHLEAN BEAST:** SZ L; MV varies by form; AL CE; HD 9+3; HP 66, if the Beast is brought to 0 HP it is not killed, but forced into its liquid form; AC varies by form; #AT varies by form. Sleep, charm, hold and other mind-affecting spells have no effect on the Cochlean Beast. It has control over creatures linked with predation, rot and decay (this includes all manners of insects, spiders, rats, caterpillars, flies, scarabs, gastropods, vultures and jackals, the occasional tiger or lion, etc.), and can call them to its service when needed, either as companions and foot soldiers, as diversions, such as summoning swarms to interrupt spell casters, or as sacrificial lambs to dissolve against its flesh, and heal its mortal wounds. The Beast can only be hit with slashing and magical weapons, unless it assumes its projectile form (see below). It is vulnerable to salt: salted water and saline solutions sprayed on the Beast will inflict D 2d4 with splash 10 feet around for 1-3 damage to other creatures vulnerable to salt, if any, and Seriously Affected by iron, as an elf or an orc.

The Cochlean Beast can assume four different shapes or forms. It takes 4 segments for it to assume a different form:

**HEADLESS GIANT** (MV 120 ft., AC 2, #AT 1 ranged or 2 melee, Ranged acid spit erupts from severed neck, D 2d4 to victims standing within the 10 ft. by 10 ft. square of primary impact, splash damage for D 1-3 within 10 feet radius around primary impact. 2d4/2d4 fists, or grab if both fists hit, then hug on the next round with saving throw vs. magic to avoid paralyzation, and level drain either way, as the snails and acid slime devour the flesh of the victim. This level drain grants +1 HD of

regenerated HP to the Beast, up to its maximum HP). The Beast looks like a stone giant completely skinned, bleeding, covered with snails and slime eating at its flesh, the bloody stump of a neck sticking out, ripped open, where the head should have been, and large stag antlers protruding from its shoulder blades. The Beast is not affected by blunt weapons while in this form. Slashing and magical weapons will inflict normal damage. The Beast exudes fear in this form, per the spell, with a saving throw vs magic negating the effects.

**FOUR-LEGGED HORROR** (MV 210 ft., AC 5, #AT 2, D 4d4 antlers or 1d8/1d8 hooves). This form is assumed through a warp spasm that dislocates the joints of the Beast and causes it to go on all four, with dislocated joints and bones allowing it to move extremely fast and at bizarre angles. The antlers on the shoulder blades cover the back of the creature and can be used to fight and charge. The Beast is not affected by blunt weapons while in this form. Slashing and magical weapons will inflict normal damage.

**ANTLERED PROJECTILE** (MV 300 ft., AC 8, #AT 1, D 3d10 rolling like a boulder with antlers): The Beast rolls into a ball of skinless, hardened flesh and antlers that jumps at high velocity at its targets, bounces off walls and performs acrobatics to maximize damage on contact. The damage from its rolling antlers and charges is awesome, but the Beast is extremely vulnerable and open to attacks. Due to all the muscles of the Beast being compact and hardened while in this form, it is vulnerable to blunt and piercing weapons as well.

**LIQUID FORM** (MV 30 ft., AC 10, #AT n/a): The Beast assumes the form of a mix of spit and acid. The substance is thick, and can move slowly along hard surfaces, on walls and ceilings, even in fresh water (not in seas or oceans as the salinity of the milieu would destroy it), as it will not mix with it. The Beast is nigh invulnerable in this form, but for magical fires, lightning, and salt.

Touching the Cochlean Beast with bare hands or exposed skin is a very bad idea, as the acidic slime covering its body also secretes a numbing effect that paralyzes its victims unless they succeed a saving throw versus magic. Those who are paralyzed are in a state of bliss, and the fractured mind of the Beast visits them in their dreams, usually as the enzymes of its body consumes them (in its giant form). Victims who have had their levels drained by the Cochlean Beast may be haunted and visited in their nightmares for the rest of their lives, as the Beast tries to steer them and use them as pawns by inflicting trauma and psychologically twisting them over years of abuse.

If the Beast is dropped to 0 HP in combat, it turns into liquid, disperses, and makes its way back to the stone shell (see Antler Gate below). The heart will beat once, opening the Antler Gate and the Cochlean beast will reform slowly inside the shell as it calls all manners of life to it to feed and regenerate. The process takes 12 hours to complete. The Beast is then healed and free to leave the shell. The stone, coiled shell of the Cochlean Beast is extremely tough (considered AC -5, takes a magical weapon +3 or better to hit it, with 66 HP). It takes salt to weaken it enough to drive an iron spike through it.

The Black Heart of Amun Paal remains within the confines of the shell at all times. If the party manages to avoid the Beast, survives the confines of the Antler Gate, and discovers the hidden space where the shell resides (see below), they will find it filled with acid and plasma protecting the Heart. If the heart is pierced with an iron spike right then and there, the Beast ceases to exist, no saving throw.

**ANTLERED SERVANTS:** The creatures slain by the Cochlean Beast through level drain become Antlered Servants. These can be any type of humanoids, who just become undead with antlers growing from their shoulder blades and along their spines in the back. The damage of the antlers depends on the size of the servant: 2d3 for small, 2d4 for medium, and 4d4 for large. The Olmechean Pygmies above already received this treatment. The pirates have avoided this corruption by submitting to the Beast immediately and willingly, thus far.

Various creatures lair around the main plaza along with the Cochlean Beast. A major confrontation would surely involve a collection of creatures including the Pygmies, some caterpillars, slugs and other possible jungle critters. Mix it up a little bit.

**CADAVEROUS CATERPILLARS (4):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL CE; Surprise 1-5; HD 3+2; HP 14 avg.; AC 6; #AT 4; D 1d3/1d3/1d3/1d3 tentacles, plus paralysis on a hit (saving throw versus poison negates). The Cadaverous Caterpillar appears as a white, bulbous, worm-like creature with two sets of tiny black eyes and four translucent, gooey tentacles spreading from the rim of its sharp-toothed mouth. The Cadaverous Caterpillar has the ability to blend in its surroundings. It paralyzes its victims to then eat them or lay 2d4 eggs inside of them. These eggs usually kill their host in 5-10 days. See the Caterpillar's entry in Appendix A, Monsters and Characters for more information.

**HORNED SLUGS:** SZ M; MV 40 ft./240 ft. zoom; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 8; #AT 1; D. 2d4 Acid spit within 40 ft. If a Horned slug has a clear path of 60 plus feet in front

of a space it has spitted on, it can slide and zoom up to 240 ft. to slam against a victim horns first for D (2d4) x2. Small version is 1 HD, MV 30 ft., 180 ft. zoom, D (2-6) x2. Large version is 4 HD, MV 60 ft., 300 ft. zoom, D (4-16) x2. Horned slugs take half damage from blunt weapons and are vulnerable to salt: salted water and saline solutions sprayed on a slug will inflict D 2d4 with splash 10 feet around for 1d3 damage to other creatures vulnerable to salt, if any.

**THE ANTLER GATE:** The Antler Gate is the 20-foot wide, south-western corridor of the complex. It goes on for about 50 feet before closing like a dead end. The entrance of the corridor as well as the interior, but for the ground, are covered with hundreds upon hundreds of intertwined, wet, as if polished, antlers. When the Black Heart of Amun Paal beats, the corridor contracts and/or opens up at the end. The light of day pours from the other side, as well as the sounds of the Olmecoan jungle beyond. The Gate remains open for 1d3 turns, during which NPCs and creatures can walk into the corridor to the other side. The Heart of Amun Paal can forbid passage to some or all creatures by contracting the gate and corridor on their way, making it feel like the whole tunnel of antlers collapses on itself, impales the intruders, and then slowly consumes the bodies. It will not let its prisoners go, but calls mystically to animals on the other side to join the fray, if and when necessary (the referee pick and choose, or use random encounters tables for jungle settings of the game variant of their choice).

The Black Heart itself is secured away in the ceiling of the tunnel, inside the shell of the Cochlean Beast entirely hidden by the antlers covering everything. Exactly at the same spot, near the south-western end of the corridor, an exact copy of the shell lies buried in the ground. A small bump is visible there. This copy shines shell with a bright Nys-tal's magic aura, and is in fact a Mimic tasked with defending the original.

**MIMIC:** SZ M; MV 30 ft.; AL TN; HD 8; HP 44; AC 7; #AT 1; D 3d4; Camouflage, glue (holds whatever part of a creature touched it). If poked, the Mimic will attack and form a mouth howling for help. If the real shell is instead found, the Mimic will try to surprise the party and attack them, likewise forming a mouth to cry for help. If the Mimic is on its way to be defeated or if the party is close to destroying the heart, the Black Heart will trigger a beat, collapsing the tunnel entirely for 10d6 damage to everyone inside, including the Mimic. If the Mimic is still buried in the ground, it is immune to this damage.

The shell itself is about 7 feet in diameter, coiled like

a snail's, and made of what appears to be some sort of dark, green and brown marble mimicking the real thing. As previously mentioned, the shell is extremely tough, AC -5, takes a magical weapon +3 or better to hit it, with 66 HP. If the Beast has been defeated and currently regenerates inside the shell, it is sealed, and will otherwise require salt to soften the material and drive an iron stake through it. If the Beast has not been defeated or is currently about, the shell is not sealed, and the heart bathes inside the shell in a mix of blood and acid. It can be reached with a spike and impaled through the opening, slaying the Beast immediately.

**HEART BEATS:** In addition to its regular beats during periods of activity, the Black Heart can prompt such events occasionally. (1) If the Black Heart, which is the force that ultimately controls the Beast and its allies, feels like it is losing control of the area of the Tomb of Amun Paal, it will beat in order to open the gate and attract new creatures to the area. After the initial chaos the Beast will subjugate them quickly and use them to its advantage. (2) If the Beast is defeated, the Heart will beat to call insect and wild life to itself so it can regenerate the creature once it is back to it in its Liquid Form. (3) If the shell is attacked, or the corridor needs control, the Heart can beat to contract the entire Antler Gate and corridor and collapse it on itself (this inflicts 10d6 damage to whoever is left inside. Those within 20 feet of the exit of the corridor to the plaza can roll a saving throw versus breath weapon to run and jump out of the way just in time).

When the Heart beats it feels like the deep sound comes out of every wall and ceiling within the Tomb. It is impossible to trace where it is coming from. The Antler Gate ought to become a focus of attention at some point, but NPCs such as Baldassar and Melisedek could eventually start to suspect something and drop some helpful hints along the way. Each beat of the Heart has a 80% chance to trigger a tremor counting towards the opening of the lower levels of the Marmoreal Tomb (see *Special Rules*, Introduction for more about them).

**THE BLACK HEART OF AMUN PAAL:** Once the Beast is defeated, the Black Heart of Amun Paal will appear as a jet black, double-fist sized organ with an iron spike or similar blade run through it. Keeping the iron inside the Heart is the key to controlling it. Its spirit is otherwise too powerful to control, and is likely to shatter its owner's mind as the being that was once Amun Paal takes over and restarts a whole new cycle of corruption somewhere else.

**STUDY OF THE BLACK HEART:** The myth of the Black Heart is tied to the legend of Amun Paal, his status as a



great king and general of the stone giant who thought to destroy the Yiggite Empire of the Snake men once and for all. His campaigns hardened his feelings and compromised his mind to such a degree it made him ready for one last stage of corruption, the ultimate sacrifice of his soul as he reached through the Obsidian realms to destroy the Yiggite Empire. The Obsidian realms constitute a web of memories and dimensions leeching off the consciousness of the shades of the Eurth, and it is through this network created by the dark gods of the Yiggites that Amun Paal had to travel to reach the refuge of the Olmecan jungle. This transition, not unlike a travel through the ethereal or astral realms, is what ultimately created the Black Heart of Amun Paal. When both the king and Typhon died, their remains together corrupted the jungle around them. The Heart made it back to Aktum and the Marmoreal Mound for burial, but ultimately it would want to reunite with the remains of the kings, hence the link to the forest created via the Antler Gate.

**USES OF THE BLACK HEART:** When controlled outside of one's body with a spike or similar of iron, the Black Heart of Amun Paal can stabilize the dying and bring them back to -1 HP within one turn of being anywhere between -1 and -10 HP. It can also bring back the dead beyond -11 HP to 1 HP if applied on the corpse within the same melee round. Twisting the spike of iron protruding from the Heart allows the use of spell-like effects such as *animate dead* 2/day, *summon insects* 2/day, and *insect plague* 1/day. The user of the Black Heart can control undead like an evil cleric of the same level, using the appropriate clerics affecting undead table for chances of success. While twisting the iron going through the Heart, the user can drink the drops of black blood pouring out of the wound, and grow antlers from the shoulder blades, like an Antlered Servant (see above). This makes the user submit to his or her immediate instincts (fight or flight, desire to feed, challenge for dominance, as decided between player and referee). In this state, the user can control other insects and some predatory animals like an evil cleric of the same level would the undead. Treat this as a lesser form of lycanthropy, which can be stopped after a full turn with a successful saving throw vs. magic. If the saving throw fails, the user will lose control of his or her own mind, and bail entirely to not reappear for a day or night at least, if not several days altogether. Who knows what the creature is capable of while blacking out for such extended periods of time? The character will likely reappear having completely forgotten what happened in the interval.

There is no doubt that evil clerics and magic-users will find much more horrific uses for the Heart. It is entirely possible for a madman to want to replace his own heart with it, but this procedure would require surgeon skills, alchemical skills and components, not to mention magical skills that would be well beyond the average adventurer, and would remove a character from the game entirely. The transformation would be horrific, and could create an entirely new and different beast, a lycanthropic and/or undead being of unfathomable power which could possibly create Cochlean projections of itself and corrupt everything and everyone around it.

**BEYOND THE ANTLER GATE (SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR):** When the Heart beats, the Antler Gate opens up at the end of the corridor. It is linked to the Olmecan jungle on this shade of the Eurth, through the Obsidian realms, and might call all manners of creatures and NPCs from such a fantastic environment. This would add exponential layers of complexity to the current status quo between the Beast, the pygmies and the buccaneers on one side, and the lizard men on the other. For the moment, the Obrachaeans and their allies of E-17 are a non-issue as they investigate this specific location and the Utukku of E-23 avoid conflicts as much as they can. The catfish worm of E-22 is an issue to get out of the underground complex, to be sure, but nothing overwhelming strength cannot solve in due time. Time is on the Beast's side, though it does not make the exact same calculation in regards to the Marmoreal Tomb itself at E-28, which it senses to be a powder keg with rich magic of Chaos buried underneath. The Beast keeps its distance from it, for now. If the Black Heart becomes aware of parties of adventurers meddling Marmoreal Tomb, priorities could change.

The Olmecan jungle is a realm of adventure onto itself the referee is free to expand based on the few hints gathered from this module. It is likely the remains of Amun Paal are hidden somewhere, but by whom and for what purpose remains to be determined. There is no doubt that whatever became of the remains exercises an influence upon the land that corrupts and invites conflict between the native tribes of humans, demi-humans and non-humans inhabiting it, such as the lizard men and pygmies featured here. There are stories of an ancient volcano the Yiggites once used as a fortress. Maybe the Black Heart could be undone by being plunged down the chimney into the magma below. The wild life incorporates all manners of species, including massive tigers and reptiles long gone from our own Earth. The west side of the jungle is mostly enclosed by the tall mountains of the Anpu, though a portion is open to the ocean on the

North West (where the Triumphant still moors). The entire forest, covering hundreds of miles on a side, is lined with the Iyeteru River and a string of lakes in the east eventually leading to the magic land of Khemet.

The Antler Gate opens directly into the jungle, like a mess of antlers floating between two sculpted poles on the other side. Among the tribes of lizard men that knew Melisedek, it is said that spraying a father's blood onto the antlers opens the gate, but whether that actually works at all or is just a legend after his departure from this land is for the referee to decide. It is possible some trigger might open the gate from the Olmechean side, but it is likely to be a little more selective, for instance involving the blood of Antler Servants sent back to the forest or their descendants.

When the Black Heart is finally neutralized with an iron spike, the myriad of antlers composing the Gate will slowly (1d6 melee rounds) relax and fade away, revealing an immaculate night sky on the sides, above, and below. The connection with the Olmechean forest will be severed, and the south-western corridor will change to become like a pier stretching into the unbound immensities of space. After a moment, the various victims of the Gate throughout the centuries will be released and fall gently like snowflakes in the endless night. The remains of a short and skinny man of wild Gaelish ancestry will slowly land on the corridor. He is Uil, son of Nel, an ancient leader about the people of Anu. Bringing him back home since his disappearance centuries ago would be cause for great celebration among the Gaelish, and would earn the folk's friendship towards the party. He is still wearing a **Ring of Mammal Control** at his hand and a **Wand of Illumination** at his belt (15 charges remaining), with the **Cloak of the Ram** on his shoulders, a dark brown fur cloak allowing the wearer to physically change into a Ram twice a day (stats and HD remain the same, but speed increases to 150 ft. on land, and modes of attacks including horns and charge reflect those of the real creature; both the *Shield at E-9* and *Axe of the Ram* from E-25 add each one more change per day to the capacities of the Cloak, if these items are worn together).

Depending on the size of the party, the referee might want to add more treasure to reward the neutralization of the Heart. If such is desired, just have more ancient adventurers from the past land softly by the physical path of the corridor. They will appear if they departed from this world just a few minutes prior, still wearing their gear, most of it crushed, the wounds still visible, but peace on their faces, with still some of their gear intact. Possibilities include: (1) a snake man wearing ex-

travagant velvet robes, still holding a flamberge-like sinuous **dagger of venom +2** with a copper hilt and obsidian blade, and wearing a golden, spiral **ring of free action** at the end of its tail; (2) an ancient elf whose traits are barely recognizable as human, wearing a **+1 ironwood banded mail**, an item extremely rare, and holding a very hard flower made of several gems cut like petals and held together by a fine thread of silver, which must be a forgotten **holy symbol** of his race (worth perhaps 2,000 GP as jewelry, but worth infinitely more as a bargaining chip or a sign of good will to the elves of Tor Ildanach in the Grim Wood, since it is a priceless heirloom to them); (3) a stout female dwarf next to him with a crushed brass armor and a highly decorated **+2 throwing hand** axe still in her grip (also worth a great deal as a bargaining chip and heirloom to the dwarves of the Palehorn and beyond). The bodies will rest there, peacefully, as many others slowly float into oblivion around them.

**25. DEAD MINOTAUR AND VINES.** This tunnel becomes hard to navigate, the waters flowing down from gradual steps as one navigates an inverted "S" progression leading upwards to the source of this particular section for the underground river network. When the tunnel becomes so tight and sharp it becomes impossible to explore any further, the party will notice vines constellated of beautiful, kaleidoscopic, orchid-like flowers littering the ground and walls around them. The psychic vines of Omdai are conscious, and can subdue their victims by triggering a variety of responses, from drowsiness or fear or confusion, to paralyzation or unconsciousness, to rage or excitement, through the combinations of clouds of pollen they project around them.

Usually, the vines trigger fatigue, and let their victims fall asleep here so they can burrow under their skin and consume them in a matter of days. This is what they did with the remains of a Minotaur whose bones can easily be spotted intertwined with the plants. The party will be able to find a finely decorated dagger worth 300 GP there, along with the **Axe of the Ram** (+1 battle axe, +3 versus lycanthropes, handle can be used for one additional free attack 2/day that causes 1d6 damage on a hit (magic bonus does apply) and knocks the target prone, or knock down doors and large objects with an assumed Strength of 18/00. If combined with either the *Shield* or the *Cloak of the Ram* (see the Red Apes of Lyon at E-9 and Beyond the Antler Gate at the end of E-24), the axe does 2d6 damage on additional handle attacks instead, and knocks down with a Strength of 19 (Open Doors and Bend Bars/Lift Gates as Hill Giant). If combined with both items, it becomes 3d6 damage and a Strength of 20 (Stone Giant) instead).

The psychic vines recently gathered some valuable information from a few of the tunnels' inhabitants. They know something is likely to upset the relative peace they want to maintain. The newcomers to the tunnels, the chaos bound to grow out of the Marmoreal Tomb at E-28, the various creatures serving Bedulbloop and the Herald of Woe around E-17, the new cycle of activity of the Black Heart, all these recent events represent uncertainty, an existential threat to the vines.

When the party shows up, the vines will make telepathic contact via pollen with the player-characters and propose a bargain. If the party is able to lure some humanoids to them, the vines will be able to switch the minds of the characters with those of the creatures they bring back. The party will then be able to join the forces of the intruders, spy on them and sabotage whatever might upset the peace of the vines.

If the party agrees, let them plan to lure humanoids here. The vines could theoretically summon victims from afar, but will observe the party's behavior. When the victims are lured by the vine, it will be able to project clouds of pollen knocking everyone out and allowing the switch of bodies to happen. From there, the party will be able to observe and infiltrate various groups, including the forces of the Herald of Woe. Utlu, Utukku, lizard men and troglodytes will all do. Wearing magic items is not a good idea: it is likely to make the characters stand out and mark them as worth investigating. If the body inhabited by a playercharacter's spirit dies, the player-character wakes up in his own body, next to the vines. The items carried by the dead humanoid are now out of reach. The spirit of the humanoid is lost, and soon to be randomly reincarnated.

This should provide a change of pace to the party, at the very least. The referee is free from there to roleplay the politics between the various factions "from the inside", to their fullest. See *Developments* at the end of this chapter for more ideas.

**26. CAVE LOTUS.** This enlarged portion of the underground river that flows towards the ruined settlement at E-28 shines of a blinding yellow light when exposed to the lights of candles and torches. The waters here are saturated with plant life and blooming flowers of golden lotus. The pollen of the flowers causes lethargy (-4 to hit, -2 AC and damage, saving throw vs poison to negate and be affected with drowsiness instead). This lethargy can easily be dissipated with a sharp hit or a loud audible interruption, but the drowsiness (-1 to hit, -1 AC) that follows will last for 1-3 weeks unless dissipated by a *neutralize poison* spell. The flowers could be taken to an alchemist and changed into a powder that could be



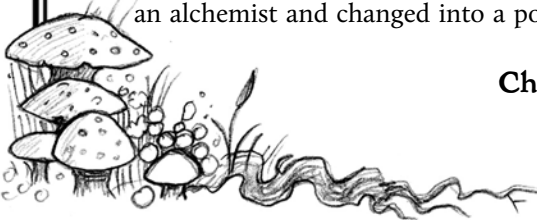
blown at a target's face to create a comparable effect (1d6 doses, 60 GP value per dose). If the plants and stems are left alone, the flowers will grow back after 2d4 months.

*A constrictor snake and its young are hiding on the rock's surface, and will wait for the party to investigate the flowers before dropping to bite and constrict their targets.*

**CONSTRUCTOR SNAKE:** SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL TN; HD 6+1; HP 49; AC 3; #AT 2; D 1d4/1-10 bite, constriction (ongoing, per round). The Constrictor snake escaped from the Tomb of Amun Paal at E-24. If slain, it will be revealed that this constrictor snake is actually a **Staff of the Serpent** that has been temporarily animated by the energies of Chaos permeating from the depths of the Mound. The remains will revert to the staff form immediately after death, and will still be usable as the magic item of the Python sort.

**CONSTRUCTOR SNAKE YOUNGS (3):** Same as a above, but with HD 4, HP 22, 19, 14, #AT 2; D 1d4/1d6 bite and constriction (ongoing, per round).

**27. LUMINESCENT WATERFALL.** The waters in this flooded cave are tumbling down from a tight, almost vertical tunnel burrowing its way down to this point. The walls are covered with vines growing light blue luminescent fruits the size of peaches. The fruits are perfectly



edible (worth 40 GP base value; 3D6 fruits available). They can be used as light sources slowly losing their shine as they decay, within the next two, but they remain edible for 3-6 days. There is a 1-in-10 chance that a fruit might be containing rot grubs, who seem to love their flesh almost as much as a human's. A group of 1d6 firebugs float around and feed on the fruits. A well-treated firebug can become an asset to the party, and even accept to be leashed in exchange for food and affection.

**ROT GRUBS:** SZ S; MV 10 ft.; AL TN; AC 9; HP 1; #AT 0; D Nil buy burrowing, death in 1-3 turns on a failed saving throw versus death.

**FIREBUG:** SZ S; MV 30ft./180ft. flying; HD 1/2; AL TN; HP 3 avg.; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1-3. Firebugs are plump insects the size of a watermelon shining of an orange amber color when flying around. They illuminate a 40-foot radius area like a torch, and can flare 1/day to increase that radius to 80 ft. for one melee round. Anyone standing within 20 feet of a firebug flaring must make a saving throw versus paralyzation or become blind for 1d4 melee rounds.

**28. GRUNN GALEB (MARMOREAL TOMB).** This is the location of the ruined dwarven settlement known as the Marmoreal Tomb. Accessing Grunn Galeb from area E-2 leads directly to area L1-1. From the underground rivers at E-26/27, the party would emerge at L1-32 inside Grunn Galeb.

## DEVELOPMENTS

The environs of the Marmoreal Tomb have been designed, much like the Hex of Chapter 1, to present a set of groups and factions that are likely to come to oppositions and generate conflict during the course of the campaign. It also represents a sort of juxtaposition or mix between the wilderness outside on one hand, and the dungeon-like underground rivers and caverns on the other. See the *Introduction* of this chapter for more about this.

Going from the general with the Hex and Environs to the more specific descriptions of the dungeon itself, we have presented here in this chapter a few specific areas that can either be visited in passing and run as they are described, or can be used as side projects and developed by each individual referee with their own maps and features, even as their own parallel dungeons next to the Marmoreal Tomb, if so desired. They can also be used both ways over time: first as described, and then later on, the same tremors opening new areas inside the Marmoreal Tomb could also reveal passageways, sections of dungeons and multiple levels in areas previously explored.

**THE TUNNELS OF THE ISLE OF THE WATCHERS (E-6):** The Towers of Lament (A) and Vision (B) are linked by a network of tunnels gathering around the lair of the Owlbears straight in the middle of the island. Though the Towers were built by giants, they have been occupied by different folks and factions down the ages, most notably some Frankhian knights during the Crusade Against the Giants, some 300 years ago. It is absolutely possible that the network of tunnels might incorporate a shrine or hidden lair of the hobgoblins and humanoids who served the giants, perhaps a set of tombs for the ancient Knights of the Frankhs, some remnant of the presence of elves and dwarves in the area, or more. Some of these tunnels could in turn link to the personal developments of the referee when it comes to the Tombs of Ur Pa Kraat and Amun Paal, and provide readymade secondary exits for them.

**THE IYATHARI TEMPLE (E-8):** The old barracks, laboratories and resting areas can be as big and convoluted as needed. The connections of this area to the surface and the depths via the tunnels running towards the Marmoreal Tomb make it an ideal place for expansions, big and small. The long empty quarters of the Iyathari could have become the lair of some predators; some humanoids fleeing from one of the factions around the Tomb could find refuge here, as long as they leave the passages infested by the undead on the way to the Shrine of Iyorthar alone. Conversely, the influence of the chaos of Iyorthar could grow and populate the area with more undead, attract more evil beings to this place as the power under the Marmoreal Tomb steers anew. Lastly, the powers of the depths of the Tomb which were once reached by the Iyathari to catastrophic results might come back up again when the chaos there is fully awakened. All of these possibilities could happen in sequence, first with inhabitants from the outside, and then the power of Iyorthar growing and creating conflict in this place, and then the denizens of the depths of the Marmoreal Tomb reaching out through the tunnels here in the Temple.

**THE HAUNTED WATCHTOWER (E-9):** The depths of the Haunted Watchtower could be used in different ways: as an extension of the lair of the Red Apes, perhaps as a greater detention area for kidnapped victims and persecution, maybe with rodents and underground critters sniffing around, for instance, or as the place for an actual haunting that could provide referees with a place to insert an apparition with a quest to be fulfilled around the Pass or in the Marmoreal Tomb (the shade of a stone giant needing to be reunited with the armor that was taken to him as a coward and that could be found somewhere on level 2 is just one possibility), or as a place where an evil entity escapes from the dungeon via the



mirror linking to area **LC-24** in the Crypts. This entity could use the Red Apes as buffer as it slowly builds power in the underground levels of the tower. It takes creatures of 6+ HD to fill that role and serve at least as a foil against heroic level characters. Combining two of these ideas, we could come up with a triumvirate of wraiths of stone giants attracting evil creatures to them. Recovering their armors or weapons from level 2 would prove them to be cowards and would be the action that would undo the magic holding them here inside the Watchtower.

**THE THREE DEAD KINGS:** The Marmoreal Tomb functions as a single unit inside the framework of the world and module around it, and while the Hex presents the more malleable, general groups that could be interpreted in the greater number of directions by individual referees, the Environs present a much more specific, hands-on set up gearing towards the specifics of a dungeon environment, yet with the same idea that a loose attitude and possible further developments will bring the whole further to life. The three kings buried are part of a pattern reflecting aspects of the history of Aktum and the legacy of the giants, the ancient mystery they are associated with, on one hand, and on the other hand the themes present in the present on the Hex, the opposition of life and corruption, and the presence of deeper, wilder things deep beneath the Eurth pushing them to confrontation.

In this picture, Ur Pa Kraat the Gatherer is thematically linked to the forces of the Deep, the unconscious, the psychic, the fire of archetypes beneath the Eurth. The Obrachaeans dedicated to discover the mysteries of his resting place are themselves strange and Lovecraftian in nature. This is balanced out by the Tomb of Amun Paal the Conqueror, linked with the powers of life unbound, having surrendered to a corrupted and self-destructive influence of magic and chaos. It is both opposite and similar to the curse of vampirism affecting Amal Khas, the once Watcher trapped beneath the dungeons, linked with the powers of Un-Death. The Curses of Amal Khas and Amun Paal are so similar they are bound to clash with one another, unless the Obrachaeans keep on acting as a bumper between them. The three kings balance and complete one another thematically, and a conflict between them is inevitable.

**BUILDING ON THE TOMBS' SIMILARITIES:** Referees can spot the similarities between the structural features of the Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat at **E-17**, the Tomb of Amun Paal at **E-24** and the Dwarven Settlement of Grunn Galeb at **E-28** from the map of the Environs: the same one-hundred (100) foot square area or plaza in the center (as area **LI-8** in *Grunn Galeb*, Chapter 3), with large, 20-foot or larger, corridors stretching perpendicular to this

main plaza (area **LI-15** of Grunn Galeb), and all around the outline of a cluster of rooms that makes up the bulk of the level in-between the corridors. The original builders are the same: the Stone Giants of Aktum, though the Marmoreal Tomb level was significantly altered by the dwarves when they settled the area. Referees are encouraged to use these similarities to map specific sections of this area as required. It is possible to use the map of *Level 1 - Grunn Galeb* as a template to detail the levels of both Tombs, with differences as noted on the map of the Environs. It is worth noting that where the outlines of the Tombs connect with the water is meant to be open terrain, not walled, (E.g. The Tomb of Ur Pa Kraat seems to have at least partially sunk into the Frog Lake, so the ruins are entirely exposed). Likewise, the river running through the Tomb of Amun Paal is a feature, with a main 20foot wide bridge connecting the two halves. It shouldn't be too difficult from there to add some specific critters building up these areas as full dungeon levels of their own. If the referee wills it, Chapters 4 and 5 of this module could be used to build specific Burial Vaults for both Tombs, and beyond even, if the *Underworld Expansion* is in play.

**THE TOMB OF UR PA KRAAT (E-17):** Additional critters will most likely involve Utluz (frog-men) trying to hide from the troglodytes and Obrachean, wild animals and dungeon monsters that can survive close to the surface and by the water, including burrowing insects, rats, and the like. All additional inhabitants will be submitted to conflict with the Obrachaeans as they take over the whole Tomb for study. Bedulbloop already knows the Amber Pyramidion has to do with the functionality of this place. Sooner or later, after squeezing all the information he can from the ruins around the pyramid, he will get back to the Golden City inside the globe and conclude the secrets of the mastery of fire are waiting to be found inside. Bedulbloop will get inside to the arena once, but the shades will hate what they sense of his mind and reject him outright. From there, the Obrachean will be obsessed to find a way inside. This, along with the resistance the other Obrachaeans are meeting at the edge of their cavern, will prompt Bedulbloop to ask from reinforcements from Nester's Folly (*The Hobby Shop Dungeon*) via the portal at **E-19**.

The presence of the Obrachaeans in these tunnels will thus increase over time, first with a more frog-men slaves, troglodytes, and Obrachean Skirmishers. Then it will be more Warriors led by an Assassin. Ultimately, it will culminate with the arrival of the Ometeplokh, the Herald of Woe himself. Note that if the Herald of Woe is somehow eventually defeated, the cult of the *Chosen of the Deep* on the other side of the gate in Nester's Folly has not ceased to exist. The Obrachaeans will see it as the

Herald's personal failure, however, and will likely close the gate at E-19 for the time being. Check out the various types of Obrachaeans in Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters* for more information on their nature and abilities. There are even greater types of Obrachaeans, and the cult of the Chosen of the Deep is further described in *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*.

**OBRACHAEAN WARRIOR:** SZ M; MV 60 ft. (land), 180 ft. (swimming); AL CE; Surprise 4-in-6 skin camouflage; AC 4; HD 4+4; HP 20 avg.; #AT 2 ranged or 4 melee; D 1d4/1d4, or D 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d4, damage on one melee attack may be exchanged for D 1d2 constriction, then on next melee round attack D 2d6 automatic bite, with D 1d6 chewing each round after that; 4d10 GP owned.

**OBRACHAEAN ASSASSIN:** SZ M; MV 80 ft. (land), 240 ft. (swimming); AL CE; Surprise 4-in-6 skin camouflage; AC 1; HD 4+4; HP 20 avg.; #AT 1 ranged or 2 melee or 1 backstab; D 1d6 (x2 if in position for ranged backstab) or D (2d6)x2 grouped tentacles backstab, (saving throw vs paralyzation to notice the shine of the blue rings and avoid a +4 to hit surprise attack) or D 1d4/1d4, damage on one melee attack may be exchanged for D 1-2 constriction, then on next melee round attack at +4 to hit while grabbed with D 1-2 + 2d4 (beak), with D 1d4 chewing each round after that; the Obrachaeon Assassin teleports (per dimension door) in clouds of ink in a 120 ft. radius at will, the blue rings covering its skin shine briefly before teleportation occurs (see above, saving throw vs. backstab), the Assassin has to wait 1d4 rounds before being about to teleport again; 4d10 GP owned.

**OMETEPLOKH, THE HERALD OF WOE:** SZ M; MV 60 ft. (land), 180 ft. (swimming), 90 ft. levitating; AL CE; Surprise 3-in-6 skin camouflage (if inactive and utterly still); AC 4; HD 6+6; HP 30 avg.; #AT 1 cartilage blast or 2 melee; D 2d6 (blast in 40 ft. radius, save vs. magic for half damage, Obrachaeans take no damage) or 1d6/1d6 (cartilage-formed weapons such as swords or spears), damage on one melee attack may be exchanged for D 1d4 constriction, then on next melee round attack at +4 to hit while grabbed with D 1d4 + 2d4 (beak), with D 1d4 chewing each round after that; The Herald of Woe can create clouds of ink in the air or underwater carrying dweomers of divine inspiration. It can Cure Light Wounds, and Chant (which is a buzzing vibration of the Obrachaeon's shell) at will within a 60 ft. radius. Likewise, the Herald can Cure Disease, Neutralize Poison, and Cure Serious Wounds within the same radius twice (2) a day. The Herald of Woe is immune to mental forms of attack involving the power of will (as per high wisdom), and extends this ability to all Obrachaeans within a 60 ft. radius as a continuous +4 to saving throws versus the same.

**SARCOPHAGUS OF AMAL KHAS (E-21):** The water crashing 200 feet down the well at E-21 seeps through a long crack running all along the northern cave wall. It falls further down, and then flows almost horizontally under the Crypts of the Marmoreal Tomb, in a crawl space that has been magically crushed by the magic of the giants of old. After yet another waterfall, the water gathers in a very deep, lightless cave, around a small island with only one feature: a huge, 20-foot long, 10 feet high and wide casket made out of a single block of celadon marble. Inside lie the remains of the vampire, Amal Khas.

**AMAL KHAS, STONE GIANT AND VAMPIRE KING:** SZ L; MV 120 ft./180 ft. flight; AL CE; HD 9+3; HP 66; AC 0; #AT 1; D 7-22 (3d6+4) and two (2) levels of energy drain; can only be hit by magical +1 weapons or better; hurls rocks for 3d10 points of damage. Amal Khas regenerates 3 HP per melee round. If brought to 0 HP, he takes on a gaseous form and retreats to his sarcophagus, and can regenerate as normal vampires do. Amal Khas benefits from the same sleep, charm and hold immunities, and from the supernatural abilities as all vampires do, and can call servants and create vampire spawn in much the same way. Amal Khas cannot charm victims, however, but can passwall, stone shape, move earth, and use other earth like spell effects at will.

Let the parties exploring the natural caves and tunnels deal with the Obrachaeans and find out about the status quo going on at the site of the Tomb of Amun Paal first. When these two forces start to conflict with one another, or when the parties of adventurers have effected major changes in the balance of forces underground, then trigger the awakening of Amal Khas, who will first reach the underground river network by gaseous form, and will reach area E-21 fairly damaged by the water (even with all the precautions, levitating above the water, the multiple waterfalls will be extremely damaging to him, and will take some time and effort to overcome, which is the entire point of isolating his sarcophagus so far down below the Eurth). There, Amal Khas will blend with the stone, and become an evil haunting presence. He will explore the network, spy enemies, snatch humanoids and call animals to serve him progressively until he reveals himself as a force to be reckoned with.

**TOMB OF AMUN PAAL (E-23):** Being the most detailed area in this chapter, it should be easy to extrapolate an entire level from this information. If the referee decides to have an additional level under this area based off the Burial Vaults of the Marmoreal Tomb, consider relocating the Antler Gate in that lower level, perhaps with some collapsed sections between levels to allow some large critters to reach the Tomb and caves from the Vaults.

## CHAPTER 3

# GRUNN GALEB

*"The 'Marmoreal Tomb' suggests a cold, dignified mausoleum where the dead lie in honor and dignity. It exudes a sense of peace and immortality. But if the doom that befell the children of Belenor was half as bloody and half as cruel as is often depicted in the stories, then its irony should become readily apparent, as the dwarves and their assailants were never moved from the rooms and corridors of Grunn Galeb. There never were any ceremonies, or proper burials. No monuments or songs to honor the departed. Just the silence of death, and a bloody massacre left rotting in plain sight. But underground places do not remain empty very long, and the cycle of life starts again, with the carrion and those feasting upon it, first, and then those opportunistic enough to profit from the misery around them. From our neglect, new predators rise, and with them, new terrors to visit upon the world. Beware, for the halls of Grunn Galeb are not at peace."*

The halls of Grunn Galeb may lie in ruins, but what we are faced with here is a dungeon in its burgeoning phase, when a lair large enough for a society of monsters to fully develop has been left vacant for a while, and starts attracting new to its chaotic bosom. First a few scouts or marauders, then small groups move in. Some are wiped out, some coalesce into stronger forces. A pecking order slowly takes shape, made of enemies and alliances. From there, either the microcosm of the dungeon devours itself and leaves a new vacuum to be filled, which starts the process anew, or the hierarchy becomes solid enough to be projected outwards, in the wilderness and communities around it, creating a new pole of adventuring and evil in the world.

This level is past the first step. We have groups that are now solidified like the goblins under the command of Grosh the Great, area **LI-2I**, some allies or semi-allied individuals gravitating around them, like the ogre of **LI-8** is to Grosh and his goblins, and we still have relatively independent groups that may be a sign of new parties and conflicts to come, like the gnolls and kobolds of areas **LI-13** and **14**, or strong individuals that can operate without being yet noticed, as was the case with Osmanidius at area **LI-34**, until his recent, self-inflicted demise.

This design choice is voluntary, in that it emphasizes the robust nature of the environment, the possible futures that can unfold from the initial situation and early developments described by the key following this introduction. Referees reading through this material

should realize it would be fairly unrealistic if the gnolls remained separate from Grosh's goblins for too long, of if the Veneur kept hanging around the greater apartments of **LI-17** with no retaliation from any of the other current inhabitants of the Tomb. The way the environment evolves in contact with the player characters and on its own volition is what makes up the "story" of the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* campaign, and it takes a life of its own as the referee keeps role-playing the world in perpetual motion.

A number of entrances are presented to optimize the various paths of exploration. During their first expedition, the player-characters will notice the main entrance of the Tomb at area **LI-1**. They will also notice the balcony at area **LI-13**, and the mouth of the river at **LI-3**, all of which are viable options. Both the mouth of the waterfall and the balcony require some climbing, nothing too straining for a party using the proper equipment.

There are additional exits that will likely be found later, as the party explores the ruins. One can be reached via the catwalk hanging above the nest at **LI-30** and leads to a trap door in the ceiling marked "C" directly south of the nest. This is a shaft that can be climbed up and reaches the plateau and side of the Marmoreal Mound above the Tomb. The second is the river flowing through **LI-32**, which comes from the Cave System of Chapter 2. The piles of rubble at each end of the corridors marked **LI-15**, the pile of the ogre at **LI-8**, and the stairs of **LI-23A** each conceal ways to access the Burial Vaults of Chapter 4.

The vegetation directly outside the Tomb is considered barren: A few thorny bushes here and there, some tools taken from the dwarven quarry discarded on the ground, many rocks, and little healthy grass, the place is neither safe nor inviting. The referee may wish to check for random encounters in the wilderness if the party spends too much time by the entrances.

**AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE:** Trash litters the ground of the rooms and corridors of Grunn Galeb. The forces of Young Krassus were uncaring, and not particularly disciplined when looting the place. Furniture was destroyed, carpets and tapestries were ripped apart, vases and decorations were smashed against the walls. People were tortured and played with for the giants' amusement. Unforgivable acts of extreme callousness and butchery were inflicted upon their helpless victims. This



is a scene of horror which has been frozen in time and the referee's descriptions should emphasize this. Groups of humanoids have been slaughtered by the dwarves fighting to keep their families alive as they attempted to flee the horde. Giant stone boulders were released from the upper level of **LI-6** down the main entrance corridor to crush the invaders, only to be picked up by the Stone Giants and thrown back at the dwarves, smashing walls, stalls, and doors on their paths. Combatants were maimed, thrown like puppets, dismembered, and run through by uncaring, vicious, chaotic evil forces.

Notice several carts depicted on the map. While most of these have been damaged in some fashion or another, all of them still bear the metal plaques affixed to their sides. These plaques are engraved with runes of the dwarven language. If deciphered, the meaning of the runes becomes plain: *"In appreciation to the Stone-cutter Clan for a job well done. This cart is a gift from His Magnificent Eminence Grise, Nester De Guyx."* All the carts were indeed given by Nester the Eurthwright to the Stone-cutter dwarves as part of their reward once the work on his dungeon was completed.

**UNDERGROUND RIVER:** The underground river running throughout the complex is about five feet deep in places. It is shallow on its sides, meaning it is possible to walk from one location to the next along the natural caves it pierced in all this time it has been flowing here. The rocks are slippery, and the current may destabilize a moving individual walking in the water. Whether this calls for specific checks, especially in combat situations, is for the referee to decide. Where the corridors overlap with the river, assume there is a two-foot high stone curb on each side of the corridor, and that the river is visibly flowing underneath.

**TRAP DOORS:** The 10' x 10' brownish squares labelled "F" indicate trap doors in the floor. Lime green 10' x 10' squares labelled "C" indicate trap doors in the ceiling. These usually lead to prospecting tunnels and dead ends dug up by the dwarves in ages past, but not always. The two trap doors located in the floor of the corridor immediately above **LI-30** are actually part of a catwalk hanging about 15 feet over the Well of Nests in the very same room. It leads to a corridor with another trap door opening into the underground river flowing besides and around the well, in its own separated corridor and ends in a 20' x 20' room opening to passages west and south. The opening in the ceiling found at the end of the south passage is an escape route leading all the way up to the plateau above the dwarven complex. The trap door at the end of the corridor above area **LI-12** leads down to

Tomb of Garn Patuul, and the trap door in the ceiling of **LI-16** is the same as the trap door in the floor at **LI-16A**.

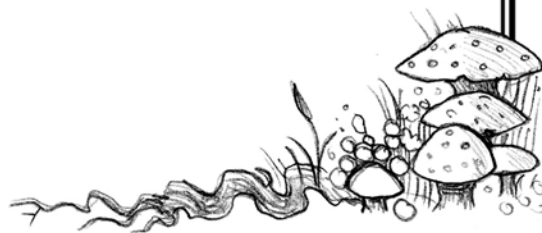
**SECRET PASSAGES:** The secret doors of the complex are generally stone slabs fitting seamlessly with the rest of the stonework: the dwarves were experts in stone-cutting, after all. The passage of time did affect their concealment, however, and they may be detected normally. All doors open when pressed upon, first moving a few feet inward, and then pivoting on powerful metal hinges previously hidden within the wall.

**RUBBLE AND EMPTY ROOM SEARCHES:** Most of the unnumbered rooms in the dwarven settlement are not really empty. They contain clutter, destroyed furniture, beams, and masonry off the walls. These spaces can be searched, with a slim chance of finding something valuable. This includes the individual 10' x 10' rooms of the lesser apartments **LI-II**, the businesses around the market place at **LI-8**, and more. It will take an exploration per such space to search thoroughly, and will trigger random encounters checks. It is very important to check for encounters: Time spent doing anything in the dungeon translates in a greater chance to be interrupted, found out, chased or ambushed. The party, and the players behind it, should always feel like time is a precious commodity. What they do carries a set of consequences, always. Don't search, don't find anything. Search, and take the risk of running into trouble sooner rather than later.

When the party searches an empty space or a pile of rubble, roll d100 and consult the following table:

**RUBBLE SEARCH GRUNN GALEB (Roll D100)**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 01-64 - | Nothing of value.   |
| 65-79 - | A consumable item of 40 GP base value, and two (2) gems worth 10 GP base value.             |
| 80-89 - | One or more (1-4) consumable items of 120 GP, and two (2) gems worth 50 GP base value.      |
| 90-94 - | A piece of jewelry worth 500 GP, and three (3) gems worth 100 GP base value.                |
| 95-97 - | A piece of jewelry worth 1,000 GP, and four (4) gems with 100 GP base value.                |
| 98-99 - | A rough uncut green diamond worth 1,000 GP base value, and four (4) gems 500 GP base value. |
| 00 -    | A rough uncut green diamond worth 5,000 GP base value.                                      |



**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS:** Check for random encounters every exploration turn. The base chance is 1-in-6. If an encounter occurs, the referee can roll on the following table:

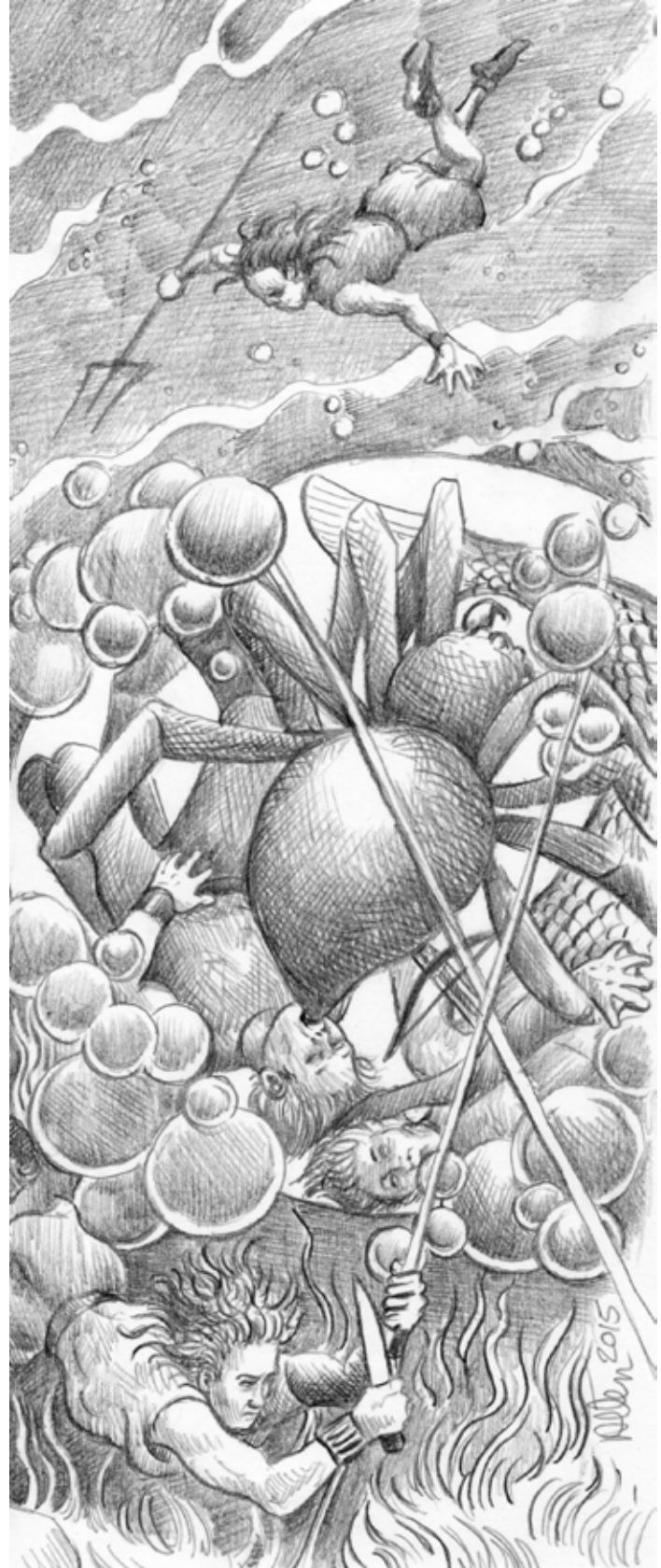
**RANDOM ENCOUNTER (GRUNN GALEB) (2D6)**

- 2 – Tremor. Partial Collapse. Saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage; D 2d6.
- 3 – Young Spider from **LI-6** or later, Gelatinous Cube, **LI-5** or other.
- 4 – Gnolls (1-4) new to the dungeon. They will join the group at **LI-13**.
- 5 – Kobolds (2-6) new to the dungeon. They will join the group of **LI-14**.
- 6 – Stirges (1-6) from **LI-5**, or undead (2-8) skeletons later on.
- 7 – Wolves (2-6) from **LI-17**, or joining the pack thereof.
- 8 – Goblins (2-8) from **LI-21**, or undead (1-6) zombies later on.
- 9 – Cave Gecko, gets spooked and runs back to **LI-18**.
- 10 – Giant Millipede, different specimen from **LI-10**.
- 11 – Obmar Nojh from **LI-15** notices the party and stalks them. Later, (1) Ochre Jelly from **LI-16A**.
- 12 – Roll/choose from random encounters (Hex) or (Environs), or, if one or more shafts down to level 2 are now open to exploration, consider rolling on random encounters (Burial Vaults) or even (The Crypts), with one or more critters having made it through a secret door and up to level 1.

**KEY OF THE AREA**

**1. MAIN GATE.** Two huge, granite statues of Dwarves carved ten times to scale and carrying shields and spears are silently standing guard on each side of this double-door entryway. The door's two leaves, both thick, 40' x 20' feet slabs of cinnamon-hued marble, hang precariously inward from heavily damaged hinges. The well-worn path leading within is littered with boulders, tools, shattered weapons, small humanoid skeletons and similar remnants of the battle which occurred here in the past.

**2. DWARVEN BONES.** This is where the dwarves' last stand once occurred. A few dwarven skeletons





wearing heavily damaged, unusable plate armor lie on top of a swarm of long-dead humanoid critters. The mound surrounds a lone stone boulder about 3 or 4 feet across. Close inspection will reveal that the boulder dealt the fatal crushing blow which wiped out the remaining combatants. These remains have long been stripped of all their valuable possessions. Inspecting the side of the boulder thoroughly could reveal the presence of Belenor's bones among the dead. His skull is missing his signature helmet (see **LI-8** and **9** for more information).

**3. WATERFALL.** A waterfall pours out of an opening 60 feet off the ground into a large body water stretching north-easterly along the cliff. The stones beyond the waterfall are rough and easy to climb. A giant water silk spider nesting close-by will attack any living creature it can reach. Small creatures will be eaten on the spot, whereas larger ones will be taken down to its lair, a webbed air bubble spun underwater.

The spider will try to bite. On a failed saving throw versus poison, the victim is paralyzed for six turns. Once the spider's venom has taken hold, the creature will grab its victim, take it 20 feet down, and push it into its lair. On the following round, the spider will follow inside the nest, causing one thrust damage to the nest in the process (see below), and uses its abdomen to plant eggs through eating orifices inside the victim's stomach. Once done, the spider will leave the nest and repair its surface. Repairing the nest requires the spider to swim back to the surface, bring back some air and patch up to two holes in a single round.

Most missile, cleaving and blunt weapons are impossible to use underwater. Missile weapons fired from the surface would be unable to reach the nest. One would have to dive and strike at the nest using thrusting weapons against AC 10 to be able to pierce its bubble. Four such successful thrusts will cause the bubble to collapse.

A particularly bold diver could swim under the nest and sever its anchor line with a knife with a successful Open Doors check. The nest would bounce right back to the surface, opening it up to further attacks.

Inside the spider's lair, the body of a merman will be found still holding an **amphibious light crossbow** able to fire above and underwater at half normal range. Eleven bolts are stored in a spider silk pouch hanging from his belt, all of them mundane but for one **+2 bolt**. Eggs planted in the body's stomach are throbbing and ready to hatch. The webbing can be salvaged and used as a waterproof substance. It is highly thought after by specialized

craftsmen and seafaring crews. It would be worth 30-180 GP if properly harvested.

**GIANT WATER SILK SPIDER (1):** SZ L; MV 180 ft. In water, 30 feet on land; AL TN; AC 6; HD 3; HP 15; #AT 1; D 1d2 + Save v. Poison (Paralysis).

**4. MAIN ENTRANCE CORRIDOR.** This inclined passage is almost 40-foot wide and stretches up, south-eastwardly, towards what was once the market place of the Stone-cutter dwarves. It is now silent as a tomb.

There are two round murder-holes on each side of the vaulted ceiling above the corridor. These lead up to a parallel series of rooms and corridors ultimately leading to the 30' x 30' guard posts of area **LI-6**. The metals bars partially obstructing the holes will be at best annoyances when climbing up and squeezing through. They allowed the dwarves of Grunn Galeb to unleash projectiles into the main corridor below, but the bars separating them from their opponents were torn apart by the gargoyles who served Young Krassus at the time of the assault.

Note the webs hanging from the ceiling. These webs cover the 35-foot wide machicolation on the upper level at **LI-6** and host the lair of a huge spider (q.v.). Several strands of webbing reach from the ceiling to the corridor's ground. A bull's eye lantern with none of its oil left lies on the floor directly under the spider's nest. It belonged to the adventurer she trapped recently. The Spider will only jump down into the corridor if she is facing a single opponent. She otherwise waits in her lair.

**5. STIRGES.** The series of rooms and corridors stretching on both sides the main entrance corridor linked the main guard posts at **LI-6** to the 5-foot wide murder-holes depicted on the map. During the maiden assault of Young Krassus on the Stone-cutter clan, these murder-holes, along with the main machicolation of **LI-6**, were forced open by gargoyles serving the giants. The gargoyles are long gone, but the northern cluster of rooms is now the territory of ravenous stirges nesting in the 30' x 40' room with the 20' alcove and a pool marked by the digit "5" on the map. These were fed regularly by Osmandius from area **LI-34** before his untimely demise.

The nest of stirges, which looks like it could have been built by giant hornets, hangs above the well. A gelatinous cube is nesting at the bottom of the well, and just feeds on the scraps falling down to it as the stirges bring back remains to feed the colony. If the party defeats the stirges and searches through the nest, they will find a blue cloak has been used as part of the fabric of the nest. It is marked with the seven pointed star and heron of the Ce-

rulean League, the alliance of the powers of men south of the Bitter Peaks. Amazingly the cloak is still in one piece. It is not dweomered, but exceptionally manufactured, and worth 200 GP.

At the bottom of the well, the party will find human bones, a **+1 footman's mace**, a good quality suit of plate mail, 144 GP, seven (7) 10 GP base value, three (3) 50 GP base value, and one (1) 100 GP base value gems floating within the cube. The mace is marked with the emblem of the League and a name: Yvon Deckhart. Deckhart is a knight from the Frontier Keep who was tracking the whereabouts of Osmandius. He found his end at his hand. Bringing back Yvon's remains to his family at the Frontier Keep south of the Bitter Peaks would be handsomely rewarded (1,000 GP, with the thanks of the Lord Castellan).

**STIRGES (3d10 in nest, 1d6 otherwise):** SZ S; MV 30 ft./180 ft. flying; AL TN; AC 8; HD 1+1; HP 5; #AT 1; D 1d3. *Special: 1d4 Blood Drain per round once attached.*

**GELATINOUS CUBE:** SZ L; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; Surprise 1-3; HD 4; HP 22; AC 8; #AT 1; D 2d4, save vs. paralyzation or anesthetized for 5d4 melee rounds.

**6. GUARD POSTS.** The 30' x 30' rooms on each side of the main entrance corridor were dwarven guard posts. Note the large arrow slits visible on the map. Spiral staircases connect both rooms with the upper level, where round boulders may still be found for use with the main machicolation there. This central hole is now the lair of a huge spider, along with her possible young (the referee may wish to add 1-6 young, or one per two characters beyond four in the party).

The nest is accessible through the machicolation hole, and hangs above the main entrance corridor at **L1-4**. The webbing stretching from the ceiling of the corridor below to the hole is covered with a thick, clear substance that acts as a powerful glue: it will automatically stick to anyone or anything touching it. It will act as a *web* spell.

Within, the cocooned corpse of a magic user lies close to the opening, wrapped up in thick webs. It still carries a leather backpack containing a **spell book** with *read magic*, *comprehend languages*, *spider climb*, *burning hands*, *shocking grasp*, and *hold portal*. This is a hefty tome weighing fifty (50) pounds. Its pages are fragile and brittle. The magic-user's body also carries a **+1 dagger**, and a purse with 2d6 GP, and 5d10 SP. If the nest is burned or the body dropped to **L1-4** the spellbook might be damaged: there would then be a 10% chance for each spell to have been damaged, and thus become ineffective, from the fall.

There are other remains in the back of the spider's nest. Unreachable from the nest's opening, they belong to a dwarven merchant who was caught by the arachnids. The body still carries a large, finely woven silver and pearl filigree necklace and a pair of earrings. The necklace is extremely delicate and its smaller pearls and silver bells would be irreparably damaged by extreme heat – from a fire consuming the webs, for instance. A dozen pearls 100 GP value each could be salvaged from it, but the whole necklace undamaged is worth much more, about 2,200 GP including the pearls' total value. In case of exposition to flame, a proper saving throw must be made for each pearl, but the necklace will be automatically ruined and transferred to 55 SP equivalent weight. If these bells are undamaged and worn by a lady, they will affect loyalty and reaction rolls from the members of opposite gender up to 20% in a beneficial way. The earrings will not be damaged by fire. They are each worth 20-120 GP.

**HUGE SPIDER (1):** SZ H; MV 180 ft./30 ft. leap; AL TN; AC 6; HD 2+2; HP 12; Surprise 1-5; #AT 1; D 1d6 + Save v. Poison (+1 on the roll) or die.

**YOUNG (LARGE) SPIDERS (1-6):** SZ H; MV 60 ft./150 ft. in web; AL TN; AC 8; HD 1+1; HP 6; #AT 1; D 1 + Save v. Poison (+2 on the roll) or die.

**7. MARBLE SANDTABLE.** A large piece of furniture made of the same cinnamon-hued marble as the main entrance doors at **L1-1** occupies the center of this room. Its reinforced sides and eight pillars support a tray filled with sand which stands three feet above the ground. On the wall hangs a rack; it carries many strange pole-arms with various appendages, such as claws, hoops, rakes and so on. A medieval watering can is visible under the table, as are the fragments of clay statuettes once used for gaming.

A little compartment under the tray contains a stained copy of *Unmensch & Überzwerg*, a set of war gaming rules where dwarves using futuristic, steam-powered equipment, including armors and big, metal, dragon-shaped chariots mounted with ballista, fight hordes of humanoids and gigantic alien monsters. Elves and humans are optional mercenaries to be hired by the players' characters on both sides. This copy is numbered 23/1000, and signed by the authors, Groin Gikalux and Jef Peryen.

A giant, old, 40-pound bobcat has claimed the sand tray as its litter box. It will come to any dwarf character and ask for food and attention. It will be sitting on the rafters of the ceiling until it spots a potential friend or an easy prey. This cat is occasionally fed by Obmar the Unwashed and its treatment might affect the party's first

encounter with the crazy dwarf. Note that if a party member is particularly unfriendly to the Bobcat, it will probably take its revenge and mark that person one way or the other. See **LI-15**.

The 10' x 10' rooms at the eastern end of the corridor are storage areas filled with clutter that can be searched for possible additional treasure (roll on *Rubble Search* table).

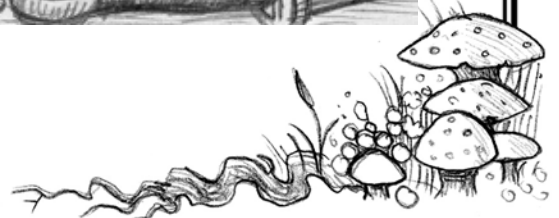
**BOBCAT (1):** SZ. S; MV 180 ft.; AL TN; AC 5; HD 1; HP 7; #AT 3; D 1d2/1d2/1d2, if both of the claws hit add 1d2 and 1d2 for the rear paws raking as the cat is locked in place on its opponent.

If the forces of Grosh the Great at area **LI-21** are aware of the presence of adventuring parties sneaking into the Grunn Galeb, they will post three goblins on the balcony with short dwarven bows waiting to assist the ogre of **LI-8**, or whoever replaces him at the mound, if he has been defeated, with missile fire.

**8. MARKET PLACE.** This was once the meeting place of the Stone-cutter community. It was the scene of the disastrous initial battle between the forces of Young Krassus and the dwarven warriors led by Belenor's lieutenant. This vast square room's ground is littered with broken cart wheels, giant stone boulders, mining tools, pieces of dwarven armor, and an assorted collection of dwarven, humanoids and wolf bones as result.

A huge pile mixing finely carved items and sheer junk lies prominently in the middle of the market place. It looks bent and precarious, like an insane, gargantuan form of pick-up sticks. A strong, armored ogre stands on top of this mound. He holds a two-handed sword and is busy rearranging his collection. He is absorbed by his work and will not notice the party's presence, even carrying light sources, if he is also ignored. This event will only occur once. He will be more alert on later visits.

**Belenor's winged helmet** mentioned at **LI-2** can be found hidden in the pile. It is now the ogre's chamber pot. It is entirely wrapped up in what was once fine but is now disgusting cloth (50 GP silk if cleaned repeatedly). It is necessary to unwrap the cloth to see the helmet and notice its magical properties. It is made of the strongest metal on Eurth and bears a metal plate on the front between the wings inlaid with the Stone-cutter clan rune. A **continual light** shines from behind the rune at a standard 60-foot radius, sending the shadow of the sigil wherever the helmet is aimed. If the wearer of the helmet takes a critical hit (reducing his or her hit points below 0), 1d10 points



of damage will be subtracted as the metal plate will flare intensely. This blow will always knock off the helmet, its dweomer dissipated until minor repairs are accomplished. The referee will also check for serious breakage, which will occur 1-in-10.

Everything else in the pile will be either heavily damaged, ripped apart or otherwise needing extensive repairs – up to the referee. These items' value and usage will be seriously affected, though one exception probably is Blake Plissken's **+1 turtle shell** he used as a buckler, which the gnolls of **LI-13** might have traded for passage, aka got bullied to give up to the ogre along the way. The rest of Blake's remains can be found at area **LI-31**.

The referee might allow one or more *Rubble Search* checks as the pile is being investigated. The first time the party really starts to search and dig their way through it, a tremor will occur, which will remove three (3) points of Structural Integrity to the pile and another (3) points from a pile of rubble determined randomly (see *Special Rules*, Introduction chapter).

Clearing this huge pile of rubble for three exploration turns reveals the presence of a vertical shaft leading down inside the pillar of area **L2-30**, in the Burial Vaults, and further down to area **LC-16** of the Crypts. A careful collapse of the remaining beams and rubble could be triggered safely from the market place. The mess would clear and fall all the way down to **LC-16**. Making one's way down will require some ropes, at the very least. Some climbing equipment, a basket, and pulleys would help considerably if trips are to become frequent. First, the secret door of area **L2-30** will come into view. Lock picking the door opening southward from the inside of the shaft incurs a -10% penalty due to work conditions, holding on to ropes or whatever other implements are used to get there. A successful lock picking attempt will open the door and avoid electrocution for 5-30 points of damage. If the attempt fails, the door remains locked, and the character is electrocuted; the referee might allow a saving throw for half damage. Climbing further down, the shaft reaches an open area at **LC-16** of the Crypts.

Note the 10' x 10' elevating platforms located in the north-eastern and south-western corners of the Market Place and marked by an "E" on the map. These were once used to access Belenor's apartments and the upper level of the tavern respectively. Both of these platforms are now out of order, the ropes sustaining them having been severed the day of the attack, and the mechanical devices powering them having long been taken apart by the ogre to add to his junk pile.

**OGRE (1):** SZ. L; MV 70 ft.; AL CE; AC 4; HD 4+1; HP 20; #AT 1; D 3d4 two-handed sword, D 2d4+3 **+1 harpoon** 40 ft. long range with a rope attached to it, -1 to hit total (the harpoon is magical but the throw clumsy, -2 to hit; the weapon reaches just about ten feet short of the square wall around the Market Place at full rope length); in the pommel of the sword is a very valuable gem worth 500 GP. The sword is ornate and decorated with gold inlay (double normal value). If the Ogre loses half his hit points, he will try to call for help by blowing a slug horn which will be heard from area **LI-21**. He will then retreat and join the goblins coming to the rescue.

If the ogre is eliminated by an adventuring party, or has a tough time and escapes to the quarry at **LI-21**, the forces of Grosh the Great will become aware of intrusions into their territory. They will post additional guards with missile weapons on the balconies (q.v.) above this area, and replace (or assist) the ogre with two bugbears who will have recently arrived to the dungeon, as well as a half dozen goblins on the ground. Whether their arrival is a sign that more goblinoids are on their way, or know of the forces of Krassus on the Tomb's doorstep (see *The Hunting Party*, Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*), is for the referee to decide.

**BUGBEARS (2):** SZ. L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE; AC 5; HD 3+1; HP 14, 16; #AT 1; D 2d4 or D 2d4 ranseur, D 1d4 light crossbow. Each possesses 1d3 gems of 50 GP base value. The Bugbears will usually team up and try to keep their opponents at bay with their polearms, ensuring that they be distinct from them for the purpose of missile fire from their allies.

**8A. BARBER.** This ruined establishment once provided grooming services for dwarves both male and female. A 5-foot wide marble container now lying shattered in a corner of the room contained the coals used to warm up the metal hair tongs and beard curlers which can still be found concealed by a thick layer of dust. Other items which could be recovered from this place include hair pins and extensions, dyes, scissors, ivory combs still dipping into some sort of muck which much have been clean water at one point, small stone tablets used as reading material as the dwarven ladies were attended to, large panels of tarnished metal once polished like mirrors, and intricate wooden seats uprooted from their sockets in front of the walls. A sign hanging on the frontage was thrown inside by one of the giants and hit one of the groomers' chest, where is still lodged to this day. It shows the drawing of a radiant lady dwarf waving her lustrous hair and beard while smiling at the viewer.

**8B. CORDWAINER.** The walls of this ruined store are lined with many shelves. Most of the shoes have been thrown about the room by the invaders as they were searching for hidden treasures to loot. A few of these articles may still be useful to halfling, gnome and dwarven characters, however, like the steal-toed working boots the quarry's workers never picked up, or the thick leather waders constructed for exploratory purposes. The room immediately east of this location was the cobbler's workshop, now a giant rats' nest.

**GIANT RATS (3-18 present):** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 4 avg.; #AT 1; D 1d3. *The pile of refuse that covers the nest can be searched to find a needle-trapped case containing a clerical scroll inscribed with command, protection from evil, find traps and silence 15' radius.*

**8C. POTTER.** Nearly all the contents of this room were destroyed by the forces of Young Krassus. The ground is covered with a three-inch thick layer of broken pottery fragments which together look like they belong to some sort of gigantic, multicolored puzzle waiting to be solved after all these years.

Amidst the utter chaos of the room, the party could in fact attempt to piece a few of the potteries here back together. Each turn spent searching through the rubble, the party may roll a percentile die to see how much of a complete pottery its members were able to conjointly assemble. Later turns allow for a re-roll of the percentile die, always retaining the better result of all those accumulated so far. The potteries lying on the ground are generally adorned with various scenic representations of events which transpired in the ancient past, and which the Stone-cutter dwarves would have cared about. The referee must feel free to introduce elements of his own setting's history. Two potteries in particular might lead to Nester's Folly, *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*, and represent useful clues for a party exploring its depths:

1) *A delicate, faceted vase blown from crimson glass was inlaid with three different scenes equidistant from one another along its rim.*

The first depicts eight obese individuals sitting around a banquet table, feasting and drinking to their hearts content. A closed door with sconces burning brightly on both of its sides can be seen in the background.

The second scene depicts the same room with the banquet table. The door is open. A wizard in grey attire stands in the doorway: He seems angry, with his hands raised as he casts a spell. The gluttons are standing up

around the table, reaching for their throats, shouting and crying, their shapes deformed, their arms and legs sucked into their bodies, as if they were straightening themselves and changing into something else.

The third scene shows the wizard leaving the room, his back facing the viewer as he walks away from the doorway. The table has disappeared. There are instead pillars in the room, each of them with a gaping maw reaching out from its surface, wailing wide open with bright, many-hued glass teeth.

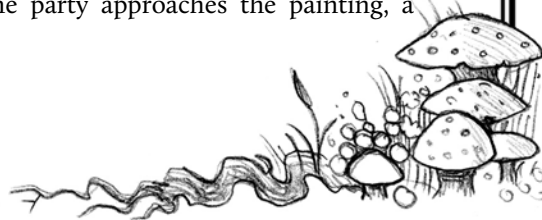
2) *A wide, round dish made out of clay is circled with a large painted band representing a torches-lit corridor running infinitely around its lip. It seems two framed paintings are decorating the wall of this painted corridor. They hang opposite one another on the dish's surface.*

One painting represents a gigantic hand holding a quill reaching out from the darkness. Drops of ink drip from the quill, and change shape to become different monsters as they reach the surface of a maze: They become a giant sitting on a golden throne, tiny creatures worshipping an enormous pillar of living flame, gladiators fighting in an arena, dragons and even more fantastical beings opposing each other on some imaginary battlefield previously defined by the hand holding the quill.

The other painting depicts a dark place with red lighting coming from the ground, and a brilliant ray of sunlight shining from above. An anvil occupies the center of the scene, with large grey bellows on its left worked by some strange creature made of stone, crystals and gravel, and a wizard wearing robes adorned with golden moons and stars waving his arms at the creature. Behind the anvil stand two characters, one an entirely brass-colored blacksmith, and the other a large, red-bearded mountain of a man wearing furs with the characteristically wide head of a bear resting atop of his strong brow. Both these characters are beating a blade resting on the anvil in front of them.

**9. LEADER'S APARTMENTS.** These were the living quarters of the clan's ruling family. It doesn't look like the area has been disturbed in a long time. Furniture has been trashed, and is coated with a thick layer of dust. The air is stale, and heavy.

A 20-foot wide painted wall right in front of the flight of stairs going down to the secret door east of the Market Place (just above the numeral of **L1-9** on the map) depicts a dwarf wearing a shining winged helmet. In his hands, he holds with a smile a hammer of outstanding proportions. As the party approaches the painting, a







ghostly figure will slowly materialize, taking a full melee round to take shape. This beautifully bearded dwarven lady had her eyes poked out. She is holding in her hands her own innards as they hang from her gruesomely cleaved stomach. She starts speaking in the dwarven language (the referee should feel free to paraphrase and get in character, rather than reading the text verbatim):

“– Is that you, Belenor, my dear husband? I cannot see. Where are you, my husband? Did you save our son and daughter? What about our people? Who escaped? Oh, my husband, it was so hard to stand our ground and wait for your return. We were so quickly overrun. A massacre. And the great creature’s horns breaking down the doors. The eyes, the flaming eyes burning with lust and hatred. And his laughter as he tore my eyes from their sockets, exhorting me to reveal where the hammer was. Again. And again. The way he violated my mind, my body, my very soul ...” She seems to have a doubt. “So much pain. But everything is cold and still inside. What happened to me, my husband? He kept asking about the hammer you unearthed. Your pride and joy. See what brought to us! Fetch it now! Oh my husband, so much pain. How could you have brought this curse upon us? So much greed. So little care. You have been foolish, my husband. And now we must make repair...”

If the ghost is attacked or treated badly in any way it

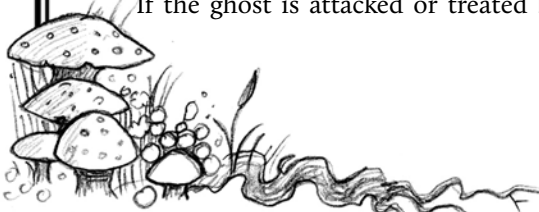
will disappear, usually for a period of 24 hours before it might decide to materialize again as if nothing happened previously.

Inspecting the wall will reveal the painting may have been tempered with. A slight indentation the size of a hand print could be spotted: The dust has not settled in the same way around the area where the dwarf’s hammer was painted. The stone under can be pushed. It is a trigger which opens a compartment hidden behind the painting itself. Inside, the party would find a half-dozen tablets entirely made of finely crafted grey marble. Each tablet weighs about 60 pounds. Together, they make up the **Stone Book** of the Cutter Dwarves. It contains an account of feats they deemed worth the record throughout time, and mentions the many lost places where the Clan dwelt in the past.

Referees should feel free to include notes and handouts which could plug whatever adventuring opportunities they wish to see explored by the party. Methods of mining, engineering and architecture are also covered in this book, and some obscure techniques could make some people envious, or trigger other adventures. Earth-related spells and effects are not included in the stone book, but the more pragmatic techniques of the dwarves touch on dweomers and enchantments in such a fashion that researching such spells from the topics covered therein would allow their development for half the time and half the investment normally required. For our purpose in introducing Nester’s Folly, *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*, a few of the passages therein read, inscribed in the runic script of the dwarven language:

*“In the beginning we wandered. There were many battles, many deaths. Our Clan was always on the move, from cave to cave, mine to mine, throughout the Bitter Peaks. It seemed we would never know peace, and never get to refine our skills as well as we should have. Nester the Eurthwright changed all this, for when he struck a bargain with us to come and help him dig deep under the foundations of his Castle, he showered our fathers with gold and gems aplenty. Our proficiency grew over this past century working for the wizard, enough to be recognized far and wide, and maybe enough for us to finally find the peace we sought all along.”*

*“The central stairway was particularly tricky for us to get right. The main tower nearly collapsed as Thornburr the Master Chiseler did the final cutting which would completely conceal the hidden way within the pillar on its upper level. We could salvage the tower and all the work accomplished as the first cracks appeared within the walls. It was such a success of craftsmanship the Architect titled us the Stone-cutter*



*Clan. We now have a name, and a purpose. Our history and place in the world is assured."*

*"Our work is now done. The wizard wanted his five levels and paid us for it; he now has them. Nester is summoning creatures of the Eurth to do his bidding and expand on the strange caverns we uncovered far below the Castle's deeper vaults."*

*"My father began work on Nester's Folly so long ago. I worked in the same tunnels, the same mazes all my life, and now celebrate the birth of my own great-grandson. What treasures are now hidden deep within, nobody really knows. The Wizard's Architect would not answer my queries. He remains aloof. It does not matter: The Clan now moves to the north-east to explore the depths within a sheer cliff side where the Eurthwright told us we would be able to reach marble veins. We should be able to settle for good."*

Next to the Stone Book lies a Fine Jade Statue depicting a dwarven female with brown agate eyes, two large hair breads on each side of her face, and a lusciously breaded beard. It is intricately carved, and seems to be of value. Its common market price would be around 500 GP, but sold to dwarves, and especially those of the Stone-cutter Clan, it would fetch much more.

Also note that the 10' x 20' rooms in this general area were the bedrooms of Belenor's children. Still present in these locations are closets where they used to hide their very personal effects away from their parents. One such closet (referee's discretion) still contains a grimoire with drawings of exciting young bearded females, with their extravagant breads and shear attire. Included besides the grimoire are makeup pipes and other secret smoking devices, as well as two bottles containing each a different type of sweet liquor. The grimoire's value when sold to a proper (dwarven) acquirer will vary greatly depending on the prospective owner's tastes and inclinations (d12 x d100% GP value, where d12 stands for the original quality of the drawing, and d% the compatibility in taste of the drawings with the buyer's tastes).

If the forces of Grosh the Great at area **LI-2I** are aware of the presence of adventuring parties sneaking into the Grunn Galeb, they will post two goblins on the balcony with short dwarven bows and one goblin arsonist (with flaming oil) waiting to assist the ogre of **LI-8**, or whoever replaces him at the mound, if he has been defeated. The goblins primarily assist with missile fire.

**10. DRINKING HALL.** This huge pillared room was once the dwarves' tavern. Long tables and benches lie shattered on the ground, along with emptied beer kegs,

stools, mugs, and likewise items. Sets of marble polyhedral dice used in the dwarves' gambling may be recovered here. A full set of these solids may be worth 6 SP to 1 GP. Several sets may be recovered, the dice scattered throughout the room.

A giant millipede lurks amidst the clutter of this room. The insect might be hiding on the ceiling, on a wall or the floor, at will. It is quick as lightning and extremely agile, as though it ignored gravity itself. It is hungry for fresh wood, and will probably attempt to attack wooden shield carriers in priority, then take a hold of spellbooks, scrolls, maps, shafts of pole arms and ten-foot poles, arrows, paper, scabbards, and the like. It will run back and forth on the walls, floor and ceiling, surprising on 1-4 during the first round, attempting to grab something and if successful, retreating on the rafters atop the pillars of the room some thirty (30) feet up. Future attacks will still have a 1-in-6 chance to surprise due to its speed and cunning, using the layout of the room to its utmost advantage.

On the rafters, the millipede stashed a few valuables including a glass jar with a screw-on lid containing a scroll inscribed with *cure light wounds*, *sanctuary*, *spiritual hammer* and *neutralize poison*, a damaged pipe with the wooden stem gone but the carved ivory bowl intact (worth 77 GP), and the remnants of a half-eaten jewelry box with a still-functioning lock and within, two pairs of gold earrings (worth respectively 88 and 96 GP), a pearl necklace (worth 169 GP) and a wedding band inscribed with "For Moo" on the inside (worth 325 GP).

**GIANT MILLIPEDE (1):** SZ L; MV 240 ft.; AL TN; AC 6; HD 4; HP 22; #AT 1; D 0 + Grabs wooden object. If reduced below 10 hit points, the Giant Millipede loses its surprise ability, is severed in two halves, with its front section aggressively assaulting the party now with #AT 1 for D 2d4.

**II. LESSER APARTMENTS.** These were the living quarters of the menial workforce amongst the dwarves. These small, utilitarian apartments filled with junk and rubble. They seem to have long been looted of their meagre contents, though a thorough search of each 10' x 10' room might still hold some hidden loot (roll on the Rubble Search table). Their swollen, rotten doors, as well as some of the beams and heaps of trash found here and there are infested by the flesh-burrowing rot grubs.

**ROT GRUBS:** SZ S; MV 10 ft.; AL TN; AC 9; HP 1; #AT 0; D Nil + burrowing, death in 1-3 turns unless a deep cut is made to excise the creature or flame is applied to kill it (1d6 damage to the host, either way). A cure disease spell immediately cast on the host will kill the Rot Grub.

**12. TOMB OF GARN PATUUL.** This the burial vault of the ancient lord of the Stone Giants Garn Patuul. The dwarves of the Stone-cutter clan inadvertently discovered this place while prospecting for new rich marble veins around their quarries. Greed overcame the dwarves' sense of caution. Belenor, their leader, ordered the giant sarcophagus to be wedged open and pillaged of its contents. He felt an immediate lust as his eyes fell upon the magic hammer it contained. Ignoring the tremor suddenly shaking the place, he grasped the hammer resting on the breast of the dead giant and took it as his own.

Unbeknownst to the dwarves, the quake was felt from a far distance by Garn's brethren...

The inside of sarcophagus's lid hides a small, three-fingers thick compartment the dwarves have not found – their fingers were too short. A switch may be felt within. If triggered, the switch releases a six-inch thick stone slab at the bottom of the sarcophagus in a spot which would have been between the giant's knees. Stored under this slab, the party will find a **celadon marble syrinx** (pan pipes) and three granite tablets etched with giant runes. The tablets explain how to play tunes with the syrinx. The effects of those tunes are all earth-based and magical. Their intent is to primarily communicate with creatures from the earth elemental plane. The market value of these items would greatly vary depending upon the acquirer. It takes enormous time and effort to be able to play this instrument properly, let alone master it. After three character levels are dedicated to regular practice with the syrinx, the instrument will ultimately serve as a ring of spell storing containing the spells *dig*, *passwall*, *stone shape*, and *move earth*. It will also add 25% to reaction rolls will creatures native of the elemental plane of Earth.

**13. BALCONY.** Two gnolls have chosen this area for a lair. They found a stash of brew manufactured at the brewery of **LI-31**. They have been getting drunk on the stuff for the past ten years, pushing the kobolds of **LI-14** to fetch food and various items for them. They are content and lazy. They use the balcony to relieve themselves and occasionally howl, or rather belch, at the moons. They also get rid of the emptied barrels of brew by throwing them over the edge. Over two dozen have already met this fate, but four still remain. Each of these full barrels of Stone-cutter's Draught would be worth 50 GP to the Gaelish folk of Crom Caemloch, 130 GP to rich inns and drinking holes, or 300 GP to a dwarven connoisseur.

The gnolls are consummate gamblers, and between swigs shake dice between the two of them. They have

a cone-shaped, pointy hat which they use as a token of victory one of them will wear after series of successful rolls with the sole intent to humiliate the other. This hat actually was the possession of a magic-user the two of them killed on their way here. It has a hidden inner compartment containing a **scroll** of *gust of wind*, *invisibility* and *strength*.

**POT-BELLIED GNOLLS (2):** SZ M; MV 70 ft.; AL LE; -1 INIT.; AC 5; HD 2; HP 8, 10; #AT 1; D 2d4 or javelin 1d6.

The gnolls have a fort about a league and a half east of the Duath Ethainn and a league south-east off the Raging Falls (see *Surroundings of the Viper Head Pass*, Introduction chapter). These two are the first occupants in the dungeon. They have already been bullied to give up Blake Plissken's turtle shield to the Ogre of area **LI-8**, and know they cannot compete with the goblins of the quarry at the moment, so they keep a low profile and beat the crap out of the kobolds when they feel frustrated. This is going to change fast, as more gnolls will join them over the next few weeks, and with them more kobolds in area **LI-14**. The gnolls will then, as they grow in number, split into two groups, one staying near the balcony to control this entrance, and the other growing a territory from the brewery at **LI-31**. They will then search for the support of the Canon of Gaugamoth of area **H-7** (who is backed by the Beggar King, a well-known criminal figure of the region), and if they get it, force Grosh's hand into an alliance together.

**14. OLD WELL.** This location was once part of a bakery, along with the huge oven found in the room directly east of this location. A group of kobolds are now living there, usually used and abused by the gnolls further north. Note a number of clay jars containing oil for the bakery are still stored in little alcoves around the walls of this room. One of them contains a small 100 GP ingot hidden by one of the kobolds there temporarily. Squeezing the content out of the jars, the party could gather the equivalent of five flasks of flaming oil out of these containers.

Near the jars, a plate-sized dwarven Jade Bread hard as marble can be recovered under a layer of dust. Jade Bread is cooked using some of the alchemical essence of the celadon marble of the mine, and enchants the bread in such a fashion that, if consumed along with the fabled Stoneskin Stout beer of the dwarves, it softens the bread and releases the celadon magic inside the body to grant the effects of a *stoneskin* for six hours or until expanded.

Bread and stout together are a killer combination, on the other hand, requiring constitution checks or saving throws vs. poison to not roll under the table complete-

ly drunk. On a failed check or saving throw, dwarves, gnomes and halflings are penalized with -1 to hit for 24 hours, while the penalty becomes -2 for humans and most other demi-humans, and a punitive -4 for half-elves. Elves cannot stand it and would pass out for 24 hours on a failed test. Jade Bread acts like Iron rations, does not spoil in extreme weather or temperatures, and can even remain immersed in water for quite a while before being affected. A full loaf like this contains enough bread to feed a dwarf for a month, and would fetch about 40 GP on a dwarven market, but double or triple that price in human places. Ales and other forms of fermented beverages can soften the bread and make it a true delicacy. Dipping bits of Jade bread (which there is better known as ambered bread, due to a different coloration around the Anhurean Wall) in vinegar has become popular form of non-dwarven consumption in the Western Duinnsmere, particularly around Vhenella.

Inside the well, a body can be spotted lying down in the mud below. A bear pelt still attached to one of his shoulders, the man wears a beautiful tunic of crimson brown laced with gold, some black leather pants and high boots. His skin is pale, his hair and finely trimmed beard are jet black. He must have been an handsome fellow with a compelling visage and sharp eye contact. He was stabbed, and beaten up pretty roughly after his death. His skin is very pale and about to turn, but his remains are not yet bloated: he cannot have died more than 72 hours ago. He has been stripped of his valuables, but still has a few items on his person that could be of interest to the party. Namely, a number of parchment pages spread around his body:

(1) First, one of them is a **bill of exchange** minted by the Council of Coin of the Free City of Villenor worth 500 GP. It would be accepted by money-changers in the Viscounty and King's Gate without issue. The kobolds have no idea what the human scribblings mean.

(2) Second, there is a short note, a reminder most likely, saying "Ask for Ektor Hoerg, Twin Tankard." Ektor Hoerg is the servant of one Parmel d'Argiquais, a member of the Vellum Society of Villenor, who also knows a contact affiliated with the Jolly Men of the Midlands. This has to do with the third set of interesting papers in the well.

(3) Third, a number of pages combine in what looks like construction plans for a huge, long flat-bottom boat the size of a fortress. The pages and diagrams are covered with notes written in a personal cypher mixed with alchemical symbols only the people who know composed it would understand. These plans are a copy of docu-

ments put together by the Knights Immaculate at Khrag An Mor to rebuild the Floating Ailes of the Great Library of Aksalskhaton. The Floating Ailes, huge barges containing complete sections of the ancient library, use celadon marble to power some of their functions and supernatural abilities. Reconstituting the Aisle could mean the Knights Immaculate would be in a possession to find those barges which were lost with the sack of Aksalskhaton almost seven hundred years ago, during the Eldritch War of Iyathar and Danthium. This could be very bad for the future of the region.

(4) The remnants of a spell book, most of which has been consumed by the mud and the occasional rodent who visited the well in the interval between the man's death and his discovery by the party. The spells that are still readable and can be copied are: *Friends*, *Jump*, *Message*, *Ventriloquism*, *Mirror Image* and *Nester's Little Red Wagon*.\*

Referees can feel free to substitute their own adventure hooks, or add more of course. The body belongs to Ermolt Le Noir, a spy and mountebank currently hunted by the Knights Immaculate, who secretly remained loyal to the Iron Siege and the Half-King regent of the Frankhs, and wanted to hand over the plans to the Pryton leadership to stop the Knights Immaculate from gathering too much power on the coast. If the party feels like helping the Citadel Immaculate, the body could still be brought back to them for a reward (or the Hunters' Guild of the Council of Coin, see area L2-32). The party could alternately finish Ermolt's mission and contact Ektor at *The Twin Tankard*, who would then help them get in contact with the Jolly Men of the Midlands. See *Figures and Factions*, *Wilderness expansion*, and *The Twin Tankard*, *Wilderness expansion*, for more information about the components of this scenario.

**KOBOLDS (8):** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL CE; AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 2; #AT 1; D 1d4. Each kobold carries 1d6 GP and 1d6 SP.

**14A. BAKERY'S FIREPLACE.** A few shelves still hang around a large stone oven by the northern wall of this room. Obmar Nojh, the crazed dwarf of L1-15, regularly sleeps in the chimney above the hearth unbeknownst to the kobolds of the Old Well at L1-14. If Obmar Nojh has not yet been encountered, roll d20 to determine his whereabouts when this area is entered: (1-2) Obmar is on the move, (2-4) Obmar at L1-14A is here, above the hearth, (5) Obmar is at L1-15 (1), (6-8) Obmar is at L1-15 (2), or (9-10) Obmar is at L1-15 (3).

If Obmar is elsewhere, a party who searches the room thoroughly may find his nest set up inside the chimney. A makeshift swinging trap will be triggered if no particular



efforts are meant to detect it first. Each character directly in front or under the chimney rolls 1d4 when it happens: the result indicates the number of small stakes inflicting 1d4 points of damage to the given character. If Obmar Nojh is present, the trap won't be triggered, but the dwarf will instead swing from the chimney to confront the intruders (see **LI-14A** for more about his behavior).

Obmar Nojh keeps his dwarven horn short bow and two (4) explosive arrows hitting for 1d6 points plus 2d6 flaming oil on contact, setting fire to anything flammable within 5 feet, and two (2) +2 non-magical, armor piercing arrows. There is also a large bamboo contraption Obmar built, which can be unfolded on both ends and lit on fire to propel a fiery projectile that splashes in a 20-foot diameter and causes 4d6 points of damage, save vs. dragon breath for half damage. These are the last resort, heavy-hitting weapons of the dwarf. A page of parchment contains a recipe: these are the bakery's instructions to make Jade Bread (see area **LI-14**).

**15. LATERAL CORRIDORS.** These 20-foot wide corridors are the big arteries of movement within the settlement numbered (1) through (4) spreading in a cross-pattern from the plaza at area **LI-8**. These main galleries are filled with carts from Nester, piles of rubble, dwarven and goblinoid remains, the hulking mass of gargoyle still in one piece, round boulders used by the young stone giants who followed Krassus in his purge... searches can be made along the corridors themselves and at their very ends, which each feature an immense pile of clutter hiding a vertical shaft leading down to the Burial Grounds. The exception to this is at **LI-15 (4)**, where the clutter gathers around a very old, round statue in the semblance of Valya, Mother of All Dwarves. Searching the rubble at the end of each corridor will weaken the particular pile's Structural Integrity by three (3) points on the first search and trigger an immediate tremor. See *Special Rules*, Introduction chapter for more on this particular aspect of the dungeon.

Obmar Nojh the Unwashed, a highly aggressive, partially mad master of guerilla tactics, is hiding in the very place his ancestral enemies now occupy. The dwarf keeps changing his hiding spots, though he regularly sleeps above the old oven of the bakery east of **LI-14A**, and at one of three locations at the end of these main corridors, in the rubble stacked up at areas **LI-15 (1)**, **(2)** and **(3)**. The referee can determine his current whereabouts randomly when the party approaches one such location by rolling 1d10: (1-2) Obmar is on the move, (2-4) Obmar at **LI-14A** above the oven, (5) Obmar is at **LI-15 (1)**, (6-8) Obmar is at **LI-15 (2)**, (9-10) Obmar is at **LI-15 (3)**.



Obmar camouflages his skin and other features – his beard is closed-cropped, and he applies mud and stone paste all over himself, customizing his disguise depending on his surroundings, becoming one with the tomb he is now haunting. There are rumors and superstitious tales circulating amongst the other denizens of the place: they speak of this shadow, this presence that kills and disappears. Many think of it as a curse.

If Obmar spots the party, he will follow, waiting for an opportunity to strike the last member closing the marching order. He will attempt a surprise attack, erupting from the shadows and yelling “DIE, SPAWN OF EVIL!” in the dwarven language. If the cat of **LI-7** has been killed by the party, Obmar will fight to the death, having either seen the corpse or just feeling that something is wrong about the party. If the cat is friendly to them, and they carry it along with them, Obmar will talk first, and maybe attack second.

If the party becomes friends with Obmar, he might share stories of his work digging out the tunnels under Nester's castle. He remembers the place's location, and could guide them there.

**OBMAR NOJH:** 2nd Level dwarf fighter; SZ S; MV 90 ft.; STR 17, CON 17, INT 7, WIS 16, DEX 18, CHA 5; AC 4 (Studded leather and grieves); HD 2; HP 24; Surprise on a 1-5; #AT 1; D 1d4+! throwing dagger, +4 to hit, 1d6+1 half-serrated short sword, +1 to hit; Obmar carries four (4) mismatched throwing daggers scrounged from the bodies of his victims, a necklace of assorted fangs, and his custom half-serrated short sword with



*a hollow handle and screwed pommel containing a sharpening stone, needle and humanoid guts string, a perfectly round marble, and fourteen (14) 100 GP base value gems. Obmar often improvises weapons and equipment as needed. He has a secret hiding place in the chimney above the oven at area L1-14A.*

Make sure to check for encounters 1-in-6 each time the party transitions through this corridor to cross it or move from point A to point B. These are some of the obvious place where lines of sight can cross over some distance and completely different inhabitants can spot, hear or detect each other from afar.

**15 (1). WESTERN CORRIDOR.** This is probably one of the more busy corridors of Grunn Galeb, with regular movement from the Kobolds, the Goblins, the Gnolls and the occasional wolves roaming around. Spending one turn clearing the pile of rubble at the end of the corridor reveals a vertical shaft leading down inside the pillar of area L2-22 in the Burial Vaults. A careful collapse of the remaining beams and boulders obstructing the way can be triggered safely from this side of the tunnel. The secret door is quite visible when one reaches the bottom, at the level of the Burial Vaults (the ground here is also made of compact rubble and could be cleared later on). A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for 5d6 points of damage. If the lock picking fails, the referee might still allow a saving throw vs. magic for half damage.

**15 (2). NORTHERN CORRIDOR.** Obmar's favorite corridor end. If the party spends one turn clearing the pile of rubble at the end of the corridor, it becomes apparent it hides a vertical shaft leading down inside the pillar of area L2-15 in the Burial Vaults. It otherwise works exactly as described above at (1).

**15 (3). EASTERN CORRIDOR.** Clearing the pile of rubble at the end of the corridor reveals a vertical shaft leading down inside the pillar of area L2-7 in the Burial Vaults. It differs from the other passages in that the bottom of the shaft is not located at the level of the Burial Vaults. The door that can be locksmithed is there (at -10% penalty if suspended by a rope in the shaft), but the shaft goes on, deeper in the darkness, down to area LC-5 of the Crypts.

**15 (4). SOUTHERN CORRIDOR.** The pile of rubble at the end of this corridor gathers around a six-foot tall statue of what, at first, looks like Valya, the Mother of All Dwarves. Appraising the piece reveals that the head of the statue seems is more detailed than her shoulders and body. A beautiful, plump, smiling female dwarves face with long braids and beard beautifully framing the entire head piece, which look relatively aged, yes, but

also very well preserved. The body stands in contrast by being damaged in parts, featuring short round legs, a wide belly, large breasts with no nipples, and no genitalia, though the viewer would first think of the deity being represented naked, not clothed.

The head piece was added by the dwarves when they converted this whole area into their settlement of Grunn Galeb. The head of Valya was carved before the arrival of the dwarves and was brought with them when they settled here. The statue of Zuun, the legacy of Aktum (see *The Burial Vaults*, Chapter 4), was connected to a passage that wasn't to be disturbed, according to the instructions left by Nester the Eurthwright, and thus the dwarves opted to simply add their own head piece and leave the statue alone.

Removing the head piece will take a bend bars/lift gates check on the part of the player characters. Up to six characters can combine their strength and percentiles together to accomplish this feat, as the head piece is quite heavy, but also quite voluminous. Check for Surprise as 1-2 giant rat per character helping in the effort will try to ambush the party from the mass of rubble at the base of statue. When removed, the interior of the head piece will let what looks like a club fall on the ground. This is actually a **shark-toothed wooden mace**, the head of which looks like intertwined roots where the shark teeth are implemented, pointing outwards. If the mace hits its target by 4 or more above its AC, cuts deep into the flesh and creates an laceration effect which causes further bleeding for 1d4 points of damage each time the victim runs or attacks in a melee round. The wound needs to be tended to first, in order to avoid further bleeding.

The weapon was used to keep the head in place, but the real treasure here will be found on top of the lean and long rectangular face of Zuun that fit into the Valya head piece. On top of Zuun's head lies a folded piece of parchment. Grabbing it without gloves can be fatal, saving throw vs. poison, for its four corners are lined with a powerful toxin causing extreme allergic reactions, including the collapse of the trachea and the asphyxiation of its victim. Inserting a spoon or something rigid in the windpipe and forcing it open within 1d6 plus the victim's HP adjustment in melee rounds, causing 1d3 points of damage in the process, will allow the victim of the poison to survive. A successful saving throw just induces 1d3 points of damage and difficulties breathing for 1d4 melee rounds.

Maybe a few more rats will show up to try and take the parchment from the party before they have a chance to take it. The rodents are subjected to the poison as well.

Use it as a way to jump scare the party into action if you need it. When unfolded, it is possible to identify the piece of parchment covered with tightly scribbled text and diagrams as a complete **recipe for the Stone-cutters' Stone-skin Stout**. The Stone-cutters' Draught is a known, if less popular beer than Palehorn's Bitter and the Halfling Gold are in the region, but the Stoneskin Stout is legendary, all exports having stopped with the fall of this settlement ten years ago. This recipe could be worth 1,000 GP if not more in the hands of the right acquirer.

Pushing Zuun's head downward will trigger the opening of the passage. Some of the clutter around the base of the statue has to be cleared out of the way in one exploration turn to guarantee its soft movement in the back of the corridor. The opening revealed is similar to the vertical shafts of the other ends of the main corridors, with a full-blown rats' nest established among the rubble obstructing the passage down. Ultimately, the shaft leads inside the pillar of area **L2-32** in the Burial Vaults. It works as described above at **(1)** from here.

**GIANT RATS:** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 4 avg.; #AT 1; D 1d3. *The nest includes maybe a little over two dozen giant specimen. It could be cleansed with flame, but that would probably provoke a collapse of the rubble down the shaft, with results probably unknown to the party as at this juncture. See L2-32 for more information.*

**16. WASHING AREA.** This place was used by the dwarves to wash their clothes and other personal items. This was the main gossip hub of the dwarf maidens back in the day. It has fallen silent now. Thick bushes of watercress and algae reach from the waters to the scrubbing stone slabs around. Two lampreys lurk in the water and would ambush easy preys.

**LAMPREYS (2):** SZ S; MV 720 ft.; AC 9; HD 1+1; HP 5; #AT 1; D 1d3 bite.

**16A. ESCAPE TUNNEL.** This tunnel and secret passage was purposefully built to allow the escape of the dwarves in case of invasion, and was used to get dwarves outside, down to area **L1-16**, then directly to the waterfall at **L1-3**, where most were ambushed and slaughtered by the forces of Krassus the Cambion. The trap door at this spot looks like a growth of light green crystals completely obstructing the way down. They radiate faint magic. Next to the crystals on the wall of the secret passage, a box contains a hammer with the instructions "Break in Case of Emergency".

Using the hammer (or any weapon) to break the crystals frees the way down to area **L1-16**. It reveals the presence

of a maiden's tiara left here during the evacuation of Grunn Galeb that ran concurrently with Krassus's attack on the settlement. The tiara is given to young maiden upon their first days as women, and before they take on a husband. It is a family heirloom worth 1,600 GP. Using the hammer also triggers the dweomer cast on the crystals, and releases the ochre jellies stored in the 10' x 10' secret rooms just south of the crystals in the secret passage, and the two gelatinous cubes north of area **L1-29** and west of **L1-25** on the map. This contingency plan was set up with the help of Nester the Eurthwright to give cover to the dwarves and disrupt the invaders' efforts to take over the settlement in their absence. As designed, after being shattered, the crystals slowly grow back under the influence of Nester's magic, and with them, new ochre jellies and gelatinous cubes are produced and incubated, but the dweomer will have a cumulative 1-in-4 chance of failing due to age and lack of maintenance.

**OCHRE JELLIES (2):** SZ M; MV 30 ft.; HD 6; HP 32, 26; AC 8; #AT 1; D 3d4. *Ochre jellies travel along walls and ceilings with ease. The fluids of ochre jellies dissolve flesh. Striking ochre jellies with lightning bolts divides them into one or more smaller jellies inflicting half normal damage. Cold and fire based attacks have normal effects.*

**17. GREATER APARTMENTS.** These were the living quarters of the specialized artisans amongst the dwarves. These are now ransacked and the main hunting grounds of a full pack of wolves roaming around the corridors of the north-eastern quadrant.

**WOLVES (15 in this area, 2-6 otherwise):** SZ M; MV 180 ft.; HD 2+2; HP 10; #AT 1; D 1d4+1.

**17A. LAIR OF THE VENEUR.** This apartment situated at the end of a strings of rooms and with a secret passage on the north wall to the outside corridor is a strategic choice on the Veneur's part.

No one knows his name. His face was melted by fire when, as a young lad, he was accused of practicing demonurgy by his own father, a Cleric of Threon of the Forge, when he revealed his amazing talent with bows by winning a very popular contest in the Archbarony of Hartst. He was castigated, banned for life from his family and community. The lad ran for his life, and ended up losing his way in the forest. This is ironically when the powers of evil seized him and made of him their instrument on the Eurth.

Disfigured, the child became a monster. His shed his former life by the wayside, like a former husk or chrysalis, and left his identity behind for good. He gathered the

predators of the forest around him, communed with the terror of the night, and became its herald. He trained the beasts, lived with them to become their leader, and gave them a taste for man's flesh. He is now known by the villages around the Pass as a shadow, a wraith who brings the wolves to the edges of their farms to steal cattle and devour small children whenever possible. Though he is no ghost, but a mortal man, these stories are actually true. His motive is vengeance, and he will continue to pillage and kill as long as he lives.

**THE VENEUR (F4):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL NE, STR 17 (+1/+1 *melee*), INT 14, WIS 12, DEX 18 (INIT +3, AC -4), CON 13, CHA 4; HD 4; HP 32; AC 2; #AT 2 *ranged*, 1 *melee*; D 1d6+4/1d6+4, +6 to hit, *point blank range* (between 6 ft. and 30 ft.), D 1d6+3/1d6+3 +5 to hit, *short range*, 1d6+1/1d6+12-7, +4 to hit, *medium and long range*, *composite long bow*, D 1d8+1, +1 to hit, *true iron battle axe*. The Veneur wears a +1 **studded leather armor**, **bracers of archery** (+1 to hit, +1 *damage*). He carries two (2) **potions of speed**, a supply of normal arrows plus four (4) **flame arrows** (adding 1d6 fire damage to a hit, 1d6+2 to cold-based creatures) and four (4) **frost arrows** (adding 1d6 damage to a hit, 1d6+2 to fire-based creatures) and **iron spurs** adding 40 ft. to a mount's movement rate for 1d6 turns and reducing the odds of being dismounted to 1-in-10 no matter the circumstances.

Since communities suspect the presence of werewolves and similar cursed creatures in the area, the reports and rumors of the crimes committed by the Veneur have reached the Lone Tower and its leader, Lyonidas. The Tower sent a servant to investigate, and essentially put the culprit in front of an ultimatum: join the Tower or die. Lukhan, a scout expert in the ways of the Midlands, was selected for the task. He first scouted for a lair and inadvertently activated the Gate to the Red Shade of Lyon at E-7. He escaped with his life, but the Veneur caught him, and is now keeping him for questioning.

Lukhan is chained to eastern wall. He is of average height and build, with dark hair, badly shaven. He looks like a man who's spent some time in the Wild and has not bathed for a few days. He is neither ugly nor handsome, but he cowers now against the wall, afraid and rubbing his hands that seemed to have been burned by torture.

**LUKHAN OF THE LONE TOWER (WEREWOLF):** SZ M; MV 150 ft.; AL CE, *Surprise 1-3*; HD 4+3; HP 28; AC 5; #AT 1; D 2d4; *Can only be hit by +1 or silver weapons. If a victim suffers more than 50% of their HP total in damage, they risk becoming lycanthropes themselves.*

Lukhan will try to hide his nature as much as possible, appealing to the party's charity to help free him. If they do this, and the Veneur is defeated, Lukhan will want to join the party for a while. He will keep his strength and abilities a secret and pull back if necessary. If the party adventures with Count Aorll of E-7, Lukhan will point to the stash of tapestries and cushions where the Veneur rests. The party will find the **Silvered Sword of Law** wrapped in a blanket and stashed there. This is a long sword with no Ego or Intelligence, as it comes from the Red Shade of Lyon. Enchanted by the powers of Law, it has a +1 to hit and does 6-9 (d4+5) points of damage on contact (i.e. half the damage of the sword is not rolled at all but fixed and maximum, i.e. d8 becomes d4+4, d12 becomes d6+6 vs. giant-sized). It is considered +2 and silver for purposes of selecting targets.

Lukhan is a werewolf and a servant of the Lone Tower. He activated the Gate to the Red Shade at E-7 and was as surprised as Aorll by the results. As the Count passed out, Lukhan changed into his hybrid form and slaughtered the green men attacking them. He then took the Silvered Sword in his rage to run outside and destroy it, but in the end he could not. He passed out in the wilderness and found the sword next to him, his hands badly burned by the silver. Then the Veneur caught him. He's been chained here and toyed with mercilessly ever since.

**18. MUSHROOM CAVE.** Giant 12-feet tall mushrooms are growing everywhere. They have bright orange caps, and are leathery and smooth to the touch. They stand on milky-white, tree-trunk stems sprouting from the sand.

Swift movements can be spotted as creatures concealed by the mushrooms run back and forth, to and from many crevices and holes dug in the natural eastern wall of the cave. These are giant geckos feeding on the fungi found here. They will defend themselves if threatened or cornered, but will generally prefer to avoid confrontations and run for cover.

If a mushroom is cut down or harmed in any way, it will grow back to its original size and shape in a matter of a day. It is actually possible to see them grow with a naked eye. The skin makes a fine leather (+1 natural AC for an armor made out of the stuff), and the flesh is filling like meat. Also note that the porous nature of the mushroom attunes it to magical energy in such way it can support dweomers cast by an 8th level magic-user, instead of the usual 11th level required for such magical undertakings. The magic-user still needs to have access to the proper tomes and training in order to know the steps needed to complete this process.



**LARGE CAVE GECKOS (1-4 per mushroom):** SZ M; MV 180 ft.; AL TN; AC 6; HD 1; HP 4; #AT 1; D 1d4 bite.

**19. SMOKING LOUNGE.** This 30' x 20' foot space is concealed behind a secret door. This was a private smoking area for the those privileged few dwarves who would want to get away from the Drinking Hall and enjoy the exotic pleasure it contains. A giant hookah stands in the center of this room. It is made out of clear glass inlaid with silver threads all along its length. Eight purple hoses spread out of this apparatus. They are tipped with thin pierced silver heads which can be used to smoke. Fluffy multicolored pillows are spread out on the floor.

If the players light the hookah up and smoke from it, the oozing waters will instead produce a hallucinogenic compound which might trigger dreams, visions and general lethargy.

A dried-smoked mummified corpse wearing lacquered armor and protective furs is still leaning against the south-western corner of the room. This dead ancient anti-hero still holds a large +1 **composite bow** and wears a

sheathed scimitar attached to his back. One can find a goat skin full of rancid kumis lying close to him and two mummified dwarven heads still hanging from his belt by their beards. His quiver contains fourteen (14) regular arrows and **two (2) treantwood arrows +1**. A few coins are stashed in a decaying leather pouch as well (12 GP, 15 SP, and 36 CP).

**20. PRIVATE BUNKS.** These little 10' x 10' rooms were used by dwarven women to brazenly expose their beards and many talents to those who could pay. Two little headless female bodies can still be found lying on a bed. Their clothing has been torn apart and thrown about the area. One of the mattresses still conceals one of these beauties' private stash. It is stuffed with low-quality jewelry, old dried-up cosmetics and perfume, coin, a few gems around 50 GP, for a total value of a thousand gold pieces (1,000 GP).

**21. MAIN QUARRY.** Here lies the pit which made the dwarves' fortune. It is lined with one of the very last known veins of celadon marble which made the reputation of the Clan before the attack of Young Krassus. The marble is still there, exposed within the giant well. The

square contours of the many blocks which have been extracted from this spot over the years are still clearly visible along its lip. A ramp goes down to the bottom of the well on its western edge.

Many tools, blocks of marble, as well as carts, wooden beams and pulley systems litter the ground around the pit. Especially worth notice is the wide, strong cart loaded with blocks of marble located ten feet away from the edge.

The bottom of the quarry is the lair of the goblins serving Field-marshal Grosh the Great, an enormously fat, rotund hobgoblin of ill repute. The Field-marshal is clearly insane, and uses the last eight remaining dwarven prisoners to carry his litter around. He holds court on the northern edge of the quarry (in the 20-foot wide emplacement indicated by an "X" on the map). The marble there has been polished to such an extent as to reflect and amplify the Field-marshal's grandeur. The goblins kneel very close to their leader as he eats, drinks, snores and speaks, waiting for his command. To ignore Grosh the Great is to die an untimely, painful death.

Using the various tools and blocks around the pit, it would be possible to crush a great many number of goblins at a time. Treat those as area damage projectiles instantly killing the goblins they hit. The cart is in a perfect spot to actually strike Grosh and his close servants first, including the dwarves carrying his litter. Dislodging the cart from its initial position will require a bend bars/lift gate check modified by the number of people involved, the tools used, and any other relevant circumstance to the referee's discretion. Multiple attempts may be made, but each failure may cause a noise raising alarm, or other such negative consequences.

**GOBLINS (50):** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL NE; AC 6, HD 1-1; HP 3; #AT 1; D 1-6. Each goblin carries 3 GP and 10 SP, totaling 200 GP if all are killed and looted.

**GROSH THE GREAT (Hobgoblin):** SZ L; MV 30 ft.; AL LE; AC 5; HD 1+1; HP 9; #AT 1; D 1-12 two-handed giant mace (a human-sized fighter would need an exceptional strength to wield it). On a natural 20, the mace has a 1-in-10 chance to break. If the mace breaks or if a character specifically announces he studies the mace in detail after acquiring it, a hidden compartment inside its head will be revealed. It contains 3-12 50 GP base value, 1d8 100 GP base value, and 1d4 500 GP base value gems. An ivory chess set matching a celadon marble board accompanying it is concealed under the cushions Grosh sits on, along with a +2 seax he keeps there as last resort. Market value: 420 GP with the board, 57 GP without the board.

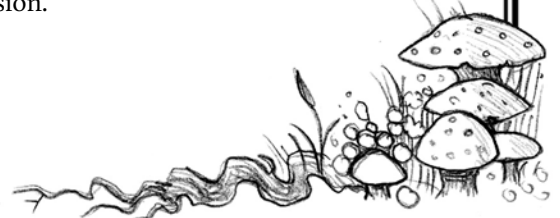


**22. QUARRY SUPPLIES.** A variety of supplies can found gathered on the floor. At least half the supplies are still usable. Sample items include: three cases with ten pots of oil each, raw hide which was used underneath slabs of marble, bees' wax candles, harnesses and pulleys, chisels and others tools, as well as coils of rope with oil spilled upon them.

A treasure chest, once locked, has been broken into some time ago. It still contains many caramelized treats, some of them half-melted and chewed-on. The foreman not only enjoyed the candies himself but shared them freely with the female staff. The workers too would occasionally get some, but only as a special reward for a job well done.

Make sure you check whether a fire is started if the party fools around with open flames. The whole room could quickly turn into a raging, flaming inferno for the unwary.

**23. FOREMAN'S QUARTERS.** The apartments of the quarry's overseer have been left alone for a long time. The goblins say they are haunted, and avoid the premises entirely. They even look at the balcony stretching from the upper level over the whole of the quarry with great fear and apprehension.







The goblins' stories are not far from the truth. An extra-dimensional entity taking the shape of a white vapor claimed these apartments as its home. The vampire cloud, or Horla, as it were, is a creature that feeds on life force. It surrounds its preys and sucks their essence out of them, taking on lively colors in the process. The cloud is easily disturbed, and greatly avert to open winds and electrical damage.

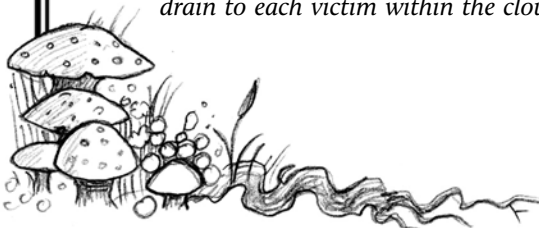
The twisted, contorted remains of the many goblins consumed by the cloud may be found littering the floor of every room upstairs. Let it be a warning for those who would tread these dangerous grounds.

A slab on the floor of the 20' x 40' room north of the staircase can be lifted to find the hidden stash of the dwarven foreman who died when Krassus attacked the settlement. There are four letters of exchange payable to the Council of Coin of the Free City of Villenor worth a total of 525 GP all together, three (3) gems worth 100 GP base value, four (4) gems of 50 GP base value, and 100 GP and 50 SP in Prytonic coinage from the Viscounty.

**LE HORLA (Vampire Cloud):** SZ L; MV 20 ft. Floating; AL LE; AC 10; HD 4; HP 18; D 2 hit points energy drain to each victim within the cloud's 15 foot diame-

ter, 1 hit point recovered for each 2 hit points inflicted. The Horla has no maximum number of hit points. It cannot be affected physically, unless by electricity and wind. Cloaks shaken to create a wind in its direction, opening the doors of the manse, and similar actions will generally inflict 1d4 points damage to the Horla. Holy Water will inflict 2d4 points of damage per vial. Combinations or augmentations are possible, up to the referee. Any magical effect creating wind and/or electricity will instantly destroy the Horla, such as gust of wind, shocking grasp and likewise spells. Upon destruction, the Horla will explode in a 15-foot diameter burst. Each victim within the cloud will incur 2-12 points of damage. 1d4 points of splash damage will be inflicted to the victims standing within 10 feet of the burst. Only a tiny wisp of light will remain, and zoom to the staircase to disappear.

The Horla was born of the dreams of the slumbering Canon of the Ashes of Aktum of area L2-3. The wisp of light indicates the return of that fraction of the cleric's unconscious coming back to him. If the tremors triggered around the Tomb have not awoken the Canon yet, the return of the Horla's spark will do it. If somehow the party leaves this area and the Horla is still alive, it will make its way back to the Canon, albeit at a much slower pace. See *The Burial Vaults*, Chapter 4, for more about these developments.



**23A. THE WAY DOWN.** Searching thoroughly around the Staircase at the bottom level of the Foreman's quarters will reveal a switch which, if activated, will make the steps of the staircase slide along their supporting column. Soon, the reconfigured staircase leads down to lower level deep under the Eurth, at area **L2-1** to be precise, and not up to the quarters anymore. Activating the switch again will bring back the staircase to its initial position.

**24. OXEN PENS.** This is where the giant oxen used to pull the blocks of marble up the quarry's ramp were housed. All that remains now are piles of large charred bones since the forces of Young Krassus slaughtered the animals and cooked them up on the spot.

**25. DWARVEN DAY CARE.** The broken toys found in this room were once used to keep the young dwarves busy when their parents toiled at the quarry. Climbing ropes hanging from the ceiling, miniature carts pulled by wooden oxen, little hammers and chisels, quantities of stone warrior figures, wheels and harnesses, leather balls stuffed with their guts ripped out are all over the place. A pink teddy bear can be found with a pouch containing an **Amulet of Life Protection**, which sadly doesn't seem to have been used on the day Krassus attacked the settlement. This area might be the source of disturbing animations and hauntings, at the referee's discretion, when the corruption of the depths starts puppeteering the dead of Grunn Galeb. See *Developments* section at the end of this chapter.

**26. FISHERMAN'S APARTMENT.** This room has been thoroughly trashed, like so many others in the complex. The party may find scattered here and there: some rotten wooden beams that once belonged to a bed, a huge chopping block with assorted broken knife blades sticking out it and making it look it a monstrous porcupine, and a stone bathtub cracked and overturned.

**27. FISHING SUPPLIES.** This is where the dwarven fisherman living at **L1-26** and his sons kept their fishing equipment. The rods and nets are intact, since these secret passages were not found by the invader. Bags of assorted grains and dead insects are stored in this location as well. The parts of a **magical fishing rod** can be found on a workbench, with a line and a large hook attached to it. The rod has a command word meaning "reveal" in stone-cutter script carved on its handle. Speaking it reveals the function of the rod usable, which uses the hook at the end of the line, twice a day, to project a *detect magic* spell making the auras of the objects thus revealed visible to the naked eye. Next to the rod, there is a **first-sized lure** carefully assembled with bits of mussel shells covered with mother-of-pearl, beads, and colorful feathers. Though not magical, this lure looks like it was built

with a very specific target in mind, judging by its size and composition. The lure is perhaps worth 40 GP base value to a fine connoisseur of such craft.

**28. FISHING BOAT.** This is the tipped over skiff the fisherman and his sons used when going to **L1-32**. It is in working order, along with the two oars, the giant gaff and an 11-foot pole aligned beside it.

The skiff includes a built-in box concealed underneath the rower's bench. It contains three hardened, decade-old sandwiches wrapped in paper, and three little vials with cork stoppers. Each vial holds four ounces of magical liquid which, if imbibed, allows one to breathe underwater for an hour per ounce consumed. One of the paper-wrappings on the sandwiches has been written on by hand, hastily. The note says "*Need to find a way to distract the fish and use the rod to get w/e that is off the bottom.*" This is a clue pointing to the treasure that lies at the bottom of area **L1-32**, and how the implements of area **L1-27** could be put to obtain it.

**29. THERMAE.** This room is open to the natural sand stone cave and the streams of water running through it. Its floor has been slowly accumulating a thick silica covering. An egg-shaped pool of steaming, boiling water lies in the middle of a cluster of smaller, marble-lined bathtubs. A mechanical telescopic arm reaches out of each 10' x 20' blocks of stone standing on its western side. Large buckets hang from each of the arms' extremities.

This was once the bath house of the dwarves. It is now the lair of a group of infant giant snapping turtles using the smaller, 10-foot wide tubs as their nests. There will be a varying number of turtles present. Either determine the number randomly (1d4+1) or have two (2) turtles present plus one (1) per character present in the party beyond four. These are dull, impulsive creatures which will snap and bite compulsively at anything that comes into range. They are helpless if they are turned over on their backs, and would die if somehow dumped into the boiling water of the large central pool. An amazing meal in large quantities if there ever was one.

**INFANT GIANT SNAPPING TURTLE (2-5):** SZ M; 20 ft. on land, 180 ft. swimming; AL TN; AC 0, unless biting or otherwise busy with a prey, in which softer parts can be targeted at AC 5; HD 2; HP 8; #AT 1; D 1d6 bite, continuous damage 1d6 after initial bite.

**30. WELL OF NESTS.** The Stone-cutter dwarves discovered this natural well reaching hundreds of feet underground. They constructed this room and its high vaulted ceiling around it for it harbors a treasure of its own: a

colony of peculiar crystalline Firebirds using the well as their reproductive grounds.

The heat rises sharply for anyone entering the room. The birds will zoom back and forth checking the newcomers out. They will look for metal and shining surfaces. If they see such items, they will attempt to get to them and melt them using their elongated proboscis beaks, injecting the molten substance into their stomach. They will then fly down to the lava below, reject the metal on the surface of the flow to clean it of its impurities, suck the refined material back up and use it to build their nests.

The more valuable the metal or alloy used to build a nest, the deeper it will be down the well. The nests a few feet away from the surface would be constituted of lead, for instance, whereas the deeper nests, 400 feet down or more, could be built using platinum, varieties of natural electrum, and the like. The referee might rule some extremely rare metals or alloys used to create specific items or harvest as spell components could be found very deep within.

There are more than a thousand specimens flitting about and living down the well. They will usually not harm living creatures, unless they are threatened, and will steal the shiniest metals they can spot instead. Endangering their active nests, which can be easily spotted for their untarnished brightness, would be a very bad idea. Only 25% of the nests are currently being used, however, which leaves many deserted nests to be harvested at will. Note the active nests are usually clustered together in patches.

There are many ancient tools, including pulleys, harnesses, and ropes, all of them dulled by the use of grease to conceal any metallic parts they might include. Note the stream of water flowing south-west of this location is separated from the well by a curved wall of solid stone.

**ACHAEAN FIREBIRD (1000+):** SZ S; MV 480 ft. flying; AL TN; AC 0; HD 1+1; #AT 1, the Achaean Firebird attacks as a 4 HD monster; D 0 or 1d4; *Special:* if the Achaean Firebird is defending its nest or grabs an item which is carried, worn, or otherwise in contact with flesh, the damage is inflicted by the melting process initiated by the bird's proboscis.

**31. BREWERY.** Two giant wooden wheels are propelled by the steam's current on the northern side of this room. There are many bags of spilled grains and baskets filled with shrunken, dried orange mushroom slices lying here and there across the floor. A huge copper vat stands near the western wall. It is opened on the top, with a large lid of the same metal hanging over it. Ladders lead up to edge of the vat. Four smaller kettles are lined up against

the walls, two on each side of the door by the northern wall, and two between the door and the large vat by the southern wall. Two metal columns are raised against the eastern wall. The vat, kettles and columns are all connected by metallic pipes.

Six bottles of Veuve Clequaux are hidden behind the columns against the eastern wall. Veuve Clequaux is a bubbly wine from eastern Nustria, and the bottles are marked with the sun flower of the Frankhs. These are each worth 120 GP base value.

The party may find the skeletal remains of a number of humanoids who tried to drink their way to the bottom of the various cauldrons and never made it, either by poisoning or low endurance. All these poor bums are long dead. Inspecting the large kettle along the western wall reveals a much more recent victim, a gnome by the looks of it, whose body has not yet started to decompose.

The gnome is four-foot tall, clean-shaven, has long curly brown hair, an eyepatch and a strong jaw. He is clad in leather from head to toe, including a long travel coat. He seems to have been killed within the last 24 hours. He is still warm, yet no rigor mortis. In his hand he holds a piece of parchment. When unfolded, it releases a round medallion bearing the arms of the Twin Perytons. The medallion bears a faint engraving on the other side that reads "*Bring this body back to Neb, Twin T. Death by Chocolate. He will know.*" On one side of the parchment, printed, there seems to be the familiar face with the mention "*ERMOLT LE NOIR. WANTED. Dead or Alive. 500 GP.*" At the bottom it mentions in fine print that "*this bounty payable by the Hunters' Guild, Council of Coin, Villenor.*" The sketch looks exactly like the face of the man dumped in the well at area L2-14. The other side of the Wanted note is blank but for a hastily written line: "*Head of the statue, south.*" Another strange detail is that his pockets are lined with cookie crumbs.

If the party brings the body back to *The Twin Tankard* and asks for Neb, the halfling in charge of the stables and general maintenance of the Inn with Sernet, will recognize the gnome as Blake "Bake the Snake" Plissken, a body hunter, baker and alchemist who's taken down a lot of people over the years. When the party shows the medallion or mentions Death by Chocolate, Neb will be surprised and respond "*Really? Are you kidding me?*" and laugh as he walks away, leaving the corpse with the party "*It's alright, I'll be right back!*" He will come back with a huge jug of milk, and will ask for the assistance of at least two people: one to keep Blake's body in a sitting position, and another to massage his trachea and tummy as Neb pours the milk down the corpse's throat. Amazingly, this will bring Black "Bake the Snake" Plissken back to life.





“Snake! You made it!” The baker-bounty hunter will take some time to recuperate, cough a lot, and breathe deeply.

He will then explain that his specialty is to bake special cookies. The dweomered kind of cookies. He’s always had this talent, and though he always wanted a life away from attachments, fighting crime and staying away from any form of government authority, he couldn’t give up on this passion. He knows how to make a variety of cookies, like the fireball cookie, which literally explodes when bitten into, the phantasmal cookie that induces some mild hallucinations for entertainment purposes, or the blink cookie, which allows when beaten to “blink”, aka teleport over very short distances, an effect similar to a *dimension door*. The Death by Chocolate cookie simulates death, as *feign death* spell, for the person who bites into it. It was only as a theoretical development stage, which is why Neb, who knows little bits and pieces of his hobby, was surprised.

Referees may want to make Blake Plissken available for the PCs as a henchman who’d take a full slice of treasure if traveling with the party, a specialized NPC who could create specific cookies for them for a price, and a recurring character adventuring around for bounties and various other rewards. Traveling with Black Plissken and his cookies would sooner or later attract the attention of Oafy, the Chaos Moppet, who has been taken from a different shade of the Eurth and now roams the lands around the Pass, and he would be extremely interested in becoming buddy

with Blake and become the official taster of his alchemical creations. For more about Blake “Bake the Snake” Plissken, see Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*.

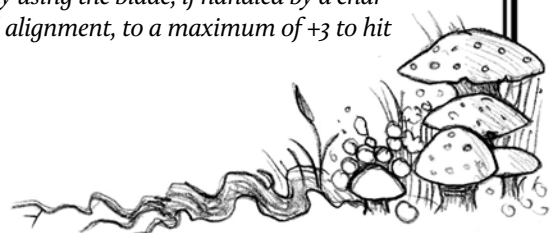
**32. NATURAL CAVE.** The stream of water is much wider at this particular spot. The water swirls inward into a deep pool around the visible rocks therein. Off the north-eastern exit, the sound of the large wooden paddle wheels of **LI-31** can be heard loud and clear. This passage is still obstructed by nets stopping any fist-sized object or animal from damaging the brewery’s wheels beyond. Similar nets once obstructed the southern passage, but they have been heavily damaged, cut and torn apart. Walking against the current beyond the map by the south-western passage ultimately leads to the “Y” intersection between this area, **E-26**, and **E-27** on the Environs and Cave System map (Chapter 2).

Many fish, most of them trophy-sized specimens of their respective breeds, are swimming around the pool. A pale glow can be spotted floating deep under the surface, surrounded by shadowy, leafy fronds, between two of the central boulders. It emanates from the fleshy growth on a giant Lighthouse Anglerfish lurking below. As soon as prey gets within 10 feet or so, the Lighthouse Anglerfish will attack.

**LIGHTHOUSE ANGLERFISH:** SZ L; MV 180 ft. swimming; AL TN; AC 6; HD 5; HP 28; #AT 1; D 4d4 toothy bite.

The fisherman of area **LI-28** was right: there is something at the bottom of the deep pool, unbeknownst to the anglerfish and the dwarves who visited this cave in the past. If the fish is slain or distracted by a lure or other types of bait, it is possible to get quickly into the weeds and find a wooden sword entangled there. This is **Bretus’s Lament**, a Votive sword, once the possession of a Knight of Ournst who wielded it in the company of Iyerom d’Ajax, the paladin tasked by legend to slay the vampire Khas. It was lost in the underground tunnels and ended up in this place after some time. Holding the sword will ignite its votive gem of a magical green fire that will spread from the center of the guard, where the gem resides, all over the nigh-indestructible wooden blade.

**BRETUS’S LAMENT:** +1 Votive Sword of Annod, INT 17, EGO 15+. AL Neutral Good. Bretus’s Lament is an elegant, curved, wooden sword carved out of treantwood (base damage 1d6). An emerald levitates in the center of the hilt area, and projects an eldritch force covering the blade with green fire when so wished by the wielder. Bretus’s Lament starts as a +1 to hit and damage weapon. It gains an additional +1 to hit and damage per three levels spent actively using the blade, if handled by a character with a Good alignment, to a maximum of +3 to hit





and damage without special training from the Halcyon Knights of Annod. Bretus's Lament also adds +1-4 force fire damage as the green flames emanating from the gem bathe the blade in combat. The same force fire can be released as separate magic missiles, with as many missiles produced a day as the weapon's modifier to hit and damage. The missiles can be released one by one, separately in different combinations, or combined all together as a single fire blast exploding in a 20-foot radius for as many d6 of damage as the weapon's modifier to hit and damage, once a day. The sword's modifier applies to targeted spells demanding rolls to hit, such as acid arrow, as it can be used as a pointing implement, a wand, in a general magical sense, guiding spells to their target.

The INT and EGO of Bretus's Lament do not translate in a single contained "personality" for the blade. These aspects instead manifest as sense of heightened awareness for the wielder, a "feeling" emphasizing certain cues and perceptions over others in lieu of warnings, summoning memories from the wielders to advice and counsel, and manifesting the shadows of past friends and spirits, such as Bretus the Labrador cross with long legs and flat ears who lives on in the gem, when conversation or mere physical presence are needed. If characters wielding Bretus's Lament search for information about the Sword, they will be told it is a Votive Sword, a blade dweomered in the Grim Wood by the Halcyon Knights of Annod.

If handled by a character that is neither Good nor Evil, the blade gains +1 to hit and damage for every four levels of constant usage, and the force fire turns yellow after the first four levels; the senses of the wielder will be confusing, not quite attuned to the blade, something will feel "off". If handled by a character of Evil alignment, the blade gains +1 to hit and damage for every five levels of constant usage; the force fire turns yellow after the first five levels, and then red after ten levels of usage; the senses of the wielder are being polluted by visions of suffering and death, victims of the character haunt his dreams and beg him to change his ways – something is definitely more than "off" between the sword and its wielder.

Votive Swords are personal, unique possessions of the Halcyon Knights of Annod. Along with the abilities described above, sages say such blades can unlock various coordination and mental abilities from their wielders allowing them to perform acrobatics, move objects with their minds and more, as long as they receive proper training and live by the code of the Halcyon Knights. The truth of the matter is a little more complex than that, but would require a dedicated quest to the Floating Groves to fully uncover.





**33. PROSPECTING AREA.** This is a sample area where the dwarves searched for new rich marble strikes. Another such prospecting space can be found east of **LI-15 (2)**. Exploratory tunnels are going up, down, in various directions. These are in very poor condition, and may be dangerous to tread. The referee might allow a roll on the *Rubble Search* table when searching these general areas or the vertical shafts marked “F” (Floor) and “C” (Ceiling) on the map, to see if anything was left behind by dwarves trying to escape the Cambion’s assault.

**34. THE FORGETTABLE ROOM.** This room is enchanted with a powerful dweomer erasing the memories of those who see it, and leaving them with the impression it was just empty and uninteresting. The referee would normally roll the saving throws, but the single inhabitant of this room will cut the spell short, and stop the dweomer before it activates. Don’t hesitate to roll the dice anyway, think intently, then describe to the players how the door they were looking at seemed to fade for a moment, as if their perceptions were being toyed with, and how the feeling suddenly stopped to leave them wondering what just happened. This should be enough to put them on guard, and might actually make them doubt what happens in this room is real.

When the party enters, the first thing they see is a very large, ebony black mirror frame occupying the entirety of the 30-foot long eastern wall. There is only the frame left: the mirror itself is missing. There are shards everywhere in the room. It must have been destroyed in the recent past. In the south western corner of the room, the party can see a 20-foot wide circular alcove and, occupying much of the space within, a well surrounded by a curb raised five feet off the ground. A work table stands by a door against the northern wall, covered with bits of parchment, alchemical pipes and ink bottles, diagrams and even a few lines of poetry.

A portly dwarf with white hair and beard finishes writing something as the party enters the room. He is silent at first, finishes his sentence, and then puts down the feather he was writing with. He sighs, and turns around to face the newcomers, a shard of the mirror in hand. “Welcome. I am Ozmi, the Incunabulum. We have little time, so please, hear me, for I must depart very soon.”

“This,” he shows the mirror frame, “is what remains of the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc. This object had a number of qualities, the main of which was a connection to what the sages call the Obsidian Realms. Through them, my progenitor could access different places and levels of consciousness. He tied his identity to this mirror, so it could project him in various states across the Earth, its shades, and the planes beyond.”

He coughs. “Dear... not much time. My progenitor tried to reach the Chaos under this location. He did this through great effort, and what he found there was a conscience that challenged and rebuked his power. Now you must understand, the power of my progenitor was prodigious, enough to inhabit this area without anyone else knowing, bring the mirror, conduct his experiments... anyway.” Another cough. “The will and identity of the wizard was shattered, and with it, the mirror which hosted his consciousness. The shards of the mirror you see here as bits and pieces of the wizard himself. I am ... a piece. The Good piece. If you use this spell...” he grabs the piece of parchment he was just scribbling on, “It will allow you to place back the shards onto the frame. But the bigger ones will be more complex.”

“There are three shards of Osmandius you will need to bring to the mirror and place back yourself, if you want to help this place from sliding further into entropy and ultimately be swallowed by the substance of the Obsidian Realms. When you have the shards and place them in the right order, the mirror will be complete and mended. Cover it, and dispose of it where it will not be found.”

“I... I am one of the shards.” He falls off his chair, a piece of the mirror in his hand. The blood now rapidly spreading on his shirt shows he gutted himself when the party arrived. “The Ozmis must die before the shard can be brought back to the mirror. And even then, do so fast, for the pieces will spawn us back if they are not reintegrated to the mirror in time.”

Assuming the party tries to assist the Ozmi Incunabulum, He interrupts them with all his strength: “**LISTEN.** I have no time. I need to pass so you can place back my shard into the mirror. Listen to me. I am the first, number one! The Palimpsest was the second, is number two! And the Apocryphon the third, number three! I placed the esoteric frame, the number 15... the illusion that hides the beast. The total is 15, from any and all directions.”

His pupils narrow as his eyes open wide in anticipation. “Behind you! Defeat the storm! Use the mending spell on the shards! Then place mine and do the same. Find the Ozmis who remain. They must give up their lives. Bring back the shards. Mend the mirror...”

The Incunabulum dies. Healing spells won’t help: he gutted himself and gave up the will to live. The shards across the room have coalesced into an amorphous mass of glass swirling on itself. It covers the 20’ x 20’ space between the well and the mirror frame. This is a spontaneously formed golem made of all the small bits and pieces of the mirror that remained scattered on the floor.

**SHARD GOLEM (TYPE II):** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 4 HD; HP 10; AC 9; #AT 3; D. 1d4(x3), shards cut. A Type II Shard Golem covers an area 20' x 20'. Opponents inside this area take an automatic d6 of slicing damage every melee round they remain inside. Shard golems can be damaged by blunt weapons, mundane and magical, and spells and effects inflicting blunt damage, such as ice storm, force and sonic-based effects like magic missile and shockwave. Fire has no effect on Shard Golems, and electricity inflicts half damage. Two Type II Shard Golems can join together and form a new, Type III Shard Golem at full HP. Once reduced to 0 HP, a Type II Shard Golem becomes two (2) Type I Shard Golems at full HP. Other types of weapons have no effect on them. See Appendix A: Monsters and Characters for more information.

Once the two type I Shard Golems that emerge from the Type II have been defeated, the party is free to search the room. They will find the piece of parchment left behind by the Incunabulum. It describes a second level spell for magic-users named Vanx's mystical mend, which is very similar to the level I mending spell, except it can work on some magic items, specifically those items which already have been dweomered to receive a mystical mend, like the frame of the mirror.

A look at the inside of the frame of the mirror will show a grid filled with numbers that must have been drawn on top of the inner surface by the Incunabulum. Here's how it presents itself, with the section in bold representing where the shards fit inside the mirror, the sections in normal script around being directly engraved onto the frame of the mirror.

	XV	XV	XV	
XV	-	<b>IX</b>	<b>IV</b>	XV
XV	<b>VII</b>	<b>V</b>	-	XV
XV	<b>VI</b>	-	<b>VIII</b>	XV
	XV	XV	XV	

When Vanx's mystical mend is cast on the shards of the mirror just defeated by the party, they will fly back to the mirror and cover the Danthean numerals marked as bold on this diagram. The only numerals missing after this is accomplished are I, II and III.

The Incunabulum still holds a large piece of the mirror in his hand. The shard that was tied to him. Casting Vanx's mystical mend on that large piece will mend it, but not make it integrate the mirror like the other, smaller pieces did. To do this, the shard of the Incunabulum must be physically placed on the mirror in the right

empty spot. Then the spell must be cast on the mirror, and the piece will grow and reform itself to fit the gap where it has been placed.

The Incunabulum pointed out: "I am the first, number one! The Palimpsest was the second, is number two! And the Apocryphon the third, number three!" Now, looking at the mirror, the players should deduce that no matter what column or line on the diagram, the total must be XV, 15. Thus, with three pieces of the mirror being left to mend, the correct positions are:

	XV	XV	XV	
XV	[2]	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	XV
XV	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	[3]	XV
XV	<b>6</b>	[1]	<b>8</b>	XV
	XV	XV	XV	

The shard of the Incunabulum must be placed between "6" and "8" at the center and bottom line of the diagram, since 6 + 1 + 8 = 15 horizontally, and 9 + 5 + 1 = 15 vertically. Casting Vanx's mystical mend changes the shape of the shard and makes it meld with the shards of the mirror already mended together. The shard of the Ozmi Palimpsest goes into the Upper Top Left spot marked [2], and the third, the shard of the Ozmi Apocryphon, goes into the Middle row, Right spot marked [3].

Placing a shard in the wrong spot, and then casting Vanx's mystical mend on it, results in a dark vibration on the mirror's part that makes the hand of the shard's holder wither in seconds, rotting from the inside out, as if affected by a mummy's rot. No saving throw allowed. It results in an immediate lack of coordination that imparts a -1 to hit and damage to combat situations, both melee and ranged, as the hand throbs and is a constant pain on the mind of the character. If attempted again by the same character, another -1 to hit and damage are applied on a wrong position, though the progression of the disease thereafter is not affected. It otherwise progresses like the mummy's rot, becoming fatal in 1-6 months and inflicting the loss of -2 charisma per month of progression, permanently. The disease negates all cure wounds spells and causes the victim to only recuperate HP naturally, at 10% normal rate. The only spell that cures this rot is cure disease.

If the party checks the well on the western side of the room, they will find it filled with a dark goo that seems to ripple when the mirror is mended or otherwise interacted with. This is an obsidian jelly, which functions exactly like an ochre jelly, but tied to the substance of undeath that permeates the Obsidian Realms, making it able to spawn zombies from the flesh it consumes.

**OBSIDIAN JELLY:** SZ M; MV 30 ft.; AL TN; HD 6; HP 30; AC 8; #AT 1; D 3d4. Obsidian jellies travel along walls and ceilings with ease. The fluids of obsidian jellies dissolve flesh. Striking obsidian jellies with lightning bolts divides them into one or more smaller jellies inflicting half normal damage. Fire based attacks have normal effects. Cold has no effect, unlike an ochre jelly, but a sonic attack affects them for half damage. Obsidian jellies are similar to the ochre type, but usually believed to be produced by the decay of graveworms or the evolutions of manes on the prime material plane. This jelly here was an ochre jelly, and was effectively mutated by the powers of the Realms emanating from the mirror. It is able to spawn 1-4 zombies in a melee round per victim previously consumed. They do this by coalescing the fluids with the production of obsidian shards that serve as the bones of the zombies, giving them a frightful appearance of translucent, half-dissolved flesh wrapped around crystalline bones black as night.

The jelly will not leave its spot inside the well unless attacked, in which case it will produce one or more waves of zombies to get out of the well and push the intruders back. It was generated by the explosion of the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc and keeps being fed by it. When the Black Mirror is completely mended, the Obsidian Jelly will wait and leave the place to wander about the dungeon. It will resume its life cycle, feeding on flesh and cellulose to grow and spawn undead, and ultimately more of itself.

Searching the rest of the room, the party will find a Disk of Orichalcum that acts as a **mirror image projector**, separating into two equal disks the size gold pieces, each of them dweomered. If one of the disks is thrown on the ground, and the command word is spoken, it projects a single *mirror image* of the person currently holding the other disk in his or her hand. Both disks must be within 10 feet of one another to operate, and the *mirror image* will mimic all the gestures of the original – it has no autonomy of its own, can't do anything else but mimic the movements of the original.. If the *mirror image* is touched or takes one point of damage the illusion is broken.

On the table, the party finds three statues of monkeys, one with hands over its ears, the other with hands over its mouth, the last over its eyes. Each statue is made of jade, very finely crafted, and worth 200 GP on its own. A book has several pages ripped out of its spine, but those that remain reveal its purpose as one of the spellbooks of the original Osmandius. The spells still contained within the pages of this book are for illusionists: *change self*, *detect invisibility*, *phantasmal force*, *wall of fog*, *magic mouth*, *ventriloquism*, *Yllonnoc's bleeding bands\** and *hallucinatory terrain*.

If the party enquires about the lines of poetry, the referee may want to show them these few from an Earthling poet:

*I met a traveler from an antique land,  
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

**WHEN THE BLACK MIRROR IS WHOLE AGAIN:** The Ozmis laid to rest, and with all the pieces reintegrated to the frame, the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc will be whole again. Some of the magic of the Mirror will be restored, and the Ostrakon of area **H-II** will instantly become aware of this fact. The link between the Black Mirror and the Silent Lake at **LC -5** will be functional again, and parties will be able to go through the mirror back and force, from both sides. The Mirror will also be able to restore the memories of those it broke, like the Mhole of area **LC-9**, and be used to cast other types of purging and restoration spells after the proper study, which will involve weeks of study and many supplies to perform (in effect studying the spells in half the time and price).

The Ostrakon, the Voice of the Chimes and head of the Sages of the Ada-Maku, secretly is a different version of Osmandius, from another shade of the Eurth, who has been reassembled and atrophied after the same disaster in his own past, and traveled back here on this shade to hide and wait for the mirror to be repaired in this dimension. Once that is done, he will be more active in helping the player-characters, and will express an interest in protecting the mine and Tomb with the player-characters, later asking for a part in the stakes of the new camp or enterprise.

The Ostrakon will want the Ada-Maku to become protectors of Grunn Galeb and have a presence there with whoever else manages it. They will provide protection and security for those working at the mine, and in exchange the Ostrakon will ask for a specific area for his men, including this room and the Black Mirror in it. If

that fact is pointed out to him, he will say that he and the Sages of the Ada-Maku could help unlock the secrets of the Mirror, including finding the legendary library and laboratories of Yllonnoc, the founder of the Black Fang and one of the greatest illusionists that ever lived. *"This is worth a try, wouldn't you say?"*

In fact, another set of commands and dweomers leads to the quarters of old Osmandius, and the Ostrakon knows it. He will know the commands, but will have to experiment for some time to get back in tune with the mirror without the Black Fang, the actual wand of Yllonnoc, in his hands. He does not know the wand still exists, and is now part of the Hungry Masks of the Dead of area LC-3.

**35. THE BARRICADE.** When the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc shattered, it separated into three main fragments, besides the dozens of shards that made up the golem of area LI-34. These three main fragments, unlike the others, were able to give form to fragments of Osmandius's personality. These "Ozmis", as they call themselves, look like Osmandius in life, yet smaller. When Osmandius was a tall man gifted with an unnaturally long life, they look like dwarves with similar features but small differences in their age, demeanor and complexion.

Ozmi Incunabulum, whom the party can meet at area LI-34, is the more mature, aged, replica of the wizard, having taken most of his forethought and empathy. The two others ran away with their respective piece of the mirror, each more attached to their newfound individuality and life than the other, when the Incunabulum realized his own existence was doomed to pain and artifice.

Ozmi Apocryphon, the less mature, and stronger among the replica, embodies most of the cunning and malice of the original wizard. He is on the run. The Marauders of Ayoun had him in their custody a short time ago, but he escaped. Finding him will be necessary to stop the influence of Chaos of this level of the dungeon. You will find his stats along with a few ideas in Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, for more on this step of the mirror's mending.

Ozmi Palimpsest, the middle-aged one, has found refuge in this room after making a couple bad encounters in the dungeon. He is the most emotional, instinctive of the replicas, prone to bits of visions and madness.

When the party arrives, they will find the door leading to this room blocked by something on the other side. The furniture beams, even the stones making up the curb of the well in the western alcove in the room, the Palimpsest moved to press against the door and make it impenetrable. If the party tries to force the way through, they will hear the Palimpsest screaming *"No! Nooo! You will not take me alive!"*

Notice the proximity of the pile of rubble at the end of the corridor at LI-15 (2). Quick roll d10: if the result is 6-8, Obmar Nojh is currently in this area and will hear the commotion. See LI-15 for more about him. If Obmar Nojh is not around and the party perseveres during a few melee rounds, make check for a random encounter. Whatever the result, the Palimpsest will remain barricaded inside the room. The party can either combine their strengths three at a time to roll bend bars/lift gates and move the door inward, pushing the clutter inside the room to get a way in, or they can find the secret door located 30 feet north of their location.

When they pass through the door, they are no longer in the dungeon. They are in a huge desert, between the trunkless legs of a statue that is no more. Not far behind the legs, they can see the immense crowned head of a Khemetian king sinking in the sand, and about a hundred feet off, a well curb that must be a stop for those who want to stay alive in this harsh climate. Elyon, the Sun, is bright and exceedingly hot high above. If the party enters by the normal door, they can see the frame and the door ajar behind them, pushing against a sand dune. If they entered by the secret door, they can see the frame opened and the corridor of Grunn Galeb they just left beyond.

A voice comes from behind the giant king's head: *"You will not have me!"*

*There is a very strong scent of incense in the air. They see what looks like the face of the Incunabulum, but somewhat younger with salt and pepper hair and beard, if they already met him at area LI-34, firing an arrow at them with a scroll wrapped around it. It hits one of the statue's legs and crashes in the sand in front of them. The scroll unfolds, grows and becomes a grotesque humanoid form made of parchment written on it. The golem closes the distance with them, slightly taken off course by a sudden gust of wind as the sand whips the characters' faces. The party has a free round before the golem reaches them. Let them react. Then the melee begins.*

**SCROLL GOLEM:** SZ M; MV 80 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 5 HD; HP 20; AC 9; #AT 2; D 1d8/1d8 Paper cuts. This Scroll golem is covered with esoteric inscriptions, but will not cast spells other than those it can absorb from the party.

A Scroll golem is only damaged by fire and magic slashing magical weapons for full damage. Mundane slashing weapons inflict half damage. Blunt and piercing weapons have no effect. Cold spells slow it down 50%. Water, acid and lightning spells cause half damage, with each water spell having a 50% chance of destroying the ink of a spell the golem is inscribed with (each acid spell has a 30% chance to do the same). Spells can be inscribed onto the



golem at creation, or can be absorbed by an active golem. For each spell cast at the golem there is a 2-in-6 chance the golem will absorb the substance of the dweomer and heal itself at a rate of 3 HP/spell level with it, with 50% chance the spell will be inscribed onto the scroll and made available to cast back on the next melee round and at any time after that, with the spell disappearing when it is cast. Mind-affecting spells are automatically absorbed but not inscribed; they restore 4 HP/spell level to the golem.

**OZMI PALIMPSEST:** SZ; MV 90 ft.; AL TN, STR 12, INT 18, WIS 8, DEX 18 (INIT +3), CON 15, CHA 14; HD 4; HP 4 remaining of 18; AC 2; #AT 1; D 1d6 Short bow, +3 to hit; (Spells, Special abilities). *The Palimpsest carries his bow with twelve (12) mundane arrows and (6) illusory arrows. The long, wooden needle-like arrows are really thin physical projectiles that can be launched from a bow but are otherwise useless. They cannot penetrate armor and do not inflict any real damage. They are however enchanted by a dweomer making them seem real and deadly. If one of these is fired at a foe, the foe must make a saving throw vs. magic or defend against the projectile as if it were real and instinctively fatal, creating an opening adding +2 to other attacks against the same target within the same melee round, and opening the target up for surprise and backstabbing, if the creature can physically be backstabbed at all. These arrows can only be used once, and break on impact.*

The Palimpsest wears **bracers of armor AC 6**. He has three (4) sticks of **incense of deep relaxation**, which if burnt for a maximum of 4 hours lowers the saving throws of victims against charms, illusions and enchantments by 1 pip per hour the incense has already burned in the room. The fourth is burning right now in the room and has been for a while. The effects like for the next 8 hours in the room thus prepared.

When the fight is over and the scroll golem lies destroyed, the Ozmi Palimpsest will yell “Nooo!” and dash towards the well. Those who have not acted during this round can do make a ranged attack, assuming they are still in the same general area with the giant legs between them and the Palimpsest. Note that the dwarf has only 4 HP remaining after a couple encounters in the dungeon that almost cost him his life and triggered his current bit of paranoia.

If the Palimpsest makes it to the well, he will jump in it and kill himself. The desert will vanish, as will the remnants of the king’s statue, but the well will remain, occupying the 20-foot alcove of the western wall of this room. The remains of the golem, no matter how burnt and damaged, will morph back into their original form, the missing pages of the spellbook the Incunabulum kept at area **LI-34**. The spells still contained within these

heavily damaged fragments include *audible glammer, color spray, hypnotism, detect magic, mirror image, rope trick, invisibility 10’ radius* and *Yllonnoc’s dislocation\**. It makes one wonder how many spells were contained in the full original, and the extent of the knowledge of the original master illusionist, Osmandius.

At the bottom of the well, the party will find the shard along with the Palimpsest’s body. They will be able to get back to **LI-34** and reintegrate the shard with the rest of the mirror. If the Palimpsest survives, then the party will have to confront a moral conundrum: While the Incunabulum knew it ultimately had an artificial life and had to die, it is not the case of the Palimpsest. He is overflowing with emotion, generating illusions and magic out of sheer insanity and will to live. Whether the party brings him back to the Forgettable Room and slays him there, or keeps him alive and brings him back to camp to then research the subject of the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc with the Shaman of Crom Caemloch or sages of Villenor, they will still have to confront the Ozmi Apocryphon, who escaped Grunn Galeb and is currently on the run somewhere in the Wilderness. Referees should check out Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*, for more information on the Apocryphon and his whereabouts.

## DEVELOPMENTS

When the game first starts, referees should let the players do their thing and explore the environment. If playing the game in the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* style, this means they will spend several sessions starting at the village, making their way to the Tomb to then explore a section or two, and then retreat at the end of the session with the loot they acquired along the way. In between expeditions, the referee takes note of the groups or factions encountered and the aftermath of their meeting with the party. What happens in between? Do the survivors seek protection elsewhere? Do they quit and create a vacuum somewhere? Is it filled by someone on the inside, or the outside? Some thought must be given about what the bad guys do in-between adventures.

After the second session you can start introducing random encounters from the Hex, or bringing in complications from the Hex into the Tomb, like agents of the Canon of Gaugamoth at **H-7** willing to parley with Grosh for an alliance, or a scouting party from the orcs of **H-10**, or the Ada-Maku of **H-19**, wanting to wipe the goblins and gnolls of the level out. Goblins from the Woods south of the Pass and Gnolls from the east beyond the Raging Falls could join in the current factions to beef up defenses between expeditions.

Before the party has finished a full exploration of the level, complicate things further by introducing the Hunting Party described in Appendix A, *Monsters and Characters*. This will start moving things around in addition to the random encounters and the other events, such as the procession leaving the Burial Vaults, the spread of oozes and slimes, and the dead starting to rise from the aftermath of the battle with Krassus all over the level, when the sufficient number of tremors have occurred and Chaos reaches out to Grunn Galeb.

When the party confronts the Horla of area **L1-23**, they may or may not find out immediately there is a way down to Level 2. Referees should play it cool, for there are opportunities arising from a hiatus between the exploration of Grunn Galeb and the discovery of the Burial Vaults. As noted in the introduction, this entire area as a “dungeon level” is in its infancy, in a flux preceding a set hierarchy, as noted in the introduction. The referee should take full advantage of this so that the parties exploring the Tomb are never quite sure what will happen next and what will have changed between expeditions in this dreaded place.

It is particularly unlikely, by the time parties have explored most of the level, that any single faction will have taken enough of a hold to keep the area under their sole control. This will set up the next phase of the game and a conundrum for the parties regularly adventuring here: who keeps control of the ruins, and who will exploit its resources once the danger is gone or at least dormant? In several of our playtests, the question of the future mining of the celadon marble was raised and became the source of renewed adventures.

If the party takes charge of the mining operation, they have to secure the area, employ personnel to work here and defend the perimeter. There are roads to guard, and shipments to protect, authorities to inform and mobilize to help them. Partnerships could be worked out with a number of powerful actors around the ruins, or a lease could be negotiated for these actors to take charge of what remains of Grunn Galeb instead. Among the big players who could be interested, we have:

The Viscounty of Poy, who would send men-at-arms and specialized workers to occupy the place, clean it up and prep it for further mining. There would be regular contacts with the Frontier Keep and the Lord Castellan would be nominally in charge of the force occupying the mine. Couriers such as the Heron Knight Laimech of Ssorg-Zsaminski would serve as direct liaison with Caer Malod and the Viscountess. But whatever help or reinforcement could be sent out would be far, far away, especially compared to the potential competition.

The ruffians and brigands of the Midlands, particularly the Vagrant Army of the Beggar King, could be interested. They have the manpower, and the *Haunted Halls* are not too far from the Marmoreal Tomb. This would build up their assets, influence and trade opportunities, all of which could be marshalled later towards a siege of Khrag An Mor, or political action within the Viscounty.

The Knights Immaculate, who now occupy Khrag An Mor, would also like to have a hand in mining the celadon marble and squashing all the emanations of Chaos in the area. If they get a foothold in the Pass, the situation is guaranteed to get worse and fast, as the Knights will not differentiate allegiances between the orcs and gnolls and Ada-Maku or centaurs... all spawns of Chaos, as far as they are concerned. Most parties will want to keep the Knights Immaculate as far away from this place as possible, and this might be precisely the kind of antagonism they need to be motivated.

Don't discount the less powerful yet more motivated factions around, most notably the Jolly Men of Hawksley of Nilbor and their allies of the Isle of Ys and the Twin Perytons, or the surviving Stone-cutter dwarves of Grunn Galeb who still live deep within Nester's Folly, the *Hobby Shop Dungeon* close to the Wild and Crom Caemloch. These may be vastly outgunned and therefore the underdogs in a fight against the Vagrant Army of the Knights Immaculate, but these tend to make the best teams to play with, especially when your business is to take risk and embark on a new adventure. Assisting the children and grandchildren of Belenor to hire mercenaries, *Seven Samurai* style, to come, repopulate Grunn Galeb, and keep it from being wiped out by brigands and humanoids wanting to squeeze everything out of it, could be a fantastic development in of itself, for instance.

Lastly, do not forget the giants sleeping under Grunn Galeb. Whether there is a period of downtime and mining or politicking between the exploration of level 1 and the delve into level 2, it is wise to assume that the Queen is gone with her Procession to find out what happened to the Hammer of Aktum and has not returned yet in either case (see introduction of Chapter 4 for more about the awakening of the giants and the Procession in question). Once the procession is gone, the giants remaining behind are back in play, and a few of them, like Procyon and Kufiss, area **L2-19**, will take an interest in the future of the ruins of Grunn Galeb. They of course have their own axe to grind, particularly with the trouble brewing in the Crypts (q.v.). Now add to this that this is precisely around this timeframe that the three main factions of the Cave System around the Tomb will start to have serious issues with one another, and you have recipe for many further interactions and adventures.

## CHAPTER 4

# THE BURIAL VAULTS

*“The archives of the Vellum Society include references to the Lithic Kingdom of Aktum. The stories that circulated among pre-humans have been gradually embellished. Prehistory faded into legend, and legend into myth. We know the kingdom must have been established millennia ago, after some cataclysmic event that took place somewhere close to the Viper Head Pass, and that this same event, after first triggering an all-out war between the giants, allowed the people of Aktum to coalesce and create a realm of their own. But what if any truth there is behind such myths as Ur Pa Kraat and his fabled Pyramidion, or the great Amun Paal wrestling snakes as he falls into the Abyss, we do not know. Discovering the remains of Garn Patuul, the Hammer of Aktum, and whatever triggered the Doom That Befell the Children of Belenor, many of us sages would pay to learn more about the tombs of the stone giants and the kingdom that bore them.”*

The stories surrounding the Lithic Kingdom of Aktum and its kings are numerous, but few of them can be verified with any certainty, as is often the case of pre-human kingdoms that existed long before the founding of Dantium in 1,600 B.G. (Before the Giants), which is a little more than 1,900 years ago. The current year, per reckoning of the Vellum Society in Villenor, is 315 A.G. (After the Giants). The Viper Head Pass provides a treasure trove, literal and otherwise, to would-be robbers, alchemists and researchers willing to explore its ruins, particularly under the Marmoreal Mound.

It is clear that the Lithic Kingdom lasted for some time, enough to have multiple kings buried in this same spot deemed significant and sacred to the stone giants for a reason that is still a mystery to be uncovered by the bold searching for truth. The end of Aktum was also progressive, involved several waves of civil wars, slave rebellions and outside conflicts which the last king, Garn Patuul the Usher, if he initially tried to fight the demise of the realm, could finally come to accept. This led to the Burial Vaults in their initial form, where Garn Patuul, his Queen Emeneptra, and a few of their chosen servants were all put to sleep together by a hobgoblin known as the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum. While the Stone Chalice, a minor artifact of the giants, was used to accomplish this task, the vast majority of the slaves, soldiers and minor servants of the King were ritually slain, and changed into the undead to keep the Tomb secure over the ages of the world. The King would awake when the times were right to exit the Tomb, bring back the stone giants together as Ur Pa Kraat the Gatherer once did after the great Schism

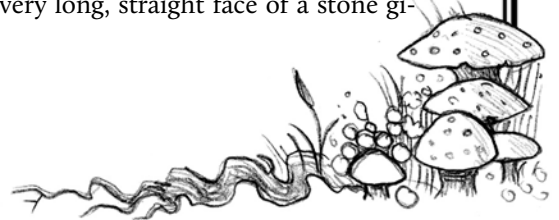
of the giants, and together they would rebuild the glory of Aktum in a new age of conquest and prosperity.

This didn't quite turn out the way it was supposed to. Instead, stone giants pilgrim re-appropriated the Tomb of Garn Patuul for their own devices sometime after Aktum fell for good. These believers in the eternal legacy of the kingdom created a mythical patron and figure, Zuun, the Unborn, to embody the history of Aktum and the unrealized potential it had become. The spirit was used to tame the servants of Garn Patuul and the undead as their command, as the pilgrims would now get access to these holy grounds and visit them for their own purposes.

As the stone giants flocked back to the site of Aktum, they restored the Tombs, decorated and used them as the crucible of their new faith binding the legends of the Lithic Kingdom to their personal realizations and future in the world. It is probably why the Tombs of Garn Patuul, Amun Paal and Ur Pa Kraat share more than a few structural similarities, besides having been built by the same race over centuries. What the sites actually were like originally, at the end of Aktum's dominion upon the Eurth, is hard to ascertain, but it is evident that the modifications and updates brought by the stone giant pilgrims who lived long after the fall of the kingdom at least participated to the architectural coherence linking each site.

There are thus two main types of original inhabitants of the Burial Vaults. First, the stone giants and their direct attendants, on one hand, who have been subjected to a magical sleep induced by the **Stone Chalice** in the current possession of the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum at area L2-3. Second, the menial servants, workers, and soldiers, on the other hand, who have been ritually slain by the same Canon and the other ancient, long dead priests of Aktum, to transform them all into the undead stored in some select rooms of this level and in the Crypts below. If the Tomb was to be invaded, the undead would rise *en masse*, and represent an overwhelming security force designed to protect the stone giants and repel all manners of invaders.

In addition to these original inhabitants, the pilgrims later added artwork in the form of extra paintings, carvings, mosaics, and various decorations to the Tomb, and created the entity known as Zuun, who is generally represented with the very long, straight face of a stone gi-



ant warrior resting on the shoulders of an asexual, small, plump body with large hips and breasts, but no nipples or genitals whatsoever. Zuun's arms are either represented as lean and part of the body of Zuun, with the hands resting on top of the figure's breasts, or completely absent, as if atrophied altogether. The very short, thick legs of Zuun stand on a ball of green fire floating in mid-air.

Zuun watches over the Tomb. He is able to open and close doors, move the stone slabs leading to the Crypts, and connect with the inhabitants of the Tomb, whether they are active or slumbering, living or undead. The original protection of the Tomb had the overseers and servants such as the Canon take care of intruders, and Zuun still lets them do this, since his goals align with those of the servants of the Kings of Aktum, regardless of their alignments.

Most giants, maybe with the exception of the mistress of **L2-18** and the eunuch of **L2-29**, are not actually evil themselves, and can be parleyed and bargained with. Some of them, like the Valet and Jester of area **L2-19**, or the Hair Carver of area **L2-26**, might ask parties of adventurers for favors and reward them accordingly, but most of their servants are, and they are okay with the petty evil nature of these creatures and the undead surrounding them.

Trying to loot and kill everything in here, especially before the Procession leaves the Tomb (see below), would be suicide, assuming the party just finished exploring Grunn Galeb and did little else in the campaign so far. This in fact not how this is supposed to turn out, in the sense that a dungeon level like the Burial Vaults does not remain a vacuum for long. The Chaos under the Tomb will keep producing horrors that will take over the Crypts and climb up to take possession of the Vaults. Agents of the groups and factions outside the Tomb will want to get a piece of the action and will recognize an opportunity for riches and new underground lairs when they see one. "Cleaning up" a level here is a temporary endeavor, and results in a Pyrrhic victory, at best.

If the party becomes complacent about Grunn Galeb above, or starts to get a routine vibe out of the exploration of these Vaults, the referee might want to introduce elements of adventure outside the dungeon, and let the party discover the different groups and factions around the place. Mix it up a little bit, and let the party create its own pace. Ideally, they'll pursue adventures outside and end up fulfilling some task or getting in contact with an NPC that will want something from the dungeon. The party could make it back to the vaults, find out some things about Amun Paal, then go back to the cave sys-

tem to learn more about the giant king, they might learn what is going on there with the Cochlean beast, talk to some sages, then switch gears back with the dungeon to see if they can discover more, etc. The referee can likewise throw in an encounter or element that would throw the game back in the direction of the dungeon or the wilderness, or even the city of Villenor or the camp of Crom Caemloch, whenever necessary to change sceneries and keep the game fresh and moving.

The Crypts and the Vaults are on top of one another and directly interact with one another. If the party never touches one of the 20-foot pillars, never messes with the stone slab, then the referee might decide the time is right to mix it up and decide the undead force their way up a shaft, or create a mountain of corpses to reach a stone slab and move it. Zuun might decide to call for them and let them. The hogle cooks of **L2-28** or the eunuch of **L2-29** might decide to bait them. The referee should at all times keep the adventure and game moving. From the moment the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum awakes, the game is on, as far as this level is concerned. Make good use of its challenges and opportunities.

**THE PROCESSION:** The Canon of the Ashes of Aktum from area **L2-3** will awake when one of four triggers happen: (1) four independent tremors have occurred, (2) the crystals blocking the way down from area **L1-16A** are smashed, which has a deeper resonance with the marble of Aktum and wakes the Canon, (3) The Horla of area **L1-23** has been confronted and made it back to the Canon, or (4) The player characters reach area **L2-3**. After dispatching any intruders, in case of the latter scenario, the Canon will enter a trance to divine the integrity of the Tomb and the current state of things.

The Canon will note the growing influence of Chaos under the Tomb, but the critical element that will prompt action on his part is the proximity of the Hammer of Aktum once held by Belenor and stolen from him by Krassus the Cambion. It turns out that Krassus is very active in this area, ten years later, and working on his own plans of invasion of the Viscounty of Poy (for more information on Krassus and his current whereabouts, see the Vile Legion, Figures and Factions, *Wilderness expansion*). With the proximity of the Hammer, the Canon has no choice but to wake the House of the King in order to retrieve it. He will thus start a ritual procession which will wake the giants, and send them on their way.

**Reminder for the original and advanced versions of the game:** a melee round lasts one minute. Ten melee rounds make one exploration turn, or 10 minutes. Six exploration turns make an hour.



**Timing of the Procession:** The Canon reaches area **L2-11** in four (4) melee rounds. Lights the candle and prays. (Tremor). Then moves to **L2-12** in two (2) melee rounds and does the same. (Tremor). [10 melee rounds.] The crews of drivers and guards prepare the animals. The Canon moves to area **L2-16** in two (2) melee rounds and wakes the royal guard, lighting their candle. (Tremor). Five soldiers follow the Canon as he progresses to the Tomb of Garn Patuul and arrives there in (3) melee rounds. The one-way secret door of **L2-21** is opened, and the Canon finds out the King is dead. Three (3) melee rounds of indecision pass. [20 melee rounds.] The Canon decides to go on with his task, and moves on to the chamber of the Queen to light her candle in two (2) melee rounds. (Tremor). Two (2) more melee rounds pass, and the Queen, joined by five of her handmaidens, decides to leave to find the holder of the Hammer of Aktum, which she can sense in the general geographic vicinity of the Tomb. The Canon, five stone giant soldiers, the Queen and her five handmaidens leave area **L2-24**, walk through area **L2-34** and finish their loop back to **L2-11** and **12** where the animals are now ready after four (4) melee rounds. [30 melee rounds.] The Queen gets in her howdah in three (3) melee rounds, and the procession arrives at the doors at **L2-8** in four (4) more melee rounds. The guards there open the doors for the procession, and the Queen leaves the Tomb (the procession from there will use Eurth magic to shape stone and clear the rubble along the way to area **E-11** q.v.). The guards and Canon stay behind, and lock the doors behind the queen, all in three (3) melee rounds. [40 melee rounds.] The Canon gets back to **L2-3** in 2 melee rounds.

Each stop takes two (2) melee rounds. Lighting a candle automatically triggers a tremor in the Tomb (which means four (4) tremors are automatically triggered once the Canon is awake, the timing of which is listed above). It takes a grand total of 4 turns for the Canon to leave the altar, go on about his ritual, gather the procession, and send it on its way outside the Tomb.

Once the procession has left the Tomb, it will emerge at area **E-11**, and will head west to find the forces of Krassus the Cambion, who is the current owner of the Hammer of Aktum. See *Developments* at the end of this chapter for more on the consequences that could follow from this course of action.

**Giants leaving:** Queen Emeneptra (**L2-24**), Handmaidens x5 (**L2-27**), Triceratops and conductor (**L2-11**), Stone Giant Guard x5 (**L2-16**).

**Giants left behind:** Rhinos' chariot and stone giant drivers x2 (**L2-12**), Stone Giant Guards x2 (**L2-16**), the Meld-

ed Mistress, (**L2-18**), Procyon and Kufiss (**L2-19**), Seev Saved the Hair Carver (Hill, **L2-26**), Thelassar Galata, the Eunuch (Half-Cloud, **L2-29**).

**DECIPHERING THE SCRIPT OF AKTUM:** The Aktan language, like the systems of writing in the ancient scripts of Khemet and lyathar, is made up of a combination of hieroglyphs and script, both formal and informal. In other words, not only are there different representations of the same symbols depending on the speed of writing and different eras of the Kingdom of Aktum, the Aktan symbols themselves can be alphabetic, syllabic and logographic, representing letters in an alphabet that can be connected to ours, or representing entire syllables and spoken sounds, or entire ideas and concepts, sometimes within the same sentences.

Thankfully, this complex, composite aspect of Aktan symbols also means they can be partially translated from different derived languages. First of all, any character that is proficient in Giantish languages can at least have a vague idea of what an Aktan stella talks about. The language seems very refined and complicated for the sake of complication, by comparison, but it is possible to derive broad strokes and narratives from the representations.

Goblinoid languages, as distant descendants, can help, but only for the most general of meanings. So can ancient human languages like Khemetian, lyathari and Ekkedian systems of writing, by lateral thinking and comparisons, more than direct ascendance or descendance in the history of language.

Of the Alignment Languages, the True Neutral language of Eskhali and the Nurdok of lyathar, for Neutral Evil characters, will help get the same broad ideas and understanding as Giantish. So characters of both TN and NE alignments will have a sort of intuitive understanding of what's going on in the carvings of the Tomb.

**CIRCLED NUMBERS - COLLAPSED PASSAGES:** These numbers are each associated with a specific corridor that caved in over time. It would take an hour to clear 10 feet of rubble with a party of adventurers, 40 minutes if dwarves are involved. Once the giants' procession has left the Tomb, tremors will begin affecting these corridors. When a tremor occurs, roll d20: 1-19 indicates the specific passage that either partially collapses and might yield some kind of new treasure, or collapses completely and opens up to the Extended Burial Vaults (see *Developments* at the end of this chapter). If the referee opts for a partial collapse, digging times to clear the rubble are divided by two; the referee can roll d100 on the *Rubble Search* table for this level to see if some



valuables are found on the way, or choose accordingly. Assume there is about 30 feet of rubble to clear with each collapsed passage, or check out the Extended Burial Vaults of the *Underworld expansion* to this work for specific information.

**RED “X” TRAPS:** These are pit traps which, unless actively searched for and found, the party will fall into, no save. Being aware and alert without being specific allows a 1-in-6 chance to notice a change in the patterns on the floor, for the traps are covered by illusory mosaics representing puppies chasing butterflies in the sunset. For some reason, the king hated puppies and associated them with really bad outcomes. When a victim falls into the trap, they hit stakes at the bottom. Roll d6: (1-5) is the number of stakes hitting the character, with each stake inflicting 1-6 points of damage. A result of (6) indicates the character was lucky and wasn’t pierced by any stake.

**RUBBLE AND EMPTY ROOM SEARCHES:** As with Grunn Galeb, there are some rooms and other areas like the collapsed passages (see above) which could be searched with a slim possibility of finding something. Searching through such an area will take some time, generally an exploration turn per space searched, and will lead to a proportional number of checks for random encounters.

#### RUBBLE SEARCH BURIAL VAULTS (Roll D100)

01-64 -	Nothing of value.
65-79 -	A consumable item of 120 GP base value, and two (2) gems worth 50 GP base value.
80-89 -	One or more (1-4) consumable items of 200 GP, and two (2) gems worth 100 GP base value.
90-94 -	A piece of jewelry worth 1,000 GP, and three (3) gems worth 500 GP base value.
95-97 -	A piece of jewelry worth between 2,000 and 5,000 GP, and four (4) gems 500 GP base value.
98-99 -	rough uncut green diamond worth 5,000 GP base value, and four (4) gems 1,000 GP base value.
00 -	rough uncut green diamond worth 10,000 GP base value.

When exploring the Burial Vaults, encounters should be checked 1-in-6, every exploration turn. If an encounter occurs, roll 2d6 on the following table.

#### RANDOM ENCOUNTER (BURIAL VAULTS) (2D6)

2 -	Tremor. Partial Collapse. Saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage. D 2d6.
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- 3 - Stone Giant Guards (2) from L2-16, or Encounter from the Crypts.
- 4 - Hogre\* Cooks (2-6) from L2-28.
- 5 - Ogre slave zombies (2) from L2-10.
- 6 - Black Bones\* Skeletons (2-12) and Lecherous C. Krom from L2-3 and L2-17.
- 7 - Lizard men and zombies (2-8), skeletons (2-12) from L2-10.
- 8 - Cadaverous Caterpillar\* (1) from L2-4.
- 9 - Dire Graveworm\* (1) from L2-25.
- 10 - A Type II Shard Golem\* from L2-31.
- 11 - Melded Mistress in a mood from L2-18, another named NPC, or Encounter from the Crypts.  
Apparition of Zuun, or Special - Roll/choose from random encounters (Hex), (Environs), (Grunn Galeb) as something made it here from the outside, or, if you are using the *Underworld expansion*, (Hearth of Chaos), meaning something made it up here from down below.
- 12 -

## KEY OF THE AREA

**1. SPIRAL STAIRCASE.** The spiral staircase and alcove have been added by the dwarves in recent times, as they investigated the place early on with the help of Nester the Eurthwright. He warned the leaders of the Stone-cutters of the dangers lurking under the settlement, and showed them the trap at area L2-2 to convince them of the duplicitous nature of the depths. They built a single sealed access with this staircase, and made sure to avoid digging too deep beyond the specifications established with the archmage about the quarry.

**2. JEWELLED SCEPTRE.** The 20-foot wide corridor directly in front of the staircase of L1-1 ends in a round room a little more than 20 feet in radius, with a huge pile of gold coins accumulated at its center on the floor. A jeweled scepter sticks out of the top of the mound of coins for all to see.

Between pile of coin and the staircase, well within the 20' foot-wide corridor, a mosaic covers the floor and represents tiny puppies chasing butterflies in a flower field by a sunny day. It is actually an illusion concealing a 20' x 20' pit marked "x" as a trap on the map, filled with water. A dwarven miner still remains at the bottom of the pit with his pick, the very first dwarven victim of the Burial Vaults in centuries. He still carries three uncut rough green diamonds stashed in a bag secured between his thighs: one is of a 5,000 GP base value, and



the other two are worth 1,000 GP base value each, but the remains would have to be pulled out and searched to find the pouch.

The coins making up the pile can be extracted from the area safely, if no one applies more than 10 pounds of pressure upon the scepter, for it is resting in a cup on top of an iron bar sticking out of the room's floor. There are 10,000 gold-painted copper pieces here, with 1,000 SP mixed in.

Trouble begins when the scepter is meddled with. If the scepter is moved or pressed upon with more than a 10-pounds pressure, the iron bar slides into the floor and the ceiling above the whole area shatters to crush anybody present for 6d10 damage. A successful saving throw vs. breath translates to half damage. Outside of the room, between the scepter and the water pit, characters may jump into the pit to avoid damage. If not, they too suffer 6d10 points of damage and make a saving throw vs. breath weapon for half. If they do jump into the pit they make the same saving throw, but for 3d10 points of damage or none if successful. Those standing in the corridor between the water pit and the staircase, the characters make a saving throw vs. breath weapon at +4 on the die, for 3d10 points of damage or none if successful.







Stone blocks keep on falling from the ceiling on the second and third melee rounds, some of them falling through the illusory floor into the pit, without harming the characters who found refuge within it. Characters that are still in the same general area will make another saving throw versus breath weapon as before. Note that taking refuge under the staircase leading up to **Li-23A** is a safe option, since it was built by dwarves and not part of the trap. Safe also are the passages north and south around this area.

As for the scepter, it is a lure enchanted with *magic aura*, but it is a very finely crafted work of art made of silver and solid gold, worth 3,000 GP total.

**3. ALTAR OF ASHES.** This domed area is initially very dark, but for the eerie, pale green light emanating from the fungi growing on the eight pillars sustaining the chamber's vault. Seven curtains richly decorated with the square designs characteristic of the stone giants of Aktum stretch between each set of pillars, covering whatever lies behind, and on top of them hangs from

each arc a cocoon of roughly human proportion incubating a cadaverous caterpillar's chrysalis.

In the center of the room, two steps lead up to a round altar, all made of limestone, richly detailed with carvings, runic sentences in the language of Aktum, hieroglyphs, and little scenes translating judgements and scenes of the ancient past. A large, grey mastiff stands guard at the base of the steps. The altar itself shows Queen Emepra under the moon and King Garn Patuul under the sun disk, each directing stone giants to flog tiny creatures looking like humanoid snakes and elves as they keep carved stylized pillars in place in the scenery. From context, the carved pillars are meant create the illusion they support the altar and keep it from crashing on the steps of the dais. On the altar's top surface lies a hobgoblin holding a jeweled, stone chalice in his joined hands at his waist. The hobgoblin wears a delicate pointed helmet, and delicate, shining dark robes that seem oiled or wet in some fashion. This is the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum.

There are three main ways in which the Canon could already be active before the party reaches this room: (1) four independent tremors already occurred, and the Canon woke as a result; (2) the crystals blocking the way down at area **L1-16A** were smashed, which has the exact same result; or (3) The Horla made it back to the body of the Canon, where it originated, either by being defeated at **L1-23**, or by leaving the area once left alone. If the Horla was left alone, it will instinctively make its way back to its host in 10 melee rounds if still in the Foreman's Quarters.

Any which way, the Canon gets up when the party enters the room, unless the Canon is performing the procession ritual with the Chalice and raising the giants from their slumber, in which case a Dire Graveworm will rest on the altar instead (see introduction to this chapter, *The Procession*, for more information on the timing of this event, and area **L2-25** for dire graveworms). A chant *a cappella* rises from behind the curtains hanging between the pillars and behind the dais (it gives +1 to hit to the forces of the Canon, -1 to hit to the intruders). This will be immediately followed by 1d8 skeletons with blackened bones, damaged splint mail and shield, as well as aged, bronze verdigris weapons, emerging from the crypts through the doors at the base of the altar. The undead will stay by the altar until ordered forward by the Canon or attacked in some way.

The Canon will wait for the intruders to make their first move. Note the pit traps, which function like the others on this level. Once the hostilities begin, 1d8 skeletons will emerge from the crypts at the altar *every melee round* until the Canon is taken out or the intruders retreat, at which point the undead will not follow. Combat will, however, bring the Caterpillars of area **L2-4** into this chamber after 3-6 melee rounds to check whether they can catch easy prey: these might follow in pursuit.

**GUARDIAN GREY MASTIFF:** SZ M; MV 120 ft; AL TN; INIT -1; HD 2+2; HP 13; AC 5; #AT 1, D 2d4.

**CANON OF THE ASHES OF AKTUM (Hobgoblin):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL LE, WIS 17, INIT -1; HD 6; HP 34; AC 1; #AT 1; D 2d4 + 2 on damage, Mammoth bone mace, roll for breakage on a maximum damage roll (1-in-10 to break). Cure Light Wounds x 2 (reversible at will), Protection from Good, Darkness, Detect Good, Hold Person x2, Silence 15' radius, Snake Charm, Resist Fire, Dispel Magic x2, Curse. If the Horla makes it back to the Canon with 0 HP, it will remain with him until he is defeated; then, the Horla will be ejected from the dead body with a number of HP remaining equal to the last HP count the Canon had just before receiving the blow that killed him. The Horla will try to reintegrate

the body to bring him back from the dead, if there is no imminent danger left. If the Horla makes it back to the Canon and both have a positive HP count, they remain separate and fight together. When the Canon is slain, then the vampire cloud gets back into the dead body of the Canon once the way is clear. It then raises him, and the Canon heals at a rate of two cure light wounds per day from here on out (hiding in the crypts below if needed). If the Canon's body is burned, disintegrated, or completely destroyed, the Horla dies as well.

The Canon's robes are made of giant cobra skin. These **robes of the cobra** weigh a pound, with a base AC 4, a +1 modifier on all saving throws vs. magic, but a penalty of -2 on saving throws vs. charm spells, specifically. The Canon has **magical incense** in his possession: 10 sticks worth, with one stick adding one (1) point to wisdom for the purpose of studying and memorizing spells for one day. A **scroll** of evil clerical spells on the priest in a tube with a gas powder trap spraying a cloud in one's face upon activation/opening. The scroll contains the spells *Blindness*, *Disease*, *Animate Dead*, *Dispel magic*, *Hold Person*, *Resist Fire*, and *Protection from Good*. He fights with a fossilized mammoth bone mace worth 50 GP. The Canon also owns a **brass skeleton key**, which allows the use to use the one-way doors at areas **L2-33** and **L2-36** back and forth, both ways, and carries a **sacrificial knife** made of basalt with inflicts +1 damage and adds +5% for beneficial sacrifices to chaos, when relevant, for the purposes of favors and summoning. It is worth noting that this knife has a bad karma, and taken thousands of souls throughout its existence. It is pregnant with history, and could eventually develop Intelligence and Ego.

The Canon wears several pieces of jewelry, including a simple straight **bone piercing** through the nose that adds +1 AC up to AC 0, and +2/10% to reaction rolls versus giant class, and a heavy necklace with a very large pendant resting on the bishop's chest about one foot in diameter representing Zuun standing on a Zenith and Nadir rune made of an emerald set in a bigger amethyst. Both gems are worth 500 GP base value for each gem. The gold pendant itself is worth about 100 GP alone. The **Canon's salmon pink belt** is incrustated with many fragments of bright yellow topaz. Giant cobra tongue. Twenty 100 GP gems and the belt itself is a tongue with the two fangs added as clasps. The tongue is worth 500 GP itself. Wearing this belt causes reaction rolls to be made at +10% versus courtiers and other individuals likely to be impressed by such a flamboyant piece of clothing. Finally, the Canon wears two random pieces, most likely a bracelet and some type of piercing somewhere else on his body, both of a random value determined with d20



(result of d20 between parenthesis): 3d6 x 100 GP (1-4), 1d8 x 500 GP (5-15), 1d6 x 1,000 (16-20).

**BLACK BONES SKELETONS (1-8 every round):** SZ M; MV 120 ft; AL CE; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 4; #AT 1, D 1d6+1. The splint armor they are wearing is damaged, but the weapons and shield are efficient.

**GOBLIN CHOIR OF AKTUM (7):** Choir of undead goblins singing unholy chant, +1 to hit for the forces of the Canon and -1 to hit for intruders on this level. Each undead goblin can be killed with one blow. They are concealed from view by the seven curtains in the back of the chamber, behind the altar.

The **Stone Chalice** in the hands of the Canon causes whoever drinks from it to fall into a permanent sleep that could last eons, only woken up by the burning of a candle specially consecrated and bound to the victim's soul. This effect can be resisted with a saving throw vs. poison at -2 on the die. If the victim is willing or fails their saving throw, their skin starts to harden immediately. After 3 melee rounds the victim will be sound asleep. *Slow Poison* saves a victim, inducing an immediate rejection of the liquid just swallowed a moment prior. *Neutralize Poison*, *Dispel Magic* completely stop the effects in their tracks and negate the magic of the chalice. Those victims, who succumb to the Chalice's effects, become more stone-like, bound with the earth. They gain +1 AC and INIT -1 permanently. Their body becomes denser, and though they can still swim at half movement rate, they will sink if they don't, their body losing its ability to float naturally. The stone of the chalice itself is celadon marble finely sculpted and worth about 100 GP, adorned with very fine gems, namely six (6) 500 GP base value gems on the base, and three (3) 1,000 GP base value gems decorating the lip of the cup.

The cocoons hanging against the curtains belong to the nest of cadaverous caterpillars at area **LC-25**. This is an efficient way to keep control of the caterpillars roaming around the Altar, as the Canon brings some of his flock back to life to serve as hosts for the caterpillars and keeps the cycle going despite a lack of living flesh for the species to feed on and effectively trigger their metamorphosis. There will always be at least two caterpillars around at all times, more (2-5) if the area is still active and parties of intruders have already meddled with it in recent weeks. They will usually be roaming around the corridors close to the chamber at **L2-4** and wait for the choir to begin, for the chants are sweet to their senses.

The bio-luminescent green fungi growing on the pillars of this chamber are edible. They can be picked, and then have to be eaten within 2-5 days before they rot, though

a user can only use one dose a day. When a mushroom is consumed, the user makes a saving throw vs poison, or rolls on the following table in case of failure, or by choice.

#### FUNGI (ROLL 1D8)

- 1 - Gain infravision for a week (if the user already benefits from infravision, its range is doubled).
- 2 - User becomes sick and loses 2 points of STR for a week.  
User just cannot see right; everything is a blur for a day at least. User has to be exposed to sun light for eight hours plus in order to heal and recover completely.
- 3 - User is afflicted by the shakes: can't use missile weapons, and -2 to hit with melee weapons for a week.  
One time only gain of 200-800 XP due to true insights and visions acquired during the trip (no further saving throws required).
- 5 - User gains a single Pivot Point (no further saving throws required)  
User falls victim of elephantiasis of a non-reproductive area determined randomly: (1) right leg, (2) left leg, (3) right arm, (4) left arm, (5) both ears, (6) nose, (7) tongue, (8) eyes, (9) both arms, (10) both legs. A saving throw vs polymorph (in lieu of poison) must be made every day: a success means the elephantiasis recedes. A failure means yet another saving throw the next day. If three (3) saving throws are failed in a row, the change becomes permanent. Really powerful spells like *heal*, *wish*, *limited wish*, *regeneration* and *restoration* will still revert it.
- 7 - Shrinking of a non-reproductive area (see above).
- 8 -

A user is still sick from mild belly ache for 1-6 turns when succeeding the saving throw (-1 to hit, -1 AC). A failure results in intense cramps in addition to the results of the throw on the table. Moreover, if the saving throw vs poison is failed, in addition to the effect indicated by the table, the victim rolls again at the end of the duration determined by the entry. If failed the effects do not dissipate for the same amount of time. If you fail a third saving throw, the effects are permanent (maybe *heal*, *wish*, *limited wish*, *regeneration* and *restoration* could help. Maybe, at the referee's discretion). Once a result has been rolled once on the Fungi table, a single individual cannot benefit from the same result again, no matter how much more mushroom is ingested.

**4. SIDE CORRIDORS.** The corridors around the Altar at **L2-3** are inhabited by two Cadaverous Caterpillars

who lurk on the walls and ceilings. Their instinct of preservation pushes them to be patient and wait for the undead around the pit to show up before they come in to grab some easy prey.

**CADAVEROUS CATERPILLARS (2):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; Surprise 1-5; HD 3+2; HP 11, 14; AC 6; #AT 4; D 1d3/1d3/1d3/1d3 tentacles, plus paralysis on a hit (saving throw versus poison negates). The Cadaverous Caterpillar has the ability to blend in its surroundings. It paralyzes its victims to then eat them or lay 2d4 eggs inside of them. These eggs usually kill their host in 5-10 days. See the Caterpillar's entry in Appendix A, Monsters and Characters for more information.

**5. LAST REFUGE AND STONE SLAB.** A strong stench of rot about 50 feet away from the room, at the crossroads of the corridors leading to it, will warn of danger lurking in this area. This room is barren, but for piles of human bones still covered with crackling fur and ancient garments with faded colors. If the party decides to look them up and investigate, a rat jumps out of a skeleton's gaping jaw bone into a character's face, followed by 2d4 of his small companions. After the party deals with this minor threat, the smell of rot becomes stronger, to the point of discomfort, on the verge of nauseating.

This is a warning not to meddle with the dead, especially if they are on the run: looking at the map, you can see that the party could find itself in a situation where it is being pursued by the forces of the Canon, Caterpillars etc., with the spinner room of **L1-36** in the way and no key in hand, and no retreat if they turn south towards this last refuge. This is a dead end that could spell the party's doom in certain circumstances, and that makes the undead here particularly dangerous by association.

The skeletons in the room wear linen, chainmail, thick fur coats ornamented iron helms, and are armed to the teeth: spear, bow and arrows (most of them dry and brittle, 60 arrows here total which will break 1-in-2 upon firing), battle axe and short, broad swords. The adventurers will recognize them as Kholduns, barbarian warriors from the east, but wearing ancient gear, meaning they came here and got trapped in this place centuries ago.

The chieftain among them is conspicuously missing. One of the corpses here has actually been mummified by his companions on this very spot, an act of desperation, trapped as they became on this level in ancient past. The Kholduns of the time were sorcerers and warriors, having not yet rejected the ways of magic that later became their doom. The barbarian hero prepped himself and surrendered to the ritual performed by his companions

which, along with the energies of Chaos permeating this entire place, changed him into a cursed undead ready to enact revenge on those who trapped them here. Then, the survivors placed the magically prepped remains under the slab in the middle of the room, as a way to set it up as a trap rather than let it out in the room to be looted and taken apart over time, and they waited for their own deaths, which soon followed.

The stone slab in the center of this room is a trap door, and used to have a mechanical trap that was disarmed or triggered a long time ago. It can be lifted to reveal a man hole obstructed with the corpse of the Kholdunic mummy leading down to the Crypts at area **LC-25**. The red, dead eyes of the chieftain will stare at them through his horned helmet, and will rise from the hole to grab and strike them down with the Horned Blade of Gur Khan. His companions will rise as well to assist him.

**GIANT RATS (3-9):** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 4 avg.; #AT 1; D 1d3.

**SKELETONS OF THE KholdUN (6):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d6.

**KholdUNIC MUMMY:** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL LE; HD 6+3; HP 25; AC 3; #AT 1; D 1d12 grab, then D 1d8+1 or D 1d8+3 (the **Horned Blade of Gur Khan** is +3 versus magical constructs). The Kholdunic mummy causes a rotting disease by touch, is only hit by +1 weapons or better and for only half damage, triggers fear and revulsion in any creature, and possesses the same particular spell immunities and vulnerabilities as a mummy.

Aside from the mummification process, this lord of the Kholduns still wears a breast plate of orichalcum worth about 3,000 GP, a utility seax made of rare, folded true iron worth 500 GP, and grieves decorated with valuable gems, five 100 GP base value for each legging. This lord was also the wielder of the Horned Blade of Gur Khan, a weapon of legend among his people.

**THE HORNED BLADE OF GUR KHAN:** +1 Hornblade, +3 versus magical constructs, INT 17, EGO 15+. AL True Neutral. The Horned Blade of Gur Khan will appear as a piece of horn about half a foot in length set in an elaborate treantwood handle radiating a faint *enchantment* dweomer. When the proper grip and pressure are applied to the grip, a sickle-like blade of scimitar proportions (base damage 1d8) springs out of the handle, and usable by those characters able to use scimitars, short and long swords. The blade is retractable between uses. Abilities: The Horned Blade of Gur Khan can *detect magic* within a 10-foot radius, *befriend* animals and *speak* with the same each three (3) times a day. Once a

day, plunging the blade into the jugular of a dead animal between the size of a dog and an elephant brings it back to life temporary, but in reeling agony. The Horned Blade of Gur Khan's wielder can communicate with the animal quickly, and the animal might help for 5-10 melee rounds, until it dies again in excruciating pain, or is relieved by removing the blade from the wound. The demand should be serious, reasonable, and help towards the fulfilment of a goal or the survival of the wielder the animal can understand. Speech and Telepathy. Languages : Ancient Eskhali, Gaelish, Vyridian, Giant.

**6. MAIN ENTRANCE HALL.** This majestic entrance hall is fit for kings. There isn't a spot of dust anywhere. The walls are exquisitely carved and painted, representing scenes of the reign of Garn Patuul over the stone giants of Aktum. The northern wall depicts the funeral procession, consisting of the King's guards, the King himself held standing on his rhinoceros-pulled war chariot, his round queen Emeneptra behind him, riding a triceratops topped with a howdah, and the Queen's handmaidens on each side, laying the sovereign and his all house to rest. The southern wall depicts the awakening of Garn Patuul, the trek of a smaller hobgoblin figure waking the giants with a mysterious chalice, and the same procession as depicted on the northern wall leaving the Tomb to conquer a new world and create a new kingdom of giants.

**7. LARGE PILLAR.** This carved pillar is adorned with scenes of a giant king welcoming the rising sun. He then gathers stones from a flooded river, forges a war hammer from the stones he gathered, and is seen raising cities out of the sand. The king, now old, crowns a pyramid built by his fellow giants and their smaller

humanoid slaves with a burning capstone. The various scenes and motifs of the life of the king all gather on the eastern side of the pillar around the mythological figure of Zuun, the Legacy of Aktum. Zuun has a round switch etched with the elemental rune of the Sun at his feet. Around him, four more round switches bear the names of the four most notable rulers of the Aktum. Above Zuun and the switches, the rune of the rising sun, also standing for the EAST, figures prominently.

Pressing any switch punches them in, while pressing the Sun rune under Zuun makes them click into position, to be released a fraction of a second later, ready to be pressed again. If the switch with the name of "KRAAT", Ur Pa Kraat the Gatherer, then the rune of the Sun, are pressed in succession, the effigy of the Unborn on the



pillar opens its mouth and reveals a **pink rhomboid gem** inside. A six-foot tall image of Zuun floating in mid-air, standing on a ball of green fire, bows to the people who entered the combination correctly. Touching the gem will not release it; whoever touches it will find a tingling sensation and will have one melee round to withdraw their hand before suffering 5d6 points of electrical damage (saving throw vs. magic for half). The secret door opens up reveals the shaft leading up to area **LI-15 (3)**.

If, however, the party enters any other combination before pressing the Sun, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar will open all the same, but this time the image of Zuun will appear and try to kill the party using the aspects of Aktum that have been unlocked by the party so far. See *Zuun manifestations* after the key to this level for more information.

The shaft leads directly down to area **LC-5**. Above, some clutter has accumulated and obstructs the way up to level 1. A test of dexterity would be needed to climb into the shaft and prep triggers, tying up ropes to then pull the rubble down from the outside of the pillar, for instance. Triggering a collapse from the inside of the shaft will result in the characters' deaths as they tumble down into the darkness, no save allowed. Once the clutter leading up to level 1 is cleared, characters are free to climb between the levels or install pulleys and baskets or whatever implement they want to facilitate the journey. Note that creatures from this level will now have access to the upper level more easily, and vice versa.

It is possible to lock pick the secret door's mechanism and enter the level from the inside of the pillar once the clutter obstructing the shaft above has been cleared. A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for D 5d6. This opens the door only one way, as it closes back automatically once the party makes it through. Reaching the gem inside the mouth of the effigy of Zuun on the pillar while closed requires another test of lock picking, a success avoiding electrocution for the same amount of damage, since we are dealing with the same magical mechanism. In case of failure, the effigy does not open. Trying to grab the gem from Zuun's mouth while open with a projection in progress will not release the gem, and deal the same 5d6 points of electrical damage. Referees might accept a saving throw for half damage.

Only by defeating the projection of Zuun in combat, or by Zuun's own volition, can the party take possession of the gem, a **ioun stone** granting +1 CON, inside the mouth of the effigy. This was part of an ancient ritual of stone giants following the fall of Aktum, by

which the believers confronted the aspects of Zuun and made themselves worthy to succeed in leadership.

**8. MAIN TOMB DOOR.** Two giant soldiers holding orichalcum spears and wearing celadon marble lamellar stand guard on each side of an enormous set of *wizard locked* double-doors carved out of the same limestone as the walls and floors of this place. The locks are also *cursed*, per the spell. They are decorated with the script of Aktum praising the awakening of the king, and the rebirth of the great kingdom. The two giants are immobile, and silent. Their metabolism has been magically slowed down by the concoction of the Stone Chalice at area **L2-3**. They will completely ignore adventuring parties as long as they, along with the doors they guard, are not messed with.

**STONE GIANT GUARDS:** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP; AC -3; #AT 1; D 3d6, or D 1d8+8 *huge spear* with +3 to hit. Stone giants hurl rocks for D 3d10. Each guard has a set of round boulders ready to throw against the wall next to them. The **orichalcum spears** of the guards each absorb a level 1 spell cast at them unless the spell caster rolls 14 or higher on d20 + caster level. If absorbed, the spell is then contained within the blade of the spear and can be cast back at a target chosen by the giant. Only one spell can be contained by each spear at a time.

**9. STATUE OF ZUUN.** This statue depicts Zuun the Unborn, the Legacy of the Giants of Aktum. Its base, which seems to have been gathered from hundreds of pebbles tightly fitted together into one coherent block, has one switch bearing the name of a king of Aktum at each main point of the cardinal directions. Amal Khas for the North, Amun Paal for the South, Garn Patuul for the West, and Ur Pa Kraat for the East (which in turns serves as a clue associating the names with the cardinal directions for the operation of the secret doors in the round pillars later). The statue can be pushed to open a passage leading down to the Crypts at area **LC-2** after all four switches have been pushed. If the names of the kings Ur Pa Kraat, Amun Paal, Amal Khas and Garn Patuul are not selected in this specific order around the base, a volley of pebbles will be released in a 30-foot radius all around the base for D 3d6, saving throw versus breath weapon for half. Characters intent on avoiding trauma should mention where and how they jump out of the way: a pit trap is nearby in the south passage to this room, and if the second passage going 10' west then north has been cleared of the rubble, then it is time to check for a potential secondary collapse, if the characters tumble through.

**10. WHIPS OF ORICHALCUM (STABLES BARRACKS).**



These two 20' x 30' are filled with bodies who have been subjected to the ritual of the Stone Chalice with the Canon of area L2-3. These are humanoid slaves and workers, clean-up crews, servants in the background, which have been put to sleep or changed into a undead and squeezed against one another to wait until they are woken up or activated again. Two lizard men slave motivators will stand guard there, and unlike the stone giants of L2-12, who will not move unless disturbed, these two will open the doors of one room and get a bunch of dead slaves together, including a large hulking ogre slave zombie out of storage to fight forward, whipping them savagely along the way.

**SKELETONS (2-8):** SZ M; MV 120 ft; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 7; #AT 1, D 1d6.

**ZOMBIES (1-6):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL NE; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1d8.

**OGRE SLAVE ZOMBIE (1):** SZ L; MV 60 ft; AL NE; AC 6; HD 4+1; HP 17 avg.; #AT 1, D 1d12 large wooden club. *This ogre shows the signs of the same abuse other corpses went through on this level: Cuts and bruises all over the body, some bones that seem out of their sockets, head wobbling at a bizarre angle, and a wide-open abdomen showing hollowed cavities (organs shrunk and the heart was removed). Protection from Evil will keep this big fellow at bay. Salt (as acid), fire and holy water will damage it. An Ogre Slave Zombie can be turned as a wight.*

**LIZARD MEN MOTIVATORS (2):** SZ M; MV 60 ft./120 ft. swimming; AL TN, STR 18, INIT -1; HD 2+1; HP 9 avg.; AC 3 shield; #AT 1 range, +1 to hit, or 1 melee, +1 to hit; D 1d4+2 barbed dart of orichalcum (allows Strength modifier within a 30-foot range), or D 1d4+2 on strike without a hit during the previous melee round, D 5-8 if a target was hit and wounded during the previous melee round, **barbed whip of orichalcum** (allows the use of Strength modifier and dweomered: feeds on the pain of the victim in equal measure, i.e. matches the Strength modifier of the wielder if it bites blood during the previous melee round). The darts are made of orichalcum and are not magical per se, whereas the whip is made of orichalcum and magically enhanced.

Both rooms can be searched with a roll on the Rubble Search (Burial Vaults) table, but they are still cluttered with a number of bodies: each room originally contained forty corpses of various species and sizes. With the damage of time, previous intrusions and guardians destroyed, this number can has been reduced to about 7-12 zombies, 8-18 skeletons and one (1) ogre slave zombie in each room, all bathed in a dim green light emanat-

ing from batches of the bioluminescent fungus similar to those found at area L2-3. The numbers indicated between brackets in the stats above are the initial number of slaves the Lizard Men whip up to respond to aggression. They can draw more as the situation evolves, and even get to the trap door "F" between L2-11 and L2-12 to draw undead from the Crypts. If the slave "motivators" are gone, the starved undead will jump at any living being that comes into range once the door are opened.

**II. THE QUEEN'S TRICERATOPS AND HOWDAH.** A party of adventurers coming from L2-10 into this area will first notice the huge 10-foot diameter candle on their left. If the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum has awoken, and has gone on to wake the procession of giants, then this candle will be lit. If the party reaches this area before awakening the Canon, however, the candle will look like a pillar or tall pedestal instead.

A triceratops equipped with a large howdah on its back is waiting here with its stone giant conductor. The howdah is supposed to carry the Queen, Emepra, out of the Tomb during the procession of giants leaving the Burial Vaults. So, if the candle has been lit, chances are both triceratops and conductor are long gone. If not they are still there waiting for their queen.

Whether the procession has left the Vaults or not, the frame of an unused howdah will be there as well. Inside, the party will find a 9-foot tall giant bow, and 8 enormous bronze-tipped arrows that go along with it. They will also discover nine (9) round, **celadon marble boulders** used by the giant as special projectiles (+1 to hit) worth 100 GP each. A triceratops driver outfit has been left for the would-be driver, made of snake hide and constellated of semi-precious stones. It is worth 500 GP on its own. It is accompanied with a three-foot tall ivory baton meant to be used to conduct the triceratops. It is in excellent condition, finally carved with the silhouettes of the Queen and her handmaidens, and is worth 300 GP itself.

**STONE GIANT CONDUCTOR (1):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP; AC -1; #AT 1; D 3d6, or D 2d4+7 ivory baton with +2 to hit. Hurls rocks causing 3d10 points of damage.

**TRICERATOPS:** SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL TN; HD 16; HP 88; AC 2 (Head/Front plate)/6 (Body); #AT 3; D 1d8/1d12/1d12. Trample for D 2d12.

**12. THE KING'S WAR CHARIOT.** Whether the huge candle near this location is lit or not depends on whether the Canon woke the inhabitants of the Tomb. Since



Garn Patuul has been slain, the king will not wake when the Canon leads the procession to his Tomb at **L2-21**. The chariot and its two stone giant sentinels will remain here, ready to go, the wooly rhinoceros ready to pull, but the king will never come.

Beware. These guys are lethal for a mid-level party. If the player characters do not disturb the chariot, the two stone giants will completely ignore the intruders and wait for their king who will never come. If the party insists and disturbs them, however, the driver will throw his spear and charge with the chariot, while his companion will fire some celadon marble boulders to squash the interlopers, and finish whatever is left of them.

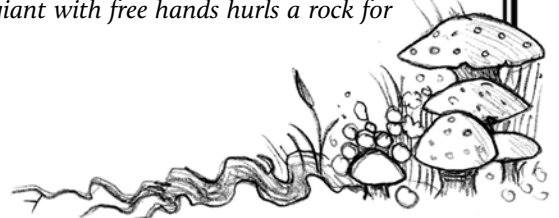
During the first melee round, the built-up velocity of the chariot causes it to bounce up the stairs violently and switch right on the Main Corridor **L2-31**. The chariot will then continue and turn to south west at **L2-14**, turn south towards **L2-30**, left to the curved corridor at **L2-34** and come back to this area. If the party is still around another boulder and possible charge would follow. If the party hides or isn't directly visible to the giants, they will

drive the chariot in circles along **L2-31** for a while as previously described, and end up parking the chariot back in its original position once they think they spooked the intruders away.

**STONE GIANTS (2):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP; AC -3; #AT 1; D 3d6, or D 1d8+8 huge spear with +3 to hit, D 1d10 Giant bow. The giants can hurl celadon marble boulders causing 3d10 points of damage (+1 to hit).

**WOOLY RHINOCEROS (2):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; HD 10; HP 54, 46; AC 5; #AT 1; D 2d6 horn. A charging rhino causes double damage, and trampling inflicts 2d4 points of damage per front foot hitting.

**CHARIOT (Giants and Rhinos together):** Can be considered a single item with INIT -1, 54 and 46 HP to stop, AC 5. Charge attack from the chariot inflicts D 4d6x2 at -4 to hit due to the tight space to maneuver. The referee might allow a saving throw vs breath weapon equivalent for half damage. Tramples D 4-16 those hit by a charge who failed their saving throw. Meanwhile, the stone giant with free hands hurls a rock for



*3d10 points of damage (four celadon marble boulders on board), or his spear at +3 to hit and D 1d8+8 damage.*

**13. OGRE RHINOCEROS HANDLER.** This is the room of the Ogre in charge of the rhinos used for the King's chariot. On one side of the room the party will find a huge pile of very old furs, most of them cracked and of little value, but for one mammoth hide very well oiled and preserved, worth 800 GP, and the mammoth tusks that go along with it, worth 900 GP each. On the other side are the implements to wash and take care of the rhinos, including brushes, spikes and harnesses for them. Two such harnesses are meant for apparat, and add sculpted, brass "wings" to the rhinoceros wearing them. They thus appear to be legendary Pteroceros, the winged ancestors of the elasmotherium and rhinoceros, which also to be a signet animal of the House of Garn Patuul. Each pteroceros harness is unique, and is worth at least a 500 GP a piece, more if they can be sold to a collector or beast master who'd appreciate them.

The Handler will almost certainly be in this room, unless he provides assistance to the guardians of the Tomb dealing with another group of intruders. He will behave exactly like the creatures he tends to, charging head first wearing the horn and skin of a rhino over his head, and then trying to trample, or in this case kick, the people he has just sent prone to the ground.

**OGRE HANDLER:** *SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL CE, INIT -1 HD 4+1; HP 22; AC 4; #AT 1; D 1d12x2 charge, with rhinoceros horn and hide on his head; D 1d8 "trample" (kicking, really), otherwise D 1d10 with bare hands. Rhino hide is like a short cloak adding a horn attack for 1d12 damage to large creatures.*

**14. STONE SLAB.** The plain stars on the map stand for stone slabs placed in the Main Corridor of the Vaults at **L2-31**. These are identified by the presence of colorful mosaics on the ground representing scenes appealing to the giants of Aktum. Here, a bloody scene in a forest. Stone giants are hunting a gigantic taurc, an ancient creature with the body of a huge grizzly bear, bump included, and the head of a boar matching the proportions of the beast. The giants are represented in the background pursuing the animal, closing in on it as it runs towards the viewer. The greens and greys of the trees and giants frame the round scene and the taurc in the middle, changing into ochres and browns, with a close up of the boar like, screaming face of the animal in the dead center of the mosaic, a ring passing through the holes of its wheezing snout.

The ring is real and can be pulled off the mosaic to lift the stone slab. A trap prevents intruders from meddling

with it: as soon as the slab is lifted, two volleys of amber shards will be shot simultaneously from the southern diagonal walls facing the mosaic for D 4d4 (range 60 feet). Ask those characters who are not directly next to the slab where they intend to dodge the volleys: if their characters jump east or west, allow a saving throw for half damage. If they dodge north towards the pillar at **L2-15**, allow a saving throw for no damage, but immediately follow with a 3-in-6 chance of triggering the pit trap and falling in, and rolling d6. (1-5) number of stakes hit, each for d6 damage, with (6) indicating no hit at all. Once the slab is lifted, it reveals the presence of a seven-foot wide manhole with ladder leading down to the Crypts below at **LC-II**.

**15. LARGE PILLAR.** This pillar is carved, and decorated with scenes of a giant exploring frozen wastes inhabited by demons and strange, amorphous creatures of bygone ages of the world. The giant becomes king, and knows some sort of epiphany or illumination opening his third eye. He is seen on a procession through seven successive gates hanging on forested rocks floating high in the air, climbing up and up until he reaches a huge tree. He stabs the tree with his sword in anger when he doesn't get what he wants. The tree is aflame and the giant king is cast out, falling into darkness, becoming a cursed creature sowing dissent wherever it goes, and feeding off the blood of the living. Zuun the Legacy of Aktum is prominently represented on the southern side of the pillar with at his feet a switch decorated with the elemental rune of the Sun. Four round switches bearing the names of the four kings of Aktum are displayed around Zuun, with the rune standing for the NORTH looming high above them.

Pressing any switch punches them in, while pressing the Sun rune under Zuun makes them click into position, to be released a fraction of a second later, ready to be pressed again. If the switch with the name of "KHAS", Amal Khas the Cursed, then the rune of the Sun, are pressed in succession, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar opens its mouth and reveals a **scarlet and blue spherical gem** inside. A six-foot tall image of Zuun floating in mid-air, standing on a ball of green fire, bows to the people who entered the combination correctly. Touching the gem will not release it; whoever touches it will find a tingling sensation and will have one melee round to withdraw their hand before suffering 5d6 points of electrical damage (saving throw vs. magic for half). The secret door opens up reveals the shaft leading up to area **L1-15 (2)**.

If, however, the party enters any other combination before pressing the Sun, the effigy of the Unborn on the

pillar will open all the same, but this time the image of Zuun will appear and try to kill the party using the aspects of Aktum that have been unlocked by the party so far. See *Zuun manifestations* after the key to this level for more information.

The ground at the level of the Burial Vaults inside the pillar is irregular but stable. It wouldn't be immediately possible to excavate it. Above, some clutter has accumulated and obstructs the way to level 1. Clearing the way up from this side is dangerous, and leads to a collapse for D 2d6, saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage as rocks are propelled from the opening into a 20-foot long cone. Triggering the collapse from a distance, with ropes etc., is an acceptable alternative. One more turn, assuming multiple workers, would be required to clear the shaft after a collapse. Once the clutter leading up to level 1 is cleared, the integrity of the ground can be affected by later tremors. Note that creatures from this level will now have access to the upper level more easily, and vice versa.

It is possible to lock pick the secret door's mechanism and enter the level from the inside of the pillar once the clutter obstructing the shaft above has been cleared. A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for D 5d6. This opens the door only one way, as it closes back automatically once the party makes it through. Reaching the gem inside the mouth of the effigy of Zuun on the pillar while closed requires another test of lock picking, a success avoiding electrocution for the same amount of damage, since we are dealing with the same magical mechanism. In case of failure, the effigy does not open. Trying to grab the gem from Zuun's mouth while open, with a projection in progress, will not release the gem, and deals the same 5d6 points of electrical damage. Referees might accept a saving throw for half damage.

Only by defeating the projection of Zuun in combat, or by Zuun's own volition, can the party take possession of the gem, a **ioun stone** granting +1 INT, inside the mouth of the effigy. This was part of an ancient ritual of stone giants following the fall of Aktum, by which the believers confronted the aspects of Zuun and made themselves worthy to succeed in leadership.

**16. HONOR GUARD.** When the party first sets eyes on this room, it will seem overcrowded with stone giants standing very tightly next to one another. There might be twenty or even thirty stone giants here! This is in fact an illusion: there are in fact several real stone giants here, but they are camouflaged among several clay figures intended to confuse the intruder, and finely carved to resemble the stone giants wearing their stone armor and weapons next to them in every way.

Whether the huge 10-foot wide candle sitting in the middle of the room has been lit depends on whether the Canon went about starting the procession of giants around the Burial Vaults. If that is the case, there are only two real stone giants left in this room, the personal guards of Garn Patuul who returned to this position waiting for their king while the rest of the procession left the Tomb. If this event has not yet occurred, then all seven guards are still present.

Either way, the stone giants here will behave like the guards at the doors of the Tomb at **L2-8**, i.e. if they are left alone, they will not bother with intruders. If they are disturbed however, they will deal with the immediate threat facing them.

**STONE GIANT GUARDS (7):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP; AC -3; #AT 1; D 3d6, or D 1d8+8 huge spear with +3 to hit. Stone giants hurl rocks for D 3d10.

**17. ARMORY.** When the party approaches the double-doors leading to this area for the first time, they will hear a commotion coming from the inside, as if a pile of dishes had crashed on a kitchen's floor. Then the doors will violently open, revealing a hill giant slave zombie holding a powerful, square iron blade in its hand, and struggling with the tiniest goblin the characters have ever seen on its back.

The goblin plunges a black dagger into the colossus's jugular over and over and shouts at the top of his lungs: "SERVE ME NOW, CREATURE!"

The zombie giant stops dead in its tracks, and the tiny goblin goes "Ah! Much better!" and starts giggling, directing the giant's motions using the dagger plunged in the giant's neck as a joystick.

A number of war implements can be found in this location, most of which are giant-sized, but not all of them. Shields, khopesh-like swords, huge bronzed-tipped spears, lamellar made out of stone and celadon marble, there are a number of interesting items that could be sold back into the world. There is one pristine celadon marble armor worth 1,200 GP, two ornamented giant-sized khopesh that have a 400 GP base value, and 2d4 random items worth 200 GP base value.

**LECHEROUS C. KROM, GOBLIN SERVANT OF THE CHAPEL OF ASHES:** SZ S; MV 60 ft.; AL CE, INIT -1; HD Less than 1; HP 4; AC 1 (effects of the *Chalice*, plus uses the giant as cover); #AT 1; D 1d4. *Lecherous C. Krom is the servant of the Canon at area L2-3. He's left his master at his tasks and decided to play with*

the **Dagger of Gur Khan**, which incidentally belonged to the Kholdun chieftain at area L2-5 before he lost it shortly prior to his entrapment. The blade is dweomered and able to control corporeal undead with no better than low intelligence once a day. It needs to be plunged into the jugular of the creature, and a control of undead check must be made using the wielder's HD or level as the equivalent Evil Cleric level on the table. After 5-10 melee rounds (d6 + 4), the creature manages to break free from the influence of the blade and rejects it. Lecherous C. Krom also owns a **brass skeleton key**, which allows the use to use the one-way doors at areas L2-33 and L2-36 back and forth, both ways.

**HILL GIANT SLAVE ZOMBIE:** SZ L; MV 60 ft; HD 6+1; HP 22; AC 5; #AT 1, D 2d8 fists or boulder, OR D 2d4 + 7, +3 to hit natural (hill giant strength), **The Sword of the Dead** (q.v.). Protection from Evil/Good will keep this zombie at bay. Salt, fire, holy water will damage it. Can be turned as a mummy. The whole time the dagger is in its jugular, the giant is reeling in pain, as if it became just conscious enough to feel the agony. If this zombie lives long enough to gain back control, it will be positively enraged. It will grab the goblin and pulverize it against a wall, and then turn once more against the party to destroy them.

**THE SWORD OF THE DEAD:** Broadsword, INT 17, EGO 17+. AL Chaotic Neutral. The Sword of the Dead has a base damage of 2d4, no pluses, but ignores all physical armor when striking (targets AC 10 - Dex mod - any magical modifier to armor). It hits as a +3 weapon for the purpose of determining eligible targets and damage. Abilities: animate dead, speak with dead, each 3/day, using the wielder's overall level in lieu of cleric levels where relevant. Can make the wielder invisible to undead (one melee round per character level), and detect undead in a 30-foot radius. The Sword of the Dead can help dominate the undead using the wielder's HD as an Evil Cleric of the same level. This is a large, two-handed executioner's broadsword, with a square tip and single razor sharp edge, not unlike the Executioner's Sword of Saint Luuk at area E-5, with which it otherwise has little in common.

The Sword of the Dead is something of a fine connoisseur in meat cuisine, butchering cuts of meats which it will want to enjoy (cook in exotic ways and eat) through its owner, if able. The Sword of the Dead wants mayhem from which blood can flow in abundance. Anyone killed wielding this blade will become an undead, the type of which depends on the exact circumstances and character level upon death. Mundane wielders will become zombies, skeletons if incinerated and otherwise stripped



of their flesh. Heroic characters are likely to become wights, ghosts, and mummies.

Super heroic characters will become vampires or worse. The Sword will hide this fact from its wielder, but will not hesitate to force his or her hand towards a quick death if the Sword feels unsatisfied with him or her. Note the Intelligence and Ego of the blade: The Sword of the Dead is smart, and will not behave as an insane caricature of the Chaotic Neutral alignment. It is manipulative, clever, has taste and a peculiar sense of artistry. It is patient and indestructible. Take it into account while role playing it.

**18. THE KING'S MISTRESS.** Originally, these two 20' x 30' rooms were occupied each by a single female stone giant, but they had a nasty habit to wake, despite having drunk from the Stone Chalice at L2-3, and fight each other before returning to their long slumber throughout the centuries. Ultimately, this recurring bout of madness fueled by the energies of Chaos bubbling under the Vaults led the two to fight to the point they blended into one another and became the same creature, the "Melded Mistress", like a stone giant ettin of sorts. The result is this parody of stone giant handmaidens joined together. They are weaker than normal giants, are not quite enough to have retained most of the special abilities characteristic of true handmaidens, but they can act fast, and hit and throw rocks pretty hard.



The Melded Mistress changes rooms with her mood. She often has arguments with herself, and then just gets mad, gets back to her own room to be able to calm down, just to realize she's still with her other self. The argument begins anew; she changes room again. It is during one of these cyclic moments of madness that the Canon and procession will show up at her door on their way to the Tomb of Garn Patuul. She will stay behind, not even noticing them passing by.

If the Melded Mistress is attacked or facing intruders in the Tomb, the other inhabitants, especially Procyon and Kufiss at **L2-19**, will just chalk it up as the Mistress having one of her episodes again. Only if she retreats and gets to their quarters will they become aware of the real threat facing her.

The doors of both abodes open on curtains made out of liana with little rocks spread out all along their length, knocking each other when one walks through. Both rooms are lit by the same eerie green glow emanating from fungi growing along the walls, as in area **L2-3**. They contain a treasure trove of interesting items., like dresses made of ancient leaves that alchemists would love to be able to study, a giant green mosquito pinned at the wall like a prop, precious stones here and there (assume ten 50 GP base value, five 100 GP base value, one 500 GP base value, and one 1,000 GP value gem), a sculpture representing a vase with roses and leaves all forged of one solid piece of gold worth about 2,400 GP, a **horn of bubbles**, a bed set on a large heating broiler liquefying the wax contained within its mattress, like a warm water bed, four (4) doses of **dust of disappearance**, a ball made out of bits of quartz hanging from the ceiling, worth about 200 GP, that projects tiny lights all around the room if you shake a torch at it. Also, what looks like a pouf cushion on the ground will reveal itself to be a land urchin: when the party tries to sit on it or move it, its long black spines will spread out. The urchin will then wake up, get up on its tiny feet, and project 2-12 spine at the intruders.

**LAND URCHIN:** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; INIT -1; HD 3+3; HP 15; AC 2; #AT 2d6; D 1d2 per spine plus saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed for 6 turns. The urchin can also release a 10-foot radius dark gas that will obscure its movement and aid in its escape, if gravely wounded.

**THE MELDED MISTRESS:** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL CN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP 32; AC -1; #AT 2; D 2d6/2d6 dancing. Throw rocks for 2d8/2d8 damage.

**19. THE KING'S VALET AND JESTER.** These are the quarters of Procyon, the valet of Garn Patuul, and Kufiss, his jester, two stone giants who have become inseparable over the years they served their king.

Procyon is tall, even for a stone giant, and extremely thin, almost skeletal. His movements are calculated, economical and precise. He has a skin condition that makes is rock-like epidermis grow veins of mercury all over his body. This ailment is supposed to be deadly, but in Procyon's case it has been slowed to a halt with a combination of mineral treatment and the help of a magic ring the valet is wearing (see below). The valet strikes with his fists and poisons living creatures on contact. He can also project mercury, much like a *water blast* would.

Kufiss, on the other hand, is everything Procyon is not. He is small, covered with runes etched all over his body, round like Queen Emeneptra, and wears a flashy, metallic-looking turban made out of snake man skin covering half his face, bringing attention to the golden ring hanging from his nose. When he concentrates, Kufiss's round belly can become hot and glows like molten rock. He can produce minor illusions with smoke coming out of his mouth, or release the heat as a breath weapon every three melee rounds. When the party enters this room, they will find Procyon and Kufiss arguing over a spherical astrolabe made out of bronze and silver. The jester is hopping around while Procyon stands still and looks at his friend waving his arms around, ranting about something in the language of Aktum. Those proficient with giant languages will recognize bits of sentences which could mean things like "*now the situation is worse, much worse*" and "*what can we do about it? The king is dead!*" or "*'Tis a bad idea to follow the echo of the Hammer, my friend, very bad idea when we don't know where it is and most importantly, in whose hands it resides...*"

Procyon and Kufiss can actually be reasoned with. They are both True Neutral, not evil like the Canon and others on this level. They will want to know who the intruders are, first. Procyon will ask matter-of-factly, while Kufiss will mock the would-be grave robbers. If the answer is disrespectful or aggressive, and it is obvious to them, their attempt at a parley are being wasted, *alea iacta est*. If, however, the answer is diplomatic, they might leave the party alone to its own devices, or even seek their help in figuring out what's going on both in the crypts, and in the outside world. They are ready to give some ingots of celadon marble for scouting and information, which take the form of about twenty bricks about two feet long by six inches thick and wide, for a total of 1,500 GP. If these first dealings with the party are fruitful, Procyon and Kufiss might later wonder what happened to the Crown of Aktum, and petition the adventurers to recover it, or its components thereof (see *Wilderness expansion* for more about the Crown of Aktum).

The room contains two (2) **potions of diminution**, in case Procyon and Kufiss need to escape via the Crypts, as

well as an **iron flask** (currently empty) and an **alchemy jug**. There are a number of gems scattered throughout the room, ten (10) gems of 100 GP base value, four (4) gems of 500 GP base value, one (1) gems of 2,000 GP base value. The spherical astrolabe is valuable, and worth 700 GP. Kufiss's nose ring is a **ring of free action**, whereas Procyon wears a **ring of regeneration**, which he wears to slow down the effect of his disease. Kufiss keeps a **bag of transmuting** he used in several tricks with giant nobles who used to annoy him. The item is cursed, and converts precious metals into junk.

**PROCYON, MERCURIAL STONE GIANT:** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP 34; AC 2; #AT 1; D 2d6 plus saving throw vs. poison or lethal mercury poisoning. D 3d4 + 9, range 90 ft., to a primary target and 9 points of splash damage 10' around it, plus saving throw vs. lethal poisoning, mercurial blast (see water blast\*). A saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage is normally allowed. Half the damage taken from the blast is non-lethal, and will be healed after 9 full turns, OR if the victim spends a full melee round completely inactive and unthreatened, and succeeds a saving throw vs. magic.

The magical mercury poisoning induced by Procyon's illness inflicts -1 STR and -1 DEX initially: muscles become weak, lack of coordination is noticeable; there might be vision and even speech impairment. If not treated, the second week the poisoning progresses, adding skin rashes, inflammation, a continued loss of coordination and cognitive functions -1 DEX and -1 INT, headaches, tremors. The third week adds another loss of -1 STR, -1 DEX and -1 INT. Death is imminent. *Slow Poison*, *Neutralize Poison* will help in slowing down and stopping the progress of the ailment, but only a thorough cleaning of the organs affected by the mercury will reverse the effects that have already taken place. This will require a physician or cleric able to heal and reach the organs affected, and a one or several alchemists able to chemically clean them up. In Crom Caemloch, the Shaman assisted by Mother Eida will be able to perform this procedure.

**KUFISS, ATHANOR STONE GIANT:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP 43; AC -1; #AT 1; D 2d6. Can roll as a boulder to bounce and hit enemies for D 2d10, and unleash the heat from his stomach in a 60 ft. cone range for D 5d6 once every three melee rounds, with a base 2-in-10 chances to burn his own lungs and overheat for the day. Every time Kufiss uses his breath weapon, the chances for his lungs to overheat increase by 1-in-10, cumulative.

Athanor stone giants, like the Queen's handmaidens, are stone giants selected at birth to fulfill specific roles in the

society of Aktum. They were lore keepers, the alchemists and potion makers of their age. Kufiss first made contact with the King of Aktum as such, but he angered his monarch and showed disrespect while reading his future in the entrails of a hammerhead shark, and would have been executed if Procyon had not intervened to turn the situation around and suggest giving the role of jester to this amusing, sarcastic little ball of a giant. A turn of phrase Kufiss particularly hated at the moment it was told to his face, he will be quick to point out. This saved Kufiss's life, and started his friendship with Procyon.

**20. STONE STEPS.** These large steps climb up to the massive, 30 feet wide by 40 feet tall secret door leading into the Tomb (see below L2-21), and are framed by two rows of shelves on the north and southern wall where three-foot tall clay figures are stored, facing east, as if guarding the Tomb of the giant. The northern set of clay soldiers is colored blue, while the set on the northern shelves is red. Each have a color-matched bungle drum set sized for an infant giant, or a large human, hanging high above each set of shelves. There used to be 50 soldiers in each set, but a number of them have been shattered or damaged over the years. There are twenty-six (26) still operational on the red team, and thirty-four (34) on the blue.

The toy soldiers of each "team" are controlled by beating the bungle drum with specific beats and rhythms: one end of each stick is for stabbing, kicking and punching, the other is for marching, running, kneeling. Different beats and rhythms make for combat combinations, marching orders, directions, twists and turns. Twenty-six (26) red soldiers and thirty-four (34) blue soldiers can still respond to the commands from their respective team drum.

These toy soldiers form a unique dweomered collection assembled for Garn Patuul as he was but an infant. Each soldier may be worth around 50 GP a piece, but together, those soldiers that remain intact (along with the drums commanding them) are worth 100 GP a piece. Bear in mind these are made of clay and extremely fragile, when considering bringing them back to the surface. The soldiers can be picked up and examined without trouble, though the slightest movement is likely to alert Procyon, who is just paranoid about this kind of meddling from anyone inside or outside the Tomb. He just has a "sixth sense" for it, 3-in-6. The drums hanging above are collected to bells however, and will deliver a lightning bolt for 3-36 damage if not detected and severed first.

**21. TOMB OF GARN PATUUL.** This massive, one-way secret door weighing at least 40 tons is completely invis-



ible from its western side and leads east-to-west inside the Tomb of Garn Patuul. The Tomb itself is thoroughly described at **LI-12**. When the procession makes it to this place, the Canon of Ashes will realize that the King is dead. The call of the Hammer of Aktum will be answered nonetheless, and the Canon proceeds to the Queen's chamber next, closing the secret door back hermetically behind him. Movement on the floor of the Tomb will now reveal the position of the door, and that it has been recently opened.

**22. LARGE PILLAR.** The pillar is carved and painted with scenes of a giant king rising to supremacy and catching a double-headed hammer by stretching his arm high above his head. This is a stylized representation of the Hammer of Aktum, the very hammer Belenor held in his hand, represented in the fresco of area **LI-9**, which was then stolen by Krassus the Cambion during the sack of Grunn Galeb. The giant king faces conflicts between his subjects, and rebellion among his servants, as he is seen sitting on his throne dealing judgment against this noble giant, or that hobgoblin overseer. The sun goes down as the king and his armies face a coalition of tiny humanoid creatures, some with pointy ears, some with beards, and some with animal companions such like the bear and the taurc, or the raven and the wolf. The king is finally laid to rest next to his round, beautiful queen. Zuun the Legacy of Aktum is prominently represented

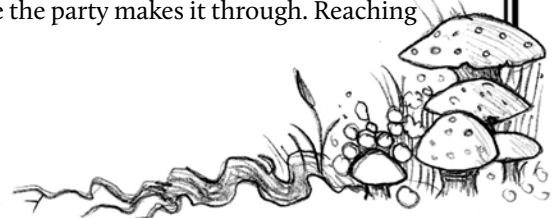
on the southern side of the pillar with at his feet a switch decorated with the elemental rune of the Sun, the Zenith and Nadir combined. Four round switches bearing the names of the four kings of Aktum are displayed around Zuun, with the rune standing for the WEST looming high above them.

Pressing any switch punches them in, while pressing the Sun rune under Zuun makes them click into position, to be released a fraction of a second later, ready to be pressed again. If the switch with the name of "PATUUL", Garn Patuul the Usher, then the rune of the Sun, are pressed in succession, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar opens its mouth and reveals a **pale blue rhomboid gem** inside. A six-foot tall image of Zuun floating in mid-air, standing on a ball of green fire, bows to the people who entered the combination correctly. Touching the gem will not release it; whoever touches it will find a tingling sensation and will have one melee round to withdraw their hand before suffering 5d6 points of electrical damage (saving throw vs. magic for half). The secret door opens up reveals the shaft leading up to area **LI-15 (I)**.

If, however, the party enters any other combination before pressing the Sun, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar will open all the same, but this time the image of Zuun will appear and try to kill the party using the aspects of Aktum that have been unlocked by the party so far. See *Zuun manifestations* after the key to this level for more information.

The ground at the level of the Burial Vaults inside the pillar is covered with fungi glowing of the same green light as those found at area **L2-3**. It wouldn't be immediately possible to excavate it. Above, clutter has accumulated and obstructs the way to level 1. Clearing the way up from this side eventually leads to a collapse for D 2-12, saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage as rocks are propelled from the opening into a 20-foot long cone. Triggering the collapse from a distance, with ropes etc., is an acceptable alternative. One more turn, assuming multiple workers, would be required to clear the shaft after a collapse. Once the clutter leading up to level 1 is cleared, the integrity of the ground can be affected by later tremors. Note that creatures from this level will now have access to the upper level more easily, and vice versa.

It is possible to lock pick the secret door's mechanism and enter the level from the inside of the pillar once the clutter obstructing the shaft above has been cleared. A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for D 5-30. This opens the door only one way, as it closes back automatically once the party makes it through. Reaching



the gem inside the mouth of the effigy of Zuun on the pillar while closed requires another test of lock picking, a success avoiding electrocution for the same amount of damage, since we are dealing with the same dweomer. In case of failure, the effigy does not open. Trying to grab the gem from Zuun's mouth while open, with a projection in progress, will not release the gem, and deal the same 5d6 points of electrical damage. Referees might accept a saving throw for half damage.

Only by defeating the projection of Zuun in combat, or by Zuun's own volition, can the party take possession of the gem, a **ioun stone** granting +1 STR, inside the mouth of the effigy. This was part of an ancient ritual of stone giants following the fall of Aktum, by which the believers confronted the aspects of Zuun and made themselves worthy to succeed in leadership.

**23. STONE SLAB.** The plain stars on the map stand for stone slabs placed in the Main Corridor of the Vaults at **L2-31**. These are identified by the presence of colorful mosaics on the ground representing scenes appealing to the giants of Aktum. Here, a round labyrinth of reds, ochres and blacks hosts a variety of creatures, including lions, panthers, wolves, centaurs and other animals of the world of the surface, magical and otherwise. In the middle, a minotaur is standing up straight, its face disproportionate compared to its body anchored to the labyrinth, as if it was closer to the viewer than the rest of the scene and staring directly at him from the inside of the mosaic, a metal ring going through the holes of its bloody snout.

The ring is real and can be pulled off the mosaic to lift the stone slab. A trap prevents intruders from meddling with it: as soon as the slab is lifted, a huge volley of amber shards will be shot from the eastern, curved wall facing the mosaic for D 4d4 (range 60 feet). Allow a saving throw for half damage. Once the slab is lifted, it reveals the presence of a seven-foot wide manhole with ladder leading down to the Crypts below at **LC-14**.

**24. THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER.** This enormous round chamber has a dais in in center with a few steps leading to the feet of Emenepra, Mother of the Stone Giants, Queen of Aktum. She stands in the middle of the round platform, slumbering until the time to wake and create a new kingdom comes. Depending on the moment the party finds this chamber, the Queen might in fact have already departed the Vault with the procession initiated by the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum, or might still be here, if this event has not yet unfolded.

At the level of the first step of the dais, in front of the large candle the Canon would lit to wake the Queen,

there is a hidden compartment where the two pets of the Queen, Pebbley and Rosetta, are slumbering along with a number of cherished treasures of the queen. The two Xorns are extremely possessive, and wake up if the possessions of the Queen are tempered with. The stone slab hiding the compartment is trapped with an acid spray that will hit those who lift the slab for 4-16 points of damage initially, saving throw vs. magic for half damage, and 4 additional points on each of three rounds afterwards (with half damage, i.e. 2 points per round for three rounds, on a successful saving throw).

When the Queen leaves the Burial Vaults with the procession of giants, her pet Xorns will have an argument with her and be obnoxious to the Queen's handmaidens. She will decide to leave them in the compartment and release them once she's followed the trail of the Hammer of Aktum and comes back here. Which means that whether the Queen still stands on the dais or not Pebbley and Rosetta will still be here to meet the party.

The compartment a variety of stones which have been magically treated to exude a variety of fragrances, like perfumes. Among them, what looks like six oblong, smooth pieces of granite of the same rough size are in fact Ohminid eggs which the Mhole of **H-15** would very much want to have, to the point the creature would reach out to the party if they came in contact with them, even briefly, once they came back to the surface. There are otherwise about twenty (20) stones, each of a 120 GP base value. The mix is volatile, and upon opening the slab, in addition to the original acid trap, the party may trigger an explosion if there are any open flames within 20 feet of the opening. If an explosion occurs, it deals 3-18 points of damage, with a saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage. The **Crown of the Queen of Aktum**, a beautiful piece carved out of a single block of celadon marble, which is dweomered and functions as a ring of giant influence (12,000 GP value), will be stored here if the Queen is present. The items that will remain in any case include six (6) doses of **Dust of Appearance** the Queen uses to find out if the King is faithful to her, a **bag of devouring** she sometimes offers as reward to humanoids she wants to toy with and see eaten by the bag, and a vast, shimmering piece of cloth that has not been yet tailored by is already dweomered to vibrate and shift with movements (worth 8,000 GP); if given to alchemists to rework for about 4,000 GP, it could be resized and become a **cloak of displacement**.

**QUEEN EMENEPTRA (STONE GIANT):** SZ L; MV 90 ft./roll 240 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP 58; AC -1;



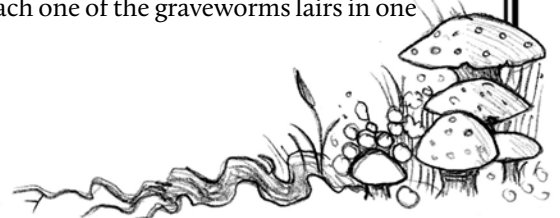


#AT 1; D 2d6. Queen Emneptra can roll (acting as her own giant boulder) for 4d10 damage in a straight line (saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage). Her voluptuous form absorbs 2 points of damage of every hit affecting her. She carries rough jewelry, including a shirt made out of two-hundred and forty (240) gems of a 50 GP value each. Emenepttra radiates natural, elemental pheromones almost impossible to resist by stone giants. They are so powerful, they can even affect humans and demi-humans who still have a connection to the earth, albeit only partially. Such characters must succeed a saving throw vs. magic, or feel protective and amenable towards the Queen of Aktum. Enamored by a generous forms, they will try to leave the Queen alone and give her space whenever possible, and treat her with deference. If she rolls towards them, they will not try to avoid her, seeking her embrace instead.

**PEBBLEY AND ROSETTA (MINIATURE XORNS):** SZ S; MV 90 ft.; INIT -1 HD 3+3; HP 16, 18; AC 2; #AT 4; D 1d2 (3 arms), 4d4 jaw. Pebbley and Rosetta are the

miniature version of real Xorns. They are like poodles to the Queen of the giants, and they act their part very well, judging by their possessive attitude towards their queen and poor treatment of anyone else around them. Stone to flesh and rock to mud spells raise lower their AC to 10. They otherwise have the same immunities, abilities and weaknesses as normal Xorns.

**25. THE QUEEN'S GUARD.** Once the quarters of the queen's personal bodyguards, these four rooms are now a total mess of intertwined corpses, most of them half-alert and animated. As the influence of Chaos grew within the crypts, a couple of Graveworms achieved a particularly cunning form of sentience, and moved up here to take over this area, along with the people stored there to defend the Burial Vaults. They took control of the undead stored in the two rooms directly south of their lair in the same corridor. Now, these two savvy predators create elaborate traps, generating skeletons to fetch for prey, with instructions to flee back to one of the two northern rooms (each one of the graveworms lairs in one





of these) here at L2-25. While the worm occupying the targeted room where the skeletons find refuge waits on the ceiling, the other worm waiting on the ceiling of the other room gets out and sprays the party in the back to try and force them inside. Its partner will then drop on top of their prey, and finish them.

While the northern rooms are the lair of the Graveworms, the two southern rooms are now stuffed with undead, in a manner similar to the Stables Barracks at L2-10. Each room originally was filled with forty (40) corpses each. With the damage of time, previous intrusions and guardians destroyed, they now contain 7-12 zombies, 8-18 skeletons and 1-2 ogre slave zombies per room. Whatever remains after dice rolls can be consumed by the Graveworms to fill their stomachs when needed (see stats). Otherwise they will have to get to the Crypts to feast upon the dead when able. All the undead are controlled by the Dire Graveworms. In case of intrusion in their territory, the worms are capable of collaborating with the original occupants defending the Tomb. They and their undead have in fact become part of the organization of this Tomb – they are left alone by the giants, as if they were an extended part of the defenses of the Crypts, and in return, the worms assist with intruders whenever they feel their territory is in jeopardy. This “arrangement” is likely to change as the worms are the first in line to change their allegiances as the power of Chaos grows within the Crypts.

**SKELETONS:** SZ M; MV 120 ft; AL TN; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 7; #AT 1, D 1d6.

**ZOMBIES:** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1d8.

**OGRE SLAVE ZOMBIES:** SZ L; MV 60 ft; AL TN; AC 6; HD 4+1; HP 17 avg.; #AT 1, D 1d12 huge wooden club. Like other ogres around these parts, these show signs of abuse like deep cuts, black bruises all over the body, bones that seem out of their sockets, head wobbling at a bizarre angle, and a wide-open abdomen showing hollowed cavities (organs shrunk and the heart was removed). Protection from Evil keeps undead ogres at bay. Salt, fire, holy water will damage them. Ogre zombies can be turned as wights.

**DIRE GRAVEWORMS (2):** SZ L; MV 90 ft. all surfaces; 120 ft. swimming; AL TN, Surprise 3-in-6; HD 6; HP 26, 33; AC 8; #AT 3 tentacles or 1 regurgitation; D 1d4/1d4/1d4, bite 4d4 automatic if two tentacles hit a single target, or regurgitation, cone of decayed plasma D 1d4 per remains expelled, or 2 HD of undead produced for two remains expelled; A dire graveworm's bloated stomach will contain 9-24 (3d6+6) remains. These re-

mains can be expelled to produce a 30-foot long cone of decayed plasma (only six remains can be expended per round in such a way), or animate as 1 HD (skeleton) or 2 HD (zombie) undead (six remains per round expended on HD per round maximum). While not technically undead themselves, the graveworms are susceptible to be turned as mummies. The remains within them react, and the pain is enough to make them back off away from the Cleric confronting them.

Among the effects no longer useful to the oozes, the party may find **two potions of haste**, and four (4) **Javelins of piercing**, and a **mace of forgetfulness +2** which causes magic-users to make a saving throw versus magic or lose one of their most powerful memorized spells randomly.

**26. THE QUEEN'S HAIR CARVER.** This room includes two chairs sized for giants, and is filled with lots of supplies, buckets, small ladder, sacks of dye, ash and water, as well as tools including shears, chisels, hammers, all the material necessary to blow glass, a small oven, a cauldron that has been used to the point of disrepair, giant spatulas, spoons and forks, and more.

Queen Emenepra could not stand being entombed to slumber through the ages and not have her personal stone carver ready to help her prepare when it was time to wake and leave the Tomb. The hill giant known as Seev Saveed seized the opportunity, not really knowing what the whole ritual entailed, and was both horrified and enchanted to have to drink from the Stone Chalice: on one hand, he would now have a luscious stone-like skin, one step removed from the true stone giant, but on the other hand, he would lose some of the speed and coordination that made him such an excellent hair carver. Saveed agreed to the downside, eager to see the future. The hair carver developed a habit over time to wake at random, despite having drunk from the Stone Chalice. During such times of activity, Saveed climbs down in the Crypts using the trap door in his quarters (which is trapped, but for those coming from the Crypts, not entering them from this room, with a stone just under the slab that will fall if even slightly moved, crushing whatever is under it for 3d10 points of damage), and goes to find some green stuff at (see LC-16), and then shapes it using his oven, to then practice his skill on the resulting likeness of a stone giant head.

Seev Saveed will be wake when the procession started by the Canon reaches the Queen's chamber. When the Queen leaves, he will stay behind, and therefore will be encountered around this location regardless of timing on this level. Saveed is not a soldier, or a fighter. He will not risk his life and will prefer to let grave robbers be, if they don't reveal he let them go. In fact, he would be happy if

they could find a way to bring him more green stuff, or statues, or even means to create his own subjects to exercise his hair carver skills further. If the referee is using the Hearth of Chaos of the *Underworld expansion*, obtaining the head of a medusa would be the grand prize for him.

Saveed looks like a rather thin, clean, and completely shaved hill giant. His skin has become copper-like, a side effect of the liquid he drank from the Stone Chalice he only seems to manifest, and wears heavy black makeup on his lips and around his eyes, which is partially obfuscated by the huge head piece carved of celadon marble he constantly wears that looks like the beard and long hair of an Ekkedian king.

If the party is puzzled and wants to find out how he could copy this hair style from the early humans of Ekked when the kingdom of Aktum fell long before then, Saveed will point to the remains of two intruders in the Tomb he had the Cooks mummify for him. He keeps the remains and their belongings in this area, and can find them given some time to search through his mess, if given assurances he will not be harmed by the party. The two corpses belong to sages who came to the Viper Head Pass from the ancient library of Aksalskhaton. They must have been a cleric and a magic-user, for their garments still each contain a poison-needle trapped tube of ivory. The first contains a **clerical scroll** with the spells *prayer*, *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*, and *neutralize poison* x2. The second contains a **magic-user scroll** with *slow*, *dimension door*, *remove curse* and *ice storm*.

To carve the hair of stone giants, Saveed uses a **wand of earth and stone** (22 charges remaining), liquefies the rigid hair and follows with the application of a dweomered **curling iron** looking to a human sized individual like an iron spear typed with a two-pronged fork of orichalcum. This curling iron can serve as a weapon, adds d6 electric damage to blows using it (1 charge for 6 melee rounds), and can discharge a bolt of lightning for 3d6 damage (2 charges). It has 18 charges remaining. These are the tools of his trade and his most prized possessions; along with the **amulet of Zuun** he is wearing around his neck, which allows him to cast *stoneskin* twice a day. He will not give them away without a fight. If Saveed calls for aid, he will probably attract the Handmaiden of L2-27 and the cooks of L2-28 to assist. The dire graveworms and their retinues L2-25 will follow one or two melee rounds later. He could also escape to the Crypts and arouse a wave of undead to take care of the threat from there. This could become a nasty situation for the party, and fast.

**SEEV SAVEED, THE QUEEN'S HAIR CARVER (HILL GIANT):** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 8+2; HP 42; AC 3; #AT 1; D 2d8 boulder, OR D 1d6+8 two-pronged curling iron in melee with, D 2d6+8 on a melee hit with 1 charge expended, OR D 3d6 lightning bolt with 2 charges expended. Seev Saveed can use his wand of earth and stone to Dig (1/2 charge per use), passwall (1 charge), move earth (2 charges), and transmute rock to mud and vice versa (1 charge).

**27. THE QUEEN'S HANDMAIDENS.** Each of the 20' x 30' rooms contains the sober quarters of three female giants each. There is no jewelry, nothing of value to find here. There are beds made out of limestone, a few seats and a work table to practice crafts, adjust garments, repair jewelry and the kind, but nothing that could be construed as treasure by a party of adventurers.

The Handmaidens of Aktum are females dedicated to the service of the Kingdom of Aktum. They no husbands, nor consorts, and have sworn away the influence of their clan and family ties. They live, by all intents and purposes, like priestesses in the service of the Queen. Their dedication and purpose in the society of the stone giants affects their looks and development over time, just like it does the Athanors like Kufiss at L2-19. They appear to have voluptuous, athletic forms defying the linear and sober lines of male stone giants, round and bald faces with eyes of gold, light green or pale blue with no iris. They walk around bare-breasted, with simple necklaces with humanoid skulls interspaced as their sole jewelry. The flowing fabrics hanging from their hips are the only real clothes they wear. This fashion wasn't rare in the society of Aktum.

There are six (6) handmaidens stationed here at the campaign start. Once the procession is initiated by the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum, five of them will follow the Queen on her journey to retrieve the Hammer of Aktum. Only one, the scrawniest and most disliked of the servants of the Queen, will remain behind, waiting for her mistress's return. If some intruders attack her, the handmaiden will try to blitz her way through the door to join with the Queen's cooks and let them get into melee. She will then assist with her abilities from afar.

If the roles are reversed, and the hogres are subject to an attack, she will let it play out, never having trusted that bunch anyway.

**STONE GIANT HANDMAIDEN:** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; AL TN, INIT -1; HD 9+3; HP 44; AC -1; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 in melee, or slab punch D 2d4-8 at 120 ft. range, or mud web, or pebble magic missiles 1d4+1(x3)

(see below). Handmaidens do not throw rocks the way usual stone giants do, but have a form of innate earth connection that allows them shape rock with their mind at a distance of 120 ft., causing a slab of rock to punch victims for D 2d4, turn the rock to mud trapping feet and pinning the unwary to a particular location (equivalent of a web spell), or cracking walls and ceilings causing pebbles to fly and hit targets like three separate magic missiles. They can create rudimentary barriers destroyed with 15 damage applied in one spot, pass through walls and shape stone.

The handmaiden is carrying a **gem of brightness** (23 charges remaining) she might use to dissuade intruders from meddling with her, blinding them instead of killing them outright. She also has an **incandescent blue ioun stone** (+1 WIS) floating around her. If the handmaiden is made to feel secure, and there is a mention of possibly making her reach the surface and commune with the Norns of area E-21, she will help the party, and give them the ioun stone as a sign of good will. If reunited with the Norns, the Handmaiden will become their representative and mouth with the player-characters.

**28. THE QUEEN'S COOKS.** This room is inhabited by the eight cooks of Emenepra, the Queen of Aktum. They are all hob-ogres, or hogres, who were enslaved at a young age and became associated with a particular clan or household of the stone giants, here Clan Trell of the House of Paal, hence their more educated, laid back attitudes compared to "real" ogres. Even in death, the staff has maintained a spark of conscience keeping them tied to their work and able to work as a team: These hob-ogres are dedicated fellows, they loved their job in life, from selecting prey, hunting it down, to skinning, cutting, cooking, and that hasn't changed with their deaths. They even share taxidermy as hobby they practice during their downtime.

The 20' x 30' room closest to the Queen's Chamber is their workshop. It contains the stoves, cauldrons, cutting boards, tools and utensils, and an apparatus made of ebonite and laced orichalcum which looks like a meat grinder, but actually grinds gems and stone (worth 1,000 GP). A stone slab (not trapped) leads to the Crypts at LC-19. The hogres they usually get rid of the bits they don't use or don't eat themselves (rare), and whatever trash remains from their work. The bases of the walls show signs of green luminescent growths – the same fungus found on the pillars of L2-3. While inspecting the floor, the party can notice that it is slightly slanted towards the center of the room and to the east, to gather liquids from the butchering jobs and make them flow through a 3-inch

hole at the bottom of the limestone wall into the room directly next, at L2-28A.

**THE QUEEN'S COOKS (HOGRES, 6):** SZ L; MV 60 ft.; AL NE, STR 18/75; HD 3; HP 16, 15, 14, 12, 10, 10; AC 5; #AT 1; D 1d10+3, +2 to hit with cooking implements including cleaver, butcher's hooks, pans. These were ritually sacrificed when Garn Patuul was buried, and are therefore undead.

**CHEFS BARN HET AND MOT MAW (HOGRES):** SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL TN, STR 18/75, INIT -1; HD 3; HP 17, 17; AC 1 (White marble apron and hat); #AT 1; D 1d10+5, with the meat spatula, and D 2d4+7 with the meat tweezers, each with +2 to hit. The Chefs have not been sacrificed with their staff, and drank from the Chalice of the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum instead. Both chefs have a **brass skeleton key** hanging on a chain from their neck. One uses an ornamented, sword-like **+2 meat spatula** (base damage 1d10+2 magic, wielder chooses whether to inflict slashing or blunt damage) forged out of orichalcum, and the other a set of long **+2 meat tweezers** made of true iron (base damage 2d4+2+2 magic, piercing damage) to fight with their staff. Both implements could be used as weapons by a human-sized adventurers. Aprons and hats are worth a total 1,500 GP together, per chef.

**L2-28A. COLD CHAMBER.** The door to this room takes Exceptional Strength to open without a **brass skeleton key**. The temperature drops immediately upon opening: this is a cold chamber where the hogre store their meat and other ingredients.

Blocks of ice are lined up against the wall. Various creatures, including the bodies of several human beings have been dismembered and are hanging from the ceiling by hooks. The large head of a hill giant here, the torso and poultry-like legs of a harpy there. The sections of what looks like a giant purple snake, but the scales match the neck of a severed humanoid head with dead slits and a forked tongue turned upside down in the north-western corner of the room, half-eaten by the voracious frost.

Another creature, that looks like a cockroach the size of a dog, hangs by a hook. It is frozen solid. If taken off the hook, the party will see that the thing looks more like a giant tartigrade than a roach. If brought back to normal temperatures, it will be visibly alive after one turn, and wake up fully after 2-5 hours. This is an Ohminid, a psychic and intelligent creature from another shade of the Earth whose species is related to the Mhole's at H-15. The Mhole will psychically call to the player-characters when they exit the Tomb and guide them to his lair. If

they follow the Mhole's instructions and give the Ohminid to its care, the giant creature will tell them there are others to save in the depths of the dungeon (at **L2-24**, and **LC-9** in this module). It will ask to bring whatever Mhole or Ohminid they find, so it can protect its future and kin. The rewards could be visions of the past, transmission of knowledge of psychic energy and dweomers, or the production of raw materials like gems gifted to them for their services.

In the south-west corner, a bundle of dark clothes can be searched. They are black cloaks with red and white trim, embroidered with the image of Cerberus, which were worn by the Danthean soldiers of the Dawn Legion. There are three (6) **+2 darts of true iron**, four doses of **ash of the supplicants** (which heals diseases contracted by wounds including lycanthropy, if mixed with water and applied within 24 hours of infection), a frozen **portion of ESP**, a **figurine of wondrous power** representing and containing Kayce, a female border collie carved of intertwined black and white onyx (HD 2-2).

An iron door covered with frost stands locked in the middle of the southern wall. The skeleton key will also open this door. On the other side, a vast ice cave, at least 50 feet large and deep enough to not make out where the opposite wall might lie in the darkness. Before the party can put a foot forward, light sources with flames exposed will be blown out by intense cold winds sucked into the Tomb, and a large, white shadow, perhaps an avalanche, will be seen rushing towards the door, as if the entire cave was being swallowed by a snowy collapse. If the party slams the door shut immediately, this is it. No consequence.

If they don't, they will receive what remains of the blunt force hitting the frame of the door right in their faces for D 4-16. They will then see an amorphous mass of snow and ice squeeze itself through the frame of the door into the room. They can retreat immediately and close the door to the corridor while the creature squeezes through the frame. If they leave the room alone, the white pudding, since this is what the creature is, will end up leaving through the open frame to the cave and hide again on the other side.

**WHITE PUDDING:** SZ L; MV 90 ft.; AL TN; HD 9; HP; AC 8; #AT 1; D 7d4 slam. Acid, cold and poison have no effect on a white pudding. Fire and magic missiles affect them normally. Lightning bolts or blows split them into viable puddings of a smaller size. The white pudding does not affect metal, but can dissolve flesh and vegetable matter in one melee round.

**L2-28B. QUARTERS OF THE COOKS.** This room contains a mess of old tapestries and clothes salvaged by the hogres and used as their bedding. There are several stuffed animals, including a panther, a giant snake, an owlbear and an elephant seal stored in this room. The referee might consider animating them as the energies of Chaos bubbling under the Tomb reach out and start effecting change in the environment around the party. The room can be investigated and reveal body parts of humanoids kept by the hogres for snacks. One of them has a hand with a ring still at one of the fingers. This is a **ring of warmth**. The referee might allow a *Rubble Search* roll, to see if any valuables in addition to the ring can be found here.

**29. THE QUEEN'S EUNUCH.** These are the quarters of Thelessar Galata, an insanely obese eunuch who kept the handmaidens in line for Queen Emeneptra, and has a pitch black pet lion at his side. His quarters are nicely decorated, with four (4) curtains covering the limestone walls each worth 300 GP a piece, cushions everywhere on the ground, and a massive brass hookah in the center of the room. Searching the room reveals the presence of a corpse, a massive ogre who was killed by strangulation, judging by the black marks around his neck. He is still holding a peculiar shield, trying to defend himself and push back against his murderer. The shield is made out of orichalcum, and looks like a round gong. This is a **+2 gong shield** that can be struck with a sword, rod or other item and produce a sound wave for D 2-8 damage in a 30 foot-long cone. Scoring a natural 20 against its wielder produces the same *shockwave*, but in a 10-foot radius. Once a week, it can be stricken by the wielder to produce a 5-20 points of damage *shockwave* in a 30-foot radius.

Thelessar is an aberration, the son of a cloud giant, Pyk Malion, who became enamored with the substance of the celadon marble the stone giants revered, and carved a magical mate out of the rock. The result of hits unnatural union was a lesser being, weighted to remain on the surface of the Eurth, forbidden to ever join his brethren both literally and metaphorically speaking, not ever seeing one of the Cloud Castles, and remaining in bondage to Clan Trell and the stone giants of Aktum. His genitals were taken from him as an infant, to ensure he would not procreate, and he was constantly berated for being a freak, a monster not fitting the expectations of society. He became a ruthless eunuch, dealing punishment to the handmaidens and other female servants of the Queen and King with equal cruelty.

On one hand, Thelessar is a horrible monster of a giant who has made hundreds of individual subjects of Aktum

suffer throughout the ages of the world. On the other hand, he is the pure product of abuse and not fitting the expectations of his people. This is something that the party could possibly leverage, since it wouldn't take much for Thelessar to rebel completely and go against the giants of Aktum, for the sake of bringing the whole thing down, once and for all. Thelessar is a terrifying opponent in a straight fight, but a pathetic figure that could become important for the game if the events of the game allow it.

**THELESSAR GALATA, THE QUEEN'S EUNUCH (HALF-CLOUD GIANT):** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL NE, INIT -1, Surprised only 1-in-6; HD 6; HP 28; AC 2 (natural cloud giant AC 2 modified by fat +1 and Chalice +1 but also negated by his being insanely obese -2); #AT 1 or 2; D 2d6 bare hands (really out of shape for a cloud giant), OR D 1d12 boulder at max 120 ft., OR D 2-8/2-8 (1d2+1d6 electricity) at 60 ft. range with **copper whips** linked to the twin crystals held in the harness in his back; if both whips hit, he can automatically electrocute his target for 3d6 points of damage on the next melee round (when the party gets there hands on it, assume there are 18 charges remaining in the apparatus, with each strike of a whip costing 1 charge, and an electrocution costing 2 charges. The apparatus can be recharged, by Thelessar himself first and foremost). Thelessar can levitate for 1-3 rounds. The Eunuch is morbidly obese, needs a full round to go through single doors on this level, and ignores 2 point on any hit he receives due to the enormous amount of protective fat he naturally carries around. A **deep red ioun stone** (+1 DEX) he confiscated to the handmaidens floats around him, and does not help much with his movement.

**BLACK PET LION:** SZ L; MV 120 ft.; INIT -1; HD 5+2; HP 38; AC 4 forequarters, 5 hindquarters; #AT 3; D 1d4/1d4/1d10. If both paws hit during the same melee round, the lion gets the advantage of two rakes with his rear claws, dealing D 1d6+1 each.

**30. LARGE PILLAR.** This pillar is carved and painted with scenes pertaining to Zuun, the Unborn, and the Legacy of Aktum. Several vignettes intertwined with the script and runes of the stone giants tell the story of the end of the reign of Garn Patuul, pictured holding the Hammer of Aktum, and the civil war that destroyed the kingdom from within. During an invasion of the capital, Queen Emeneptra lost her child out of worry for her people. This tragedy was of such consequences to the Houses and Clans of Aktum that the civil war ended. The kingdom found peace in mourning, but never truly recovered. Slaves revolted. Houses disbanded. The sands of time are shown on the pillar swallowing the pyramids and monuments of the giants, and the little folk taking

over the Eurth. It is only much later, according to this record, that a few stone giants worshipping the memory of Aktum focused their attention on the Unborn, and made him the spiritual guardian of the kingdom's legacy. The Tombs of the ancient kings were revered, decorated anew, as the giants slept here waiting for a day when the kingdom could be safely brought back to the world of the living. And thus the memory of Aktum survived through the ages.

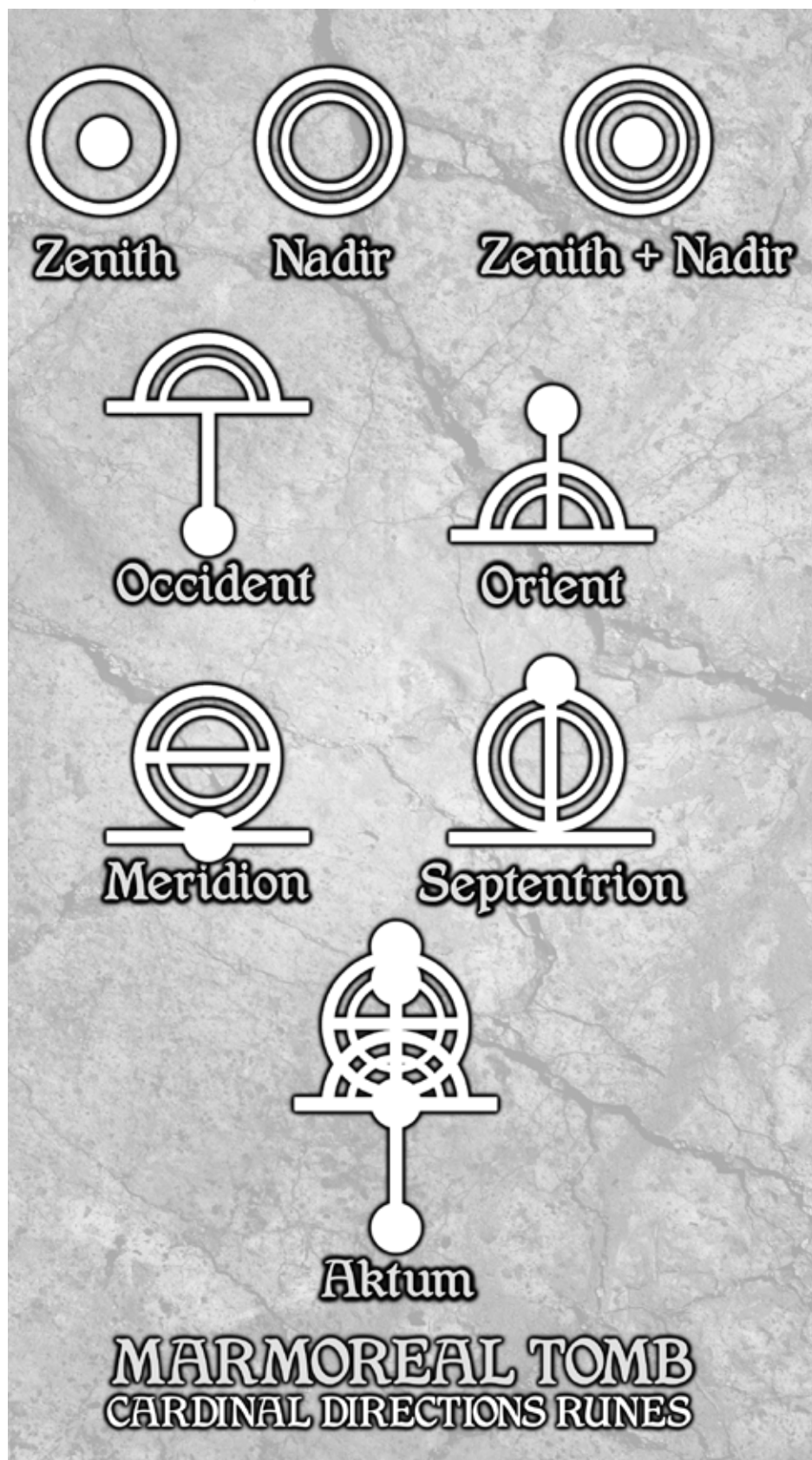
Zuun, the Legacy of Aktum, is most prominently represented on the southern side of this pillar. He is represented with, at his feet, a switch decorated with the elemental rune of the Sun, the Zenith and Nadir combined. Four round switches bearing the names of the four kings of Aktum are displayed around Zuun, with the very same rune (a dot surrounded by two concentric circles) for the Nadir and Zenith above the effigy.

Pressing any switch punches them in, while pressing the Sun rune under Zuun makes them click into position, to be released a fraction of a second later, ready to be pressed again. If the rune of the Sun, representing the Nadir and Zenith of Aktum, is pressed, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar opens its mouth and reveals a **pale green prism spindle gem** inside. A six-foot tall image of Zuun floating in mid-air, standing on a ball of green fire, bows to the people who entered the combination correctly. Touching the gem will not release it; whoever touches it will find a tingling sensation and will have one melee round to withdraw their hand before suffering 5d6 points of electrical damage (saving throw vs. magic for half). The secret door opens up reveals the shaft leading up to area **L1-8**.

If, however, the party enters any other combination before pressing the Sun, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar will open all the same, but this time the image of Zuun will appear and try to kill the party using the aspects of Aktum that have been unlocked by the party so far. See *Zuun manifestations* after the key to this level for more information.

The shaft leads directly down to area **LC-16**, but is partially obstructed by the same bioluminescent fungi found at area **L2-3**. Hacking a way through would take a melee round. Above, some clutter has accumulated and obstructs the way up to level 1. A test of dexterity would be needed to climb into the shaft and prep triggers, tying up ropes to then pull the rubble down from the outside of the pillar, for instance. Triggering a collapse from the inside of the shaft will result in the characters' deaths as they tumble down into the darkness, no save. Once the clutter leading up to level 1 is cleared, characters are



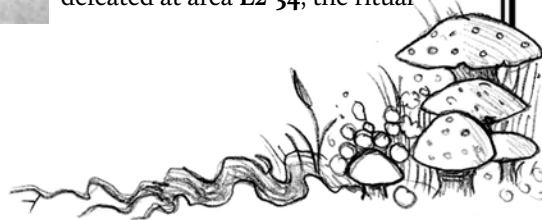


free to climb between the levels or install pulleys and baskets or whatever implement they want to facilitate the journey. Note that creatures from this level will now have access to the upper level more easily, and vice versa.

It is possible to lock pick the secret door's mechanism and enter the level from the inside of the pillar once the clutter obstructing the shaft above has been cleared. A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for D5d6. This opens the door only one way, as it closes back automatically once the party makes it through. Reaching the gem inside the mouth of the effigy of Zuun on the pillar while closed requires another test of lock picking, a success avoiding electrocution for the same amount of damage, since we are dealing with the same magical mechanism. In case of failure, the effigy does not open. Trying to grab the gem from Zuun's mouth while open with a projection in progress will not release the gem, and deal the same 5d6 points of electrical damage. Referees might accept a saving throw for half damage.

Only by defeating the projection of Zuun in combat, or by Zuun's own volition, can the party take possession of the gem, a **ioun stone** granting a level of experience, inside the mouth of the effigy. This was part of an ancient ritual of stone giants following the fall of Aktum, by which the believers confronted the aspects of Zuun and made themselves worthy to succeed in leadership.

Once Zuun has been physically defeated at area L2-34, the ritual



pilgrimage and contest of leadership is considered won. Zuun will tell the victorious contestant to come back to this location. They will find the mouth of Zuun's effigy wide open, and inside, a second **pale green prism spindle gem**, which is really a magically metamorphosed form of the celadon marble, granting a level of experience.

**31. MAIN CORRIDOR.** This main artery of the Tomb of Garn Patuul is 30 feet wide in some places, about 40 feet in others, and draws a angular pattern closing back on itself in order to facilitate the procession that gathers the stone giants before their exit from the Necropolis. The ritual starts by waking the animal handlers and drivers of the king and queen, and let them tend to their tasks as the procession then wakes the honor guard, valet, king and queen, handmaidens, in counter-clockwise trajectory ultimately bringing them back to the animals at **L2-11** and **L2-12**, where they climb into the howdah and chariot, and finally leave the Tomb. See *The Procession* in the introduction of this chapter for more information.

The floors, ceilings and walls of this corridor are all made of blocks of limestone fitting into one another so tightly it is sometimes hard to tell where one stone begins and another ends. Mosaics regularly interrupt the monotony on the ground, some of them camouflaging stone slabs covering passage ways to the Crypts below, for instance at **L2-14** and **L2-23**, others hiding the presence of pit traps for the would-be robber, and finally some for the pure aesthetic of the place. The walls are carved with profile figures accomplishing rituals, leading giants to their rest, feasting and warring with one another. The stone giants among the figures are very recognizable, as well as their various goblinoid servants, due to the delicate accuracy of some of the depictions, and the obvious size differences.

Most of the movements of the Tomb's inhabitants, once awake, will cross this main corridor, sooner or later. Each time the party goes through this area, or simply walks through to get from a side passage to another, roll d6 to see if a random encounter occurs on a "6". If the party stays put in one specific spot for too long, or studies the scenes carved on the wall for too long, Zuun is likely to detect it, and two Type II Shard Golems will animate to take care of the intruders.

**SHARD GOLEMS (TYPE II, 2):** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; Hits as 4 HD; HP 10; AC 9; #AT 3; D. 1d4 each, shards cut. A Type II Shard Golem covers an area 20' x 20'. Opponents inside this area take an automatic d6 of slicing damage every melee round they remain in the area. Shard golems can be damaged by blunt weapons, mundane and magical, and spells and effects inflicting blunt damage, such

as ice storm, force and sonic-based effects like magic missile and shockwave. Fire has no effect on Shard Golems, and electricity inflicts half damage. Two Type II Shard Golems can join together and form a new, Type III Shard Golem at full HP. Once reduced to 0 HP, a Type II Shard Golem becomes two (2) Type I Shard Golems at full HP. Other types of weapons have no effect on them. For a Type III Shard Golem, see area **L1-34**.

**SHARD GOLEMS (TYPE I):** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; Hits as 3 HD; HP 5; AC 8; #AT 2; D. 1d4 each, shards cut. A Type I Shard Golem covers an area 10' x 10'. Opponents inside this area take an automatic d4 of slicing damage every melee round they remain in the area. Shard golems can be damaged by blunt weapons, mundane and magical, and spells inflicting blunt damage, such as ice storm, force and sonic-based effects like magic missile and shockwave. Fire has no effect on Shard Golems, and electricity inflicts half damage. Two Type I Shard Golems can join together and form a new, Type II Shard Golem at full HP. Once reduced to 0 HP, a Type I Shard Golem is destroyed. See Appendix A: Monsters and Characters for more information.

**32. LARGE PILLAR.** This pillar features carved and painted scenes of another giant king, this one a commander of armies, conqueror who is seen leading legions of giants as he strangles two snakes, one in each hand, simultaneously. On some parts of the pillar, the same giant is seen dealing punishment to his own subject, impaling them and beheading them for not respecting his authority. In others, he is revered by the handmaidens of Aktum and praised by his subjects. In a section of the engravings the great king of the giants is seen falling into an abyss as he wrestles with what looks like a dragon or giant winged snake whose head is exiting a huge wound in his torso, and pulls his heart out of his rib cage in its maw. The king lies dead, and his body is burnt in the shadow of a ziggurat. A procession of stone giants is seen carrying his heart through a portal, as the sun is high above the horizon. Zuun the Legacy of Aktum is prominently represented on the northern side of the pillar with at his feet a switch decorated with the elemental rune of the Sun, the Zenith and Nadir combined. Four round switches bearing the names of the four kings of Aktum are displayed around Zuun, with the rune standing for the SOUTH looming high above.

Pressing any switch punches them in, while pressing the Sun rune under Zuun makes them click into position, to be released a fraction of a second later, ready to be pressed again. If the switch with the name of "PAAL", Amun Paal the Conqueror, then the rune of the Sun, are pressed in succession, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar opens its mouth and reveals a **pink and green**

**spherical gem** inside. A six-foot tall image of Zuun floating in mid-air, standing on a ball of green fire, bows to the people who entered the combination correctly. Touching the gem will not release it; whoever touches it will find a tingling sensation and will have one melee round to withdraw their hand before suffering 5-30 points of electrical damage (saving throw vs. magic for half). The secret door opens up reveals the shaft leading up to area **L1-15 (4)**.

If, however, the party enters any other combination before pressing the Sun, the effigy of the Unborn on the pillar will open all the same, but this time the image of Zuun will appear and try to kill the party using the aspects of Aktum that have been unlocked by the party so far. See *Zuun manifestations* after the key to this level for more information.

The ground at the level of the Burial Vaults inside the pillar is irregular but stable. It wouldn't be immediately possible to excavate it. A pack of rats nests in the rubble obstructing the passage above. Cleansing the infection by flame would probably cause of a collapse which then would have to be cleared either from the exterior of the pillar, or from area **L1-15 (4)** above. Triggering a collapse from a distance, with ropes etc., would result in partial results, and rats would defend their nest, about 1-3 rat per player character. Once the clutter leading up to level 1 is cleared, the integrity of the ground can be affected by later tremors. Note that creatures from this level will now have access to the upper level more easily, and vice versa.

**GIANT RATS:** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 4 avg.; #AT 1; D 1d3.

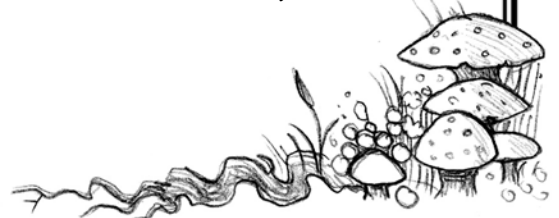
It is possible to lock pick the secret door's mechanism and enter the level from the inside of the pillar once the nest and clutter obstructing the shaft have been cleared. A successful lock picking test will avoid electrocution for D 5d6. This opens the door only one way, as it closes back automatically once the party makes it through. Reaching the gem inside the mouth of the effigy of Zuun on the pillar while closed requires another test of lock picking, a success avoiding electrocution for the same amount of damage, since we are dealing with the same magical mechanism. In case of failure, the effigy does not open. Trying to grab the gem from Zuun's mouth while open, with a projection in progress, will not release the gem, and deal the same 5d6 points of electrical damage. Referees might accept a saving throw for half damage.



Only by defeating the projection of Zuun in combat, or by Zuun's own volition, can the party take possession of the gem, a **ioun stone** granting +1 CHA, inside the mouth of the effigy. This was part of an ancient ritual of stone giants following the fall of Aktum, by which the believers confronted the aspects of Zuun and made themselves worthy to succeed in leadership.

**33. STONE SPINNER ROOM.** This 20' x 30' area has two doors, including a one-way door that opens normally when exiting the room, but can only be opened from the other side with a **brass skeleton key**, like the one currently in the possession of the Canon of area **L2-5**. Two carved limestone sentinels stand guard inside the room on each side of the one-way door. A large spinner tied to a corkscrew apparatus hanging from the ceiling and connected to a system of ropes running along the walls of the room sits in the dead center of the area.

When the door leading from **L2-34** into this room is opened, it activates the system of ropes and pulls the corkscrew up, making the spinner swirl freely for six (6) full melee rounds on its concave pedestal. When the spinner is activated, so are the sentinels who will attack the intruders immediately. While the sentinels are relatively tough, the spinner itself only has 15 HP, and takes double damage from blunt weapons. If the spinner is destroyed, it explodes as the sentinels stop moving, projecting bits of gems in every directions for 1d4 damage to anyone in a 15 foot radius, rolled individually. The num-



ber of points of damage received is also the number of gems that hit each individual characters: they are precious stones, each worth 200 GP base value.

**L2-36** functions exactly the same way as this area.

**LIMESTONE SENTINELS (2):** *SZ L; MV 70 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 6 HD; HP 30; AC 8; #AT; D 1d10/1d10, plus 1d6 on each fists on their first strike, as the copper bracers discharge the electricity they contain. Limestone sentinels, also known as guardian effigies when associated with burial grounds, are damaged by magical blunt weapons, impervious to most forms of magic, but vulnerable to move earth spells, which will shatter them. Other earth-affecting spells, like stone shape, rock to mud etc. can damage them for 1-6 per spell level, and stone to flesh makes a guardian effigy completely vulnerable to all forms of attack including magic.*

**34. CELADON CURVE.** The outer wall of the curve is covered with carved scenes filled with paint and brilliant pieces of amber representing the king Garn Patuul fighting and slaughtering his own subjects, with humanoids ranging from hulking hill giants to bugbears, hobgoblins and goblins clashing against one another in an orgy of violence. The opposite, inside wall of the curve is made out of smooth and partially translucent celadon marble. Some kind of golden light filters through the various shades of opacity of the marble and projects various shades on the surface of the murals, giving them an illusion of mystery and movement captivating the eye.

If the party has run into trouble around this level, or triggered a trap somewhere, the spirit of Zuun left behind and watching over this place will be aware of them. Shortly after they walk through this section of the inner corridor, Zuun will animate the amber of the murals which will coalesce into a Type III Shard golem mimicking the profile appearance of the characters on the wall.

**SHARD GOLEM (TYPE III):** *SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 5 HD; HP 20; AC 10; #AT 4; D. 1d4 each, shards cut. A Type III Shard Golem covers an area 30' x 30'. Opponents inside this area take an automatic d8 of slicing damage every melee round they remain in the area. Shard golems can be damaged by blunt weapons, mundane and magical, and spells inflicting blunt damage, such as ice storm, force and sonic-based effects like magic missile and shockwave. Fire has no effect on Shard Golems, and electricity inflicts half damage. Once reduced to 0 HP, a Type III Shard Golem becomes two (2) Type II Shard Golems at full HP. Other types of weapons have no effect on them. See Appendix A: Monsters and Characters for more information.*

**THE END OF THE TRIAL:** This is the conclusion of Zuun's apparitions by the pillars of the Tomb. See *Zuun Manifestations* after the key to this level for more information. Once all the manifestations of Zuun have been faced by the pillars at **L2-7**, **L2-15**, **L2-22**, **L2-30** and **L2-32**, a physical representation of Zuun will *passwall* through the inside celadon marble wall of the curve, and have a last confrontation with the party combining all four aspects of the kings of Aktum. If the party defeats him one last time, Zuun will telepathically let them know they have won the trial and are worthy of leadership (this grants them +20% reaction adjustment when dealing with stone giants, who can feel the arcane mark of the trial on them). A prize awaits them at the central pillar of **L2-30**, a **second pale green prism spindle** adding one level of experience as a ioun stone, for their efforts.

**ZUUN (ALL ASPECTS):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft. flying; AL TN, Magic Resistance 60%; HD 8; HP 64; AC -2; #AT 1; D 2d4 Sonic "OHM" shout in a cone 80 ft. long, with saving throw vs. magic to avoid being slowed for 5 rounds. This sonic shout can be replaced by an 80 ft. long cone of acid inflicting 2d4 points of damage initially, and for again for the next three (3) rounds if the acid is not cleaned up. Zuun stands on a floating flaming ball of green fire that can shoot five magic missiles for 1d4+1 points of damage each, or five bolts of flame requiring a range attack each for 1d6 damage. Zuun can body slam a target for 2d4 damage, and open his mouth to suck their life force, sucking 1 point of STR and 1 point of CON on a failed saving throw vs. magic (cumulative). Finally, a replica of the Hammer of Aktum floats around Zuun and can block one incoming attack per melee round, OR shoot a lightning bolt for 4d6 damage every three (3) melee rounds.*

**35. THE CRYPTS.** The dotted lines on the map indicate the position of the main corridors of the crypts down below in relation to this level of the dungeon. This is the place where most of the humanoid servants of Garn Patuul's house were buried. The place has evolved over time, and become particularly dangerous to tread due to the spells of the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum, new tunnels dug over time by visitors and new inhabitants, and the pervasive influence of Chaos deep within the earth. See *Chapter 5, the Crypts*, for a complete description of this sub-level.

**36. STONE SPINNER ROOM.** This room has the same characteristics and function as the Stone Spinner Room just above, at **L2-33**.

## ZUUN MANIFESTATIONS

Zuun the Unborn, the Legacy of Aktum, is a mythological figure that has been retroactively created by the stone giants after the fall of the Lythic Kingdom to represent and become the guardian of its history, embody the bittersweet memory of what never was and never could have been, while keeping the memory of what actually was alive for future generations.

It is evident from the inclusion of Zuun in the iconography of the Burial Vaults that the Tomb served as a place of ritual and pilgrimage long after the fall of Aktum. One such ritual demanded from the pilgrim in search of a role of leadership to enter the Tomb, study the scenes and carvings along the way to learn from the history of the kingdom, to then test their knowledge and resolve using the large 20-foot large pillars of areas **L2-7**, **L2-15**, **L2-22**, **L2-30** and **L2-32**. At all five pillars-stations along the way, pressing the right combination of switches would manifest an approving Zuun, while wrong choices would force combat. It's hard to say whether the pilgrims would fight Zuun despite his approval on good answers, and what the role of the secret doors and shafts were in the overall progression of the challenge. Too much of the top level has been altered to really find out now, but explorers today can still find the pillars and have to face Zuun to open the secret doors that unlock vertical passages up and down the complex.

Each time Zuun manifests from a pillar, it is an illusion projected from the gem contained in the mouth of Zuun's carved effigy on the pillar itself. Referees should be very careful **not** to mention beams or anything hinting at the projection of Zuun not being real. Only if players ask very pointed questions should the referee potentially reveal this. Like, if a player asks "does Zuun cast a shadow from our light sources?" the referee might consider answering "Zuun does cast shadows, but now that you mention it, it seems something's a bit off with them, like there is a slight delay between what Zuun does and how it is reflected by his shadow." If at any point a character specifically says he disbelieves, not in a joking tone, but seriously, then the referee may allow a saving throw vs. magic. This makes the character impervious to Zuun and his attacks; the character can no longer affect Zuun in any way, but Zuun cannot affect the character either. The next time Zuun manifest, a character that disbelieved one of his prior apparitions can choose to let go and believe this new manifestation, or choose to disbelieve again at any point with a saving throw vs. magic. At least one opponent must believe Zuun is real and defeat him to win the trial and get the gem.

Zuun appears when the switches at each pillar are activated. If the right combination of king and sun is chosen (on simply the sun alone for area **L2-30**), Zuun will nod to the party and the secret door will be unlocked. The gem, however, will not be released. If the party asks for combat, or punches the wrong combination of switches, Zuun will manifest and fight. Then, if victorious, the party will be able to take the gem from the pillar. The door will still close and require punching the right switches to open, but Zuun will no longer manifest.

When Zuun manifests, he first appears as a 4 HD creature, the Base, embodying its own characteristics as a mythological figure of Aktum. If the party defeats Zuun, the next time he manifests, he will adopt the aspect of the King represented on the pillar(s) where he previously manifested and was defeated. The exception to this is defeating Zuun at area **L2-30**, which makes no difference. He will appear the same as he was at his own pillar the next time he manifests. Once Zuun has been defeated five times, the last of which as Zuun with all four aspects of the Kings of Aktum, he will reappear one last time, this time physically, not as an illusion, and *passwall* through the celadon marble at area **L2-34**.

**Example:** After defeating Zuun for the first time (as a 4 HD base) at area **L2-7** (Ur Pa Kraat's pillar), and then again (as a 4 HD base plus Ur Pa Kraat's Aspect) at **L2-15** (Amal Khas's pillar), the party now tries to open the secret door of **L2-30**, Zuun's own pillar. They get the combination wrong, and he manifests as the combination of the Base + Ur Pa Kraat and Amal Khas Aspects, meaning he is a 6 HD creature with 48 Hit Points, AC 0, etc. Let's say the party defeats him here at area **L2-30**, the next time Zuun manifests (for instance, at **L2-32** if that's where the party goes next) he will still be 6 HD with the aspects of Ur Pa Kraat and Amal Khas, since **L2-30** is the pillar dedicated to Zuun and is the only pillar not granting him any new Aspect.

Let the players deal with these confrontations on their own time. If the party is fighting Zuun twice in a row without having to retreat from the Vaults to lick its wounds, consider adding some Type II Shard Golems and some undead to the mix, or encounters in between. Time is supposed to pass between these challenges, and by now the party should become involved with the Hex and Environs of the Tomb, giving them time to breathe, go on side adventures, figure things out before they fight Zuun repeatedly. Referees should keep things varied and entertaining.

**ZUUN (BASE):** SZ M; MV 120 ft. flying; AL TN, Magic Resistance 20%; HD 4; HP 32; AC 2; #AT 1; D 2d4 Sonic



*“OHM” shout in a cone 10 ft. long per HD of Zuun, with saving throw vs. magic to avoid being slowed for 1 round, plus one per additional aspect adopted by Zuun. Zuun stands on a floating flaming ball of green fire that can shoot a magic missile for 1d4+1 points of damage, plus one per aspect currently adopted by Zuun.*

**UR PA KRAAT (ZUUN ASPECT, L2-7):** -1 AC, +1 HD, +8 HP, +10% MR. Zuun can produce a bolt of flames for 1d6 damage, plus one per aspect he currently adopts, targeting different individuals with range attacks, instead of magic missiles.

**AMAL KHAS (ZUUN ASPECT, L2-15):** -1 AC, +1 HD, +8 HP, +10% MR. Zuun can zoom and body slam a target for 2d4 damage, and open his mouth to suck their life-force. It sucks 1 point of STR and 1 point of CON on a failed saving throw vs. magic. Effects are cumulative. The points will be recuperated naturally at a rate of 1 point per day.

**GARN PATUUL (ZUUN ASPECT, L2-22):** -1 AC, +1 HD, +8 HP, +10% MR. A replica of the Hammer of Aktum floats around Zuun like a ioun stone. The Hammer blocks on incoming strike per melee round, or can shoot a lightning bolt of one d6 damage per aspect adopted by Zuun once every three (3) melee rounds.

**AMUN PAAL (ZUUN ASPECT, L2-32):** -1 AC, +1 HD, +8 HP, +10% MR. Zuun can project a cone of acid instead of his “OHM” shout inflicting 2d4 points of damage, 2d4 more points the next round, plus one more round of 2d4 damage per two aspects adopted by Zuun.

Referees wanting to spice things up a little bit should not hesitate to involve shard golems, various types of undead and cadaverous caterpillars as warranted. The spirit of Zuun inhabits this place. It can call for help, control lesser minds protecting this place, and open/close access to the crypts, among other things. Think of it as a spirit guardian to the Tomb and the giants of Aktum. Initially, Zuun might just not care for a tiny group of tomb robbers. Then he might consider their back and forth and research to open the pillars as a way to test them just like the stone giants who believed in the legacy of Aktum were tested in the ancient past. Maybe Zuun can use them as a probe to see what is going on in the Crypts and beyond, at the source of the Chaos bubbling under the Tomb. Or maybe he just finds amusement playing cat and mouse with the little humans and demi-humans.

## DEVELOPMENTS

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, we have three different layers of inhabitants in the Burial Vaults: (1) The original giants and the servants of Garn Patuul who

were put to sleep using the Stone Chalice of area L2-3, (2) the slaves and soldiers who were slaughtered and reanimated by the Canon of the Ashes of Aktum to act as the security force around the Tomb, and (3) the presence of the spirit of Zuun which was later added by the followers of Aktum who used this place as a ritual experience and a pilgrimage long after the fall of the Lithic Kingdom.

The second layer of this level lies in the Crypts described in our next chapter, that contain an overwhelming amount of undead, and also creatures that came from the depths whom, consciously or not, slowly drive the progress of the influence of Chaos upwards in the dungeon. This corrupting influence will take over the allegiance of those evil servants, including the Canon, who are loyal to the stone giants, and this will detonate a metaphorical bomb under the Tomb, in terms of conflicts in the campaign. How it manifests and the ultimate source depends on the referee's own exploration of those concepts and/or the use of the Extended Burial Vaults and Hearth of Chaos described in the *Underworld expansion* to the Marmoreal Tomb.

**EXTENDED BURIAL VAULTS:** The passages with associated circled numbers on the map will progressively open up as the player characters explore the core of the Vaults described in this module. From there, referees may choose to expand on the level as much as they want, or use the companion Extended level presented in the *Underworld expansion* of the Marmoreal Tomb. Though it could be that these passages lead to isolated rooms with not much else to explore throughout the complex, it is interesting to toy with the ideas already presented on the level and perhaps expand upon them.

For instance, each cardinal direction in the dungeon is associated with a specific King of Aktum. Information about each one of the kings is summarized on the pillars associated with them on the level, and further information can be found exploring the underground ruins of the *Environs and Cave System* of Chapter 2. Thus, passages leading north from the core of this level could lead to areas themed after Amal Khas and centering around a long forgotten shrine dedicated to his curse and memory. The passages to the south could contain artifacts dating back to the Yiggites of Olmech, reveal more about the history of Amun Paal when he travelled there, or involve connections to the Obsidian Realms that ultimately destroyed the king's heart and soul.

Another possibility would be to expand on the passages following the same hints from the cardinal directions, but focusing on the nature of the each individual ioun stone associated with a specific king and why. Or per-

haps later tunnels were dug around the core of the Burial Vaults by the worshippers of Aktum long after the fall of the kingdom, and one can find more tests and rituals supervised by Zuun the Unborn. It could be a mix of all these ideas, or something entirely different.

The Extended Burial Vaults of the Underworld expansion are nothing like ideas suggested here, and involve more servants of the kingdom, what happened to the slaves that didn't make it into the Crypts, shrines to other entities and relics of bygone ages of the world, so if referees want to use both the material of the Underworld expansion AND their own ideas to expand this level, there is absolutely room to do so. Shifting from one version to the other could be a matter of shifting between different shades of the Eurth closely associated with one another. Maybe one version of the extended vaults is a pocket plane more in tune with the historical and mythical resonance of this place, and the other is the version of the prime material plane. Conversely, the version of the *Underworld* could be used as the expansion for this site under Grunn Galeb, and the ideas explored above could be used to explore the Burial Vaults added under the Tombs of Amun Paal and Ur Pa Kraat at areas E-24 and E-17 of the *Environs and Cave System* of Chapter 2.

Consult the Developments section of *The Crypts*, Chapter 5, for more ideas in the same vein, this time pertaining to the Hearth of Chaos of the *Underworld expansions* and different interpretations of the connections between the levels of the Marmoreal Tomb.

**EVOLUTION OF THE GIANTS AND CORRUPTION OF THE CRYPTS:** When the Burial Vaults become available for exploration, the newly opened passages will be options to dip a toe and look at what might be lurking below, but the party will be too weak to go too far. An encounter with a caterpillar could spell the doom of a bunch of beginners. Seeing the giants in their slumber, with the procession to leave the Tomb not having yet occurred, or even witnessing it as it happens, should be enough to give them pause, and withdraw before anything becomes too nasty for them. It is much more likely that the party will find the way down by confronting the Horla of LI-23, and then searching around for hidden quarters and treasure.

Initially, the giants themselves will completely ignore parties investigating the place, or shoo them away like nuisances at best. Pretty soon, they will rethink that attitude, and if most of the true neutral inhabitants are not murderers at heart, they will have no problem calling in the undead or other guardians to deal with the issue. Think of it like we humans would consider the presence

of rodents in a house. At first we see a mouse and we let it be, we cringe, then realize that the problem will only become worse over time, and then we try to set up traps or get them cornered to get rid of an occupation that could get much worse over time in terms of health, hygiene, fire hazards, and the list goes on.

At the same time, the energies of Chaos on which the Tomb was built are pushing up and have been transforming the nature of the Crypts under the Vaults. The nature of the undead and their allegiances are changing in favor of creatures who want to continue to push up and build up the Vaults and the ruins of Grunn Galeb above as new dominions from which to spread in the surface world. The entity known as Zuun, who now oversees the balance of forces in the Burial Vaults and can affect the minds of the servants of the Tomb, will consider both ends of the problem when dealing with the player-characters. Zuun will wonder if the adventurers represent an opportunity to try and stop the spread of Chaos in the Crypts for the time being, or if they are themselves more of a disturbance than is worth dealing with in the first place.

The answers will have to be determined by the game itself, with the attitude of the characters, their particular strategies, whether they spare the giants or not, respect the place in some fashion or just ransack the place and slay everyone they meet, are trying to sneak around or just behave like hooligans owning the place, being a big part of that process. From there the giants themselves will either welcome them, or want to destroy them, the Chaplains of the Crypts will band together to hunt them down or keep playing cat and mouse with them. Zuun is likely to test them, probably through the puzzles of the pillars of the Vaults, and maybe the entity will decide to talk to them directly, too, by telepathy, or with the Aktan (stone giant) language.

**THE RETURN OF QUEEN EMENEPTRA:** As this situation inside the Burial Vault evolves, and whether it finds some kind of denouement in the Crypts or not, at some point, Queen Emenepra, or someone, will come back to the Tomb after the Procession reached its objective and found the Hammer of Aktum. We know that Queen Emenepra will make it to the hiding location of Krassus the Cambion, who manages the Vile Legion as it slowly takes control of the eastern corridor of the Midlands leading to the Tor of the Hierarchs by Penreg's Ring, a methodical movement of troops destined to overwhelm the Viscounty at a later point of the campaign using the *Wilderness expansion* (see the *The Vile Legion, Figures and Factions* section of the expansion for more about Krassus's schemes). Assuming referees by then have knowledge of the *Wilderness expansion*

and use its contents or adapts them to their own milieu, there are three possible outcomes from there the referee might consider.

**(1) The Queen is impressed with Krassus and joins forces with the Vile Legion.** The Queen comes back with her escort, minus one or two stone giants lost fighting along the way, accompanied by hill giants, bugbears, goblins and hobgoblins sent by Krassus to fortify the entrance of the Tomb and transform areas E-10 and E-11 into a camp for the Vile Legion. Krassus hopes to slowly build up forces here as he takes care of the Viscounty. This state of affair will last for a while in the campaign, until the Knights Immaculate of Khrag An Mor notice this increase of activity and a conflict becomes unavoidable.

Learning of the growing influence of Chaos over the undead of the Crypts, the Queen will want to find a way to harness and control this power. Word will reach the Cambion (and through him, the Six-fingered Hand of the Silted King of Avlon, see Figures and Factions, *Wilderness expansion*, for more information). Evil clerics and magic-users will be sent to take control of the situation, and the presence of the Vile Legion will become stronger in the region.

From there, whether the player-characters appeal to inhabitants around the Tomb, report to their patrons, decide to join the efforts of the Queen and Vile Legion, and how the other inhabitants of the Vaults, including Zuun, react to this turn of events, is a mostly a function of the past events and current dynamics in the campaign. From a point of view of initial relationships and alignment, the stone giants of the Tomb and Zuun are likely to get along with the program, as both recognize Queen Emenepttra as legitimate. Whether this has changed in the time the party interacted with this level of the dungeon is for the referee to ascertain.

**(2) The Queen is not impressed and tries to retrieve the Hammer by Force.** Two possible outcomes immediately follow: either the Queen fails, and goes back to the Tomb empty-handed, in which case go to (3), OR the Queen is successful and retrieves the Hammer of Aktum before coming back to the Tomb. In this case, Queen Emenepttra has in her possession a powerful artifact that can keep the influence of Chaos at bay for some time, as it did through centuries prior.

Emenepttra will rule from the Tomb, and want to spread her influence outside of it. Reaching out to various groups and factions of the Hex and Environs seems like a natural next step. How that turns out, and how the player-characters play into it, either by swearing allegiance to the Queen, turning against her to serve another master

instead, or remaining independent to play the king-makers in the Pass, is too far from here to conjecture, but this will not be the final word of Krassus, nor the forces of Chaos under the Tomb, not to mention other major forces of the area, like the Knights Immaculate of Khrag An Mor, who might want to do something about the growing influence of ancient giants awakened in the Viper Head Pass. Further conflict is inevitable.

**(3) The Queen is not impressed and comes back to the Tomb empty handed.** The Queen dislikes the Cambion and his plans for the race of the giants on Eurth, and either tried to wrestle the Hammer from him and failed, or just retreated politely, biding her time before trying. Krassus now sees the Queen as a loose thread and a menace that should be fixed before she ruins his plans concerning the Viscounty of Poy. The Queen, likewise, knows her days are numbered, and seeks to rebuild her strength from the Tomb, and fast. This makes new alliances a priority for Emenepttra.

If the party assists the giants in their struggle to keep control of the Burial Vaults, she first assists Zuun and the player-characters to find a way to deal with the influence of Chaos inside the Crypts, and then uses the player-characters, if willing, as envoys to try to create bonds with the groups and factions they know and are on good terms with. If the player-characters are not allied with the giants as this juncture, she uses the Nameless Company or the Marauders of Ayoun, whichever group has not been wiped out by the party yet, as proxies to deal with other groups in the Pass, starting with the Ada-Maku and their masked representatives at areas E-19 and E-11 first.

Stone Giants from the Bitter Peaks and well beyond, perhaps even down to the Anhurean Wall of the Archbarony of Hartst, and north to Jotun's Wall beyond the Plains of Jonnt, will be contacted to join the ranks of the Aktan giants. Non-evil giants who would have frowned at the ambition of Krassus, like the Cloud and Storm Giants, could be contacted via portals designated by the Norns, as very long shots and particularly hard quests for an allied party. The Queen will want to fortify all possible access routes to the Tomb, and will wait for the Cambion to make the first move. His attack will eventually come, first with a mix group of moderate size, to test her defenses, and then with a properly-sized contingent to take control of the Pass.

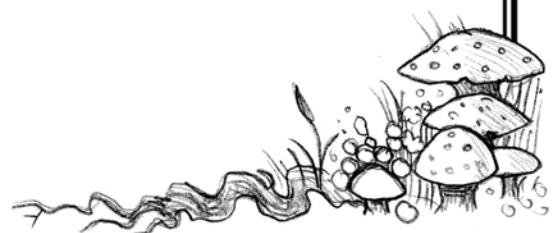
**POSSIBLE DENOUEMENTS:** There is a significant chance that the events already discussed will be influenced by the evolution of Grunn Galeb post-exploration. Whether player-characters take charge of the place, some

faction or authority in or around the Viper Head Pass takes ownership of the complex, the question of how these new masters deal with the awakening of the giants will surely become a source of conflict with the player-characters right in between, assuming they arranged a deal or accepted the presence of the new occupants, and weren't just kicked out. As discussed in the previous chapter, if Grunn Galeb is explored and then just left as it is, the vacuum left by the party will be filled by tougher and more organized forces, which means the problem will become worse from the point of view of the giants. The possibilities are so numerous it is impossible to enumerate them all, but this will sooner or later enter in collision with the return of the Queen or the survivors of her expedition, and whatever happens in regards of the legacy of this place, the possession of the Kingdom of Aktum and the current whereabouts of Krassus the Cambion.

Broadly speaking, either the giants become the new occupants of the ruins of Grunn Galeb and repopulate the dungeon with the new allies they made with or without the player-characters, or they are in a good relationship with whoever takes over instead of them (which would still be source of tensions in the short term because when you think big picture the way stone giants tend to do, they are the ones who built this entire complex in the first place), or they are completely at odds with whoever comes to Grunn Galeb after the goblins of Grosh and clearing up the first level becomes another one of their problem in addition to the Crypts and later Krassus the Cambion.

The alternative is the loss of the giants. Whoever takes over Grunn Galeb will also take over the Burial Vaults and repurpose them to their design. What happens to the stone giants from there? Are they all dead, and with them, is the memory of the Kingdom of Aktum wiped out of this world? Do the giants find refuge somewhere else, among the Ada-Maku of **H-19**, perhaps? What is the reaction of the mysterious Norns of the stone giants at **H-21** when this happens? Do they simply leave the Pass, never to be seen again, or do they suspiciously wait for the consequences of the death blow to the legacy of Aktum to occur, tipping the balance in a fateful direction depending on the role the player-characters played in its undoing? If the forces of Krassus show up in the Pass and meet no resistance from stone giants, the arrival of this big player in the area could precipitate many changes in allegiances and from there, more conflicts for the player-characters to get involved in.

The referee is encouraged to **not** try to work towards a predestined outcome, and let the player-characters do their own thing, getting into side-quests and their own adventures with the different inhabitants of the Tomb and region around it, and generally initiating the chain reaction that will make the campaign unique and playable with different groups over and over again. There will never be a single pre-determined outcome to this small dungeon and wilderness setting, as long as the referee keeps role-playing the world and reacts to the actions of the players. From there, the outcomes will keep on being surprising, and we hope, inductive to a continuous engagement with the campaign.



## CHAPTER 5 THE CRYPTS

*"Chaos is beginning and end. It is movement, change and decay, the cycle by which all things come into being and disappear, that which triggers imbalance and prompts the restoration of such, the eternal dance of concepts with no lasting effects in the field of time. Some sages conceptualize Chaos as the great darkness, where the cacophony of possibilities is so fast and so overwhelming as to create its complete opposite, a never ending wave of complete silence, darkness and oblivion. Others represent it as a boiling ocean of colors and possibilities, where no form can last more than the blink of an eye, and no thought perdure beyond the moment of its inception. There have been many gods wearing the cloak of the representation of Chaos, among which the thousand deities of Iyathar. But then, the elves have their champions too, who bear their arms on eight-pointed shields in the name of Chaos. And so are the fertile goddesses of the Eurth, and the spirits and sprites of the rivers and the woods of the Midlands, and so many others who seek to heal, grow and create around us. And so, the nature of Chaos is not good, nor evil. Chaos is eternal rebirth, change, the cycle of all things in all their facets, all their stages of glory and pain, of beauty and ugliness, from the greatest peak of creations, to the loneliest of moments preceding death."*

The Crypts represent a place of death and regeneration where a trial must be met and a spiritual evolution or rebirth is naturally experienced. The cultists of Zuun believed this and used this during their pilgrimages and stations between the pillars of the Burial Vaults above, with the results of their tests versus the projections of Zuuns and its aspects dictating the path they had to undertake around the complex, whether to follow the galleries of the main vaults or plunge into the darkness of the Crypts to face more challenge and emerge at the end of a tunnel renewed in their faith and thirst or spiritual discovery.

If the Burial Vaults represent a growth for exploring parties after their first adventures in Grunn Galeb, and a gradual meeting of Allies and Enemies along the way, given the neutrality of some of the giants there, the Crypts represent the inmost cave, the belly of the beast, the place of darkness and rebirth that provides key insights to venture further and lead to a transformation into a new state of being, a hero, to confront the dangers beyond, the last tests and great revelations that follow. Solving the immediate issue of the corruption of the Crypts leads to a moment of detente and learning, where the party can get a sense of closure, having made Grunn Galeb and the mines above secure for the time

being, which then leads to greater confrontations, trials and discoveries along the way, whether that means using this module and going off on a tangent cooked up by the referee, or following up with the *Underworld expansion* and the *Hearth of Chaos*.

**THE CULT OF THE ASHES OF AKTUM:** The giants of Aktum derived their spirituality from a general reverence towards the elements and components of magic that birthed them and made them what they are. The giants believe they sprung from a crucible which opened gateways through the fabric of the planes. These gateways syphoned the substance Chaos and propelled it into the vastness of the multiverse, seeding life wherever it went. Ultimately, Chaos would splatter through our reality like liquid wax sprays upon cold iron, immediately forced into adopting essence and substance as it came in contact with our prime material plane. Thus, through one of these rhythmic tidal waves throughout the planes were born cloud, fire, stone, frost, and storm giants..

The belief in the Ashes of Aktum was a cult created by the giants' inferiors. Early on, prior to and during the reign of Ur Pa Kraat, those we now call "hill giants" were the initiators of beliefs that glorified their patrons through pain and resentment. They gave themselves to the worship of Evil, and it is this abandon that kept them content enough to not create problems for the greater society of Aktum. If the sovereigns could point them in the right direction to battle the enemies of the realm, squash rebellions among their own, or devote their own selves to black orgies and insane sacrifices, all would be well for the giants themselves. Soon, humanoids replaced hill giants as their population started to dwindle. The cult became centered on servitude, disposing of the ashes of the great fire for the good of a realm ablaze with life, glory, and contentment.

For the worshipers of the Ashes of Aktum, the Kingdom thrived under the light because they, the cultists, were willing to spend their servants' lives in the dark, toiling in the crypts and catacombs of the world, hidden as they were in the long shadows cast by their giant overlords.

This Cult stands in sharp contrast with the worship of Zuun the Unborn, which came about only after the fall of the giants, and created the mythological figure as a composite of both the lament of the loss of the Kingdom of Aktum and its potential as a power on Eurth, and a reverence towards its history, culture, and mythology



left behind, the memory of which was worth preserving and following on a spiritual level. The cultists of Zuun portrayed the Ashes of Aktum as the underbelly of the beast, the necessary evil that all power must sooner or later project, the shadow cast by the light of the Kingdom, not a subject of worship in and of itself, but a subject of fear and guarded respect.

**MAIN CORRIDORS OF THE CRYPTS:** Leaving the limestone corridors of the Burial Vaults to visit the Crypts introduces a sharp change of pace for the party. The place is bathed in darkness, but for the very small luminescent fungi growing on the walls and ceilings, which are of the same sort as the bigger specimen found at area L2-3 and elsewhere in the Burial Vaults. This creates a hazy, green half-light weakening conventional light sources (torches shed only 20 feet of illumination, bullseye lanterns 40 feet ahead, and magically lit weapons 10 feet at best in this environment) as well as infravision (completely ineffective).

The party will detect the presence of alcoves carved in the stone of the main corridors, as depicted on the map. They are four (4) feet deep, four (4) feet tall and eight (8) feet long, and contain caskets painted crudely and decorated with recumbent effigies (aka gisants), statues lying down and representing the likeness of the departed, that is, mostly hobgoblins, bugbears, lizard men and such humanoids who served the giants (no orcs – orcs were not a thing at the time of Aktum).

The floor is littered with pulverized shards of bones, which create a definite, audible “crunch” as the party ventures forth. Predators in a 40-foot radius would hear a cautious party walking through the tunnels. The inhabitants of the Crypts are much quieter. So quiet in fact that it seems the Crypts themselves help the undead get around undetected. Perhaps it is the malevolence of Chaos deep beneath the Earth reaching out and influencing the environment to help its own. Perhaps the undead are just used to it and part of this place.

The entire system of corridors and tunnels of this level is very damp. The smell of humanoid rot, which should have gone away a long time ago still lingers in the air, in part due to the way some corpses were preserved in undeath and evolved over time, and in other parts due to the influence of Chaos and the growth of corruptions in multiple sections of the Crypts.

Venturing through the main corridors of the Crypts triggers an encounter 1-in-4 per exploration turn. Disturbing the caskets risks not only to disturb the dead, who might be really dead (1-3 on d12) but are more likely to be

more (zombie 4-6, ashen bones\* 7-8, ghoul 9-10, ghast 11, mummy 12, on the same d12), BUT also, alternately, the gisant on top of the casket, which might reveal itself (1-in-4) to be a guardian effigy.

**GUARDIAN EFFIGY (GOLEM):** SZ M; MV 70 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 6 HD; HP 30; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d10/1d10 blunt stone fists. Guardian effigies take half damage from mundane blunt weapons, full damage from magical blunt weapons and half from other types of magical weapons, are impervious to most forms of magic, but vulnerable to move earth spells, which with shatter them. Other earth-affecting spells, like stone shape, rock to mud etc. can damage them for 1-6 per spell level, and stone to flesh makes a limestone golem completely vulnerable to all forms of attack including magic.

**THE CHAPELS:** The five chapels to the Ashes of Aktum are found at the end of each one of the main corridors of the Crypts. They are located at areas LC-2, LC-8, LC-11, LC-14 and LC-19, respectively.

Each chapel is guarded by a Chaplain, an elder cyclops in the service of the Canon to the Ashes of Aktum of L2-3. Gradually, as the influence of Chaos grows inside the Crypts, each Chaplain’s allegiance is repeatedly assaulted, tested, and turns from the Ashes of Aktum to the substance of corruption and entropy that changes their essence into that of the Vitiates of Chaos. As Vitiates, a Chaplain becomes possessed by incorporeal undead emanations of Chaos, and the single shard of amber crowning the forehead above his single eye turning as dark as night. Extracting the shard, or killing the Vitiates of Chaos to then trap the incorporeal undead that possessed it in an iron flask or destroy it itself, would be a way to purge the chapel from its influence. So would an *exorcism* spell.

The party can see the corridor open to a half-circular room one accesses through concentric steps shaped out of amber. This amber is clear and see-through until its Chaplain gives in to the corruption and becomes a Vitiates of Chaos. It then turns into a black, obsidian-like substance, until the Vitiates is eliminated, or the Chaplain freed from the influence of the shade possessing him. In the frame of the corridor leading to the room, above them, the explorers will notice the presence of a seven-foot wide circular opening surrounded by a curb hanging from the ceiling. This is the opening of a shaft leading up to the corresponding area of level 2 indicated in each of this chapter’s individual chapel entries.

The steps of amber, while see-through, reveal the presence of a celadon marble statue of Zuun encased within them; the statue is held by the remains of a humanoid

sitting in the amber legs crossed, covered in linen, his place accentuated by the display betraying his or her status as an important servant to the kingdom of Aktum. The steps lead down to the half-circle of the wall carved directly out of the rock. Five six-foot wide alcoves have been incorporated into the wall, each equidistant from one another, with a beautiful jade statue worth 800 GP base value between each of them (four in total). Each alcove contains a 5-foot tall pillar, an urn of celadon marble resting on its top. The statue of Zuun and his mummified protector behind it silently stand guard within the amber of the steps and stare at the urns directly.

The urns each contain the ashes of one or several servants of the giants of Aktum. They usually bear runes identifying individual names, titles, clans and professions. Opening the urns leads to a roll on the *Rubble Search Table* of level 2 ignoring any consumable items and just retaining jewelry and gem results. At the same time, a magical effect will be generated by the urn, which the opener determines by rolling 2d4 on the Urn Table.

#### URNS TABLE (ROLL 2D4)

- (2) Ashen Bones\* (1d4) crawl their way out of the burner and animate (2-8) Black Bones\* around the urn. When the Ashen Bones possess characters (save vs. magic failure) and the victim is used as a tool by the malignant presence in the Crypts, a link is created with the souls trapped therein, including the residual presence of the Canon to the Ashes of Aktum. A vision showing the procession (see Chapter 4) in progress is possible, as are scenes of the past, like the construction of the Crypts, or dialog with the voices of the dead. Use this opportunity for the player to interact with different elements and glean some experience or information as the body is fighting their comrades.
- (3) Cremated remains\* (1d3) animate and are lit on fire. They in turn animate (2d6) Skeletons to confront the intruders under their command.
- (4) Two (2) manes\* emerge from the urn as inky dark blobs of goo floating in mid-air, and linked to one another by a single string of black slime. They burn of a single ebon flame, and the string between them vibrates at different speeds, creating a low, sinister suite of notes able to summon the material dead to rise. (2d4) Skeletons, (1d6) zombies.
- (5) Ash has a special oily fragrance and may be lit as incense. It feels like an **incense of meditation**, but has a 1-in-2 chance of really being an **incense of obsession** instead.

- (6) Ash mixed with *holy water* will produce **ash of the supplicants**.
  - (7) Ash in a burner can be lit and used as a **candle of invocation**.
- Ash produces sustained flames when lit in a thurible, adding +1d6 damage to it. This ash also can be used as a powdered replacement for flaming oil.

**BLACK BONES:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 1; HP 4 avg.; AC 4; #AT 1, D 1d6+1. *Appear as armed and armored skeletons with bones black as soot.*

**ASHEN BONES:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d6+1. *Skeletons with malignant eyes in their orbits and dull grey bones. When reduced to 0 hit points, the Ashen Bones become dust and try to enter the eyes, ears and mouth of their slayer to possess the body for 2-8 melee rounds. Save vs. magic negates. Wearing a sealed helmet prevents the attempt.*

**CREMATED REMAINS:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE HD 3; HP 12 avg.; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 hands on fire. *1-4 residual damage on the next melee round on a hit, as the victim burns from the inside out. Skeleton with vestigial organs that burst on fire and make the whole body of undead burn of an orange light. When the cremated remains are reduced to 0 hit points they explode for 2d4 damage in a 10-foot radius, saving throw versus breath weapon for half damage.*

**MANES:** SZ S; MV 30 ft.; AL CE; AC 7; HD 1; HPS 4 avg.; #AT 3, D 1d2/1d2/1d4. *Can only be hit by +1 weapons or better, holy water and the like. These are direct emanations of Chaos in the Crypts, newborn spawns which ultimately could attach themselves to physical entities like the Chaplains of the Ashes of Aktum and create more Vitiates of Chaos. Manes on this level will appear in pairs, as inky dark blobs of goo floating in mid-air, linked to one another by a single string of black slime. The string of black slime vibrates and emits low notes similar to a funeral song, the pavan, made of a single eldritch voice. The pavan can awaken the undead waiting in the caskets, concealed by the shards of bones on the floors, in the urns and elsewhere in the tunnels of the Crypts.*

Check for random encounters every exploration turn. The base chance is 1-in-6, unless the characters are currently in a main corridor, in which case it becomes 1-in-4. If an encounter occurs, the referee can roll on the following table:

## RANDOM ENCOUNTER (THE CRYPTS) (2D6)

- 2 – Tremor. Partial Collapse. Saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage. D 2d6.
- 3 – Guardian effigies\* (See *Corridors*, above).
- 4 – The Crimson Red Worm\* from LC-15.
- 5 – The Hungry Masks of the Dead\* from LC-3 taunt the party .
- 6 – Black Bones\* (2d6) (see *Chapels*, above).
- 7 – (2d4) Skeletons and (1d4) Ashen Bones\* (see *Chapels*, above).
- 8 – (2d4) Zombies and (1d4) Cremated Remains\* (see *Chapels*, above).
- 9 – Cadaverous Caterpillars\* (2) from LC-7 or LC-25.
- 10 – Enormous pack of rats with (3d4) Giant specimens from LC-22.
- 11 – (1d3) Statues of green stuff\*, LC-10.
- 12 – Roll/choose from random encounters from levels above, or some Chaos horror from below.

## KEY OF THE AREA

**1. CHAOS MEMBRANE.** The “wall” separating the two corridors from the altar of the Ashes of Aktum at L2-3, with steps going down into the Crypts in opposite directions, is in fact a very thin, translucent, red membrane which vibrates whenever a living creature walks nearby. Faces will appear in the surface of the membrane, staring at those who walk through the area, some of them smiling, others sneering, or in distress. Some of them might even try to interact with the living, mock them or entice them to join the Crypts.

One could greet, “Welcome to our playground, fleshlings, join us, play with us, forever” while two others could ask and comment to one another: “How long do you think because these join us here? Oh. Perhaps a day or two. They seem vigilant.” Another voice could be more specific and marvel at the player-characters: “One of the elves! We haven’t seen your kind here in quite some time. Can’t wait to digest your memories. Welcome.”

The voices talking are those of the dead in the crypts, including the workers on the tomb, the humanoids who served the giants, the priests of the Ashes of Aktum, and those who explored these grounds and lost their lives over the ages of the world. Examples above include a psychopathic bugbear slave master, two Danthean legionnaires prone to place bets on sports events, and a particularly hungry hill giant. The referee must use his imagination and make these voices distinct and diverse

in tone and personalities, since they will reappear at other crucial points of the exploration of the Crypts, and are part of the entity known as the Hungry Masks of the Dead from area LC-2.

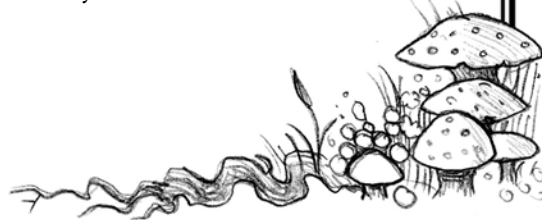
The membrane is easily the best place for the spirits of the dead to talk as they can make it vibrate and use their voices loud and clear. Striking the membrane is a bad idea, and will result in the skin absorbing the blow and blasting a drum-like note resulting in a *shockwave* spreading 10 feet around the membrane for 5-20 damage, saving throw for half damage and avoid deafness for 6 full turns.

The faces in the membrane radiate of chaos and evil. Spraying holy water at the membrane will free some of the souls trapped in it. The membrane will smoke in a 10’ x 10’ area and voices will rise thanking whoever freed them and sent them to their final rest. Likewise, *bless* spells would cover 30’ x 30’ areas and have similar effects, relieving the souls afflicted by the malignant presence using them as that many masks to play with its prey. The first time such an attempt to free the souls of the dead will grant a 500 XP individual bonus for each party member, and doing it again later in other parts of the Crypts will grant 100 XP bonus per vial or spell level expended, as long as the spell makes some kind of sense to the referee (*bless*, *chant*, and the kinds of spells that would normally grant peace or boost morale could serve as baseline).

**2. CHAPEL OF THE ESSENCES OF AKTUM.** The steps of this chapel are still clearly made out of translucent amber, which means the Chaplain has not yet been corrupted by the influence of Chaos. The confidence or relief in the party would be short lived, however, for the characters will have to make immediate saving throws versus poison, and become lethargic (-4 to hit, -2 AC and damage) or drowsy (-1 to hit, -1 AC) on a success, as pheromones assault their senses.

A Chaos Cicada is hanged, its wings tied to the ceiling by webs of spit, facing the player-characters, unable to move. It is the only cicada to have come out of the chrysalides of the cadaverous caterpillar. When the Chaplain of the Essences of Aktum notices the party, the cyclops will run towards the cicada and give it a beating with its wooden paddle. The cicada will scream and start beating its wings, subjecting the party to its hypnotic pattern (saving throw vs. magic or become bewildered, forgetting all about situation and surroundings, for 1-3 melee rounds).

This is when the Graveworms will vomit a wave of undead that will immediately come into contact with the



party. On the next melee round, the Chaplain will cast a *prayer* as the cicada agonizes behind him, and then on the third round he will grab his battle thurible out (a censer with acid fumes hanging from a chain which can be used as a flail) and join into the melee.

**CHAOS CICADA:** SZ L; MV 60 ft./240 ft. flying; AL CN; HD 4; HP 8 (18); AC 6; #AT 1 or 2; D 2d4 wing flap in a 50 ft. cone, or 1d3/1d3 legs plus automatic bite on both hits D 2d4, none of which the Chaos Cicada can use right now. The Cicada exudes pheromones which induce lethargy (-4 to hit, -2 AC and damage) or only drowsiness (-1 to hit, -1 AC) on a successful saving throw vs. poison. Their wings emit bright colors triggering bewilderment in their targets for 1d3 melee rounds, unless a successful saving throw vs. magic is made.

**GRAVEWORMS (2):** SZ M; MV 90 ft. all surfaces; 120 ft. swimming; AL N, Surprise 3-in-6; HD 2; HP 9, 12, 14, 11; AC 4; #AT 3 tentacles or 1 regurgitation; D 1d4/1d4/1d4, bite 2d4 automatic if two tentacles hit a single target, or regurgitation, cone of decayed plasma D 1d4 per remains expelled, or 2 HD of undead produced for two remains expelled. A graveworm's bloated stomach usually contains 2-8 remains. These remains can be expelled to produce a 30-foot long cone of decayed plasma (only three remains can be expended per round in such a way), or animate as 1 HD (skeleton) or 2 HD (zombie) undead (three remains per round expended on HD per round maximum). While not technically undead themselves, the graveworms are susceptible to be turned as ghouls. The remains within them react, and the pain is enough to make them back off away from the Cleric confronting them.

**AKMONIDES TRELL, ELDER CYCLOPS, CHAPLAIN OF THE ESSENCES:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL TN; STR 18/00 (+3 to hit, +6 damage), WIS 15; HD 5; HP 26; AC 2; #AT 1; D 9-17 (1d6 + 7 + 1d4 acid), Battle Thurible. An Elder Cyclops can cast spell as a 5th level Magic-User or Cleric. Clerical spells memorized (5/4/1): cure light wounds x2, command, protection from good, darkness, hold person x2, silence 15' radius, know alignment, and prayer. Akmonides wears an **amulet of Aktum**, which grants +2 AC, can be used to stop the undead that are not chaotic evil in their tracks (as though trying to control undead as a 5th level evil cleric) and can command some of the functionalities of the level, like the lanterns freeing the green stuff to break up fights and intervene in the favor of the amulet wearer. The green stuff makes a collective saving throw versus magic using their HD equivalent to figure out the wearers of the amulets are not the Chaplain of Ashes. Remember: the Green stuff has an embryonic conscience, unlike golems.

Please refer to the general entry detailing the Chapels in this chapter's introduction for the other contents, including the valuables, of this area. If the characters take pity on the cicada and end its pain humanely, consider a small XP bonus. If they manage to heal the cicada and bring it back to the surface, award a 500 XP bonus.

**3. BLACK OBELISK.** This cave will first look like a dead end to the exploring party. Low ceiling, stalactites and stalagmites, only the very end of this corridor has a 15-foot wide area with a very high, 50-foot ceiling above it. This space is occupied by an obelisk carved out of a single block of basalt about 7-feet wide on a side, at its base, and reaching about 40 feet high at the pyramidion. It is covered with hieroglyphs of Aktum, radiates faint magic, and will prove itself impervious to damage, *stone shape*, *rock to mud* and variations of such spells.

The obelisk was moved from **LC-16** where it stood, along with many of the bodies that were housed around that location, when it was repurposed to house the broken greens. What used to be a completely dead end tunnel for centuries is now a passage way accessible from the silent lake at **LC-5** and the Chapel of **LC-2**. The tunnels have changed over time, and so did the obelisk, sinking partially into the mud and releasing a certain frustration for being discarded in such a disrespectful manner, like psychometric foot print that festered and cursed the place over time.

The area ultimately gave birth to the Hungry Masks of the Dead, an incredibly powerful entity that fed on the carrion of the Crypts for quite a while, tried to absorb a powerful magic item it was not meant to digest, and grew an evil, troubled sentience from then on.

**THE HUNGRY MASKS OF THE DEAD:** SZ L; MV 60 ft.; AL CE; HD 11; HP 88; AC 5; #AT 1; D 6d4. Striking the Hungry Masks of the Dead with electricity, lightning bolt and the like, divides them into one or more smaller jellies inflicting half normal damage. They can coalesce back together after 1d6 turns. Fire affects the Masks normally, but cold has no effect on them whatsoever. Sonic attacks affect them for half damage, but they are otherwise impervious to acid and water. Like the visages they can manifest around this level of the dungeon, the Masks are vulnerable to holy water for D 2d4 per vial, and bless spells likewise inflict 2d6 damage to the entity, freeing that many souls trapped within it. Award a bonus 1,000 XP award if the idea makes it from using these types of attacks on the membrane of **LC-1** or the walls to using such means on the Masks themselves.

The Hungry Masks of the Dead appear as a black gelatinous mass with many faces covered with white ivory masks showing different, caricatured emotions lurking near the surface, and the hints of hands and feet and bodies in the ooze's depths. They are an anomaly, the result of the combination of many souls and lifetimes gathered together into a single-celled organism. They are an incarnation of the hunger of the Obsidian Realms combined with all the feelings of loss and resentment gathered by the living on the material plane. The insatiable embodiment of one the most self-destructive instincts combined with a host of memories, sentient lives, and the broken desire to persist beyond death.

The Hungry Masks of the Dead can move swiftly along walls and ceilings. They can also meld with and manifest their presence along the walls of the Crypts, in a manner similar to the membrane at area **LC-1**. They are impervious to all but sonic attacks while doing so, but neither can they do more than manifest their presence and talk through the walls. Their fluids dissolve flesh and digest memories and personalities. The Masks were touched by the combined influence of the Realms when they took possession of the Black Fang of Yllonnoc from Osman-dius, the Mirrored Mage of area **LI-34**, and the collective psychometric frustration absorbed by the black obelisk. They grew and absorbed many of the memories and personalities of those laid to rest in the Crypts, and became the entity known today.

As demonstrated briefly at area **LC-1**, the Masks of the Dead can interact with people, either using individual voices among the many broken memories and identities they can access from the dead they digested, or speaking together of a single mind, as the malevolent spirit of hunger that plays cat and mouse and teases its future victims. They see themselves as the master of the Crypts, the hosts of the living visiting these parts, and will take some time to have their fun before finally attempting to consume them.

The Hungry Masks of the Dead can eject and shape some of their substance to create one or several simulacra; physical humanoids hosting a part of their collective identity. A simulacrum is a servant of the Masks imbued with a measure of autonomy and is able to work in its service. A simulacrum is set with a specific archetype when it is emitted by the Masks of the Dead. It cannot change its archetype without rejoining the mass of the Masks (i.e. a 5th level fighter cannot suddenly become a magic-user, or change its level). To emit one or several simulacra, the Masks eject a number of Hit Dice (HD) from their body and lose eight (8) hit points of every HD invested in the emission, to a maximum of 6 HD total

emitted at one time, in whatever combinations desired. Thus, for example, all 6 HD could be spent at one time on a single 6th level illusionist simulacrum, OR 1 HD could be emitted for eight men-at-arms, then 3 HD for a 4th level MU and her two 2nd level apprentices, then 2 HD for two 3rd level fighters, their bodyguards, OR any combination thereof. Hit Dice emitted on a simulacrum are subtracted from the total of the Hungry Masks and lower its efficiency to hit as long as the simulacrum is away.

**6 HD** = One 6<sup>th</sup> level simulacrum

**5 HD** = One 5<sup>th</sup> and two 3rd level simulacra

**4 HD** = two 4<sup>th</sup> level simulacrum

**3 HD** = one 4<sup>th</sup> level and two 2nd level simulacra

**2 HD** = two 3<sup>rd</sup> level simulacra

**1 HD** = one 3<sup>rd</sup> level and two 1st level simulacra

**1 HD** = eight men-at-arms (6 HP)

Classes and personality specifics are picked from the memories absorbed by the Hungry Masks of the Dead during the emission of the simulacrum. They cannot be changed as long as the simulacrum is dissociated from the Masks of the Dead. They can appear to be of a specific alignment and register as such with spells and detections, and might not even realize they are being puppeteered by the Hungry Masks of the Dead. This makes simulacra ideal baits for the Masks.

The Hungry Masks of the Dead will manifest regularly in a similar fashion they do on the membrane of area **LC-1** to taunt parties of intruders, they will laugh at their missteps, interrupt them to ask them what they are going to do next when they are trying to catch their breath, and otherwise become rapidly obnoxious. They will be particularly mean to cleric types, a hint which might help the party discover its weakness to bless spells and holy water.

The only way to get to face the Hungry Masks of the Dead is to get them to physically manifest. It can be done by humiliating them, mocking them in return for their cowardice and their lack of direct involvement in the fate of those they want to torture. The referee should be judged of how much it will take to get there, but another, surest way to accomplish a similar thing is to get in contact with Ragna at area **LC-9** and help the Mhole of the area get to the polished wall of the silent lake at area **LC-5**, which will trigger a confrontation between the two, with the party in the balance. See **LC-9** and the *Developments* section at the end of this chapter for more about the last confrontation between the Mhole and the Hungry Masks of the Dead.



When the Hungry Masks of the Dead are slain, the obelisk will shatter and reveal its contents, to be found when the party next visits this cave. First, it contains nine (9) urns containing the ashes of the dead, each worth 800 GP base value, unopened. They can be opened, thus rolling on the Urns Table in the introduction of this chapter, but their value would fall to 400 GP a piece, regardless of the results. Four funerary masks of celadon marble each representing one of the known kings of Aktum in ceremonial dress can be found here, too, each worth 1,200 GP base value a piece. A **clerical scroll** is stored here and includes the spells *lower water*, *exorcism*, *neutralize poison*, *flame strike* and *raise dead*. There is one (1) **potion of stone giant control**, which essentially functions like *charm monster* benefitting the drinker and influencing up to two stone giants per the spell, as well as (2) **potions of stone giant strength**.

Also stored inside the obelisk, which must have been built to hide such a trove in the first place, the party can find a giant-sized arrow, more convenient to be fired as a javelin, feathered with black, red, blue, white and green feathers, and with a head shaped like a dragon's. It was forged by the ancient giant against the slavers of the Yig-gite empire, and is in fact a **+3 Arrow of Slaying versus snake-men, dragons and reptiles**. It is a prized possession that survived the entire existence of the Kingdom of Aktum. It could still be fired by humans using a *reduction* spell on it, or *enlarge* on themselves.

Lastly, there is a **celadon turtle of Aktum**, a figurine of wondrous power made of marble, the size of a palm, which can be put on the ground and transform into an enormous 20-foot diameter turtle with the proper command word. It is not especially effective in combat, but has AC 0, 60 HP and hits like a 6 HD creature (bite damage 2-8). It can remain active for up to 16 hours a day. Though very slow on land (MV 30 ft.), it can swim fast (MV 200 ft.) and carry great loads over long distances.

**THE BLACK FANG OF YLLONNOC:** This wand has been swallowed by the Hungry Masks of the Dead and was a prominent part of the transformation that made it what it is today. It will only be freed and left behind when the Masks are defeated. The Fang looks like a two-pronged black root twisted at odd angles. It first behaves as a **wand of illusion** (32 charges remaining), but can also be used as an implement to target spells requiring rolls to hit, with a +3 bonus to them. It can also cast *dimension door* for 1 charge and activate such artefacts as the black mirror of Yllonnoc to accomplish *teleportation* over great distances, even to the secret laboratories and library of the founder of the Black Fang himself. Final-

ly, the Black Fang of Yllonnoc can be used as a receptacle for a suitable **crystal of the ebon flame**, to form a single votive sword dedicated to the powers of evil.

**4. VERTICAL SHAFT.** This shaft presents itself as a seven-foot hole in the ceiling semi-concealed by a few short stalactites, and a similar hole directly under it on the ground, by the silent lake. This shaft going through the levels of the Tomb goes directly up to area L2-7, and down into the matter of Chaos.

The hole is located a little hill with a slope sliding down to the lake. It is surrounded with dried weeds, which if disturbed reveal the presence of bright pink eggs the size of melons. These are giant shrimp eggs, which are absolutely succulent if eaten, well worth 120 GP a piece on the market of a big city like Villenor. There are about fifty (50) eggs stashed around the lip of the shaft down to the matter of Chaos, but they are extremely fragile, and would require nets and other soft containers to be carried out safely. Any combat situation, hard riding on a horse, running and jumping, would risk to breach and destroy a dozen of them.

These eggs are the prized possession of a Samurai from the Shoko-Jumi area of Nippon who made it through a portal into the Labyrinth below, and managed to survive there for a quite some time. With the recent events and the push of Chaos up towards the surface, he was finally caught into a conflict and was hit by the substance of entropy, which made him mutate into a humanoid shrimp man and fuse with the four lampreys that originally killed him in the Labyrinth, now fused to his spine in his back.

Dazed and confused, Naguro Masasaki finally escaped and found his way up to this location right next to the lake. He fought the raging waters when he tried to leave this area, and found the **ring of the silent lake** allowing him to be ignored by the spirit of area LC-5 and remain here for the time being. He hunts down the shaft, finds food there, and considers this area his lair and refuge, letting the spirit of the lake deal with intruders by fading along the walls and keeping quiet when they show up, from above or below.

If the party manages to get past the spirit of the silent lake, or if as he observes them from the shadows he takes a liking to them, he will come out of the shadows and be willing to parley, either setting the spirit at rest or congratulating the explorers for doing so themselves. He will hide his crustacean appearance with his armor, his actual real face being what looks like the face plate of the

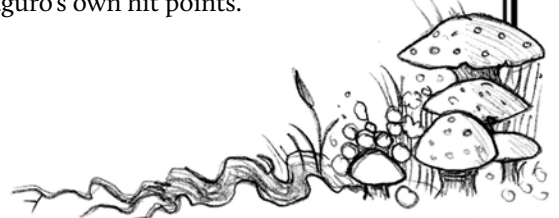


helmet, the oblong orange plates of a shrimp with round black eyes. His intention is to find out if he could have a place with the party, at least enough to get to the surface and maybe find a more secure lair for his eggs and his own lasting security. If they agree to escort him and his eggs to a new lair, whether that is in the *Environs and Cave System* (Chapter 2) or elsewhere, he will be willing to give up the **ring of the silent lake** as a reward.

**NAGURO MASASAKI (F7):** SZ M; MV 90 ft.; AL LN, STR 18/56, DEX 16, CHA 16, INIT +1; HD 7; HP 44; AC 2; #AT 5; D 1-6 (x4)/1d6+10, Lamprey heads, +3 to hit Katana, OR Ranged D 1d6+1 (x2), +2 to hit longbow and magic arrows. Naguro appears as a shrimp man wearing Samurai armor with four lampreys growing out of his back spine. He wears a +2 **Samurai suit of armor** (scale mail equivalent) fitted on top of his shrimp exoskeleton. His **Mother-of-Pearl Katana** is a very fine weapon of Law, +1 to hit and damage non-magical, inflicting d5+5 base damage one-handed, d6+6 points two-handed (Naguro almost always favors the latter),

*treated as a +3 magical weapon for the purpose of selecting targets. He also carries a longbow and twelve (12) +1 arrows, and wears the ring of the silent lake on his right hand pinky.*

This **ring of the silent lake** grants protection from the spirit of the lake (see area LC-5 specifically) and influences the spirit's behavior. For instance, it can trigger rage and target it towards a specific group of people, or attempt to calm down the spirit, with such attempts having a 30% chance of succeeding plus any percentile reaction bonus granted by Charisma; the ring also grants *water breathing* (5-foot radius) and *water walking*, as well as *part water* and *lower water* once a week; finally the wearer will be able to *communicate with water elementals* on a neutral reaction basis, any help or hostility being gained via role-playing and the occasional Charisma roll. The lampreys are part of him, not individually conscious, and fight with him in melee. They can be individually targeted, AC 0 (extremely slimy), and cut if they take 11 points of damage each, independent of Naguro's own hit points.



Near the eggs, the party can find more personal effects, including blank sheets of parchment mixed in with the Samurai's writings, sigils and haikus. Sharing haikus with the Samurai could be a way to soften him towards an adventuring party. He would then open a conversation with such a form, playing with words, if the referee is up to it. There are six (6) **blank sheets of parchment** total: each is dweomered and can be used by a competent cleric to create scrolls for half the price and half the time it normally would take to produce them.

**5. THE SILENT LAKE.** All three tunnels leading to this place are carved with a warning rune on the walls looking like a D struck across with three horizontal bars. It symbolizes a string instrument of some sort. Searching the north-eastern shore of the silent lake will reveal the presence of a dead adventurer there, buried amidst the pebbles and the bits of bone, still holding a beautiful mandolin in its skeletal hand (worth 1,200 GP). There are no waves rippling across the water. Everything is perfectly calm, the shores to the west and north east somewhat facing one another, with the entire section of the cave's wall to the north-west being polished like a reflective volcanic glass, and the little hill full east hiding the hole and vertical shaft of **LC-4**.

When the party gets too close to the shore, the entire lake will lift itself up. This is not a mundane lake, but a water elemental of ungodly proportions. If the party does not leave the shore immediately, the water elemental will crash over them with the force of a tsunami, the equivalent of a 12th level *water fall* spell (q.v.), creating a large wave rolling all the way to area **LC-16** via the western shore, or to areas **LC-2**, **LC-3** and **LC-8** via the north-eastern shore. The party members by the shore when the wave crashes will take 12d4 points of damage, but are allowed a saving throw vs. breath weapon for half. If they immediately retreated in the adjacent corridors, they take 6d4 damage instead, saving throw vs. breath weapon for half. Either way, they will be transported by the wave to **LC-16** if they were by the western shore, or **LC-8** one way, **LC-2** the other way from the north-eastern shore of the lake.

One way to deal with the silent lake is to slay the water elemental that possesses it, which is easier said than done, considering the nature and immunities of the entity. Flying or levitating over the water will not disturb the elemental. Another, more efficient way is to play music to the Water Elemental, which is its great weakness, as music slows it down to a crawl, as if frozen in time, but moving very slowly if one keeps staring at it. The Water Elemental can be discussed with in its own



elemental language, and will never leave this area. It will not pursue intruders throughout the Crypts and will be content to be left alone here.

The Water Elemental was there when Osmandius tuned his Black Mirror to connect with the depths of Grunn Galeb and arrived here, in this particular area of the Crypts. It is Osmandius who crafted the lyre still buried in the sand, and made the elemental magically susceptible to music. The Mirrored Mage would soon meet his doom; however, as he would connect with a malevolent conscience able to break his body and spirit, which in turn shattered the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc at **Li-34**. The two areas are still linked, however, and if the mirror is put back together from the shards scattered throughout the Tomb and beyond, its surface will regenerate and lead back to this area if crossed, by default, and vice versa.

Whether the Water elemental is quieted by music or defeated, a party investigating the depths of the Silent Lake will find a half circular shield, what looks like the half of a full, round, large shield, at the very bottom. This is a **Moon Shield +1**, an implement which does not impede spell-casting, but channels it. It radiates strong magic, and will only reveal its true potential when brought together with its second half, the Sun Shield of area **H-11**. The two shields can be melded back together using *Vanx's Mystical Mending*. When that is done, the **Sun and**

**Moon shield** becomes +3, and its magical modifier adds to saving throws against ray and cone attacks against the wielder, and can summon a *flame strike* or *water fall* twice a day as cast by a 10th level character.

**WATERELEMENTAL:** SZ H; MV 60 ft./180 ft. swimming; AL TN; HD 12; HP 60; AC 2; #AT 1; D 5d6 if manifesting on the lake, D 12d4 or 6d4 as a wave (see above). The elemental is only affected by +2 magic weapons or better.

**6. GOLDEN AQUARIUM.** A seven-foot wide cylinder of thick, translucent glass connects the floor to the ceiling at this location. It is clearly manufactured, and contains a deep, golden liquid with a few tiny pockets of air lazily making their way up and down the shaft, like the bubbles of a lava lamp from the quarters of the melded mistress at L2-18. A huge sapphire stays stationary at the center of the cylinder, floating in the golden liquid. It is worth 10,000 GP. Breaking the glass of the cylinder would take 20 points of damage with blunt weapons, double that amount by other means. The inside of the tube is in fact occupied by a massive ochre jelly. It will devour whatever teleports inside the cylinder, or whenever it is breached.

Behind the cylinder against the face of the rock, the party can discover a number of implements used to carve and decorate clay, but made of ebonite, not wood, as well as a dozen bricks of the green stuff necessary to manufacture new seals for the shafts reaching down to the matter of Chaos. A grimoire nearby contains information on how to cook celadon marble to create the green stuff, fashion it in a desirable form, and cook it with an athanor, an alchemical oven, to finalize the process. Kufiss, the stone giant friend of Procyon at area L2-19, could serve as an athanor, and would understand the instructions of the book written in the script of Aktum. Deciphering the script would otherwise require the service of sages, and alchemists with a laboratory could then be employed for manufacturing. The Grimoire hints at the creation of independent golems made out of the same green stuff but does not explain the process. It could be researched by magic-users, or discovered in the Extended Burial Vaults detailed with the *Underworld expansion* to this module.

**OCHRE JELLY:** SZ M; MV 30 ft.; AL TN; HD 6; HP 42; AC 8; #AT 1; D 3d4. Ochre jellies travel along walls and ceilings with ease. The fluids of ochre jellies dissolve flesh. Striking ochre jellies with lightning bolts divides them into one or more smaller jellies inflicting half normal damage. Cold and fire based attacks have normal effects.

**7. CATERPILLARS' NEST.** This area is filled with bodies and eggs of cadaverous caterpillars gestating inside

them. Living bodies being so scarce in this environment, the caterpillars do not have the resources necessary to reproduce and fatten themselves at full rate. The chrysalides present at area L2-3 are the only ones they produced. There are always at least two caterpillars guarding the eggs in this area.

**CADAVEROUS CATERPILLARS (2-6):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; Surprise 1-5; HD 3+2; HP 14 avg.; AC 6; #AT 4; D 1d3/1d3/1d3/1d3 tentacles, plus paralysis on a hit (saving throw versus poison negates). The Cadaverous Caterpillar has the ability to blend in its surroundings. It paralyzes its victims to then eat them or lay 2d4 eggs inside of them. These eggs usually kill their host in 5-10 days. See the Caterpillar's entry in Appendix A, Monsters and Characters for more information.

**8. CHAPEL OF MISTS OF AKTUM.** The steps leading down to the chapel have turned into a black, opaque substance indicating the occupant of this place has ceased to serve the Ashes of Aktum and has become a Vitiate of Chaos. Pyrameon, the Vitiate of the Mists, has in fact completely shed its physical form as a Cyclops, and assumed the next evolution step of along the path of corruption to become a Wraith himself.

The visibility inside the Chapel is poor, as a thick mist lingers down the steps. Strong smells of carrion and tannins are pungent here, and could make characters slightly nauseous. Whatever lies on the floor is invisible to them. This should be a huge warning a trap is afoot. At the bottom of the steps, the ground is covered by the skins of many humanoids sewn together by the forces of Chaos. This unnatural horror will animate and try to engulf the party, so the Wraith can then come and drain the victim's level by passing through the leather golem, in and out.

Please refer to the general entry detailing the Chapels in this chapter's introduction for the other contents, including the valuables, of this area.

**LEATHER GOLEM:** SZ L; MV 80 ft.; AL TN; Hits as 7 HD; HP 30; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 leather slaps. A leather golem can engulf a victim. It does so by moving into the space of an opponent and succeeding with both hits. If both slaps hits, the victim is held inside and smothered for 1d4 damage every melee round. Magical slashing weapons deal full damage on the outside of the leather golem. Magical piercing and slashing weapons (which have a point and cutting edge) are needed to escape a leather golem from the inside. A hit at -4 to hit on the inside, no penalty on the outside, dealing at least 6 points of damage will be enough to slice a hole





through the fabric of the golem to let the victim squeeze through. Cold, sonic and electricity spells have no effect on the leather golem. Fire slows it down 50% but makes it release its smothered victims automatically. Acid inflicts full damage, and salt only half. Water spells heal a leather golem for 3 Hit Points per spell level.

**PYRAEMON PAAL, VITIATE OF THE MISTS (WRAITH):**  
SZ M; MV 120 ft./240 ft. flying; AL CE; HD 5+3; HP 28;  
AC 4; #AT 1; D 1d6 + Energy Drain, one level per hit.  
Wraiths can only be hit by silver (half damage) or magic weapons (full damage). Powerless in sunlight.

Pyraemon will try to stay out of reach, eventually summoning corporeal undead to rise from the bottom of the stairs to stop the party from reaching him as he stays in the shadows of the alcoves below. He then passes through the ranks and into the leather golem to easily drain life energy from the helpless victims of the golem to return back to the shadows. Only when Pyraemon is finally defeated will incorporeal form drop the **Superior**

**Amulet of Aktum** he is wearing, which is unique, since it also functions as an amulet of life protection, which may be why Pyraemon tried to leave his mortal cyclops form behind, only to be consumed by the evil spirit of the Vitiante inside him. The amulet also grants +4 AC, can be used to stop the undead that are not chaotic evil in their tracks (as though trying to control undead as a 5th level evil cleric), and can command some of the functionalities of this level, like the lanterns freeing the green stuff to break up fights and intervene in the favor of the amulet wearer.

**9. CORAL LAKE.** The water in this cave is quiet. The first time the party explores the area, they will find it empty. What they do not know is that a Mhole, a psychic tartigrade-like creature the size of a sea lion or a cow, is lurking in the water and observing them as they walk by the water. Make secret saving throws vs. magic. If some of the characters in the party succeed, inform them they feel like they are being watched from afar, like someone is staring at them from the corridor facing them.



The Mhole is probing them psychically, going through their past memories to see if they just slaughter everything in their way or are capable of empathy, compassion, and parley. If the party searches the water at this point, the Mhole will hide at the bottom, in a supernatural coral reef that has recently grown there out of the energies of Chaos seeping into the Crypts. The party would have to insist, dive and search hard into the water to find the creature.

When they come back at a later time, up to the referee and when it is most appropriate to get the show down with the Hungry Masks of the Dead of LC-3 to occur, assuming the Mhole determined talking to them wouldn't be fruitless, the party will find a female dwarf waiting here, wearing a scale mail, her forehead resting on the handle of a war hammer, its head firmly on the ground. Her equipment has seen better days, and her hair and beard could use a bath.

She presents herself as Ragna, of the Stone-cutter dwarves. She says she escaped Grunn Galeb when it was attacked by giants, goblins and gargoyles. She can describe to the party how the fight went, how some dwarves tried to escape via the waterfall, others by climbing up to the plateau of the Mound above, and how she found herself going down into the forbidden regions, the Burial Vaults the dwarves had been told not to disturb. She made her way here and tried to survive since then.

She will ask the party if she can join them for the time being. She hopes to make it back to the surface with them. If she is pressed about the time she spent here in the Crypts, how it has been ten years since the sack of Grunn Galeb, and keep questioning her about how that seems an awful long time, it doesn't quite square with her just being there in this cave at this moment, not looking especially starved or changed by years of isolation, she will admit she was telling stories to the party, and encourage them to come back to the Coral Lake if they already left the area with her.

*"My natural language would be confusing to you. I communicate scenes and memories from my psyche to yours, and these work like mental logograms, much like hieroglyphs can represent entire phrases with a single visual sign in your written languages."*

Ragna will explain, approaching the water. *"This mode of communication might not have been optimal between us. I had to find an alternative. I apologize if you feel I misled you. I had to make sure we could help one another."*

She stands in front of the lake. *"I am but an illusion, a phantasm conjured from scraps of memories belonging to*

*the real Ragna who did escape the sack, sought to help me, and died for it."*

This is when the Mhole will come to the surface. Ragna will turn to face the party and repeat. *"Ragna died to keep me safe. I buried her. Somewhere. I can't remember where."*

When the party has had a good look at the Mhole, or if it is asked what it is it wants that might be mutually beneficial, it will explain. *"I am M'khepot, an Ohminid of the Eldritch Moon of the Eurth. I was summoned here eons ago, and was subjected to awful experiments by the cultists still haunting these Crypts. My eggs, my children were taken from me, never to be seen again. I was beaten, and violated, but I managed to escape. I found my way here, though I do not exactly know where "here" is. I need help to get out. I can't do it on my own. I saw something... and my mind was shattered. A piece of me is missing and I need it back. If I could look back upon that moment, find out what happened to me... I could remember everything. I could remember where I buried Ragna, and you bring her back to her people. I would be very thankful."*

If pressed further, the Mhole will tell what it remembers of the traumatic event. M'khepot will describe how he felt surrounded by walls of water, how he saw a face staring through the water, then faced with dozens upon dozens of carved faces, each a caricature of a different humanoid expression... how the lone bearded face tried to push back against the tide of generic smiles and cries and hollow orbits with no eyes. This is when M'khepot's mind broke. It saw the flicker of a wand dark as night. The assault of dozens of memories invading its mind, and as the bearded face exploded into three main pieces, so did he lose something of its mind, in the mirror. M'khepot remembers seeing the mirror shatter, then turning away, seeing a rune, a sort of talisman that now obsesses him, and running away.

*"I need to go to the place where the wizard died."*

If asked about the rune or talisman, M'khepot will describe the "D struck by three horizontal lines". If the party ventured by the silent lake, they will know he is referring to LC-5. This is the location where Osmandius came into conflict with the entity that would grab the Black Fang he was brandishing, and with the combined power of the dead and the obelisk of LC-3, would become the Hungry Masks of the Dead that would fracture his mind and kill him in the process, giving birth to the three Ozmis at area LI-34.

M'khepot is terrified to leave the Coral Lake alone. Despite his pleas for help and despite of itself, it will want to

stay at the very last moment, assuming the party accepted to help. Let the player-characters try and convince M'khepot to come with them. Role-play the Ohminid's behavior as a form of PTSD. It could even project memories of the attack and death of Osmandius into the minds of the player-characters.

It is worth noting that the children and eggs M'khepot is talking about are the granite eggs found in the hidden compartment of the Queen at **L2-24**, and the body of the Ohminid at **L2-28A**. If these have already been recovered, and the Mhole of **H-15** contacted them, then they know where to lead M'khepot once they helped it regain the lost part of its mind. If not, M'khepot will be psychically reached by the mature Mhole at **H-15** when it reaches the surface. They will then petition the party to help them get the eggs and child back from the Burial Vaults.

For more about the final confrontation between M'khepot and the Hungry Masks of the Dead, please jump to the *Developments* section at the end of this chapter.

**MHOLE:** SZ L; MV 120 ft./ 120 ft. burrowing; AL TN; HD 8; HP 42; AC 5; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 claws, followed by 1d10 bite if claws both hit. Automatic 1d4 acid damage and -1 AC as the acid dissolves the armor of the victim on the next round, and until someone attacks the Mhole and makes it drop the victim, or the victim hits the Mhole at -4 to hit. A Mhole has psychic abilities which allow it to perform ESP, psychometry, hold persons, mental attacks (for 3d4 damage in a 20 foot radius around the Mhole, saving throw vs magic negates), ethereal and astral projections, as well as phantasmal forces at will.

**10. CLEANING CREW.** This small natural chamber features a 4-foot tall pillar of granite in its center, with a lantern resting at the top of the pillar. There are three effigies made out of green stuff against the circular wall of the chamber, all around the pillar, each of them carved to resemble a stone giant in full combat gear, with lance and stone armor, but with human(oid) proportions. When Chaplains of the Ashes of Aktum deem it necessary, they can break out fights between slaves, undead, and other inhabitants of the crypts using this enforcers. They just have to concentrate on their Amulets of Aktum and the lantern is lit, the warmth of which will get the statues of green stuff going on the next melee round.

A dwarf lies petrified at the foot of the pillar, his left hand still holding on to a bag open, but covering its content as it lies on the ground. Looking at the unnatural position of the dwarf, one arm still lifted up as it has been knocked over face first in the ground, it is apparent he turned to stone before being disturbed to fall into the mud that

way. Lifting the bag to look at the content without a mirror or reflective surface would be a big mistake, as inside rests the decomposing head of a medusa, on its very last stretch of life. In fact, the head of this medusa could still be used to turn targets into stone three times (save vs petrification or be turned to stone within a 30 ft. radius), and by the last time the head will just droop and the snakes making up its hair will all have died, the head losing its terrifying magic forever.

The dwarf is Iyoga (Th9), the companion and lone survivor with Wysla An Seru (area **LC-20**) of the expedition that stopped Lord Venik (**LC-23**) from acquiring a Rod of Smiting hidden in this part of the dungeon, at area **LC-13**. Iyoga in fact betrayed Wysla and turned the head against the Mynch, though he will not admit it. He still feels guilty about it, and left the body without looting it. Wysla isn't sure, as his own memories could indicate simple mistake or fearful negligence, and not necessarily premeditation. If rescued, Iyoga will be very thankful and try to help the party in order to get back to the surface and get on with his business. He wears +2 **leather armor** and a **necklace of adaptation**, is armed with six (6) +1 **arrows**, a strong short bow, and a +2 **club** he affectionately calls "skull crusher".

**STATUES OF GREEN STUFF (3):** SZ M; MV 50 ft.; AL TN; HD 5; HP 20 avg.; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6. Creatures made out of green stuff take full damage from blunt weapons and only half damage from other types, unless magical. They do not regain their HP normally, and must be repaired with more green stuff to heal. They are impervious to acid, and electricity damage. Green stuff is healed by water, and takes half damage sonic sources. Any form of heat animates it and keeps it functional (in one melee round with an open flame, though warm living bodies standing right next to it can do the trick in three melee rounds), but the green stuff is otherwise indifferent to fire. Cold spells and salt are the bane of the green stuff, as well as anything that could similarly take away the heat and moisture that keep them active. Deprived from heat and moisture, the green stuff solidifies and simply stops moving around, frozen in place until a new heat source shows up.

**11. CHAPEL OF BLADES OF AKTUM.** The stairs going down to the chapel proper and the alcoves containing the urns of Aktum are not made of translucent, golden amber anymore. The steps have turned black as night, and it should be a warning for those hoping to survive this chamber's challenge.

When the party looks down the chapel, the lights for them will suddenly go out, as a *darkness 15' radius* spell

has been cast by Kargan exactly under the entrance, where they stand. At the same time, a funeral chant will rise as Argan casts *prayer*, and a group of 2d4 zombies will blitz up the stairs to contain the party. Argan and Khargan are flying near the ceiling (the flying spells coming from a scroll still containing two of the same), but it is impossible to tell with the echo of the caves and their current confusion of the senses.

On the second round of combat, Argan the Cleric intends to cast *Silence*, 15' radius by the entrance of the Chapel, leaving him and Kargan just out of the zone of effect as they levitate above the alcoves and urns of Aktum. Then at the same time, Kargan will hit directly through the entrance of the Chapel with a *lightning bolt* for 5d6 damage.

On the third round, they will start attacking from a distance with their thurible, hoping to hit, and then pull a victim up in the air the next round to stab them, while their Vitiated shadow tries itself to chill touch the victim and drain its strength. The shades are part of Argan and Kargan during this combat. They each have exactly half the hit points of their hosts, and will leave their hosts before getting to zero hit points. They will then hover in the shadows, pretending to be dead, letting the party have their win, but they will not forget, will seek some new hosts, and will want to have their revenge later on. It is up to the party to not forget they still exist, seek them out and destroy them.

Referees should feel free to select different spells and change the tactics of the Vitiates of the Blades like they would any creature or non-player character of this volume, of course. This is not a script, but more of a laying down of one of the many possibilities that would make the combination of these two lethal in more than one way. Please refer to the general entry detailing the Chapels in this chapter's introduction for the other contents, including the valuables, of this area.

**ARGAN AND KARGAN KHAS, VITIATES OF THE BLADES (2 ELDER CYCLOPS):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; STR 18/00 (+3 to hit, +6 damage), WIS 15; HD 5; HP 22, 24; AC 2; #AT 1; D 1d6 + 7, Battle Thurible. If the Thurible hits, D 1d4+7 with a +7 to hit next melee round, as the cyclops pulls the chain to project its victim in the air and stab it with an iron dagger. An Elder Cyclops can cast spell as a 5th level Magic-User or Cleric. Clerical spells memorized by Argan (5/4/1): cure light wounds x3, protection from good, darkness, hold person x2, silence 15' radius, know alignment, prayer. Magic-User spells memorized by Kargan (4/2/1): Mag-*

*ic Missile x2, sleep, enlarge, shockwave, mirror image, lightning bolt. Kargan is in possession of a scroll containing the spells fly x2 (originally fly x4).*

**TWIN VITIATED SHADOWS (2):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 3+3; HP 11, 12; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d4+1, +1 STR, Chill Touch. Shadows can only be hit by weapons +1 or better. Drained Strength regained 2d4 turns after being touched. When the shadow is inside the body of its host, it takes the same damage as its hosts does. Only when it is apart from its host can it benefit from the full protection of its insubstantiality.*

Both bodies of Argan and Khargan wear an **amulet of Aktum**, which grants +2 AC, can be used to stop the undead that are not chaotic evil in their tracks (as though trying to control undead as a 5th level evil cleric) and can command some of the functionalities of the level, like the lanterns freeing the green stuff to break up fights and intervene in the favor of the amulet wearer.

**12. SALT CAVE.** A tight natural corridor leads to a small cave constellated with salt crystals growing in columns from the walls and ceiling. It is hard to navigate, very hot and dry, and treacherous to the extreme. If running, the characters navigating this small cave and tunnel must make dexterity checks to avoid small cuts from the salt crystals.

At the end of the tunnel lies a natural altar entirely made out of salt. On it rests the White Fyre Opal, a gem of great power that sucks in humidity and creates the crystal formations seen all around it. People who are not at the top of their health, with Hit Points under their maximum total, will take 1d4 damage per melee round within 10 feet of the Opal, as it sucks the water out of their bodies through the small bruises and cuts that resulted in their low HP count.

The White Fyre Opal found its way there during the creation of the Burial Vaults, in the possession of one of the slave masters entombed here. Over the centuries, it slowly fought back and reached out, imbuing one of the greens of area **LC-16** with the conscience and identity of a servant of Aktum stolen from an ancient amulet in the Crypts, thus creating a white fire of its own. This creature rose from storage, sought the Opal, took it before it destroyed it, the Opal making it invulnerable to salt by contact, and set it in this cave to protect it from then on. The White Fyre Opal has been there ever since, and with it, its guardian has slowly grown into a hero figure of its own right.

The green being is now covered with plaques of salt melded to its body like a suit of armor. It will interrupt

the party, standing behind them as they inspect the gem. The salt warrior, as others refer to him in the Crypts, is a deadly opponent to the worms, slugs and zombies of this level, but he cannot make it past the sentinels and greens of area **LC-16** alone, especially knowing he would hurt the statues of green stuff along the way.

Now, the salt-plated warrior remembers something of who he was. His name is Ren. He holds on to that truth like his entire sense of identity depends on it. He was a worker once, a human slave who built for the giants of Aktum. He must have done something right, for one of the Chaplains of the Ashes of Aktum considered his soul to be valuable, and integrated it into a magic talisman the Chaplain kept with him in death. The talisman. Ren would like to be reunited with it, and then his soul to be released in the winds outside the tomb, as he earned with a thousand life times in the Crypts. Yet, he feels loyalty towards the Fyre Opal, and will not give it up unless those that would take it would prove themselves to be worthy.

At first, Ren will want to know what the party intends to do, as they have discovered the White Fyre Opal. If he feels like he can parley, he will explain who and what he is, and how he desires the rest of death. But to do this, he needs the amulet of the dangerous Vitiates of the Mists at area **LC-8**, who has already been consumed and became a full, mature Vitiates in the form of a Wraith, a powerful undead to confront.

If the party agrees, Ren will come with them and help them get past the Guardian Effigies of **LC-16**. His plan is to either have the party help the green stuff with water while he is running through the area to get past it, or otherwise provide a distraction so the White Fyre does not have to face the green stuff and destroy it (the green stuff needs heat and moisture to operate). Facing the Vitiates of the Mists, they could gain the amulet of life protection that would house the soul of the salt-plated warrior. Then, the party would be able to bring it back to the surface, and release it to the winds. Ren would be satisfied, knowing the new caretakers of the White Fyre will do what must be done, and protect the Opal as their own.

**REN, THE SALT-PLATED WARRIOR:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CG, STR 18/56; HD 4; HP 32; AC 2; #AT 1; D 1d8+3, + 2 to hit, blade of salt. The Salt-plated Warrior is the bane of slugs, zombies, and anything vulnerable to salt, which includes the Cochlean Beast occupying the Tomb of Amun Paal at **E-24**. Ren is an intelligent individual, witty and likeable. Referees should not hesitate to endear him to the party, for instance by letting them know through him about the slugs of **LC-17**, or saving them from getting trapped in another situation, so his loss will be felt that much harder, in victory or failure, either way.

**THE WHITE FYRE OPAL:** This gem is a minor artefact that gradually draining the humidity out of an area. It can wound people 1-4 damage per round if their blood is already exposed to it at a 10-foot range. It can be used as a projectile creating a saline explosion for 4d4 damage, then 2d4 if reused within the same day, then 1d4 flat for the rest of the day. It emits a soft warmth that can save lives in cold environments, adding +2 to savings throws in such conditions, and emit a flash of white light that will blind people failing a saving throw vs magic once a day.

If the party meets or already carries Bretus's Lament from area **LI-32**, its wearer will get insight from the sword and identify the White Fyre Opal as a votive gem, which could be used to forge a unique votive sword with the proper techniques. Whether the party seeks out the Halcyon Knights of Annod to do so, or seek more knowledge about them, is up to them and the referee.

**13. SHIMMERING LAKE.** This natural cave features a large expanse of water occupying its central area and south-eastern side, leaving a single strip of firm gravel about 20 feet at the widest running from one exit to the other against its north-western wall. The ceiling in this cave is 25 feet above the ground.

The party will notice an ungodly amount of insect life right under the surface from a distance, by one of the entrances of the cave. *Everything* moves down there. A 6-foot wide hole is visible on the surface of the south-eastern wall, just at the level of the water, and connects to a secondary chamber. A legion of insects are swarming around this tight passage connecting the two halves of a hive mind of intertwined maggots, leeches, flies and other insects. The Leech Hive Mind is a colony made out of all these creatures, with none of them critical to its survival, so it has no conventional statistics.

Anyone stepping within 10 feet of the Hive Mind (and thus the water) takes an automatic 2d8 points of damage as that many maggot heads spring out of the water and try to tear the flesh of their victims apart. Those characters who do not back off from this initial assault and remain within 10 feet of the Hive Mind and water separate 80 points of damage between them as a wave of insects devours them on the next melee round.

The insects are all considered less than 1 HD for the purpose of fighters and their multi-attacks, and the referee could certainly decide to have some tactical fun by separating a few giant specimens from the mass of the colony, but it does no good to the general situation as the Hive Mind is not damaged by the loss even some of the critters within it. It has no anatomy, no muscles, and

no nervous system to affect. Only sources of damage that affect entire areas of the creature will be effective. If hit by an area spell for 8 points of damage or more, the entire portion of the creature affected by the area will be destroyed instantaneously. Likewise, if flaming oil is carefully (more or less) distributed over an area of the creature evenly before being set on fire, and that the 2d6 damage indicate more than 8 damage when lit, the entire area of the creature will be destroyed.

The entire Leech Hive Mind occupies a surface of 113,090 cubic feet, give or take a few. Of these, 61,250 cubic feet are located in the main chamber in the water and occupy this entire space when attacked, while 51,840 cubic feet remain secure in the second chamber behind the wall, with a 40-foot ceiling above it. If only a part of the creature is destroyed, it will grow back to its original scale after a single melee round. Only by destroying the entirety of the monster in short order, one part immediately after the other, is it possible to obliterate it for good.

If, for instance, two *fireballs* were stacked next to each other in the main chamber, simultaneously, and then, on the next melee round, the rest of the creature being sucked back in the secondary chamber, two more *fireballs* were fired through the 6-foot hole to detonate on the other side, then the creature would be destroyed. Then, there could be a couple giant beetles, some huge ants or horned slugs remaining out of the entire mass of the Hive, if the referee is for more realism and anti-climactic fight sequences, but they might as well have disbanded with the explosion.

Once met, the party will be known of the Hive Mind. Every time they come to the chamber they will be attacked as food sources and the matter of the Hive will just crash against the entrances pursuing their prey. The Leech Hive Mind will not leave this area, however. It will keep its lair at all costs and die there if it must.

A corpse half-sunk into the muck inside the secondary chamber was slowly being eaten by the Hive's eggs and larva. The woman is still wearing **greaves of stability**, which provide +1 AC and a 75% chance of magically staying stable and afloat on swallowing surfaces such as sand, swamp terrain, mud, and the like. This percentile also applies as a chance to not be affected by spells inhibiting movement at all, such as *web* and similar dweomers, prior to any potential saving throw. Wearing these greaves means the character is considered weightless for the purpose of traps using pressure plates.

Even deeper into the muck, it is possible to find the body of a Danthean warrior and priest still wearing a +1 **breast**

**plate**, his flesh, cloak, leather straps all having long decayed. He still has an metallic tube trapped with a needle (death, no saving throw), with inside **two scrolls**, one inscribed with *dispel magic*, *Threon's elliptic throw\**, *cure critical wounds* and *heal*, and the other with *continual light*, *exorcise*, *detect lie* and *insect plague*. The warrior priest is carrying a legendary weapon, the **Ivory Rod of Smiting**, which behaves as a +3 weapon and inflicts d8 + 3 points of damage. Against golems, any hit will cost 1 charge to the rod, but it will inflict double damage, and if a 20 or better is rolled to hit, the construct is immediately destroyed. Similarly, the rod does normal damage to creatures of the outer planes such as demons, devils, night hags and the like, but a 20 or better rolled it draws 1 charge inflicts triple (d8 + 3)x3 damage. This rod has 41 charges remaining, and cannot be recharged by usual means. This rod's body, made out of bone and ebony wood, is etched with lyathari sigils and clearly bears the mark of Abadel, the Reaper of the Eurth. It is a unique item, so perhaps there is more to it than meets the eye.

**14. CHAPEL OF GRAVES OF AKTUM.** The Stairs of the Chapel are made of translucent, golden amber. The corruption of the matter of Chaos deep under has no sway here.

As the party comes down the stairs, they will see the Cyclops Brontes Patuul waiting. "*Welcome to the Chapel of the Graves of Aktum*", he will say in the language of the stone giants. If someone within the group understands giant languages, let them discuss for a while, with the idea that Brontes is no fool, and knows these are probably grave robbers of some sort. His turns of phrase might sound out of place or archaic at first, but he will catch up pretty quick and modernize his giant speech to match his interlocutors'. Then he will demand to know why the party is here.

If the party responds they are here to take what they want, disrespect the cyclops or threaten him, then Brontes will defend the Crypts. If however they mention the mounting corruption of Chaos, that they perhaps know some giants and are willing to help, then the giant will look very surprised, and will demand to test them in combat, albeit a non-lethal one, where damage disappears after a few melee rounds after sparing. Regardless, Brontes will present himself as the Guardian of the Graves and Memories of the King Garn Patuul. He will lift what looks like an empty handle. The fantomatic body and head of the Hammer of Aktum will appear, as if projected from the handle. "*Let us fight, then,*" and the Cyclops will begin.

At some point during the fight, describe a flying blob of black goo floating around Brontes trying to wave it off as he fights. It seems to be bothering the cyclops, like a bee







would behave towards a human with a sweet smell. The blob of black goo is a mane, and it will suddenly enter the Cyclops through his eyes, ears and nose. As Brontes chokes, skeletal hands will take hold of him from the ground, and the noble shard of amber just above his single eye will turn black and dull. Brontes has succumbed. He needs to be put down before the shadow grows further inside him.

Please refer to the general entry detailing the Chapels in this chapter's introduction for the other contents, including the valuables, of this area.

**BRONTES PATUUL, CHAPLAIN OF THE GRAVES (ELDER CYCLOPS):** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; STR 18/00 (+3 to hit, +6 damage), WIS 15; HD 5; HP 28; AC 2; #AT 1; D 11-14 (1d4 + 1 + 6 + 3), +6 to hit, Ghost Hammer of Aktum. An Elder Cyclops can cast spell as a 5th level Magic-User or Cleric. Magic-User spells memorized (4/2/1): magic missile, enlarge, spider climb, feather fall, web, invisibility, haste.

Brontes wears an **amulet of Aktum**, which grants +2 AC, can be used to stop the undead that are not chaotic evil in their tracks (as though trying to control undead as a 5th level evil cleric) and can command some of the functionalities of the level, like the lanterns freeing the green stuff to break up fights and intervene in the favor of the amulet wearer.

**GHOST OF THE HAMMER OF AKTUM:** The original hammer of Aktum is the **Hammer of Thunderbolts** of legend. The Ghost of the Hammer of Aktum, which springs from a very real handle when the command word is spoken, with the upper part and head of the hammer translucent and glowing from an inner bioluminescent blue common to the solid ectoplasm they are made of, behaves like a shadow of its original. It can resize to its wielder, and functions like a Hammer +1 unless its wielder has extraordinary strength (18/01 and above), in which case it behaves as a Hammer +3 when swung or hurled, and deals double damage to the giants, giant-kin and goblin-kin it strikes. Each time the hammer is hurled

and hits, the ghostly, echoing sound of a thunder clasp will be heard striking *fear* in the hearts of those who fail a saving throw vs magic within 30 ft. around the impact.

**15. LAIR OF THE CRIMSON RED WORM.** This cave is the lair of a gigantic red worm, a parasite that blows a corpse out of proportion with gases and shapes it into a worm-like monstrosity growing dozens of small appendages like a centipede to crawl around on floors, walls and ceilings, and be able to burrow at great speeds as well. The completely deformed features of the corpse and vestigial limbs are still visible along the worm's surface. This creature is responsible for most of the galleries dug around the main corridors of the Crypts. There are over forty (40) small worms easily popped with open flames in the creature's nest, at the end of this tunnel. They are said to be delicious when roasted, and considered delicacies by the elves of the Grim Wood. These worms are worth 400 GP base value each, but they are extremely fragile and must be moved with precaution.

An ancient entomologist of Aksalskhaton lost his life here and is still wearing some of his basic gear, including a **wand of lightning** with 10 charges remaining, an entomologist **potion** which, when opened, releases a 20' x 20' sleep cloud which lasts for 1-4 turns, and an **entomologist's net** that is +4 to catch insects, little frogs, birds and any other small animal deserving study.

**CRIMSON RED WORM:** SZ L; MV 90 ft./120 burrowing; AL CE; HD 9; HP 46; AC 4; #AT 1; D 2-12 Bite. When a prey is bitten by the Crimson Red Worm, it rips apart the victim's armor, reducing its AC value by 1-6. This secondary damage only affects the armor worn, with the armor destroyed if the defense it provided is reduced to zero (0). When the armor is gone, the red worm burrows inside the rib cage of the victim on the next round and lays eggs inside it, a procedure which is fatal in two weeks, reduces the STR and CON of the victim by 1 point per week, no saving throw, and ultimately kills the host after two weeks (saving throw vs. death after the second week, success means the victim survives for now but loses yet another point of STR and CON; failure means the eggs hatch and the victim dies). Slow poison is completely ineffective. Neutralize poison will stop the loss of points of STR and CON, and must be followed by a heal or restoration spell to completely flush the infection out.

**16. THE CRUCIBLE OF FAILURE.** This area of meeting of all the main corridors of the Crypts was once much tighter and similar to the corridors themselves, in terms of width and general features. This changed once the first creatures from the matter of Chaos down below started to

smash their way up here. Conflicts with laid waste to the whole area ensued with the undead of the Ashes of Ak-tum, and soon the area had become unrecognizable, the walls of the Crypts smashed, the separation and doors to the central shaft of the Tomb completely gone.

What remains now is an uneven, cleared surface mostly covered with mud and bones, with the occasional corpse or pot hole here and there, 2,200 square-foot area of death that still now is a regular hot spot on the level.

The intertwined gisants on top of the casket in the rectangular alcove of the north wall of this area, right between the corridors leading to **LC-8** and **LC-11** respectively, represent a hobgoblin general and his female ogre lover in a disturbingly provocative embrace. They are guardian effigies which will animate and break out fights if they become too intense. They are part of the original system of dweomers that was meant to keep the undead servants quiet and keep them from destroying one another over centuries of waiting.

The gaping hole in the ground is about seven-feet wide, and matched in the ceiling by a similar opening. This is the central shaft of the dungeon, going up to area **L2-30**, and down directly into the matter of Chaos (area **L3-1** of the Hearth of Chaos, if you are using our *Underworld expansion*).

A dozen life-sized statues radiating magic are stored close to the hole, including a huge, broken triceratops, and the statues of ogres and stone giants looking like its retinue. They are all defects, broken, or misshapen in some places. They are hollow and made out of a dark type of clay. If flames are brought to them the clay will instantly become wet and shed the dust and grime that were covering it. It will reveal to be green, spotless, probably created by an alteration of the substance of the celadon marble surrounding this place. If the party does not back off with the open flames, 1-3 of these statues will animate

A dozen bricks of the same green stuff similar to the supplies found at **LC-6** are stored within the broken statues. These have never been used.

**STATUES OF GREEN STUFF (1-3):** SZ M; MV 50 ft.; AL TN' HD 5; HP 20 avg.; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6. Creatures made out of green stuff take full damage from blunt weapons and only half damage from other types, unless magical. They do not regain their HP normally, and must be repaired with more green stuff to heal. They are impervious to acid, and electricity damage. Green stuff is healed by water, and takes half damage sonic sources. Any form of heat animates it

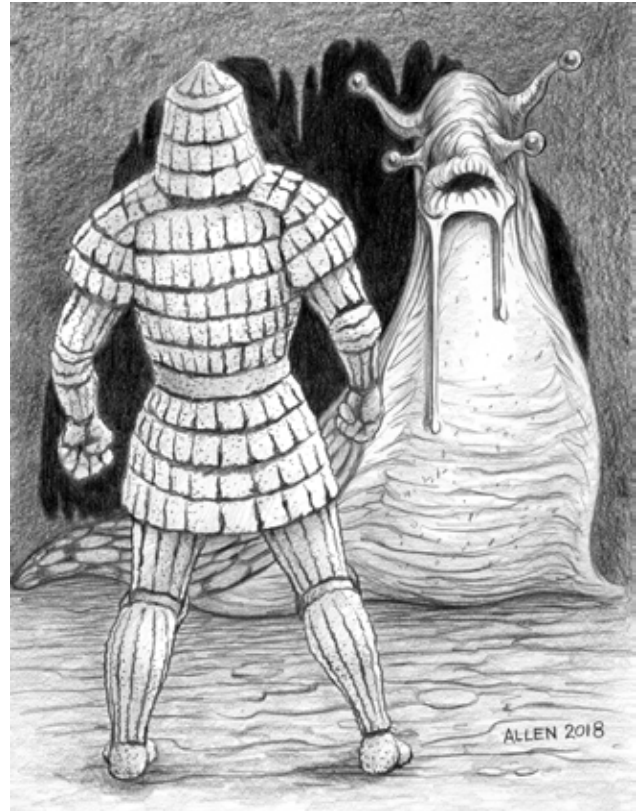
and keeps it functional (in one melee round with an open flame, though warm living bodies standing right next to it can do the trick in three melee rounds), but the green stuff is otherwise indifferent to fire. Cold spells and salt are the bane of the green stuff, as well as anything that could similarly take away the heat and moisture that keep them active. Deprived from heat and moisture, the green stuff solidifies and simply stops moving around, frozen in place until a new heat source shows up.

**GUARDIAN EFFIGY (GOLEM, 2):** SZ M; MV 70 ft.; Hits as 6 HD; HP 30; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d10/1d10 blunt stone fists. Guardian effigies take half damage from mundane blunt weapons, full damage from magical blunt weapons and half from other types of magical weapons, are impervious to most forms of magic, but vulnerable to move earth spells, which will shatter them. Other earth-affecting spells, like stone shape, rock to mud etc. can damage them for 1d6 per spell level, and stone to flesh makes a limestone golem completely vulnerable to all forms of attack including magic.

**17. LAIR OF THE SLUGS.** This cavern has a very treacherous, muddy ground mixing gravel, bits of bones, steam and the spit of its inhabitants. Movement is halved, unless the party wants to press and risk a saving throw versus paralyzation to avoid falling head first in the mud, prone for an entire melee round. They would need to succeed another saving throw to get back up, or waste another melee round in the muck. Visibility is also reduced by half, due to the density of the steam emanating from the cave's wall.

At the edges of the area, several horned slugs are nesting. Six (6) small specimens of 1 HD, four (3) specimens of 2 HD and one (1) large specimens of 4 HD are lying in wait, ready to zoom and hit targets who would enter this area. The biggest threat however is a giant slug on the ceiling of the cave, which is the progenitor of the whole brood.

**HORNED SLUGS:** SZ M; MV 40 ft./240 ft. zoom; AL TN; HD 2; HP 8 avg.; AC 8; #AT 1; D. 2d4 acid spit within 40 ft. If a Horned slug has a clear path of 60 plus feet in front of a space it has spitted on, it can slide and zoom up to 240 ft. to slam against a victim horns first for D 2d4x2. Small version is 1 HD, MV 30 ft., 180 ft. zoom, D 2d3x2. Large version is 4 HD, MV 60 ft., 300 ft. zoom, D 4d4x2. Horned slugs take half damage from blunt weapons and are vulnerable to salt: salted water and saline solutions sprayed on a slug will inflict D 2d4 with splash 10 feet around for 1d3 damage to other creatures vulnerable to salt, if any.



**GIANT SLUG:** SZ L; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; HD 12; HP; AC 8; #AT 1; D 1d12. Can spit at 60 ft. range with 50% of hitting a target, +10% with every 10 ft. closer to target, and -10% for every 10 ft. over 60. First spit is almost always a miss, with only 10% chance of hitting regardless of range. Then further spit attacks use those established probabilities. Giant slugs are unaffected by blunt weapons.

The mix of spit and muck kept the body of a magic-using scholar of Aksalskhaton sealed in an anaerobic environment that kept most of his effects intact. He still carries **two scrolls**, one inscribed with *shockwave\**, *ice storm* and *stone to flesh* x2. The other with *blink*, *confusion*, *water fall\** and *cloudkill*. A **ring of protection +2** is still at the thumb of his right hand, and a **ring of free action** at the pinky of his left.

**18. FUNGI MEN.** This area of the Crypts must have been blasted by something very significant, or have been the subject of a colossal collapse, to create this 70 foot tear into the north-western wall of the corridor leading to LC-19. The natural cave wall soon started to sprout a variety of molds and fungi, including the bioluminescent green variety found the altar of the Ashes of Aktum of the Burial Vaults and other places besides (it is possible to extract samples and consume them – see the table at L2-3 for the effects they have on humans).

A colony of Orchidean drones developed from there, under the influence of the matter of Chaos below. They are fungi men who service the molds and mushrooms of the colony, trying to keep predators at bay and grow to the best of their capacity. The Vitiante of the Flame at area **LC-19** communicates with them and keeps the undead away from their refuge, while the Orchidean drones let the servants of the Vitiante come back and forth by their wall and cavern. A party can either try to sneak past them if they are coming from the south-eastern tunnel leading to **LC-22**, or parley with the drones to let them visit the Vitiante of the Flame. If the Vitiante is later in trouble, a couple of drones will be sent to investigate, while the rest will stay to defend the colony.

There are twelve (12) drones total in this colony, at least four of which are assumed to be roaming the corridors at any point in time. If the colony loses more than half its drones, it will be willing to parley for the sake of the colony's survival.

**ORCHIDEAN DRONE (FUNGI MEN 2-8):** *SZ S; MV 90 ft.; AL TN; HD 3; HP 12 avg.; AC 6; #AT 2; D 1d4/1d4 root tentacles. Orchidean drones look like spore sacks the size of a human torso moving on tiny root-like tentacles topped with vivid flowers reminiscent of orchids the size of a human head. The drones emit clouds of brightly colored pollen which can be imbued with magic, and have a variety of effects depending on the maturity, mood and color of the pollen projected. The drones of this area are fairly young, spreading quickly through these parts, but they have accumulated enough energy to be able to produce effects such as magic missile (white vapor), charm person (green cloud) or sleep (blue) every melee round, ray of enfeeblement (indigo), scare (red) or stinking cloud (yellow) once every other round, and slow (violet) or hold person (orange) every three melee rounds.*

The bulbs of the drones are valuable alchemists, and would sell for 400 GP base value a piece. The north-western wall of fungi itself hides several corpses, some of which have been killed by the drones. If the party strikes peace with them, they will let them take their pick. There are several potions here, including one (1) **Potion of climbing**, two (2) **potions of extra healing**, one (1) **potion of fire resistance**, and a **poison** that will feel like potion of polymorph self. One corpse still wears a **ring of invisibility**, and another, what must have been a giant of a man in life, some **gauntlets of ogre power**.

**19. CHAPEL OF THE FLAME OF AKTUM.** The mood of this chapel is different. The steps leading down are black as night, indicating the corruption of the matter

of Chaos below, but bright torches are burning between the urns and alcoves below.

The Vitiante of the Flame of Aktum waits for the party directly in the middle of the room, at the foot of the steps. The party will immediately notice him as he sets himself on fire, and immediately duplicates himself into several identical bodies, all of them aflame!

Steropes just cast *mirror image* on himself. Immediately determine how many doubles are generated, and then describe how the flames of all the bodies intensify, and all of them seem to duplicate **again** before their very eyes, the new doubles running up, from their originals, into contact with the party. What happened is that Steropes summoned as many cremated remains as he has doubles plus himself to create an illusion that the cremated remains are more doubles of him. This should spook the party somewhat.

As the party faces the cremated remains, Steropes will first cast *magic missile*, softening his targets, and then, if he is still free on the round after this, he might cast *hold person* on what he would consider a particularly nasty member of the group at this point. He will keep his last *magic missile* in reserve to put down an injured magic-user, and will not cast *fireball* until the very end, right before he dies. It will be his grand exit, his ultimate insult to the party, if they let him cast it of course.

Please refer to the general entry detailing the Chapels in this chapter's introduction for the other contents, including the valuables, of this area.

**CREMATED REMAINS ("Doubles" of the doubles):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 3; HP 12 avg.; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6 hands on fire. 1d4 residual damage on the next melee round on a hit, as the victim burns from the inside out. Skeleton with vestigial organs that burst on fire and make the whole undead burn of an orange light. When the cremated remains are reduced to 0 hit points they explode for 2d4 damage in a 10-foot radius, saving throw versus breath weapon for half damage.*

**STEROPES KRAAT, VITIATE OF THE FLAME (ELDER CYCLOPS):** *SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; STR 18/00 (+3 to hit, +6 damage), WIS 15; HD 5; HP 26; AC 2; #AT 1; D 9-19 (1d6 + 7 + 1d6 flaming), Battle Thurlible. Targets must make a saving throws vs magic or be set on fire for 1d6 damage per melee round until extinguished (takes a melee round to stop the flames from propagating). An Elder Cyclops can cast spell as a 5th level Magic-User or Cleric. Magic-User spells memorized (4/2/1): magic missile x2, hold person, mirror image, fireball.*

**VITIATED SHADOW OF FLAME:** SZ M; MV 120 ft.; AL CE; HD 3+3; HP 13; AC 7; #AT 1; D 1d4+1, +1 STR, Chill Touch. Shadows can only be hit by weapons +1 or better. Drained Strength regained 2d4 turns after being touched. Each time the Vitiated Shadow of Flame is hit by a ranged weapon, whether it currently inhabits the Vitiate's physical body or not, an ebon flame appears on impact and retraces the trajectory of the projectile, hitting the original attacker for 1d6 fire damage and 1 STR damage. In fact, Steropes's shadow will spend most of the fight in his own body, making its own touch attacks to chill touch and drain strength. When the shadow is inside the body of its host, it takes the same damage as its hosts does. Only when it is apart from its host can it benefit from the full protection of its insubstantiality.

Steropes wears a **ring of fire resistance**, as well as an **amulet of Aktum**, which grants +2 AC, can be used to stop the undead that are not chaotic evil in their tracks (as though trying to control undead as a 5th level evil cleric) and can command some of the functionalities of the level, like the lanterns freeing the green stuff to break up fights and intervene in the favor of the amulet wearer.

**20. LAIR OF THE OCTOFISH.** This very dark and damp natural cavern serves as the lair of a couple mature octofish and their get. They will usually be satisfied with the flesh of those juicy undead that remain wandering along the corridors of the Crypts, but the young will not be able to hide their excitement when they feel the approach of warm bodies: the party will be able to hear some squeaking ahead, much like rodents.

If the party is not careful and does not check the ceilings, one young octofish will fall from the ceiling per character in the front line. The mature specimens will stay in the back and let their young feed on the victims, unless they become endangered, in which case the mature octofish will want to push the intruders backwards towards the main corridor of the catacombs. They will not follow the party, and will stay in the cave they consider their lair.

The Octofish do not like fire. If pyrotechnics or fireballs and flaming oil are employed, they will try to find refuge in the darkest corner of their cavern and stay there while the party moves along or searches the area. Characters wielding torches can test their mettle and try to intimidate the octofish, essentially using their own level, no matter the character class, as though they were clerics trying to repel undead, with a young octofish counting as a ghast, and the mature specimen counting as a mummy.

**OCTOFISH (YOUNG, 9):** SZ M; MV 70 ft. mobile on walls and ceilings; AL TN; HD 4; HP 16 avg. ; AC 8; #AT 8; D 1 point of damage per tentacle hitting. If at least one tentacle hits, the target must make an immediate saving throw vs poison, with a -1 penalty on the die per tentacle that just hit, or be paralyzed for one full turn. If the victim succeeds and is not paralyzed, she will have the opportunity to make one attack, with a -1 penalty on the die per tentacle that previously hit, in order to escape the octofish's grasp. If this fails, the octofish then makes an attack with a +1 modifier on the dice per tentacle that hit previously; if the attack hits, the victim is brought to the octofish's mouth and bitten for 2-8 damage. The victim makes another saving throw each following round to avoid paralyzation, and may attack again to break free if the saving throw succeeds. A failure means an automatic bite. The procedure is repeated until the victim is paralyzed, frees itself or dies.

**OCTOFISH (MATURE, 2):** SZ L; MV 70 ft. mobile on walls and ceilings; AL TN; HD 6; HP 38, 32; AC 6; #AT 8; D 1d3 per tentacle hitting. The same procedures apply to the mature specimen as described above, except the bite damage is 4-16 instead.

The octofish is a creature able to walk on the ground, on walls, and ceilings, that looks like a starfish with eight prongs each ending in black tentacles able to grab prey and bring it to its toothed mouth at the center of its mass. The octofish is slow and relatively awkward in its movements. Though its rugged skin is naturally dark blue, with tiny yellow eyes blipping in out of existence as they blink, it can alter its hue and pigmentation enough to mimic its rocky surroundings, with a 1-4 chance of surprise.

If the octofish are dispatched or leave the party alone, they can discover the petrified body of a Mynch warrior half buried in the mud, as well as a few of the octofish, also petrified. The Mynch are small, green-skinned and long-eared goblin-like humanoids who inhabit the southern part of the Grim Wood. This particular warrior is dressed with a cloak, linen robes, and **bracers of defense AC 4**. He still carries **potions of diminution, climbing** and of **ESP**, as well as an **iron flask**, at his belt, a **scroll** in a sealed bone tube containing the magic-user spells *enlarge*, *protection from evil*, *fool's gold* and *invisibility 10' radius*, and holds a short sword and a dagger in his hands. The short sword is made of orichalcum and fits perfectly against the blade and through a slit along the guard of the short sword that makes them one together. They are in fact two of a kind; magical blades bound by the same identity and will to live. They are **Bear and Taurc** (short sword and dagger, a taurc resembling a grizzly bear in



looks and stature, including the bump on the shoulders, but with a boar-like, porcine head instead), both robust weapons named after the totem animals of the ancient Vharag, who are believed to be a pre-human offshoot of those who would come to be known as the Gaelish, the people of Anu (see the Gazetteer of the Eastern Duinnsmere, *Wilderness expansion*, for more on the history of the region).

**BEAR AND TAURC:** +1 short sword and +1 dagger, INT 17, EGO 15+. AL Chaotic Good. Languages: Vyridian (Alignment), Gaelish, Aodhian, Yiggite and Giant Languages. They will understand Frankhian, but will mock the language mercilessly. When separate, Bear and Taurc each function as +1 weapons. They are both elegant, slightly curved weapons resembling elven blades, but forged by men, as the runes covering their length both can attest. Bear is covered with an elaborate scene showing a bear, whose face forms the guard of the sword, fighting alone against a legion of warriors carved charging from the point of the sword down towards the animal. The handle is made of the finest walnut, and blends with the brass of the guard seamlessly. Taurc shows the porcine face of the animal, this time scaring away the warriors, running away from the guard, towards the tip of the blade. It too has a walnut handle, and both fit together perfectly, as Taurc can be placed into a slit along the guard of Bear to fit into an indentation of the blade and a recess of the handle, the two blades forming one whenever its wielder would want to combine their forces in single powerful strikes. When Bear and Taurc are held together in separate hands, they become +3 weapons, to hit and damage. Together, they can detect magic in a 10-foot radius, and specifically those individuals currently under the influence of charms or otherwise personality altering spells, such as friendship, geas, hold person and the like. While Bear is an inspirational blade, that adds 20% to the loyalty of those who serve its wielder and adds 10% to reactions thereof, Taurc can break such enchantments when it draws blood from those who are thus enslaved. A true strike must be performed to break such sortileges, and a saving throw at +4 bonus on the die succeeded. When the blades are joined together and held two-handed, the joined sword inflicts damage like a +4 magical short sword, and allows its wielder to fly true at MV 120 ft., for one hour a day. The mere sight of the blade allows those under the influence of personality-altering spells to make a saving throw and break free from them, with no modifier this time, but it will only inspire +10% to troops and will not free the enslaved it might strike together. Only Taurc alone has the power to do this.

*Bear and Taurc have a simple goal: freeing humans and demi-humans from enslavement. They believe the forces of Law can too easily be turned against the power of self-determination of the souls they are sworn to defend, and as such they can be extremely driven and persuasive. The blades tend to speak telepathically with two voices.*

**WYSLA AN SERU:** The warrior Mynch (F6/MU6) was part of an expedition to the Marmoreal Tomb that was ordered to stop the Lord Khran Vedik, a Death Knight of the Order of the Vryll, from acquiring the **Ivory Rod of Smiting** now in possession of Hive Mind at LC-13. The party confronted the Death Knight and destroyed him at area LC-23, against all odds. Wysla and Iyoga the Dwarf were the only survivors. Confronted by a wave of undead, they tried to escape through the natural caves due west, where Iyoga used the head of a medusa they had slain along the way to repel some of the octofish. He called his companion, turned around, and Wysla only remembers staring into the eyes of the medusa, losing consciousness with the next heartbeat. He has been petrified in the mud of this cave ever since. Iyoga the Dwarf (Th9) can be found at area LC-10.

**21. EVER-COLLAPSING CHAMBER.** This natural cave collapses every time someone or something walks through it. The stalactites and ceiling just fall off, inflicting 3d6 points of damage to whoever stands in the room, saving throw vs breath weapon for half damage. Then, after living creatures have left this area, it resets 1-6 melee rounds later, as if the ceiling never fell down. This is a magical glitch that can be avoided if all the people walking through the area do so *backwards*. Then the collapse is not triggered and the room doesn't need to reset.

The collapse can be heard from area LC-20, LC-22 and LC-23. Their inhabitants will know some intruders unfamiliar with this chamber are afoot.

**22. GIANT STONE FACE.** This flooded area serves as the lair of a huge, unnatural colony of rats and wererats, including a insanely large, three-headed specimen ruling the bunch. The walls of the cave have been smoothed out by thousands of bites and hide thin passages and tunnels the rats use to reach other levels and areas within the Marmoreal Mound and beyond. Though fire can be useful outside to redirect the rats or confine them to specific areas, exposing the cave to blasts of fire would simply cause most of the rats to find refuge under the water. Lightning bolts cast at the water directly, on the other hand, could be much more effective, and extraordinarily deadly.



In the center of the cavern lies an island with a single particular feature: the huge head of a stone giant slowly sinking in the silt. This is the head of the dead giant sitting on his granite throne in the middle of the village of the Ada-Maku at **H-19**. The Ada-Maku would hail as heroes those who would retrieve this head and bring it back to them. It weighs seven or eight tons, so moving it physically will be an issue, unless one uses spells to shrink the head before moving it, or other means of movement are available.

The giant rats are masters of their domain. The stench is unbelievable, inflicting a -2 to hit and damage on a successful saving throw vs. poison due to strong nausea, -4 to hit and damage and half movement rates on a failed saving throw. The rats will come at the party like a swarm. The referee can go over the top, and describe the giant wave of rodents rolling over the stagnant water swallowing everything in its path.

**GIANT RATS (250+):** SZ S; MV 120 ft.; AL TN' AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 3; #AT 1; D 1d3. This entirely chaotic mass of rats will sometimes move like a giant wave possessed by the hunger of an utterly immoral and insatiable hive mind. It then becomes ravenous, and unstoppable.

**WERERATS (12):** SZ S/M; MV 120 ft.; AL NE; Surprise 1-4; AC 6; HD 3+1; HP 13 avg.; #AT 1; D 1d8. Only hit by silver or +1 magical weapons and better. Victims losing bitten over 50% of their max HP is infected with the disease of lycanthropy. Consider there are four (4) wererats always present in this room, but never the same.

**THRICE-HEADED GREEN RAT:** SZ M; MV 170 ft.; AL NE; AC 4; HD 5; HP 41; #AT 5; D 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d8, claw, claw, bite x 3; there is a 15% chance of infection with a serious disease with each bite of the thrice-headed rat.

**23. PRISMATIC FOUNTAIN.** In the middle of this cave lies a seven-foot wide well with an impressive abstract sculpture springing out of it. The well is surrounded by curb made of granite, while the substance of the sculpture, which looks like a giant splash of liquid springing in the air and frozen in time as fantastic fish, octopus and other marine creatures reach out to break free from its mass, seems carved out of a single piece of celadon marble.

A single, black curved blade, a khopesh of Iyathari making, was used to stab the sculpture, its blade still stuck in there up to the weapon's guard. Pulling it out requires a lift gate, bend bars test, but several characters can combine their strengths before making the roll. Pulling the blade out will turn the sculpture into liquid marble that will fall back into the well by the force of gravity in a split second. A *transmute rock to mud* spell would accomplish a similar result, ejecting the blade out of the sculpture, and returning the marble to its liquid state.

A melee round later, an eldritch centimanus will have been generated by the bubbling liquid marble in the well. It will want to feed immediately. The fountain of marble can be stopped by a *transmute mud to rock* spell, or by stabbing it with the magical khopesh. If left alone and active, the fountain of marble will generate more chaotic

creatures. Every 2-8 days, the referee can roll for an encounter, Monster Level VI, to determine randomly.

This is where Wysla the Mynch and Iyoga the Dwarf faced a medusa and ultimately defeated Lord Khran Vedik, a Death Knight of the Order of the Vryll. The khopesh blade known as the Watcher, currently freezing the fountain of marble in this very area, used to belong to Khran Vedik. Pieces of the Death Knight's armor are still in this room, buried under the mud and gravel of the area. It IS possible that, in time, with the influx of the energies of Chaos reaching from the depth of the Eurth to the Crypts, the Death Knight might come back to (un)life to haunt this world once more. Lord Vedik would probably leave the Tomb and report to his superior, Lord Vrool of Rhadamanth, Plenipotentiary Knight of Abadel, Orthoprinceps of the Crowns of Onyx and Chrysoberyl, the Reaper of the Eurth, but he would come back to try to complete his mission and get to the ivory rod of smiting of area **LC-13**, if at all possible.

**ELDRITCH CENTIMANUS:** SZ M; MV 90 ft.; AL CN; HD 6; HP 28; AC 4; #AT 4 initial attacks; D 1d6 fist. If one fist hits, roll another fist to hit for D 1-6, and again if this second fist hits, and then again, until a fist attack fails. The eldritch centimanus is a creature entirely made of arms and heads. It is absolutely deadly, unless it is kept at a reasonable distance. Legends say it has fifty heads on the top and its back, with a hundred arms forming the rest of its mass. It is hard to ascertain, but for the fact that once the centimanus is in contact, it can be very deadly, very fast, especially to those who are not properly protected. Each attack to hit with a fist simulates many more, softer slams in the interval.

**THE WATCHER:** +2 *Khopesh* (2d4 base damage), INT 17, EGO 17+. AL Chaotic Evil. Languages: Dark Speech (Alignment), Ekkedian, Khemeti, Iyathari, Danthean and Aodhian. The watcher is versed in many forms of languages, one of its magic abilities, and it will take no more than three melee rounds of exposure for it to understand at least the basics of a specific language. The Watcher is a curved, dark iron blade of obvious Ekkedian making, with a guard made of ebonite, at the center of which shines a round, slitted, living yellow eye that moves and looks around, blinks, and studies its surroundings endlessly. It is able to probe the people around it, read their surface thoughts (ESP) within a 30-foot range, and detects magic in a 10' radius. Three times a day, it can grant the use of *clairvoyance* and *clairaudience*, for one use per melee round each. It comprehends languages, and can decipher ancient manuscripts. If the Watcher is used in

a fight for three consecutive rounds against the same adversary, it can strike true once at +8 to hit and damage, as it has figured out the weakness in the technique of its opponent. This only works once per confrontation with a single specific opponent, however, as targets usually change their tactics once they have suffered this ability, consciously or not, but the Khopesh will strike this specific individual as a +3 weapon to hit and damage from then on, as it knows its target well enough.

The Watcher is the ancient spirit of a Ekkedian sorcerer now inhabiting the blade for eternity. It is obsessed with knowledge, and paranoid to the extreme. It only believes in the survival of the fittest, and will mold its wielder as a tool to ascend the echelons of power as quickly as possible. It loves martial arts, torture, any sorts of studies of the dark arts and history of the Eurth. It is relentless in its pursuit of all manners of secrets, and will often whisper to its wielder what it can detect and know, but also what it cannot and what disastrous consequences not knowing could have on them both, thus manipulating whoever carries it to its own advantage.

**24. POLISHED MARBLE CAVE.** The entire western wall of the area is polished like a mirror of pristine green marble. Touching the surface reveals one can walk through, and reach the underground levels of the Tower at area **E-9**. The rats and wererats of area **LC-22** use this place to come and go to and from the Crypts to the surface. They are allied to the Red Apes of Lyon, who also send some of their numbers here to maintain a presence in the Crypts and try to reach hire power and levels of recognition among their kin.

**RED APES OF LYON (7):** SZ M.; MV 120 ft./150 ft. leaps; AL CE, HD 3; HP 12 avg.; AC 6; #AT 2 or 2 or 2, +3 to hit on bludgeoning attack on a leaping charge, +2 to hit on fists attacks on charge, and +1 to hit on normal attacks; Net throw\* and D5-15 (2d6 +3) to a single target on a leaping charge, OR 1d6+2/1d6+23-8 on a charge on land, OR 1d6/1d6 regular combat. The red apes favor a leaping charge first, during which they throw their net at a target (no bonus to hit) and then pummel it with their fists when landing. Once on the ground, they can charge normally if they have the room to maneuver, or attack normally their targets with their fists in melee. \* A successful net throw pins the target down and prevents returning attacks against the red ape until a Strength test is succeeded to break free from the net (the red apes are specialists with their weapons: a net would have to be used by a humans and demi-humans with two hands to pin a target, then use weapons on the next round).

**25. CATERPILLARS' NEST.** As is the case with area LC-7, this cave is filled with bodies and eggs gestating inside them. This nest of caterpillars is directly under the control of the Canon to the Ashes of Aktum, who feeds them and controls their development; much like one would guard dogs or pets. The caterpillars are in fact starving, and do not have the resources necessary to fully develop and become Chaos Cicadas. Those Chrysalides they manage to develop are taken away by the Canon and hanged around the Choir at area L2-3. There is always at least one caterpillar guarding the eggs in this area.

A **scroll** can be found amongst the mess of eggs and rubble, in a wooden tube. It is inscribed with the magic-user spells *knock*, *water blast\**, *fly* and *improved shockwave\**, as well as six (6) gems worth 100 GP base value, and four (4) of a 500 GP base value.

**CADAVEROUS CATERPILLARS (2-8):** SZ M; MV 60 ft.; AL TN; Surprise 1-5; HD 3+2; HP 14 avg.; AC 6; #AT 4; D 1d3/1d3/1d3/1d3 tentacles, plus paralysis on a hit (saving throw versus poison negates). The Cadaverous Caterpillar has the ability to blend in its surroundings. It paralyzes its victims to then eat them or lay 2d4 eggs inside of them. These eggs usually kill their host in 5-10 days. See the Caterpillar's entry in Appendix A, Monsters and Characters for more information.

**26. CLEANING CREW AND FOUNTAIN CREATURES.** Creatures and humanoids made out of Green stuff are stored in this area, on two opposite sides of the cave. Three are made to resemble stone giants in full gear, with spear and stone armor, and are located around a lantern by the northern wall that is not lit. When Chaplains of the Ashes of Aktum deem it necessary, they can break out fights between slaves, undead, and other inhabitants of the crypts using this enforcers. They just have to concentrate on their Amulets of Aktum and the lantern is lit, the warmth of which will get the statues of green stuff going on the next melee round.

The other group of creatures, by the western wall of the cave, includes what looks like snake men, pre-human simians and small dinosaurs made out of the same green stuff. The temperature drops sharply as the party approaches these statues. They are being kept cold on purpose, to avoid being animated by some body warmth or torch by accident. If the party searches the area, they will find a box of iron buried in the center of the group of green stuff effigies. The box is protected by a needle-trap, no saving throw. Inside, there is a radiant Blue Fyre Opal resting on a bed of dark velvet. It is the gem that keeps the green stuff cold. If it is taken away from this place,

ultimately the rest of the green stuff will animate and roam the corridors of the Crypts with no direction, and just their basic instincts to guide them.

**STATUES OF GREEN STUFF (3):** SZ M; MV 50 ft.; AL TN' HD 5; HP 20 avg.; AC 8; #AT 2; D 1d6/1d6. *Creatures made out of green stuff take full damage from blunt weapons and only half damage from other types, unless magical. They do not regain their HP normally, and must be repaired with more green stuff to heal. They are impervious to acid, and electricity damage. Green stuff is healed by water, and takes half damage sonic sources. Any form of heat animates it and keeps it functional (in one melee round with an open flame, though warm living bodies standing right next to it can do the trick in three melee rounds), but the green stuff is otherwise indifferent to fire. Cold spells and salt are the bane of the green stuff, as well as anything that could similarly take away the heat and moisture that keep them active. Deprived from heat and moisture, the green stuff solidifies and simply stops moving around, frozen in place until a new heat source shows up.*

**THE BLUE FYRE OPAL:** This gem is a minor artefact that gradually drains warmth around it. It can wound people for 1d4 cold damage per round on contact, and can be used as a projectile to deal 4d4 damage as it radiates biting frost on violent contact. If reused the same day for the same purpose, it will inflict 2d4 next, then 1d4 flat for the rest of the day. It will soothe people in particular warm situation, near lava, in the jungle, and provide +2 to saving throws against heat in such conditions. The Blue Fyre Opal can emit a flash of bright light that will stun people for 1d3 melee rounds on a failed saving throw vs magic, once a day.

## DEVELOPMENTS

**CONFRONTATION OF M'KHEPOT AND THE MASKS:** When the Mhole is brought to area LC-5, the Silent Lake, it means the party has either figured out how to quiet and control the water elemental there, has defeated it, or has enlisted the help of Naguro Masasaki of LC-4, whether he still around, or the party already helped him to relocate outside the dungeon. Whatever the circumstances may be, make note of the enemies and allies the party has in the area at the moment, as their interventions might sway the result of the confrontation drastically. In fact, it would be an error not to plan this move, especially since the reaction of the Mhole, which at first should be hesitant and clearly indicate there's a danger via his PTSD, will be unpredictable.

Also consider this confrontation has the potential to be epic, and involve some prior steps and skirmishes before its resolution. The Mhole is psychic, and can sense things from far away, albeit with no certainty of clarity since it is missing a part of itself. The power of the Hungry Masks is confined to the Crypts, but it is greater in its precision and it can spy on the party regularly. With that said, M'khepot has the ability to summon memories as if they were real people, when they are in fact phantasmal forces, while the Masks can create simulacra from its mass. Though the Masks know about the Mhole's psychic ability, they are not always on guard doubting and "disbelieving" everything around them – they are too overconfident for that. A confrontation between the two beings might involve subterfuges and illusions on both sides, some groups trying to join to help the other, then betraying them during the final confrontation and vice versa.

Ultimately, when the M'khepot is brought to **LC-5**, and assuming the Black Mirror of Yllonnoc has been mended by then, the Mhole will have a flashback and live the assassination of Osmandius again, which he will psychically project around him and the party. The memories of the Mhole are faulty. It is the Mhole, in fact, who saw Osmandius in the caves and decided to stop the dark wizard as it was bringing obsidian jellies down into this area to do his bidding. The Mhole summoned all his memories to him, and faced the wizard. He was the generic faces with multiple expressions, for the Hungry Masks did not exist yet. It when the wizard finally decided to deliver the coup de grace with the Black Fang of Yllonnoc that the Mhole realized there would be no escape, and fractured his mind to inhabit one of the jellies summoned by the Wizard. It grabbed the Black Fang, and psychic explosion that resulted from this fractured Osmandius just as it did the mind of the Mhole.

With the Black Mirror mended, the Mhole knows that the wizard can come back, for a part of its spirit still lives in the Hungry Masks of the Dead, that part of them that makes them so envious, cruel and ugly. And thus it becomes apparent, now, that the Masks of the Dead are part of the memories of the Mhole, and that the Black Fang still holds onto a piece of Osmandius's mind through the existence of the Masks. They must be destroyed, and then the memories of the Mhole will be liberated.

The confrontation ensues.

When the Hungry Masks of the Dead are defeated, M'khepot will regain his memories and identity as a Ohminid. He will also remember where he buried the remains of Ragna, on the eastern shore of the Coral Lake at

**LC-9**. Her scale mail is still serviceable, but its dweomer was destroyed during the invasion of Krassus. She still carries three items that are significant for the adventuring party. The first one is a **crossbow of speed +2** which doubles the usual fire rate and stacks with arrow modifiers. The second one is a personal item significant to the ruling family of Grunn Galeb: It is the **Dragon Belt of Belenor**, with its dragon head buckle, which acts both as an anti-gravity belt, effectively allowing the character to move as if suspended in mid-air for up to an hour (6 turns) per day. It also grants an automatic 18 CON, much like giant belts do for Strength.

The third one is the **Pickaxe of Grunn Galeb**, dwarven thrower. This damaged weapon appears to be +1 and radiates strong magic in the hands of a non-dwarf. If a dwarf gets a hold of it, it becomes a +3 dwarven thrower to hit and damage, striking its opponents at a 60 ft. distance to then return to its wielder. The Pickaxe inflicts double damage to giants, giant-kin and goblin-kin. It is the ancestral weapon of the Stone-cutters, before Belenor's greed got the best of him and he tried to wield the Hammer of Aktum. If brought to the surviving Stone-cutters of Nester's Folly, *The Hobby Shop Dungeon*, it could be repaired and its true revealed, becoming a +5 pickaxe, dealing double damage to the enemies of the Stone-cutters, and triple damage to giants, giant-kin and goblin-kin. Restituting this weapon to the Stone-cutters would make them lifelong friends and allies to the party.

If the party goes through the trouble of moving the remains of Ragna and give her a proper burial inside or near Grunn Galeb, give each character in the party a 1,000 XP reward. Likewise, if the party goes through the trouble of trying to find the survivors, goes all the way to Nester's Folly and finally gives up the Pickaxe of Aktum, referees must make sure to reward the characters appropriately.

On the Masks' side, their destruction will ensure Osmandius will not make a comeback any time soon. The Ostrakon from the Bone Hill at **H-II**, the version of Osmandius that is forever crippled and made it back here from another shade of the Eurth to avoid the same fate twice, will immediately feel the destruction of the Masks, and will increasingly become desperate in its quest to resurrect Osmandius. The defeated Masks of the Dead will drop the Black Fang of Yllonnoc, and the black obelisk of area **LC-3** will loudly shatter, which a party at the Silent Lake of **LC-5** would hear, thus revealing its contents. Check area LC-3 for that side of the loot, and pepper with an ambush or two if you feel this needs a little more of a struggle to get it.



**THE LAST PUSH:** If the referees want a final dramatic confrontation to this whole section of the adventure, and a challenge to mark the possible end of the corruption in the Crypts, at least for the time being, they must keep tabs on the activities of the party. When the Vitiates of Chaos have all been eliminated, and the other emanations of Chaos such as the Hungry Masks of the Dead, the Leech Hive Mind and the others are on their way out, the referee might want spring one last surprise before the shafts are sealed. Alternately, referees could let some time pass, let the party get well underway sealing the shafts (see below), go through a period of clean up and administration of the mine and what's going outside and so on, and then just before the seals of the shafts are finally done BAM, trigger that one last climactic encounter.

As the Chaos of the place makes a final push, a huge earthquake shakes the entire complex, and the green stuff and celadon marble of the place gathers in one spot under the control of the malignant force of the depths responsible for all this to form one last attempt to regain it all and wipe out the opposition to its will: a dragon able to meld into the Eurth and eager to destroy the party.

The dragon will materialize as veins of ore pierce through the walls of the crypts, effigies of green stuff are sucked into the chaotic mass that takes a reptilian shape, grows wings, and finally growls of anger as it wants to regain control of its territory.

**CELADON DRAGON:** SZ L; MV 90 ft./240 ft. flying/120 ft. melding through the Eurth; AL CE' HD 10; HP 66; AC 2; #AT 3; D 1d4/1d4/4d6, claw, claw, bite. A Celadon dragon can use one of two breath weapons choice: the first is 20-radius shockwave sending plaques of marble skin flying around the dragon in all directions, and the other is a more conventional breath weapon, a flow of molten pebbles and shards of granite forming a 50 ft. long cone 5 ft. at its base and 50 ft. at its widest. Per first edition rules, all breath weapons inflict an amount of damage equal to the current hit points of the dragon to all eligible targets, but half that amount with a successful saving throw vs. breath weapons. A celadon dragon can meld with stone and passwall at will, as if moving and breathing through water, indefinitely. It often uses this tactic to its advantage, disappearing through the walls of a cave to reappear at the opportune moment and surprise the party with its breath weapon. This Celadon dragon being a personification of the rage and anger of the matter of Chaos, it does not cast spells, but it can still absorb them as they are cast at it, 1-in-3. If absorbed, a spell heals the dragon from 3

points per spell level, or 1 point per 3 points of damage it was supposed to inflict, whichever is higher. A celadon dragon is particularly sensitive to cold damage, which it will not absorb, as well as air and water types of attacks.

When the Celadon dragon, the last line of defense marshalled by the emanations of the matter of Chaos trying keep its hold on the Crypts of Aktum, finally lies defeated, it will deteriorate right before its victor's eyes, and only leave the green stuff it had gathered behind. Among the warm mounds of green stuff, the party will also find an item which had disappeared during the loot of the tomb of Garn Patuul, and managed to find refuge of its own volition, inside the veins of Celadon marble surrounding the mines, and made its way here, until the dragon coalesced all the substance it could to manifest itself: the sacred crown of Aktum, last worn by Garn Patuul himself.

**CROWN OF AKTUM:** Carved out of Celadon Marble and plated with Orichalcum, the crown of Aktum makes the wearer immune to all forms spell-like *fear*, *confusion* and *charm* and *hold person* effects, as well as *suggestions*, *magic jar* and the like. It further allows the casting of *dig*, *passwall*, *stone shape*, *stone skin*, *move earth* and *transmute rock to mud/mud to rock*, once a day, *stone tell* and *earthquake* once a week for the wearer who wouldn't be able to cast them naturally using his own HD as the spell caster level. If these spells are cast from other sources, as memorized spells for instance, the Crown adds two levels to the wearer's effective HD/character level total to cast relevant Eurth-based spells.

The crown of Aktum must be worn to be able to use these powers. When it is worn, it sends a continuous, subtle tremor through the Eurth that will let all stone giants within 10 miles per character level (or hit die) of the wearer know that the item has been found and is being used. Needless to say, the stone giants of the Tomb will want to have the item back. The Norns themselves could intervene, and ask for it in reparation of their troubles as they explored the area. Continuous use of the crown sends a magical broadcast that any stone giants can tune and listen to, figuring out the whereabouts of the wearer in their very bones. How the stone giants of the Midlands and the Vile Legion of Krassus react to this revelation is up for the referee.

**THE NATURE OF THE CELADON MARBLE:** The celadon marble is linked to the construction of dungeons and the work of magic-users upon the Eurth. It is an alchemical, metamorphic rock that is particularly receptive to dweomers and alchemical manipulations. This particular substance is ruled by principles derived

from magic, symbols, analogy and allegory, more than it is ruled by the lawful principles of mineralogy, chemistry and physics. Thus, it is possible with magic to shape the celadon marble into normally impossible shapes and proportions, to make it withstand forces that conventional Earth architecture and physics would tell us it can't possibly withstand, to make it become diamond or gas, potions or clay, or support complex dweomers and channel telluric currents to empower patterns and sigils aligning forces of magic to the benefit of their users. If as some say, some dungeons are purposeful attempts at creating four-dimensional models and patterns channeling such energies for greater purposes, then it makes sense to use material that would respond to such energies and share the same common laws of essence and substance on the Eurther.

**THE GREEN STUFF:** The "green stuff" is a malleable compound similar to clay, which is alchemically produced from the celadon marble of the Tomb. Since the Celadon marble responds to magic and the telluric forces of the Eurther, it made sense to adapt it to various forms. The world of the Eurther being much more magical than our own Earth, the separations between the elements and the states and even nature of matter are much more tenuous, and ruled by symbols and analogy, more than they are by some strict rules of physics.

The green stuff is therefore a form of clay that is primed to receive dweomers and create forms of life, which, though quite similar to golems, are not quite the same thing, for the celadon marble itself lends a form of conscience to the effigies and statues built out of it. The clay golem might actually be its closer relative, since from its conception it can at some point become possessed by an evil spirit and turn against its creator. But the soul of the green stuff does not emanate from one single aligned source, and if and when it develops a sense of self-awareness, a process which can take any length of time and occur completely randomly, it is usually expressed as a child-like wonder at the very fact of being alive to experience events and things around it. The downside to this is that once green stuff is aware, it develops a form of independence, just like a human being, that can be turn into anger, hatred, antipathy, violence, obsession if it is badly treated, or feels like some injustice must be redressed, as would be expected of all truly free spirits of this Eurther.

The surroundings of the Golden Aquarium at LC-6 include the tools and grimoire explaining how to create the green stuff from raw celadon marble, shape it, and then treat it to get back to its solid marble form. It does not provide the instructions necessary to use the green stuff

and create effigies. Suffice to say that these instructions require a wizard to be used, if stone giants and dwarves are unable to help, and could perhaps be obtained via the sections of the Burial Vaults that could gradually open to more exploration by the party. If the referee uses the *Wilderness expansion*, this is included in the chapter covering the Extended Burial Vaults.

**POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS:** Possibilities of resolution vis a vis the issues of corruption of the Crypts can take different directions, depending on the party and who they choose to enlist to help in their efforts. If the Canon of Gaugamoth of the Dwarven Fort at area H-7 gets wind of what is going on with the Crypts for instance, and the existence of the Cult to the Ashes of Aktum, to begin with, the ettin will be extremely interested. The Cult was started by hill giants who were none others than worshippers of Gaugamoth, known at the time as the abyssal entity, Demogorgon. He would support the party in its quest to save the Cult from the persecution of Chaos, which referees might now understand is a bit an irony: corrupting a cult of chaos and evil with chaos and evil, how does that work, exactly? And yet here we are, with the indiscriminate, ever-changing matter of chaos corrupting the ancient cult of chaos and evil, like cancer cells destroying everything in their path, or fanatics only separated by paper thin differences tearing each other apart.

We've mentioned the Ostrakon of H-II quite a few times as well, due to his relationship with Osmandius and the nature of the Hungry Masks of the Dead. What will be his role in all of this, especially if he gets a foothold inside Grunn Galeb and gets control of the Black Mirror he desires so much? The Ostrakon would help to clean up the Crypts, in exchange for control of the mirror. Sealing the shafts would seem like a no brainer, at least for the time being, until such a time the Ostrakon himself can be sure he can face whatever lies down below, beyond the Crypts, under the Eurther. He could employ the party to find out and go on side-quests for legends, artefacts and historical records that would reveal more about the Labyrinth, the Hearth of Chaos, or whatever, if anything, the referee plans to do with the depths, using the *Underworld expansion* to this module or not.

Referees are welcome and encouraged to extrapolate like this with every major NPC and faction the party has come in contact with at this point. This is the meat of the world in motion, and what makes the unfolding events so personal and unpredictable on our end.

**PURGING THE CRYPTS:** Now, to completely purge the crypts of the influence of Chaos down below, two things

need to happen: (1) All the agents of Chaos at the level of the Crypts must be somehow eliminated, imprisoned, or disposed of, and (2) The vertical shafts now open to what lies below must be sealed anew, which means building proper seals, and placing them in the right locations.

**THE AGENTS OF CHAOS:** Purging all the agents of Chaos from the Crypts is necessary to completely secure the place. It is better to cap the shafts leading down to the Hearth of Chaos first, and then to slay what remains of the agents of Chaos in and out of the Crypts, so as to not miss anyone or anything. If the shafts are sealed, then no more corruption from below sips through, and what remains of the corruption in the Crypts is a known, measurable and ever-dwindling quantity. Not so the other way around, as when the party is about taking care of this or that NPC, another could be in the process of being corrupted at the same time, and escape detection later on.

With all that said, the Vitiates of Chaos should be the first to go: The Vitiates of the Mist of **LC-8**, the Vitiates of the Blades of **LC-11**, and the Vitiates of the Flame at **LC-19** are those already corrupted. As proposed for dramatic effect, the Chaplain of the Graves **LC-14** would immediately follow upon first meeting with the party, and there's no taking bets as to how fast the utterly disgusting Chaplain of the Essences of **LC-2** would come next.

Then, the creatures which are the result of the corruption of Chaos would have to be eliminated. This includes the Hungry Masks of the Dead of **LC-3**, the Leech Hive Mind of **LC-13**, the Thrice-Headed Green Rat of **LC-22**. The Watcher would have to be extracted from the fountain at **LC-23**, and that's about it, minus this or that undead.

**SEALING THE SHAFTS:** With the help of Kufiss of **L2-19** (or the Handmaiden of **L2-27** leading the PCs to the Norns of **H-21**, or some other NPC like the centaurs of the Font of Life etc., around the dungeon), it is possible get to the information necessary to trap the shadows that are inhabiting the Vitiates (with an Iron Flask, like the one found at area **LC-20**), if they are not destroyed outright, and to seal the passages down the shafts anew.

Sealing the two main shafts of areas **LC-4** and **LC-16** leading down from the Crypts to the Hearth would be a priority. Then, the other three shafts going down from the Burial Vaults at areas **L2-15**, **L2-22** and **L2-32** would be next, as some of them must surely have collapsed and be wide open to the matter of Chaos already. To accomplish this, one would need to fashion a lid, place dedicated statue of Zuun on top of it, and then place the resulting seal on top of the opening concerned.

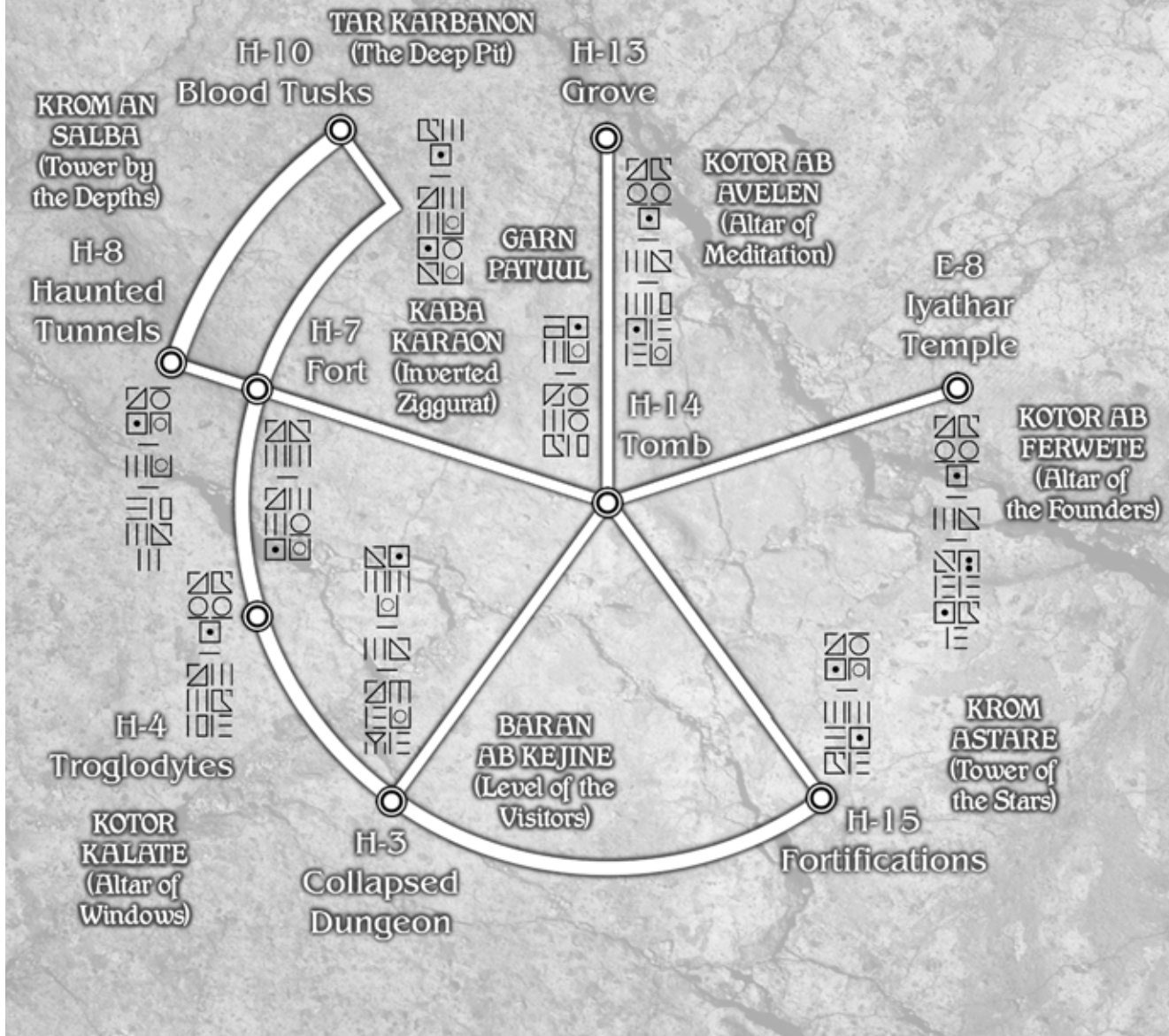
The tools and instructions to reshape and repurpose the green stuff area are available at **LC-10**. The green stuff itself at **LC-10**, **LC-16**, and the fountain of **LC-23** could be used for more. The statues of Zuun are each trapped in amber, along with a mummy of an important servant of Aktum which may or may not turn out to be an amber mummy; we'll let the referee decide for best impact. Accessing the mummies and statues is simply a matter of retooling a rock to mud spell, or asking for the help of the stone giants like Kufiss or the Norns who would sympathize for the party's cause and agree to scribe a scroll with a dedicated spell of *amber to resin* for them, for instance. A cleric casting a last blessing or the stone giants assisting in the placing of the lids onto the openings of the shaft would work just fine. Players should feel free to use the gamut of friends and relations they have accumulated over the course of the game to make this work.

#### VENTURING FORTH - THE MATTER OF CHAOS:

Areas **LC-4** and **LC-16** have direct, unhindered access to the matter of Chaos, a term designating what lies below, which is more dungeons and caverns directly tied to thematically to the idea of impermanence, entropy, birth and rebirth, etc. Referees who wouldn't want to use the *Wilderness expansion* to this module or vary contents between shades of the Eurth should go ahead and create their own dungeons, extrapolations and variations thereof. Referees could choose alternately to skip the extra-dungeon levels step and directly jump to the underworld known as the Labyrinth, the abstract, never-ending tissue of rooms and corridors that ties all underground complexes through the Eidos, or to the realms of the Dark Under, where entire cities and nations thrive under the Eurth.

## Appendix A

# MARMOREAL TOMB DIAGRAM OF TUNNEL NETWORKS



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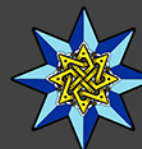
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# MARMOREAL TOMB

## Campaign Starter

### GAME MODULE



The Marmoreal Tomb has been found! The sun rises on the Viper Head Pass and illuminates the massive dwarven statues framing the marble doors leading inside, to the settlement pillaged years ago by stone giants and their minions. Treasures have been left undisturbed, and tunnels loaded with ore are still ready to be mined. The silent halls now call for exploration, for the dead want peace, but the shadow stirring in the depths will not let them rest.

You are holding in your hands the main module of the *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter*, which presents the ruined settlement of Grunn Galeb, the ancient burial vaults and crypts beneath it, as well as the entire six-mile hex and immediate environs around the the dungeon.

Characters will progress from 1st level to level 8 to 10, as they discover the nature of the mystery that brings the dead back alive and spells doom for the entire valley.

## Ernest Gary Gygax Jr.'s

# The Hobby Shop Dungeon

A GP ADVENTURES CASTLE AND CAMPAIGN

*The Hobby Shop Dungeon* is a series of first edition game modules and game aids presenting the campaign run by Ernest G. Gygax Jr. at the Dungeon hobby shop of Lake Geneva from 1978 on, along with the world around the Great Lake of the Duinnsmere. The *Marmoreal Tomb Campaign Starter* is the first product in the series, along with its two companion volumes: *The Wilderness* expansion, and *The Underworld* expansion to the Marmoreal Tomb.

