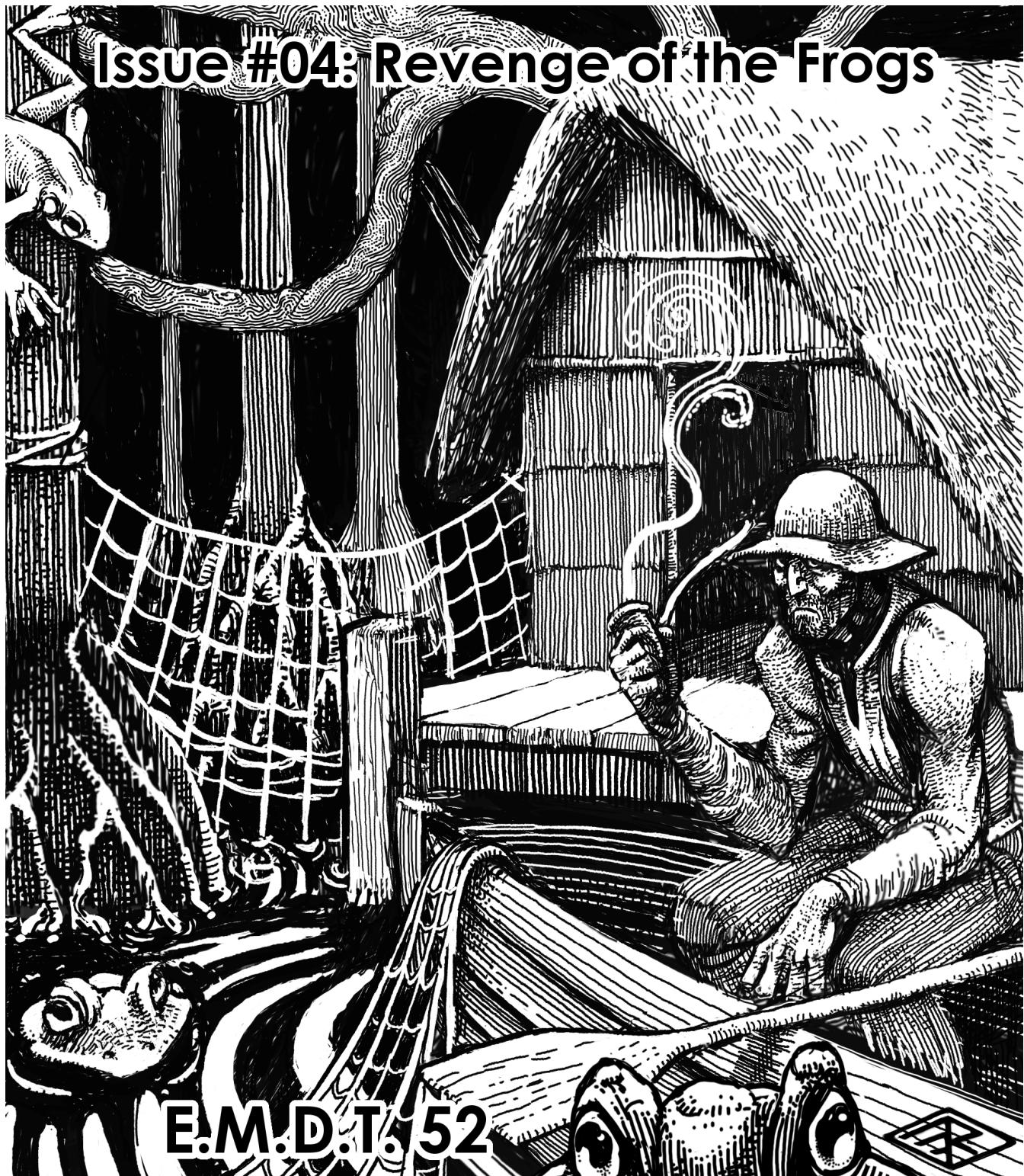


Echoes From **FOMALHAUT**



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First Hungarian
D20 Society

Issue #04: Revenge of the Frogs



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Issue #04: “Revenge of the Frogs”
by Gabor Lux

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Frogs and lots of frogs! There has never been a better recipe for an old-school game. Indeed, giant frogs have a prestigious history in gaming: from Dave Arneson’s **Temple of the Frog** and the moat in **The Village of Hommlet**, to the frog level in **The Tomb of Abysthor**, they have devoured their honest share of careless adventurers. Some time in the darker days of gaming, giant frogs fell out of fashion. Perhaps the publishers thought they were ridiculous, they had a carefully concealed anti-frog bias, or worst of all, they did not even think about their decision. If you look carefully, you will recognise an old-school game for its rich selection of frogs and frog monsters, and most new-school efforts for a conspicuous lack thereof.

To keep with the frog theme, this issue presents an old favourite of ours, a frog-themed wilderness module which started off as a companion piece to **Cloister of the Frog God** (published appropriately enough by Frog God Games as a chapter of **Rappan Athuk**), but never released on its own. It has now been recreated as a standalone scenario, retested, and included here for your enjoyment.

The issue also continues the hex key of the Isle of Erillion mini-setting, presenting the wilder, stranger western half of the island, where settlements are rare, and the strongholds you find in the wilderness are ruled by brooding feudal lords and strange customs. But strange customs are not exclusive to Erillion: from our City of Vultures campaign, I present Arfel, a smaller city state where the living are ruled over by the dead – and yet life goes on with all its perplexing contradictions (Arfel provides this issue’s map supplement).

Gabor Lux
Pécs, 3 april 2019

The Technological Table

%	Technological Instruments	Price
01-05	Laser pistol	2000
06-08	Laser rifle	3000
09-11	Laser sword	1500
12-14	Laser spear	1500
15-16	Chrome glove	2000
17-19	Electro-whip	2500
20-25	Cartridges	400
26-27	AG box	4500
28-29	AG belt	3000
30-37	Aquastel	150
38-45	Antitoxin	700
46-47	Argent	1800
48-52	Diambroid	500
53-55	Doctrinator	800
56-63	Galtan's Precise Skullcap	600
64	Hypno-box	6000
65-70	Integrator	2000
71	God-box	3000
72-75	Comm device	1000
76-81	Chromathrophe	600
82	Polymorphic base	1500
83-87	Raptogen	250
88-90	Reversal	800
91	The dark eye	6000
92-00	Stim	50

Futuristic weapons: laser weapons have an infinite penetration capacity, but require precise aiming. Accordingly, armour, shields and natural defences are useless against them, while Dexterity and magic still apply.

A character concentrating fully on moving unpredictably (foregoing other actions) can avoid rays with a successful save vs. wands, granting protection against one opponent. A character under fire from multiple foes receives a -3 penalty on the second save, -6 on the third, etc.

On maximum damage (e.g. 0 on one of the d10s), roll another dice and add to the total. There is no theoretical upper limit.

Characters who are untrained in the use of lasers do not develop a precise aim until they participate in at least three raygun battles.

Roll 1d6 after each attack; if the result is odd, subtract it from the total.

Some of the older weapon stocks are close to malfunctioning. On a natural 1, they deplete all energy in a cartridge.

Automated lasers are typically found in ancient underground installations, and should be treated as stationary 2 HD opponents with AC 3.

Laser pistols have a capacity for 30 shots, but those found in the field usually have 2d10+10 charges remaining. The larger, bulkier **laser rifles**, slung over the shoulder on a belt, consume charges at a x1.5 rate. **Cartridges** are small cylinders holding 15 shots worth of energy, and may not be refilled, nor are they manufactured at any known location on Fomalhaut.

Tri-lasers can fire three shots within a fan-shaped area. They are immobile (although they can turn up to 180 degrees), and are usually found mounted at strategic locations.

Laser swords and **laser spears** are melee weapons. Their full capacity is 15 units (one cartridge). They have the penetration of regular lasers, but after depleting their charges, they inflict damage one dice under their normal equivalent. One charge functions for 5 rounds, expended by pressing a switch in the grip.

Chrome gloves are chrome-plated gauntlets of a cobalt alloy worn over the hands, and essentially function as laser pistols.

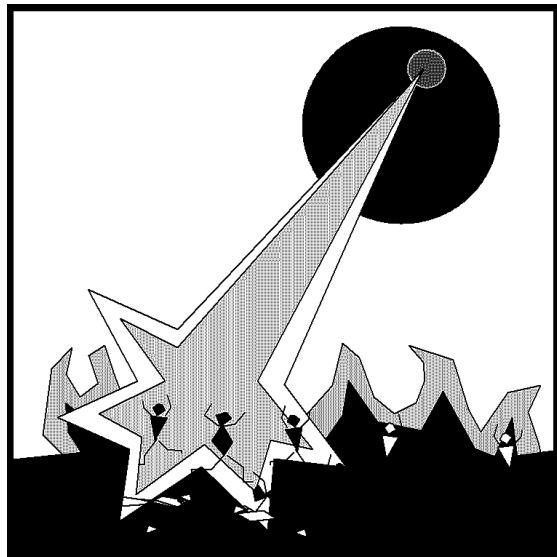
Flamethrowers, also heavy mounted weaponry, have a short range but generous area of effect, and are equipped with 6 units of napalm. A save is applicable for $\frac{1}{2}$ damage. Almost all of them are found behind protective shielding, as concentrated heat (e.g. a laser hit) detonates them as a *fireball* (3d6 damage and 10' radius for every remaining charge).

Electro-whips are employed by elite enforcer units. On the basic setting, they cause nonlethal damage, but they can be set to kill if necessary. In the first case, 10 rounds of use consume one charge; in the second, the rate is doubled. Their full capacity is 15 units (one cartridge).



Futuristic weapons	Price*	Damage	Range (feet)
Laser pistol	2000 gp	2d10+	100'
Laser rifle	3000 gp	3d10+	100'
Tri-laser	6000 gp	3*2d10+	100'
Laser sword	1500 gp	2d6+	-
Laser spear	1500 gp	1d12+	20'
Chrome glove	2000 gp	2d10+	100'
Flamethrower	2500 gp	6d6	20'x60' area
Electro-whip	1200 gp	3d4+ spec	-
Cartridge	400 gp	-	-

* Approximate value; typically less valuable in original environment. Price is for a fully charged specimen (i.e. a depleted laser pistol would be worth 1200 gp).



AG box (4500 gp): a 5' cube which is not subject to gravity or friction, and turns the objects placed therein weightless. Due to its nature, it is not always easy to control.

AG belt (3000 gp): this anti-gravity device uses the same cartridges as futuristic weapons, with a capacity of 15 units. One unit allows vertical levitation like the spell; three flight with free movement, with respective durations of 1 hour and 1 hour + $1d6*10$ minutes. On every use, there is a cumulative 2% of malfunction.

Aquastel (150 gp): a liquid that resembles water, but has ten times the weight. Mixed into liquids, it efficiently reduces them to their components, layering them over each other by their density. This neutralises potions, toxins and most other compounds, which cannot be remixed. 1d6 doses found.

Antitoxin (700 gp): a small dermal patch which removes all toxins from the body upon application. 1d3 are found.

Argent (1800 gp): a liquid stored in shiny metal canisters, which develops into a silvery 20' ra-

dius gas cloud upon contact with air. The gas is a strong nerve poison (two saves at -3). Initial effect reduces subjects to a vegetative, easy-to-manipulate zombie state; secondary effect 2d3 hours later kills subjects after terrible convulsions. Argent leaves behind silvery traces, but this residue is harmless.

Chromathrope (600 gp): a cylinder containing prisms and lenses, emitting rainbow-coloured light through one end. This light burns permanent, random patterns of a colourful, crystalline nature into the chosen surface. Whatever the device's former purpose, the vivid colours will create a permanent marking. On human skin, this is a painful process, and there is 20% probability the radiation results in the permanent loss of 1 Constitution. Chromathrope can be used 12 times.

Comm device (1000 gp): tiny, flat metal disks and earplugs can transmit everything louder than a whisper to everyone wearing similar devices within a 10 Stadion range. Strong electromagnetic fields and thick metal walls can muffle or neutralise the signal, while receivers owned by hostile parties can easily pick it up.

The dark eye (6000 gp): in the ancient era, the use of this device was strictly prohibited. The round black device is an artificial eye equipped with a darkly glinting lens. Touched to the forehead, it sinks within the skull to embed itself, allowing perfect vision even in total darkness. The eye's energy can be charged by sapping the life force of others, by emitting a grey-black light beam draining $3d6+3$ Hp from the subject. Victims permanently lose 1d3 Hp, which the owner gains temporarily. At 0 Hp, the eye drains all remaining life energy, transferring it to the owner and killing the subject. Although there are no theoretical upper limits to the life drain effect, the human organism cannot always cope with the excess energy. However, if the eye receives insufficient

nourishment, it will devour the user's brain – warning signs include a feeling of pressure within the forehead.

Diambroid (500 gp): explosives typically stored in flat tin canisters; damage is 6d6 Hp per dose, radius 20' per dose. It is set off by strong impact, electrical discharge, and 1:6 also by electro-magnetic fields. It can be found in its basic form, as well as with suction cups allowing easy placement, timers, remote control, etc.

Doctrinator (800 gp): a metal slug that sinks into the skull when pressed against the temple. It encourages the subject to act according to a pre-set doctrine. If it detects deviation or inadequate eagerness, it may administer disciplinary measures in the form of excruciating pain (a save allows the character to act despite the torments). Certain models are also equipped with a detonator and miniature explosive charge.

Galtan's Precise Skullcap (600 gp): perhaps the most common technological instrument; left to the current era in prodigious quantities. It is a headpiece made of a firm, coppery alloy and engraved with curious patterns, often sheathed in comfortable cloth or hidden within a turban. The device is in constant contact with the array of geostationary satellites above planet surface, and allows the wearer to telepathically request his position by sector (map region) and coordinates (hex number) according to Solon's standard system. It does not operate in enclosed spaces, and its service can be unreliable due to the increasingly erratic behaviour of the ancient satellites.

God-box (3000 gp): a communication link to a (hopefully intact) subterranean databank. The box answers questions put to it, although its terminology, wording and reference points may not be perfectly clear for men of the current era. The databank may have its limitations and it may be malfunctioning in both obvious and subtle ways. Finally, there is no intelligent actor behind the responses: precise and ap-

propriately worded questions are indispensable to receive useful and relevant answers.

Hypno-box (6000 gp): a heavy box made of glossy black alloy. The box allows for the control and manipulation of enormous crowds, similar to the combination of *enthral* and *rainbow pattern*. The effects can be sustained over a very long period, although they become progressively less reliable.

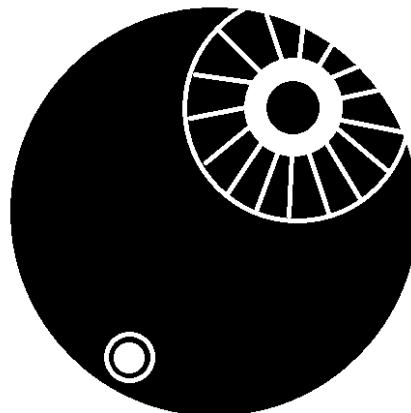
Integrator (200 gp): single-use sticks made of black metal, storing incredible amounts of concentrated heat in the tip. The sticks can be used for welding, cutting up thick metal sheets, and similar tasks. In combat, they are at -4 to hit due to the small size of their contact area. They cause 8d6 damage to exposed flesh and organics; metal armour must save to avoid destruction, and suffers the effects of heat metal.

Polymorphic base (1500 gp): dough-like mass stored in cylindrical, self-refrigerated metal tanks. The material of the polymorphic base can be shaped into humans, animals or other creatures, and depending on the skill of the creator, from the primitive to the most intricate organisms. One cylinder is sufficient for one human-scale being, defaults to LVL 3. Precision instruments and a laboratory allow for much more efficient work.

Raptogen (250 gp): crystalline purple-black salts which sublimate into a gas causing immediate loss of consciousness (save at -3 avoids).

Reversal (800 gp): once, mere ownership of this agent could be grounds for termination. Reversal is usually found in self-contained syringes, initiating a reverse evolutionary process upon injection (save at -3 to avoid). The subject usually declines one or two stages on the evolutionary ladder, resulting in physical and mental degeneration. The effects are irreversible.

Stim (50 gp): essentially a first aid patch; used immediately after sustaining injuries, it restores 1d4 Hp.



Revenge of the Frogs

adventure module for levels 3-5

Playtesters (Party #1): Gergely Keresztes Nagy Antal (+Ungor Gar, Northman Archer 4), Ferenc Kantor (+Morv, Cleric 3 of Morg), Balazs Laszlo (Kalava, Barbarian 4), Aron Peterfy (+Olaf, Cleric 4 of Thor), Viola Sziacs (Tara, Fighter 4), Tumula the Marshman (NPC Thief 4)

Playtesters (Party #2): Gabor Acs (Bartam Starry-Eyes, Sailor 3), Kalman Farago (Abu al-Omayar al-Haquim, Cleric/Illusionist 2/1), Laszlo Feher (Rotar the Raftsman, son of Tumula, half-orc Druid 3), Gabor Izapy (Fafnir the Dwarf, dwarf Thief 3)



Background

For centuries, the dreaded frog-cult had cast a shadow over the marshlands, and struck fear into the surrounding communities. Although dormant and decrepit, the order had still demanded tribute and dragged away hapless victims for human sacrifice. Villagers would offer gifts when the barges came, and even Murtar, God of Murky waters shuddered in his smoky sanctuary when the monks paid a visit to the town of Silvash.

That was long ago. The frog-worshippers were destroyed when a band of adventurers unleashed something dreadful in the vaults beneath their monastery, and the complex, along with the ridge where it had stood, sunk into the swamp. From the wreckage came a great plague of frogs, but when destruction seemed certain, the priests of Murtar performed their one and only miracle. A trio of guardians were fashioned to keep the batrachian doom at bay, and a great conch-shell horn raised to their lips to make it sleep. It was said the menace would slumber as long as the horn played its music, and the winds blew over the marshland. But the wind has stopped blowing, and Silvash is endangered once more.



Silvash

The port town on the marshland's edge is avoided by travellers and ships alike. The place is more of an overgrown village, and even so, it shrinks year by year as the swamp retakes its outer quarters, and ever fewer boats are moored along the stone-reinforced channels. The houses of Silvash, with their peaked straw rooftops, the dead cats hanging from tall poles and bats nailed next to the doorways seem more like diseased hovels than the dwellings of prosperous merchants. The inhabitants, whiling away their time sleeping in hammocks or smoking bitter herbs from their pipes, are more dirty, ragged and lean never-do-wells than proud citizens. The ones who do not smoke are driven to cough not by the tobacco, but the miasmatic environment. All in all: this is place worthy of neither trading with nor conquering, and neither an inn nor a caravanserai is to be found.

This is the place the characters find themselves by some misfortune (most likely marooned by a passing ship). Silvash is far from every other civilised locale, and overland travel would take several weeks through hazardous and inhospitable terrain. The winds have ceased, and the only people who know how to restore it are the priests of Murtar...



The temple of Murtar: This beehive-shaped building of mud bricks is a veritable palace among the wretched huts and filthy channels. In the cool hall of the dark temple, smelling of birchsmoke and decay, the sanctum is tended by the high priest **Baktlu-Baadi** and his four **acolytes**. All are wrinkled old men with several rings on their long fingers, and rows after rows of gaudy necklaces. The idol behind the ragged leather curtain is an obese, naked human figure, which the acolytes clean and polish with great reverence.

Baktlu-Baadi calls on the characters to find out what has happened to the three statues and the horn. In exchange, Murtar would also be generous to the strangers – they might even receive the temple's old ceremonial barge, properly refurbished and mended for sea travel. Perhaps even a few hundredweights of gold, brought forth from the temple's secret stores, could be involved. He also warns them that, if they would dawdle or fail, the frogs will rise again, and all will be lost! The venerable high priest offers three pieces of assistance for the journey:

- He can provide them with a **raft**. The raft is outfitted with oars, machetes, a crowbar, an oil lamp, 3 bottles of oil, 5 torches, a tent, 50' rope, dried fish*5 days, leeches (1d4 damage but cleans out poisons), net, mortar, bags and pots.
- He can give them the temple's **taxation seal**. This cuneiform-inscribed clay tube hanging from a leather strap entitles the bearer to collect the annual taxes on Murtar's behalf, or ask other favours in his name. Baktlu-Badi wisely forgets to tell the company that only eight months have elapsed since the latest collection, and the seal's subjects may be reluctant to pay up... but let that be their problem.
- If the characters are insistent, he can offer them **three potions**: a *potion of healing*, a *potion of diminution*, and, if they press the issue far beyond comfort, a *potion of invisibility*.

The marshlands

The marshlands are a maze of relatively clean water channels hemmed in by reeds, sickly looking trees, and ever-present vines. Water is slowly flowing towards the sea across the wetlands, but it is easy to travel by raft in any direction. The foetid mire is crawling with life. The air is thick with leeches, and the waters are overflowing with fish. Innumerable birds nest in the reeds. Finding food will not be a problem (at the cost of one time unit).

- Depending on the pace the characters are dictating, they can move **six to eight times** per day (counted in stretches of water between intersections).
- Roll **random encounters** every time the characters travel from one location to another (1:6 probability, **1d6**), and three times per night unless secure shelter is available.
- At the start of the expedition, roll randomly to determine the location of the **conch-shell horn (1d3)**: 1 – Lord Snek's treasure horde in Slimywater (D); 2 – the tower of Lillian the Wizardess (I); 3 – Durlang's hoard in Sackshore (K).
- There is a **time limit** to the adventure. Three days from the start, the **Gloop** (see area M) will awaken from its slumber, and start moving towards Silvash at a rate of **four sections** per day. The Gloop chooses a random direction at intersections. It destroys everything in its path, and will bring devastation if it reaches the town.

1. Killer Frogs (3d6): HD 1+4; AC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec hop attack +2; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	10	6	11	11	5	8
	5	8	7	10	12	12
	10	6	5	10	6	5
	10	11	11	7	5	6
	6	11	10	9	10	6

2. Giant Frogs (2d6): HD 2; AC 7; Atk hop attack +2 1d6, tongue +4, swallow 2d4/r; ML 7; AL N.

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

3. Snakes, constrictor (1d2): HD 6+1; AC 5; Atk bite 1d4 and constrict 2d4/round; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	29	26	27	24	34	27
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4. Snakes, poisonous (1d2): HD 4+2; AC 5; Atk bite 1d3 + deadly poison; ML 8; AL N.

Hp	19	18	20	21	20	33
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5. Giant leeches (2d8): HD 2; AC 9; Atk bite 1d6 and attach; Spec blood drain 1d6/round, vulnerable to salt; ML 6; AL N.

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

6. Shambling mound (1d2): HD 8; AC 0; Atk limbs 2d8; Spec suffocation 2d4 rounds, immune to fire, grows from lightning, weapons ½; ML 10; AL N.

Hp	36	38	32	29	38	34
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A. Bell: Ruined walls on a tiny island surrounding a small **bell tower**. Pilgrims from Silvash sometimes perform sacrifices here, leaving behind flower garlands, colourful glass shards and metallic objects. If the **old bronze bell** is rung, the sacrifices placed around the ruins are consumed by rot and rust, and the characters' food and water spoils. If the bell is damaged, the defiler must save vs. death or age 10 years for every point by which the save was missed.

B. Ruin: Crumbling wall protrudes from water with **reliefs** of male and female dancers. Cracks in the wall are overrun with **swamp slitherers**, tiny black toothy horrors able to leap great distances. They attack the curious.

Swamp Slitherers (12): HD 1+1; AC 8; Atk bite 1d4; Spec attach & automatic damage each round; N.

Hp	3	9	6	5	5	2
	4	4	9	3	2	7

C. Black nets: Revolting, tattered miasmas hang from the tree branches to the water surface, blocking the shorter way. They resemble nettles, causing reddish welts on touch (save vs. poison or -2 to all rolls until antidote is received). They are impervious to fire, but fall upon prodding (save vs. paralysis to avoid getting caught).

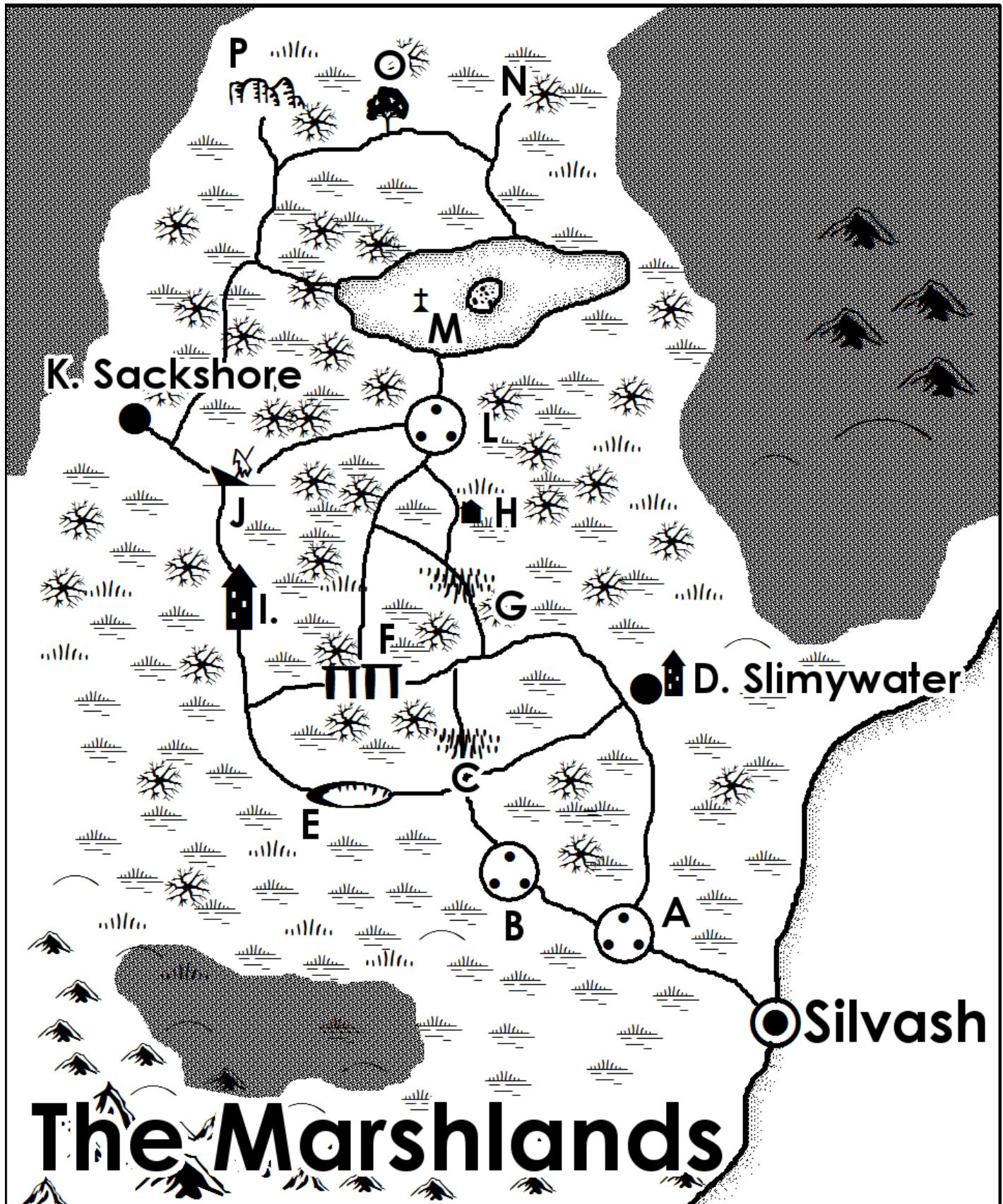
D. SLIMYWATER: Piers built from decrepit boards stand on the swampy side of this miserable village inhabited by half-orcs. The people of the settlement live in dismal huts, and wear mixed human and orc features – hairy backs, protruding paunches and swine noses, six-teated mothers nursing their contentedly grunting little ones, nude children running around.

The marshside is watched by three guards: **Bellyhang**, **Snotspit** and **Wobblefat**. All wear badly made leather armour as well as large brass disks around their necks to mark them as the servants of Lord Snek. Their arms are halberds with lanterns hanging on them (more ceremonial than useful), and sabres. At first, they demand duties, gate tax and a trespassing fee, all three separately – but they are easy to fool or intimidate. They ultimately try to escort the newcomers before Lord Snek.

The master of Slimywater lives in a ramshackle tower, recently renovated to reflect its lord's tastes: painted plaster lions perch on the old walls, and a fancy balustrade rises on the terrace above the gate. **Lord Snek** is the only human in the village. He is as wide as he is tall, preferring to soak his hamlike legs in hot water while his four half-orc concubines massage him, cook, and do the chores.

If pressed, Lord Snek isn't fond of the thought of paying his taxes so early before their due date, and especially not to strangers. The taxation seal is important, but this is the marshland, where things don't go the same as in Silvash. What if the seal is stolen? Where, oh where are the sacred nettle robes of the visitors? Why didn't they light a birchbark smoke to announce their holiness? Why didn't they chant the sacred guttural chant?





Nevertheless – if the company can show before the people of the village that they indeed carry Murtar's might and wisdom, and adjudicate their miscellaneous quarrels as customary, he will also help them.

The **tasks**, which will be watched by the great and small of Slimywatern, are as follows:

- **Gruelbrew**, a handsome young mother with protruding jowls brings her spawn: he had swallowed a thistle, and there was no way to retrieve it from his throat.
- **Smokewave** and **Bellystuff** have married, but Smokewave's family did not hand over the betrothed's dowry, and ate until they depleted Bellystuff's food stores. However, it has also been known that Bellystuff was already married in the tiny village of Ingralw, where he was selling his wares, and furthermore, he has two small children from a different mother. What is to be done?
- **Stinkegg**, a youth has broken all of his neighbour's clay jugs, but did so when both the sun and the moon rested, and thus, no witness from the sky could see the deed. What is the judgement?
- **Crookedneck** asks what sign should he expect before embarking on building his new pottery kiln, and how he might protect his products to be made there from the evil eye.

Even so, Lord Snek tries to **bargain down the tax**, but becomes very accommodating if he is asked anything that costs him little. Otherwise he is prepared to pay up to 1.5 hundred-weights of gold (150 gp) – this was a bad year – and a flask left behind by a traveller, reputedly filled with a strength-building elixir (*potion of giant strength*). If he has it, he is loath to part with the **conch-shell horn** unless extravagantly reimbursed, or convinced of the coming danger (as a lord of half-orcs, he has seen much).

Lord Snek keeps his **treasures** in his tower, within an iron footlocker under his bed (locked): 300 sp, 300 gp, lizardskin shirt embroidered with minuscule pearls (350 gp), and a green frog figurine (stolen from the cloister long ago, non-magical).

Bellyhang, Snotspit and Wobblefat: half-orc Fighter 2; AC 8 (leather); Atk halberd 1d10 or sabre 1d6; ML 8; CN; lanterns, coils of rope.

Hp 9 10 9

Lord Snek: Fighter 4; AC 10/5 (unarmed/chainmail); Atk mace 1d6+1; ML 8; CN; pearl ring 150 gp, *golden medallion* 250 gp (*of fireballs*: 2*6d6, 2*4d6, but unknown by anyone here to be magical), decorative clothes.

Hp 25

E. The Great Sink: The waters of the swamp disappear here in a large **sinkhole** with a gurgling noise. Driftwood, branches and the remains of a **barge** have become stuck across the hole. Around the site grow colonies of **clumpfoot cabbage** [Stinkkohl], a marsh-dwelling plant, which heat the water around them to a boil (2d6 Hp). On the bottom of the barge, glowing, walnut-sized **frog eggs** wait to hatch in the warm water. They are a delicacy, and may have other uses. However, the barge is so rotten through that it may break apart: 1:6 under one man, 1:3 under two, 1:2 under more. Those who can't save themselves or aren't immediately thrown a rope will be sucked down the sinkhole and gone.

F. Island of the Frogs: Although shrubs and saplings have overgrown this low hill, one can easily see the bent old standing stones forming a **stone circle** through the vegetation. Frogs are always abundant here. Those who visit the island have a 1:2 to be attacked by **3d10 killer frogs** (initially 1d10, soon followed by the others). The frogs will surround and devour their victims.

The **stones** are covered with moss and lichen, and in the **pit** dug in the centre, there are charred bones and a battered **old brass cauldron**. The patterns of this vessel depict the priests of the Frog as they perform sacrifice with the cauldron to their fell deity. Those who decipher and follow the instructions, boiling herbs within before inhaling the steam, will find the following boons:

- A random character will be possessed by a higher power, and proclaim: "INDEED! THE BANE OF THE WEAK TOWN-DWELLERS SHALL RISE! NO MAGIC HORN HIDDEN BY [PETTY LORD / SCHEMING WOMAN / ORCLING CHIEF] SHALL BE OF USE!" This character must also save vs. magic, or he will try to sabotage the expedition at a convenient moment (a second save at -3 is possible).
- Those who took part in the rite may select a one-use second-level cleric spell of their choice, and the character announcing the prophecy will also gain *insect plague*.
- From now on, the characters will not be bothered by frogs or giant frogs.

Destroying the cauldron is a good deed, but attracts the ire of the frogs. Beneath the fire pit lie **2500 buried gold pieces**, hidden here by the old order and now completely forgotten.

Killer Frogs (3d6): HD 1+4; AC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec hop attack +2; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	12	6	8	7	6	11
	5	13	9	6	6	7
	7	8	8	7	12	7
	7	10	9	12	11	7
	9	12	12	8	5	7

G. Black nets: These nets are identical to those at **C**, but a careful observer has 1:6 of noting gaps where a canoe might slip through (1:3 for elves, 2:3 for rangers and druids). There are fishing nets and landing nets half-submerged in the water, with the day's catch. 1:3 of **Tumula the Marshman** lurking nearby.

H. Tumula the Marshman: Nets and strings with drying fish hang before a **round hut** half dug into the earth of a tiny island. Here dwells the ancient and decrepit **Tumula the Marshman** (present 1:2 by day, 5:6 by night). His ragtag clothing cobbled together from grey and greenish pieces, his stubbled face and unkempt moustaches make him an unappealing figure, and the smell of tobacco smoke around him is strong enough to scare away the mosquitos. When given the chance, Tumula smokes, and he smokes the cheapest and nastiest stuff. He only talks when asked, but he knows the marshland like the back of his hand. Typical phrases:

- "Well, don't hurt to pack some smoke y'rself's."
- "If you'r 'fraid your junk gets wet in the marsh, get some oilcloth. That's what I'm wearin', never hurt me none."
- "Can get used to it."
- "So-so."
- "Wouldn't go there, but won't stand in you'r way."
- "Now! Just eat it. Don't be squeamish like some little girl."
- "Y'never know w'the half-orcs. Part of 'm is man, part is orc, and then one attacks you for half a copper, but the worse is the human part because that's sneaky."

Tumula can also heal heavily wounded characters with **herbal teas** (1d6 Hp).

He doesn't join an expedition if requested to do so, but if he learns of the company's intentions to save Silvash, he follows them in his skiff from a discreet distance. Tumula can hide in the swamp as in the shadows (+25% probability).

Tumula the Marshman: Thief 4; AC 5 (Dexterity, marsh clothes); Atk machete 1d6 or 2*shortbow 1d6; Spec backstab, PP 45%, OL 37%, FT 35%, MS 33%, HS 25% (50%), HN 15%, CW 88%, RL 20%; Str 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Dex 16, Con 15, Cha 7; ML 10; LN; oil lamp, flint & steel, long forked pole, pipe & tobacco, dried fish, 2 bottles wine, knife.

Hp 19



I. Lillian the Wizardess: Creepers and colourful flowers decorate a small tower and island rising from the swamp. Two skiffs rest by a newly built stone pier. This is the home of **Lillian the Wizardess**, shared only with her half-orc servant, **Hushuk**. Lillian is in her fourties, dressing in yellows and purples. She receives visitors politely, but is not really happy about their arrival.

Lillian's tower is full of **flowers** on the inside: colourful petals nod and leaves litter the floor, the scent mingling with the vapours of tea. Lillian pours the purple drink from a screw-necked decanter into glasses the shape of bluebells – pleasant, but -2 to saving throws against mind-affecting until slept off.

If she is **asked for her help**, she tells characters directly that she wishes to be left alone. Thus, taxation seal or not, she will not reveal anything that'd compromise her neutrality.

- If the characters are clever, her denials can be quite telling.
- If the characters seek material help, she gifts them with a 170 gp opal, and her own *biscuits* made from wasps' hearts and primrose flour (1d8+1 Hp each, +1 to all rolls for one hour).
- If she has the **conch-shell horn**, she has placed it on top of her tower as a piece of decoration. She would part with it for an object of equivalent beauty. She is convinced the Gloop would never come near her tower anyway, and Silvash isn't worth much.

Whatever the conversation's direction, Lillian makes sure to send Hushuk to spy on the strangers, and collect "insurance" she could use as leverage. If the company is sufficiently paranoid, they may apprehend the half-orc, and he is cowardly enough to spill the whole deal.

Otherwise, Lillian is not a fighter. If a conflict breaks out, she tries to flee with her *ring of gates*, leaving behind the **chest** under her bed (600 sp, 235 gp). Her **real treasures** are carefully hidden in the chimney behind a loose stone (3*45 gp pearls, 500 gp enamelled bracelet, spellbook). If she is killed, her body collapses into a heap of flowers and leaves, to be blown away by the winds. Her tower soon follows, leaving an old tree stump.

Lillian the Wizardess: Illusionist 6; AC 10; Atk #2 dagger 1d4; ML 7; AL CN; *ring of gates* (dimension door 1 ch, teleport 3 ch, dimension gate 5 ch; 14 charges), *potion of neutralise poison*, *dust of sunlight* (coalesces into cloud in air, cuts passing through for 3d8 Hp, save halves), dagger, perfume, vial of nectar.

Spells: 4/2/1; 1: *audible glamer*, *colour spray*, *detect illusion*, *hypnotism**2, *phantasmal force*; 2: *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *improved phantasmal force*, *ventriloquism*; 3: *spectral force*, suggestion.
Hp 17

Hushuk the Servant: Assassin 2; AC 7 (swamp gear); Atk shortsword 1d6 + poison or #2 throwing knife 1d4 + poison; Spec surprise, backstab, assassination shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 + poison or 2*dagger 1d4; Spec surprise, backstab *3, assassination 0-1 55%, 2-3 50%, 4-5 40%, 6-7 30%, 8-9 15%; ML 6; CE; tobacco leaf necklace, bottle of snake spirits, 4*knives, dried lizard, golden bell 5 gp.

Hp 10

J. Man-eating moss: This evil (?) green colony has turned the water surface into a thick miasma. A skiff drifts in the middle, with a half-consumed corpse inside whose bones are already protruding. The **moss** attacks those who venture into it, striking from multiple directions. The cadaver wears a monk's green habit; his haversack and the cheese and bread within have been infected with the green horror, but the symbol of the frog around his neck is intact.

Man-eating Moss: HD 6; AC 6; Atk 6*pseudopods 1d6 and grab; Spec strangle for automatic damage for 1d6/round, susceptible to fire, immune to mind-affecting; ML 12; NE.

Hp 32

K. SACKSHORE: A stockade surrounds the rotund, reed- and moss-covered wooden houses of this small half-orc village, and travellers are only admitted if they tie their boats outside, and enter via ladder. The inhabitants are fishermen and occasional brigands, venturing from the marshlands to raid small villages and homesteads. The green-clad bowmen of the village are expert marshmen, but greatly fear the lingering powers of the Frog.

The chief, **Durlang** only assists the company if they show the **taxation seal**, and one of them also demonstrates proof of his bravery. The place of trials is the **frog pit**, a muddy, moss-choked pool in the middle of the village, surrounded by a palisade. Around on an elevated platform sit the villagers looking for a spectacle, while in the pool, **six killer frogs** (already wounded in a previous fight) wait for the champion to be lowered down in a leather harness.

- After defeating the frogs, Durlang looks on the company much more favourably. He declares a feast of jellied frog and swamp soup (this fermented soup of roots, sprouts and grain contains small amounts of frog), then admits that he has no idea how to help.
- If convinced a little more thoroughly – with or without threats – he quickly remembers he *can* in fact provide something useful – the escort of six bowmen through the marshlands (they will follow in their own skiff).
- If he has the **conch-shell horn**, Durlang will only give it up if his bowmen can first see what's brewing under the central lake – but he will honour his bargain if his men bring news confirming the trouble.

Durlang: half-orc Fighter 3; AC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; ML 8; CN; 35 gp.

Hp 19

Half-orc Bowmen (6): Fighter 2; AC 8 (leather); Atk #2 longbow 1d8 or club 1d6; ML 8; CN.

Hp	8	7	4	11	13	4
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Killer Frogs (6): HD 1+4; AC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec hop attack +2; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	2/6	4/8	3/7	5	6	3/7
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L. Watchtower: The slimy water has long conquered this tower. Someone has placed skulls in the lower windows, and filled them with glowing frog eggs. Those who approach will experience ringing ears, then the skulls send strange, troubling and confused thoughts into their minds via telepathy. Those who fail a save vs. paralysis will suffer a headache so heinous that they will have a 1:3 of missing any round until they leave the area or the skulls are destroyed.

The tower interior is the lair of **six giant frogs** lurking underwater. A relief on the wall depicts the dead of the swamps bowing before a great bloated frog. This image has been cleaned of moss and earth, and smeared with some kind of greasy unguent.

Giant Frogs (6): HD 2; AC 7; Atk hop attack +2, tongue +4, swallow; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	6	9	10	9	14	11
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M. Lake: Large, still lake. The wreckage of the Cloister of the Frog God lies submerged beneath the surface, save for the odd arch or piece of wall still protruding above the waterline. Fish are bountiful, but waterfowl avoid the area, and the place is ominously still. East to west, there are three points of interest.

A small **isle of rubble** rises in the middle of the lake. Three statues hewn from rough stones stand motionless in a cluster. Once the guardians of the **conch-shell horn**, **Hakus**, **Pakus** and **Grogotus** act like overgrown, dim children.

- They can barely comprehend the instrument is gone, and they can only bellow and mope painfully ("Stolen, stolen! Music gone, music gone! The orcs, they took it – took it!").
- They played the music together, but it has gone all wrong ("Hakus held it, Pakus held it, Grogotus blew it!" and "Grogotus coughs, Grogotus coughs and coughs! He doesn't blow, there is no wind! There is no wind, Gloop gets stronger! No good, no good!").

Even if the **conch-shell horn** is returned to the statues, poor Grogotus has a flu, and can't blow it properly without **medicine**. Tumula the Marshman (H), Lillian the Wizardess (I), and the haunted meadow (N) can all provide something to clean the brutish statue's nose... and beware those who come near when it blows! With the medicine received, the statues can resume their music, and the Gloop will go back to sleep once more.

In the middle of the lake, a **steeple** still protrudes from the water. It serves as a nest of bats, but the real thing of interest is a **sack of 600 gp** hidden in the bell room (take care, or the old leather splits and the coins will spill... right into the lake).

To the west, one can see the hatching **Gloop** in the depths. Looking like a myriad glowing frog eggs, its amoeboid bulk emits an eerie radiance which is unpleasant to observe at length. Great, malformed **catfish** swim lazily around its clusters, but avoid getting too close. If the Gloop awakens (after three days have passed from the start), it has the powers of a **shoggoth** as it flows through the marshlands, leaving devastation in its wake. It can be soothed with music, making it halt on a failed saving throw. Only the music of the horn will send it back to sleep.

Hakus, Pakus and Grogotus (earth elementals): HD 12; AC 2; Atk fist 4d8 (-2 per dice against flying); Spec +2 or better to hit; ML 10; AL N.

Hp 50 47 53

The Gloop (shoggoth): HD 20; AC 1; Atk 2*gloop 3d10; Spec immune to weakness, paralysis and charm, able to take any form or dimension, vulnerable to music; MR 30%; ML 12; AL CE.

Hp 105

Catfish, giant (4): HD 6; AC 4; Atk bite 3d6; Spec swallow on 18-20; ML 9; AL N.

Hp 20 20 20 23

N. Haunted meadow: This dry stretch of land is overgrown with fleshy swamp plants, weeds and wildflowers, and loud with the buzz of bees and dragonflies. Some of the **rare herbs** are curative (1d4+1 doses, their tea restores +1d6 Hp over a restful sleep). However, strange manifestations haunt the peaceful locale. Only their **stag-shaped shades** are apparent, but if someone does not leave quickly, or they are molested, they tear their victim to pieces with their sharp teeth. The shades always concentrate their fury on a single target. A thorough inspection of the surroundings turns up numerous **animal and humanoid bones**, while a small **burrow** conceals a cache of treasure: 350 ancient electrum pieces, 250 gp, a *chain shirt* -1, and a 500 gp silver decanter with an amethyst-studded stopper.

Stag shades (3): HD 4, AC 7; Atk bite 1d12+1 or gore 3d6, Spec +1 or better to hit, surprise 5:6; ML 9; AL NE.

Hp 18 18 21

O. Birch grove: Thin, sickly birch trees stand in the greenish water. The undergrowth is sufficiently thin to provide good visibility of the whole area. A few round boulders rise above the water surface, and clusters of (regular) frog eggs stick to their sides. This hatchery is guarded by a **frogodile**, a 20' man-eating hybrid created by the Frog cult through controlled mutation. Unless it is thrown a large haunch of meat to devour, the frogodile attacks from underwater (surprise 4:6). It tries to drag its intended victim underwater.

Frogodile: HD 7; AC 4; Atk bite 3d6 and grab; Spec hop attack +2, ½ damage from acid and poison; ML 9; AL N.

Hp 35

P. Quarry: A cliffside rises on the border of the swampland. It had been used by the Frog-worshippers to quarry the stones for their monastery, and later by the priests of Murtar to fashion the three earth elementals. Traces of mining are still apparent, but the place lies otherwise abandoned. Or is it? A careful search of the area reveals a *diviners' stone* forgotten in the debris!



Diviners' stone: This oval-shaped stone is etched with magical runes and alchemical symbols. It is activated by casting an kind of detection spell (e.g. *detect magic*, etc.) on it – *detect good* also reveals it is benevolent in nature. Activation results in a short, spoken omen of some kind. While its cryptic and mysterious advice might appear insightful, the stone is merely bluffing in the hope of pleasing its owners.



ARFEL

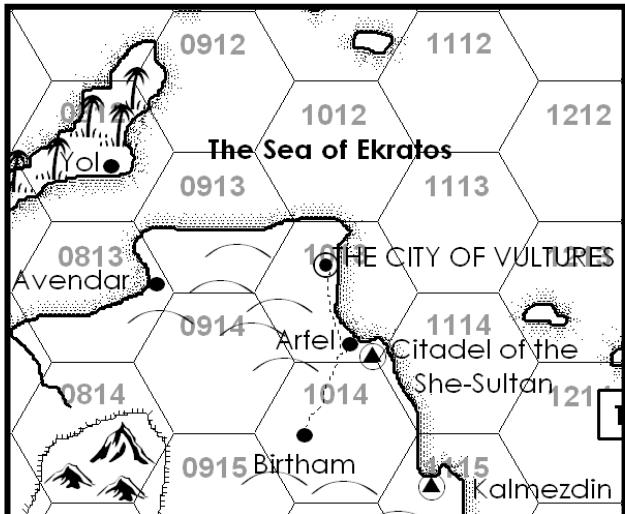
City State of the Charnel God

Playtesters: Gabor Acs (Santiago del'Avellos, Fighter 5), Kalman Farago (Burzasp Serfiroz, Fighter 5), Laszlo Feher (Vifranavaz, Illusionist 5), Matyas Hartyandi (Marashura, Fighter 2/Magic-User 2), Gabor Izapy (+Thorlig Jansen, Northman Barbarian 3 – died of a mysterious tropical illness when his player lost his character sheet), Adam Tarnoczy (Ambrosius, Fighter 5).



Background

All travellers who have visited the City State of the Charnel God have noted its dark and dilapidated-looking buildings: no matter how poor or wealthy, the structures in town all have a funereal appearance, and most windows are unlit during the night. That is no accident, as Arfel has grown up around the immense, labyrinthine temple-complex of Ozolba the zombie god, and the presence of this necropolis can be felt in every aspect of life in the city. The shambling Ozolba – a near mindless hulk who resides within his temple with all who have died within the city walls – is cared for by an extensive hierarchy of priests, living and dead. All within the walls is free for Ozolba's taking, and the veiled priests exercise this right without mercy, seizing anything and anyone they wish, and carrying it back beyond the gates of their shadowy realm. The city aristocracy, in turn, has seen fit to imitate the manners of the dead: the noble families inhabiting the orderly but rather lifeless Upper City are withdrawn to their windowless mansions, living by the tenets of the Necrotic Traditions, which prescribe a funereal existence to both the living and the dead.



Both the priests and the nobles see the day-to-day affairs of actually running a city as beneath their status (or at least their true purposes are obscure and mysterious): accordingly, civilian rule in Arfel is left in the hands of a motley group of gang leaders and potentates. The six Benevolent Seigneurs, as they are called, rule collectively, and the armed forces of the city consist of their followers, with key points like the gates and harbours under common supervision. Nevertheless, none would dare challenge the priests and the aristocrats, as their formidable reputation is made stronger by their secrecy and reclusiveness. When the priests come for their due, or the aristocrats summon someone before their exalted presence, even the mightiest denizens of the city shudder – and obey. Arfel imports substantial quantities of embalming materials, barely covered by the taxes collected from its craftsmen. The imbalance has left the city-state in a precarious financial situation, and the underclasses of the Lower and Outer Cities are growing desperate. Reputedly, even the aristocracy is feeling the pinch – but they are not telling.



Customs and denizens

The cult of Ozolba, the Zombie God:

Alignment: Neutral Evil

Symbol: rotting head

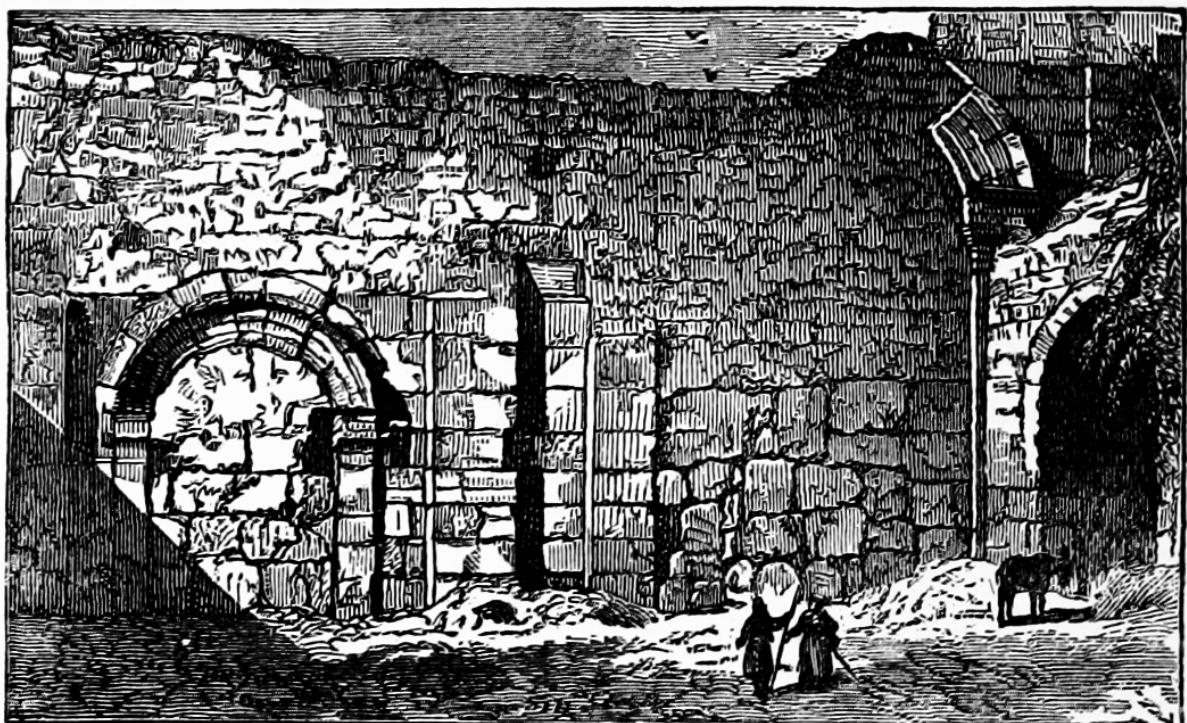
Weapons: bludgeoning only

Ozolba is a huge decomposing corpse. He has minimal intellect, and only concerns himself with destruction and murder, which he relishes. Zombies under the domain of Ozolba always have a crude intelligence. The secretive clergy often includes priests who are themselves zombified corpses, but none may progress beyond the fifth level. Their ranks include normal men as well as all character classes. Most adherents are ashen-faced and dour due to their morbid activities. Many are infected with filaments of corpseweed, a parasitic grass which saps away bodily fluids, and leaves the flesh dull, grey and lifeless.



Anything and anyone in the city can be claimed by Ozolba (that is, his cult) without express reason or compensation. To refuse is a sin above all sins, with punishment too horrific to adumbrate. This rule extends everywhere within the city walls, but excludes the Outer City, built on the rocky plateau just outside the city limits, where not even the Silent Sentries walk. Even so, the cult has its way – they let the Benevolent Seigneurs do their bidding through blackmail or bribery.

The priesthood of Ozolba is opposed to the customs of the nearby City of Vultures, where, according to the Prophecies of Dókh, burial has been forbidden for three centuries, and the dead are devoured by the sacred vultures – a fate reserved for animals and lower beings in Arfel. However, their hatred and rage is focused on Karttekeza, the six-armed, peacock-riding god whose followers rule the Citadel of the She-Sultan. This fortress of marble and alabaster, located only a few hours' ride from Arfel, has often granted shelter to those fleeing from Arfel, and it is such an affront to the clerics that they have had the city's southern gate walled off and the road placed under a curse!

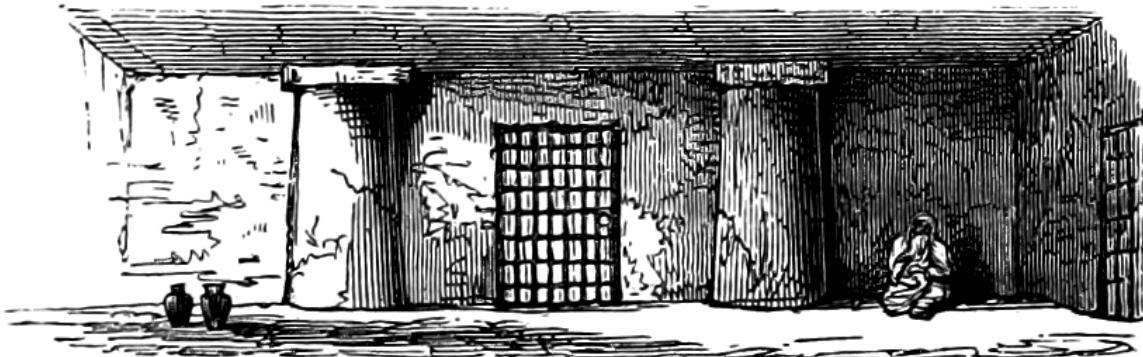


The aristocrats: Only these families – mostly claiming an unbroken lineage going back to Arfel's foundation over a thousand years ago – actually have citizenship rights in the city-state. They are reclusive, and their residences show few signs of habitation. Most don't venture outside their doors for weeks or months, and some for years. The older families (marked on the map with a +) are firmly committed to the stifling Necrotic Traditions as a matter of pride, and wear heavy, uncomfortable finery. If a family gives no signs of life for a certain period (*), it is considered to have achieved holiness, and they are thought to possess Ozolba's favour. Some of the newer, lesser families are more active, and engage in limited trade and diplomacy.

The Silent Sentries: They are the elite guardians of the deserted upper city, responsible for the peace and safety of the aristocrats and the clergy. The Silent Sentries are indifferent to the fate of the lesser city-dwellers or outlanders, although they are not entirely free from corruption. Most of them stick to the Upper City, leaving the rest to the Benevolent Seigneurs.

The Benevolent Seigneurs: Absent a formal leader (and since Ozolba's interests are purely ecclesiastic), Arfel is *de facto* ruled by a crime syndicate of the strongest. Such a constellation is predictably plagued by persistent distrust, although the Seigneurs hold regular council meetings in an old hall next to the Dream-Obelisk of the Burned Poet (12), and they are united by common interests pertaining to their status, and Arfel's balance of power. Currently, the six Seigneurs are:

- **Salwar Afzal the Seafarer (Fighter 4, 13):** A young merchant and pirate who has seen a rapid rise in his wealth and fortunes. He belongs to the rising cult of the red god, Ishab-Lambar, and lets it known that as the god's power grows in the coastal city-states, those who stand with him are sure to be rewarded.
- **Rahman Rasheed Uthman (Fighter 2, 5):** An older merchant who has been known for a heavy-handed approach, he is now seeking grooms for his grown daughters, both of whom have rejected or driven off several previous candidates.
- **Zaida-Shura (Assassin 5, 14):** Based in the Cameleopardalis Tea House, she is the grandmistress of a society of assassins, sought as unaligned outsiders in the City of Vultures. Zaida-Shura is allied there to Lady An-Raydn, the leader of the mercantile faction based in the Market of Ugen, doing a brisk trade in fenced antiquities and prized materials.
- **Nezham Omaar the Alleyway Lord (Fighter 3, 18):** A common but shrewd criminal in charge of a gang of street toughs and breaklegs. He is recognisable for his long dough-face still bearing the red marks of a whip, and his splendid blue garments.
- **Hyemélkshú (Thief 2, 11):** A supposed holy man, popular on the streets, lording over a band of robber-cultists based around the Demon Steps. These crazy, bird-masked fanatics dedicate themselves to the memory of the Burned Poet, Duri ibn-Ghuti, and call themselves his legacy's guardians.
- **The Scarlet Man (doppelganger, 15):** Based in a deserted caravanserai, the Scarlet Man and his gang are only discussed in hushed whispers, if at all. He is a scare story to warn unruly children, the subject of macabre tales and wild rumours. He has long lost his interior control over his appearance, and become a perpetually shifting, amorphous shape resembling red, molten wax. He spends most of his time withdrawn to his underground oil tank, preferring not to emerge into the painful outside world.



The Three Cities: Arfel is demarcated into three parts, which almost seem like different cities (Ozolba's temple-complex is consistently left out of this grouping, as if its existence was better off glossed over).

- The **Upper City**, encompassing the noble residences, makes up over half of the effective city territory, while having perhaps one tenth of its total population (naturally, an estimation without basis in demonstrable fact). It is orderly and neat, but mostly deserted, save for the occasional servant scurrying to or from a specific residence. Groups of priests chant blessings on passersby and the houses. The streets are windy, and even patrols of the Silent Sentries give Ozolba's disciples a wide berth. A group walking here stands out like a sore thumb.
- The **Lower City** is Arfel's port and bazaar, a pocket of antique high-rises bustling with life and revelry. This part of the city is lower than the rest (although, curiously, the sea is not – a trick of perspective or a peculiar sorcery?), and rather claustrophobic – bordered by the massive walls of the temple-complex from the north, the Demon Stairs from the west, and walls from the south, leaving only a tiny, if busy harbour, it has no other exit.
- The **Outer City**, as its name suggests, lies on a plateau outside the city walls, and its formal jurisdiction. Four informal, although discreetly guarded gatesways cut into the city wall allow entry and exit. It is a lawless territory where might makes right, and the Benevolent Seigneurs hold sway. Yet, its chaotic alleys and unruly buildings are not necessarily poor nor joyless, and the plateau affords a certain safety from the perils of the wasteland, as long as one pays his dues.

The Cats: Although they are not mentioned in travelogues, and command little attention, cats are a common sight in Arfel. Strays from helpless kittens to proud alley cats dwell in the weed-choked courtyards and abandoned pleasure gardens, and among the cracks of the crumbling edifices. They hunt in packs, and beg for scraps and milk in large groups (under the right circumstances, these swarms could devour and skeletonise a careless man). The cats know ways unknown even to the city's inhabitants, and if they were talking, they could tell much about lost secrets. The cats have a particular hatred of cat-catchers, pariahs who live in the Outer City, and do gruesome things to their careless kin. The cat-catchers know this well, protecting themselves from the cats' vengeance with thick walls and posted guards.



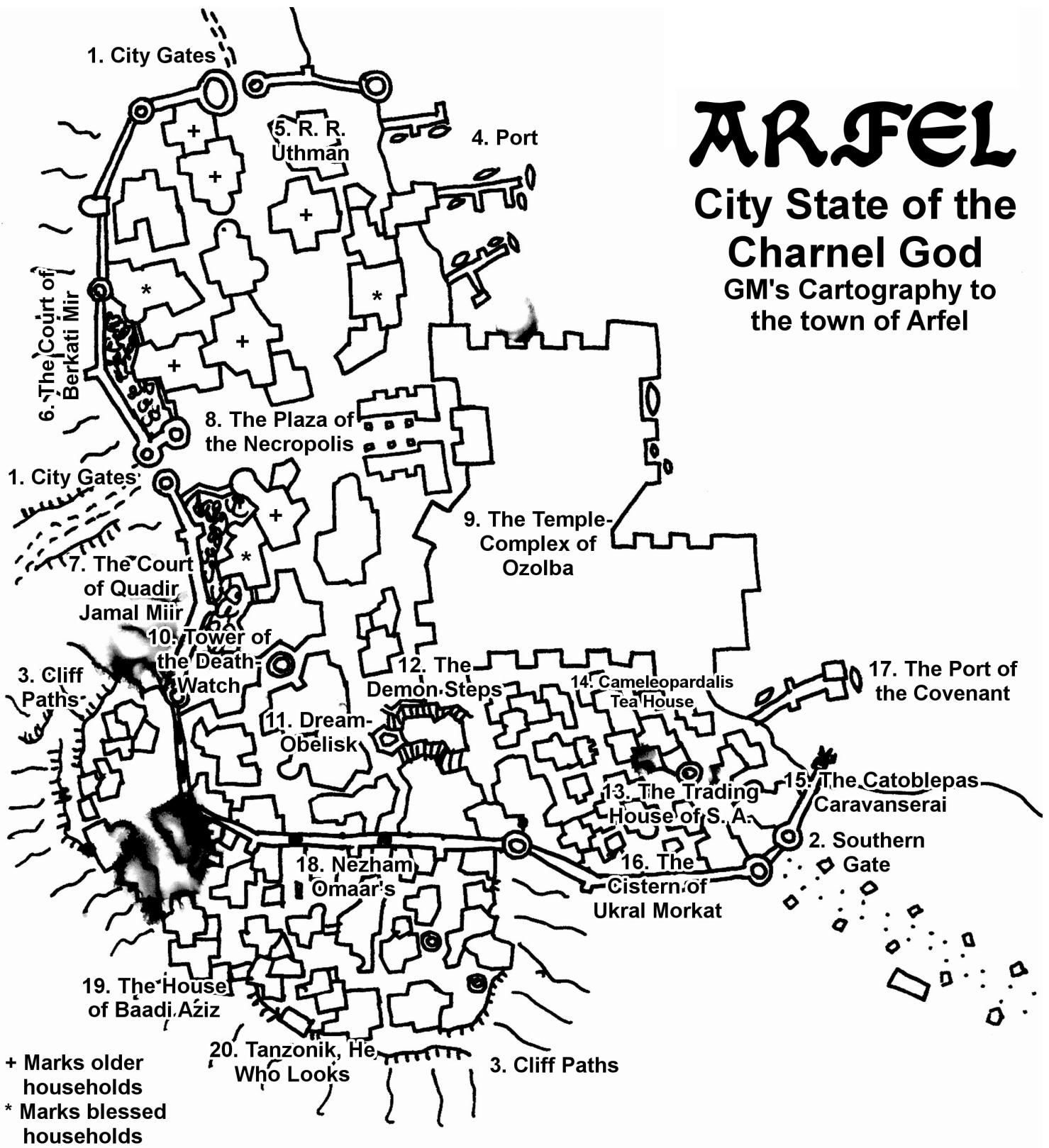
A Brief Guide to Arfel

1. City Gates: A motley crew sponsored by the Benevolent Seigneurs mans the walls and gates. They are a mixed company, consisting of each Seigneur's representatives due to a mutual lack of trust. Passage 1 gp per man or beast, 5 gp per vehicle. Shady types lurking near the gates sell "protection from Ozolba's priests" for 5-15 gp (worthless racket).

2. Southern Gate: This archway has been walled up. The road between the ancient obelisks lies abandoned, since caravans now take a detour to enter from the west. The ruins of a caravanserai are the lair of a ghast and 18 ghouls.

3. Cliff Paths: These treacherous paths to the plateau are used for smuggling, and to avoid the notice of the city's upper classes. The southern path is controlled by Nezham Omaar, while the northern one is administered collectively by the Seigneurs.

4. Port: Even the Silent Sentries are present in Arfel's larger – and safer – harbour. There is an entry cost of 5 gp/boat and 1 gp/person; more for large vessels. The guarded central pier is in use by the Caravanserai of Extennos, and only available to its clients (+1 gp surcharge). Extennos, the head of the family, is "indisposed", and his wife **Pallidia** (Thief 3) runs the business. In truth, Extennos has long been dead, laid to rest in his room to avoid Ozolba's laws.



5. Rahman Rasheed Uthman: A rare exception in the Upper City – the merchant's abode is reasonably lively and open, so much so that the neighbours have started complaining. However, with Uthman's control over rare spices and preservatives, he feels safe from the priesthood's clutches.

6. The Court of Berkati Mir: A shady, fresh-smelling little forest within the walls. Here are the backdoors of two noble residences, none of whose inhabitants have ventured outside in quite a while. A small side building is in use by a company of freelance thieves.

7. The Court of Quadir Jamal Miir: A dense and surprisingly dark park with twisting paths among the old trees, tumbled statues, and multiple small pavilions. Peacocks run wild here, long forgotten by their former owners. The Mutated Statue, a magical enigma, shows a different grotesque appearance every day.

8. The Plaza of the Necropolis: This place is oversized, dusty, and desolate. To the two sides stand the storehouses and barracks of the Silent Sentries, with two rows of obelisks between them. The exterior faces of the buildings contain prayer cells, where huddled ascetics recite their litanies in endless monotony. The most devout are properly necrotic, silently shrivelling into dried meat under the merciless sun.

9. The Temple-Complex of Ozolba: The unadorned, geometric surfaces of this massive necropolis lend it an appearance of awe and menace. The doors are always open, for Ozolba always welcomes the dead. Describing the hallways and chambers of the temple-complex, which forms a single level, is beyond the means of this publication; thus, only the names of the main areas are listed:

- The Gateway Halls
- The Cryptic Necropolis of the Accursed Corpse-Eaters
- The Oubliettes of Many Stairs
- The Forlorn Catacombs
- The Piping Cells and the Two Galleries
- The Inner Pathways of the Charnel God
- Catacombs of the Crawling Bones

10. Tower of the Death-Watch: The only tower left standing from Arfel's early cycles, and said to conceal a secret from the ancient days. This structure is inhabited by **Zirak Naram-Sin** (M-U 6), a powerful ally of the zombie-god. Originally of Khosura, he has been known to deal in the wisdom of the distant stars as well as mystical objects, which he sells from the curio store on the lower floor. Zirak Naram-Sin is guarded by three black onyx lions.

11. Dream-Obelisk of the Burned Poet: A simple, old obelisk is dedicated to the memory of the poet Duri ibn-Ghuti, who had burned himself here on a pyre after his beloved was dragged away by the priests. His songs were lost with him, and only a few fragments – considered to be perfect – remain. Unsurprisingly, the priesthood has been trying to tear down the stone ever since, but in this one field, they have been beset by unexpected resistance, and eventually, a fanatical robber-cult has sprung up to protect the site. The obelisk is located in a courtyard surrounded by high walls, and it is sooty from the smoke of oil lanterns constantly burning around it. Hyemélkshú's crazed, bird-masked followers guard the place day and night. A columned resting hall beyond the courtyard serves as the occasional council room of the Benevolent Seigneurs.

12. The Demon Steps: Ancient stone steps predating Arfel's foundation form two zigzagging stairways leading down to the Lower City. The stonework is decorated with faded faces bearing a variety of different expressions. The stairs are swarming with beggars, lepers, peddlers hawking their wares, prostitutes and sellswords (mostly thieves and brigands). A row of book merchants sell copies of Duri ibn-Ghuti's remaining works (essentially scraps), and numerous other scrolls and pamphlets – 1:3 of an interesting find, further 1:6 of magical work. This area is controlled by Hyelmékshú's bird-masked fanatics, who stand guard here and there like motionless statues.

13. The Trading House of Salwar Afzal: A small, fortified compound swarming with burly, tough-looking men. Bustling warehouses at the bottom, arrow slits on the floors above, and Salwar Afzal's splendid, if utterly tasteless quarters under the cupola on the top. The merchant's bearded visage decorates several banners in silhouette.

14. Cameleopardalis Tea House: A multi-level building filled with gossiping locals; curtained niches and separate corners for discrete conversation – higher up, sleeping quarters with barred windows overlooking the alleys. This is an excellent place for sleep, clandestine meetings, and business both legal and illicit. Zaida-Shura, middle-aged and clad in blue robes, is a pleasant conversationalist and a shrewd bargainer, but also a skilled assassin in her own right. (She would *never* poison her tea!) The tea house is filled with secret passages, sliding panels and escape routes, known only to her and her immediate underlings.

15. The Catoblepas Caravanserai: This building had lain abandoned after the southern gate was walled up and interdicted, until it was claimed by the Scarlet Man and his gang. There is a cool, now empty courtyard, mostly deserted warehouses, while the living quarters are inhabited by lurking killers. A fire burns constantly in the ramshackle tower. The Scarlet Man finds relief in his custom-made oil tank, located in the cool cellars where the cisterns were.

16. The Cistern of Ural Morkat: A colonnade surrounds a courtyard where water springs from a carved mule's head. This place is associated with a mystery, although it is a forgotten one. Still, it is a serene, peaceful location with good-tasting, cool water.

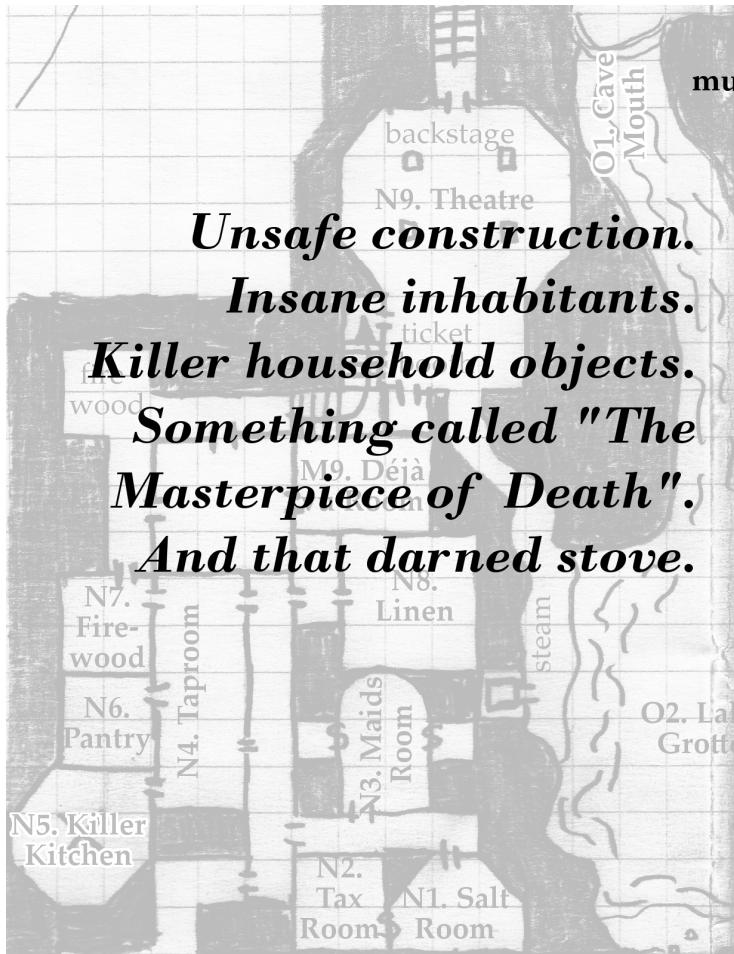
17. The Port of the Covenant: This smaller but busier port is under joint control by the Seigneurs. The main pier is guarded, and a tiny watchtower has been erected at the end; even so, thievery is commonplace. Entry is 3 gp/boat and there is a disembarkation fee of 5 sp/person. There are always dense crowds here, with a lot of jostling, haggling, hawking, and pickpockets.

18. Nezham Omaar's Mansion: The Alleyway Lord's badly built, gaudy dwelling has closed shutters, neglected terraces and absolutely tasteless plasterwork. The banner of a bull's head flutters over the gate. Loitering, bored toughs – ruffians with scimitars and colourful clothes – harass passersby for fun.

19. The House of Baadi Aziz: A small, fortified house with a tree-flanked portal, belonging to Arfel's wealthiest cat merchant. Shelves over shelves with mummified cat heads, cat heads in oil, in ointments, shrunken or cleaned to the bone. The corpulent, jowled Baadi Aziz (Thief 2) has hired a heavy guard of mean, moustached guards to protect himself and his thriving business.

20. Tanzonik, He Who Looks: This adobe building hanging precariously over the cliffside is inhabited by a holy dervish and his disciples. All Tanzonik does is sit cross-legged and watch the wastelands with his empty, black eye sockets, which he has been doing for 170 years. He is fed and cared for by his followers.





Castle Xyntillan

by Gabor Lux



E.M.D.T.

Viktor, heavy footman, ambushed and murdered by Malvin Malévol the Strangler;

Henri d'Aramitz, Cleric 1, choked by Sybille Malévol the Widowmaker;

Hafiz the Persian, M-U 1, fried to a crisp by a razzle-dazzle;

Raynald of Chatillon, Fighter 5, turned into a bunch of flowers;

O3. O6. Arnold, Thief 2, burned to cinders by a stove;

Brother Tadeus, Cleric 1, burned to cinders by a stove;

Luciano, heavy footman, burned to cinders by a stove;

Jacques One-Eye, heavy footman, burned to cinders by a stove;

Mullet, crossbowman, burned to cinders by a stove;

Tout, crossbowman, burned to cinders by a stove;

Carp, crossbowman, burned to cinders by a stove;

Brother Benedict, Cleric 1, killed by Charles Malévol the Calamitous;

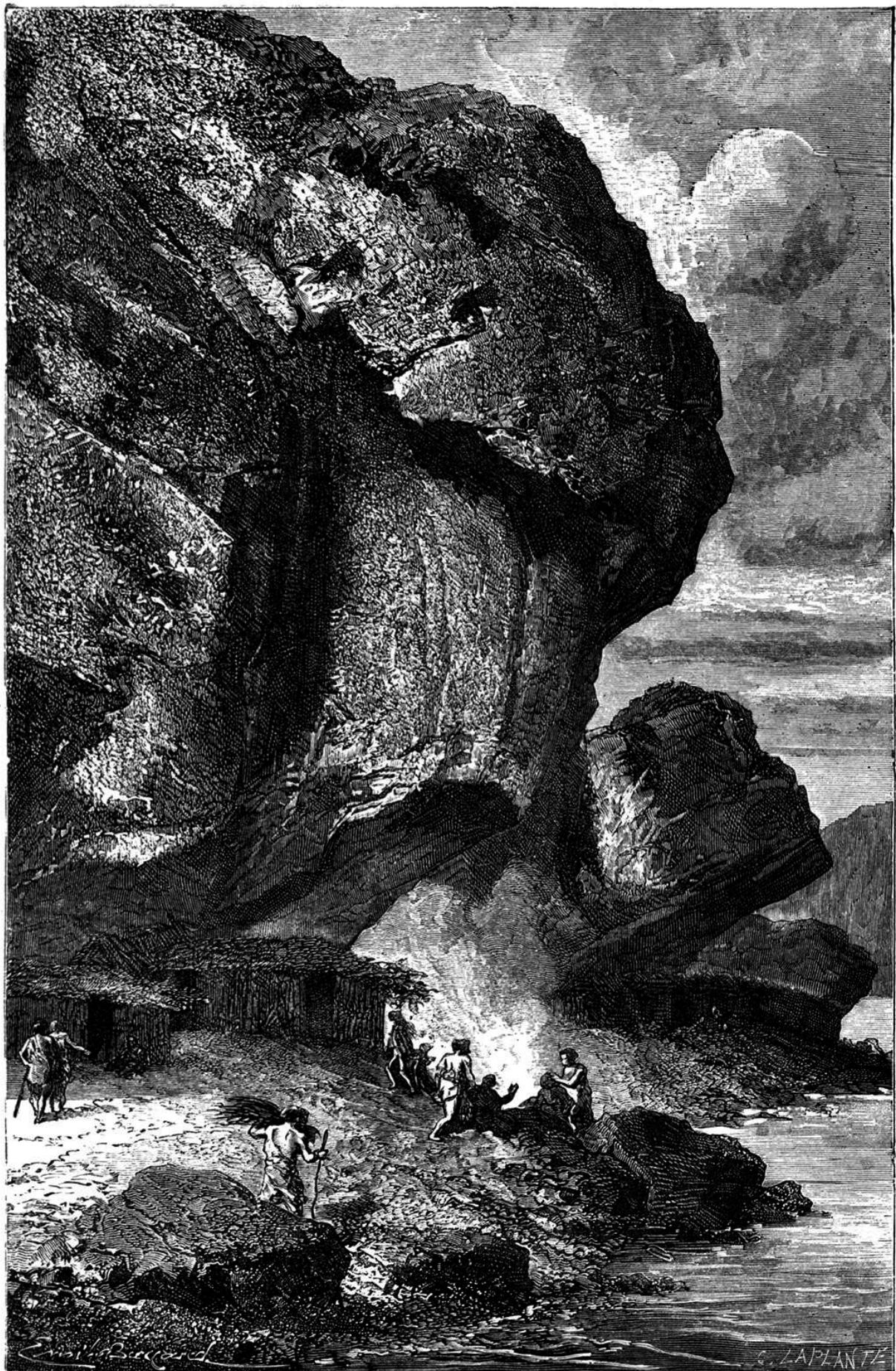
Brother Bonifacio, Cleric 1, killed by a reanimated Brother Benedict;

Jorge, crossbowman, killed by a reanimated Brother Bonifacio.

...and so on.

***That stove has
got to go!***

Say no to Xyntillan!



♦♦♦ Erillion, West ♦♦♦

This article presents the second half of the hex key to the Isle of Erillion mini-setting (general writeup in Echoes #02, first half in Echoes #03).

This part describes the wilderlands on the western half of the island, and the hex coordinates refer to the map included with the previous issue (only the area under discussion is depicted on the map to the left). All this is mostly wilderness: there are no major settlements west of the city of Baklin, and even Tirwas, the largest extant town, is a small place. Instead, civilisation in these lands is found in the vicinity of small manor houses and forts.

Feudal lords here are more powerful and capricious, underlings more accustomed to harsh treatment and obedience, and it is sometimes said even the nights are darker in the endless forests. Unlike Erillion's traditional liberties, life here hews closer to the norms of the Twelve Kingdoms. Indeed, the coastal settlements around Tirwas were once a part of this divided realm, and there are many who have little loyalty to the prince of Baklin and his taxmen. Likewise, many petty lords in the Twelve Kingdoms would gladly claim these lands as their own, if only an opportunity presented itself.

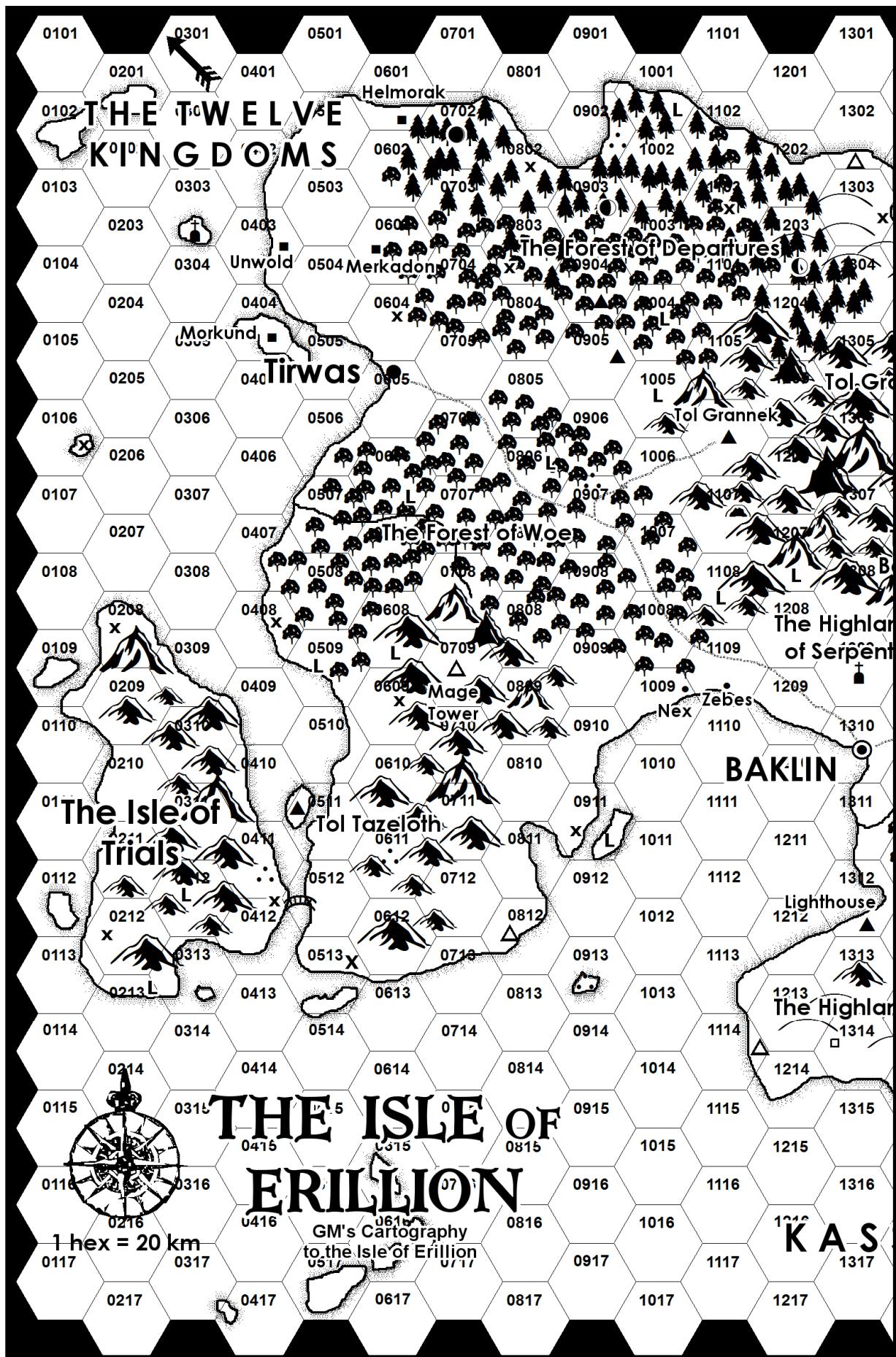
As before, the following hex key is only a starting point, left for personal interpretation and expansion. Many locales are left briefly sketched out, and there is a lot of space for the GM to add new terrain features, ruins, and forgotten wonders. A few locations will be forthcoming in future issues of this zine, but aside from the town of Tirwas (presented in the next issue), they may be safely located where the GM please, or replaced at his or her discretion.

The Lunar Path A peculiar mystery associated with the lunar cycle, this path is lost in the wilderness. Those who would undertake this pilgrimage must start their journey from the standing stone next to Helmorak (0601), and visit the black lunar stones in the following order: 0702, 0903, 1203, 1404, 1704, 1903, and 2002. They will receive guidance in the form of a black dog, who will show the way and walk before them. The dog starts at 1 HD and grows by 1 HD at every station; at the end of the pilgrimage (8 HD), it will try to devour its companions. Significantly straying from the path or pausing for more than one day voids the journey. Those who follow the entire Lunar Path to its conclusion receive +1 Wisdom and +1 on a random saving throw, and can pass through a portal into the world of dreams.

The Lunar Path has an additional mystery associated with it: those on the way have 50% to cross paths with the Wandering Glade, an enchanted forest which periodically appears at different points of Erillion (roll 1d8 to determine the segment of the pilgrimage where it happens). The exact movement patterns of this labyrinthine woodland were only known to the ancient druids, now long extinct. Walking the Lunar Path is the most reliable way to enter it. The Wandering Glade will be described in a later issue.

The Isle of Trials A mountainous island of dormant volcanoes west of Erillion. Once known for its silent mountains, inhospitable terrain and strange relics from a bygone age, it has gained a reputation for spirituality. Dozens of persecuted cults and religious movements, mostly from Kassadia, have found refuge on the island and established self-ruled communities. Most attempts have ended with failure, and the pilgrims' return to their homelands, but 2:3 of all encounters with men are still with pilgrims or settlers of some kind.





0106 Terraced farms lie fallow, and the ruined walls of Orthain, a village fortress stand as a memorial to the war within the Twelve Kingdoms. Caught in a feud between two of its petty princeleings, Orthain was put to the torch so it could benefit neither, and its people fled to seek a new life elsewhere (0212). 1:3 of some activity within the ruins: pirates and merchants alike still use the place to replenish their stocks of water and undertake repairs – or to strike illicit bargains.

0208 A decaying longhouse consumed by moss. At night, shivering forms (4 wraiths) try to warm themselves by the flames of a cold ghost-fire. Those who venture closer are invited to join, and offered a 35 gp silver torc: but those who take this boon have accepted the bond of the undead warlord Remillik the Skarl, and must visit his court below the sea (at 0403) to offer company and gifts!

Wraiths (4): HD 5+3; AC 4; Atk touch energy drain; Spec silver or +1 to hit; ML 9; AL LE.

Hp	23	19	23	21
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0212 A community of eight reclusive hedonists and their households, moving from Kassadia to this remote location, have built a settlement on the ruins of a looted monastery. Here they live a life of ease and contentment, protected from raiders by the monastery's thick walls and well-stocked cellars. Only merchants selling exclusive wares are welcome, and never with an armed escort. The hedonists' needs are served by outcasts from the village of Orthain (0106), who live in meagre huts at the foot of a cliff. Their former leader, Illamor (Fighter 3), has been trying to find the hedonists' source of wealth, with no luck.

0213 9 worgs have devoured Rennogard of the Golden Mouth, but his will prevailed: he lives on within the pack, and speaks and sings in their howls (as a 6th level Bard). Rennogard's cottage lies abandoned now, although there are signs of recent visitors.

Worgs (9): HD 3+3; AC 6; Atk bite 2d4; ML 8; AL NE.

Spells (as Rennogard): 3/3; 1: acclumsed ode (-25% MV, -1 initiative, -1 to hit, 10%/r of dropping items), calm aire (soothes anger and agitation while sung), faunacare warble (heal animals 1d6 Hp/r, 1r/level); 2: freebody strain (removes magical slowness/paralysis, +1 Str, Dex while singing), thornhedge refrain (4' hedge, 2d2 Hp/round, cut through in 4 rounds).

Hp	18	14	20	15	16	19
	16		21			

0303 Peaceful island-dwellers known for the prevalence of caveman blood search the coast for precious amber, or mine milk-shale in the gentle foothills. They live a simple and egalitarian life, now greatly disturbed by the newly built monastery on the island. Gillon Stone-heart (Cleric 4) and 24 fanatical monks, worshippers of Kurlakum of the Seven Misfortunes and followers of the cult of Barzog (q.v. 1908), have enslaved the island's populace, and put them to work on reckless construction projects. The monks are working on erecting an evil temple under their monastery, and hope to gain the powers of the Stone of Wollek Thane, a lost runestone of legendary origin.

* * Legend * *

- City
- Town
- Village
- ▲ △ Fortress (ruin)
- □ Homestead (ruin)
- ∴ Ruins
- † Temple or Mstry.
- ✗ ↳ Ruin / Lair
- Road

Gillon Stone-heart: Cleric 4; AC 2 (plate and shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1; Wis 14; ML 11; AL CE; *scroll of the maleficent manifestation* (grows four extra arms, all armed with murderous weapons, must roll system shock to survive after spell expires).

Spells: 3+1/2; 1: cause fear, command, cure light wounds, light; 2: chant, spiritual hammer.

Hp 16

Monks (24): Fighter 2; AC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1; ML 9; AL CE.

Hp	14	8	10	12	11	4
	18	14	11	3	9	8
	13	10	2	11	7	15
	7	14	3	14	11	2

0312 A type VI demon roosts in the crater of an extinguished volcano. Here, in a round pavilion, it guards a fallen stone ankh. The demon challenges valiant heroes to single combat: it will let them visit the shrine and depart in peace if they wound it twice, but will slay them if they are unsuccessful, or if the single combat rule is broken (in this case, it will use its *gate* ability). A character begging the demon for mercy will be allowed to live at the cost of extinguishing six noble souls and dedicating him- or herself to the cause of Evil. Such a character can become an anti-paladin at the completion of the task. The demon possesses no treasure due to the bargain which binds it here, and is extra resentful for it.

A Good character visiting the shrine gains 25% of the XP required for the next level, while a Lawful Good one gains 40%. A Lawful Good Fighter (of any subclass) can convert to a Paladin, and have his ability scores raised to fulfil the requirements. For every point so gained, 20% more XP must be earned for the next experience level. Neutral or Evil characters may convert to the cause of Good, but the latter must atone for their former life afterwards.

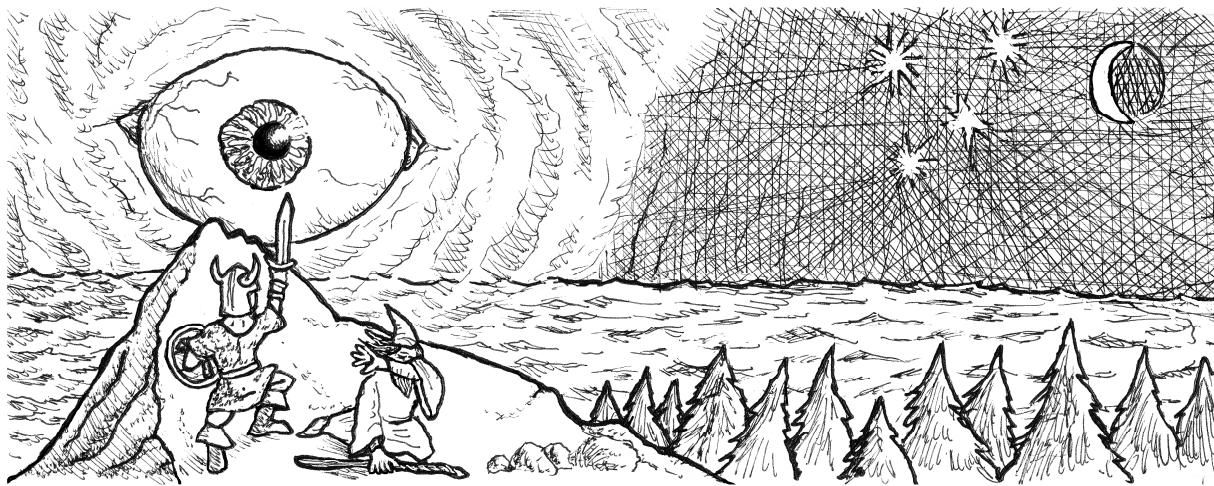
Type VI Demon: HD 8+8; AC -2; Atk *enormous sword* +1 1d12+1 or flaming whip; Spec flames 4d6 Hp, *darkness* at will, spells, +1 or better to hit, $\frac{1}{2}$ damage from cold, electricity, fire, and gas; MR 70%.

Spells: fear, detect magic, read magic, comprehend languages, detect invisibility, pyrotechnics, dispel magic, suggestion, telekinesis, symbol, gate (70%, 80% type III, 20% type IV demon).

Hp 45

0403 UNWOLD The barren lands around this coastal village provide little grain; fish is the main export, and some good shipbuilders also ply their trade. Found on top of a steep cliff above the clustered huts and narrow alleys, Unwold Manor is ruled by the widowed, increasingly senile **Lady Sharbra** (Ranger 5). Several younger fortune seekers have gathered around to exploit the lady's weakness and win her hand, not to mention her inheritance. These "suitors" are **Sorgel the Violet Knight** (Fighter 3), **Heddar Wyrmslayer** (Fighter 4), **Pavone of Zok** (Thief 2) and **Fuldon the Gallant** (Fighter 3), all reprobates and cheats, who spend their days gambling, drinking, and wooing the lady. **Captain Borgen** (Fighter 1) is the inexperienced leader of the local soldiers, appointed after his predecessor's fall from the manor tower. It is rumoured that **Remillik the Skarl**, a long-dead Northman warlord, holds court in his watery grave below the sea – and unknown to all, it is only his love **Lady Sharbra** craves.

0404 MORKUND: Even wood must be brought to this barren island of shepherds and cottagers. The water has a foul taste, and the inhabitants are sickly. **Lord Morkund** (Fighter 3) is heartbroken and lonesome, having locked his past and former pirate companions in the deep cellar below the manor... recently, he has started hearing rattling and scratching noises from behind the walls. The lord's only son, **Riel Morkund** is said to have "left for the big city"; he has in fact become a notorious bandit (0904).



0408 Goat paths converge on a steep cliff besieged by the sea. At night, the vision of an enormous disembodied eye draws the gaze of travellers. Someone who would climb the cliff and withstand its gaze (save vs. magic) shall see the vision of Erillion, left behind by men and retaken by nature, and realise that this image could be both a distant past and a possible future. The character can also learn a random one-use druid spell for every second level of experience (1/2 experience level determines spell power). Those who fail their save see nothing, and awaken the next day without rest.

0411 Looted and ruined farmhouses on a plateau overlooking the sea. The remains of an enormous serpent statue lie half-covered by debris. Twenty pilgrim families have recently arrived to restore the settlement, and claim it in the name of The Spiritual Narcosis (a minor Kassadian heresy). Hiding among them is the thief Cuollagh (Thief 4), who carries the 2800 gp crown of a dead overlord... 1:2 he suspects the characters to be on his trail, and tries to rile up the pilgrims against them.

0412 The statue of an enormous basalt serpent overlooks the bridge leading to the mainland. Under the timeless structure is a fire bowl, now filled with earth and saplings. 1:6 of a chained human sacrifice, left here for the blood eagles by one of the island cults.

Blood eagles (5): HD 3; AC 6; Atk beak 1d6 + drain or 2*claws 1d4+1; Spec blood drain 1d6 Hp/r; ML 7; AL NE.

Hp	3	16	9	11	19
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0509 20 berserkers, outlawed from their homeland, have erected a temporary shelter behind a crumbling circular wall. They spend their time wrestling and quarrelling, and raid only occasionally. 1:3 they have a captive they are tormenting. They have amassed 350 electrum, a 400 gp necklace, and a 2000 gp brooch – the lost, unique diamond-class Order of the Starstone, issued to Captain Rimalgon of Baklin, and lost on his expedition to the northern lands.

Northman berserkers (20): Fighter 2+2; AC 7 (furs, shield); Atk 2*battleaxe 1d8 or javelin 1d6; Spec fight until -5 Hp; ML 12; AL LE. * has a necklace of 30 platinum coins, won in wrestling.

Hp	9*	9	8	17	7	12
	17	15	18	14	9	18
	12	10	11	16	18	12
	12	15				

0511 TOL TAZELOTH: Incessant winds and mighty waves buffet this rocky island, the site of a small port village clinging to the citadel of Tol Tazeloth. Once held by the great pirate, Johno Bonifaces (who has been reputedly buried here anonymously), it is now ruled by Lord Virmgard the Besieger. He holds court in a hall lively with music and song, for the old veteran rewards tales of heroism with generous gifts.

Five empty chairs, marked with a single rose each, are set aside to remember the lord's adventuring companions, lost to legend while he lived to an old age: the Lady Izanoxin, ruler of Castle Sullogh; Niblott of the Golden Seal, magician extraordinaire; Ballodrac the Minstrel; Ishamarg the Silent One; and Sparkthrower Selena the Grey.

Tol Tazeloth's dungeons – beneath understores holding supplies to last a year – are under lock and key, for revellers who had snuck down there for extra booze had sometimes been lost. In a locked and warded section, there lies the laboratory of the citadel's ancient builder, Chlorax Purple-Blood (with a fabulous collection of pressed butterflies, and a sandalwood box reputed to hold the soul of a monarch); a singing gargoyle whose whistling is a clue to further enigmas; and – through a dry well – a gateway to the basement of the Nine Doors Tavern in the City of Baklin!

0512 The Serpentyle Bridge – its name a modern invention – is a massive stone bridge linking the Isle of Trials and the Isle of Erillion. Left over from ancient times and decorated with motifs of serpents, it is a famed battleground, and a landmark seen from a distance. 1:6 of a band of pirates threatening to drop rocks on passing ships to extract a ransom, 1:6 of an armed ship from Tol Tazeloth looking for signs of piracy.

0513 A giant oak tree overlooks the seas, bearing countless cuts and carved inscriptions. 35 orcs have set up a tent camp here under Lieutenant Shakbrak (*), with 3 hell hounds on leash. They are looking for opportunities to expand in this area and establish an outpost. Under the tree, in a burial vault surrounded by its roots, lies the glass-steel coffin of Immerlon, the Sick Prince. His rule brief and unhappy, he was buried along with *the dragonblade of Kor* (black +3 bastard sword – it has a beguiling effect on black dragons, who seek out and follow its wielder with a strange obsession).

Orcs (35): HD 1; AC 6; Atk flail 1d6+1 or hand axe 1d6 or spetum 1d6+1; ML 7; LE.

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

Hell hounds (3): HD 4; AC 4; Atk bite 1d4+3; Spec fire breath 4/2 Hp, surprise on 4:6, surprised 1:6, locate hidden/invisible 1:2, immune to fire; ML 7; LE.

Hp 4 24 14

0601 HELMORAK: The rich landholders of the village have bought out the last Helmorak of the impoverished line, and converted his manor house into their council building. However, they have found no able militia to replace the former guards, and the village has been left mostly defenceless – not to mention their plans for self-sufficiency have been beset by a series of failures and accidents. Huorlan Helmorak (Fighter 3), the former heir, is looking for adventures in the wide world, served by his remaining retainers, Leptar the Blind (M-U 2, pursued by the faerie) and Ratesco the Toad (Thief 1, pock-marked visage).



The Cackling Cur Society: Unknown to either the new tenants or Huorlan, Helmorak Manor had been the traditional seat of The Cackling Cur Society, one of the three criminal organisations on the Isle of Erillion, and equal partner in the Combination, the pact of non-aggression and cooperation between these parties. Thus, the head of the Helmorak family was, by tradition, the Grandfather of Assassins – until the recent disappearance of all the society's members. For some reason, Huorlan, brought up by his distant uncle, never knew, and he had only seen his old family nest after he received news of his old man's disappearance.

The black dog runs at night: An ancient black stone on the village border is carved with the image of a dog. This is the beginning of a trail leading east into the forest, and the beginning of the Lunar Path. Those who embark on the pilgrimage will be met at midnight by a small black dog, who will lead them on if it is thrown a piece of food.



0603 MERKADON: This village, built in a secluded valley over a moor, is noted for its expert woodsmen and rangers... but few know they are the evil kind. They hunt on the edges of the Forest of Departures, but avoid its interior, which possess a witchy reputation. Their saying, often repeated in these parts, goes: *"Raise no axe on faerie tree; if its blood you take, with your own shall your debt repay".*

This ancient conflict between man and forest has recently come to an end with the arrival of Brellonek, He Who Laughs (M-U 9), who had stumbled half-naked out of the forest one day, and claimed the old manor house as his own. The deranged Brellonek is venerated as a living saint, and he has proclaimed "the era of the New Peace". Ever since, it has been strangers venturing here who have been fed to the thorns and oaks. Brellonek has been buying up the farmland of impoverished farmers in the surrounding villages through Fruskell, a merchant based in Tirwas, and driving out the former tenants with his men.

Merkadon has a single pub: The Errant Troll, a smoky shed serving simple fare, and catering to the local huntsmen. Proprietor Grisly Gorlank (Fighter 2) has some orcish blood, and his wife, the rapidly aging, unpleasant Muskata (Fighter 1), is Brellonek's spy.

0604 Sinkholes in the karst have been fenced off to keep away roving herds of sheep, and straw men hung on stakes to warn travellers. One of the sinkholes leads to a cave system: first a deep lake and a submerged tomb; then, a flooded passage leading to a cavern. 6 wights scoop water on their faces to wash away their sins; ten platinum tubes etched with alchemical symbols (10*120 gp) filter the dripping water and distil them into potions (three present; another will be distilled every month as long as the tubes are undisturbed).

Wights (6): HD 4+3; AC 5; Atk claws 1d4 + LVL; Spec drain, silver or +1 to hit; ML 9; AL LE.
Hp 20 22 23 22 25 24

0606 A band of 19 ogre bandits – 6 adults, 6 ogresses and 5 young – have erected a crude house from sticks and stones. Orc heads are mounted on stakes to warn intruders. Here they fatten kidnapped children in cages, and keep a chained dwarf, Silanor (Fighter 2+2) to mend their items. Their leader, Garsh the Voracious keeps their treasures in a locked chest: 300 electrum, 400 gp (rare, ancient coins from the time of the druids), a *potion of polymorph*, and a giant brass cauldron with beaten sun patterns (also druidical).

Garsh the Voracious: HD 7; AC 5; Atk club 2d6; ML 7; AL CE.
Hp 30

Ogres (5): HD 4+1; AC 5; Atk club 1d10; ML 7; AL CE.

Hp	13	30	22	19	16	27
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Ogresses (6): HD 4+1; AC 5; Atk club 2d4; ML 6; AL CE.

Hp	17	14	15	11	13	24
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Ogre lads (5): HD 2; AC 5; Atk wrestling 1d6 or sling 1d6+1; ML 5; AL CE.

Hp	10	9	14	6	10
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0608 15 orc troopers, 18 orcs and Lieutenant Zabrak oversee the work of 20 human slaves. They are clearing a long, buried stairway leading to the valley of Mage Tower. This path is long forgotten by the mages, and the masters of Tol Grannek would like to establish a secret access point for their future plans. Their military camp is small but orderly and well equipped.

Orc troopers (16): HD 2+2; AC 5; Atk guisarme 2d4 or battle axe 1d8 or javelin 1d6; ML 8; LE. Lt. Zabrak (*) has an alarm horn and wears Agak's symbol.

Hp	9	11	14	10	7	4
	9	11	10	9	11	12
	11	11	10	12*		

Orcs (18): HD 1; AC 6; Atk flail 1d6+1 or hand axe 1d6 or spetum 1d6+1; ML 7; LE.

Hp	7	5	5	7	2	7
	2	2	8	7	5	7
	1	1	7	8	5	7

0609 A narrow canyon leads to a small forest among the peaks. Giant butterflies and rainbow-coloured caterpillars (harmless, hallucinogenic). Vivanax and Vivanor, two legendary wizards now transformed into elemental forces, play their chess game with living figures on a giant marble board. The prize of the game, which has lasted centuries, is the *staff of power*; suspended in a force globe. Vivanax is now a cruel face carved into the side of a mountain peak, while Vivanor is a cloud formation resembling a bearded visage.

Vivanax, earth elemental: HD 16 MAX; AC 2; Atk fist 4d8; Spec demolish stonework, +2 or better to hit, spell immunities; ML 11; AL LE.

Hp 128

Vivanor, air elemental: HD 16 MAX; AC 2; Atk winds 2d10; Spec vortex, +2 or better to hit, spell immunities; ML 11; AL NE.

Hp 128



0611 A winding trail bypasses multiple crumbling residential towers, formerly belonging to The Immeasurable Path. This group of mystics had their holy place on the plateau at the path's end, but they were devoured one and all by "The Plateau Horror", a **chimera**. The columned hall, found among stunted pines and overgrown with ivy, still holds their prophecies imprinted on golden sheets (1600 gp – all fulfilled, and no longer of religious value), and *Bronwilt's basher (footman's mace +3, grants 18/00 Str, 18 Con and -4 AC when fighting demons)*, along with Bronwilt's shoes, robes, and other mundane relics.

Chimera: HD 9; AC 6/5/2; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and 2*goat horns 1d4 and lion head 2d4 and dragon head 3d4; Spec 50% of fire breath 3d8 Hp; ML 10; AL CE.

Hp 34

0702 15' black standing stone with the sign of the new moon. The structure absorbs both light and magic in a 10' radius, 1:6 of extinguishing minor magic items. Tiny, lost shoe, miniature footprints disappearing in the undergrowth. Following the trail leads to a mushroom circle, where disembodied laughing can be heard. Returning the shoe, a tiny voice declares: "Your reward will not be forgotten! When you return home, you will find your greatest benefactor dead!" Those who would try to attack the source of the voice will be attacked by their own shadows.

Shadows: HD 3+3; AC7; Atk 1d4+1 + Str drain; Spec drain, +1 or better to hit; ML 6; AL CE.

0709 **MAGE TOWER:** Eternal night reigns among the mountains encircling an overgrown park. Killer goblins and giant bats hunt in the dark, and the owls are said to spy on those who venture here. The tower in the middle of the valley is ruled by the archmage **Poroxius Vern** (M-U 12), his eight apprentices, and a small army of goblins, brigands, and monsters. Those who would learn high magic (4th and 5th level spells) must first visit this tower and undertake a trial. Trials may occur by invitation (sponsored by a M-U or illusionist of high standing, the disciple is summoned to the tower through a magic circle) or on one's own right (as a personal pilgrimage). The test is not deadly, but there is only one attempt! In our campaign, the tower was represented by Judges Guild's classic **Citadel of Fire**.

0802 Ruined, primitive kilns stand next to a dry riverbed and a drained lake. There is an ill feeling about the area, and minor metal objects rust at a rapid pace. At night, golden light emanates from the kilns, and the mirage of molten metal glitters within. Someone who would bother the metal must save vs. magic, or suffer a heavy curse (can't bear the touch of metal, -3 to all associated rolls, encumbrance of metal doubles). This place was once used to cast the ancient druids' golden sickles, and a druid could still fashion one with some work. A miracle smith – if one could be found – could produce magical weapons and armour here.

0803 Giant bluebell flowers with an intoxicating smell grow in the deep forest. The marble statue of a bearded old man stands on a clearing, raising a crooked staff. Around the figure, stone figures of men lie haphazardly in bizarre contortions. If the Horned Sign is shown before the statue, or a sacrifice is offered, it speaks, revealing the Legend of the Tree: "*The seas he cannot view, walls around him rise / His fingers winds caress, his feet in earth cold / Those who walk by him, know not his mighty heart / But the walls shall break, and the truth be told.*" This legend refers to the oak tree in Elendir Manor (1910), but what it may mean is not clear. Those harming the statue must save vs. petrification or die after terrible convulsions.

0806 A tall cliff rising from the forest is home to 9 **ogres** (4 adults, 3 ogresses and 2 young). While also brigands, they are sworn enemies of the band at 0606. They are, however, allied to dishonest guides, who lure innocent travellers to their lair. They are currently roasting an elf, while also tormenting their chained slave, **Niquaf**, who has gone insane from having had nails beaten into his skull, and now only repeats his own name incessantly. The ogres own 45 sp, 35 gp, and lots of junk: mouldy tapestries, a hookah currently used as a spittoon, a bent gong, a wizard's cloak torn into pieces, a sofa, and numerous human and animal bones.

Ogres (4): HD 4+1; AC 5; Atk club 1d10; ML 7; AL CE.

Hp	18	20	14	23	
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Ogresses (3): HD 4+1; AC 5; Atk club 2d4; ML 6; AL CE.

Hp	17	19	24	
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Ogre lads (2): HD 2; AC 5; Atk wrestling 1d6 or sling 1d6+1; ML 5; AL CE.

Hp	9	6	
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0812 80 pirates have made camp around a ruined coastal tower. The crew of the Shrieking Snit, they are making repairs while a smaller expedition is exploring the ruins at 0911, and their captain, **Roberto Tartagnus** (Fighter/Thief 3/4) is away on business in Baklin. The first mate, **Tony Junk** (Fighter 5), is a harsh taskmaster, and one of the men has been hanged from the tower for theft. 600 gp worth of weapons, 200 gp spices, 300 gp Kassadian wine, 250 gp.

Pirates (30/80): Fighter 2; AC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk scimitar 1d8 or axe 1d6 or 2*dagger 1d4; ML 7; AL LE.

Hp	2	13	8	10	6	17
	17	9	8	7	10	16
	16	12	17	8	14	12
	15	18	4	16	4	13
	16	15	8	13	9	10

Tony Junk: Fighter 5; AC 5 (chain shirt, buckler); Atk *scimitar +1* 1d8+1; ML 8; AL CE; 140 gp.

Hp	38	
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0902 Abandoned trappers' colony. A collapsing pier, decaying cottages, and a half-built long-house with the tools still lying around it suggest a sudden abandonment. Several pelts in a completed storeroom have gone to waste, and are smeared with blood and excrement. The 15 survivors have gone insane, turned into drooling beasts by the unknown calamity.

Insane trappers (15): HD 2; AC 8 (furs); Atk club 1d6 or knife 1d4 or hand axe 1d6; ML 9; AL CE.

Hp	9	8	10	9	6	9
	11	8	15	11	6	13
	10	8	7			

0903 15' black standing stone with the sign of the waxing crescent moon. It is as if the stone was in a deep, dark pit, even though the ground is flat – the very forests have been bent by the stone's weird powers. Those who would depart will find themselves returning to the stone. Only those who defeat their doubts about being able to escape this anomaly will walk free – others will have to survive until the arrival of the Wandering Glade (in 1d30 days), which will allow exit into this enchanted woodland.

0904 The fort of **Siub the Goblin King** stands at this location. Siub and his people (150 goblins and 250 noncombatants) have occupied an old motte-and-bailey structure. Siub, who can eat berries whenever he likes, keeps three human wives, the lost and deeply confused brides of the trappers (0902). The goblins serve the orcs of Tol Grannek, but only reluctantly; Siub knows a secret back entrance to the fortress, which he will reveal to someone who would bring him the fabled *golden bow*, kept in the mysterious Spider Keep (1804). 600 sp, 260 gp (all ancient coins from the time of the druids), and *the arrows of the night* (3*, they inflict 2d6 Str, and those who are brought to 0 are turned into undead shadows).

Siub the Goblin King: HD 3; AC 15 (chain shirt, buckler); Atk footman's mace 1d6+1 or 2*shortbow 1d6 (+3 to hit); ML 6; AL CE; 1000 gp crown, keyring (stolen, keys open various doors in Tol Grannek), silk sitting cushion with gold tassels, root sceptre.

Hp 17

Goblins (30/150): HD 1-1; AC 6; Atk shortsword 1d6 or 2*shortbow 1d6; ML 5; AL LE.

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

0905 A dilapidated keep with a crooked tower is the domain of the sickly **Argonax the Magician** (Illusionist 5). Unnaturally infirm at a young age, he is a refugee from Kassadia, where his experiments to obtain eternal youth through marrow transfusion had gotten him the reputation of a ruthless maniac. Argonax is aided by 20 men and five reprobates, his assigned heirs – as long as his death will be of natural causes. They are Crogott, Zorlak, Aberan, Patrus and Terexus. Argonax's treasures include “the Eggs of Grollek”, a set of precious gemstones (2000 gp, 300 gp, 500 gp, 500 gp, 150 gp), *the storytellers' carpet* (the spirits of the dead will sit on it to tell fairy tales), a *potion of extra-healing*, 3**potions of healing*, and 2500 gp.

Argonax the Magician: Illusionist 5; AC 9; Atk –; Str 8, Int 15, Wis 10, Dex 15, Con 5, Cha 10; ML 7; AL NE; *blue ring* (save vs. death or reduces touched opponents into blue mush, 4 charges).

Spells: 4/2/1; 1: audible glam., detect magic, hypnotism, light, phantasmal force*2; 2: hypnotic pattern, improved phantasmal force, ventriloquism; 3: fear, non-detection.

Hp 10



Crogott, Zorlak, Aberan: Fighter 3; AC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or battleaxe 1d8; ML 8; AL CE.

Hp	19	17	18
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Patrus, Terexus: Assassin 4; AC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or 2*dagger 1d4; Spec surprise, backstab*2, assassination 0-1 65%, 2-3 60%, 4-5 50%, 6-7 40%, 8-9 25%, 10-11 10%; PP 35%, OL 29%, FT 25%, MS 21%, HS 15%, HN 10%, CW 86%; ML 7; AL CE.

Hp	13	14
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Armsmen (20): Fighter 2; AC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk spear 1d6 or shortsword 1d6 or 2*sling 1d4; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	8	3	10	10	3	12
	9	5	5	4	12	5
	3	11	10	7	8	8
	9	4				

0907 "Hunting lodge" inhabited by 30 bandits led by **Riel Morkund** (Fighter 4), the estranged son of Lord Morkund (0404). They only target wealthy travellers, and may provide shelter and assistance for the downtrodden. They would like to claim the riches of Argonax (0905), but consider their numbers inadequate for the venture. The bandits have amassed 400 gp worth of ambergris, 300 gp, and the plunder of a cairn: 500 electrum, a *scimitar* -1, a *footman's mace* -1, and a *shortsword* -2. Riel also has a treasure map to his secret mountain lair.

Riel Morkund: Fighter 4; AC 2 (chainmail, shield, Dex); Atk *scimitar* -1 2d4+4; Spec +2 to hit; Str 18/96, Int 9, Wis 11, Dex 16, Con 18, Cha 11; ML 10; AL N; signet ring 440 gp, medallion with lock of hair, embroidered handkerchief.

Hp	45
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Bandits (30): HD 1+1; AC 8 (leather); Atk hand axe 1d6 or 2*shortbow 1d6; ML 8; AL N.

Hp	9	3	9	4	8	5
	7	3	2	8	2	5
	5	8	9	6	5	2
	5	9	9	7	7	6
	5	3	8	2	3	3

0911 10 pirates from the Shrieking Snit (0812) have landed on the coast to explore the ruins of two ruined structures, but they have only found an indecipherable inscription on a stone slab.

Pirates (10): Fighter 2; AC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk scimitar 1d8 or axe 1d6 or 2*dagger 1d4; ML 7; AL LE.

Hp	10	13	14	8	18	18
	8	16	4	12		

0911 Poison ivy and innumerable rabbits are found on this forested island. 20 pirates from the Shrieking Snit (0812) are looting a half-sunken ship, drunk on the wine they have found.

Pirates (20):

Hp	5	2	8	9	2	4
	11	8	3	11	6	2
	2	6	10	5	3	5
	8	8				

0913 Reefs surround this island, where a small fort and a village lie in ruins. The walls are dangerous and close to collapse. In a columned hall, **Vilix the Demon Woman** (a succubus) enjoys the fruits of corrupting the former inhabitants and instigating their deadly civil war. 1450 gp spread around colourful carpets; roses, marble well, musical instruments.

Vilix the Demon Woman: HD 6; AC 0; Atk 2*claws 1d3; Spec draining kiss, +1 or better to hit, at will: *darkness* 5', become *ethereal*, *charm person*, *ESP*, *clairaudience*, *suggestion*, *shape change*, *gate* (40%, 01-70 type IV, 71-95 type VI, 96-00 lord or prince); MR 70%; ML 10; AL CE.

Hp 33

1001 Birdsong, giant mushrooms, and a crystal-clear brook in an enchanted meadow. A unicorn grazes by a row of broken columns,. This creature is very shy, but even in its tracks grow healing herbs (3d4, 1d6 Hp/application or cure poison/disease). If the unicorn is killed, the meadow rots into a black, diseased foulness.

Unicorn: HD 4+4; AC 2; Atk 2*hooves 1d6 and alicorn +2 1d12; Spec charge for 2d12, *dimension door* 1/day, *neutralise poison* on touch, sense enemies, immune to poison, save as 11th LVL M-U, immune to charm, hold and death spells; ML 6; AL CG.

Hp 21

1004 15 wolves gorge themselves on a fallen woolly mammoth. The tusks are split, but still worth 500 gp. The gored and crushed bodies of three Northmen are surrounded by broken spears, a crushed horn, and a pulverised drinking vessel. They all wear the mark of Sogmund the Red and "The Brotherhood" on their upper arms.

Wolves (15): HD 2+2; AC 7; Atk bite 1d6+1; ML 6; AL N.

Hp	8	9	9	12	8	15
	15	7	16	16	7	11
	8	13	7			

1005 5 beaten orcs are on their way home to Tol Grannek after trying to take the tower by trick, and losing a fight with Argonax's men (0905). They have found a broken stone statuette of an owl, and are bringing it back to pretend they have done something, and avoid punishment.

Orcs (5): HD 1; AC 6; Atk footman's mace 1d6+1; ML 4; LE.

Hp	3	8	4	5	2
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1009 NEX: Coastal village of fishermen, woodcutters and the odd craftsman. **Foreman Arholt** (Thief 2) has brought prosperity to the place through a flowering smuggling network working through the fishing fleet, all under control of the Baklin Thieves' Guild. However, the village is pressed by bandits from the Highland of Serpents, whose lair could never be found. Nex has a single tavern, The Mighty Mule. Propertior Zubor Hewstone (dwarf Fighter 1) is a retired miner, with a famous fish soup and tall tales about his time at now abandoned northern mining colonies. Two local trouble-makers, **Harperic** and **Haxon**, are running a money-making scheme where they join adventuring companies for a share, while staying back and doing nothing.

1103 A watery bog with ancient menhirs sticking out of the stagnant mire. 26 killer frogs lurk underwater. The menhirs have the following spells inscribed on them: *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*, *wall of stone*. They can be copied into spellbooks, or memorised above normal spellcasting capacity with a successful "chance to know" roll in either case (-15% for each successive spell). On a failure, the character is warped into a repulsive hunchback by cosmic forces.

Killer Frogs (26): HD 1+4; AC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec hop attack +2; ML 9; AL N.

Hp	9	11	11	12	10	11
	8	12	8	5	10	7
	6	6	12	11	9	6
	12	6	10	12	8	6
	10	8				



1106 TOL GRANNEK: The hidden citadel-fortress of the orcs sits on an old military road. Formerly the stronghold of the knights of Yolanthus Kar, its original owners have been long forgotten due to the notoriety it has gained under its orcish masters. From here, the clerics of the orc god Agak plan and scheme to gain a foothold in distant corners of Erillion, until the island can be fully brought under their rule. Likewise, many slaves captured by the orcs, or sold by dishonest merchants are brought here to labour in the underground mines. Entire dwarven mining camps have been overrun and enslaved by orcish raiders. Frontal access to Tol Grannek's gates is guarded by advance outposts and worg-riding scouts. Only orcs and slaves are allowed entrance; unwelcome guests are captured outright, or killed by the green-cloaked archers who always employ poisoned missiles. The orcish forces are commanded by **Larog the Warlord** (Fighter 9), but it is the secretive clerics who truly run the place. Tol Grannek will be detailed in a future issue.

1107 The Maze of Gnidax: the entrance to the infamous dungeon is blocked by a massive stone boulder, and only a secret word of power can make it move aside (although there may be other ways in). One of the lower levels hides the **Super Colossus**, a mighty being; and the elusive Grimoire, which always appears at a few steps' distance from those who would reach for its powers.

1108 A homestead and hunting lodge owned by **Ethalgond**, the owner of the Seven Stallions in Baklin (27). Half of his horse herd is kept here, and he uses the place to personally break in the "starwalkers", the best steeds. Ethelgond's 32 hunters, "The Galloping Gallants" pretend to be a merry band of blundering misfits, but they are actually watching orc movements in the mountains, and running messages from Baklin to Tirwas.

Ethalgond: elf Ranger 4; AC 7 (studded leather); Atk longsword 1d8; Spec +4 damage vs. giant-class, surprise 1-3, tracking; Str 13, Int 13, Wis 15, Dex 14, Con 18, Cha 12; ML 9; AL NG.

Hp 38

Hunters (32): Ranger 1; AC 8 (leather); Atk 2*longbow 1d6 or spear 1d6; Spec +1 damage vs. giant-class, surprise 1-3, tracking; ML 8; AL NG.

Hp	13	7	11	14	16	9
	13	8	9	6	4	11
	17	13	9	12	11	6
	3	6	7	10	13	12
	15	5	6	10	7	12
	17	9				

1109 ZEBES: A fishing village with poor farmlands – most of the young men are involved in smuggling or become sailors. **Vulan the Fire-starter** (Illusionist 4), known for the elaborate spiral carvings he has been carving into the cliffside under his house, has been appointed as the temporary village foreman in spite of his local reputation as an unstable kook. Vulcan has also been entrusted with the village funds chest, whose location he has promptly forgotten, replacing the valuables with his illusions. Zebes is involved in a protracted legal battle with neighbouring **Nex** (1009), whose foreman, **Arholt**, is accusing Zebes of negligence in keeping the coast road clean of bandits.

1203 15' black standing stone with the sign of the waxing gibbous moon. Sharp black rocks (10*arrowheads +1) have been placed as a sacrificial offering. The surrounding forest is heavy with cobwebs, and 2d6 giant spiders always lurk nearby.

Giant spiders (2d6): HD 4+4; AC 4; Atk bite 2d4; Spec poison, webs; ML 7; AL CE.

Hp	24	19	20	19	23	15
	15	21	21	26	16	13

1207 A stretch of forest devastated by rampaging giants (who come here for wrestling matches) conceals a 60' fissure. The deep crack hides broken trees, boulders, and the bones of innumerable animals – including 700 gp in mammoth tusks.

Zine Conventions

While much of old-school gaming originates from the same lineage, and its products remain largely cross-compatible, there is much devil in those details. Every table and every party has its own ideas and house rules, and it is a good idea to lay these assumptions out into the open. Therefore, the conventions governing this fanzine are thus:

- Unless otherwise noted, the materials published here were designed for **Advanced** rules.
- A thousand gold pieces is **worth a small fortune**. Monetary treasure is relatively scarce.
- Conversely, **XP for treasure** is gained through squandering it in hedonistic excess (or any kind of lavish spending which has no discernible benefit), with a ***5 multiplier**. If you adjust the treasure values, adjust the multiplier as well.
- **Level demographics** form a very flat pyramid: low-level NPCs (1st to 4th level) are commonplace, while mid-level ones (5th to 8th level) tend to be outliers – present in most communities, but never numerous. Few NPCs reach more than 9th level, and over 12th is almost unheard of.
- Magic is limited to 5th level spells or lower. Magic items are limited to **+3**.
- Fighters can do **carryover damage**: when fighting grouped opponents, the damage remaining after a killing blow is transferred to the next opponent.
- **Roll-under morale** is in effect (see **Morale & Men in Echoes #01**).
- The **gods are limited in their powers**, but actively involved in the fate of the world.

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Prestigious Plunder

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EMDT 22 – In the Name of the Principle! +		Helvetians' Delight #
EMDT 23 – Below the City +		
EMDT 24 – Oolar's Time #	2012	2018
EMDT 25 – The Blood Drinkers of Yukum #		EMDT 46 – Echoes #01: Beware the Beekeeper! +
EMDT 26 – Khosura: City State of the Four Myst. +	2013	EMDT 47 – The Barbarian King (REVISED) +
EMDT 27 – Trials on Tridentfish Island +		EMDT 48 – Echoes #02: Gont, Nest of Spies +
		EMDT 49 – Echoes #03: Blood, Death, and Tourism +
		EMDT 50 – Cloister of the Frog-God (HU) (+)
		2019
		EMDT 51 – The Enchantment of Vashundara (HU)
		EMDT 52 – Echoes #04: Revenge of the Frogs
		EMDT 53 – The Lost Valley of Kishar (HU) # +
		EMDT 54 – Murderous Devices (HU) #
		EMDT 55 – The Lost Valley of Kishar (EN) # +
		EMDT 56 – Echoes #05: The Ench. of Vashundara +

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