

The Barbarian King

adventure module for levels 4 to 6



E. M. D. T.
First Hungarian
D20 Society



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by Gabor Lux

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2011 playtesters: Krisztina Bekefi (Kara Nefer, Priestess of Set, Cleric 4), Kalman Farago (Adad Ham-ilsutekh, Champion of Set, Barbarian 4), Laszlo Feher (Rapesco the Unwell, Cleric of Scedu 6), Peter Fustos (Cynrick Gaigos, Champion of Talorn, Fighter 4), Matyas Hartyandi (Hûsker Dû, nomad Archer 4), Gabor Izapy (+Yad-Harul, caveman Barbarian 4, slain by the Barbarian King).

Dedicated to Clark Peterson and Bill Webb

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The Barbarian King was first published in 2002 as a standalone mini-module describing a small tomb-complex (now areas 18-25). Another piece of the puzzle, focusing on the tomb areas, was used as a sub-level and alternate entrance to **The Tomb of Abysthor** (published by Necromancer Games), but never released. This version, in fact, was lost for a long while, and even though the key was eventually found, the map had to be reconstructed from memory and an old play report. The current, third version combined these elements, added most of the wilderness segment, and was first released in **Fight On! #11** in 2011.

In its various forms and incarnations, **The Barbarian King** has stood the test of play by both my players and other groups. It has been bootlegged and sold illicitly on the DM's Guild (really!), not to mention expanded, reconstructed, taken apart and put together again. It is a hardy piece of adventure, making it a good candidate for standalone publication. You can put it in a corner of your campaign world anywhere where the mountains are cold and the valleys silent, where common men fear to tread.

Gabor Lux

Pécs, 16 july 2018

BACKGROUND

Beyond the border city of Velft where the legion of general José Antonio Balazán upholds the law, the great eastern trading route leaves civilisation. After the ploughed fields of the townlands and the small villages and guard towers of the valleys stand endless mountain ranges, cold and unforgiving.

These harsh wastelands were once the domain of the Barbarian King, whose men bowed before animalistic spirits and fought with weapons of brass. In their raids, they showed no mercy: not consent with pillaging, they took their victims as slaves or killed them when they could. So it was until the death of the king, after which men in mail came from the plains, and as their foes once, they had no pity for those they met.

Today, there is a fortress city named Castle Evening on the lands where the barbarians had roamed, and barges plow their once holy lake. The initial conquerors, the knighthoods of Alliria and Mitra, were eventually defeated by the fanatical inquisitor-priests of Talorn; shamefully exiled from the land of their hard-won victories. The abundant mines and rich pastures have since transformed the wilderness into something else, a place of order and watchful sentries. Yet beyond the lands of the settlers, the mountains are silent as they had always been. And it is said, in a valley haunted by the shades of the barbarian warriors, there stands yet the burial place of that last warlord: the Barbarian King.



RUMOURS

If the characters expend effort before setting out to learn of their destination, they may pick up the following pieces of information in Velft and Castle Evening (1d6 or select as appropriate).

1. The barbarians venerated four great spirit entities, patrons that had lived with the tribe in appropriate locales. They also represented stages in a man's life: worm (childhood), eagle (youth), wolf (young adulthood) and bear (late adulthood).
2. After the barbarians had all been slain, missionaries of Alliria and Mitra had gone to the valley to preach their faith. Thus, the place must still have been inhabited in that period.
3. Undead warriors will attack those who set foot in their valley. To stay is tantamount to suicide.
4. Where barbarians had once lived, a dragon now hunts for prey. **[False: the "dragon" is in fact two wyverns nesting in the valley's upper region, and they don't hunt near their nest.]**
5. After their victory, the good-aligned gods had raised great guardians to warn travellers of the dangers that await them.
6. The inquisitors of Talorn have forbidden anyone to set foot in the valley. Perhaps they are wary of the evil that lingers there; but even more likely, the old victory of Alliria and Mitra is a memory they find uncomfortable. **[Half-truth: while the inquisitors do not condone visits to the valley, no specific interdiction is in place.]**



THE VALLEY OF THE LOST

The Valley – which can be approached on an old road half-swallowed by encroaching forests – is a basin surrounded by imposing peaks, and can only be entered through a canyon carved by the swift mountain river that divides it. The sides of the interior are steep, and north of the fork in the river, form the slopes of a great mountain range. The land is covered in thick mist day and night; only three or four hours around noon (ca. 11 AM to 3 PM) are clear. The majority of the land is covered in rich pastures, and only two mountainsides are forested.

The valley still bears the curse of its evil memories and the unseen presence of the Barbarian King, alive even in his entombment. In the middle stands a small village populated by slave-pariahs, where the chains of servitude remain unbroken many years after the barbarians' doom. In the surrounding lands, the shades of warriors haunt when mists shroud the valley.

- When intruders arrive, they needn't expect danger outside fixed encounters until the mists fall on their first afternoon.
- For every four hours afterwards, there is a **1:6** probability of a random encounter with **1d10+2 phantom warriors** or **1d6+2 shade wolves**. Also roll another chance after major confrontations. The shades will not rest until all intruders are driven from their homeland or killed.
- Only locations marked in the text (**C**, **H** and **Q**) and some areas of the tomb can be made appropriate for uninterrupted rest. If the characters spend their night at an especially dangerous location, they face a certain encounter.

Phantom Warriors (1d10+2): HD 2; AC 7; Atk incorporeal spear 1d6 or incorporeal long-sword 1d8 (ignores armour); Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 11; AL CE.

Hp	9	7	7	16	14	9
	9	9	9	6	6	4
	5	10	11	10	2	11
	2	9	9	10	13	10
	10	5	8	8	5	7
	4	12	10	14	10	12
	11	11	8	5	9	4
	5	9	8	8	10	6
	9	7	5	5	12	12
	10	3	9	13	7	8

Shade Wolves (1d6+2): HD 2; AC 4; Atk incorporeal bite 1d8 (ignores armour); Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 11; AL CE.

Hp	7	6	8	13	13	13
	11	15	11	11	9	9
	3	10	4	12	7	15
	13	15	16	13	11	8
	8	5	8	8	12	12
	12	14	11	7	6	16



THE BARBARIAN KING



A. Canyon: Looming cliffs over the rapid river create permanent gloom even during the day. The road crosses the river multiple times; old bridges and fords follow in succession. Up the river, there are more and more remains of the ancient battle: discarded and useless shields, weapons and armour.

B. Tower: The rectangular ruins of a crude **watch tower** stand on the cliffs above the road. The barbarian fortress was demolished by the armies of Alliria and Mitra, and only some of the exterior walls remain. From **C**, a winding mountain path leads to the stone piles, which still cover skeletons in their armour and weaponry. Around and in the rubble, there are several round limestone balls, the leftover missiles of siege engines.

C. Memorial: At this memorial site lie the champions and priests of Alliria and Mitra buried after their armies' great victory. Two great **marble slabs** embedded in the mountainside list the fallen, perhaps three or four hundred men. One name, that of Saint Bofred, was once gilded; yet the paint and gold has faded, leaving behind the bare stone which strangers had tried to smash on multiple occasions. To the south, a steep **mountain path** ascends to the ruined watch tower, while between the marble slabs, a dark **entrance** once sealed by portcullis opens to an underground hall.

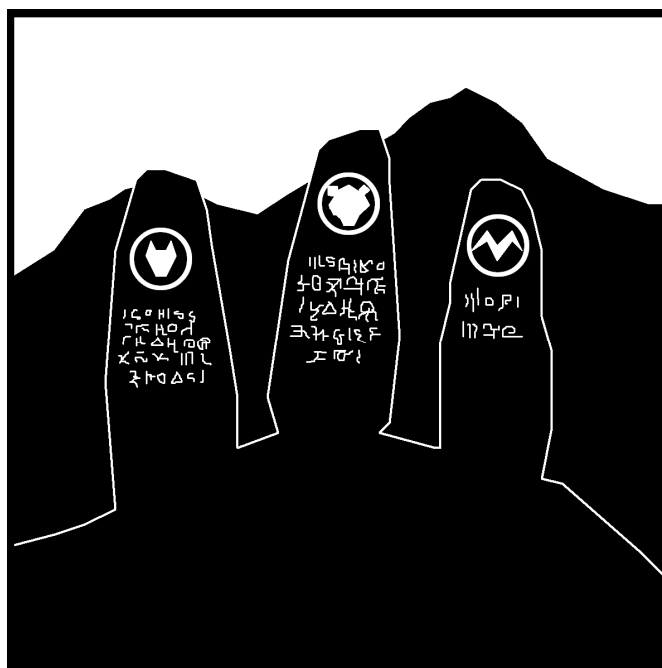
The **chapel and tomb** hewed from the rock has been looted, and the **statues** of the Goddess of Knights and the God of Justice gaze disapprovingly with empty eye sockets on the makeshift fireplace, scattered bones and smashed sarcophagi, which still bear skeletal remains and rusted equipment.

If characters restore the memorial to a semblance of order, they may sleep safely here; and if they retreat after a major battle, good-aligned characters will sleep off all their injuries. After breaking the curse of the valley, the statues are able to raise one character from the dead, a one-time boon. In the pedestal bearing Alliria's statue, there is a secret niche that can only be opened by Lawful Good characters, concealing a *shield +2*.

D. Stockade: The remnants of the defensive line protecting the valley. Only a few moss-covered, rotten stakes and the collapsed piles of towers remain. Discarded and useless equipment lies everywhere.

E. Burial Mounds: These mounds of earth are barbarian burial sites from before the coming of the plainsmen. Each of the major mounds, which are surrounded by multiple lesser ones, bears a **standing stone** with glyphs and faded carvings. Every stone is marked with the symbol of a worm, an eagle, a wolf or a bear, reminders of the buried person's age (worm, childhood; eagle, youth; wolf, young adulthood; bear, late adulthood).

If the characters visit mounds in the hours when the valley is covered in mist, always roll for a random encounter with a group of **phantom warriors**. Roll again if the mounds are excavated; each of them (one per mound symbol on the wilderness map) has a chance for treasure: 25% 1d12*50 electrum, 50% 2d4*50 gold, 10% 1d4 gems, 20% an object of art and 20% of 1d3 magic items.



F. Demolished Bridge: The road ends by the river. The wooden bridge crossing the waters has been destroyed in the confrontation and while the distance is small and the river is fordable without great difficulty, it has never been rebuilt. The villagers on the other side do not venture from their lands.

G. Village: A settlement consisting of dismal stone huts half dug into the earth, gaps reinforced with moss and mud, standing under a plateau where stand the burned-out timbers of a ruined longhouse.

In the Valley of the Lost, usually believed uninhabited, there lives a small community descended from the slaves of the barbarians. Two centuries have passed since the passing of the “Masters”, but the bonds of servitude prevail. The **villagers** fear the memories of their captors as they had once feared their physical presence. In their eyes, the barbarians have merely marched off to war, and they may return at any moment; the Barbarian King is a living sovereign; and the longhouse over the village is an intact structure – although forbidden to mere thralls. If intruders claim the opposite, they nod but do not believe it, going to any length to preserve their cognitive dissonance (e.g. if the PCs bring a villager to the longhouse ruins to see the proof of its destruction, he or she will be killed by the others soon after return). They have no accurate concept of time; or rather, its categories – seasons, individual life and the valley’s history – in them are hopelessly confused.

The villagers do not leave the village and the poor plough-lands that surround it. They while away their days tilling the mud or tending their meagre crops, and do not venture further if they can help it. They consider the resting places of the Masters and the dwellings of the four spirits protecting the freemen (**L** – worm; **J** – eagle; **K** – wolf; **M** – bear) holy sites, and the ruins of Mitra’s chapel (**H**) accursed. On the feared “Festivities”, due twice a year, they make human sacrifice before one of the spirits from the appropriate age group, or careless travellers (last time was the wolf’s turn, and the bear’s is due soon). The sacrifices are performed by the oldest member of the community, who always serves as an informal leader of sorts – this person lives in the separate hut of the old villagers, and is distinguished by slightly nicer-looking rags than the others.

The villagers are reserved and distrustful of strangers, secretly hating them for their freedom. Therefore, while they will offer them food and shelter if asked, their reluctant help will omit references to danger, and characters who appear weak or separated from their comrades will be killed and their bodies hidden. If the characters spend the night in the village, the kindling in the hut emptied for their use will be mixed with poisonous herbs, and the smoke-hole covered in the darkest night with a wet tarp to let them suffocate.

The villagers have no knowledge of the King’s tomb. If they are asked about Mitra’s chapel and its priest, the most they say is “he came here once or twice” and “then he didn’t come any more”.

The **longhouse** above the village is a ruin. A few wooden carvings are visible by the entrance, but no things of interest are to be found among the wreckage. When the mists are thick, there is a **1:6** probability of an encounter by day and **1:3** by night, always with **1d10+2 phantom warriors** with another 1d10+2 lurking somewhere in the vicinity.

Able-bodied Villagers (30): HD 1; AC 9 (thick rags); Atk sticks and clubs 1d6; ML 5; AL LE.

Hp	2	2	8	2	7	3
	2	6	7	3	1	8
	1	1	4	3	2	3
	2	2	2	1	6	6
	1	1	7	2	2	5

H. Mitra's Chapel: This mission, erected after the death of the Barbarian King and the defeat of his people, had soon thereafter succumbed to the curse of the valley. The small stone structure, visible from a distance with its simple tower, stands open and empty, the wind blowing through entrance and windows. The head of the **idol** has been knocked off and smashed; the symbols of the crown, the chalice and the sceptre destroyed. The **choir/attic** above the main chapel and the adjoining **priest's dwelling** (rough wooden chair, bed and lectern) contain only old knick-knacks. Restored and blessed, the chapel is a safe place to rest.

From the chapel, a small rock path leads to a **well**. Halfway there, a curious memento rises from the earth: a **man buried upside down** from the shoulders; the protruding body long decomposed but still present as a mixture of moss-covered clay, earth and a network of tiny roots that form a sort of mesh growing through it. This is how the surviving followers of the spirits had slain Mitra's priest and confined him to an existence beyond death. With telepathy or similar means, the man can be communicated with, but in this state is only occupied with his terrible torment.



If the form is uprooted, a crown of thick roots becomes visible where the head should be, snaking roots attacking to suck out the characters' brain fluids. If defeated, the vegetable horror collapses with a sigh. A *remove curse* slays it instantly, while a successful turn attempt by a Lawful Good cleric halts its progress, compelling it to fall to the ground and receive mercy in death.

In the ground where the roots had been are objects buried with the body: the golden holy symbol of Mitra (25 gp), a *mace* +2, a suit of *chain shirt* +2 and two *potions of healing*. If extracted in time, the resinous "blood" of the roots has the effects of a random potion, with 1d3 doses.

Cursed Priest: HD 6+6; AC 2; Atk 4*roots 1d6+2 and save vs. paralysis or entangled; Spec entanglement (if the roots are not removed, automatic damage for 2 rounds, after which the character's brain is sucked out of the skull), ½ damage from fire, electricity and cold, immune to mind-affecting; Str 18; ML 10; AL LG.

Hp 28

I. Path: The rock path leading to the summit bypasses a number of **graven stones**. The writing is faded, but a character who can understand ancient glyphs can identify them as the ancient magic of the Druids. Studying the writing, a successful spell learning roll allows a character to memorise the spells as extras over capacity (one-use only). Druids receive a +15% to the probability, but clerics, M-Us and illusionists may also try. Some of the stones are no longer legible, but the remaining six contain the following: *faerie fire*, *obscurement*, *flame blade*, *augury*, *call lightning* and *control winds*. The last two spells are learned at -5% and -10%, respectively.

J. The Stone of the Eagle: A round, smooth **boulder** standing on the bare mountaintop, overlooked by a **tall wooden structure** constructed from decaying logs that may represent the shape of a man (this landmark is visible from all over the valley in clear weather if the characters examine the mountains). The boulder is surrounded by **sacrificial objects**: small bone piles, clay vessels, strings of beads and other worthless junk. This is the holy site of the eagle, one of the spiritual beings protecting the barbarians, as confirmed by the carved symbol of an "M", or a bird with spread wings. If someone takes a careful look around, he may easily find smashed bones down the cliffs below the mountaintop, the remains of old sacrifices.

The eagle ("The Spirit of the Sky") still slumbers within the boulder, and if sacrifice is performed or the site disturbed, it awakens from its sleep, demanding in a distant booming voice the purpose of the intruders' visit. It is evil, but not necessarily hostile.

- In exchange for revealing its secrets, it demands human sacrifice, or a character to stand up to its trial. However, appeals to its desire for freedom, a precious (preferably shiny) gift or a clever trick not described here may also work.
- If a character volunteers for the **trial**, he must remain standing on top of the boulder for four rounds without being swept off to his doom. One way to conduct the trial is saves vs. breath, where two consecutive failures mean disaster (7d6 Hp).
- If the champion is victorious, the spirit reveals **two pieces of information** leaving to the King's resting place ("*Two stand guard before the house of my Lord. And when the unseeing stone will see, will you see my Lord likewise.*"), and if the party has not been disrespectful or hostile, it may gift them with its **treasure**: the boulder rises into the air, revealing a cavity with 370 gp, a 400 gp gold bowl with the figures of birds and a *shield* +1 made of supple dark wood, but as strong as the best steel.

If attacked or the site desecrated, the spirit fights until slain.

The Spirit of the Eagle (Lesser Elemental Force): HD 8+6; AC 0; Atk slam 3d6 and save vs. breath or fall; Spec +1 or better to hit, invisible, immune to mind-affecting; ML 10; AL NE.
Hp 40

K. The Stone of the Wolf: This smooth, round **boulder** stands on a peninsula at the confluence of two mountain streams, and bears the carved symbol of a stylised wolf's head. The surrounding **half-ring of trees** have ropes with nooses affixed to them, but the only thing remaining of the sacrifices tied up this way is the gnawed bones scattered over the area. This place is the holy site of **the wolf ("The Spirit of the Woods")**, one of the spiritual forces protecting the barbarians, which animates as soon as the characters approach, filling the boulder with its presence and bringing a chorus of howls from the forest.

- The spirit demands bloody sacrifice for its knowledge, or a character to stand its trial; however, someone who radiates power and shows no sign of fear or doubt may force it to back down through sheer confidence. Characters may also exploit its ravenous hunger. The spirit recognises deceit and if it does, it destroys the characters without mercy.
- If a character volunteers for the **trial**, he must remain standing atop the boulder while the spirit tries to devour him in the form of **shade wolves** leaping from within. There is one wolf in the first round, two in the second, three in the third and four in the fourth. The wolves don't bite at first, and a successful hit just means the character must save vs. paralysis or be knocked off. However, if the character is on the ground, they will have no mercy and attack until the character or the four shades are defeated.
- If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit reveals a **piece of information** leading to the King's resting place ("*When the falling waters show the way, will you see the house of my Lord.*"), and if the character had fought without fear or hesitation, it may gift them with its **treasure**, which it retrieves from a buried cache: a leather sack with 440 electrum, 30 gp, two *potions of healing* and a *scimitar* +2 made of horn.

If attacked or the site is desecrated, the spirit attacks as a pack of eight shade wolves and does not rest until the characters are dead.

The Spirit of the Wolf (Pack of Shade Wolves) (8): HD 2; AC 4; Atk incorporeal bite 2d6 (ignores armour); Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 10; AL NE.

Hp	16	16	16	16	16	16
	16	16				

L. The Stone of the Worm: In the middle of a cluster of burial mounds gapes a **wide 20' pit** in the ground. Skulls of variable age from the relatively fresh to the mossy are mounted on spikes on the perimeter; the muddy interior resembles an opened grave. Bones intermixed with mud, clumps of hair, tangled muddy bodies and sacrificial goods of no value lie on the bottom. The sides are very treacherous to climb, and require a save vs. paralysis to climb out even with a rope, and two consecutive saves without one. On the bottom, the top of a large half-buried **boulder** is visible, carved with writhing shapes. Next to the boulder, the corner of a rotted **wooden casket** sticks from the mud. This is the holy site of **the worm** ("**The Spirit of the Dark Earth**"), one of the spiritual beings protecting the barbarians.

- Unlike its companions, the worm is not communicative but extremely malevolent. It only speaks to the characters if they call it out or disturb its pit, but even so, only reluctantly. It only offers a trial if asked for one; otherwise, it prefers human sacrifice, whether it is given one or if it can take it.
- If a character volunteers for the **trial**, he must stand on top of the boulder and defeat the **worms** emerging from the ground before they devour him. The worms come for three consecutive rounds, four each time.
- If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit imparts its **piece of the puzzle** leading to the King's resting place ("*When from the fivefold burial he is unearthed, will you see my Lord. He was buried under the mountain, under two stones, under the earth, under a hundred stones and under a double stone and wood. But if you see him, sees he you likewise!*").
- The rotted **casket** can be broken with bare hands, and contains the worm's **treasure**, 470 electrum and four 300 gp opals, but anyone who steals from it earns the eternal enmity of the spirit.

If attacked or the site desecrated, the spirit attacks as a mass of worms (they may emerge from the earth anywhere near the pit) and when 24 are slain, in its true form, that of a leathery rotund body supported by strong rubbery stalks and attacking with appendages sprouting from the top.



The Spirit of the Worm (Worms): HD 1+2; AC 8; Atk bite 1d4; Spec attacks as 2 HD monster, immune to mind-affecting; ML 10; AL CE.

Hp	10	5	10	9	5	5
	3	4	7	5	7	9
	8	6	10	4	4	9
	7	10	4	6	8	9

The Spirit of the Worm (Bonesucker): HD 6; AC 4; Atk 4*arms 1d6 and save vs. poison or bones liquefy; Spec bonesucking (automatic damage until appendage removed and -2 to all rolls; permanent if not healed after combat as bones re-solidify in a wrong way); ML 10; AL CE.
Hp 29

M. The Stone of the Bear: A large, round **boulder** standing deep in the woods has been overgrown with moss; the carving of a stylised bear's head is barely visible. Scattered bones, broken trees and disorderly (worthless) sacrificial offerings are also found in the area. This place is the holy site of **the bear** ("**The Spirit of the Mountains Unmoving**"), one of the spiritual beings protecting the barbarians.

- The bear slumbers within the stone and it is rather sleepy, but persistent disturbance draws it forth, roaring to ask who would disturb its peace. It demands human sacrifice for its knowledge, or that a character stand its trial, but is actually in no mood for a fight – nagging requests, a sufficiently tasty treat or similar trick may win the secret. **[Play-test note: rubbing the boulder with a piece of bearskin is NOT a good idea.]**
- A character volunteering for the **trial** must wrestle the spirit for four rounds without being crushed. The spirit does not attack to kill, but if it hits, it will hug for damage that round.
- If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit reveals **a piece of information** leading to the King's resting place ("*When you the mountain-depths see, will you see the house of my Lord. But if in his house my form you see, beware; for one alone is harmless, but more may kill you with but a sigh.*"), and if the characters have been respectful or given him an especially tasty morsel, he gives them his **gift**: the boulder splits temporarily to reveal a *torc of bear power*, which grants 18 Strength when worn.

If attacked or the site desecrated, the spirit attacks until dead.

The Spirit of the Bear (Lesser Elemental Force): HD 8+6; AC 0; Atk paws 2d6+2 and hug 2d6+2; Spec +1 or better to hit, invisible, immune to mind-affecting; ML 11; AL N.
Hp 48

N. Smithy: Constant hammering sounds from this small plateau. The source of the noise is a primitive building constructed of stones; a **long house** ending in a large chimney. The **forge** is cold and the interior of the place is a wreck: the attic has collapsed on the lower floor, and the ground is littered with pulverised bones, destroyed brass objects and flat, mangled cakes of metal, once weapons, shields and armour. The **invisible force** holding the hammer is hammering on the shapeless remains of a helmet; if it is disturbed, it attacks. The hammer is a +1 weapon.

Phantom Smith: Fighter 4; AC 4; Atk *smith's hammer* +1 1d8+3; Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; Str 18, Con 18; ML 9; AL LE.
Hp 37

O. Tomb Entrance: A waterfall cascading from the upper valley; a narrow **serpentine** climbs up to the right (treacherous without a rope – save vs. paralysis or fall for 6d6 damage). Here on the two sides of the falling water stand **two statues**, 15' each. The forms of Alliria and Mitra are barely recognisable, the stucco covering them degraded and destroyed. Only hints of the first's royal blue gown and the second's red and gold tunic are still visible. The faces are broken and pitted. Once, these guardians had warned men who stepped through the waters of the dangers facing them. Now, all they can produce is a strange, sad wail that rises and then fades.

Beyond the **waterfall**, there is a large natural cavern filled with bones in its grotto-like recesses. Beyond the simplest offerings, they have nothing valuable. A long, winding passage proceeds northwest to the tomb-complex proper.

P. Lake: This small, cold mountain lake is surrounded by stunted trees and shrubs.

Q. Wyvern Lair: The source of the river is a large **cave mouth**, emerging from a shallow underground lake collecting numerous small streams. The back chamber of the cavern is inhabited by **a pair of wyverns**, usually away on a hunt (**1:6** for each to be present). Their presence is easily betrayed by a horrid stench from the pile of decomposing, mangled carcasses they have collected. Their single **treasure** is a golden ewer worth 1000 gp.

From the wyverns' lair, a small passage leads to a vertical **chimney**. Upwards, it terminates in crags close to the mountain summit; downwards, it travels to the tomb-complex, area **8**. Multitudes of bats lair in the chimney. **16 of them are vampiric**, and attack if they detect characters ascend or descend.

Wyverns (2): HD 7+7; AC 3; Atk bite 2d8 and sting 1d6 + deadly poison; ML 7; AL NE.
 Hp 42 41

Vampire Bats (16): HD 1+1; AC 8; Atk bite 1d4 + blood drain; Spec blood drain 1d4/round, up to 12 Hp; ML 6; N.

Hp	2	2	8	8	8	2
	4	2	4	7	4	4
	6	6	4	4		



THE KING'S TOMB

The southern section of the dungeon complex (1–12) consists of rough-hewn passages covered in stucco, the northern section (13–17) is natural caverns, while the tomb of the Barbarian King (18–25) is mostly constructed of smooth stonework with a stucco cover. Except for the caverns, the walls feel greasy to the touch, and they are covered in ugly, primitive frescoes applied in black and red colours. These depict distorted, demonic animals, as well as motifs hinting of vegetation and geometric patterns.

In the southern section, **random encounters** occur on a 1:6 every 20 minutes or 1:3 if loud noises are made (major battle, loud spells, significant structural damage etc.), and are with **2d8 zombies** each time. There are a total of 22 wandering zombies in the dungeon.

Zombies (22): HD 2; AC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec slow, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	12	8	5	14	4	14
	6	7	9	9	4	13
	13	12	8	8	5	10
	6	9	12	6		



1. Entrance: Sooty and faded **frescoes**, discarded torch butts scattered on the floor. Opposite the entrance stands a brutal **bear idol**, talons and maw painted blood red. Next to the larger than life monument, there are two stones graven with runes.

2. Burial chamber: Entrance blocked by unclean, heavy **cobwebs**. Inside, there is the choking smell of dust and dried mildew; **clay jars** everywhere on the ground and in recesses. **6 wights** are lairing here, wearing cobweb-heavy shrouds; a total 20 gp worth of jewellery.

Wights (6): HD 4+3; AC 5; Atk claws 1d4 + drain; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL LE.

Hp	22	18	9	18	16	24
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3. Niche: A **mural** depicts a bearded man painted in grey colours, piercing silvery stare. Before him, on the ground, there are **offerings** of brass and silver vessels, glass beads and the like to a total of 220 gp. If someone steals from the sacrifices, he must save vs. charm or attack his companions in a shrieking frenzy until incapacitated. Destroying the mural brings a **curse** (the character's desiccating skin gradually peels off like the grey fresco; losing 1d3 Hp daily with no chance of natural healing and only half effect from spells) and uncovers a wall erected of rough stones. Breaking through this layers reveals the old man's dried out cadaver wearing a **cloak +1** – attacks as a **wight** if disturbed.

Wight: HD 4+3; AC 4 (**cloak +1**); Atk claws 1d4 + drain; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL LE.

Hp	17
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4. Burial chamber: Extensive, low-ceilinged chamber with an uneven floor. Rotund, sooty-necked **clay pitchers** standing on the ground, **wrapped corpses** stooped in wall niches. From the rotting linen hang beardlike growths of porous, dirty grey moss. If disturbed, the spores act as airborne poison, save twice or lose 1d6 Constitution for each failed save. The exit to the north is flanked by **painted**, stylised depictions of bowing, obeisant human figures.



5. Tomb entrance: A **statue** standing by the northeast wall shows a muscular, bearded man, and is flanked by two rampant **bear idols**. The eyes are empty holes. If someone does not approach here in genuflection or crawling on the ground, **22 of the dead** the in the previous cavern animate as **zombies** and attack.

The **bear idols** have polished topaz eyes (4*160 gp), but if someone touches them, the statue to the left breathes flames, and the one to the right, acidic vapours (3d6 Hp each, save vs. breath for ½). If gems are inserted into the eye sockets of the stele, the massive stone shifts with a grinding noise, revealing the crawlway to the inner tomb.

Zombies (14): HD 2; AC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec slow, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	7	11	8	10	6	5
	6	7	16	10	11	4
	10	12				

6. Mass grave: The **frescoes** are incomplete here, amounting to nothing but faint sketches at places. The ground is covered in a thick layer of sooty **bone fragments** and **ceramic flinders**. In the middle, the layer of debris sags, and the explorer who lacks caution may sink to his knees among the jagged shards, suffering 1d4 damage and having leggings below chain strength destroyed.

7. Pool room: This isolated, natural grotto is avoided by the undead. If the characters don't call attention to themselves, they may rest safely here. In a shallow basin, water dripping from the ceiling has formed a **small pool**. Within, there is a curious object resembling molten, clear green glass. It is actually **green slime**.

8. Room of bats: Another natural grotto. From the eastern corner, a wide **chimney** leads upwards, bypassing the Wyverns' lair (**Q**) and terminating in crags near the mountain summit above. Multitudes of **bats** lair in the chimney, of which **16 are vampiric**, and attack if they suspect victims (for stats, see **Q**).

THE BARBARIAN KING



9. Burial chamber: On the ground, especially near the archway to the south, there lie valuable **offerings** – metal vessels, ivory carvings, strings of beads made of semi-precious stones etc. – to a total value of 300 gp. **Five** withered, **blackened corpses** have been nailed to wooden racks by the walls with copper nails. The eyes of the slumped heads are shrouded with linen. If the offerings are disturbed or the southern chamber desecrated, these guardians exhale a black smoke, which coalesces into shadowy forms with burning eyes.

Shadows (5): HD 3+3; AC 7; Atk touch 1d4+1 + Str; Spec Strength drain, +1 or better to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting, 90% undetectable; ML 6; AL CE.

Hp 13 24 14 12 19

10. Tomb: As the archway raised from smoothly polished blocks, the chamber's regular rectangular form and the superior frescoes show, this is the resting place of a distinguished person. A short flight of steps leads up to a **sarcophagus** covered with beaten brass plates, before which stands a cauldron full of gold dust (630 gp).

The linen-wrapped **body** in the sarcophagus is in good shape, wearing a copper mask, an instrument on his hands that transform them into bestial claws, as well as several bracers, buckles and wires around the arms and legs. The corpse also wears a faded purple *cloak* +1. If the corpse is disturbed, it attacks from surprise as a **mummy**, grabbing the closest character's throat. Due to the *ring of fire resistance* worn under the wrappings, it is not susceptible to fire like regular mummies, but gains no special resistances from the ring either. There are also 3 gems worth 350 gp apiece under the wrappings, two in the eye sockets and one on the breast.

Mummy: HD 6+3; AC 3; Atk hit 1d12 + rot; Spec fear, mummy rot, +1 to hit, ½ damage from weapons, *ring of fire resistance*; ML 12; AL CE.

Hp 21

11. Pit of horrors: This elongated burial hall enters a round, domed chamber to the east, whose centre is occupied by a round **pit**. Seven wooden **coffins** stand by the walls, while from the pit comes the smell of rotting vegetation and damp earth. The occupants of the coffins are **wights** waiting to strike, six normal and one who knows the ancient magic of the Druids. The valuables in the coffins are altogether worth 510 gp; in addition to multiple normal weapons, there is a *dagger* +1.

The pit is 30' deep and, like the inside of a jug, broadens downwards. Anyone who falls in suffers no damage from landing on the vegetation, but this awakens the otherwise dormant **shambling mound** that lairs in the pit. There are further valuables beneath the plant matter: 10 silver ingots worth 32 gp each, and a *horn of blasting*.

Wights (6): HD 4+3; AC 5; Atk claws 1d4 + drain; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL LE.

Hp 18 21 21 18 23 16

Wight Druid: HD 6; AC 5; Atk claws 1d6 + drain; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting, *robes of druid power* (spells function 2 levels higher than normal); ML 9; AL LE.

Spells: 4/3/2/1; 1: entangle*2, faerie fire*2, 2: heat metal, produce flame, warp wood; 3: cause disease, plant growth [used on the shambling mound in the pit, it allows it to attack opponents in the chamber with its tentacles].

Hp 24

Shambling Mound: HD 8; AC 0; Atk 2*limbs 2d8; Spec entanglement, suffocation 2d4 r, immune to fire, electricity adds 1 HD, cold ½ damage; ML 11; AL N.

Hp 44

12. Cavern of the three idols: A tall chimney above this chamber is lost in shadow. Blackened floor with ashes and soot. Between exits, 15' tall stone blocks hold great **bear idols**, their eyes polished topaz (6*160 gp). If someone passes through, the eyes glow and all three breathe – one flame, one acidic vapours, one a lightning bolt (3d6 damage each, save vs. breath for ½). The effect can only repeat every 3 rounds, but it continues until everyone within the place is dead and even the remains are utterly obliterated.



13. Cavern of the tree: A large, natural cavern, whose floor is covered in damp **piles of soft earth**. Poking through the soil are human **bones**, the final remains of the odd rotted cadaver; from this rich environment sprout vines, ferns, small shrubs. In the centre of all this is a gnarled little **tree** radiating a golden light, bearing four fruits resembling yellow tomatoes. These juicy fruits restore 4d6 Hp each and rejuvenate the character who consumes them by two years (or restore one lost level). Since they are very ripe, they may not be kept for long.

14. Pool grotto: Grotto with a **pool of water**. The water leads, through an underwater passage, to a different underground complex. At its tightest point, the passage is clogged by a **gelatinous cube**, nearly invisible in the water.

Gelatinous Cube: HD 4; AC 8; Atk gelatine 2d4 + paralysis; Spec surprise 2:3, paralysis 1d4+16 r, engulfment, immune to lightning and cold; ML 8; AL N.
Hp 25

15. Burial chamber: Crude chamber decorated with several **frescoes**. By the walls stand six wooden **coffins**, containing **wights** waiting for their opportunity to attack. They have a total 320 gp worth of valuables in minor decorative objects; the rightmost coffin to the north also holds a vial of orange oily liquid, a *fire bomb* that explodes as a 5d6 damage fireball if subjected to fire or concussion.

Wights (6): HD 4+3; AC 5; Atk claws 1d4 + drain; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 9; AL LE.

Hp	22	20	14	13	13	15
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16. Collapse: The cave passage is blocked by a collapse here. On top of the jumble of stones, a **skeletal arm** tries to reach between the ceiling and the rocks, grasping a small metal tube. This is a scroll case covered in contact poison (thankfully weakened – save twice or take 2d6 damage on each failure), and contains a druidic scroll (*heat metal*2, stone shape*)

17. Crystal cave: A vegetation-filled cavern similar to **13**. Sizeable **quartz crystals** burning with a pale light reach from the ground. The five of them would be worth 130, 220, 100, 100 and 100 gp, respectively, but they are rather bulky and heavy.

18. Tomb entrance: This corridor is the entrance to the Barbarian King's inner tomb-complex. The walls are polished stone, decorated with **frescoes** of worshipping men and women, processing down the hall bearing gifts. They are led by a priest wearing animal hides and a bear mask. On the other side, other men, this time armed, are going down the same hall, but they are stopped by animal-men (hybrid monstrosities), who hurl them into a fiery inferno.

The corridor is trapped: there is a **double pit trap** in the middle. The first pit is badly concealed and only 30' deep; the second is more carefully hidden, 40' deep and lined with rusted spikes (1d6 spikes, 1d6 damage each plus save vs. poison or contract gangrene). The pits close on their own after eight rounds. Unarmed characters approaching in acts miming worship do not trigger the pits.

19. Room of offerings: This used to be a sacrificial area before being converted into a tomb. **Murals** depict barbarians laying their offerings before huge, fearsome-looking animals (there is a figure of the wolf, the bear, the eagle and the worm), and in turn receiving blessings. The room has been set up as a false crypt: A crude **stone bier**, flanked by **two idols** depicting snarling bear idols painted red and black (magical but no discernible function), holds the **remains of a warrior**. He wears fine, if decayed clothes, an iron crown, copper plate mail (treat as scale due to age and poor materials), a battleaxe (also copper), golden jewels worth 300 gp around the neck and a +1 *shield*.

There is a **secret passage** to the northwest. This is no secret door, but rather the entrance was closed off with a hastily constructed mortar-less wall of rough stones, the gaps filled with earth and clay, and the surface stuccoed and painted over. Removing the stones and creating a man-sized entry takes twenty minutes.

20. Circular hallway: vivid paintings from the floor to the ceiling. The **murals** are a connected series, going clockwise from the entry point, depicting the soul's journey: first as a worm crawling up from the earth (southern quarter), then as an eagle (western quarter), a wolf (north), a bear (east) and, finally, as a worm again. All depictions are unpleasant to behold: the worm feasts on terribly mutilated human corpses, the eagle claws out the eyes of bound captives, the wolf tears apart helpless infants, and the bear is seen stomping small human forms into a bloody pulp.

The inner ring has a number of small **alcoves**. These contain sacrifices appropriate for the creatures on the opposing side – clay urns of human ashes and dirt for the worm, crushed rodents for the bird, lamb skulls for the wolf and human bones for the bear.

All **exits** to chambers are hidden as in **19**, but these entrances are easier to open, only needing ten minutes to remove the rocks blocking the way in.

21. The tomb of animals: This room has an arched ceiling and painted walls. The **paintings** are of animals and man-animal hybrids torturing and eating faceless human victims. The air is heavy, and lights burn with a faint greenish tint – there is a weird, unpleasant smell, the combination of musty spices used in mummification and the stench of an old grave. Heaps and heaps of carefully **mummified animal remains** lie along the walls, wrapped in dyed cloth and preserved with incense and herbs.

At the end of the room, there is a **sealed well** (painted with the eye of a cat), covered in the same stucco as the doorways. If the stucco is scraped off and the lid of the well removed, the noxious gases inside ignite if there is any sort of open flame, and explode in a ball of fire (6d6 Hp, save vs. breath for ½). The well is 30' deep, with a 20' diameter **lower room** below. This is full of even more corpses, which were just heaped in animals and humans alike. If someone takes great pains to search these remains (six hours of digging), he will find 210 gp worth of low-value jewellery and a *ring of protection* +1, but has to save vs. polymorphisation or contract lycanthropy (wolf) and save vs. poison or contract grave fever (fatal in 1d3 weeks, character returns from the dead as an undead monster).

22. The tomb of plants: Arched ceiling, **murals** on the walls depict a dark and twisted forest where humans are being strangled by tree-monsters. The air is heavy and fetid, smelling of earth and mould. Along the wall sit or lie a number of **human mummies** in contorted poses that betray intense agony and pain. Roots and long vines grow from their insides, tearing apart the wrappings. The southern end of the room has a small depression, filled with **ceramic jugs**, sealed with resin and tar. There are 15 such jugs, each completely intact, containing the following:

- Five contain **sweet mead**. This brew is ancient and would fetch 40 gp per jug if a buyer could be found.
- Three contain a **thick, green syrup**. It cures 3d8+3 Hp if applied externally, or 1d8+1 if swallowed.
- Five contain a **red liquid** with a strong, acrid taste. This liquid raises Strength to 18 for six hours, but also lowers Wisdom by 2 and incites paranoia (the GM should feed false clues to the character's player until the effects wear off).
- Two **small containers** are wrapped in thin bark stripes in addition to being sealed. The orange liquid inside had been fermented from the crushed berries of killer vines and toxic mould. If it is swallowed, the drinker will at first feel nothing, but three hours later he will experience extreme stomach cramps and convulsions, losing 25% of current hit points every third hour as a killer vine grows within. These injuries can't be cured, but the process can be halted for 1d3 days with a *cure disease* spell (this stops further growth for a full day) until a cure is found or some extreme poison is ingested to kill it off. If the victim dies, the body is reanimated as the mummified corpses in the room.

If the jugs or the bodies are disturbed, **four mummies** (or rather, the vines under the wrappings animating them) attack, preferring to strangle intruders with their appendages.

Killer Vine Zombies (4): HD 4; AC 4; Atk vines 1d6+entanglement; Spec strangle 2d6/round, immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	10	9	16	22
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23. The tomb of servants: Similar to the other side tombs, this chamber is significantly less decorated. The **murals**, depicting servants working in a village, seem to have been hastily done and they are of an uniformly poor quality. There are a lot of **human bones** here, strewn about and mixed with rags. There is a total 45 gp worth of jewellery, but taking them invites the Curse of the Servants (save to avoid, -4 to all rolls until removed).

24. Collapse: opening the doorway to this area, it appears that the ceiling of the passage had collapsed and blocked the stairs. This, however, is a ruse; the rocks are piled against a **wooden door** set at a 45 degree angle, and can be removed within an hour of work. The steep stairs leading down are flanked with **frescoes** of the tomb's builders, hewing the corridors, painting the walls and finally – just as the passage terminates – being immured.

25. Tomb: The Barbarian King's burial chamber, consisting of a northern antechamber (10' ceiling), a more spacious inner tomb (25') and a sealed burial vault. As always, the walls are full of **frescoes**, depicting conquests and war (burned villages, captives, the bloody sacrifices of animalistic priests), feasts and orgies. There are many **miscellaneous items** here, left for the afterlife: clay jars with wheat, knives and household tools (looms, hand mills etc).

The **inner tomb** is where the Barbarian King's horse and wives were buried: unearthing these remains takes two hours of digging. The **horse's** saddle is too decayed to be used anymore, but the golden bits and gems are still worth 300 gp, while the **three female skeletons** have 620 gp worth of jewellery and a tattered cloak that used to be magical. If these two locations are disturbed, however, the party will be attacked by a horse-shaped wraith and three hounds crying in mournful lament within the week.

The southernmost wall contains the **vault** of the barbarian king: it is sealed by a pair of **stone doors**, which take a bend bars roll or three hours of work to open. Beyond is a short flight of stairs, leading up to a **second (wooden) door**. This door is covered in paintings, although badly deteriorated – a depiction of the Barbarian King, a muscular, bearded man wearing an iron crown, sceptre and sword. If this wooden door is opened, the king's corpse, along with his surrounding cohort of 22 skeletons that have followed him into undeath, comes to life, issues a challenge to the intruders and attacks. They may not be turned within the tomb.

If the undead warlord and his aides are defeated, his **treasure** is free for the taking: there is an iron pot filled with golden jewels (1600 gp total), 2 *potions of giant strength* and 2 *potions of heroism* in addition to the fallen warlord's personal equipment.

The Barbarian King: HD 8; AC -1 (skeleton, *chainmail* +2); Atk *brass two-handed sword* +2 1d10+4; Str 18, Int 10, Wis 13, Dex 15, Con 16, Cha 12; *sceptre of command* (as clerical spell, 2/day); ML 12; AL CE.
Hp 44

Skeletons (22): HD 1; AC 7; Atk longsword 1d8; ML 7; AL LE.

Hp	7	4	5	6	1	2
	7	4	2	6	2	4
	4	5	2	5	5	5
	8	1	5	6	5	6



EPILOGUE

If the characters manage to break the Barbarian King's power, his sway over the valley fades away. The mists retreat, to return only with the rains. The resting places of the dead in the valley are silent; the spirits are banished from this world and forgotten with the memory of the barbarians. And as for the people of the village, the accursed slaves: they also gain their freedom. Returning from the tomb and descending into the valley, the characters find them all dead, with each person fallen where the living spirit had left them.



DOES ENERGY DRAIN SUCK?

These rules may help if you think it does.

- Wights, wraiths and other lesser undead drain 1d6 Constitution.
- Spectres, vampires and other greater undead drain 2d4 Constitution.
- Shadows drain 1d6 Strength.
- Scores recover at a rate of 1 per day.
- A character drained to 0 in a score is lost, and becomes an undead of the given type.

With these changes in effect, undead represent a greater immediate threat, but do not damage long-term character viability.

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The Barbarian King

Beyond the border city of Velft where the legion of General José Antonio Balazán upholds the law, the great eastern trading route leaves civilisation. After the ploughed fields of the townlands and the small villages and guard towers of the valleys stand endless mountain ranges, cold and unfor-giving.

These harsh wastelands were once the domain of the Barbarian King, whose men bowed be-fore animalistic spirits and fought with weapons of brass. In their raids, they showed no mercy: not consent with pillaging, they took their victims as slaves or killed them when they could. So it was until the death of the king, after which men in mail came from the plains, and as their foes once, they had no pity for those they met.

Today, there is a fortress city named Castle Evening on the lands where the barbarians had roamed, and barges plow their once holy lake. The initial conquerors, the knighthoods of Alliria and Mitra, were eventually defeated by the fanatical inquisitor-priests of Talorn; shamefully exiled from the land of their hard-won victories. The abundant mines and rich pastures have since trans-formed the wilderness into something else, a place of order and watchful sentries. Yet beyond the lands of the settlers, the mountains are silent as they had always been. And it is said, in a valley haunted by the shades of the barbarian warriors, there stands yet the burial place of that last war-lord: **the Barbarian King.**