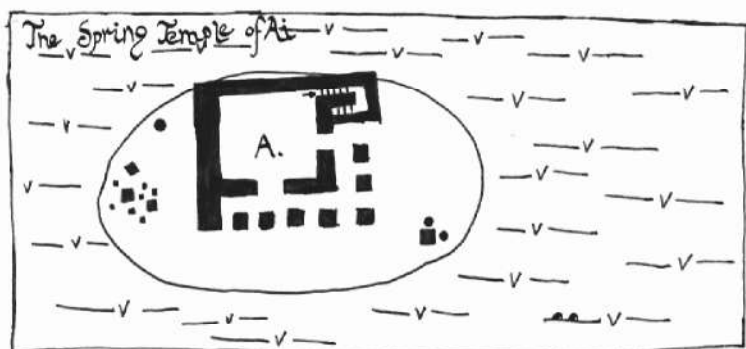


The Spring Temple of Ai

mysterious locale by Gabor Lux

In the southern jungles stands the Spring Temple of Ai. It is a broken ruin generally unknown due to hostile surroundings and lack of local interest. The only people who regularly seek out this place are those with an interest in magical mysteries, divinations and alchemical knowledge. The inhabitant of the temple, the water naga Daepheros, is said to drive a fair bargain for the fruits of its wisdom: a visitor must prove to be worthy by defeating the shrine's guardians and answering the riddles put forth by Daepheros, one for every question a visitor wishes to ask. Those who fail in the latter task are enslaved and serve as future guardians for the naga.

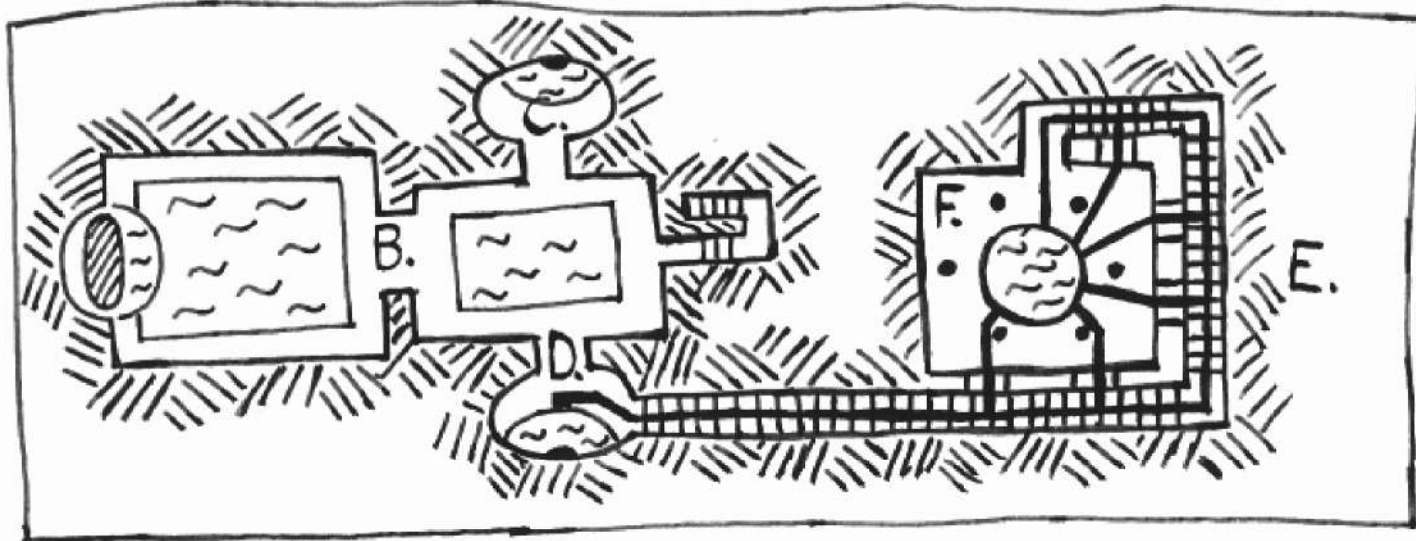


A. Swamp Island: The Spring Temple of Ai stands on a round island surrounded in all directions by waters and swampland. Visitors must therefore use rafts, rowboats or similar means to reach the ruins. The temple is an ancient, low building with a flat roof and a colonnade of thick, square columns. The whole structure is in a bad shape and it is slowly sinking into the ground. Piles of debris, broken columns and fallen statues dot the island it is located on. Characters approaching the island must battle the inhabitants of the swamp, 50 killer frogs. Five frogs emerge every round as the PCs get ready to disembark, appearing from the murky water and

pursuing opponents to the temple entrance. To complicate things, Maestran the Magic-User is also about, and uses his spells to hinder, disable or kill intruders. Maestran is a former visitor to Daepheros who fell under its charm spell. He hides inside the ruin and prefers to hit foes with his lightning bolt (usually hitting 1d3+1 PCs), block the temple entrance with webs and retreat inside to cause further trouble when (and if) the PCs are victorious. His sole possessions are a dagger, torn clothing (blue robes, leather boots) and a spellbook hidden somewhere in the rubble outside (memorized spells are marked with asterisks). **Killer Frogs** (50): HD 1; hp 4 avg; DC 8; Atk bite 1d6; Spec leap 20'; AL N. **Maestran**, Mage 5: hp 13; Spd 20 (due to limping); DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; AL N; Str 12, Dex 7, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 9. Spells: detect magic, mystic missile, light, sleep, opening charm, levitate, create webs, lightning bolt. The interior walls of the temple are covered in peeling blue stucco depicting marine life, waves and a ship, where a man dressed in the vestments of a patriarch raises his hand in worship before a smoking brazier. The whole room is otherwise empty, except for a blanket, some pots full of oil and the remains of Maestran's campfire.

B. Sanctum. This long, domed chamber continues with the watery motifs of the entry hall. It is pleasantly cold due to the large pools and the ever-flowing springs, whose murmurs are the only sound to be heard. Maestran has spilled oil just before the stairs, so anyone who steps into the chamber carelessly must roll a saving throw or land in the first pool. The pool is 20' deep and it is inhabited by a 4 HD giant frog (hp 16; DC 8; Atk bite 1d8; Spec leap 20'; AL N).

The second pool is fed by a large bas-relief in the form of a bearded human head. This image of gigantic proportions depicts the god Poseidon, to whom the Spring Temple is consecrated. Silvery vapours seem to rise from



the basin the water flows into, although this is an optical illusion. However, valuables deposited into the basin or the pool vanish, to appear before Poseidon in his watery court. Woe be to anyone who offends this great deity with inappropriate sacrifice, for he will send a hydra (HD 5; hp 24 for the body and 8 each for the heads; DC 4; Atk 5* bite 1d6; AL CE) to punish the infidel at once!

C. First Spring Chamber: Within this domed chamber is a spring with magical waters. The waters heal 2d4 points of damage to anyone who samples them, but this enchantment only works one time a day for a person.

D. Second Spring Chamber: As above, but the healing waters here spill out from their pool and flow down a groove cut into the stairs leading down. If Maestran is still alive, he makes his last stand here, attacking from above after casting levitate.

E. Stairs. These stairs are slippery from the waters; anyone who walks fast or runs here will slip and suffer 1d6 points of damage. At five locations, arched windows allow one to look down into the lower spring chamber.

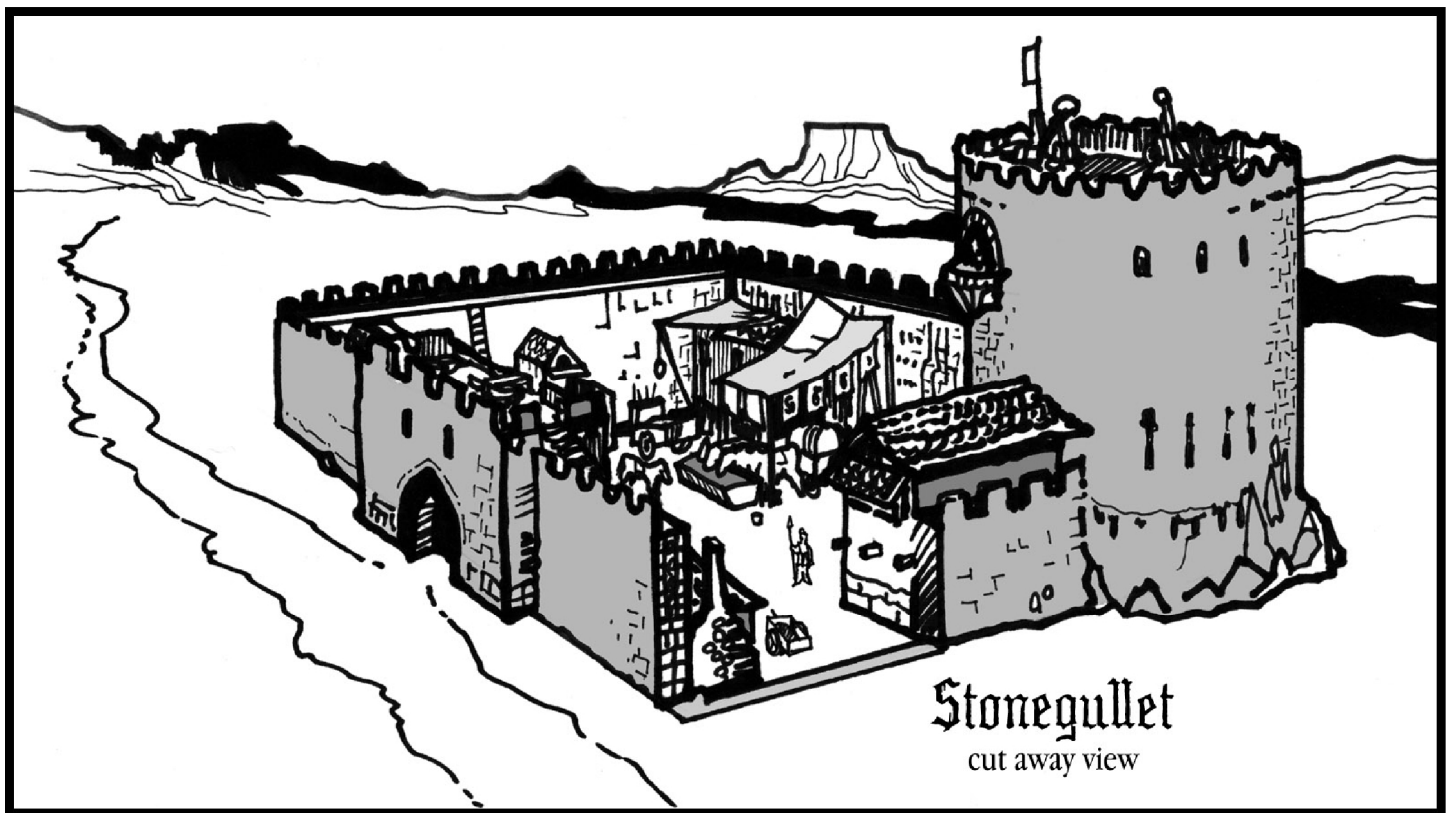
F. Lower Spring Chamber: The streams of water which flow from above through the stairs and from the windows collect here in an opalescent pool glowing with an unearthly radiance. The spring chamber has a high, domed ceiling supported by green serpentine columns and partly obscured by the water's haze. Floor tiles are azure and the rim of the pool is a golden yellow. Daepheros the Water Naga lives in the waters and emerges to greet visitors. Its serpentine body is emerald-green, with a pretty female head supported by the long neck. Daepheros is open to questions from approaching characters on its usual terms: a character wishing to ask something must first answer one of its own questions himself. A character who fails to answer a riddle will become the Spring Temple's new guardian. A few riddles are presented for use by the Referee, but others may be easily invented:

- "He washes his riches in a basin of stone, a tasty morsel alive and alone." (clam)
- "Diamond sheaves on a black field, never harvested but always withering to flower once again." (stars)
- "The treasure of the seas that grows on trees, a golden prison with a dazzling burial." (amber)
- "An invincible army guards the waters; without their charge, they flee your hand." (sand)

If attacked, Daepheros fights from the pool with spells and poisonous bite. If wounded below ½ of its total hit points, it flees to its abysmal depths. Daepheros prefers to keep at least one character alive to serve as guardian.



Daepheros: HD 7; hp 30; DC 5; Atk bite 1d4+poison; AL N. Spells: charm person**, identify item, floating lights, ESP, cloud of fog, mesmeric pattern, paralyze, suggestion, polymorph other (into some tasty, small animal). Those who slay Daepheros can claim its treasures provided they can retrieve them from the bottom of the well 100' below. The treasure consists of 5000 sp, 900 gp, a great silver vessel worth 1500 gp, a javelin of impaling, and a lightning wand (12 charges). Ω



Stone Gullet

keep on the border by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: 1st party: Akos Barta (Zorlan, Son of Odbuj, Archer 3), Laszlo Simonits (Tio Blackbird, Warrior 3), Gyorgy Gergovatz (Hagdor Ordur, Priest 3), Marcell Pap (Habbar al'Hadr, Thief 3); 2nd party: Gabor Acs (Hawk the Etunian, Archer/Thief 2/2), Zsolt Bagdi (+Ratomil the Rogue, Thief 3, died to illusionary monsters in the first round of his first combat without even gaining initiative); Kalman Farago (Harmonos, Follower of Karttekeza, Archer/Illusionist 3/2), Laszlo Feher (Licar del'Avellos, Mage 5), Gabor Izapy (Beristo Akelis, Pr 4 of Mereskan)..

Overview: The tower of Stone Gullet is a fortified garrison in the Desert of Regulator, a refuge from desert brigands, monsters and evil mirages. Here, caravans from the western lands may rest before they embark on their seaward route; likewise, the tower protects the city state of Khosura from dangers known and imagined. In the second month of each year, it sees a different sight from the usual tradesmen, beggars and the obsessed who ply the wastes for secrets that may or may not be: flower-girded sacrificial youths and maidens, escorted here by the grim riders of Khosura and onwards along the untravelled road to the southwest, where waits the Land of the People of the Worm with its crater city. Seen no more, the sacrifices are lost to men, while the riders return in an unusually dark mood that spurs them back home without stopping to rest or make merry.

The four-level tower stands near a dry river bed. In time, the round structure was supplemented by a walled courtyard, a new wing and finally small houses and workshops clinging to the courtyard walls: when times became less warlike, the new wing was turned into a caravanserai and sold to whoever would rent it. Shops soon followed: a smithy and a trade monopoly, catering to both the garrison and passers-by. Stone Gullet today is a place to rest while on the road, a haven of safety from which to seek adventure, but also a locale where trouble may be found – if one seeks it hard enough.



The commander of the fortress is **Krandol the Minstrel**, sent here by the grand vizier of Khosura's enigmatic priest-king for his services to the city. But Krandol, once a popular figure in the city-state's high life, has proved disgraceful and believes the boon to be a hidden form of exile for satirical songs, and treats his situation with disgust and contempt. Absent his leadership, **Captain Tarvosk** of the guard contingent has been running Stone Gullet's affairs, something the disciplined but unimaginative soldier finds an agreeable development. Altogether, he oversees 20 light cavalry patrolling along the caravan route, while another 20 footmen and 20 bowmen are stationed within the fortress walls; in sore need, another ten servants may be armed to defend the stronghold. **Light Cavalry (20)**: Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or lance 1d6 or shortbow 1d6; hp 21,16,13,21,16,16,18,16,29,17,20,26,21,22,15,18,22,18,23,16. **Footmen (20)**: War 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6 or spear 1d6; hp 3,13,7,20,10,8,16,10,3,4,12,6,16,4,4,6,12,13,19,10. **Bowmen (20)**: Archer 2; DC 7 (studded leather); Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d6; hp 8,13,14,10,12,5,3,3,16,12,5,7,17,8,12,6,8,13,12,7. **Servants (10)**: Warrior 1; DC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk scimitar 1d6 or spear 1d6; hp 9,5,10,10,1,7,7,10,2,5.



1. Gate: A wide gatehouse usually manned by two sweat-soaked lookouts. Limp banners hanging from faded poles, two ballistae trained on the road. A toll of 1 sp is levied on all travellers who pass by, and it costs 4 to enter the fortress proper; the price is 1 sp for mounts, 5 for loaded beasts of burden, 2 gp for carts and other conveyances. The lower level of the gatehouse is defended by Captain Tarvosk's right hand, **Lieutenant Tanner**, with five men. **Lieutenant Tanner:** War 3; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk longsword 1d8+1 or spear 1d6+1; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 8; hp 28.

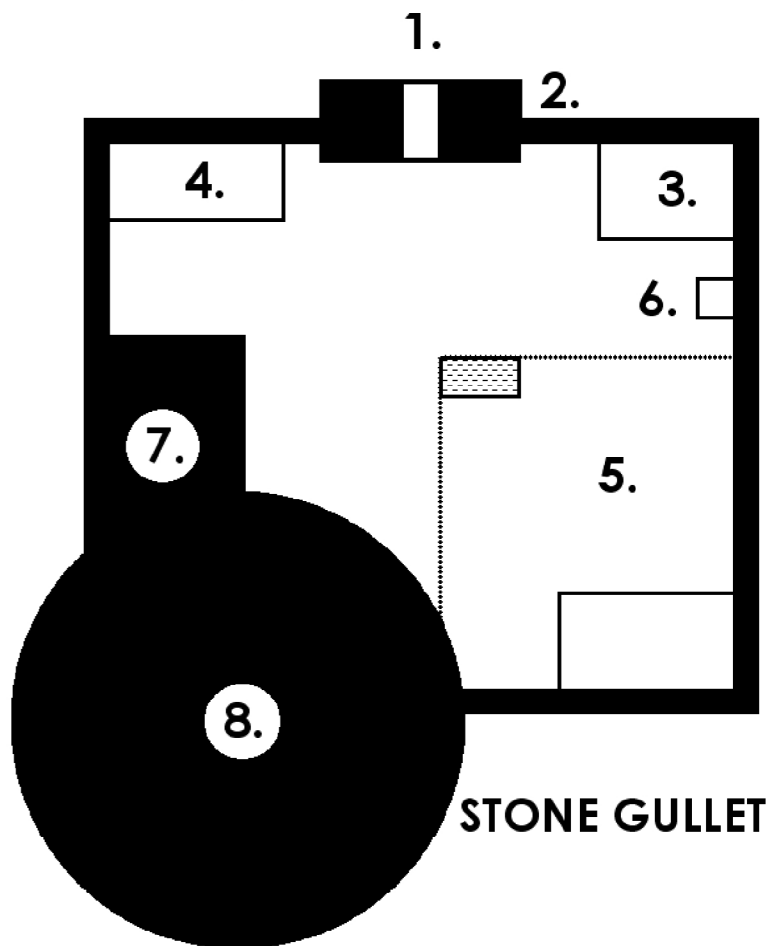
2. Parapets: Worn but massive fortifications to a height of 15'; easy to scale unless the guards (including archers on top of the tower) see you. By day there are usually two guards for every stretch of wall; during night three or four.

3. Smithy: **Gothran the Rabiater**, blacksmith; bullying, violent and lustful. Greying short-cropped hair, hardened leather apron. Gothran's workshop is on the lower floor of the building, while his wife and five children (who usually run naked around the courtyard) live on the second, where there is also a small altar to Phum the Crimson Bull, a demigod of the western wastes. At the moment, Gothran is seeking a priest to bless a bundle of arrows for him; in exchange, he will give a fine dagger (15 gp). His goods are:

- horseshoe 1 sp
- leather armour 6 gp
- studded leather 20 gp
- chain shirt (4 suits) 60 gp

- chainmail (1 suit) 80 gp
- small metal shield 10 gp
- large metal shield (1) 20 gp
- spear 5 gp
- longsword (2) 20 gp
- scimitar 18 gp
- arrows, 10 2 gp

Gothran the Rabiater: War 4; DC 8 (leather); Atk hammer 1d4+2 or scimitar 1d6+1; Str 17, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 9; hp 21.



4. Trade Monopoly: A small trading house owned by **Palmedies**, a lean and murky-eyed fellow; sedate and uncertain of manners, he often indulges in narcotic substances. Regardless of their interests, he tries to sell customers opium oil, drugged wine or pure opium; if refused, he gradually becomes irritable and unpleasant. The monopoly is crammed with a multitude of crates, bundles and hanging sacks. Palmedies sleeps in a side-chamber separated from the store by a tattered curtain. Locked metal chest; 310 gp, 200 sp, glyph-engraved black iron dagger, scorpion amulet, white ceremonial robes, lacquered urn with opium to a value of 160 gp); an iron brazier and a few amphorae of rose-scented water. Goods for sale:

- iron rations, 1 day 5 sp
- wineskin 5 sp
- flint & steel 1 sp

- clay oil lamp	2 sp
- oil, scented	1 gp
- rope, 50'	1 gp
- chest, small	2 gp
- sack	1 sp
- blankets	2 sp
- tent, large (2)	20 gp
- opium oil	15 gp
- drugged wine	3 gp
- opium	30 gp

Palmedies: Thief 3; DC 9 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4+ scorpion poison; S 12, D 15, C 11, I 8, W 11, Ch 12; hp 9.

5. Courtyard: An open space flattened by men and beasts. In one corner, there is a horse tie with a through of water; in the other, stables for the cavalry. There are altogether 30 light horses, 10 usually saddled for travel. Any given time, there are going to be 1d3-1 caravans in the courtyard; even one means a bustle of men, while two invariably result in a multitude of voices, haggling, fistfights, odd arguments and all the chaos of the road. The guards only intervene if there is blood, and then usually only after it is too late.

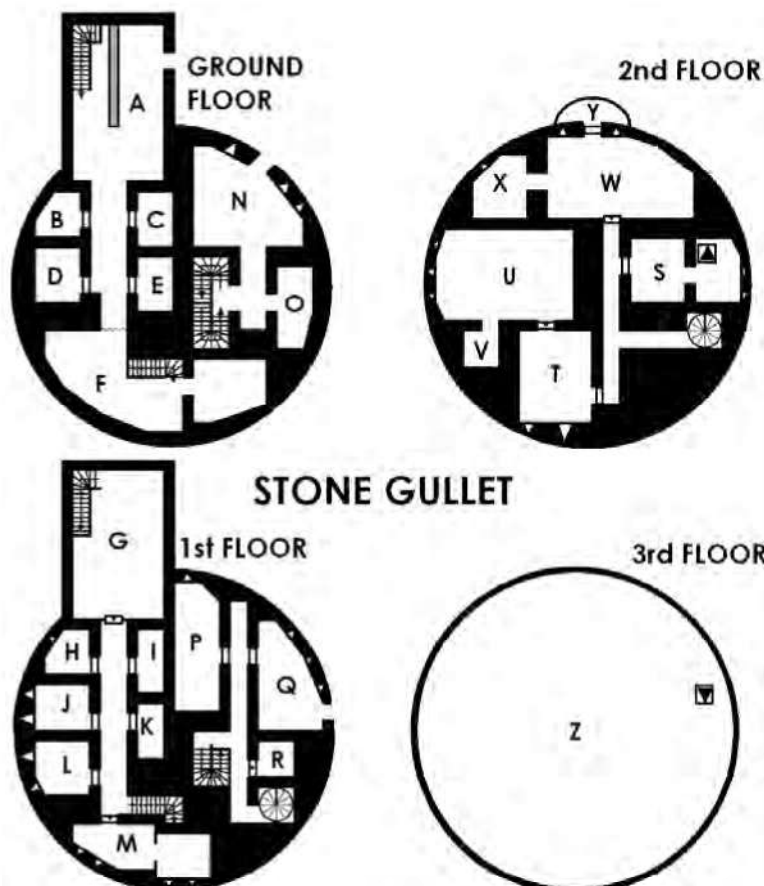
6. Privy: Four wooden privies by the wall, used by everyone in the fortress.



7. Zorten's Caravanserai: The side wing of the tower is now an old building, having served a succession of tenants. The current proprietor is **Zorten**, relaxed and sometimes indifferent. He is squat of stature with trimmed hair and simple clothes. On an expedition to the Mountains of Monoculus in his younger days, he acquired psionic powers; as *telekinesis* spell up to three times per day, 200 kg max, usually used on rowdy patrons and insolent servants. Lodgings in the serai can be had for 2 sp per night in the common room, 5 sp in the ground floor rooms (**B-E**), 1 gp upstairs (**H-L**) and 3 gp in the suite (**M**); availability is highly variable. All separate rooms may be locked, and locks are of average quality except Zorten's lodgings above the bar (**G**), which he shares with a slave wife. **Zorten:** Warrior 2; DC 10; Atk cudgel 1d6+3; psionic telekinesis; Str 18/10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10; hp 17.

A. Bar: Six round tables, the bar, braziers hanging from the beams also serve as a grille for spiced meats. Porridge 5 cp, viands 1 sp, palm wine 2 sp, thil or quat 2 gp. A full feast can be had for 1 gp per person. The patrons are various travellers – mule drivers, caravan guards and the like; 2d6+2 per caravan present sleep in the common room. 1d6+2 more interesting guests (selected from the accompanying article or inserted by the Referee) also tend to be here, renting rooms according to their means.

- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____



F. Common Room: Crowded and dark sleeping quarters. Arguments and fights are common, and theft is not rare, although it still beats sleeping in the courtyard. There is a 1 in 6 probability the whole common room is rented by someone at the rate of the upstairs suite.

G. Zorten's Room: Well-illuminated room overlooking the courtyard and wastelands. The door to the corridor is always locked (-10%). Various carpets, cushions and copper dishes, crated food and drinks – everything that would be unsafe to leave in the bar for the night. Locked chest, 520 sp, 61 gp, mummified ape hand pierced by old knife.

H. _____

I. _____

J. _____

K. _____

A long-departed guest has hidden a message under a loose floorboard, now yellow with age: *"Two weeks after the ring of monarchs falls, by the tyrant's head."*

L. _____

M. _____

Suite: Secure door (-20%), 2-room suite with carpets, pillows and all the comfort the middle of nowhere can offer.

8. Tower: The tower of Stone Gullet, once serving purely military purposes, is overcrowded now that it shares space with the serai. Entering undetected would be a task for a master thief.

N. Common Room: The entry room has bunks for 10 soldiers, while the long wooden table and the worn chairs are used to seat guests and envoys. There are trophies on the walls, including a lion's head (from a chimera if anyone believes it), lizardman, giant wolf, and two huge, yellow birds' feet of unknown origin. South of the room there are stairs up and down. The latter lead to a well-guarded jail; there is only a 1 in 6 chance of a prisoner, as unimportant criminals are usually hanged the day after they get caught, while important ones are escorted to Khosura.

O. Kitchen: Ompos Del, cook. Greasy man of enormous girth, copper and silver rings, golden chain around neck (50 gp), cheap perfumes. Smarmy behaviour, but always carries a giant machete type knife (scimitar equivalent). **Ompos Del:** Warrior 2; DC 10; Atk machete 1d6; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 5; hp 15.

P. – Q. Barracks: Each with 10 men; **Q** exits to parapet.

R. Armoury: Dark room closed off by a massive steel door (-20%). The only keys are held by Krandol, Captain

Tarvosk and Lieutenant Tanner. 80 spears, 30 longswords, 10 longbows, 30 shortbows, 5 suits of leather armour, 3 suits of plate mail, 25 small and 10 large metal shields, and the battle banner of Stone Gullet, as well as another won by the fort's men in an old campaign.

S. Barracks: 20 men; ladder from inner room to rooftop.

T. Barracks: Another 10 men, plus Tarvosk's two bodyguards. Small table, boardgame in larger window niche, wolfskin rug, footlockers, bull's head, old spears on wall. The north door is always kept locked. **Bodyguards:** War 3; DC 4 (chain, shield); Atk sword 1d8+1; S 16; hp 18, 23.

U. – V. Captain Tarvosk's Quarters: Puritanical, almost bare room. Heavy, dark wooden table, and soldier's footlocker (-20%) containing Stone Gullet's funds, 1200 sp and 900 gp, as well as coded reports and messages. Tarvosk's ceremonial banded mail (only worn on visits to the priest-king and similar occasions) and fitting helmet are mounted on a dummy. On the table, there is a jug of palm wine and a leather case containing a fairly accurate map of the Desert of Regulator. **V** is a sleeping chamber, with personal effects, a set of extra goblets for the use of guests, etc. **Captain Tarvosk:** Warrior 6; DC 1 (banded mail, shield, Dexterity); Atk *bastard sword* +1 2d4+1; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12; *potion of healing*, hp 42.

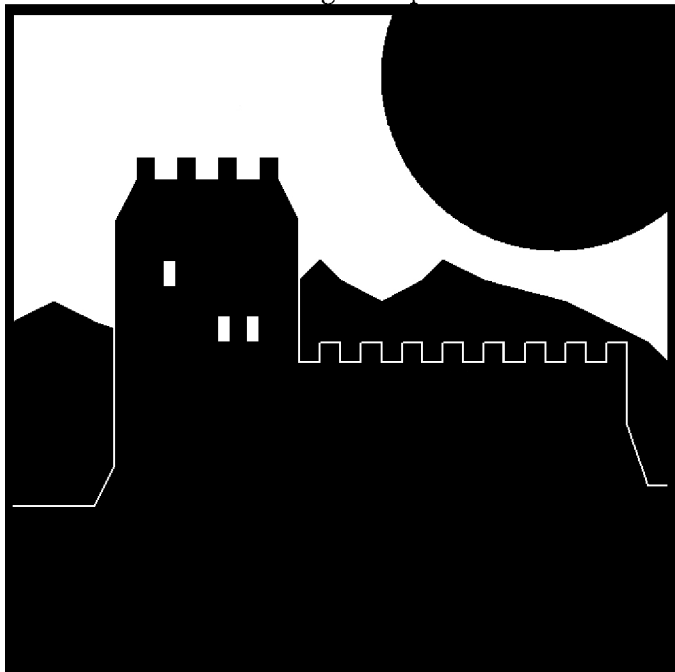
W. – Y. Krandol's Quarters: With his thinning hair, bloated appearance and quiet desperation, Krandol has all the distinguishing characteristics of a second-rate has-been. Since he is uninterested in the affairs of the fortress, he has become isolated from his own men and is almost always bored. When he acts, he is either unpredictably malevolent or surprisingly generous; with the right words, he can be easily – although not reliably – manipulated. However, Krandol *will* jump at every chance to be portrayed as the





romantic hero or the misunderstood artist. In the evening, it is not uncommon to see him playing his harp on the tower balcony, something that invariably ends in self-contempt and depression. **Krandol** wears rich, fur-trimmed purple clothing with golden buttons. **W** is the room of the fortress commander: canopied bed, armoire and table, various writings (sketches, half-completed poems, a few letters), musical instruments on the wall (lyre, broken harp, flutes), bearskin rug and a brazier. **X** is a bathroom and storage containing a wooden tub and step, bottles of perfume, and soap (110 gp). In a locked chest (-10%), there are 130 gp, 600 sp, 3 gems (800 gp, 100 gp, 500 gp), 5 pearls (70 gp, 100 gp, 90 gp, 120 gp, 160 gp), **Krandol's** spellbook, and a depleted wand. **Y** is a round balcony overlooking the wastelands; the view, if picturesque, is devoid of variety. **Krandol the Minstrel:** Thief 3/M-U 2; DC 10; Atk shortsword 1d6; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10; spells (only 50% underlined spell memorised): 1: detect magic, identify, light, magic missile, Nalle's magic aura, read magic, unseen servant; hp 14.

Z. Tower Top: Usually, 5-6 archers are stationed here. There is a ballista and two light catapults.



Wasteland Travellers

by Gabor Lux

I. Caravans (d4). Caravans on the road are 50% likely to attract 1d3*10 additional travellers looking for protection; there will usually be 1d3 notable NPCs among them.

Caravan #1: This company carries bone carvings and exotic glass from the Land of the Khans and miscellaneous goods back to the sea. When first encountered, the pack mules carry the following:

- Weapons (scimitars, falchions and exotic polearms) from Pentastadion, 900 gp
- Snow-white cat furs from beyond Propyla, 1000 gp
- Dyes from Glourm, 1000 gp
- Scented oils from Glourm, 800 gp

The caravan is led by a consortium of three merchants; **Angore Iron-head**, **Orn Thyros** and **Varos Leng**. Bearded, fat **Angore Iron-head** is a calm, middle-aged man, a collector and teller of improbable tales. He is happy to tell a few to anyone who would listen (50% true, 25% fabrication based on true elements, 25% wild fancy). **Orn Thyros** is an old man with a knotted face; incessantly tormented by a skin ailment and multiple other ills. When he can, he spends all of his time in hot baths. **Orn Thyros** follows the tenets of transarchism, a declining philosophical school advocating personal anarchy. **Varos Leng** is a tall, thin figure with thick stubble and long flaxen moustaches. He always appears tired and withdrawn; in truth, he is under the effect of *The Curse of Deterministic Pursuit*, a destructive force only a few steps from his heels. The curse is tied to *the hallowed scrolls of Y'a*, which he hopes to deliver to a desert khan before he is destroyed. The caravan is followed by **30 guards**, **3 officers** and **Gerthyun Gwyld**, a seasoned mercenary leader.

Angore Iron-head: Warrior 5; DC 6 (scale mail); Atk halberd 1d10 or composite longbow 1d6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11; hp 27.

Orn Thyros: War 6; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk battle-axe 1d8; St 13, Dx 13, Cn 18, In 12, Ws 12, Ch 8; hp 55.

Varos Leng: Thief 4; DC 6 (leather, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6 or throwing dagger 1d4; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 9; *oil of blessings*, *potion of levitation*, *potion of healing**2, *the hallowed scrolls of Y'a*; hp 26.

Gerthyun Gwyld: Warrior 4; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4; hp 28.

Officers (3): Warrior 3; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 17, 18, 11.

Guards (30): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 9, 10, 7, 11, 15, 15, 10, 14, 7, 16, 8, 9, 16, 12, 19, 5, 6, 14, 17, 8, 6, 16, 17, 14, 5, 19, 13, 6, 10, 7.

Caravan #2: Sthran Mirza and Ezilim Bek are merchants from the Land of the Khans, travelling the wastelands with their rag-tag band; trading, serving as mercenaries or robbing weaker companies depending on which is the more profitable. Currently, their goods consist of the following:

- Powdered sulphur in leather bags, 600 gp
- Unrefined scorpion venom, 11 doses, 550 gp
- Three wooden chests with mummies preserved in fragrant resin; 1500 gp for the correct customer
- 20 slaves, able-bodied men, 1000 gp



Sthran Mirza is a warrior clad in a sheepskin svitza and wearing a round, fur-trimmed metal helmet; his smile reveals black teeth. Sthran is always ready to hire thugs with a low moral fibre, and considers himself a ladies' man – a feeling rarely reciprocated. The assassin **Ezilim Bek** still bears the black marks of fire on his face and left arm, which he wraps in white cloth. He is never seen without his trusty old chain shirt. Ezilim Bek is daring, but trusts no other than Sthran Mirza. The leaders of the caravan are accompanied by **36 guards**, **4 officers** and **Daske**, a young, handsome man with blue eyes, blond hair and no memories. Daske is one of the overmen, the starfaring people who originally colonised Fomalhaut; he was found in a desert valley by Ezilim Bek, who, to his surprise, discovered that a body in a copper sarcophagus was not just perfectly preserved but alive. So far, attempts to discover the mysterious man's origins have proved unsuccessful. Daske has a *doctrinator* sunk into his right temple; he is always sardonic and downbeat.

Sthran Mirza: War 4; DC 3 (plate mail); Atk *footman's flail* +1 1d6+3; S 16, D 10, C 13, I 12, W 18, C 10; hp 26.

The hallowed scrolls of Y'a: these magical documents function as a spellbook and reveal the following mage's spells: *conjure frog demon* (as *conjure elemental spirit*, 5th level), *exorcise* (as priest, 5th level), *animate the restless dead* (3rd level, animates 4 HD of low-level undead per experience level but bestows no control over the spell's subjects) and *contact other plane of existence*. The scrolls bear The Curse of Deterministic Pursuit, which may not be removed until the documents are discarded. The spells in the hallowed scrolls of Y'a may not be transcribed into a spell book.

Doctrinator: When pressed against the forehead or temple, this round metal bar sinks into the skull. The doctrinator encourages its subject to act in accordance with a loosely or narrowly defined, preset doctrine, occasionally sending helpful messages right into the brain. If it detects deviation or a lack of appropriate enthusiasm, it may resort to disciplinary measures in the form of excruciating pain (a saving throw may be attempted to retain freedom of action). Some specimens are equipped with a small detonator & corresponding charge.

Ezilim Bek: Assassin 6; DC 2 (chain shirt, shield, *ring of protection* +2, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6 or dagger 1d4+scorpion poison or shortbow 1d6; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 6; *potion of speed*; hp 38.

Daske: War 2; DC 0 (chain, shield, Dex); Atk scimitar 1d6 +3; St 18/56, Dx 18, Cn 18, In 18, Ws 18, Ch 18; hp 28.

Officers (4): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6 or footman's mace 1d6+1; hp 11, 20, 14, 8.

Guards (36): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 18, 3, 10, 9, 12, 19, 13, 3, 13, 11, 14, 9, 15, 18, 14, 7, 17, 2, 14, 12, 12, 10, 12, 9, 11, 14, 5, 15, 5, 6, 4, 12, 8, 8, 9, 11.

Caravan #3: Valdesia Mir and Amran Mir are husband and wife; their caravan is accompanied by their only daughter, **Zeni**. The family are exiles from the arid lands of Thasan, and have resorted to trade and the pursuit of certain relics so that they may one day return to their ancestral home. The members of this company are fanatically loyal to each other and their cause. Current wares include:

- Alcoholic essences from the city of Kaswul, 1200 gp
- Narcotics from Kaswul, 1200 gp
- Three carved wood idols, each on a separate cart, altogether 3000 gp for the right buyer
- Cloths and carpets from the sects of Im Khuus, 700 gp

Valdesia Mir is a middle-aged woman of sharp features. She is an excellent swordswoman and a passable minstrel.

Out of respect for her man and the Red God she wears pure copper armaments. Although an able leader, on some occasions she shows inexplicable uncertainty and makes severely erroneous judgements. **Amran Mir** is a proud man who has suffered long for his cause, and still bears its signs on his face. His blue-red turban is decorated with crane feathers; by nature, he is merciless and devoted if he sees a threat to himself and his loved ones. The girl **Zeni** is young and curious, as well as a 2nd level practitioner of magic. She is not at all interested in the work of revenge, a sentiment she tactfully doesn't share with her parents or guardians. The company is protected by **26 guards**.

Valdesia Mir: Archer 8; DC 2 (chain shirt, Dexterity); Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d6; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 8; *potion vs. paralysis, potion of respectably increased yet not superlatively efficacious healing*2, the dust of Khalil Azim*6* (a mixture ground from rare spices and the innards of unearthed mummies; airborne poison. Beings slain by the dust return as zombies in 1d4 rounds, and may be given verbal commands as usual); hp 46.

Amran Mir: Warrior 7; DC 2 (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity); Atk *scimitar* +2 1d6+3; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14; hp 33.

Zeni Mir: Illusionist 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 18; *scroll (IOUN stones, improved illusion), scroll (hypnotic pattern, fear)*; Spells: 1: rainbow spray, dancing illuminations, detect illusion, hypnotise, light, lesser illusion, sound illusion; 2: hypnotising pattern, improved illusion; hp 9.

Guards (28): Warrior 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d6; hp 7, 13, 8, 8, 4, 11, 8, 10, 12, 11, 4, 13, 13, 9, 8, 2, 14, 8, 11, 4, 12, 8, 7, 14, 5, 11, 11, 15.

Caravan #4: Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator drives a disciplined, powerful caravan. They usually operate as slavers, but don't shun other wares as long as they are profitable. When first encountered, the caravan has:

- 30 slaves, able-bodied men, 1500 gp
- 30 slaves, women and children, 900 gp
- Divlis Mil, dancing girl, 400 gp
- Carpets and textiles, 800 gp
- Glass prisms and pyramids, flawless, 1400 gp

Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator wears a rich turban, dark green caftan, and well-tended beard. When the caravan is at rest, he spends his time in a rich tent, usually in the company of 1d3 slave women. His demeanour is polite but menacing. Uflonz Mork is a champion of the frog-god Tsathoggus, in whose hierarchy he enjoys a high position. He is involved in shady affairs at all times, and will always

have some work for those with few scruples. Uflonz Mork is accompanied by two bodyguards (veteran soldiers) at all times. His force consists of **30 guards, 10 veterans** and their lieutenant, **Miraxis al Nar** (this quiet but cruel man, seemingly wearing light chain, is in fact a doppelganger).

Uflonz Mork the Gnasticator: Warrior 8; DC 4 (*chainmail* +1); Atk *scimitar* +3 1d6+3; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13; *potion of healing*2, hydrocreation dust* (turns a great amount of dust into potable water), *ring of demon conjuration* (frog demon, 5 charges); Spells (one-use divine gifts from Tsathoggus): augur, curse, converse with dead, animate dead, occasion critical wounds; hp 39.

Miraxis al Nar: Warrior 4 (doppelganger); DC 0 (natural, chain shirt, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4 or strike 1d12; imitation 90% accuracy, ESP, immune to sleep/charm, save as 10th level warrior; hp 36.

Guards (30): War 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk spear 1d6 or javelin 1d6; hp 14, 9, 3, 13, 15, 14, 11, 17, 9, 7, 11, 10, 10, 4, 10, 9, 15, 15, 14, 7, 12, 13, 13, 9, 11, 7, 11, 7, 8, 4

Veterans (10): War 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk halberd 1d10 or bow 1d6; hp 13,15,21,15,14,23,15,11,28,22.

II. Travellers (d20). On the road, travellers are only rarely encountered alone – even if they lack the armed escort of a caravan or patrol, 80% of all encounters consists of 3d10 travellers banding together for mutual protection. These individuals usually range from 1st to 3rd level, with gear and treasure as appropriate. The other 20% consists of 1d6 individuals, who will be very careful to avoid running into something unpleasant. In both cases, 1d3 of the travellers will be interesting, the others being average pilgrims, traders, thieves looking for their opportunity and so on.

1. Amagarte, morose assassin. Dark, hanging moustaches, grey, unfocussed eyes, dull felt clothing. Masquerading as a pilgrim, Amagarte is fond of drink and in an evil mood when he is deep in his cups. Normally of 14 Intelligence, he has lost some of his edge after suffering the side-effects of a long charm spell. If needed, he kills without remorse. **Amagarte:** Assassin 4; DC 6 (leather, shield, Dexterity); Atk longsword 1d8 or dagger 1d4+snake poison; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 10; hp 24.

2. Bel Amir and Raskar. Both are adherents of Kang the Thousand-Eyed, god of adventurers and good exemplars of their violent, materialistic faith. Bel Amir is a moustached, glum type, while Raskar mixes an insolent, disrespectful personality with a horrendous fashion sense – green breeches, yellow vest, and green cloak with plum boots. The pair guards their treasure map with obstinate determination. **Bel Amir & Raskar:** Warrior 2; DC 5

(chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8; Raskar also has a longbow 1d6; hp 19,14.

3. Merton, Master of Illusions: Wearing a cloak that is blue on one side and red on the other, this bald, liver-spotted old man sporting a mere wisp of a beard is traveling beyond the Land of Khans, but stays for a long spell at every resting place along the way. He is short-sighted, shrewd and distrustful. He is usually seen when ingesting colourful drops and dusts from glass vials, taken for a stomach ailment. Merton's valuables are carried in a sack which has been reinforced with an illusion-enhanced *magic mouth* spell (attacks as 5th LVL monster, bites for 3d4 points of damage, 5 rounds). He is especially fond of the following illusion tricks:

- [lesser illusion]: impassable grid made of smoke
- [improved illusion]: flaming staff – the flames inflict 2d4 on touch, touched opponent catches on fire unless a save is made
- [improved illusion]: “Summoning the Secondary Aura” – blocks melee attacks around the illusionist and stuns attacker unless a save is made
- [greater illusion]: 5 illusory tentacles, each attacks as 2nd LVL monster, damage 1d6, Hp 2 each, 5 rounds

Merton, Master of Illusions: Illusionist 5; DC 9 (Dexterity); Atk quarterstaff 1d6; Str 6, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12; *scroll (improved illusion*2, greater illusion, paralysation), potion vs. Poison*; Spells: 1: rainbow spray, dancing lights, detect illusion, hypnotism, light, lesser illusion*2, sound illusion; 2: cloud of fog, detect magical dweomer, improved illusion*2, magicked mouth; 3: greater illusion, paralysation; hp 10.

4. Ovotral tal Varius, merchant. A commanding type in turban and kaftan; oiled beard, expensive rings (6*120 gp). He is transporting three virgins to a female-exclusive cult and guards the naïve-yet-lustful beauties like a dragon – seeing all strangers as potential kidnappers and seducers. **Ovotral tal Varius:** Warrior 5; DC 3 (leather, shield, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d6; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15; *scintillating dust**2 (save vs. spell or mesmerism for 1d10 rounds); hp 35.

5. Oskander Effendi, insane pilgrim. Man in white linen clothes, turban and weapons; obsessed visage, thick stubble. He has sworn a holy pledge to find and slay Uzmag Bey, a killer fleeing him for years. To this end, he will ally with strangers, even offering his possessions in case of victory. Every evening, 10% probability that the personality of Uzmag Bey surfaces and commits some horrid crime. **Oskander Effendi:** Warrior 4; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+2 or dagger 1d4+1; Str 16, Dex 7, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 10; hp 22.

6. Palairos Monothos, envoy. This official has been sent to these lands to conclude a deal, as well as to keep an eye open for the strengths and weaknesses of potential allies. 50% probability of chest with a gift worth 2d6*100 gp. Bodyguard **Medoros** has a secret mission to spy on Palairos and deliver the *real* message. **Palairos Monothos:** Warrior 3; DC 7 (leather, shield); Atk short sword 1d6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12; hp 20. **Medoros:** Warrior 4; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk two-handed sword 1d10+3; Str 18/39, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14; *potion of invisibility, potion of gaseous form*; hp 21.

7. Namsur, snake charmer. He travels the roads of the wasteland with a mule-drawn cart bearing six clay jars: five contain his trained snakes, the sixth a wraith he commands with an ancient, corroded metal token. Three gemstones, 600 gp, 250 gp, 200 gp. **Namsur:** Thief 3; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+snake poison; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 7; snake poison*6; hp 13. **Snakes (5):** LVL 4+2; DC 5; Atk bite 1d3+poison; hp 28, 23, 19, 24, 20. **Wraith:** LVL 5+3; DC 4; Atk touch 1d6+LVL; energy drain, silver or magical to hit; hp 24.

8. Ums Orthyl the Haggler, cursed traveller. This seller of brass lanterns is dragging heavy iron chains on the road, and he will not be able to cast off this load and eternal life until someone voluntarily assumes both. Non-combatant but undying.

9. Gargaris Gigantes, a hairy-chested goliath; bushy black beard and burning eyes. He wears beautifully decorated bronze plate mail and a huge two-handed sword which he can use single-handedly. He enjoys bullying the weak, but is stupid enough to be easily fooled (if he recognises this, he kills). Gargaris Gigantes is tracked by three assassins thirsting for his blood. **Gargaris Gigantes:** Warrior 7; DC 2 (plate mail, shield); Atk two-handed sword 1d10+3; Str 18/69, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 11; hp 41.

10. Marunce, Associate Fellow of the Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate, PhD. Young dandy affecting a fashionable green hat, eccentric boots and robe, and refined manners. Following his studies on the island resort of Dusal Dagodli, Marunce has been endowed with a generous scholarship for the customary post-doctoral research trip. His research subject is either hopelessly esoteric or just a good bluff; the “research trip” suspiciously resembles a pleasure voyage with only the bare hint of serious work. Marunce carries 900 gp worth of silk cheques issued by the Church of Fedafuce sewn into his garments. **Marunce, Associate Fellow of the Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate:** Thief 3; DC 8 (leather); Atk scimitar 1d6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 16; hp 15.

11. Elwyna, Dorisand and Moira: three Amazon adventurers. They stick together and distrust all men. Moira, unlike the other two, is impulsive and over-curious,

given to capriciousness when disobeyed. Currently, the amazons are looking for the golden treasures of a lost temple. **Elwyna, Dorisand and Moira:** Amazon 4; DC -1 (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; *potion of healing* (Elwyna); Spells (one-use, Dorisand): augur, pray, cure heavy wounds; hp 28, 32, 29.

12. Badzum Mirza, older nomad warrior. Scarred brown face, moustaches, fur-trimmed round helmet, curved sabre. He is mute, communicating by hand signs. Badzum is calm and indifferent by nature, but guards his gem-encrusted dagger (800 gp) fanatically. The blanket of his horse is a stolen war flag. **Badzum Mirza:** Archer 6; DC 5 (chain); Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or sabre 1d6 or dagger 1d4; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 7; hp 21.

13. Ravix Yeld, spice merchant. He trades in exotic salts, spices, drugs and poisons, usually carrying them to a value of 3d6*100 gp. He is fond of gossip and will listen to it just as happily. **Ravix Yeld:** Thief 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+deadly poison (-2 save); Str 11, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 9; hp 12.

14. Xaxor, swordsman and paladin of Dornak. A follower of this peace-loving deity, Xaxor's mission of pacification involves the wholesale massacre of people he detects as evil, preferably in their sleep. During his holy tasks, he has amassed a considerable war chest (1600 sp, 700 gp, 600 gp ring). **Xaxor, Paladin of Dornak:** Warrior 5; DC 3 (banded mail, shield); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1; detect evil 3/day; St 12, Dx 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Ch 10; hp 37.

15. Menzar Marmax, evil mage. Due to bad luck, Menzar lost his spellbook and was forced to flee with only the spells in his head. Since then, even this arsenal has been partially depleted. He is willing to commit any deed to gain a new spell repertoire – if necessary, even good ones. **Menzar Marmax:** Mage 6; DC 6 (Dexterity); Atk staff 1d6; St 15, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 13; Spells (no spellbook): ESP, mirror image, lesser illusion; hp 17.

16. Zorm Ozvalq the Altruist, wandering philosopher, and **eight disciples**; renounced all wealth and encourages others to do the same; sustains himself with jobs taken on the road but donates excess profits to charity. The pious disguise has been of great service to the small pillaging band, who have robbed many during their career, and maintain a lavish lifestyle in their tower hideout. **Zorm Osvaqlq the Altruist:** Cleric 3; DC 7 (ring mail); Atk staff 1d6; St 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 13; Spells: 1: cure wounds*2, command*2; 2: paralyse person*2, silence; hp 20. **Disciples:** Warrior 2; DC 7 (ring mail); Atk footman's flail 1d6+1, hp 7, 7, 13, 19, 15, 13, 16, 16.

17. Ephemerides Barbanikos, glass merchant. He trades in colourful glass blocks, which he offers for sale from his mule cart. Each block sells for 1d6*10+60 gp; some are exquisitely beautiful and, when looked at from specific angles, display human faces trying to say something to the onlooker. They also detect as magical (having been enchanted with *lesser illusion* spells). Ephemerides “doesn't recognise” the extraordinary specimens and sells them at his regular price, feigning ignorance about their ultimate origins. **Ephemerides Barbanikos:** Illusionist 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4; Spells: 1: change self, dancing lights, lesser illusion; 2: ventriloquism; hp 6.

18. Athauran, archer. Blond primitive with flowing mane, sunken eyes below sloping forehead, hairy legs and arms, and hunched gait. Athauran barely knows the language of the land, and is not in any case given to much speech. He drinks the blood of his slain enemies and worships strange gods. **Athauran:** caveman Archer 4; DC 4 (hides, Dex); Atk 2*composite short bow 1d6 or spear 1d6+1; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 10; hp 28.

19. Murmuraos, vampire. This aristocratic potentate from the city state of Pentastadion is guarded by five charmed servants; the lead-encased coffin is seemingly only one of the crates on their heavily laden wagon. Murmuraos is extraordinarily shrewd, never engaging in affairs where he is at a disadvantage, but if he has an opportunity to acquire wealth or suck blood, he doesn't tarry. The vampire's treasures are carried in an invisible chest affixed to the bottom of the wagon – 500 gp, 200 gp opal medallion, *shield* +1, *banded mail* +1, *potion of levitation*, *potion of fire breath*. **Murmuraos, vampire:** LVL 8+3; DC 1; Atk claws 1d6+4+LVL; energy drain, +1 to hit, vampire abilities and weaknesses; *cloak of protection* +1, *scarab of death* (worn as a sign of transcending death); hp 37. **Retainers (5):** Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or javelins 1d6; hp 15, 16, 20, 20, 17.

20. The Heroes of Leget, adventurers. **Volonar the Woodsman**, archer – green and brown clothes, moustaches, somewhat dim. **Im Ver**, olive skin, slanted eyes, bronze armour and sharp features, hails from a foreign dimension. **Yacub the Clever**, short, hyperactive cutpurse of a hundred wiles. **Volonar the Woodsman:** Archer 5; DC 5 (chainmail); Atk 2*longbow 1d6 or longsword 1d8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6; hp 26. **Im Ver:** Warrior 4; DC 3 (banded mail, shield); Atk glass glaive-guisarme 2d4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 12; green glass medallion; hp 28. **Yacub the Clever:** Thief 5; DC 7 (studded leather, Dexterity); Atk shortsword 1d6 or 2*throwing dagger 1d4; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14; the holy symbols of six different gods – whichever comes handy!; hp 28. Ω

The Temple of the Sea Demon

by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: Gabor Acs (Hawk the Etunian, Archer/Thief 2/1), Kalman Farago (Harmonos, Follower of Karttekeza, Archer/Illusionist 2/1), Laszlo Feher (Licar del'Avellos, Mage 3), Gabor Izapy (Beristo Akelis, Priest 3 of Mereskan), Gyorgy L'Aune (Gorulga, Barbarian 3), Tamas Szabo (Kher'tar, Mage 3).

Introduction: The Temple of the Sea Demon, which has stood in its abandoned plaza since time immemorial, may not be approached through ordinary street or passage: only those who wait until the foreordained night and then follow certain dreams may walk new ways through the dark and silent city, through the Market of Kagmek Khotoummi and the Plaza of Uthul Yaros. Then by an alleyway unseen one can approach the temple's plaza and see the great stone pillars before the windowless houses, each a different height and bearing the statues of ancient kings. There, the domed temple beckons. Those few who arrive may consult the bearded priests and receive dark blessings and visions from a great pool dedicated to the destructive aspects of the sea. Those who arrive without a call are slain by the vigilant guardians, and even those who triumph over the temple may be hunted until they find a power strong enough to shield them. The men of the temple are tireless in the perpetual night, and each fights with the strength of three men. The priests patrol the lower level – but don't venture upstairs unless given permission! The high priest, Zemon, is a powerful spell-caster in his own right. All priests wear dark blue robes.

Priests (9): Fighter 2; DC 10 (robes); Atk 3*trident 1d6+1; hp 9, 8, 14, 8, 20, 8, 8, 15, 13. **Zemon:** Pr 6; DC 8 (*cloak* +2); Atk 3*trident 1d6+1; Str 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Con 14, Dex 8, Cha 12; Spells: 1: *blessing*, *divine command**2, *create water*, *sanctuary*; 2: *chant*, *paralyze person**2 (by exhaling a cloud of cold mist), *silence* 3: *curse*, *pray*; hp 25.

1. Temple: Blue and green eyes in the bronze dome cast beams of filtered light into the great pool of water. The floor is covered with blue and yellow tiles, and there are old brass candelabra, tall and gnarled, by the walls. There is a 1:2 probability 1d3 priests are here walking their rounds around the pool and chanting. Zemon is also here with a 1:3 probability, standing over the pool atop the stairs in silent contemplation; otherwise he is in his quarters on the second floor, across the bridge. The pool, which draws in light with a weird distortion effect, has the following powers, which any of the priests may call on while staying in the temple: *cloud of fog**4, *hypnotic array**2, *lesser*

*healing**4, *locate thing**2 (no range restriction), *identify item*, *divination*, *sea demon's blessing* (subject miraculously avoids drowning once in future, if such a fate befalls him), *conjure undine* (only Zemon is allowed to attempt this, but a disciple who is desperate enough may try, with a 1:3 chance of success). These powers replenish every 12 hours.

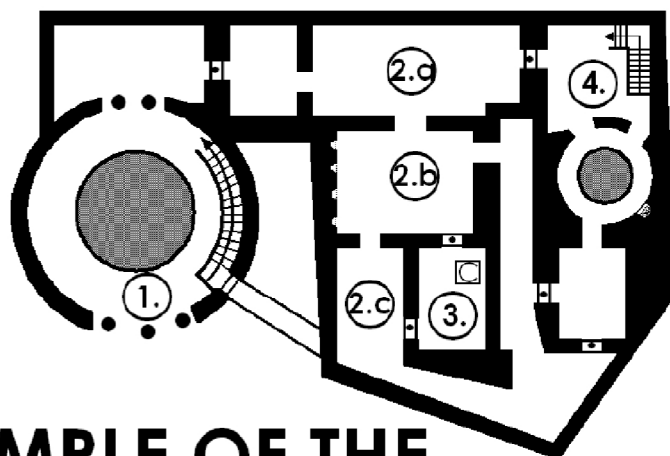
The pool is very deep, and an experienced swimmer will take 2 minutes to reach its bottom. Here the following treasures may be found: 550 sp, 500 gp, 250 gp, dagger with golden grip (40 gp), silver vessel (500 gp), copper idol of a globular conglomerate (the deity Yol, 180 gp), gold-inlaid silver plate (80 gp), green-bladed *longsword* -1, *chainmail* +1. One item may be recovered on each try, 5:6 chance. However, each time the pool is disturbed there is a 1:6 chance the undine awakens to destroy the interlopers.

Undine (Water Elemental): HD 12; DC 2; Dam 5d6; +2 or better wpn to hit, -1 damage/die outside water, hp 74.

2. Quarters: The living quarters of the priests, dark cells in the cold stone building. All priests who are not in the temple are found here.

a. A room of prayer: here are found supplication mats around a giant silver bowl of water (400 gp, 200 if melted), a selection of ceremonial cups (10*15 gp), dark blue tiles, and lead idols in shadowy recesses. The scent of incense wafts through the cold air. Unless upset, the bowl of water emits a silvery mist if strangers enter. After 1d3 rounds, the mist attacks as a silvery noose at the 3rd level of ability; if it hits, the victim must save vs. death. One of the lead idols contains 6 doses of *meditation incense*, but the idol must be broken to retrieve it.

b. A room of rest: here large cushions, blue and vibrant yellow, are piled for the disciples. A total of 2d6*30 gp of personal items may be found. There are dark recesses cov-



TEMPLE OF THE SEA DEMON

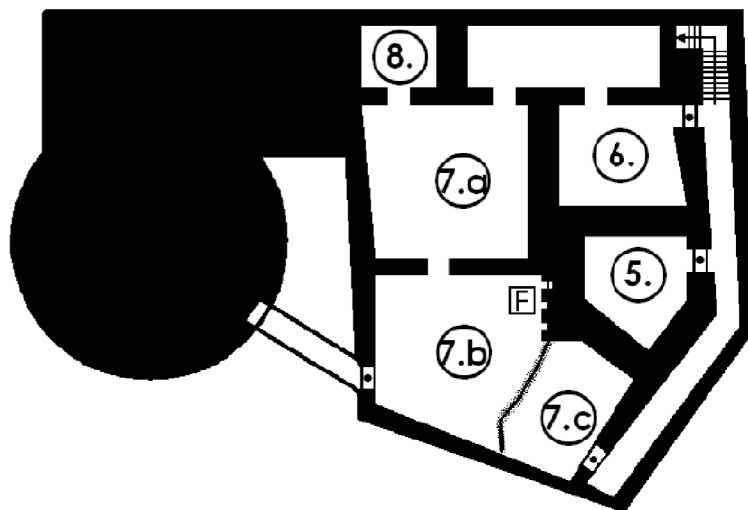
-ered by thick grilles in the western wall; prayers written on bits of parchment have been stuck through. One is a scroll with the *exorcism* spell (used on the temple pool, it dispels the elemental and allows the scroll's user to draw forth all magic within, available as one-use bonus spells); another is magical but blank (an application of holy water reveals a *greater healing* spell; unholy water reveals *greater harming*).

c. A brass altar case holds a small set of scales and silver weights used to measure holy and unholy water. The set is worth 160 gp, but one of the decorations, a silver serpent, bites with a deadly poison if the items are stolen (attacks as 3 HD, save vs. poison).

3. Archives: The temple archives are packed with ancient cabinets overflowing with holy writings dating back several centuries. Most are concerned with sinister astrologies, and one who studies them will learn things that are not to be known. These secrets are very useful to the character, but the more he studies, the greater the chance of even darker realisations: six secrets may be so learned, with a cumulative 15% probability per secret the character must save vs. death or pluck his eyes out in a paroxysm of hysteria and seek the comfort of watery death in the great pool. An iron box in a small compartment holds 6 pearls of 120 gp value each, a silver goblet (22 gp) and a *ring of protection* +2. A trap door leads up, covered by a great quantity of pillows (open door check required).

4. Lesser Pool: This set of rooms is unnaturally cold, and an acoustic effect focuses sound to a strange but perfect pitch – speech cuts like a knife and footsteps echo with ponderous significance. If the characters are completely silent and keep lights low, a formless, glowing phantom will emerge from the air and reach towards a random character (attacks as 4 HD, ignores armour). The touch of the apparition leaves a golden handprint on a PC's chest, which is experienced as a heavy weight. Only a blessing from a 9th+ level priest can safely remove this burden; other attempts to remove it require a save vs. death to avoid having the PC's heart magically torn from his chest. Whether it succeeds or not, the apparition disappears with a heavy sigh. *Exorcism* drives it away, and causes a segment of the wall in the circular room to fall, revealing a cavity with a shrivelled body still bearing a *necromancer's staff* (this heavy brass staff has 23 charges, and may be used to cast *detect undead*, *animate dead*, and *converse with dead* for a charge each, but the bearer will return as an undead monster of hit dice equal to his experience level if he dies carrying it). The porous cadaver has half-metamorphosized into heavy golden dust, and may fetch 1200 gp for the sweepings, or 3000 gp if sold intact to the right buyer.

In the circular room, a small pool is lined with yellow and dark blue ceramic. Through the water's distortion, room 9 in the dungeon is visible, and it may be reached in two rounds of swimming. However, the interior of the well is



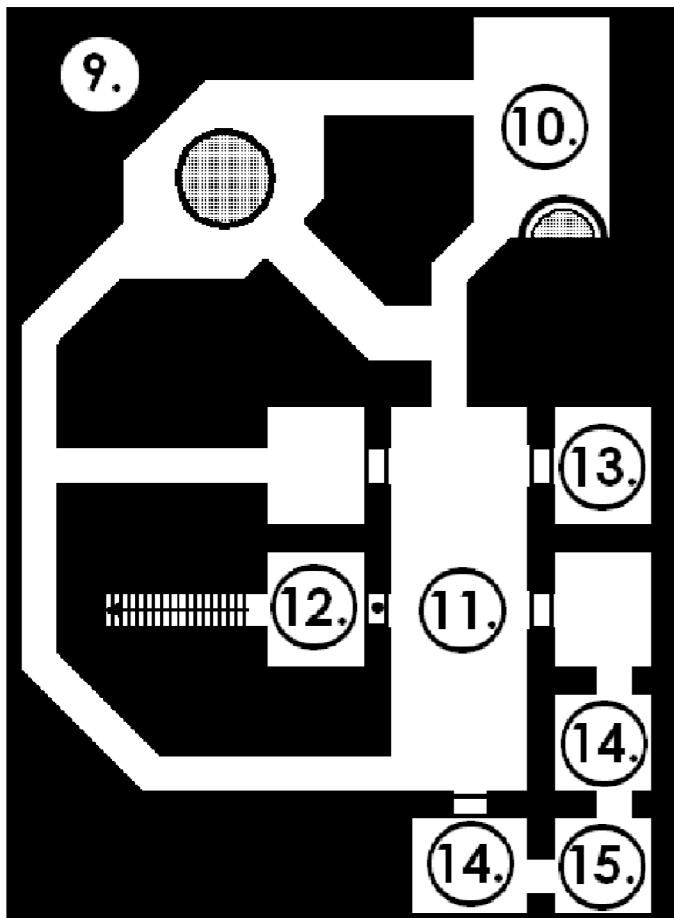
lined with invisible blades, and if their location is not ascertained before diving (by probing or *detect magic*, which makes them glow with a faint radiance), there is a 2:3 chance to suffer 4d4 points of damage.

5. Domed Room: Beams of silver light are focused on a pedestal holding a silver decanter with alchemical symbols. There are 10 doses of holy water in the decanter. The lights are filtered through the clear, faintly bluish glass “eyes” of a small dome; these eyes are faintly magical and are used to create holy water over a month-long distillation process. These are worth 2400 gp if all are extracted without damage; the non-magical decanter is worth 500 gp.

6. Bath: Water flows from a bearded satyr's head into a large basin in the SW. Lead pipes carry away the excess water; brass and ceramic ornaments decorate the walls. A collection of bathing salts (300 gp) lies on a small table, next to rare oils kept in long-necked glass vials (6*40 gp oil, 6*30 glass). One is enchanted: applied to the eyelids, it allows one to see through illusions and invisibility (3 uses).

7. Zemon's Quarters: As with the entire upper floor, these quarters are forbidden to priests other than Zemon. The rooms are stocked with a great quantity of rugs, pillows and carpets. The more valuable pieces would be worth 1400 gp total, but a single unencumbered person could only carry up to 400 worth.

a. A low wooden table (with a half-opened compartment containing a set of polished lenses and a flat box full of glass dust – 150 gp) lies at the centre of the room, surrounded by comfortable and colourful pillows. On the table, there is a silver censer (140 gp) containing scented ash as well as several pieces of writing in a disorderly heap. These outline a method of reaching hidden sections of the city in one's dreams – a plaza of the dead, a magical well, a palace that subtly works against the standing administration, and a further possibility only hinted at with ominous circumscription. An ewer of violet dream-wine, scintillant and of a deep and troubling aroma, lies next to the table.



b. The NE part of this room serves as a sleeping chamber, with a pile of pillows over a trapdoor leading into the archives. Next to the pillows are niches with small figurines – these grotesques are made of lead and worthless, but a panel behind the northern one opens into a recess containing a jade box (200 gp) with 500 gp worth of opium and a water pipe. Faint movement within the glass bowl of the pipe turns out to be a faint shimmering vapour – slightly sweet upon inhalation but with no discernible effect. However, a rolled-up sheet of black parchment turns out to be painted with glowing stars, and if the character has partaken of the pipe, he will see a personal omen within their configuration that, if followed, may bring great sorrow (1:3), enormous power (1:3), or vast wealth at the cost of doom to many others (1:3).

c. This curtained-off area has been converted to wine storage, with a selection of good vintages. 8 heavy amphorae with the sigil XOΣ contain 40 gp worth of wine each.

8. Altar Nook: This bare area holds a font of clear water. Three tiny vials are arranged on the edge in a triangular configuration. Although they seemingly contain water, they are magical: #1 functions as a *potion of water breathing*, #2 as a *potion of lesser healing* and #3 as a *potion of watery death* (save vs. death or drown instantaneously, cough and spit water for 3d6 rounds if successful; this liquid can also be used against the undine, which must save or be dispelled).

9. Dungeon: The well opening from the lesser pool (4) leads here, the column of water suspended in the air by some miraculous influence. The passages and rooms of the dungeon reverberate with a sinister presence.

10. Font: Waters rush from a small opening, to drain away through gaps at the bottom of the font. If observed carefully, a gurgling sound comes from one; a sapphire ring worth 600 gp is stuck there and may be removed with some ingenuity (1:6 to 1:2 to catch it before it gets swept away depending on method).

11. The Hall of Wells: Eight plugged stone wells are found along the western and eastern wall, sealed with soft lead. Under a layer of clear water, they contain liquid light that burns without heat in extravagant colours. This light can be shaped with one's willpower as hot wax – even a mild effort such as contemplating their purpose effects some change, which may be increased through intense concentration. The shape that is created is inherent to the particular liquid, and the shaping process becomes harder and harder as one gets closer to its conclusion. Three saves are needed vs. spells at +4, +0 and -2; 1d6 damage if the first is failed, 3d6 for the second, and the character collapses into protoplasmic mush if the third is unsuccessful. Failing any save means the light-stuff is ruined, becoming clouded and worthless; so does "letting go" of the light after passing the first save. The hues and potential forms, clockwise from the north, are:

- 1 – mauve – *wand of charm*, 12 charges.
- 2 – incandescent green – kaleidoscope, causes *suggestion*, 6 uses before rendered ordinary.
- 3 – pink – gelatinous intelligence (Int 15), telepathic, may be consulted on various problems, dries out in 2d4 weeks.
- 4 – hot orange – *shortsword* +3, melts after 2d6 battles.
- 5 – hypnotic cube – droning hum in cone-shaped emanation functions as *hypnotic array*, 11 uses.
- 6 – azure – ray-caster, 3d6 damage in narrow cone via entirely silent vibrations, 18 charges.
- 7 – transparent black – 8 doses healing gelatin, 3d6 each.
- 8 – purple – doppelganger, obedient.

The liquid light is radioactive, and with each well opened there is a cumulative 2% chance of radiation sickness.

12. Descent: Beyond the old brass door set with a sigil of an eye in a clawed hand, stairs lead down to the unknown.

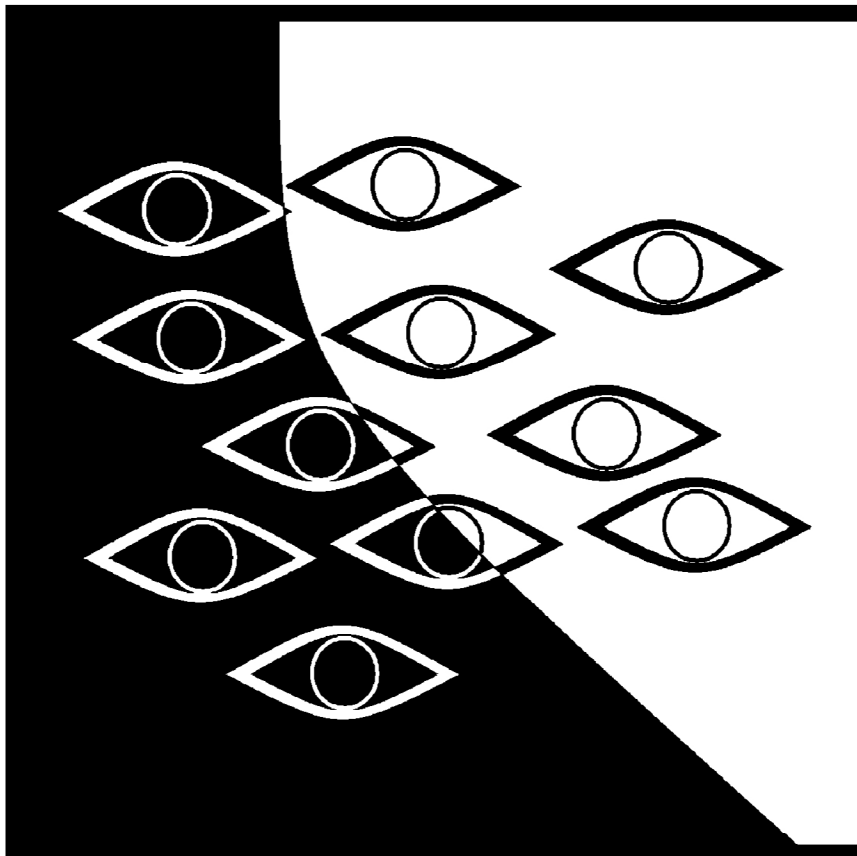
13. Storage: A place of old odds and ends: slabs of semi-solidified glass with bubbles of encased light (faulty experiments with the wells?), pews, rusty tridents, amphorae, ceramic jars, candelabra and brass ornaments. A cherry wood box contains several sorts of coloured chalk, and an oilskin bundle holds a ream of good parchment.

14. Rooms of Lateral Transference: Both domed chambers are decorated with yellow and blue ceramics. Arches

allow characters to see the treasure room and the valuables within. However, upon stepping through an arch characters emerge through the other in the other room marked **14**. An inscription in fine mosaic on the floor reads “MAY ONLY THE LIGHT OF YOUR PURPOSE LEAD”. Only if all light sources outside the treasure room are extinguished is it possible to step into **15**, guided only by the light within. (Note: if a light is brought from **15** into **14**, the transference effect is reactivated, and characters in the treasure room are trapped until the lights are re-extinguished or removed from the area!)

15. Treasure Room: The ceramics are richest here: culminating in a peaked black dome, they are set with golden patterns of watchful eyes that look down with dispassionate vigilance. The room itself is also a place of many wonders: in the centre, there is a basin of red and gold fish, the waters glowing with smooth amber radiance. Further sources – six rods of twisted glass – are also set with lights, magical in origin and a soft purple in hue. Around the basin lie the weird treasures of the temple:

- six heavy silver decanters standing on a long bench (6*150 gp): the water within is intoxicating, and if carried outside one decanterful may re-vivify the dead.
- a giant iron chest holding 7800 ancient silver coins, each worth three regular ones.
- three sets of polished bluish plate armour.
- a curved *scimitar* -1 sheathed in a mother-of-pearl-inlaid scabbard.
- glass prisms placed on a brass table in a seemingly random arrangement; removing any breaks a sacred harmony and looses a baleful force that will soon be manifested in the overworld (however, it may possess a degree of gratitude towards its benefactors – 1:2 probability).
- two fully loaded laser pistols in a flat bakelite box, with 3 extra cartridges.
- finally, a conch-shell horn, the major treasure of the temple, is set on a green glass pedestal. This gold- and silver-bound item is worth 900 gp for its workmanship,



and its dirge can call the formless black monstrosities of the deep seas to do the holder's bidding, or create a force bubble that allows descent into formidable depths. However, blowing it requires a save vs. death to avoid breathing in waters that bring swift oblivion.

The sea's demonic influence, a palpable malevolence, is strongest here. If a character spends more than a minimum amount of time (such as what is needed to grab one item and retreat discreetly) in the chamber, there is a 1:6 chance for each item handled or disturbed (or each time there is loud conversation or sudden movement) that the demon of the temple awakens. This invisible force first manifests as a sharp pressure and a taste of metal in the mouth, emanating unseen from the eyes above. Thereafter, those who do not run are attacked at the 12th level of ability, suffering 4d6 damage per hit as they are rent by invisible forces. Characters must run towards the column of water without hesitation or pause: doing so, or taking wrong turns, invites attacks. The Referee should of course pay attention to the distribution of sources of light, both in

terms of lightless navigation and of the consequences of some PCs bringing light into the anterooms while others remain in the treasure room (see **14**). Preparation and swiftness is the key to surviving this segment. An *exorcism* spell keeps the demonic influence at bay for 1d6+6 rounds: other methods may also be effective, but no spells or weapons will avail.

The demonic influence pursues interlopers through the dungeon level. After that it requires 1d6*10 minutes to emerge into the temple, and if the latter has been significantly desecrated,

some days thereafter to begin its merciless pursuit. What sort of forces may shelter the characters if they become subject to demonic attention – and they will sense their coming doom – is a good question; at what price this security may be obtained is probably more fascinating still. Through time and space lie secure shelters: yet there must be a method to turn and fight, and knowledge and means to make that fight meaningful. These considerations, however, lie outside the scope of this module. Ω



objectives of Tevik Algorn are less complicated: as with his previous victims, he intends to lure the characters into the deepest portions of the Mirage, where they will either perish or have to face him at the height of his power, and then to kill them and drink their blood.

This text cannot anticipate all of the moves the characters might make nor all potential forms of the Mirage. Therefore the Referee should respond to unexpected actions with improvisation and, instead of forcing the players onto a pre-determined route should follow the logic and atmosphere of the described dream-places to devise newer and newer dangers. The key to successfully using the adventure is *adaptivity*: on the two occasions it has been run, the events and resolution were widely different as they were moulded by player actions. Everything that follows is a springboard, not a tight script to follow.



Beyond the Stone That Sees: Tevik Algorn, the desert spirit, makes the characters an offer: if they ease his thirst with blood he will help them find water. His behaviour is tense and nervous, with the longing of opium-eaters deprived of their due. If refused, he is overwhelmed by impotent rage, pleading and cursing, but unable to hurt PCs in incorporeal form. If the characters don't change their mind, he leaves eventually, swearing that they will not leave this land alive. In this event, unless they follow the right direction by chance, the characters will find themselves trapped in an uncertain world devoid of life or water – the means of their escape up to the Referee to determine. If they accept the pact and pour a little bit of blood (1d3 hp) into the ashes, Algorn's tension decreases, and before fading away into nothingness he advises the characters to climb one of the gorges until they reach a bare plateau. Here, "*if The Stone That Sees no longer beholds the*

gate in the rocks", they can find what they are looking for – if they are able to get it. (Note: from this point, all locations are described in multiple possible forms. When the characters arrive for the first time, use paragraph **a**. Returning to the same place – from any direction – use paragraph **b**, then **c**, etc. It is irrelevant where characters are in the "real" world: what matters is how far they have descended into the falsehood of the Mirage.)

1. The Stone That Sees

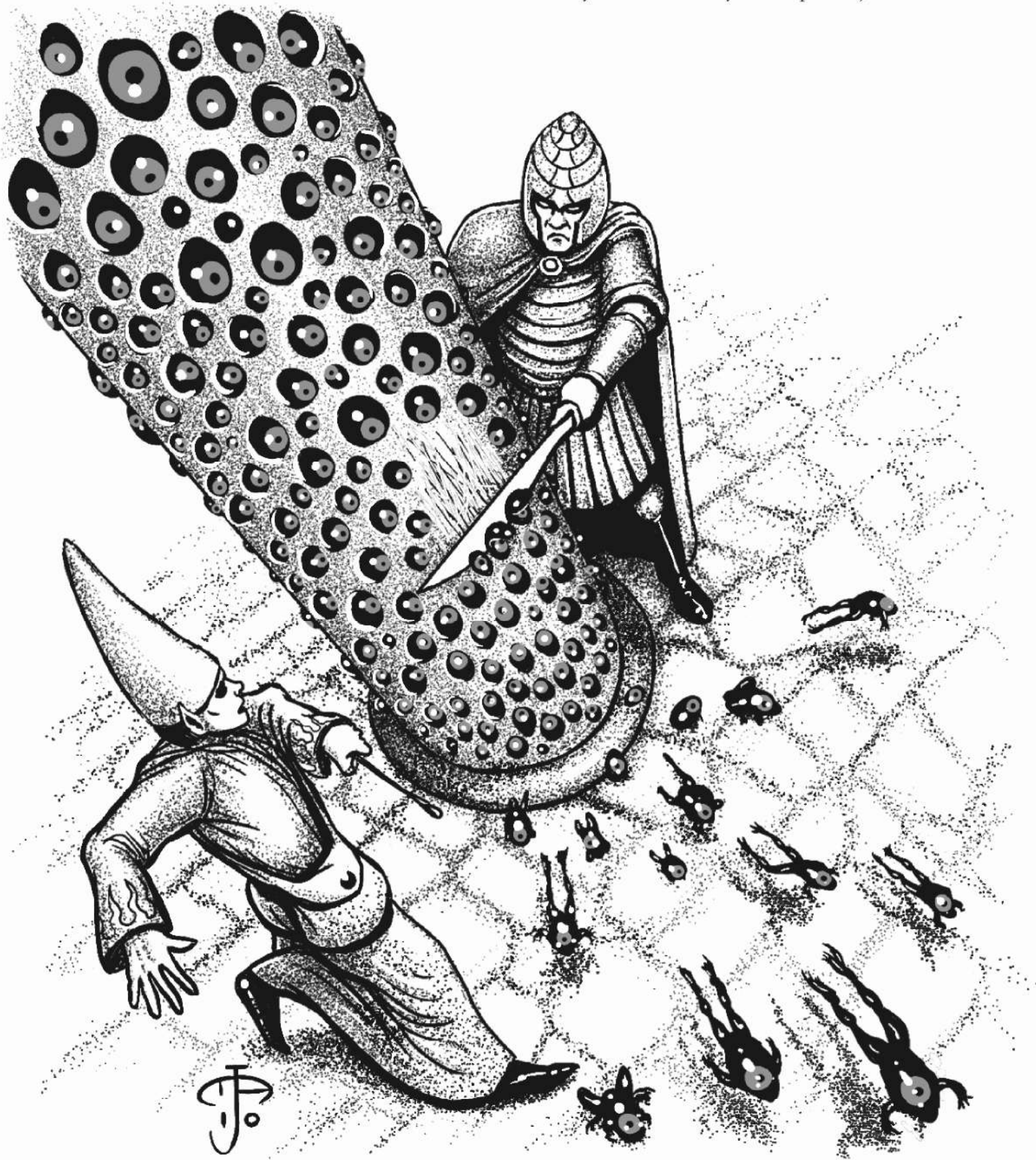
a. At the spot revealed by the spirit, on a plateau covered by ancient, cracked stone slabs, stands the Stone That Sees. The Stone is a rough pillar approximately the height of a man, its surface covered in a mass of round warts like a toad's back. Upon approach the warts turn out to be hundreds of slimy eyes, which pop open and watch the characters. These eyes also peer at the rock face to the back where, between two pillars, there stands an ancient stone slab with an iron ring. As long as the pillars' eyes gaze upon the slab, it is absolutely immovable. Their gaze may be diverted by mechanical means (e.g. covering it with a tarpaulin or blanket, building an obstruction, etc.), appropriate spells (e.g. *sleep*, mind control or illusions) or otherwise, but if the characters try to scrape off the eyes, they will first roll down like peas, then turn into 5d4 murderous killer frogs while the bloody remains sprout new eyes in place of the old. The potential number of frogs is effectively limitless. **Killer Frogs (5d4):** HD 1; DC 8; bite 1d6; jump +2 to first attack; hp 6, 1, 6, 2, 3, 1, 7, 8, 2, 8, 7, 6, 2, 2, 1, 6, 1, 2, 5, 9, 6, 2, 4, 2, 4, 6, 3, 4, 6, 9.

b. On the second approach, a dust storm rages across the plateau, hurling red dust into the characters' faces. The pillar remains as it was, the hundreds of small frog-eyes measuring the party with unmasked hatred. The gate lies wide open. The dust storm brings faraway voices, distant singing in a Gregorian-like chanting: "*So-o-ooo will ri-ii-se the e-e-e-eem-pire-eee of A-alva-an Voroda-aaanmmnn...*"

c. On the third approach the stone pillar is lifeless, the stone eyes inert and uncomprehending. The gate is open.

d. On the fourth occasion, the pillar is as before, but broken stone statues half-buried in dust and rubble stand

around it in various poses. If the characters don't declare that they proceed through the open slab at once, they must roll two saving throws vs. charm or join the statues forever (if only one save is failed, the character may be dragged away from the scene by his companions).



2. The cavern

a. Beyond the stone slab, a crudely carved zigzagging passage descends into the depths. The air is humid and the walls glisten with wetness: from a distance, the roar of falling water may be heard. The stairway eventually leads to a ledge in the side of a great underground cavern; above and below, the walls are lost in darkness (40' up, 60' down). To the east, the ledge descends towards the sound and mist of the waterfall.

b. On the second and subsequent occasions, if the characters arrive from outside the stairs are half-covered with a fine dust that trickles down with every step. The air is dry and in the depths there is only silence. If the characters ascend from below, they will find the stone slab closed; it will not budge at any effort.

3. The bridge

a. The ledge widens into a small flat area. Beyond it, water falls in a roar from a gap in the wall. A rope bridge on the left leads to the other side of the cavern and a ledge descending even further. Before the bridge stands a massive, misshapen form: it is the desert spirit, but this time in physical form and much stronger than before. Wearing only a red loincloth, his dark skin glistens with an oily-metallic sheen, and he looks upon the intruders with evident scorn. In a booming voice (*"bo-bo-bo"*), the spirit declares that the water the characters wanted is here, but to obtain it, a new deal must be struck. He offers it in exchange for a party member to devour, but will agree to a test of strength against a single champion: if the chosen one can wrestle him to the ground, he will allow everyone to drink – if he can't, there is always the first option.



To simulate wrestling the scale above may be used: wrestlers should roll opposed attacks, and whoever wins by at least 5 points gets a degree closer to winning. Start at the middle, and once the triangular marker is off the scale victory is declared. If this goes badly for the party and the sacrifice is still refused, the spirit offers a horrible bargain as an act of mercy: he wants blood, and lots of it. The donor permanently loses 1d3+1 points of Constitution. Naturally, it is possible that the party will just attack the dark shape. In this case, Tevik Algorn utters a maddened cry (*"Lo, so will rise the empire of Alvan Vorodan!"*) and fights with all his might, using his powers of levitation if needed. If defeated, he disappears with a booming laugh. **Tevik Algorn:** HD 5+10; DC 5; bare hands 2d4+2; Str 18, levitation at will, +1 or better to hit (non-magical damage decreased by 5 points), magic resistance 40%, immune to mind-affecting spells; hp 31.

The waters of the fall are abundant and cool, their scent temptation embodied. But swallowed, even drunk without

restraint, they do not slake thirst: though seemingly liquid they are dry as dust. Anyone who has drunk feels their lungs fill and begins choking – but then, cavern and waterfall disappear and the characters awaken at their camp site, with dried-out mouths and the dust storm raging around them. The storm is uncontrollably violent, tossing rocks with its sheer might. Unless they depart, the characters must start to make periodic saving throws to avoid taking first 2d4, then 3d4 damage from flying debris. The falsehood of the waterfall can be discovered with some experimentation: although the wall behind it is wet, items submerged into it don't become so. Moreover, the water disappears before hitting the cavern floor.

b. On a second visit the place is silent – only the slow trickle of sand from the ledge's side is audible. There are no traces of the waterfall, and the boards of the rope bridge are bone-dry – if stepped on, they snap with a sickening crunch (save or fall – only 3d6 damage due to the sand-covered cavern floor).

c. On the third and subsequent visits, there is no bridge, and the ledge itself is close to collapse. Unless the characters think of a safe method to descend, they cause an avalanche and suffer 6d6 damage from falling rocks.

4. The chamber and the gate

a. Here the stone ledge descends to the cavern floor. In a side chamber, the walls are covered in polished black stone. In the centre, there is an empty pedestal with a ram's-head motif. Further on, the cavern narrows until it terminates in a tall bronze gate with the inscription, "LO, HERE IS TEVIK ALGORN, FAITHFUL SERVANT OF ALVAN VORODAN". The bronze sheets are decorated with grotesque reliefs of giant frogs. The gates are heavy, but open with some effort.

b. On the second visit the walls of the side chamber are rough. Heaps of bones and dusty, snaking iron chains lie on the floor. The bones are human, but the skulls are from asses. The frogs on the gate are in a noticeably different configuration, tearing small human shapes to shreds.

c. On the third occasion, the rock ledge does not descend to the floor, but merely ends; the bottom is much further down (60') than before. Like 3c, it is hazardous to navigate. The side chamber resembles its previous state, but the heaps of bones – the remains of Tevik Algorn's previous victims – animate as skeletons and attack with their paws while swinging their chains and braying infernally. The gate, or what remains of it, is a collapsed heap of bent brass. **Accursed Victims (12):** HD 3; DC 5; claws & chains 2d4 plus entanglement (save vs. paralysis); hp 18, 9, 16, 12, 13, 16, 19, 13, 14, 11, 11, 11.

5. The realm of the frogs

a. The walls of the corridor are covered by beaten bronze sheets decorated with patterns of amorphous, liquescent frog-like shapes blurring into each other. The grotesque beings are shown in copulation, devouring tiny man-like figures, defiling women and performing other depraved acts. Examined more closely, the murals have an unpleasant liquid aspect, as if they were slowly morphing. The corridor terminates in a rectangular hall, with walls, floor and ceiling again covered in bronze sheets, this time showing the image of a ram's head. At the slightest touch, the sheets reverberate audibly. Unless precautions are taken while traversing the place, this ringing increases until it grows to a deafening peal, a cacophony of mad sound that inflicts 1d6 to 4d6 damage to listeners (Referee's choice based on the amount of noise being made).

b. The second time this location is visited, fattened man-frog hybrids crouch on the bronze walls. A faint wind dances in the great hall, eliciting an uncertain resonance.

c. On the third occasion, the situation is as before, but it is as if a group of maddened dancers were afoot. Someone who does not make absolutely certain to preserve himself before crossing will take 4d6 damage.

d. On later visits, there is nothing but silence: the bronze sheets have cracked and fallen and all is covered in dust.

6. The road in the sky

a. The corridor from the bronze-covered hall is painted in white-blue tones. The stucco is a lifelike depiction of the sky, as if the characters were walking on thin air. This illusion becomes increasingly realistic the further one goes, and even a gentle breeze can be felt. Finally the sky is real: the characters are walking on nothingness. Far below them stretch the broken wastes under a merciless sun; on a winding road, tired figures are dragging themselves towards a hill range – the characters themselves! As the winds grow the corridor fades and becomes less real. Someone who proceeds will fall and die, as will someone who hurls himself downwards; but a more careful plan to reach the surface by any other means, no matter how desperate, will be successful. Even a short rope reaches the distant surface, and a character carefully lowered experiences only a short fall and minimal damage.

b. On the second occasion, the sky is disturbed: there are clouds, an approaching storm, and dull tension in the air.

c. On the third occasion, the storm is at full power, a chaotic, violent swirl of dust and air. It is almost impossible to see, and if someone does not fall to his hands and knees to find the way and employ the utmost caution to descend he will surely meet an unpleasant end.

7. Down on the barren earth. If the characters have successfully gone beyond the road in the sky and descended to the ground, there are two possible options:

a. If they have not yet become too deeply entangled in the Mirage – for example, they have recognised the false waterfall and didn't have to travel through the caverns multiple times – they arrive before the Stone That Sees, and may continue their adventure from that point.

b. If, on the other hand, a longer time has passed since meeting Tevik Algorn a second time, and the characters have not yet tried to consciously break free from their enchantment, they are now in the utmost depths of the Mirage, from which there is no way out but to recognise Truth and loudly declare it. The characters once more find themselves next to their former resting place; around the fire, they see the figures they observed from the sky. Their simulacra, squatting in a circle, are now but huddled bags of bones in close-drawn cloaks, textiles ripping and bones collapsing at the lightest touch. The following events then unfold in full kaleidoscopic horror. First, in the distance a wind-borne Gregorian chant sounds across the waste: "*So-o-ooo will ri-ii-se the e-e-e-eem-pire-eee of A-alva-an Voroda-aaaannnn...*" Then, on the road, a procession of cowed pilgrims approach singing and bearing old ceremonial flags. The procession is slow but their arrival is as inevitable as the dust storm that comes at their heels. The pilgrims are skeletal monstrosities with clawed hands and the skulls of an ass. They are statistically identical to those



at 4c., but there are so many that they will eventually encircle even the most careful, dragging them down and tearing them into shreds. Second, shortly after the appearance of the procession, the winds become so strong that they begin to tear the land apart. Gigantic boulders are ripped from jagged cliffs and hurled at the campsite; those who don't avoid them (save vs. paralysis with increasing regularity) will be crushed to a pulp. From beyond the winds comes demented, all-encompassing laughter. The third and final sign of the end will be the appearance of yet more skeletal pilgrims coming from the road, the gorges, and behind the rocks, in uncountable multitudes. And if even that is not enough, wilder and more disjointed events occur and a curious madness sets in until all is finished.

8. On the edge of the Mirage. If the characters recognise the Truth and declare the world that surrounds them false, they will come to the edge of the Mirage, where Tevik Algorn may be defeated and the characters may return to the world of the living. No matter where the PCs were before, the scene fades and they find themselves in a low octagonal chamber of dark marble. Everywhere, there are mounds of riches – copper and gold, silver and jewellery. The sinister form of Tevik Algorn, sitting on a decorative golden cushion, drinks foaming human blood from a golden chalice. With contempt, but also a hint of hysteria, he cries out: *“So are you! I have sated myself with you, know who you are and know what you could do against me! And now – I will finally kill and devour you! LO, SO WILL RISE THE EMPIRE OF ALVAN VORODAN!”* With a mighty leap he then attacks in unbridled fury. The fight is merciless and unequal. Tevik Algorn's statistics are as described at 3a., but after the first uttered spell he becomes immune to magic, and after the fifth strike, weapons will bounce off his skin or break (50%). The only method of defeating Tevik Algorn here is not to take him seriously. If the characters deny his abilities and use the Truth against his unreal nature, they can gradually break his confidence: the physical form of the dark juggernaut becomes less and less formidable, even weak and impotent. Degraded, he can only crawl on the ground and try to latch onto someone to exsanguinate – and then the Mirage is dispersed and only a pitiful, dust-dried cadaver remains. With a single hit and an awful crunch, the corpse breaks like a dry twig and the treasure-room, like Tevik Algorn, is no more.

Beyond the Mirage: Upon escape the characters find themselves once again by the fire pit, probably wounded and with weapons in hand. The dust storm slowly fades, and from the sky, in fat drops, rain begins to fall. Probably, from far away, an echo of a strange Gregorian chant is heard: *“So-o-ooo will ri-ii-se the e-e-e-eem-pire-eee of A-alva-an Voroda-aaaannnn...”* And who knows yet, how long is the road. Ω



image by Steve Robertson, text by Alfred John Dalziel

Alfred, inspired by Steve's prizewinning picture from the Erol Otus Art Challenge, came up with a backstory for this trio of terror. -Ig

Leynaflemma

Chaotic Elf Warrior 4/Mage 4

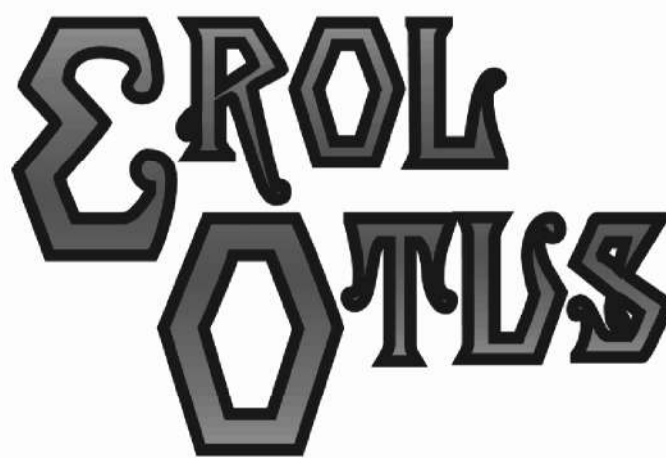
S 11 I 13 W 9 C 10 D 13 Ch 16; Speed 9, DC 2, hp 16

Spells: Charm Person x 3, Sleep; Invisibility, Phantasms

Magic Items: Platinum Plate Mail +1, Wand of Fireballs, Potion of Undead Control

Description: Native to the snowy pine forest on the inland side of Hell Fog Spine, Leynaflemma was less reclusive than others of her Svartalf tribe and grew up making mischief among the Northmen. One spring night she happened across a pair of wounded dwarves, Stegga and

Congratulations Winners! The



Art Challenge has concluded. Our champions:

First Place, Color: Mark Allen

First Place, Black & White: Mikko Torvinen

Second Place, Color: Raven Daegmorgan

Second Place, Black & White: Steve Robertson

Third Place, Color: Stefan Poag

Third Place, Black & White: Steve Zieser

First Honorable Mention, Color: Peter Mullen

First Honorable Mention, Black & White: Lee Barber

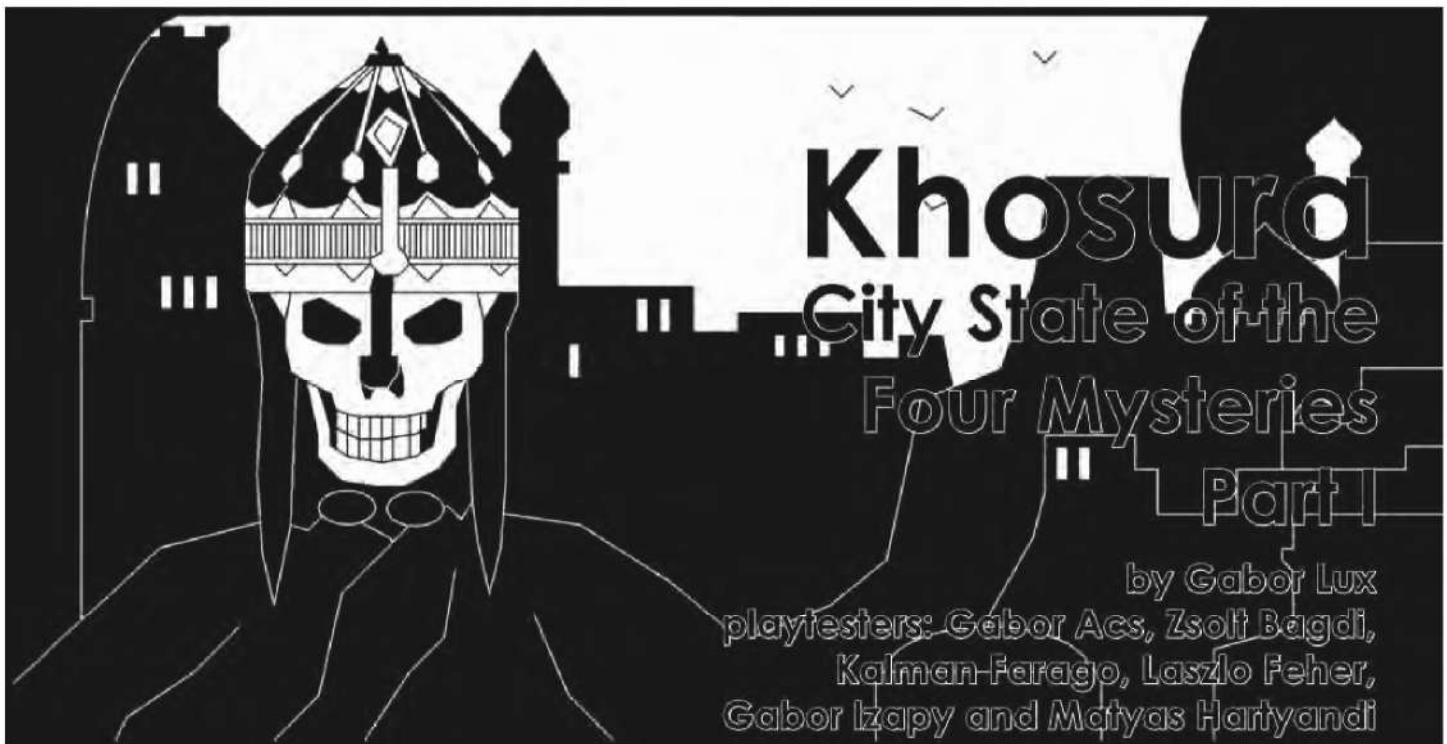
Honorable Mention, Color: B. Ingle, K. Mayle, Atom, A. Schröder, S. Turnbull, and K. Vito

Honorable Mention, B&W: Bat, P. Fini, K. Green, Keshner, S. Kisko, A. Stiller, and J. Weigel

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants!

KHOSURA





Background: In the Desert of Regulator, three days from Famful and overlooking a lake of salt water stands Khosura, City State of the Four Mysteries. Khosura is sacred to the cults of Ishtar, Uthummaos and Derceto; the Kamnic Mysteries, its fourth spiritual foundation, is concerned with matters outside religion and is less known. Two other ideologies, Fedafuce and Mung, have purchased the right to operate within the city, but their presence is seen as blasphemous by many traditionalists.

In the dim past some 2200 years ago, Khosura had seen its greatest glories as the seat of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells; twelve cities fell to rubble and ash beneath his heel, and his sons were left an empire that had no one to rule over. Then came the girl Vashanka, born the daughter of a slave: and it is told how she escaped the riders, went into KROAX to wage war on the bird-men, unified the amazon tribes of Ookant, and returned at last to find a city wasted by hunger and disease. So passed the blood of Srabmar from Khosura and came the gentler laws of Ishtar, Goddess of Love and War. In the years since, the city has seen many masters and mistresses; there came other gods and the Palace went from Ishtar to the grim

priests of Uthummaos, who rule still. For seventy years, the master of Khosura has been the ageless priest-king Panthozar, who is also the supreme high priest of Uthummaos on the world of Fomalhaut.

The main product of the barren city-state is salt. Salty waters emerging from springs beneath Khosura have flooded the ancient Lower City once populated by the less prosperous classes, but enriched the merchants: in addition to common salt, more valuable encrustations are collected and exported. Presently, only two tiers of the city are inhabited: the Middle City of the craftsmen and an increasing number of the beggared, and the Upper City of the merchant class, generally north of Vashanka's Market. The Upper City rises a level above the rest; at a lower height are the catacombs to the southwest (3–5), one level above the Middle City. The submerged Lower City lies two levels below the Middle and the surrounding escarpment: the place is now interdicted, for the former inhabitants, not allowed to escape the rising waves, are restless behind apparent calm.

All three mystery religions of Khosura maintain holy sites under the city, and the Kamnic Mysteries are entirely located



underground. The Undercity can be divided into four levels following the city's aboveground topography, and encompasses a total of eight known sectors distributed among them. (*These regions will be described in FO! #10 – Ig.*) References to the Undercity include level and region designations; hence, **UCIII/A-12** refers to Undercity Level III, Sector A, area 12. Most entrances to the Undercity are unknown to the general populace, and those that are, are either sealed or heavily guarded. These latter include the Plaza of Wailing (**3**, heavily undead-inhabited) and the gates in the northern walls of Vashanka's Market (**7**, barred and guarded; the secret door used by the men of Klaides the Merchant is unknown).

List of Entrances to the Underworld:

2. Bengazar's Columns, to **UCIII/C-2**.
3. The Plaza of Wailing, to **UCII/C-B-1**.
7. Vashanka's Market, to **UCII/A-9** (two entrances).
8. Row of Huts, **UCII/C-B-2**.
12. The Curved Sabre Caravanserai, to **UCIII/B-15**.
18. Beshket's Well, to **UCIII/A-5**.
19. Ostek's Plaza, to **UCI/A-1**.
21. Panthozar's Palace, to **UCI/A**.
22. The Shrine of Uthummaos, to **UCI/A-15**.
26. Ennoikos–Memfer Court, to **UCI/A-14**.

The Army: The regular forces of Khosura consist of 200 reserve Militias (War 1), 100 Footmen regulars (War 2), 80 Bowmen (War 2), 120 Light Cavalry (War 3, out on patrol), 100 Veterans (War 3) and 50 Elite palace guards (War 4). Patrols in the city and on the walls consist of 1d4*5 men, double if reinforced. 1 in 3 patrols are with bowmen. Secret agents of the Palace are commonplace and attentive, although corrupt.

Militia Reserves (200): Warrior 1; DC 7 (leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or sling 1d4+1.

Footmen (100): Warrior 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or spear 1d6.

Bowmen (80): Warrior 2; DC 7 (studded leather); Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or scimitar 1d8.

Light Cavalry (120): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8, longsword 1d8, lance 1d10 or 2*shortbow 1d6.

Veterans (100): Warrior 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or longsword 1d8.

Elites (50): Warrior 4; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk halberd 1d10+1.

The Gods and Ideologies

Uthummaos (LE): symbol is faintly glowing chasm in a dark field; weapons include priestal range and short swords. God of Empty Darkness; the cold breath speaking from dark chasms in a vaporous and gloomy voice. His mystery-religion is made up of a web of rituals, superstition and obscure, seemingly self-contradictory commandments, which believers must carry out exactly as prescribed. Priests of Uthummaos are strict, joyless men who dress in sombre shades. They make human sacrifices in complete secrecy and according to precise guidelines. High Priest Panthozar (Pr 11). Aboveground shrine at **22**. Undercity sanctum spans **UCI/A-15**, **UCII/A-16-18**, **UCIII/A-15-19**.

Ishtar (N): symbol is crossed bow and arrow; weapons are of any type, bows and one-handed swords favoured. The goddess of Love and War, as are her followers, is both gentle and merciless; always possessing a hidden edge when presenting as Love and an indecipherable gentleness and attractiveness as War. Priests are of either sex, but men may only advance to fifth level, and are not found in Khosura. High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars (Pr 6), recently succeeded Marcella Vil Amnir after her disappearance. They rule Vashanka's Market and an adjacent complex (**7, 11**); the old Undercity shrine at **UCIII/B-1-3** is now abandoned.

Derceto (CE): symbol is night-black disk surrounded with swirling tentacular protrusions; weapons include nets, crooked knives and swords. The Dark Mother dwells in the lightless hollows of the Underworld, but also appears in her fane in person or through progeny. This occasion is not always a pleasant one, as Derceto has been known to devour her callers after bizarre fertility rites. There are no female followers allowed, and both goddess and cult are characterised by definite misogynic tendencies. High Priest Bengazar has been left crippled after an underground orgy, and is cared for by her daughter Ivkin. No aboveground temple exists, but Bengazar's Columns (**2**) is their centre of activity. Undercity temple at **UCIII/C-5-14**.

The Kamnic Mysteries are non-affiliated, and have neither a formal organisation nor many followers, who are typically mages or illusionists. Their site of pilgrimage spans **UCIII/B-5** and **UCIV/B-4**. Those who have found the place and been initiated are allowed an indigo stripe in their turban. Imitators are identified and rooted out with unexpected vehemence, and this serves as the only common bond between the initiates.

Fedafuce (N): symbol is merchant's scales; all priestly weapons are allowed. Although the majority of religions are inherently inclined to simony, Fedafuce's priests have made it an art form, providing information, religious services, magical devices, and various fiscal transactions

regardless of the moral inclinations or even the declaration of religious devotion by their supplicants. Prices somewhat exceed the usual level, but various instalment plans, loans and other constructions balance out the inconvenience. Fedafuce's temples are also involved in usury and money-changing, as well as other monetary transactions. Bursar Caius ben Caius (Pr 5) is a recent arrival, with instructions to recover the costs of their operating licence and temple's establishment by any means necessary. Temple at 6.

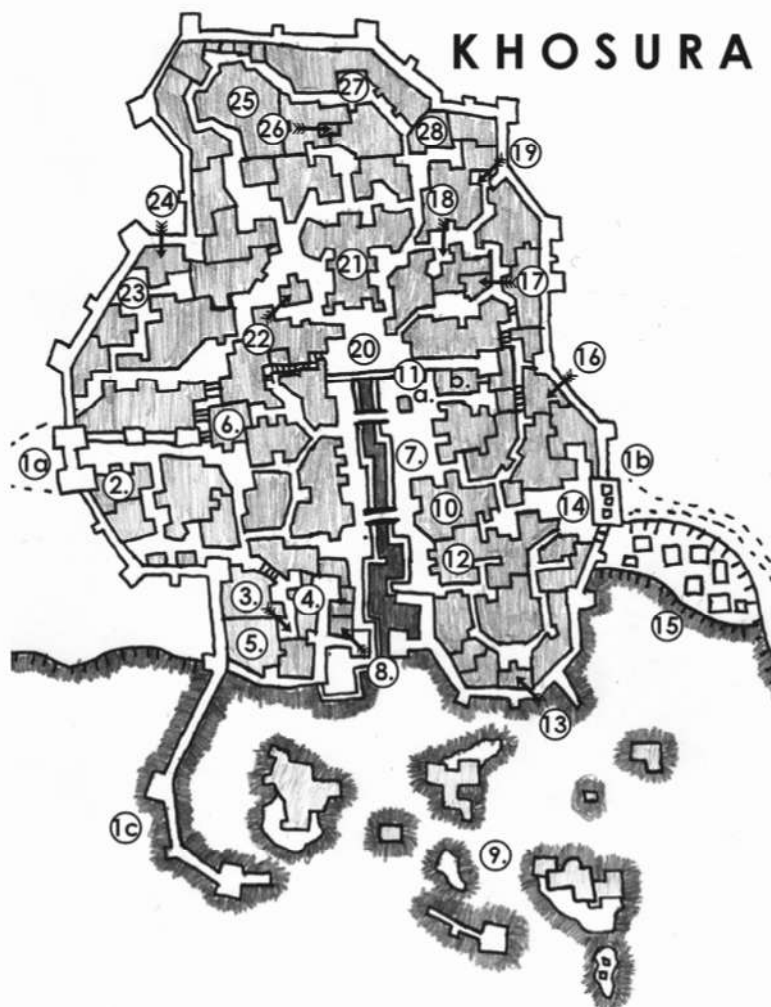
Mung (LE): symbol is golden sun in purple field. The state ideology of Imperial Mungor City, which has assumed some religious trappings for the sake of convenience, has set up its mission (13) in the slums to provide shelter and sustenance for the needy and downtrodden. Archdeacon Valsket (Thf 8) and two men.

Ishab-Lambar (LN): symbol is cobra; weapons are any but poisonous daggers are preferred. The followers of the new god of the southern nomads are restricted to members and servants of the Kheldzi trading family, all immigrants from Thasan. Leader is Patriarch Dedimos (Pr 8); they maintain their unlicensed, illicit temple in their fortified compound at 4 and shun contact with outsiders beyond that required by commerce.

Within the Walls

1. City Walls: Massive old fortifications with foundations dating back to Overking Srabmar, topped by the odd bastion and constantly patrolled. Toll at the gates is 1 gp per person + a 2 gp deposit, 1 gp per horse, 5 gp per loaded beast of burden and 2 gp per loaded slave. Travellers are recited the laws of Khosura when they enter, and are required to heed them while in the city:

- All must accept the jurisdiction of the Priest-King Panthozar and the god Uthummaos. The price for all crimes in the city is whipping followed by either enslavement in the salt evaporators [see 15], imprisonment in the Pits of Lamentation [UCIII/A-10], or exile into the Lower City [see 1c].
- None are allowed to break the religious monopolies of Uthummaos, Ishtar, Derceto, Fedafuce and Mung. Proselytism, open worship and even the display of non-licensed religious symbols is interdicted.
- Outlanders may not harm or lay hands on the animate or inanimate property of citizens, and may not do business with merchants who are not licensed by the city.
- Outlanders must openly wear a distinguishing mark during their stay, and return it upon leaving or as required by law. This sign is a small copper wafer imprinted with complex markings, and is provided in exchange for the 2 gp deposit.



Although there is no law preventing someone from taking the road around the city, any caught trying are apprehended by horsemen and charged with espionage. Citizenship in Khosura may be obtained in the Palace for an administrative fee of 100 gp and a sacrifice to one of the licensed religions. A trade license, allowing independent commercial activity costs 600 gp and requires the consent of the council of merchants (25), and a sacrifice before the statue of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells (20).

1a. Western Gate: 20 guards under Watch Captain Khejan, who is obsessed with the paranoid conviction that enemies plotting against him intend to sell him into slavery. There is a 40% probability that if armed strangers enter through his gate he will blackmail them with the accusation of smuggling in symbols of forbidden gods (if needed, by implanting evidence), then demand that they serve him if they wish to be cleared. Their first mission will be to observe whom they see talking in the evening by the Temple of Ishtar (11); the second is to assassinate Atar Ibash, innocent lantern-merchant. He then reports them as spies to Panthozar. Khejan is controlled by the charm of Ishab-Lambar's devotees, who use him to monitor unlicensed faiths attempting to infiltrate Khosura, looking especially for stray worshippers of Ellinger or the Red God. In his quarters Khejan

has 3d10 holy symbols of various deities. **Watch Captain Khejan:** War 6; hp 42; DC 3 (chainmail, shield, Dexterity); Atk scimitar 1d8+1; S 15, D 16, C 15, I 12, W 10, Ch 13.

1b. Eastern Gate: 30 guards under **Watch Captain Aikamtar**. The captain wears a closed full helmet with a bearded male head on both front and back, and tight clothes to mask features melted after an encounter with a bonesucker. He is a desperate follower of Derceto hoping for eventual healing. **Watch Captain Aikamtar:** War 4; hp 20; DC 1 (full plate, shield); Atk halberd 1d10; S 13, D 6, C 6, I 9, W 12, Ch 2.

1c. Lake Wall: A half-ruined stretch of wall reaching into the salt lake, used for executions. Sinners are whipped until they bleed, and then “exiled into the Lower City” – lowered into the salt waters until the coming of the dead, who claim the victim as one of their own. The middle bastion is used by city embalmers, eight swarthy men. **Ong the Mummifier**, the dark-faced overseer, is responsible for the preparation process through which the deceased are infused with salts before burial; he sells the mummified members and organs of the poor and childless as a side venture (5–15 gp as a talisman or incense; full body 50 gp). “Burial insurance” 25 gp (ostensibly to have someone watch the corpse and prevent the dead from “taking a few bites”); full salt infusion 100 gp, alchemic salt infusion 250 gp or 50 gp to go (a luxury in death for that beautiful sealwax-red complexion, “filtered through mummies for extra purity”). **Ong the Mummifier:** War 3; hp 17; DC 10; Atk poisoned dagger 1d4+poison; S 11, D 8, C 11, I 14, W, 12, Ch 12. **Embalmers (8):** HD 1; hp 9, 6, 6, 5, 7, 6, 3, 2; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4.

2. Bengazar’s Columns: Fortified house decorated with yellow ceramics, the major aboveground centre of Derceto’s worship. In place of the invalid Bengazar, his daughter **Ivkin** runs the store: as a woman, she is considered inferior by the faith, but as the only child of the high priest, she is required to carry on certain duties, a conflict leaving her with a rather distorted personality. There is a 60% chance she tries to arrange an accident for women who visit the place. The store is a place of testing, used to see if outsiders not born into the faith are worthy of admission to the mysteries. Such volunteers are required to stand in a narrow circular pit, into which naked slaves gradually lower heavy stone weights with a system of ropes and pulleys. Those who can support a “column” with their shoulders (open doors rolls) may gain extraordinary insight in the form of one-use spells or other benefits; to become a full member of the mystery, all five columns must be endured in succession (no break or recovery allowed, but retries are possible and after each column, the volunteer is allowed to leave the ordeal and try another day).

- 1st column, white alabaster: 2 rolls, failure 2d6 damage, success roll 1d6: 1 read magic, 2 create [black] water, 3 blessing, 4 cure lighter wounds (8+level hp, 25% morphs flesh into lumpy blackness), 5-6 nothing.
- 2nd column, red granite: 1 roll, failure 2d6 damage, success roll 1d4: 1 create unholy water, 2 create green slime, 3 augur (but 25% chance of hypnotic obsession when used), 4 nothing.
- 3rd column, grey porphyry: 2 rolls, failure 3d6 damage, success roll 1d6: 1 cure medium wounds (16+level hp, but see above), 2 slow poison, 3 augur (see above), 4 spiritual forces (conjures jingling sounds that attack as a warrior of user’s level for 4d4 damage, duration 1 round/level), 5 bestow curse, 6 nothing.
- 4th column, white salt: 2 rolls, failure 3d6 damage and black water rushes in – save vs. polymorph or turn into a zombie, success roll 1d3: 1 turn victim into green slime on touch, 2 cause serious wounds, 3 nothing.
- 5th column, dark basalt: merely a test of faith; as the column is lowered, a secret door slides open to reveal the shaft to the Temple of Derceto, **UCIII/C-2**.

Ivkin: Illusionist 4; hp 14; DC 8 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4; S 10, D 16, C 7, I 15, W 14, Ch 12; 200 electrum, 650 gp ring. Spells: 1 – *auditory illusion, hypnotize, phantasmic forces, shimmering spray*; 2 – *improved phantasmic forces, mirror images*. **Slave Cultists of Derceto (8):** War 2; hp 16, 6, 4, 9, 11, 6, 7, 14; DC 9 (buckler), Atk scimitar 1d8 or net (entanglement, save vs. petrification).

3. The Plaza of Wailing: In this dark plaza surrounded by high buildings and narrow terraces, mourners take their farewells from the dead, who, after being wrapped in linen strips and mummified with salt (c.f. **1c**), are lowered into a well leading to the catacombs (**UCII/C-B-1**) by means of a pulley mechanism. Wailing beggars 5 per gp, self-flagellants 2 gp each, self-mutilators 20 gp and up each, executions in honour of the deceased 50 gp each (30% probability; if there are none, they will get some for about 80 gp each...). At night, eight guards stand watch over the well lest something escape.

4. Kheldzi Trading House: Khosura branch of the merchant family from Thasan, a bare and uninviting building with tall, fortified walls and narrow arrow-slits. The family mainly exports salts and sulphites to Thasan and imports grain and other foodstuffs into Khosura. The men are all outlander followers of Ishab-Lambar from servants to family, and basically spies, with a mission to uproot and destroy members of religions proscribed by their deity, primarily Ellinger and the Red God. In organisation and demeanour, they most resemble Fred Phelps and followers. The head of the family is the **Patriach Dedimos**, followed in rank by his sons **Trasymakhos** and **Mene-laion**. A mage in their service, **Ishmas Tereas**, has placed charms on multiple notable citizens, including Watch

Captain Khejan (1a) and Ujef, keeper of the Curved Sabre (12). The illicit temple of Ishab-Lambar is a window-less brick-walled room opening from the warehouse, behind an old, empty crate; the Chest of Sanctities lies before a black cobra symbol flanked by braziers. Touching it brings forth two **fire crows**. The chest contains a proph-ecy (fatwah) by Ishab-Lambar against Khosura, a poisoned *dagger* +1 used for ritual purposes, a *plate mail* +1 with an engraved cobra, a *potion of cure disease* and 9 doses of snake venom.

Patriarch Dedimos: Pr 8; hp 43; DC 10; Atk poisoned dagger 1d4+poison; S 15, D 13, C 16, I 12, W 15, Ch 14. Spells: 1 – *commanding word, cure lighter wounds, detect magic*; 2 – *augur, chant, paralyze person*; 3 – *curse, dispel magic, pray*; 4 – *divine, sticks to snakes*.

Trasymakhos: War 3; hp 19; DC -2 (plate mail, shield, Dexterity); Atk trident 1d6+1 or throwing dagger 1d4+poison; S 12, D 18, C 7, I 15, W 10, Ch 12.

Menelaion: War 1; hp 4; DC 3 (banded, shield); Atk trident 1d6+1 or throwing dagger 1d4+poison; S 9, D 13, C 14, I 11, W 11, Ch 7; *healing potion*.

Ishmas Tereas: Mag 3; hp 8; DC 7 (Dexterity); Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 11, D 17, C 12, I 13, W 10, Ch 11; *dust of black widows* (deadly poison). Spells: 1 – *charm person* *2, *identify object, shielding*; 2 – *forget*.

Guards (12): War 2; hp 4, 12, 11, 14, 9, 7, 17, 9, 20, 12, 12; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk trident 1d6+1.

Fire Crows (2): HD 4; hp 20, 14; DC 6; Atk beak 1d3; Spec *fireball* 3/day (4d6), immune to fire.

5. The Bronze Colossus: The last remains of an ancient bronze statue serve as a sign for this exclusive caravan-serai, the most expensive in Khosura. As listed in *The Proclamations of Eidark the Gastronome*, "...offering four-person rooms for a rejuvenating night of rest 3 to 10 gp; suite with splendid view of the Lake Wall 15 gp; ask for schedule of whippings and subaqueations from proprietor Kummom Kmetri. Enjoy zither play in charmingly refurbished common room, zither girls 5 gp and up, some priestesses of Ishtar; or try the local intoxicants of favor, opium 20 gp, thag (a Khosuran specialty served in slender copper tubes) 45 gp, occasional availability of Blue-22, 100 gp. Cook serves avant-garde interpretation of geometric cuisine; 90 gp tasting menu includes a salad of reed buds,

needlebeak confit served up in a salt crust, the pyramidals we all know and enjoy with a subtle Khosura savoir, as well as complimentary thag. Enjoy a casual stroll over the Lake Wall and chat with the mummifiers, or mingle with the locals on Vashanka's Market. 🍷🍷" (Note: while this information is omitted in the *Proclamations*, there is always a 75% chance of 1d3 secret agents among the guests or staff. **Kummom Kmetri** [Thief 1, 1 Hp], a reed-thin, urbane man, is a follower of Mung and heavily in debt with them.)



cation or counterfeiting.

6. The Temple of Fedafuce:

Opened five years ago in the former Mnakkim Dor Trading House, riotous banners announce the deals and opportunities of the week, and **Bursar Caius ben Caius** is always happy to see you! The most popular financial service is perhaps the sale of certificates in the form of silk strips which may be easily carried in clothes or perhaps a turban without detection. The certificates are redeemable at any of the god's temples and of course many other locations; available in values of 20, 50 and 100 gp at a surcharge of 10%, they are absolutely secure from dupli-

Special sales every week! Roll d6:

1. Divinations 10% off!
2. Healing and potions 10% off!
3. Potion lottery: for every purchase over 250 gp, we add in an extra (d12)...
1-6: vial of holy water!
7-8: healing potion!
9: balm of relieving paralysis!
10-11: 4 doses of opium essence!
12: super healing potion!
4. Holy water 25% off, unholy water 50%! (Or the reverse.)
5. Seasonal incense sale, all must go! 5 sp per stick (50% off, but 25% mouldy).
6. One-use priest spells 25% off!

There is also a 1% probability of a "You are our 1000th customer!" extravaganza each buying visit.

Over the altar hang gemstones in pans of golden scale (1000 + 500 gp). The treasury holds 900 gp, 7 gems (6*50 gp, 1*5000 gp ruby), 8 *healing potions*, 3 *super-healing potions*, *potion of polymorph*, *scroll with mage mouth*, *lightning bolt*, *vampire touch*, a two-handed *Sword* +1, 340 sticks of incense, and 8

doses of opium. **Bursar Caius ben Caius:** Pr 5; hp 29; DC 10; Atk flail 1d6+2; S 16, D 10, C 9, I 12, W 11, Ch 15; 2* holy water, *potion of haste*, *potion of fire breath*, *medallion of ESP*. Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *cure lighter wounds*, *command word*; 2 – *augur**2, *paralyze person*; 3 – *cure disease*; Bonus one-use: *command word*, *cure lighter wounds*, *cause critical wounds*. **Lesser Priests (2):** Pr 3; hp 16, 17; DC 10; Atk flail 1d6+1. Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *cure lighter wounds*; 2 – *augur/paralyze person*. **Temple Guards (6):** War 2; hp 10, 6, 15, 17, 17, 7; DC 6 (studded leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8.

7. Vashanka's Market: The market at the foot of the Upper City, bisected by the channel of salt water that emerges from barred gates in the northern wall, enjoys the special blessing of Ishtar and is under her protection. One fifth of the taxes taken from the market go to Ishtar's coffers, and the priestesses may take from the wares as they please – considered a special honour by most. In place of the city guards stand amazons (mostly next to Vashanka's Mausoleum to the north, so the southern parts are less safe); usually 10 spearwomen and 10 archers by day and 10 spearwomen by night (not including the guard at the Temple of Ishtar or the inner guardians of the Mausoleum); see **11a** for statistics. 20% chance of pick-pocket attempt, 20% of priestess encounter. Each visit to the city there is also a 20% chance for 1d6*10 amazon pilgrims to be present. At nighttime, the channel is hazardous to probe as there are always 2d4*5 **giant rats**; in the deserted square and the slum area to the south, 10% of 2d8 **cultists** hunting for sacrifices (1-4 Uthummaos, 5-6 Derceto). There are two entrances to the Undercity at **UCII/A-9**: the gates in the wall (these are covered by thick grilles and do not open; there are always at least four amazons guarding them), and a less known secret door opening by the bastion to the east – used by the men of Klaides the Merchant (**10**). **Giant Rats (2d4*5):** HD 1-1; hp 2, 4, 6, 4, 3, 1, 3, 4, 3, 6, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 4, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3, 3, 6, 3, 4, 7, 2, 5, 4, 2, 2, 5, 6, 7, 5, 4, 1, 2, 3, 7; DC 5; Atk bite 1d6+disease. **Cultists (2d8):** War 2; hp 13, 2, 9, 15, 16, 15, 4, 15, 19, 11, 12, 9, 9, 17, 20, 15; DC 9 (shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or net entanglement (save vs. petrification).

8. Row of Huts: A row of squalid huts, some multi-story, clinging to a stretch of the city wall. A slum area mostly populated by beggars and other human trash; they don't accept anyone who can't demonstrate a few dirty tricks. A secret door from the second floor of one of the shack leads to **UCII/C-B-2. Riff-Raff (30):** HD 1-1; hp 2, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 2, 1, 3, 7, 4, 3, 1, 1, 3, 2, 6, 5, 5, 1, 2, 3, 7, 7, 6, 1, 3, 4, 6, 3; DC 9; Atk club 1d6 or dagger 1d4.

9. Lake: The salt-water lake covers an area of approximately 180 by 120 stadion (18*12 km) ringed by high escarpments. Its smooth surface is a dirty grey; at the site of the Lower City, there are islets with ruined structures and remains of walls, formerly looming above the ancient slums. Against all official efforts to keep the place off

limits (even owning a skiff is a punishable offence), these places remain inhabited by men and monsters. The waters are populated by the dead. On every travel by skiff, there is a 1:3 probability of an encounter with zombies and a further 1:6 of running into shoals. **Zombies (3d8):** HD 2; hp 11, 9, 12, 11, 10, 6, 12, 11, 10, 12, 14, 16, 9, 10, 6, 13, 17, 15, 13, 13, 11, 13, 4, 11, 13, 9, 14, 8, 15, 14; DC 8; Atk claws 1d8.

10. The Trading House of Klaides the Merchant: A labyrinthine building complex of warehouses used by a number of parties from the authorities to lesser merchants; constant bustle of activity in and out during the day, guard of 20 men at the gates during the night. Warehouse space from 40 to 350 gp a month depending on size and access. The single owner of storage space is **Klaides the Merchant**: as a follower of Pragmatic Incrementalism, he takes money where he sees it. In addition to letting storage, he sponsors a robber band based in the Undercity (**UCII/A-7**); stolen goods are stored in disused warehouse branches (some extremely hard to get to due to inter-level navigation challenges), treasure hoard in secret abandoned room: 2000 electrum, 400 gold, 50 platinum, silver ewer 200 gp, holy symbol of Ishtar 350 gp, *potion of slow poison*, *wand of mystic missiles* (16 charges), *bracers* DC 6. **Klaides the Merchant:** War 7; hp 66; DC 3 (*chainmail* +1, shield); Atk scimitar +2 1d8+2; S 13, D 10, C 17, I 11, W 15, Ch 10. **Guards (20):** War 2; hp 19, 5, 6, 19, 11, 14, 6, 19, 14, 17, 15, 13, 8, 4, 10, 18, 6, 12, 10; DC 9 (shield); scimitar 1d8.

11. Temple Complex: Two buildings, a mausoleum and a temple, form the Temple Complex of Ishtar; by ancient right guarded by amazons instead of city authorities.

11a. Vashanka's Mausoleum: The rectangular mausoleum of the legendary amazon queen who had given the city its laws was constructed when the original tomb was moved here from the Undercity (**UCIII/B-3**). The walls are brass latticework through which visitors may peer into the dark interior (although not the inner shrine, which is only open to the eyes of women); the steps are a favourite resting place for pilgrims and beggars. The outer perimeter is guarded by 10 spearwomen and 10 archers by day and 10 spearwomen by night. The inner shrine is decorated by a sum total of 14,000 gp worth of gemstones and gold jewelry. If an Ishtar-worshipper comes here in pilgrimage for the first time in her life, she gains one one-use spell of Ishtar's choosing per character level (however, these may not be more powerful than she would be able to cast as a priest of equivalent power). Vashanka's coffin holds the scant remains of the warrior queen, an *amazon spear* +3 (only usable by women), a *chain shirt* +3, a *shield* +2 and an *amulet of life* (5 charges remaining). However, if the inner shrine is violated in any way, five otherworldly **amazon guardians** appear to defend it from harm. **Amazon Spearwomen (10):** Amazon 3; hp 25, 23, 20, 16, 15, 16, 18, 20, 27, 14;

DC 1 (chain shirt, shield, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6+1 or javelin 1d6+1. **Amazon Archers (10):** Amazon 3; hp 14, 26, 29, 23, 24, 8, 29, 24, 16, 11; DC 3 (studded leather, Amazon, collective psionic); Atk 2*longbow 1d6+1 or scimitar 1d8+1. **Guardians of the Shrine (5):** Amazon 6; hp 50, 52, 51, 42, 42, 57; DC -5 (chain shirt +1, shield, Amazon, collective psionic, Dexterity); Atk 2*longsword +1 1d8+3; S 18, D 18, C 18, I 18, W 18, Ch 18.

11b. The Temple of Ishtar: A squat building painted red and gold, guarded by day by 15 spearwomen and 15 archers, and by night by 15 spearwomen. Supplicants are only allowed to approach the idol on their knees. The flames of the brazier burning before the simple form have the power to dissolve all magical or mundane bonds if the petitioner's feelings are heartfelt. Women undergoing this rite may receive the protection of the priestesses from attempts to reinstate these ties. Otherwise, the most typical rites concern marriage or lovers' bond, whether to be confirmed or cancelled. The head of the temple is **High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars**, who succeeded her more experienced predecessor **Marcella Vil Amnir** after her unusual disappearance (Marcella was slain by cultists of Uthummaos on an errand to the Undercity: her spirit haunts **UCIV/B-2**). The sudden advancement in rank has brought little happiness to the new High Priestess, but it has brought the weight of responsibilities: she is especially concerned that the holy relics may be stolen from the Mausoleum, an idea which makes her see every stranger, especially strange men, as a potential thief. As she has learned via divinations that "Marcella Vil Amnir walks the depths below the city, but may never return to the surface without help", she spends much time exploring the passages of the Undercity with her entourage.

High Priestess Mennen Reimi al-Vars: Pr 6; hp 26; DC 1 [-1] (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity, [collective psionic]); Atk scimitar 1d8; S 9, D 18, C 13, I 13, W 12, Ch 17; Spells: 1 – *blessing, light, detect magic, cure lighter wounds*; 2 – *augur, detect charming, paralyze person*; 3 – *heal blindness, remove curse*; Bonus one-use: *cure lighter wounds*2, command word, cure heavy wounds, divine*.

Second Priestess Annai Delsadora: Pr 3; hp 19; DC 9 [7] (collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; S 11, D 10, C 10, I

12, W 14, Ch 15; Spells: 1 – *blessing, command word, cure lighter wounds, detect evil*; 2 – *augur*.

Priestesses (7): Pr 2; hp 10, 3, 8, 9, 3, 11, 7; DC 9 [7] (collective psionic); Atk spear 1d6; Spells: *blessing, cure lighter wounds*.

Amazon Spearwomen (15): hp 18, 26, 20, 24, 18, 12, 9, 24, 16, 21, 14, 13, 26, 27 and **Amazon Archers (15):** hp 19, 21, 16, 15, 17, 18, 22, 23, 9, 12, 18, 17, 13, 24, 18 are as at **11a**.

12. The Curved Sabre Caravanserai: The Curved Sabre is located in a bad neighbourhood, but it is cheap and



(inside, at least) a safe establishment. Proprietor **Ujef**, a dark, thick man, has fallen under the magical charm of Ishab-Lambar's worshippers, and reports everything of interest to them. From the cellars, stairs lead down to the Undercity and a small arena (**UCIII/B-14-15**) where bets are placed on gladiators by the cream of society. An entire wing of the caravanserai had been walled off on Panthozar's orders fifteen years ago in memory of the traveller who had slept there and attempted to take his life. The assassin still survives as a **wraith**, and every year, he takes four of the Caravanserai's guests as eternal

punishment for the four wounds he inflicted on the priest-king (2% a PC will be next). If the wraith is defeated, Panthozar will raze the Cara-vanserai and all adjacent houses to the ground, and have every single inhabitant or traveller in them tortured to death and reanimated as zombies. **Ujef:** War 2; hp 15; DC 10; Atk dagger 1d4+2; S 16, D 7, C 18, I 13, W 11, Ch 10. **Wraith:** HD 5+3; hp 18; DC 4; Atk touch 1d6+LVL; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, powerless in sunlight.

13. The Temple of Mung: In the slums stands a former warehouse, only one step better than the stinking insulae that surround it. **Archdeacon Valsket** has acted as a representative and patron for the poor, forging them into an army of spies and warriors that would eventually gain Khosura for the sinister purposes of his progressive ideology. At all times, the "orphans of Mung" – beggars, never-do-wells and ragged idealists – are in evidence; there are only two guards, both taciturn foreigners. Valsket, a soft-handed, rosy-faced Scientologist type, always finds time to preach the doctrines – the Empire's civilising mission to lift the poor into humanity, end poverty and

create a new type of man. However, he is currently occupied by more immediate concerns, which may be interesting to mercenary types:

- He has received ambiguous hints that another proselytising religion may be present in the city without license: he would pay handsomely to have them found and destroyed.
- He knows of the Undercity but not its exact layout and entrances; he will pay 3-500 gp per level for maps and 50 gp each for the location of entrances (he already knows of **19**, Ostek's Plaza, as well as **3**, The Plaza of Wailing).

The temple's funds are found in a compartment behind the symbol over the main altar, a radiant golden sun in a purple field: this location is widely known and contains 600 sp, 250 electrum and 120 gp. The real treasures are behind this false front in another space, 1400 gp and 1d3 reports from foreign lands. **Archdeacon Valsket**: Thf 8; hp 36; DC 7 (leather, Dexterity); Atk *snake tongue shortsword* +1 1d6+1+poison (double damage on rolls of 1 and 20) or thrown dagger 1d4+poison; *ring of spell containment* (with *detect evil*, *charm person* and *paralyze person* loaded), 6**healing potion*. **Tolvel and Flink, Guards**: War 4; hp 23, 28; DC 2 (plate mail, shield); Atk battleaxe 1d8+1.

14. Slave Market: A small market composed of several corners, arcades and odd overhangs. Merchants typically lie in the shades and announce their products to passersby, although some slaves, especially the more educated, are selling themselves. Children and old people 30-50 gp, men and women 40-70 gp, strong men 70-80 gp, fighting men 70-180 gp, in each case 20% probability of receiving a special slave (teacher, philosopher, princess etc.).

15. Salt Evaporators: The evaporators operate as a closed-off slave colony encircled by sheer cliffs, and may only be approached from a side gate in the city wall. Salt is produced by dipping coarse cloth into the waters, drying them under the sun, and then scraping off the salt. The work is filthy and hot, the salt dust stings hellishly, and sometimes the dead in the lake will yank in a slave pulling at a heavier cloth. There are some 200 slaves and 50 guards; the punishment for escape attempts is execution for the culprit [see **1c**, but the sentence is carried out here] and whipping for his entire barracks – although snitches may be spared this fate. Those who are useful spies for the guards may be accepted as overseers. The guards are lead by **Bahlul ibn Ish**; he and his toadies are deeply involved in salt embezzlement, and have the slaves make up for the missing quotas. Bahlul is a member of Derceto's cult and provides them with a steady supply of slaves. **Bahlul ibn Ish**: War 3; hp 24; DC 4 (chainmail, shield); Atk flail 1d6+2; S 16, D 13, C 15, I 13, W 13, Ch 12.

16. The Palace of Anvin Ishambarg: The septagonal minarets and terraces forming this palace complex belong

to **Anvin Ishambarg**, the priest-king's closest confidant. As a powerful magic-user, he can trace back an unbroken chain of apprenticeship to Lankwiler the Great; in his younger days, he wandered the lands of Thasan and the southern jungles in pursuit of knowledge that ultimately made him wealthy beyond measure, and returned a three-fold wasted youth. In addition to human guards, his quarters are defended by a **shadow guardian**; moreover, he can call a **vulture demon** to come to his bidding. When Anvin Ishambarg is available (1:3), he can read from the stars or sell magic items. His current goal is to acquire the burial shroud of Ymmu M'Kursa, said to be hidden somewhere in the Undercity: this quest has recently been announced by Uthummaos, and the opportunities of benefiting from the dark god's benevolence has drawn the attention of many – Ishambarg and Taramis, Daughter of Zafar (**17**) the most prominent among them.

Items for sale:

- alchemical salts (magnetic, mummy, southern star, harmonic, sulphurous etc.): 1d12*10 gp
- potion of hasten: 440 gp
- potion of fire breath: 440 gp
- Mage scroll (lightning bolt): 600 gp
- Mage scroll (reanimate dead, flame charm, summon monster C): 2400 gp
- illusionist scroll (shadow conjuration): 1100 gp
- longsword +1: 2000 gp
- chain shirt+2: 2200 gp

Anvin Ishambarg, Kettoni Ei: Mag 9; hp 23; DC 6 (*bracers* DC 6); Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 9, D 13, C 11, I 15, W 15, Ch 11; *wand of lightning* (22 charges), *ring of wizarding IV*, *potion of soul entrapment*, symbol of Uthummaos; Spells: 1 – *charm person*, *detect magic*, *identify object*, *mystic missile**2, *read magic*, *shielding*, *floating disk*; 2 – ESP, *hypnotizing pattern*, *invisibility*, *levitation*, *mirror images*, *locate object*, *strength*; 3 – *clairvoyance*, *reanimate dead*, *ball of fire*, *gaseous form*, *hasten*, *paralyze person*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *suggest*; 4 – *dimension door*, *flame charm*, *flame shield*, *less puissant globular field of invulnerability*, *curse removal*, *wall of ice*; 5 – *contact distant plane*, *dreamsending*, *quest*; Bonus one-use: *flame shield*, *mirror images*.

Vulture Demon: HD 8; hp 49; DC 0; Atk 2*claws 1d6+1 and beak 1d8+1; Spec immune to mind-affecting and electricity, ½ damage from acid, cold and fire, MR 50%, summon vulture demon 20%; Spells: *mystic missile**3, *detect good*.

Shadow Guardian: HD 7; hp 28; DC 2; Atk touch 1d6 Str and paralysis; Spec +1 to hit, lifesteal once per day (save vs. death or drop unconscious at 0 hp and roll system shock to survive), *silence* 3/day, turned as spectre.

Guards (30): War 2; hp 19, 13, 14, 14, 5, 8, 7, 11, 13, 13, 17, 10, 14, 12, 9, 7, 10, 10, 11, 7, 14, 12, 8, 4, 3, 10, 17, 6, 3, 10; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8.

17. The House of Taramis: A gaudy palace with a multi-level interior garden: after several decades of abandonment, it has become the home of **Taramis, Daughter of Zafar**, or, as less charitably mentioned, The Whore of Khosura. A proud, hawk-nosed and black-eyed beauty, Taramis is a new face in the city and the mysteries of Uthummaos: a rising star with ambitions, it is said, to become second in the hierarchy. Only the oldest among the living may recall another palace and another Taramis, a girl just as beautiful and just as bound to sin: she who had loved the priest-king Panthozar in his younger days, but was entombed in the Undercity when she took another lover (c.f. **UCIII/B-3**). In any case, Taramis will not foment open rebellion: ideally, she plans to regain favour with god and high-priest as well as to remove those who stand in her way. The rumours about the burial shroud of Ymmu M'Kursa and its significance to Uthummaos may become instrumental in fulfilling these ambitions; her wealth, wiles and youthful body are stepping stones in their pursuit. As Taramis does not trust locals for fear of treachery, outlanders would become ideal accomplices in her schemes, used and rewarded as appropriate. Taramis is guarded by 9 black slaves and a **mechanical servant**. **Taramis, Daughter of Zafar:** Mag 7; hp 22; DC -1 (*bracers* DC 6, *cloak* +1, powers of Uthummaos); Atk throwing dagger 1d4+poison (2*4d6 Hp); S 8, D 13, C 11, I 17, W 14, Ch 16; *dust of sneezing and choking*; Spells: 1 – *charm person**2, *detect magic*, *mystic missile*, *slumber*, *unoculated servant*; 2 – *ESP*, *invisibility*, *knockspell*, *indomitable hideous laughter*; 3 – *reanimate dead*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *paralyze person*; 4 – *charm monster*. **Mechanical Servant:** HD 5 MAX; hp 40; DC 2; Atk two-handed sword 1d10+2; Spec ½ damage from fire, cold and electricity, S 18. **Black Slaves (9):** War 2; hp 13, 14, 13, 18, 12, 12, 8, 14, 13; DC 6 (chain shirt); Atk morning star 2d4+1; S 16.

18. Beshket's Well: This deep well of clean water is fed by an underground lake, courtesy of a lesser-known demon lord. In thanks for the waters, a sacrifice of strong youths and rare spices is performed six times a year. The well leads to **UCI/A-7** and eventually to **UCIII/A-5**. An ancient beggar missing his left hand, **Naram-men-Khemtri** will tell the well's legend for 2 gp; for 15, he will *augur* from it and for 80, *divine*; however, while he has a 100% chance for an answer, he likes to distort truth into falsehood. In the evening, he often descends through the secret passages of the Undercity to Beshket's Lake, there casting his treasures into the waters. Naram-men-Khemtri is a powerful efreet, bound by his lord to guard the well and deliver the sacrifices; out of 333, he has so far managed to obtain 212. Since death to him means six years of torment on his home world, he will offer a wish if close to defeat. **Naram-men-Khemtri, Efreet:** HD 10; hp 45; DC 2; Atk huge scimitar 3d8; Spec immune to normal fires, -1 per die for magical; Spells: 3/day: *flame sphere*, *invisibility*, *lesser creation*, *wall of fire*; 1/day: *flame shield*, *gaseous form*, *greater creation*, *spectral forces*.

19. Ostek's Plaza: Dusty and usually abandoned square surrounded by derelict buildings. A row of defaced statues standing in old alcoves hide a secret door, one of the better-known entrances to the Undercity, **UCI/A-1**. Street urchin **Kefar Sami** (Thf 1, hp 4) is often found playing here among the rubble; shaking trespassers down for some coins ("My daddy has told me it is fitting to give to beggars") and, if threatened, remarking that his disappearance would be noted and investigated. An abandoned octagonal tower looming over the plaza has an open gallery at the top; at night, a horned human skull sits on a stone pedestal, surrounded by braziers holding dust and ashes. Whispering of demonic power in exchange for evil deeds, the skull is also an oracle, but its prophecy is only one, of Khosura the Cyclical. If harmed in any way, the skull shrieks, calling from their dark niches the membrane-winged, deformed **ulyuleng** (and potentially alerting the city watch on the walls). **Ulyuleng (5):** HD 5; hp 23, 17, 21, 17, 27; DC 3; Atk 3*tentacles 1d6 nonlethal damage; Special immune to cold and mind-affecting, melts in sunlight. **Demon-Skull:** HD 5; hp 30; DC 0; Atk telekinesis (save vs. wands); immune to cold and mind-affecting.

Khosura the Cyclical: "In changeless change Khosura dreams of itself: of its men and gods, palaces and markets, gate to gate and plaza to plaza. Those in the dream greet you and you greet them, passing by and leaving. Yet you are gone but they remain; walking, merrymaking, loving, falling and ever returning. In years, they will all return, as they already have. For they are: the dead."

20. Parapets: The plaza before Panthozar's palace overlooks Vashanka's market and the Middle City. The palace guard and the secret police are always watchful here, and there are frequent military drills. A short flight of steps ascends to a platform before a stone face: the haughty gaze, the cruel lips and the carefully curled beard lend an air of severity to this image of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells, the last remains of a great colossus. The platform is used to perform sacrifices to the benefit of the city: only citizens are allowed to do so, and then only over a value of 500 gp total and in the presence of at least three representatives of the four mysteries (in practice, this almost always means Uthummaos, Ishtar and Derceto).

21. Panthozar's Palace: A compact collection of cupolas and minarets supported by walls of porphyry and alabaster. The interior spaces are a maze of antechambers, zigzagging halls, prayer rooms and small offices. Locations of renown include the Font of Delights, the Portal of Enlightenment and the Conventicle of Judges. Among the cupolas, on a flat roof, is a small, overgrown garden, diligently watered

but never visited. By day, there is a constant bustle of slaves, officials, scribes and petitioners; by night, the place feels curiously deserted, although there are constant patrols throughout. Storage, cells for all but the most important prisoners, and various other rooms are located underground, in the south-western quadrant of **UCI-III/A**. The Palace is the seat of the **Priest-King Panthozar, High Priest of Uthummaos** on Fomalhaut. Panthozar, savant of occult mysteries, stands straight and tall, his habit a severe black, gaze burning with sinister intensity. Although appearing middle-aged, he has ruled Khosura for 70 years, first with uncompromising terror, then with a subtle network of balances and counterbalances among the powerful and influential. In his throne room, he is inscrutable; outside it, reclusive. The towering western wing of the palace is set aside for his personal use and alchemical experiments, and interdicted to all others. Here are the reinvigorative salt mixtures and other components which, through frequent application, have given the priest-king his strange vigour and certain extraordinary capabilities. Panthozar is an initiate of the Kamnic Mysteries. **Panthozar, Priest-King and High Priest of Uthummaos**: Pr 11, mummified; hp 72; DC 2 [-2] (mummification, *bracers* DC 16, [*ring of force shield* 10 r/day]); Atk *shortsword* -1 1d6-1 or 2*claws 1d12+rot; Spec fear, mummy rot, +1 to hit and ½ damage, immune to mind-affecting spells, +1 damage per dice from magical fire; S 15, D 11, C 18, I 15, W 17, Ch 15; *flask of spirits* (1d6 ghosts), *priest scroll (reanimate dead, commune, travel to other planes)*, *tripod of conjuration (summon monster A*3 and summon monster C stored)*; Spells: 1 – *detect magic**2, *detect good*, *command word**2, *create unholy water*, *protection from good*; 2 – *augur**2, *enthrall*, *paralyze person*, *silence*, *godhammer*; 3 – *reanimate dead**2, *bestow curse* (worms and beetles), *dispel magic*, *speak with dead*; 4 – *divination*, *protection from good* 10' radius, *sticks to snakes* (11 snakes, 55% poisonous); 5 – *death ray**2.

22. The Shrine of Uthummaos: The aboveground shrine is a simple rectangular slab of dark stone with the air of a mausoleum. The single gate is closed by heavy iron bars. The uninitiated may not enter, and sacrifices are taken by the priests through the bars with the remark that it will be up to Uthummaos to reward the donator or not. The shrine is overseen by the crafty **Armentak**, a wizened old priest with 6 pale novices. Within the shrine, there are black-silver decorations to a value of 10,000 gp: candlesticks, round pitchers, faded and dusty mirrors etc. If a melee develops within the shrine, every intruder must roll a save vs. charm or turn weapons against him- or herself. After every casualty, there is a 10% chance that Uthummaos fills the body with his power, animating it at the 10th level of fighting ability and 18 in all ability scores: this warrior is unnaturally swift and his eyes burn with golden fire. **Armentak**: Pr 4; hp 24; DC 10; Atk scimitar 1d8+1+poison; S 16, D 14, C 16, I 10, W 11, Ch 4; Spells: 1 – *blessing*, *command word*, *create unholy water*; 2 – *augur*, *paralyze person*. **Novices (6)**: War 2; hp 17, 4, 12, 16, 8, 8; DC 4

(breastplate, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8. **The Champion of Uthummaos**: War 10; hp 95; DC as previously -3; Atk 2*previous weapon+2; Spec MR 30%; S 18, D 18, C 18, I 18, W 18, Ch 18.

23. Ulwar's Plaza: This plaza is where caravans passing through Khosura can saddle down and rest. The entire area falls outside city jurisdiction (and is legally not a part of it); the city guard do not interfere in outlanders' affairs and therefore, justice is customarily served by the collective judgement of the caravan leaders who are present at a given time (1d4-1). Brawls and knifings are commonplace; enslavement and robbery occur with regularity.

24. The Caravanserai of Balbinus the Accursed: An abandoned three-story warehouse converted into a caravanserai, with a huge common room spanning all levels, galleries for drink and discussion, and only a small number of luxury rooms at the top – most guests sleep with their animals on Ulwar's Plaza. **Balbinus the Accursed** is a non-citizen; he has fled here after he was afflicted by The Stalking Curse in the ruined city of Skandalais: periodically, bands of invisible fighters come to slay him. So far, surrounding himself with crowds has offered respite; nonetheless, Balbinus sleeps most uneasily and has spent a small fortune on exorcisms, so far to no effect. **Balbinus the Accursed**: War 3; hp 10; DC 9; Atk 2*composite longbow 1d6 or shortsword 1d6.

25. The Council of Merchants: A consortium of the six most powerful trading houses in Khosura, responsible for directing the salt trade as well as levies. Five members of the council come from Khosura's oldest families, and live in the surrounding buildings; the sixth, the Kheldzi family (4) are nominal members, but do not participate and are shunned by the council as they shun them. Thus, the five families and their heads are as follows:

- Memfer: **Kathaggosh Memfer** (Thf 3; collects mirrors in vain attempt to find the one that shows him in the most perfect light)
- Olyani: **Ruhani ibn Olyani** (War 5; connections to several nomad khans from the west)
- Zosimos: **Arthragos Zosimos** (Thf 7; a fascination with death has resulted in a curious affliction that has turned him almost reptilian)
- Tastaxares: **Metromaxos Tastaxares** (Illusionist 6; loses himself in his own illusions after work)
- Ennoikos: **Wos Ennoikos** (Thf 4; hairy, corpulent man masking the stench of his sweat with abundant oils and perfumes)

The rotating leadership is currently held by Wos Ennoikos. The council's mentality is traditionalist to the extreme, and views all new religions as a severe threat. They would pay generously for dirt on them, and maybe even for the demonstrative harassment or murder of a few adherents

(although there is a 35% they will turn on the assassins afterwards). Their communal chest holds funds for joint action: poison pin trap, 1000 electrum, 5000 gp, 4*400 gp gems. This also contains their symbol, a 900 gp sceptre. The council building is guarded by 20 men, but more are nearby and patrols in the Upper City are also frequent.

Kathaggosh Memfer: Thf 3; hp 21; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8; S 15, D 8, C 17, I 15, W 16, Ch 10.

Ruhani ibn Olyani: War 5; hp 35; DC 5 (*chain shirt +1*); Atk *flail +1* 1d6+1 or 2*shortbow 1d6; S 12, D 9, C 9, I 12, W 16, Ch 16.

Arthragos Zosimos: Thf 7; hp 25; DC 5 (*leather, cloak +3*); Atk longsword 1d8; S 15; D 14, C 7, I 16, W 10, Ch 4; *potion of super-healing*.

Metromaxos Tastaxares: Illusionist 6; hp 17; DC 8; Atk dagger 1d4+poison; S 14, D 16, C 8, I 13, W 8, Ch 15; *illusionist scroll (misdirection, hallucinatory terrain, IOUN stones, Ylam-Ylam's red spell), illusionist scroll (spectral forces, rainbow)*; Spells: 1 – *auditory glamor, colour spray, hypnotize, phantasmic force*3*; 2 – *fog cloud, improved phantasmic forces*2, mirror images*; 3 – *spectral forces*.

Wos Ennoikos: Thf 4; hp 25; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8+1; S 16, D 10, C 16, I 16, W 9, Ch 11.

Guards (20): War 2; hp 6, 11, 10, 12, 10, 8, 9, 12, 16, 10, 17, 15, 15, 8, 15, 15, 12, 12, 9, 9; DC 9; Atk scimitar 1d8.

26. Ennoikos–Memfer Court: A courtyard between the Ennoikos and Memfer trading houses. From the pedestal of a king's great statue opens an entrance to the Undercity, **UCI/A-14** (The Crypt of Tellamek Than). The entryway has been walled off, and the iron door beyond it has a *fire trap* on it (1d4+12 Hp).

27. Plaza of the Nameless King: The much smaller statue of another king, whose name and deeds have been long forgotten. An altar has been fashioned in a barred niche; it is customary for merchants to come here and pray, casting treasures through the bars. While the statue is magical, it has no discernible effect. There are altogether 4000 cp, 3000 sp, 500 electrum and 70 gp in the niche. Anyone who steals from the hoard will be pursued by 1d4 **breathstealers**, phosphorescent undead in tattered rags and emanating a cold aura. **Breathstealers (1d4):** HD 4; hp 17, 9, 19, 21; DC 6; Atk claws 1d6; Spec breathstealing (save vs. death magic or begin to suffocate; only by defeating the elusive undead can one's breath be regained), immune to cold, silver or +1 to hit.

28. The House of Bagavami the Sage: A rare altruist in a sinful city, **Bagavami the Sage** lives here in modest but not destitute circumstances. He has dedicated his life to

healing the sick; prices are set in consideration for wealth and need. He can cure diseases up to and including mummy rot. Bagavami's speciality, however, is slimes; in one year, he is expected to progress enough in this field to find an antidote to the protoplasmic deity Yol: a reason for which he is sought by agents all over Fomalhaut. Bagavami is guarded by **Tolen**, a black bodyguard who protects him in gratitude for saving him. He stores his notes in an invisible chest masked by *obscure object* in a dusty corner of the attic; the only clue is his dusty robes, and his sole confidants have been Tolen and Ishtar's former high priestess. The chest also contains 250 electrum and a 350 gp gem. **Bagavami the Sage:** Mag 6; hp 17; DC 9; Atk staff 1d6+1; S 16, D 6, C 10, I 15, W 11, Ch 14; Spells: 1 – *detect magic, floating disk, identify object, mystic missile, read magic, shielding, slumber, uncolated servant*; 2 – *hypnotizing pattern, locate object, mirror images*; 3 – *slow, suggest*. **Tolen:** War 4; hp 25; DC 4 (*chainmail, shield*); Atk scimitar 1d8+2; S 18, D 7, C 12, I 13, W 15, Ch 9. Ω

Congratulations Winners! The

EROL OTUS

Art Challenge has concluded. **Our champions:**

First Place, Color: Mark Allen

First Place, Black & White: Mikko Torvinen

Second Place, Color: *Raven Daegmorgan*

Second Place, Black & White: Steve Robertson

Third Place, Color: Stefan Poag

Third Place, Black & White: Steve Zieser

First Honorable Mention, Color: Peter Mullen

First Honorable Mention, Black & White: Lee Barber

Honorable Mention, Color: B. Ingle, K. Mayle, Atom, A. Schröder, S. Turnbull, and K. Vito

Honorable Mention, B&W: *Bat, P. Fini, K. Green, Keshner, S. Kisko, S. Poag, A. Stiller, and J. Weigel*

Many, many thanks to Erol and to our fine contestants! As of this issue, all the B&W images have been published, and many of the color images as well. (Italicized winners in this issue.) Keep an eye out for the others!



(In FO! #9 we learned about the the city-state itself; now please join Gabor for an adventure into the depths beneath it... - Ig.)

The Undercity: The Undercity of Khosura can be divided into four levels following the city's aboveground topography, and encompasses a total of eight known sectors distributed between them:

- Level I is situated below the Upper City, and includes one sector (**UCI/A**).
- Level II is slightly above the Middle City (the plane of Vashanka's Market); it includes **UCII/A** two levels below the upper city, and **UCII/C-B**, the Catacombs straddling two lower regions and situated within the lesser hill in the south-western part of the city.
- Level III is below the Middle city. It includes **UCIII/A**, three levels below the Upper City, **UCIII/B**, stretching from Vashanka's Market to roughly the lake walls, and **UCIII/C**, a mostly isolated segment of the Undercity below the southwestern city.
- Level IV is approximately above what used to be the Lower City, and is therefore below the waterline. Only isolated sections, far from the lake, remain. **UCIV/A** is four levels below the Upper City, and consists of the Tomb-Complex of Ymmu MPKursa (described in FO! #1), and The Pits of Lamentation (described here). **UCIV/B** is a half-level located two levels below the northern part of Vashanka's Market.

Keys in the Undercity include level and sector designations; hence **UCIII/A-12** refers to Undercity Level III, Sector A, Area 12. On the maps, level transitions are indicated with Roman numerals, exits with Arabic numerals in a rectangle (referring to the aboveground

locale the exit emerges at). Thick cross-hatching indicates a chasm leading to the next level; thinner marks are a sign for chasms connecting from above.



List of Exits From the Undercity:

2. Bengazar's Columns, to **UCIII/C-2**.
3. The Plaza of Wailing, to **UCII/C-B-1**.
7. Vashanka's Market, to **UCII/A-9** (two entrances).
8. Row of Huts, **UCII/C-B-2**.
12. The Curved Sabre Caravanserai, to **UCIII/B-15**.
18. Beshket's Well, to **UCIII/A-5**.
19. Ostek's Plaza, to **UCI/A-1**.
21. Panthozar's Palace, to **UCI/A**.
22. The Shrine of Uthummaos, to **UCI/A-15**.
26. Ennoikos-Memfer Court, to **UCI/A-14**.



Random Encounters: In addition to fixed encounters, characters adventuring in the Undercity may encounter random monsters (1:6 probability). Roll for an encounter every second turn while the party is moving or when a noisy altercation develops. Isolated rooms are usually safe as long as doors are secured and there is little noise; however, if PCs are careless 1d2 groups should be rolled for, and denizens may even team up for a coordinated siege. Unless called for, roll encounters on the **Undercity** table in general and the **Catacombs** table

in tombs and other undead-inhabited sections. Both tables may call for rolls on the **Special** / **NPC** tables. Three specific areas, the under-temples of **Derceto** and **Uthummaos**, as well as the underground areas of **Panthozar's Palace**, have their own chart.

d12	Undercity
1	Animated Swords (1d10)
2-3	Centipedes, Giant (2d8)
4	Grey Ooze (1)
5	Living Statues (1d6)
6	Men, Robbers (2d8)
7-8	Rats, Giant (2d4x5)
9	Rust Monsters (1d2)
10	<i>Catacombs</i>
11-12	<i>Special</i>

d12	Catacombs
1	Ghouls (2d6)
2	Mummies (1d2)
3	Shadows (1d6)
4-5	Skeletons (3d10)
6	Wights (2d6)
7	Wraiths (1d6)
8-9	Zombies (2d8)
10	<i>Undercity</i>
11-12	<i>Special</i>

d12	Special
1	Battle*
2	Breathstealers (1d4)
3	Corpses**
4	Cultists of Derceto (2d8)
5	Cultists of Uthummaos (2d8)
6	Gelatinous Cube (1)***
7	Golem, Stone (1)****
8-9	Men, Soldiers (2d8)
10	Wererats (2d4)
11-12	<i>NPC</i>

* Ongoing, two random groups

** 25% useable equipment, 10% treasure on bodies

*** 10% Napalm Cube, explodes for 4d8 when burned

**** Stone behemoth in Overking Srabmar's image, destroys all living things in its path. Only one in Undercity.

d12	NPC (with City residence)
1	Captain Aikamtar the Three-Faced with 2d8 Soldiers (1b)
2-3	Trasymakhos, Menelaion with 2d4 Guards (4)
4-5	Mennen Reimi al-Vars, Annai Delsadora with 2d6 Amazons (11b)

6-7	Valsket, Tolvel and Flink (13)
8-9	Taramis, Mechanical Servant and 8 Black Slaves (17)
10	Naram-men-Khemtri (18)
11	Panthozar with 2d8 Cultists (80%) and/or 1d6 Clerics of Uthummaos (50%) (21)
12	Armentak with 2d8 Cultists (80%) (22)

d12	Under-Temple of Uthummaos
1-2	Breathstealers (1d4)
3-4	Clerics of Uthummaos (1d6)
5-6	Cultists of Uthummaos (2d8)
7	Demon, Shadow (1)
8	Panthozar with 2d8 Cultists (80%) and/or 1d6 Clerics of Uthummaos (50%)
9-10	Shadows (1d6)
11	Shadow Guardian (1)
12	Wraiths (1d6)

d12	Under-Temple of Derceto
1-2	Black Pudding* (1)
3-4	Clerics of Derceto (1d6)
5-10	Cultists of Derceto (2d8)
11-12	Shambling Mound* (1d4)

* Both types are spawn of Derceto, with her general appearance – bulbous rubbery sacs resembling sea anemones of a whale-black colour.

Statistics are only given for monsters and generic NPCs not conforming to a well-known type. Special NPCs from the City State are described in the previous issue.

Animated Swords (1d10): HD 2; DC 5; Atk 1d8.

Breathstealers (1d4): HD 4; DC 6; Atk claws 1d6; Spec breathstealing (save vs. death magic or begin to suffocate; only by defeating the elusive undead can one's breath be regained), immune to cold, silver or +1 to hit.

Cultists of Derceto (2d8): Warrior 2; DC 9 (buckler), Atk scimitar 1d8 or net entanglement (save vs. petrification or -4 to hit and +4 DC).

Cultists of Uthummaos (2d8): Warrior 2; DC 9 (buckler), Atk scimitar 1d8.

Demon, Shadow (1): HD 7; DC 10 (sunlight, can't attack), 5 (artificial light), 0 (dark environs); Atk 2*claws 1d6; Spec 1/day *magic jar*, *darkness* 15', *fear*, immune to cold and electricity, 1/2 damage from fire, +1 to hit.

Living Statues (1d10): HD 4; DC 2; Atk 2*hit 1d8; Spec immune to fire and cold, +1 to hit.

Men, Robbers (2d8): Warrior 1; DC 9 (buckler); Atk scimitar 1d8.

Shadow Guardian (1): HD 7; DC 2; Atk touch 1d6 Str and paralysis; Spec +1 to hit, lifesteal once per day (save vs. death or drop unconscious at 0 hp and roll system shock to survive), *silence* 3/day, immune to cold, turned as spectre.

Soldiers (2d8): Warrior 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or spear 1d6.

Undercity, Level I Sector A

UCI/A-1. Traces of peeling stucco on walls, ochre and black. A statue of a beggar with a bowl in outstretched hand in niche, 5-30 sp, 3d6 electrum (50%) and 3d6 gp (30%) on every occasion. If the coins are stolen, the probability of random encounters increases to 1:3 for this expedition. For every gp value deposited in the bowl, there is a cumulative 1% probability the statue falls forward and shatters; the plaster countenance hides amber bones worth 800 gp (but only 2d4*100 if broken).

UCI/A-2. Domed room, spiral staircase a frequent spot for random encounters (roll every time passing through, encountered group starts 75% here, 25% on Level II). Stucco of reeds, animals and birds.

UCI/A-3. Sitting with their backs to the walls are nine shrivelled corpses with black strings around their necks. All have similar facial features, although they are of variable age – members of a wealthy family. If disturbed, save vs. disease or contract grave fever (fatal in 1d3 weeks, victim turns into zombie/ghoul), and swarms of small black **spiders** infesting the bodies emerge from their orifices to attack. One corpse wears electrum bracers with a scorpion motif (50 gp), another has a silver mirror (50 gp). **Spider Swarms (4):** HD 5; DC 5; Atk swarm 2d4+poison (2*2d6 Hp); Spec ½ damage from S/P weapons; hp 33, 30, 24, 18.

UCI/A-4. Three covered 30' pits before old, cracked frescoes of gates painted on the wall. The first gate bears the image of a ship, the second a city, the third stairs. On the bottom of the first pit are oil-soaked rags; if falling in, there is a 1:2 probability of a conflagration for 2d4 damage/round, 1d3 rounds. The second pit is empty, while the third has a secret exit to **UCII/A**.

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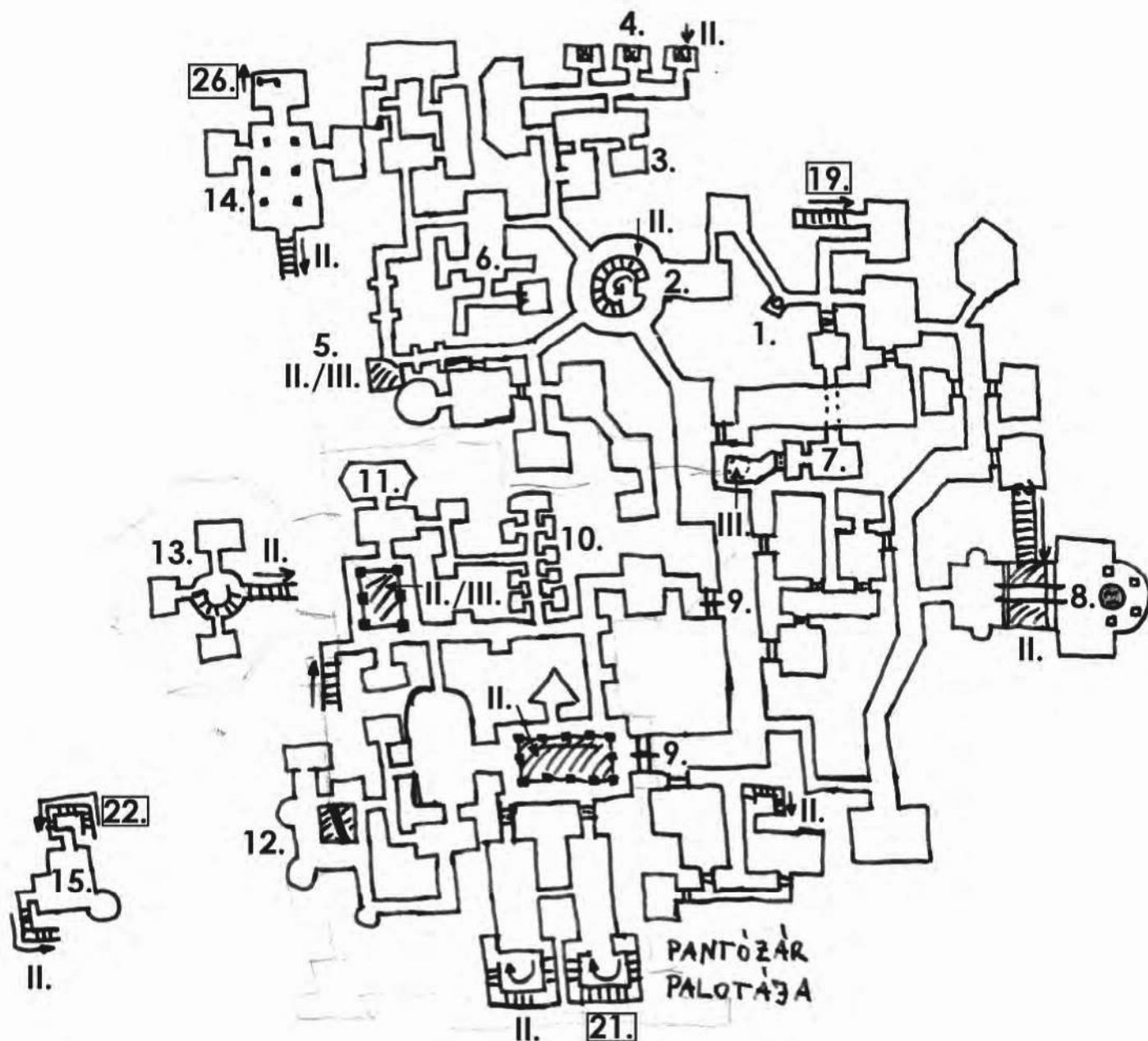
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KHOSURA - A - I. / A



UCI/A-5. Wide shaft passing through **UCII/A** (gallery) and terminating at **UCIII/A**.

UCI/A-6. One of the dead ends has a secret door that opens with a simple push, but knocks over the bronze full plate resting on the other side (check encounters 1:3). The chamber has the set of armour (dented helmet and greaves, as plate mail until repaired, weight 125% normal), a crate with 7 rusty scimitars and 4 gems underneath (3 tiger eye*10 gp, pearl 100 gp), three rolled-up and worm-eaten carpets with a scorpion pattern (one

roll hides a bundle of scrolls which disintegrate with age if handled), 3 amphorae of scented but rancid oil.

UCI/A-7. Damp chamber with low vaulted ceiling. Outside the barred door are stuccoes of maids bearing sheaves of grain; within are stuccoes of black slaves bearing maids with cut throats. The interior passage leads to a ledge opening to Beshket's Well. Some coins thrown from above can be gathered from here (40 sp, 16 electrum, 6 gp), but the ledge is slippery and unstable; save vs. paralysis or fall into the lake at **UCIII/A-5**.

UCI/A-8. A temple-like, cool hall decorated with vivid frescoes of blue and purple gridwork and water fowl. The hall is bisected by a chasm; 30' down lies the Tomb of Bel Am Arz. The stone bridge crossing the chasm holds a series of empty stone holders with soot and the remains of candles. On the other side of the bridge, four statues, two of naked women and two of naked men, surround a shallow basin. The pool is decorated with splendid mosaics of gold, indigo and royal purple; on the bottom is the pattern of a medusa's head, and on the rim the following is inscribed: "WITH BLESSINGS AND CURSES, HERE IS THE GIFT OF STONE. THE GAZE TURNS IF IT SEES THE BLESSING, AND THE FOES FALL LIKE EARS OF CORN IF THEY FEEL THE BITE OF THE CURSE." If a *bless* is cast on the waters, they become curative when bathed in (1d8+1) and also bestow a *gaze reflection* spell on the bather which lasts until the next gaze attack. If the reverse spell is used, the waters deal damage to bathers (1d8+1) but will turn a sword or 10 arrows into +1 *weapons* for the duration of one battle (1:2 they break afterwards from the magical strain). If the spell used is *bestow curse*, the effects are double (2d8+3 damage, +2 *enchantment*). The waters lose their potency in 1d3*10 minutes. If the basin is fouled or otherwise harmed, the statues animate and a medusa's head rises from the pool. **Living Statues:** HD 4; DC 2; Atk 2*hit 1d8; Spec immune to fire and cold, +1 to hit; hp 11, 18, 22, 18. **Medusa Head:** HD 1; DC 4; Spec gaze 1/round (save vs. petrification); hp 3.

UCI/A-9. The underground gates of Panthozar's Palace. These heavy bronze portals are decorated with intricate patterns and cuneiform praising the might of Overking Srabmar, He Who Buys and Sells. They have no lock or pull-ring, but there are brass gongs next to them with heavy metal mallets chained to each. If the portals open, they ring loud bells on the inside, alerting the guards within.

UCI/A-10. Barracks for the low-ranking palace guards. Usually 2d8 men by day and 4d8 by night. Various "cabinet contents" furnishings and treasures.

UCI/A-11. Storage space, typically with caravan wares. Six types from the table at right, 2d6*100 gp value each.

UCI/A-12. Training room. Targets, dummies and a pit with a plank over it for combat practice. 20' fall to sand-covered floor below (50% to take 1d6 damage), save vs. petrification after each hit or fall. 50% chance of 2d8 guards here betting on two combatants having at it.

UCI/A-13. Room complex beneath Panthozar's Tower, heavy with the smells of incense, perfumes and exotic salts. A **shadow guardian** protects it from intruders. In the northern chamber, there are two large stone vats, the

sides heavy with saline encrustations and filled with a thick solution. On a long shelf are various alchemical salts (magnetic, mummy, southern star, harmonic, sulphurous etc. – 8 copper boxes, 1d12*10 value each). In one of the vats lies the body of a young, handsome man who transgressed against the priest-king and is now being mummified. In its present state, it can be controlled with verbal commands as a mindless 4 HD zombie.

The walls of the western chamber are crowded with shelves of the occult: scrolls and papyri dealing with philosophy, religion, divination and similar matters. One scroll is magical, and holds the spells *true seeing* and *travel to other planes*; however, it is protected by a *ghypb* inflicting mummy rot. A dusty case on a top shelf contains a sealed glass beaker of opal fluid; the fluid is magical and can store a mind as a *magic jar* spell if *ESP* is used on it. The beaker is relatively resilient.

In the southern chamber, a dark metal mirror stands between two golden candelabra (2*1200 gp). The surface always shows the true nature of those looking into it – evil alignment as a darker, good as a brighter aura, disease and curses as shadows, charm as a veil, the presence of Yol as small phosphorescent globules etc. The mortarless bricks behind the mirror can be removed to reveal a cavity; therein are two *potions of extra-healing*, 3 gems (2*20 gp jade eyes, 90 gp alabaster hand) and a *medallion of ESP*.

UCI/A-14. This hall of columns is the exit from the Crypt of Tellamek Than. Due to an ancient curse, the undead may not go further than the top of the stairs, making this locale safe for rest. The stucco on the walls has been destroyed, and only a sign above the stairs remains: " ... TELLAMEK THAN, THE FOE OF ISHTAR, ... ". The iron ladder to the north leads up inside the pedestal of a king's statue; the exit is sealed by an iron door from the inside (*fire trap*, 1d4+12 hp) and bricked up from the outside.

d100	Caravan Wares Discovered
01-10	alcohol or drugs
11-20	animals
21-25	art
26-30	exotic substances
31-35	materials
36-50	oils and ointments
51-55	religious accessories
56-60	spices
61-70	textiles
71-75	tools
76-78	treasure
79-83	vessels and home wares
84-88	wax
89-95	weapons and armour
96-00	weird objects

UCI/A-15. Black stuccoes and velvety darkness decorate this room beneath the Shrine of Uthummaos. When passing through, a glowing pair of eyes painted in gold appears on the wall, and a hollow voice intones: “I AM THE EMPTY WORD”. Unless the proper answer is uttered (“MAY NONE TROUBLE ITS EMPTINESS”), the eyes cast *hold person* on the infidels, and the voice continues: “FALSEHOOD HAS SNUCK INTO THE PATTERN!”. Subsequently, a new pair of eyes appears each round, casting more and more hold spells. When all in the room are immobilised, their gaze starts to emit *searing light* rays (roll to hit, 2d8 Hp). When escorting unvetted guests, cultists of Uthummaos like to test them if they know the proper phrases. The company descends in groups of three, and a different speaker must speak on each of the three levels.



Undercity, Level II Sector A

UCII/A-1. Three wall niches, each with the bust of a woman, each identical in features and each with the inscription “KHTAL – THE BLIND” underneath. The busts are magical; if their blindness is healed by salve, ointment or spell, the eyes glow in blue radiance. When all three are cured, they retract to reveal crawlways into a small tomb. Within the chamber, a gold-inlaid ebony casket holds the intact if waxy body of a young woman clad in sky blue robes with golden daggers through her eyes. Khtal the Blind is an intact but fragile shell, as the beautiful body has been dried, hollowed out and stuffed with deadly poison dust (if she is “wounded”, kissed on the lips or the daggers removed, the dust escapes, save at -4 or die). The dried lips respond if spoken to, although they only request solitude. Curing Khtal’s blindness and using a *remove curse* or *exorcism* spell, the body crumbles and the poison turns into gold dust worth 1200 gp. The daggers are 200 gp each and of -1 *enchantment*.

UCII/A-2. Vaulted chamber with wall niches containing bits of debris. An empty pedestal stands encircled by the downwards stairs, but the statue is missing. A sign reads: “OVERKING SRABMAR, HE WHO BUYS AND SELLS. GIVE, OR SRABMAR TAKES HIS DUE. SHARE IN HIS PLENTY IF YOU COME WITH HIS SIGN.” From a turn of the stairs, a secret door opens into the Tomb of Ghos-II-Rhen; note the traps in the initial passage.

The pedestal used to be the stand for the restless stone golem which now prowls the Undercity, and the niches each held one living statue. In the pedestal, there is still a metal mesh and a small chute leading to a pit. With a mirror or such, the gleam of gold can be seen from the

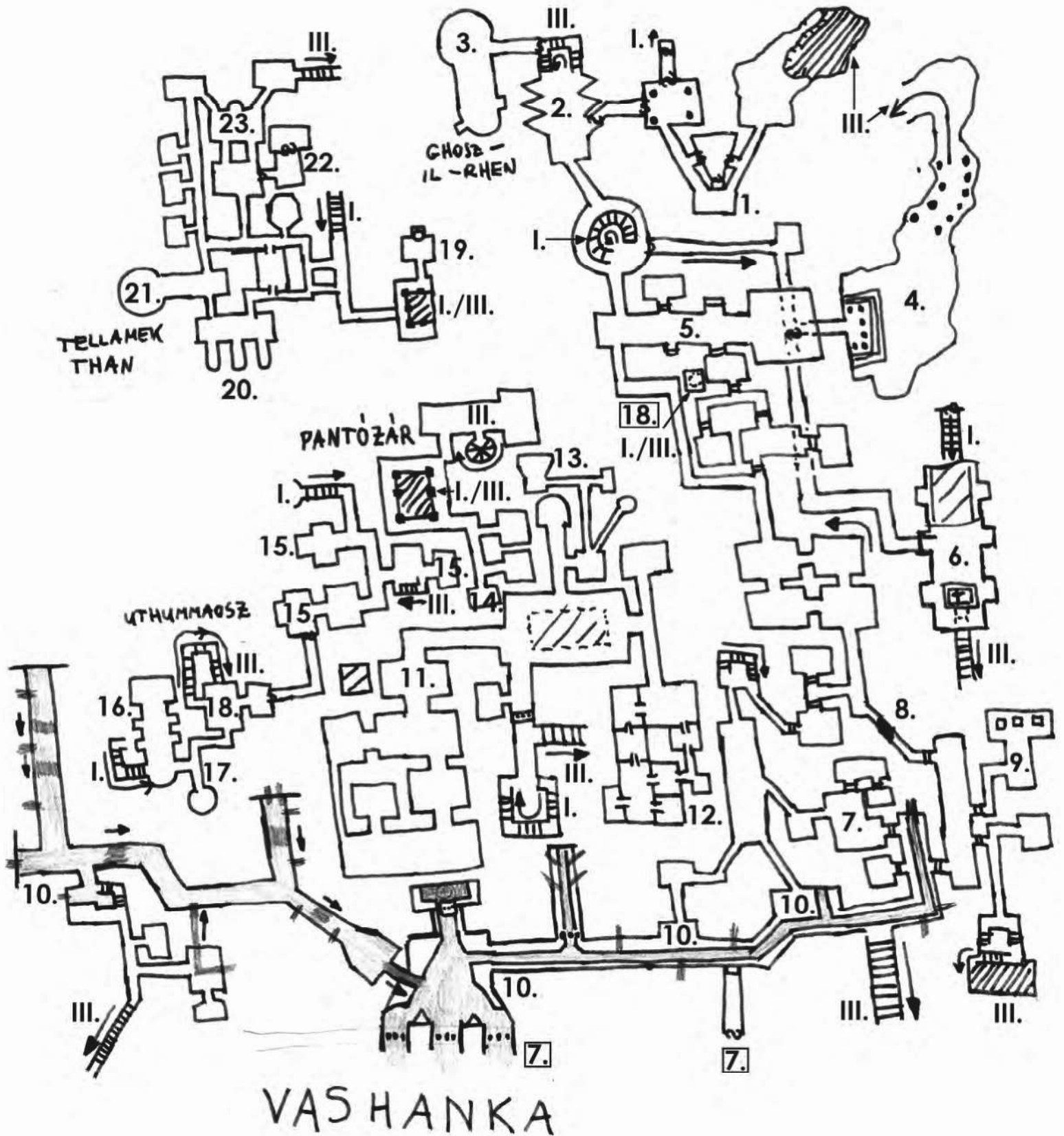
bottom. Displaying Srabmar’s Sceptre (see **UCIII/B-6**) makes the pedestal move to the side and reveal the treasure pit: 1300 sp, 3900 electrum, 3000 gp, 250 pt (in a box on the bottom) and 5 gems (5*350 gp topaz). If someone manages to steal from the treasure without the sceptre, the next random encounter will occur with 10 living statues and the stone golem.

UCII/A-3. This tomb is the resting place of Ghos-II-Rhen, one of Srabmar’s sons who was killed by Vashanka in her campaigns and brought here to be buried in utmost secrecy. The walls are a rich blue stucco painted with stars to imitate the night sky; the ochre and blue tiles on the floor are covered by a layer of mixed animal bones, at least half bovine. In the entry corridor, there is an easily discovered stepping stone that triggers a blade trap at ankle height (attacks at 10th Level for 2d8). However, anyone who jumps across will land on a much more carefully hidden trigger that brings iron skewers through the stucco (save vs. petrification at -4 or 5d8).

Within a brazier in the tomb proper burns an eternal flame with a *fire charm* spell; save vs. spell or remain transfixed for 16 rounds unless intruders purposely avert their eyes. Meanwhile, sensing the party, the bones assemble into **skeletons**, those of the bulls advancing in a shambling upright gait with an angry roar. In the niches to the south are the broken remains of statuettes; around the sarcophagus lie the corpses of three hooded figures skewered by a fusillade of iron bolts. The sarcophagus is no longer trapped: within it, the body of Ghos-II-Rhen still grasps his *mace* +1 and wears a *cloak* +2 (10% of mummy rot without a thorough cleaning).
Skeletons (25): HD 1; DC 7; Atk scimitar 1d8; hp 6, 6, 4, 6, 4, 2, 3, 1, 6, 2, 3, 1, 6, 5, 5, 3, 1, 4, 2, 3, 7, 8, 2, 2, 2.
Bull Skeletons (4): HD 4; DC 7; Atk 2* horns 1d6 and claws 1d6; hp 14, 23, 12, 20.

UCII/A-4. A columned entrance with tympanum emerges in a large cavern descending towards the next level. On the way down, there are pillars on both sides, a brass bowl filled with ashes before each one. The bowls are marked with names – Polykrates, Syndichos, Alkmaion, Archippos, Nikomedes, Mnason, Megastatos and Barbanikos. The ashes are the remains of ancient philosophers; lighting a fire in the bowls or performing some sort of burnt sacrifice brings forth their spirits from the Underworld. The philosophers can answer questions put to them, but the risk is commensurate with the complexity. For a query similar to an *augury* (yes/no or weal/woe), there is a 5% the spirit becomes enraged and attacks; for a *divination* (general questions about an area, object or being), 15%; for an oracle (specific and exact matters of great importance or obscurity), 30%. For multiple questions, the probabilities are cumulative. The philosophers are not omniscient (there is an 80%, 60% and 40% chance for correct answers for the

KHOSURA-A-II/A



three types), but they do not lie. If attacked or enraged, they fight as **spectres**; if the bowls are desecrated, there is a 5% cumulative probability per bowl that all appear to attack. **Spectres (8)**: HD 6; DC 2; Atk touch 1d8+LVL; Spec incorporeal, +1 to hit, immune to cold and mind-affecting; hp 21, 26, 24, 33, 30, 26.

UCII/A-5. False and real stone doors open from an ancient hall. The great chamber at the end was once pure marble, but many of the slabs have been carried away or shattered. A cuneiform inscription on the floor reads: “HERE I HAVE BROUGHT THE BODIES OF THOSE RISEN AGAINST ME; I PILLAGED THEIR KINGDOMS AND PLACED MY FOOT ON THEIR PROUD NECKS BEFORE THE COMING OF THE END.” Two stone images of these kings remain on bas-reliefs: the first depicts a stooped, turbaned sage sitting cross-legged with the sign “UNTOK AR ARSIN, KING OF BEL-ATI”, the second a pair of sisters holding hands with the sign “IVIZANT AND KEONA, AMAZON-QUEENS OF OOK-ANT.” The slabs with the other nine have been carried away long ago or broken beyond recognition.

UCII/A-6. The Tomb of Bel Am Arz: a tall burial vault with the highest parts lost in darkness (and in the north, leading up to **UCI/A-8**). The unadorned stone coffin rests on three stone steps, and its four corners are suspended from long iron chains that rise to the ceiling. The coffin contains a translucent material similar in texture to wax; within, there are faint outlines with the merest hint of a man’s presence. The coffin may be lifted with two simultaneous successful open doors checks (the counterweights at the other end of the chains help that much), revealing a steep flight of stairs going down. The other secret passage, a crawlway from the central niche in the western wall, is full of webbing and dead bugs crunching underfoot.

UCII/A-7. This room complex is the lair of a robber band who serve Klaides the Merchant (10) and emerge from the sewers at night to rob and waylay; their spec-

iality is merchant caravans on Ulwar’s Plaza (23). There is a 2:3 probability the band is here; otherwise, the innermost storage room remains locked. In addition to mundane supplies and objects, there is 50% chance of a mid-level treasure and 25% for 1d3 types of stolen caravan goods as per **UCI/A-11**. **Robbers (60)**: Warrior 1; DC 9 (buckler); Atk scimitar 1d8; hp 7, 3, 7, 10, 6, 6, 7, 3, 7, 8, 3, 7, 5, 3, 5, 5, 7, 7, 3, 3, 1, 4, 10, 6, 6, 7, 7, 6, 10, 3, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 10, 5, 2, 3, 2, 10, 8, 1, 7, 8, 7, 9, 2, 1, 4, 10, 4, 3, 6, 10, 6, 6, 10, 9.

UCII/A-8. A 30’ pit, too wide to jump across, but there is an unstable ledge – save vs. petrification to get across that way. On the bottom are broken bones and loose rubble. The stonework is unstable down here, and a great explosion or some excavation would open a way to the southeast corner of **UCIII/A-12**.

UCII/A-9. Skeletal remains in room, three statues on top of a flight of steps: armoured figures with skeletal

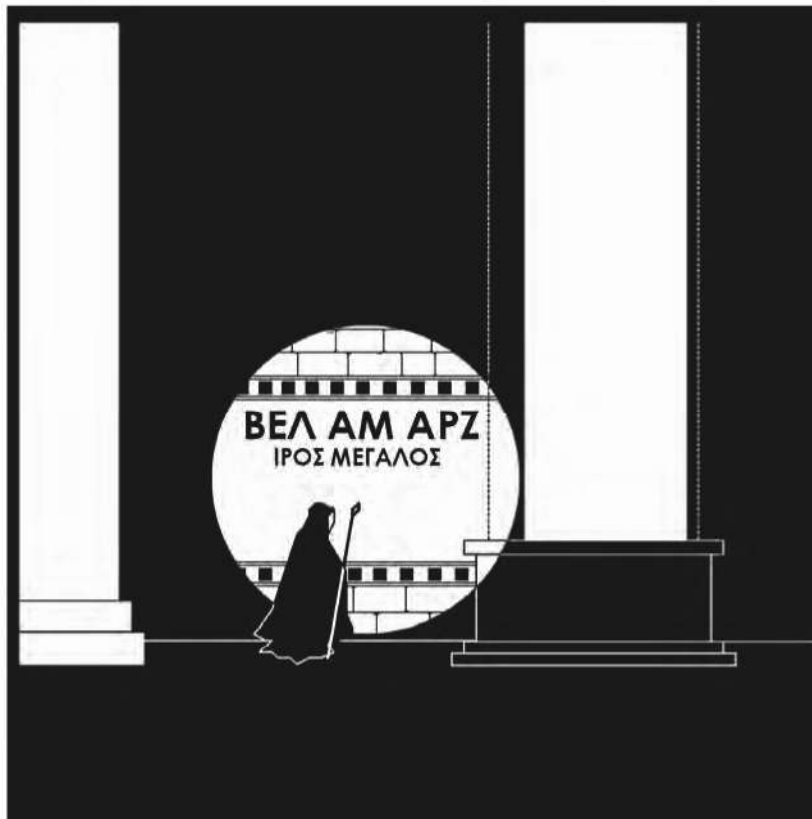
heads and golden headbands (120 gp each). The statues can each cast *hold person* once per day; in the walls are arrow traps which are triggered at the same time someone steps into the wider part of the room and the spells go off (a barrage of 2d4 arrows per person, Atk 5th Lvl, 1d6 damage each).

UCII/A-10. The sewers are much more recent construction than the rest of the Undercity. Sewage, mixed with salt waters, runs in a grey-black mixture in the channels. Opposite the thick grilles through which the flow cas-

cades down to Vashanka’s Market, the main source of the waters, an abundant spring, is closed off by a barred gate bearing Panthozar’s seal (*glyph*, 22 damage in a fiery explosion). Gurgling sounds.

UCII/A-11. The storerooms of the Palace are packed with all manner of foodstuffs, materials, and mundane equipment.

UCII/A-12. At the end of the disused room-labyrinth filled with dusty crates and other junk is hidden an idol



of Ishtar. The figure, depicting the goddess in all her naked glory, has been covered with a canvas. If heartfelt prayer and sacrifice is performed before it, the goddess imparts one-use spells to the supplicants.

UCII/A-13. An abandoned shrine to Ishtar, the dusty frescoes showing couples making love. The bronze vessels are intact and apparently cared for, there are remains of recently lit candles, but the idol is missing. Someone has disturbed the flagstones in a corner. Underneath a layer of loose dirt is the corpse of a palace guard in full equipment and carrying a *potion of healing*.

UCII/A-14. A palace official's hidden loot cache, embezzled over the years. The iron chest is engraved: "DO NOT BOTHER THE ANCIENT SECRET, FOOLISH MORTAL, ERE THE HORRIFYING REVENGE OF K'SHWR'GG CLAIM YOU!" The chest is magical (*Nasruddin's magic aura*) but untrapped. It contains 600 electrum. In a false bottom is more: 550 gp, 20 pp, a 300 gp gold medal with a hexagram on it, a *potion of polymorph* (cursed, turns user into a flabby giant batrachian), a *potion of cure paralysis* and *Yor's stone* (an opalescent amber gemstone crudely fashioned into a stone-age dagger; *dagger* +1 and grants 18 Strength with fighter combat ability once per day).

UCII/A-15. All three of these chambers beneath the palace hold a sarcophagus decorated with beaten copper sheets and marked with Panthozar's seal (*glyph*, 22 damage in a fiery explosion). They bear the names AKSEL MER SIMRAN, DUILI THE DANCING GIRL and KINHAB BEN BALSAR, the triumvirate who ruled Khosura before the priest-king. They all perished after being only given salt water for drink, and are now **mummies** imprisoned within the sarcophagi. Aksel mer Simran's sarcophagus holds a *scroll* (*fireball**6), Duili the Dancing Girl's a *potion of haste*, and Kinhab ben Balsar's a *wand of magic missiles* (23 charges). If all three mummies are freed from their torment, they reveal the secrets of the salt baths providing the priest-king's unnatural longevity: a shrewd alchemist might accomplish much with this knowledge.

UCII/A-16. The chamber is shrouded in magical silence. The stuccoed walls are a sickly mixture of swirling grey and black shapes; the air is cool and there is a feeling of emptiness. Chains hanging in the internal section can be used to suspend two humans; novices of Uthummaos (who may not see the lowermost shrine until their initiation) are left here in the darkness to learn their god's emptiness while the **shadows** emerge to drain them of their strength. Those who struggle or cannot bear this ordeal are swarmed by the dark shapes and claimed as one of their own. **Shadows (7):** HD 3; DC 7; Atk touch 1d6 Str; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 6, 16, 17, 13, 16, 11, 15.

UCII/A-17. A side altar with black-silver sacraments (2*300 gp chalices, 500 gp bowl, black candles). These objects are unbearably cold to touch (1d6 hp and 1d6 Str) and accursed (Strength does not return until the curse is broken).

UCII/A-18. Velvety darkness in a room painted a hue between black and deep purple. The floor is covered in red and black tiles. As in **UCI/A-15**, a pair of glowing golden eyes appears if intruders approach and a voice intones: "I AM THE EMPTY HEART". Unless the proper answer is uttered ("AS A TESTAMENT, I GIVE MY BLOOD") and the character stabs him- or herself in the heart (in which case the weapon slides harmlessly through the heart as cold mist, and only 1 temporary point of Constitution is lost), the eyes cast *hold person* on the infidels, and the voice continues: "FALSEHOOD HAS SNUCK INTO THE PATTERN". Every round, more and more eyes appear to cast more hold spells and then emit a piercing gaze (roll to hit, 1d8+1 damage).

UCII/A-19. Here is the gallery of the shaft starting at **UCI/A-5** and descending to **UCIII/A-7**. The passage to the west is walled up, and beyond waits an eager group of random undead. In the northern room, there is the headless statue of a young, well-built man in a toga. A sign reads: "BEAUTIFUL GLEISTES OF THE SHARP WORDS, WHOM EVEN THE WISE MEN LISTEN TO". If a head or skull of any sort is placed on the neck that would be lower than 18 Charisma, the statue speaks and pronounces a curse on the characters: save vs. polymorph or they will have the same heads they have placed on the stone stump. At 18 Cha, the statue reveals the location of Tellamek Than's tomb (**UCII/A-22**).

Sublevel: The Tomb of Tellamek Than.

This area of the Undercity uses the **Catacombs** encounter table. Additionally, the undead warrior Tellamek Than, accursed foeman of Ishtar, is here with four randomly rolled groups of undead (1:3 in room **UCII/A-21**, otherwise roaming the place); neither he nor the undead in his company can leave the confines of the sublevel. The entire area is covered in ancient, crumbling stucco. **Tellamek Than:** Warrior 6; DC -1 (chainmail +1, natural, shield, Dexterity); Atk 2**bastard sword*+1 2d4+3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 2; hp 49.

UCII/A-20. Faded frescoes of weird fires in the sky above a mountain range. Three cylindrical tomb chambers to the south have been sealed with circular stone disks cemented with resin. One disk is broken, revealing a cavity of distorted human bones with knots, hornlike protrusions and other deformities. The chambers behind the second and third disks are intact, and filled with the

same bones as well as a sickly green-gray mould. Unless purified by fire or great heat (or made temporarily dormant by extreme cold), the mould is infectious; save vs. polymorph or undergo horrid mutations. The second tomb chamber contains 1300 electrum (ancient) and a *Galtan's Punctual Skullcap* (a copper headpiece used as a navigation device to determine surface sector and Solon classification coordinates – hex coordinates – via an ancient but functional satlink); the third contains 1200 electrum and 3 boxes of *diambroid* with detonator attached (6d6 damage; must save vs. fire or all three go off, turning everything within the chamber into a fine dust and exploding outside as a *fireball*).

UCII/A-21. Brass bowls have been set on the perimeter of the room, containing snake bones; non-figurative frescoes of green and blue gridwork adorn the walls. A throne facing the entrance is a favourite of Tellamek Than, and he is often found here brooding about his strange fate.

UCII/A-22. The secret rooms can only be found if a layer of stucco hiding the entrance is first struck down. The first chamber has eight racks of bronze breastplates (DC 5, weight 125% normal) and the same number of bronze mallets. Unless their magic is dispelled, the mallets rise into the air and begin beating the armour when intruders enter, attracting Tellamek Than's group and an additional company of undead every third round afterwards. If the mallets are grabbed, they swing to hit (Atk at 3rd LVL, 1d8+1 Hp). In the interior chamber, around an empty bier, are Tellamek Than's treasures: 500 electrum, 400 gp, a 400 gp electrum drinking horn, a beautiful although heavy set of regal clothing woven from fine gold and silver threads (2500 gp) and a 80 gp brass pitcher with inlaid electrum.

UCII/A-23. A brass skull lies on the flat top of a truncated pyramid in the northern niche. The sides of the pyramid are decorated with painted reliefs of swords. The skull is worth 100 gp for its workmanship, but it attracts undead, doubling chances of random encounters in areas where the Catacombs table is used.



Undercity, Level III Sector A

UCIII/A-1. In the centre of the chamber stands a structure of four upright stone pillars holding four horizontal beams. The structure absorbs all spells directed at it, but if a spellcasting character spends a night underneath, he or she will awaken with one of the absorbed spells in his or her mind. No class boundaries apply, but someone who could not cast a spell of that level yet must save vs.

spell or lose all other memorised magic. The structure can store 20 spells. If it is filled, a random one will get replaced each time it gains more. The current list is:

1. detect magic	11.
2. detect magic	12.
3. Tensor's fl. disk.	13. fireball
4. tongues	14. divination
5. tr. rock to mud	15. exorcism
6. identify	16.
7.	17. magic missile
8. read magic	18. read magic
9. dispel magic	19. wizard eye
10. detect magic	20. telekinesis

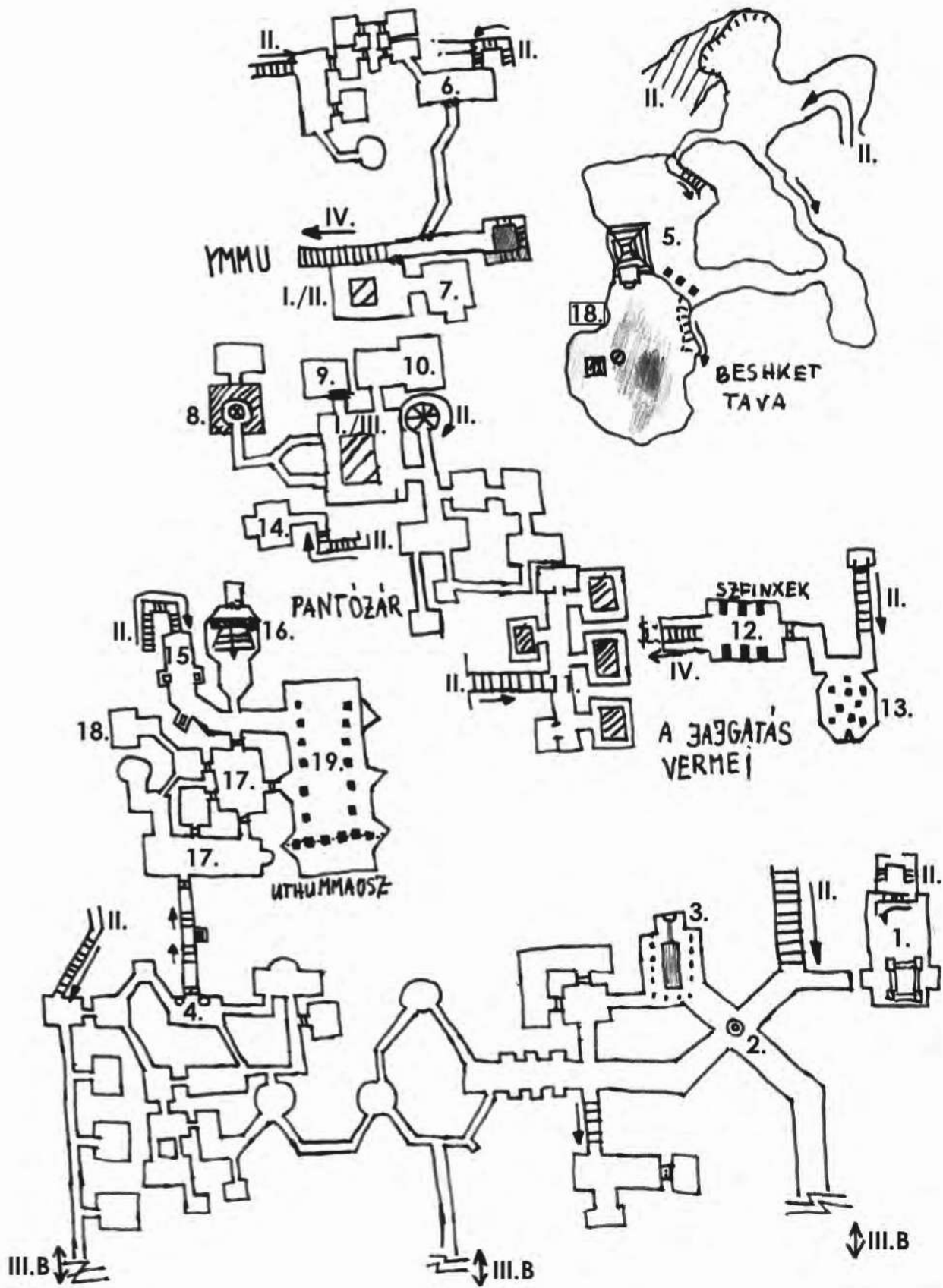
UCIII/A-2. On a pedestal stands the rearing statue of a lion, a monument of poor workmanship. A sign at the base reads: "RAISED BY KUT THE CLOTHMON-GER AS SRABMAR HAS RAISED THIS HALL: SUCH HAS HE EARNED HIS RANK AMONG THE GREAT." The **shadow** of Kut still lurks within the statue, punished by the gods to linger in memory of trying to earn immortality in so cheap a way. He is bound to remain until someone even more niggardly outdoes him (even in jest). In that event, save vs. spell or the character is *magic jarred* into the statue as Kut is freed; otherwise, the shadow attacks (1-4), wails (5) or remains silent (6). If defeated, he reforms in time for the next expedition. **Shadow of Kut:** HD 3; DC 7; Atk touch 1d6 Str; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 11.

UCIII/A-3. A spring from a lion's head in the wall feeds a brass basin, which in turn flows into a larger pool of mosaics and tiles. The salty waters have an unpleasant taste and cause weakness (save vs. poison or -3 to all rolls for 1d3 days), but there are valuable encrustations in the pool worth 2d12*10 gp.

UCIII/A-4. Here is a heavy iron door with the symbol of Uthummaos superimposed on it and glyphs smouldering in a golden light (*explosive runes*, 6d4+6 damage, save for ½ in blast radius, no save for reader). They are harmless if the character displays the holy symbol of Uthummaos, and the door opens to the password, "IT IS FINISHED". Otherwise, it is -20% to open and on a failure, the lock breaks pick.

Halfway down the stairs is a hooded black statue emitting an otherworldly cold. The holy symbol must be placed in the idol's upturned palm, or the **shadow** within flees into the Under-Temple, shrieking, "INTRUDERS! MASSSTERR! INTRU-DERS!" If the statue is touched with bare hands, it drains 1d6 Strength as a shadow. **Shadow:** HD 3; DC 7; Atk touch 1d6 Str; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 6.

KHOSURA-A-III./A



UCIII/A-5. Beshket's Lake is a large body of water in an enormous cavern halfway between the planes of Levels III and IV. There is a 20% probability the beggar **Naram-men-Khemtri** (c.f. 18) is here, absentmindedly playing with a brass box of 212 pebbles or playing his zither. If caught here, he is more open than on the surface, and may agree to a bargain – permission to dive into the lake and recover treasures for a sacrifice of 10 humans. If he is not present, the box rests next to one of the three pillars by the water. Its loss will drive Naram-men-Khemtri into a blind fury, and he will murder anyone he suspects of taking it.

The water of the lake is potable. Its source is the small step pyramid to the north. In the depths, there lurks an **eight-headed hydra**, which attacks divers 80% of the time and swimmers 20%. A *sleep* spell cast at the lake lulls it to sleep; with his zither, Naram-men-Khemtri is capable of the same. At the bottom of the deep lake is an enormous treasure hoard of coins and items. Someone submerging to take them must roll randomly to find items in the mixture of mud and money. In addition to 8000 sp, 7000 electrum and 5000 gp, there are:

d12	Treasure Found
1	13 gems (10*300, 3*400 in iron box)
2	scimitar with gold pommel and jade grip (300 gp)
3	holy symbol of Ishtar with rubies (2000 gp)
4	electrum cup with encircling serpent (100 gp)
5	silver medal (10 gp)
6	heavy golden chain (300 gp)
7	<i>wand of polymorphisation</i> (29 charges)
8	<i>ring of clumsiness</i>
9	<i>potion of extra-healing</i>
10	<i>mace -1</i> (with human head)
11	<i>scale mail +1</i>
12	warm copper globe

The globe is most important to Naram-men-Khemtri, since it contains his soul; he will spare no expense or effort to obtain it. **8-Headed Hydra:** HD 8; DC 4; Atk 8*bite 1d8; hp 52 (body), 6, 5, 5, 1, 8, 2, 5, 6 (heads).

UCIII/A-6. The rooms to the west of this chamber use the **Catacombs** encounter table. The secret door to the south bears the faded outline of a man; if magic is detected for, the outline glows in faint silvery light, but the image has no other effect.

UCIII/A-7. Floor covered in debris and mould. On the southern wall is a black shape similar to a sea anemone, somewhere between a mural and a mould patch. This symbol of Derceto has the texture of soft felt and is humid with drops of a fragrant material, a powerful

hallucinogen/stimulant. The stuff works on contact: save vs. poison at -4 or go into a paroxysm of murderous frenzy. Every round, the character suffers 2d6 if he or she does not wound someone successfully. There is a 1:10 probability for the effect to wear off each round. If the character is restrained or incapacitated, a system shock roll is called for to avoid death from the convulsions. 1d4 doses of the drug can be removed from the patch; it quickly dries into inert resin unless sealed from the air; otherwise, it can be used as airborne poison.

UCIII/A-8. The treasury of Khosura lies across this 60' pit in a room filled with piles of coins (approximately half of the annual tax revenues, or about 22,500 gp in various denominations). The soft whistle of the wind fills the air. The gap is narrow enough to jump from the central column; the invisible *wall of force* before the treasury, however, may be an inconvenience. Anyone who falls into the pit is attacked by the **air elemental** dwelling therein, and knocked off the wall if trying to climb out. It does not pursue outside this chamber. In the centre of the circular pillar, a square hole accepts the key of the treasury. One of the two copies is kept in Panthozar's tower, the other in the care of his advisor, Anvin Ishambarg (16). Turning the key makes a wall of force descend onto the pillar, forming an invisible bridge over the pit. **Air Elemental:** HD 12; DC 2; Atk winds 2d10; Spec +2 or better to hit, whirlwind save or 2d8/round; hp 53.

UCIII/A-9. The room has been bricked up, but the stonework is obvious to discover and easy to knock down or dismantle. In the room are stacks of dusty coffers, filled with the salt-mummified dead.

UCIII/A-10. A storage room of ancient armaments: corroded sets of bronze armour, swords and spear tips. These would be fit to equip a small army if it were not for their obvious antiquity.

UCIII/A-11. The entrance to the Pits of Lamentation, Khosura's bleak prison. Few of the prisoners led down the stairs ever see the light again. In the side rooms, there are large openings covered by thick grilles. 40' down are the maze-like chambers of the pits. Convicts are lowered in a leather harness 15' above the bottom and ordered to jump. If they do not, they will be pulled up again, but guards will be waiting with halberds, glaives and glaive-guisarmes to make them get off. There are usually **8 guards** in the room at the end of the corridor. The northern door there has no lock and is rusted shut from disuse. Only a bend bars roll, explosives or a *knockspell* can open it. **Guards (8):** Warrior 2; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or halberd 1d10 or couteaux de breche 1d6 or glaive-guisarme 2d4; hp 11, 11, 12, 18, 11, 13, 16, 13.

UCIII/A-12. Two rows of black granite sphinxes watch each other motionlessly in a vaulted hall. Between the stone forms on their pedestals, a disturbance in the air picks up heavy, greasy soot. Letters carved into the floor read: “KNOW YOURSELF”. Stepping between a pair of sphinxes, their eyes flash a burning gold and both project heat rays before them for 3d8 damage; save vs. wands for both, with a -4 penalty for the second ray (a *haste* spell negates the penalty). The heat burns through all softer materials and heats up metal. The most effective shield is human flesh; a blind rush of several men through the room will most likely help a lucky few get across. The sphinxes are indestructible. The metal door to the west is locked. If examined, the stonework in the southeast corner of the room proves to be loose, and with some work a large enough hole could be dug to crawl up to the bottom of the pit at **UCII/A-8**.

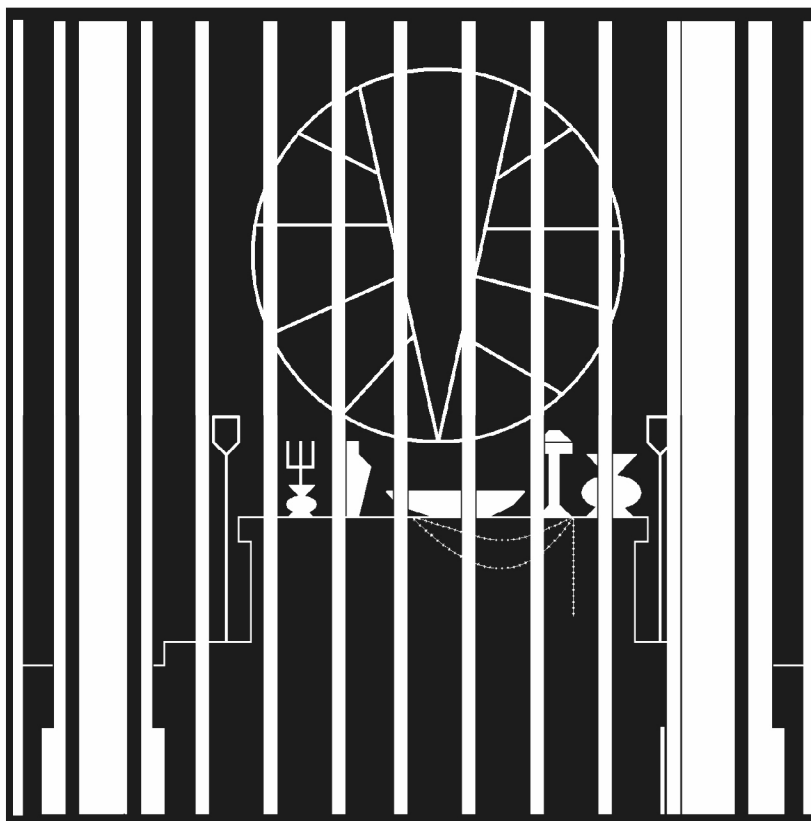
UCIII/A-13. The room is filled with a forest of thin, rectangular columns distributed seemingly randomly. Firelight shines from the other side and letters carved into the floor read: “NOTHING IN EXCESS”. If someone steps between the columns, he or she receives a *suggestion* to seek out the source of the fire and be immersed. In the back is a great brazier burning with an eternal flame that has *fiery charm* cast on it; shifting, glowing letters can be seen in the conflagration. Someone failing a save against the *suggestion* and the *fiery charm* will enter the fire and suffer 3d6 points of damage, breaking both spells but necessitating a new one against the *suggestion* on the way out. Someone who fails a save against the *suggestion* but not the *fiery charm* may roll a save vs. spell to stay out of the fire. Someone who fails against the *fiery charm* but not the *suggestion* is free to go once the duration of mesmerism expires, but in the following dazed state, the save against the *suggestion* is at -3. No harm comes to those who succeed at both saves, and if they gaze deep into the fire, they may read the letters within and commit into their mind the *fiery charm* spell (this can be copied into spellbooks for mages if desired; others can employ it only once). Staying long

enough also means a save against the *suggestion* will be necessary on the way out.

UCIII/A-14. Here lies Panthozar’s sarcophagus, between two bronze candelabra. It is secured with a seal and a *glyph* (22 damage in lightning). There is a 10% probability the priest-king is present within in trance. Triggering the glyph immediately alerts him to the intruders’ presence. The sarcophagus contains a small bagful of the deadliest black lotus (save at -6 or die) and a *peript of foulest rot*.

Sublevel: The Under-Temple of Uthummaos.

This area of the Undercity is halfway between the planes of Levels III and IV, and uses its own encounter table. Upon entering the complex, a random encounter should be checked for every room except **UCIII/A-15-16**. (that is, 7 times). If the result for **UCIII/A-19** comes up positive, there is a further 1:3 probability of a service being in progress: roll up four groups in attendance, ignoring duplicates.



UCIII/A-15. Velvety darkness in a tall hallway painted a sombre black and gold. The statues in the niches are unnaturally thin. If intruders approach, a pair of glowing golden eyes appears on one of them and a hollow voice intones: “I AM THE EMPTY ABODE”. Unless the proper answer is given (“IT STANDS EMPTY, FOR I SHARE IN ITS EMPTINESS”), the **shadow demons** within two of the three statues attack at once. The demons open with *magic jar*, preferably on well-

armed fighters, using them to dispatch opponents who look like spellcasters. If there are only a few enemies left, they have a 4:6 probability of leaving with a possessed character through the shadow-gate at **UCIII/A-16**. **Shadow Demons (2):** HD 7; DC 10 (sunlight, can’t attack), 5 (artificial light), 0 (dark environs); Atk 2*claws 1d6; Spec 1/day *magic jar*, *darkness 15'*, *fear*, cold & electricity immune, fire ½ dam., +1 to hit; hp 23, 24.

UCIII/A-16. Here on a pedestal stands a great circular gate swirling with inky darkness. The gate, which is two-

way, transports characters stepping through it to the Underworld, next to an immense black chasm burning with a radiant white “negative” light that does not illuminate but helps distinguish individual shades of darkness. This is the domain of Uthummaos, extremely hazardous to visit even for his believers. Behind the gate, there is a secret door opening into a secluded, bare chamber. This area is unknown to everyone in Khosura except Anvin Ishambarg (16) and Taramis, Daughter of Zafar (17) – not even Panthozar is aware of its existence. Since Taramis rarely ventures into the Under-Temple for fear of the other’s treachery, it is now in use by the master wizard, who keeps a spare *staff of frost* (15 charges) here, but might also use it to keep other precious objects secure. If either Ishambarg or Taramis would have to mention the hiding place, they would always use the phrase “*beyond the shadow-gate*” to misdirect the query with ambiguity.

UCIII/A-17. These are ritual meditation chambers for the cultists with bare, cold stone floor to kneel on and chilly baths for their ablutions. Faint magical lights serves as illumination.

UCIII/A-18. The chamber of the high priest is as spartan as anything else here, but it has a small library of occult and religious texts, complex diagrams and other esoterica. As Panthozar tends to avoid the place, it has become the domain of his second, Anvin Ishambarg (16). There are two spellbooks in the library. Spellbook #1 (mage): 1: *detect magic, identify item, read magic, shielding, sleep, invisible servant*; 2: *ESP, invisibility, multiple images, phantasmal hand, ray of enfeeblement*; 3: *animate dead, exploding runes, gaseous form, hold person, suggestion, vampiric touch*; 4: *fear, storm of ice*. Spellbook #2 (illusionist): 1: *audible glamor, colour spray, detect invisibility, detect magic, hypnosis, phantasmal force*; 2: *identify object, improved phantasmal force, ventriloquism*; 3: *hallucinatory terrain, paralysation, spectral force, suggestion*; 4: *rainbow pattern in the dark*.

UCIII/A-19. The vast hall’s slender columns are lost in darkness, the frescoes on the walls a blur of grey and black tones superimposed with golden gridwork. The Under-Temple’s sanctum is separated from the worshippers by a row of pillars and thick metal meshwork. There is no idol, only a 10’ diameter black-silver symbol hanging on the sanctum’s south wall depicting an abstraction of The Chasm of Uthummaos. This object is literally invaluable. Around it are placed 10,000 gp worth of heavy, dust-covered black-silver sacraments: ceremonial bowls, candlesticks etc. These valuables are thrice-accursed. Loud speech is forbidden in the hall and only whispers are tolerated. Those who act otherwise may draw the attention of Uthummaos, whose essence slumbers within the black-silver symbol, half-aware. Unless he is explicitly called to this world, Uthummaos has only two powers here:

- *magic jar* as a shadow demon, save at -3, one person only at one time
- *telekinesis*, one person only at one time (no save, 10’ velocity in the first round, 20’ in the second, 40’ in the third and 80’ thereafter – convert to falling damage)

The two powers may not be employed simultaneously. If a melee develops, there is a cumulative 5% probability after every death that Uthummaos fills the body with his power, animating it at the 10th level of fighting ability and 18 in all ability scores. This warrior is unnaturally swift and his eyes burn with golden fire. If he is personally called by his worshippers (which they, as a general rule, DON’T), there is a 10% of a manifestation, 20% if the caller is Panthozar and only 5% if an infidel. In physical form, Uthummaos resembles a severe old man of gray face and beard, with burning golden eyes and wearing an inky blue cloak. Anything after his appearance is a subject for speculation. **The Champion of Uthummaos:** Warrior 10; DC as previously -3; Atk 2*previous weapon+2; Spec MR 30%; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18; hp 95. **Uthummaos:** HD 15 MAX + 45; DC -7 (natural, Dexterity, *ring +3, cloak of the darkest night* [+3 cloak w. *invisibility* 3/day]); Atk incorporeal touch 3d6 Str + 4d6 cold; Spec +2 to hit, Strength drain as shadow, MR 90%, immune to cold, electricity and mind-affecting, ½ from fire; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18; Spells: At will: *continual darkness, darkness 15’ r., hold person*; 3/day: *shadow conjuration (5 shadows), shadow monsters, demi-shadow monsters, phantasmal killer*; hp 135.



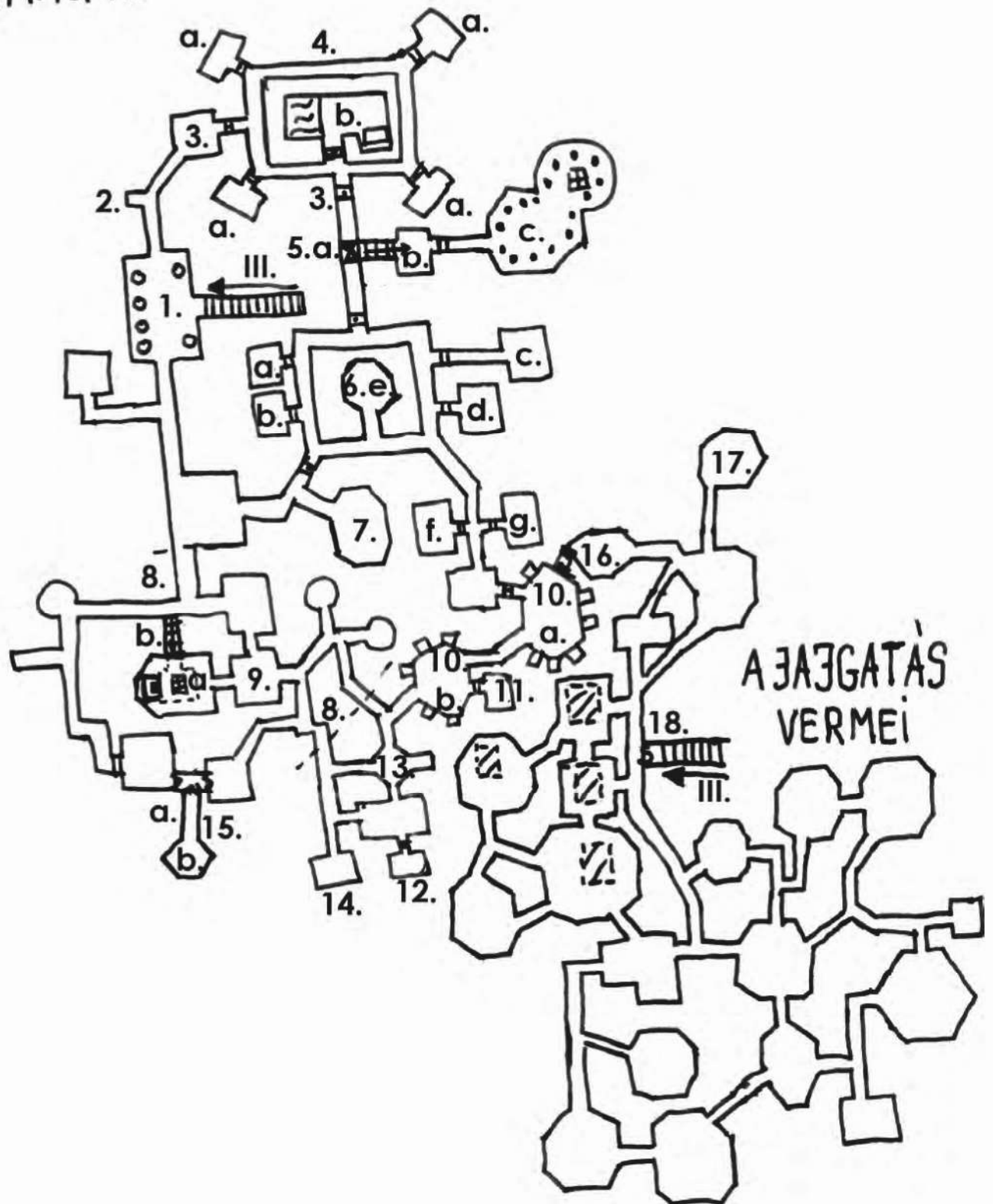
Undercity, Level IV Sector A

Sublevel: The Tomb-Complex of Ymmu M’Kursa. This domain of the dead is discussed in *Fight On!* #1.

Sublevel: The Pits of Lamentation. A labyrinth of black-walled, clammy pits submerged in perpetual gloom. Water leaking from the Lake of Beshket to the north produces a fetid environment of slow moist rot. The inmates are largely shuffling unfortunates, wrecked by months or years of consignment: people thrown here on a whim, too weak to work in the salt evaporators (15), or disappeared with the idea that they may become useful later. Food and torches are cast down with some regularity, but supplies are always low and the prisoners fight tooth and nail to obtain them. The master of the pits is Ong the Gladiator. The former champion of the Arena (UCIII/B-14) and a vicious

KHOSURA-A-IV./A

YMMU M'KURZA S'IRKOMPLEXUMA



brute, he was sent to the pits when, in an inebriated state, he took advantage of the generosity of Kathaggosh Memfer's two daughters (25) after a particularly impressive triumph. As a mark of his station in the pits, he carries a heavy iron trident and a buckler. He has an entourage of seven toughs, and they always take the best of the things that get thrown down from above. The only one here presently who knows a way out of the Pits of Lamentation is Asan the Beggar; formerly a soldier in Khosura's army, then a thief on its streets. His knowledge of this (UCIV/A-18) has done him no good, and he keeps it to himself for the time being. **Ong the Gladiator:** Warrior 7; DC 5 (buckler, Dexterity); Atk trident 1d6+1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 13; hp 47. **Toughs (7):** Warrior 2; DC 10; Atk club 1d6; hp 9, 6, 12, 7, 10, 11, 14. **Wretched Prisoners (25):** HD 1-2; DC 12; Atk stone or knife 1d4-2; hp 1, 4, 1, 5, 4, 4, 5, 4, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 4, 6, 1, 1, 6, 6, 4, 1, 4, 2. **Asan the Beggar:** Thief 3; DC 10; Atk knife 1d4; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 4, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 6; hp 8.

UCIV/A-16. A hexagonal crypt has been set aside for the use of Ong and his men. They have a makeshift barricade to keep out potential thieves, rough bedding made of rags, places to sit in the wall niches where upright sarcophagi used to be, and more food than the other denizens. Such are the luxuries of this sublevel. One of the sarcophagi is still in place, and stores Ong's surplus scraps of food. With some effort that has so far been beyond the lazies loafing about here, its back can be broken through to another sarcophagus, then a walled-off niche with a dried corpse, then The Tomb-Complex of Ymmu M'Kursa, **UCIV/A-10a**. Note that unless adequate precautions are taken, the new connection will be noticed by undesirables on both sides.

UCIV/A-17. The walls are especially wet here, and drops of water from the lake on the other side trickle through into small pools. The walls are sufficiently weak to demolish with great force, draining the lake, flooding the entire sublevel, and consigning everyone therein to death.

UCIV/A-18. Loose bricks may be removed from the wall here to reveal a locked metal door with the sign of an octagram on it. Behind are steep stairs leading up.



Undercity, Level III Sector B

UCIII/B-1. The Under-Temple of Ishtar, constructed in ancient times and now unused (high frequency of encounters, 1:3 each time passing through). The construction is simple and reliant on heavy forms. Ishtar herself

is depicted in a fuller figure than is now customary. From her lifted hand flow pure waters into stone channels in the floor, then into the lake below. The waters are curative for women (1/day, 3d4 hp). If a woman performs sacrifice before the image of Ishtar, she gains the following boon permanently:

d12	Ishtar's Boon
1-6	+1d2 to MAX Hp
7-9	as above and +1 to random save
10-11	as above and +1 to hit
12	as above and +1 Charisma

If a man who has ever committed rape in his life stands before the idol, it intones: "DEPART FROM BEFORE ME, YOU ENEMY OF WOMEN, FOR YOU ARE REPUGNANT TO ISHTAR'S EYES, AND BEAR A THOUSAND SINS ON YOUR SHOULDERS." This curse must be saved against at -4; if unsuccessful, the character has his Strength, Dexterity and Constitution reduced by 3 and the word "knave" appears on his forehead. The curse can only be removed by a 9th level high priestess of Ishtar, and there are none in Khosura save the ghost of Marcella Vil Amnir (**UCIV/B-2**) – a pilgrimage to Ookant or The City of Vultures is called for. If the statue is harmed, the two statues of naked women standing before it animate as hasted **caryatids**. **Caryatids (2):** HD 5 MAX; DC 5; Atk 2*stone bastard sword 2d4; Spec +1 to hit, immunity to magic (50% bounce spells), weapons must save on each hit or break, *rock to mud* destroys unless saved against; hp 40, 40.

UCIII/B-2. A marble hall with colonnade. Marble slabs in the walls depict the life of Vashanka: her birth as the daughter of a slave (1), her escape from the riders (2), the war against the bird-men of KROAX (3), the unification of the tribes of Ookant (4), the laying of Khosura (5), the slaughter of the sons of Srabmar (6, depicted as several smaller figures), a sacrifice before Ishtar (7) and finally Vashanka as queen on her throne (8). The secret door behind the last slab only opens before a *command* spell or a priestess of Ishtar of at least 6th level.

UCIII/B-3. The ancient burial vault of Vashanka is empty and full of dust as the body and valuables have been transported to the above-ground mausoleum. The sarcophagus lid lies broken next to the stone chest. Glowing glyphs on the sarcophagus are implanted with a *suggestion* spell to "Depart this place and forget you have been to it." The writing, if the save is successful, reads: "THE DAUGHTER OF ZAFAR, THE WANTON TARAMIS, WHORE OF ALL, WHOSE BODY IS AS THE ROAD. THE PRISON OF SEVENTY YEARS AWAITS HER FOR FORESAKING PANTHOZAR: MAY HER LOVER, THE YOUNG ALKMAION GUARD HER FOR LESSONS LEFT UN-

LEARNED.” The bones of Alkmaion, who starved to death here, lie in the corner. In his hand is a broken symbol of Uthummaos.

UCIII/B-4. Decorative bronze door with the image of a lion. Letters on the lintel read “THE TOMB OF MERLANE”. There are what seem like thin horizontal slots on the door, and a lock. The lock triggers the blade trap in the door – save vs. paralysis or 3d6 damage. Pulling the opening ring transforms the stairway into a slide which deposits all in the corridor into a hidden pit, and thus the lake at **UCIV/B-1**. The door slides open into the space above if the lock is picked and the opening ring is turned 90° clockwise and pulled up. The Tomb of Merlane itself is decorated with murals of more lions and old battle scenes. The grave goods are lion pelts, fabrics and precious woods, all too aged to be of value. The bier in the centre holds the body of an old grey-bearded man in *chainmail* +1 with a *longsword* +1. In the back niche lies a 2' blue quartz crystal worth 350 gp.

UCIII/B-5. This grandiose hall is the entryway to the Kamnic Mysteries. It is a frequent spot for encounters: check on 1:3 every time passing through. The ceiling is supported by massive yet slender columns; the frescoes on the walls are gold gridwork superimposed on a green base; in the gaps are Hellenic letters painted in gold. At the eastern end above the stairs stand two giant statues, one of a man and one of a woman, both extending their right hand in blessing (?). Over the stairs, there is writing in golden letters embedded into the stones: “THE GROTTO OF THE KAMNIC MYSTERIES. THOSE WHO BRING OF THE GIFTS SHALL KNOW THEMSELVES AND PROFIT THEREFROM.” Behind the two statues there is a recess with two stelae on the sides. One shows a bearded man sitting on a throne with sceptre in hand and a king's circlet on his head. The other shows the same figure kneeling on the ground in beggar's rags, sceptre and circlet broken and hands raised towards the sky. Between them, there is a sign on the wall: “HE WHO IS HIS OWN MASTER IN KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE FREE OF DEATH; HE WHO IS HIS OWN MASTER IN MIND SHALL FIRST SHOW, THEN CONCEAL IT.” The secret way to the east is an *illusionary wall* enchanted with a *finger of death* spell that goes off both way (save or die, 3d8 damage on successful save). Due to the illusion, only someone suspecting a secret portal can step through. Only disciples of the Kamnic Mysteries are exempt from the *finger of death* spell.

UCIII/B-6. In the small onion-domed structure within the tall chamber floats *the sceptre of Overking Srabmar* in a field of golden light. The southern iron door is stamped with the mark of an eye in a hexagram, casting a *suggestion* on those who enter (save or “Depart this place and never return”). The hexagram is surrounded by a circle of

glyphs (*explosive runes*, 6d4+6 damage, save for ½ in blast radius, no save for reader). The golden light's effect is *enfeeblemind*; only someone who has somehow become catatonic or otherwise suppressed conscious thought can remove the sceptre. *The sceptre of Overking Srabmar* can be used to control or dismiss animated statues and golems as a cleric of the character's level; 3/day, one end can emit a *dispel magic* spell (9th level) and the other can be used to draw a *protection from evil/good* 10' circle (drawn rightwards/leftwards). The sceptre is worth 4000 gp as a treasure alone, independent of its magical potency.

UCIII/B-7. A side chamber, abandoned. Ashes are strewn on the floor among broken urns, and an invisible hand traces odd patterns into them. Among the non-figurative elements are letters, and if their track is followed, the message is always one asking for help or relief. These are the ashes of unquiet dead. If *remove curse* or a similar spell is cast on the ashes, they release 1d6 hostile **wraiths**. A spell such as *dispel evil* or *raise dead* dismisses them utterly, but they are also subject to other magic without a saving throw – e.g. a *speak with dead* or *magic mouth* lets them communicate, *animate dead* brings them forth under the character's control etc. **Wraiths (1d6):** HD 5+3; DC 4; Atk touch 1d6+LVL; Spec energy drain, silver or +1 to hit, powerless in sunlight; hp 34, 31, 30, 26, 26, 26.

UCIII/B-8. Gold-inlaid letters above the entrance read “THE TOMB OF XÉ”. This place is a legend among the city-state's lovers, and a pilgrimage site to make a personal bond stronger, but it gets few visitors due to the danger. On the walls, there are frescoes of myriad songbirds; the relief on the sarcophagus shows Xé herself with her zither. Stubs of candles are placed around the bier, and there is a faint scent of incense. The sarcophagus looks empty, but this is an illusion spell created by Xé's lover, Oolos, and it is possible to descend into the real tomb (**UCIV/B-5**).

UCIII/B-9. Six men have been left here, half buried in soft sediment under some misplaced flagstones. All wear the cloaks and hoods of thieves, and have matching equipment as well. One wears a serpent bracer made of electrum on an arm (250 gp). Buried two feet underneath is a bag with 500 electrum, all old coins, and 3*30 gp smoke quartz gems.

UCIII/B-10. The badly defaced statue of a fighting man stands in the alcove. Letters on the pedestal read “ZOSIMOS”.

UCIII/B-11. Streams of sewage flow from openings in the wall and disappear down enormous wells that ultimately connect to the lake. The wells are closed off with thick metal grilles.

UCIII/B-12. A chamber of frescoes with a procession of naked, pitiful men with donkeys' heads before the throne of a voluptuous naked woman. To the south is a pool of misty red liquid. Upon drinking or submersion, save vs. polymorph at -4 or the character's head turns to that of a donkey and his Intelligence drops to 7 (if not already lower). Women are unaffected by the water.

UCIII/B-13. A busy section where there is always a 1:3 chance for an encounter. At night, if there is a fight in the northern arena, the way is blocked from both directions by three guards armed with crossbows, swords and alarm horns. In this case, there are also six in the arena and four in the caravanserai basement who will come investigate a disturbance. The room west of the circular corridor was once an ossuary, but this has been looted and turned into a urinal. There is, however, a hidden crawlway behind a broken sarcophagus which leads to the secret domed room in the centre. The dome is decorated with murals depicting several running figures, and the statue of a bronze rider holding laurels on the back of a rearing bull stands to the east. A secret compartment in the pedestal holds three *potions of strength* and a *potion of haste*. **Guards (6):** Warrior 3; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4+1 or crossbow 1d6; hp 15, 19, 6, 13, 13, 11.

UCIII/B-14. This semi-secret arena under the Curved Sabre Caravanserai (12) caters to visitors as well as high society. There is a heavy smell in the air above the sand-covered floor; the overlooking gallery is small and crowded when games are in progress (20% each night). In addition to the guests and their bodyguards, the caravanserai also has six men on hand (with six more guarding the corridors and four the caravanserai basement). Arena combatants have to fight using random equipment, chosen by lot right before each match. Only the champion is an exception, as he always carries a trident, net, and set of plate mail. Favourites can hedge their bets and get +1 from the arena master, and if their situation looks bad, they are given performance drugs to even out the odds. A match is either fought to three wounds or the death. There are frequent intermission rounds where combatants are paired with beggars, cripples etc. Style matters a lot; someone who can work the crowd will be able to pick up much gold from the sand afterwards, and have basically any woman he desires – the place is very popular with bored merchants' wives. Fighters who aren't entertaining are pelted or hindered (e.g. -2 to attacks as spectators call their moves). There are currently six professional gladiators on the roster, although anyone can decide to enter a fight. The champion, Caligula, is on the top of the heap. Caligula is a squat, barrel-chested, and hairy little man with an odd half-smile and mean temperament. Having doomed the former champion, Ong the Gladiator, to imprisonment in the Pits of Lamentation (UCIV/A) by betrayal after

his rival was discovered with the daughters of Kathag-gosh Memfer, he is now the arena's master.

d8	Weapon
1	manacles and chains (-2 to hit, 1d6 damage)
2	bare hands
3	dagger (25% poisoned, 25% weak, snaps 1:3 each hit)
4	shortsword
5	scimitar
6	spear
7	battleaxe
8	net (entanglement, save vs. petrification or -4 to hit and +4 DC) and reroll

d8	Armour
1	fetters (slowed movement, +2 DC)
2	naked and oiled
3	leather
4	ring mail
5	chainmail
6	breastplate
7	splint mail
8	shield and reroll

d8	Pairing
1	cripples
2-3	beggars
4-5	average joes
6	brutal hack and slash machines
7	the King himself
8	two groups

Guards (6): Warrior 3; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4+1 or crossbow 1d8; hp 13, 15, 11, 18, 13, 12. **Average Joes (3):** Warrior 3; DC by armour; Atk by weapon+1; hp Cato 15, Seneca 19, Marcus Aurelius 16. **Brutal Hack and Slash Machines (2):** Warrior 4; DC by armour; Atk by weapon+2; hp Marius 27, Sulla 28. **Caligula, the King Himself:** Warrior 5; DC 3 (plate mail); Atk trident 1d6+3 or net entanglement, save vs. petrification or -4 to hit and +4 DC); Str 18, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 6; hp 46.

UCIII/B-15. The basement of the caravanserai is stocked with ample provisions and also has a well of drinking water in a side room. At the bottom, buried under a layer of silt, a cage contains the bones of a man still holding an electrum ceremonial orb (400 gp). A holding cell to the north is used to keep kidnapped victims and thieves for arena matches. There are four guards in the basement day and night. **Guards (6):** War-

rior 3; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4+1 or crossbow 1d8; hp 12, 22, 10, 20.

UCIII/B-16. Rough slabs of marble have been left here. The walls have the beginnings of ancient frescoes, but they were never completed. One of the slabs shows the rough outlines of a human face, and a *magical mouth* spell recites tales of woe and abandonment if the visage is touched. There is nothing to do here, and the spell is a malicious prank.

UCIII/B-17. Frescoes on the wall show portals, three to the north and south and one each to the east and west. Those which are painted around real passages are clear, the others shadowy illusions. Barely visible shades of men pass through the room in conjunction with the PCs, but they cannot be meaningfully communicated with and the illusion-portals are inaccessible. In the northern room there lie dark brocades thrown over statues and marble columns. One of the statues is made of a semi-transparent shadow-material, and it can speak in ringing echoes. However, it only commands the characters to leave him and his court. If the statues are harmed, it can use *magic jar* two times a day to possess an intruder. In the south-eastern room, there is a discarded pile of clothes for three men, two shortswords, a falchion, two chain shirts, a set of studded leather, a battered lantern, and a coil of rope that has hardened to the consistency of stone.

UCIII/B-18. A columned hall that has the appearance of a small temple with stone pews and crumbling pillars holding an upper gallery (**UCII/C-B-3**). The pews have been moved to the side and three shallow holes underneath have been looted of all valuables. To the north, there is an old altar and above it an idol of a lion with 18 twisting snakes in place of its head. Six of the snakes have been broken off. On the wall over the idol is a relief depicting a wheel. With great effort, it can be turned. A full clockwise turn has a 1:3 chance of lifting an existing curse off a character, a counter-clockwise one places the weight of one instead. There is, however, a 1:20 probability the entire thing falls off when operated; save vs. petrification or be crushed for 8d8 damage.



Undercity, Level IV Sector B

UCIV/B-1. Still waters below the Under-Temple of Ishtar have collected into a lake, fed from both above and below. The cold, dark liquid is heavier than normal water, making it almost impossible to swim. Characters who slip into the deeper recesses without a rope will get sucked under and be gone.

UCIV/B-2. M. C. Escher memorial stairs (with the letters M.C.E. carved on door lintels in this area): this stairwell keeps on going on and on in both directions in an infinite loop. There are the faint sounds of heavy steps, which belong to the ghost of Marcella Vil Amnir, the former High Priestess of Ishtar. Marcella has been ambushed and killed by cultists of Uthummaos while on an errand in the Undercity; presently, she is invisible, unable to speak and cursed to walk these stairs forever. In her visible form, she looks to be in her early 40s with rough but attractive features and a set of decorative plate mail. *Remove curse* or a similar method frees her, for which she can give absolution to one accursed in the name of Ishtar, heal the characters and gain them the permanent goodwill of the goddess and her followers. If attacked, she uses her *telekinesis* ability to throw opponents down the stairs (3d6 damage) or smash them and their possessions against the walls. **Marcella Vil Amnir, Ghost:** HD 10; DC 0; Atk touch 1d10; Spec +2 to hit, *telekinesis* 1/round; hp 34.

UCIV/B-3. A small candle burning with an eternal flame in the intersection sheds a butter-coloured light which keeps away monsters and characters of evil alignment. Sleeping here restores an extra 2d6 hp and has a 1:6 chance vs. disease and poison. If the light is removed, it goes out and cannot be relit.

UCIV/B-4. The cavern of the Kamnic Mysteries. Letters above the columned entrance read “KAMNOS ☉ MEGAS” with an octogram between the two words. The tympanum shows a set of scales. The entrance is guarded by two mute, immortal guardians, forms in heavy robes who hide their features and hands under a gauze wrapping. The only sounds they make are faint, weird titters from under their wrappings. They can be defeated, but return 1d3 rounds later to full power. They bar the way before anyone who would go in any other way than alone, and bearing gifts.

Inside the cavern, the breath of the Mysteries flows from the recesses of the deep earth and speaks: “STAND NOW BEFORE THE SACRED AIR, THE BREATH OF THE MYSTERIES, AND PRESENT THE SACRIFICE YOU HAVE BROUGHT!” Someone who breathes the slightly hallucinogenic vapours and performs the appropriate sacrifice (five bars of magnetic brass and six pounds of pure mercury) can benefit from its powers. If the sacrificed goods are not the appropriate ones, the Mysteries intone: “THE REQUEST OF THE MYSTERIES IS PRECISE AND IMMUTABLE. BUT IN GREAT NEED, EVEN THESE LIMITS CAN BE TRANSCENDED. DO YOU PAY WITH THE ESSENCE OF YOUR LIFE IF YOU COULD NOT WITH YOUR SACRIFICE?” The character then has the option to leave or lose two levels in exchange for initiation.

When the sacrifice is complete, the Mysteries continue: “LO, THESE ARE THE SECRETS OF THE KAMNIC MYSTERIES! HE WHO IS LOST CAN RECEIVE ADVICE TO GO ON; HE WHO IS IGNORANT CAN LEARN; AND HE WHO IS WEAK CAN GAIN IN POWER. YET WHAT IS ADVICE TO ONE WHO DOES NOT HEED IT? WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE TO ONE WHO CANNOT USE IT? AND WHAT IS POWER TO ONE WHO HAS NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE? ONE CAN ONLY BEAR TWO OF THE THREE: THAT WILL BE ENOUGH!”

- The first secret allows the character to gain insight concerning matters of great importance. Answers are accurate but not always straightforward.
- The second secret allows spellcasters to learn a total 15 levels of new spells, even those the character may not be able to use at his or her current experience level (these can be stored in spellbooks, and also be used one time each just as if the character has memorised them). Non-spellcasters gain 25% of the experience they need for their next level.
- The third mystery has three possible benefits. All spellcasters have the option to make their spells more powerful (opponents to save at -1); magic-users and illusionists have a one-time option to convert to the other class and fill their head to full capacity with new magic of their choice (which can be copied into spellbooks unless used); all other classes get an extra +3 to their maximum Hp.

The Kamnic Mysteries are a secret among the initiates. Someone who has ventured before the breath may never tell of what he or she has seen, but has the right to wear an indigo stripe in his or her turban or other headpiece as a mark of honour. One person may only seek out the Mysteries once, as the next time, the cavern will appear empty. **Immortal Guardians (2):** Warrior 5 MAX; DC 3; Atk 2*claws 2d4+2; Spec revival Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18; hp 60, 60.

UCIV/B-5. The real tomb of Xé: walls depict a lush garden of songbirds. Xé’s embalmed body rests on a stone bier, and is intact beyond the slight reddish tint of her skin. She wears a golden necklace (70 gp), *bracers AC 6* (100 gp), a sapphire *ring of protection +2* (600 gp) and holds a golden zither (500 gp). Next to the bier, a stand holds an illusionist spellbook: 1: *audible glamor, colour spray, detect invisibility, detect magic, hypnotism, phantasmal force*; 2: *hypnotic pattern, invisibility, magic mouth, mirror images, misdirection*; 3: *disperception, spectral force*; 4: *improved invisibility*. None of the magic items in the room detect as such due to a special *misdirection* spell placed on them, only three small stones do. If *identified*, they are revealed to be *bracers AC 6*, *ring of protection +2* and an *illusion wall*, respectively.

KHOSURA-A-IV/B



UCIV/B-6. A locked iron door with copper bindings seals the entrance to this underground suite. Inside, everything is covered under a layer of dust, from the old carpets to the brass bowls and low tables and hookahs.

UCIV/B-7. A domed chamber lit by (false) moonlight, with the faded scent of perfumes and incense over a dry pool. A polished brass door opens to the north.

UCIV/B-8. More carpets and cushions. Lying among them is the corpse of a thin, bearded old man wearing heavy robes and a turban with a single indigo stripe. If the corpse is touched, the dead lips move: “Leave me to my rest. What I possessed has been given away to the worthy, and all I desire now is to decay in quiet.” The body is lifeless and the voice is that of a *magic mouth*. There is nothing of value here.

Undercity, Level II Sector C-B

This area of the Undercity uses the **Catacombs** encounter table. Additionally, four randomly rolled groups of undead are always prowling the passages, and are also found nearby on other levels. The dead only retreat if there is a chorus of wailing on the surface, which signals they are to be joined by another of their own. Several wrapped bodies are found in various recesses, pits and stone sarcophagi which are not listed in detail here. They have typically been looted of all valuables, although some may still hold the odd trinket or two.

UCII/C-B-1. The well from the Plaza of Wailing (3) leads here. Unless a rope has been lowered, there is no easy way out, as there are no footholds or ladders.

UCII/B-C-2. These passages exit at a row of huts by a channel of salt waters (8) on the second floor of a ramshackle building. Near the exit are discarded torch stubs, bits of chalk and tallow. Although the place seems unguarded, 2d8 thugs are always nearby in case something comes out. **Thugs (2d8):** HD 1-1; DC 9; Atk club 1d6 or dagger 1d4; hp 1, 6, 1, 5, 2, 6, 4, 4, 1, 4, 5, 2, 3, 3, 4, 6.

UCII/B-C-3. The gallery of the small temple on the lower level (**UCIII/B-18**), with a balcony across. The entire structure is unsound, and there is a 5% chance for a heavy weight or 15% for a sudden strain to send it tumbling down (2d6 falling damage + 6d6 from the collapse, save vs. paralysis for 1/2). The banister is no better, with 25% to fall (2d6 + 3d6). In both cases there is a 50% chance three random groups of undead from the Catacombs and the thugs from **UCII/B-C-2** investigate.

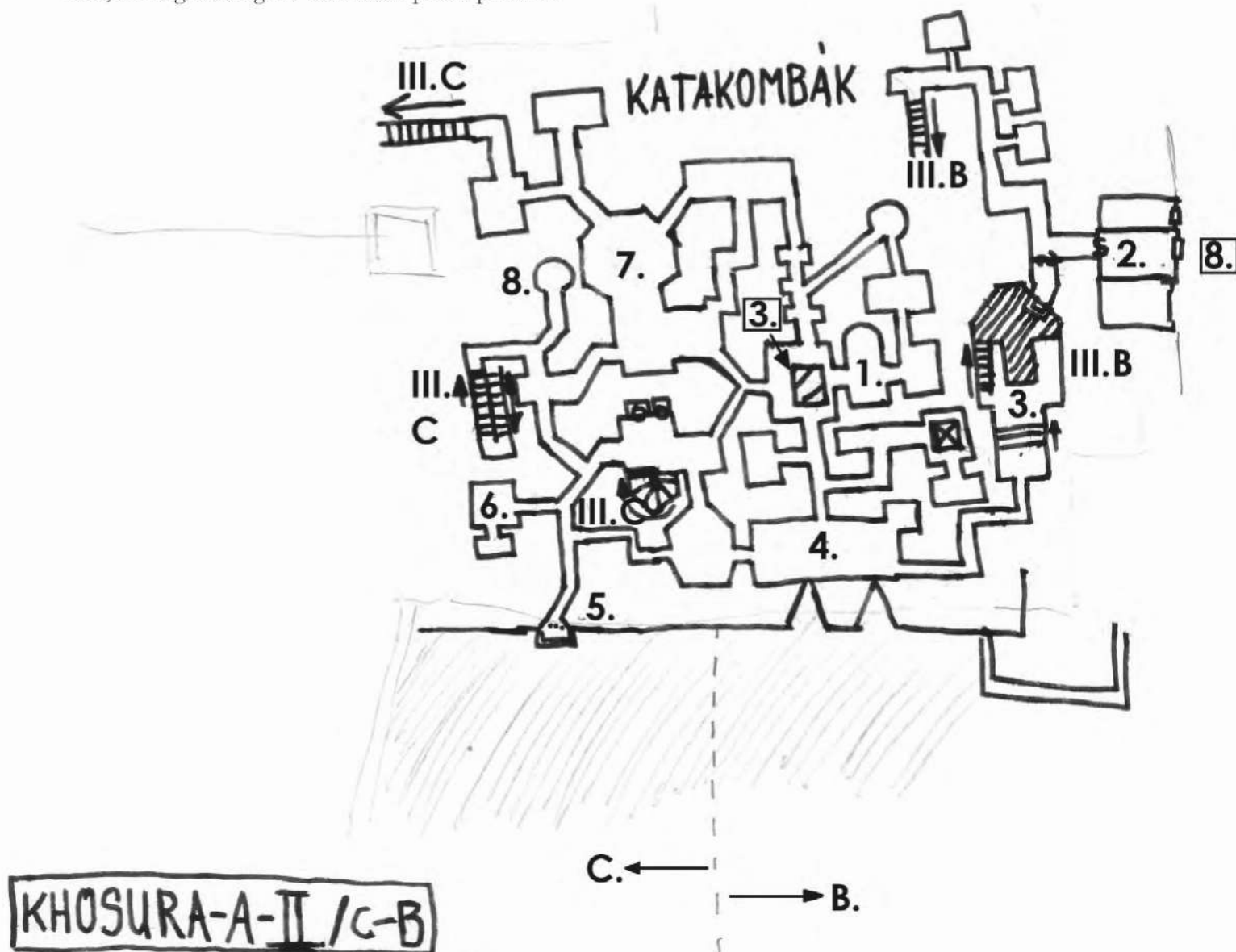
UCII/B-C-4. A large hall overlooking the salt lake through narrow windows. It is possible to climb out here, although scaling the walls could pose a problem.

UCII/B-C-5. Another overlook, sealed with bars. Due to the salt air, the bars are corroded and can be snapped with an open doors roll.

UCII/B-C-6. A recently constructed crypt that has not been looted yet. The deceased, who wears a silvery headband (looks silver at 50 gp, but is in truth platinum and 10x the value) is inanimate... but a **wight** lurks in the side room. **Wight:** HD 4; DC 15; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 18.

UCII/B-C-7. This large burial complex holds several bodies stacked in piles or propped against the wall. Some of them are undead feigning regular death (a random encounter group, 1:3 for another one).

UCII/B-C-8. Another undisturbed burial vault: a single iron coffer containing bones and wrapped in tight chains. A plaque on the coffer reads: "WRIGGLE OUT OF THIS ONE, YOU INSUFFERABLE HARPY!"



Undercity, Level III Sector C

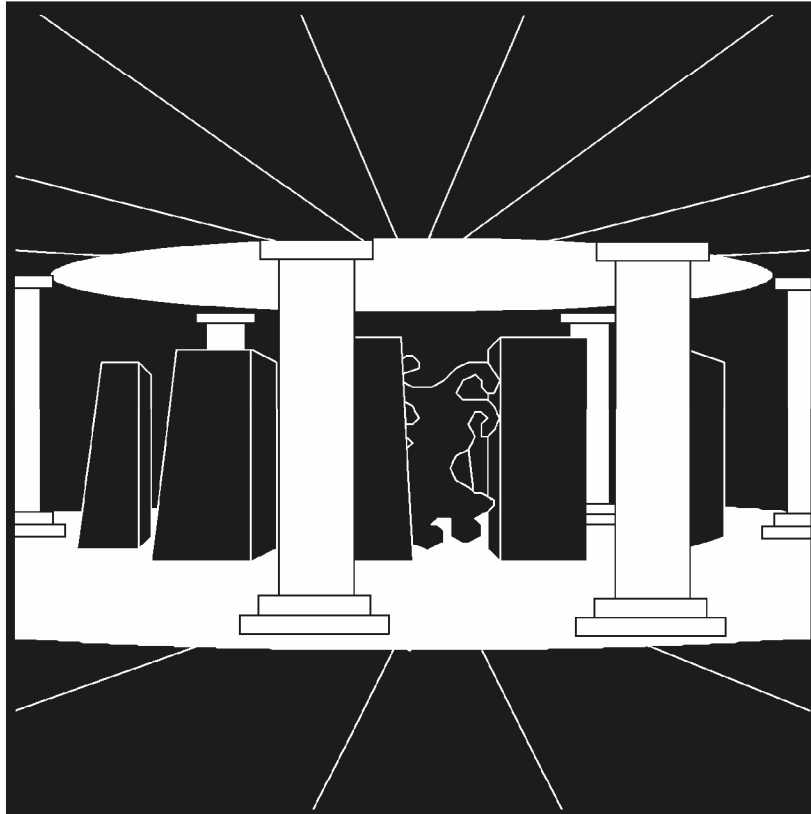
UCIII/C-1. A single torch burns in the recess and the floor is strewn with torch butts, old and new. The ceiling here is sooty.

UCIII/C-2. There is a rickety, unstable rope bridge here over a 40' chasm and a pool of dirty water. The pond is loathsome, with a foamy layer of black filth floating on the top; to the west, there are occasional gurgling sounds as the water gets sucked under and spat back up. Sharp-clawed corpses, **zombies** reach out for anyone who falls in. If fighting near the deep portion where there is strong suction, save each round v. paralysis or get sucked under. **Zombies (16):** HD 2; DC 8; Atk claws 1d8; hp 11, 6, 7, 6, 13, 9, 2, 13, 6, 7, 7, 9, 9, 8, 8, 8.

UCIII/C-3. Grandiose hall with recesses, smashed and tumbled remains of old statuary. At the end, there are double brass doors plated with gold: "OVERKING SRABMAR, DESTROYER OF TWELVE CITIES. EVEN THE GODS WILL THESE GATES SHOULD HOLD HIS REST FOR A MILLENNIUM BEFORE HE WOULD COME FORTH FROM HIS PEACE AND TAKE HIS PLACE AMONG THEIR RANKS" The gates are sealed and utterly impregnable. If, by some miracle, the characters find a way to get through them, Overking Srabmar will have already emerged from his sarcophagus to attack with the soggy black tentacles hanging from his ashen face. Although dangerous, this is all the filthy, mindless, howling and hooting horror that was once a king is capable of. The treasures in the vault have a total value of 150,000 gp, but they bear the curse of the gods, and whosoever would claim them as his own will have to save vs. death at -12 or immediately turn into a rotting, imbecile wreck. **Srabmar:** HD 16 MAX; DC -2; Atk claws 2d6+filth-plague (save at -4 or decompose at the rate of 1d3 Con and Dex per round) or tentacles (these burrow into the flesh at a rapid rate of 1d3 rounds, after which the victim is torn in two for 1d6*20 damage; permanent dismemberment results even if the attack is survived. In the first round, the tentacles may

be removed with *cure disease*, *cure serious wounds* or *remove curse*; Spec +1 to hit, MR 80%, immune to mind-affecting; hp 128.

UCIII/C-4. Corroded metal door with no lock or handle, only the faint outline of something that might be a sea anemone. This is the entrance to the Under-Temple of Derceto, and opens to the display of Derceto's symbol, a *knockspell* or brute force.



Sublevel: The Under-Temple of Derceto

This area of the Undercity uses its own encounter table. The northern part lies approximately half a level under the plane of **UCIII/C**, and exits to the Underworld.

UCIII/C-5. A meditation chamber with the faded image of a spawn of Derceto on the western wall and figures of naked men and women dancing around the form as it stuffs one of them into its gaping maw.

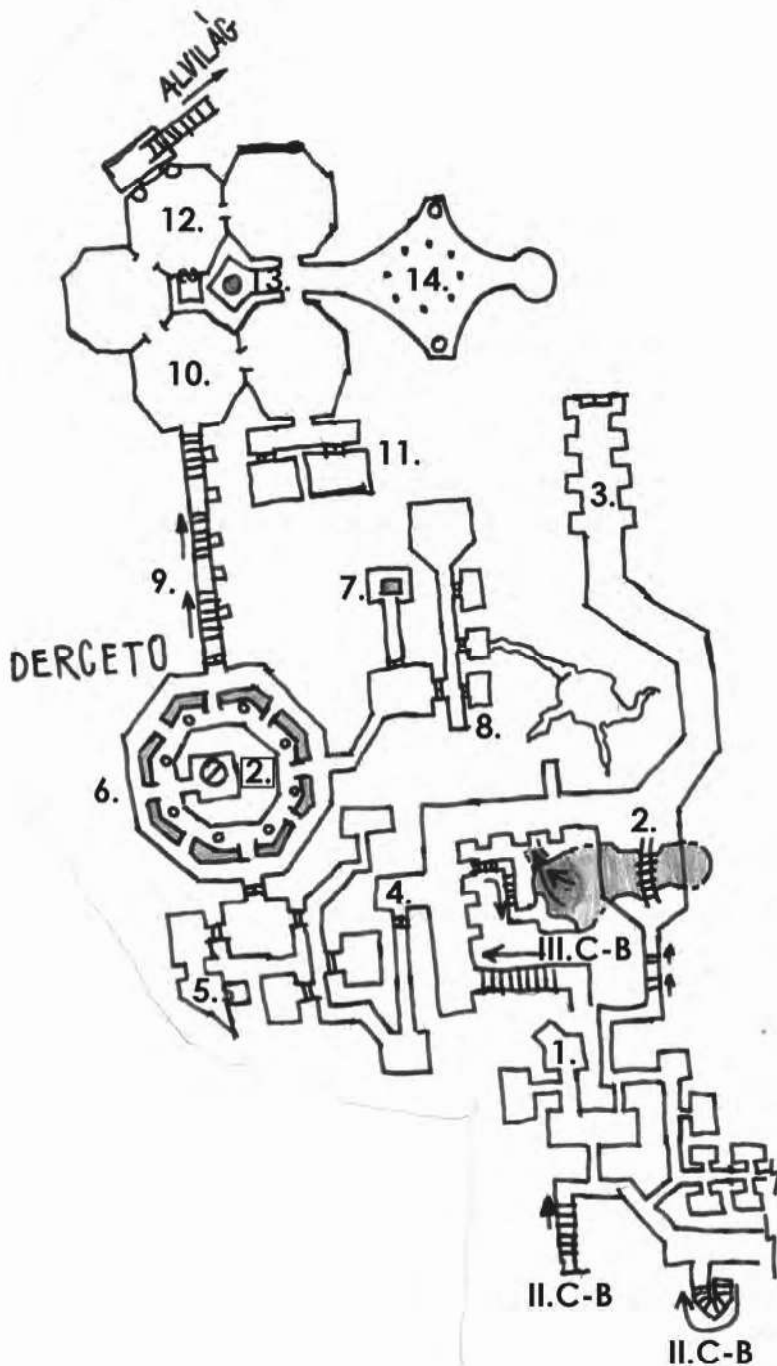
The fresco hides a secret door to a chamber where Bengazar, the former high priest, hid some valuables: *goatfoot boots* (allows leaps 20' but turns wearer's legs into those of a goat) and a *robe of a thousand eyes* (this particular specimen looks like a black leather mantle and is a living parasitic organism preying on its wearer).

UCIII/C-6. Round channel crossed by small bridges; eight black marble statues depicting gyrating half-beings that are like satyrs from the waist down and amorphous, smooth blobs from the waist up. From the central chamber, an exit emerges to Bengazar's Columns (2); two open doors check to push the dark basalt column out from below.

UCIII/C-7. Ritual bath; basin of clear, scented water with a slightly hallucinogenic quality.

UCIII/C-8. Cells holding sacrificial victims, usually 1d6 in number. They are under the effects of drugs which render them dazed, lustful and vulgar. In the end room, there are chains, robes, tallow candles, oil, and stimulants mixed with opium. From the middle cell, a loose

KHOSURA-A-III.C



brick reveals a crawlspace emerging in a globular spider nest with the body of the unfortunate tunneler sucked dry by the creamy yellow arachnids. **Spider Swarms (4):** HD 5; DC 5; Atk swarm 2d4+poison (2*2d6 Hp); Spec 1/2 damage from S/P weapons; hp 20, 22, 24, 32.

UCIII/C-9. Steep stairway descending into the under-earth, lit by candles in wall niches. Oily, dancing

shadows; if a ritual is in progress (10%), inarticulate cries of pipes echo from below.

UCIII/C-10. A series of octagonal vaults, the stones black from mould, the ground packed earth.

UCIII/C-11. These cells are set aside for important captives to participate in the rituals. There is only a 5% probability there is someone here.

UCIII/C-12. To the northwest, the statues of two satyr-blob hybrids flank an arched entrance opening on rambling stairs descending downwards and downwards, slowly morphing into natural cave passages that leave into the Underworld – through the Kingdom of the Ghouls to the Land of a Hundred and Seventy Pits. To the south, a relief of thick foliage hidden by the mass of mould sticking to the wall hides a secret door, and a chamber with 550 gp, 3*500 gp platinum ingots, 2 *potions of love* and 2 philters of *oil of slipperiness*.

UCIII/C-13. A second bath, used just before rituals.

UCIII/C-14. In the Under-Temple of Derceto, a circle of black slabs lies in the chamber's centre. To the north and south, there are hybrid statues holding metal pipes that sound when a ritual is in progress. There is a 75% probability of 1d2 spawn of Derceto lurking in the area. If combat develops, there is a 5% probability Derceto, the Dark Mother herself pays the intruders a visit. If there is a ritual, there are always 1d3 spawn and a 10% of Derceto twisting and pulsating within the circle. If a battle develops between characters and cultists, the chance of Derceto appearing goes up to 25%. Derceto is not intelligent. If she is reduced to 1/2 hp, she retreats through the round eastern teleportation room to the Underworld. Those who wish are welcome to follow!
Derceto: HD 20 MAX+40; DC 6; Atk 4*tentacles 4d6+4 and grab; Spec +1 to hit, MR 80%, immune to electricity, swallow (6d8/round due to acids); *charm monsters* and *feeblemind* 3/day via piping sounds; hp 200. Ω



The Barbarian King

by Gabor Lux

dedicated to Clark Peterson and Bill Webb

Playtesters: Gabor Acs (Narg, multiclassed horror, level 6), Zsolt Bagdi (Brantar, Cleric 6; Hung Sheng, Fighter 4), Laszlo Gramantik (Grey Fox, grey elf Thief 5), Akos Laszlo (Sol-Hirad, Druid 4) and Quarion, elf Bard 4 (NPC); 2nd party: Krisztina Bekefi (Cara Nefer, Cleric of Set 6), Kalman Farago (Adad Hamilsutekh, Champion of Set, Barbarian 4), Laszlo Feher (Rapesco the Unwell, Cleric of Scedu 6), Peter Fustos (Cynrick Gaigos, Champion of Talorn, Fighter 4), Matyas Hartyandi (Hûsker Dû, nomad Archer 4), Gabor Izapy (Yad-Haran, caveman Barbarian 4)

Background: Beyond the border city of Velft, where the legion of General José Antonio Balazán upholds the law, the great eastern trading route leaves civilisation behind. After the ploughed fields of the townlands and the small villages and guard towers of the valleys stand only endless mountain ranges, cold and unforgiving. These harsh wastes were once the domain of the Barbarian King, whose men bowed before animalistic spirits and fought with weapons of brass. Their merciless raids left all who opposed them dead or enslaved. So it was until the death of their King, after which men in mail came from the plains, showing the barbarians as little pity as they had been shown under the King's reign.

Today the fortress-city of Castle Evening stands on the lands where the barbarians roamed, and barges plow their once-holy lake. The initial conquerors, the knighthoods of Alliria and Mitra, were eventually defeated by the fanatical inquisitor-priests of Talorn, shamefully exiled from the land of their hard-won victory. The abundant mines and rich pastures have since transformed these far vales into something else, a place of order and watchful sentries. Yet beyond Castle Evening, the peaks stand silent as ever. And it is said that, in a valley haunted by the shades of savage warriors, there is yet to be uncovered the burial place of their last warlord: the Barbarian King.



The Valley: The Valley of the Lost can be approached on an old road half-swallowed by encroaching forests. It is a basin surrounded by imposing peaks which can only be entered through a canyon carved by the swift mountain river that divides it. The sides of the interior slope steeply

Note: Part of this adventure (areas 18–25) was published in 2002 as *Tomb of the Barbarian King*. Another version containing the tomb areas was used as a sub-level and alternate entrance to *The Tomb of Abysthor* but never released. This third version adds most of the wilderness segment. - GL

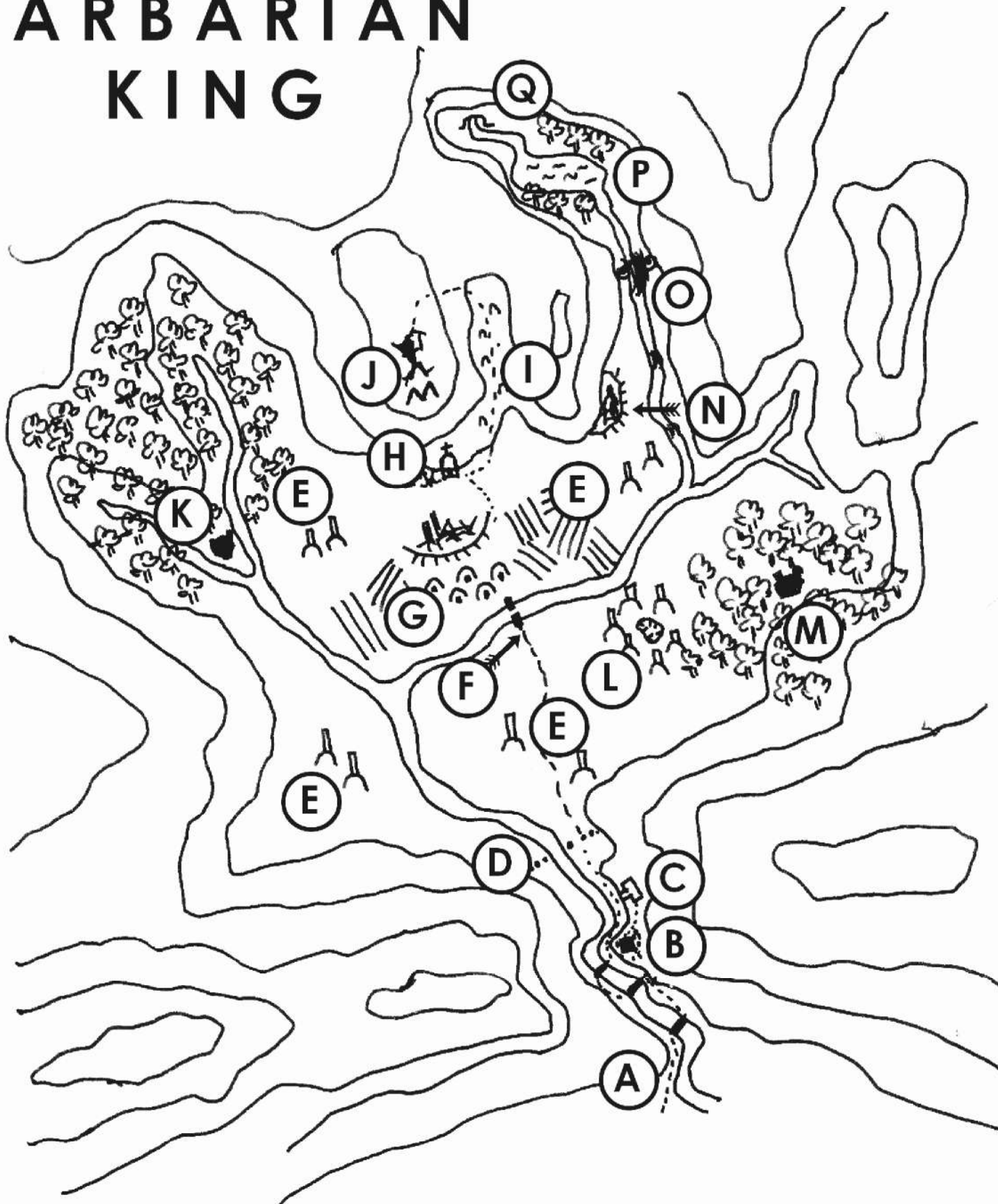
Rumour Table (d6 and/or select as appropriate): If the characters make an effort to learn about the Valley before setting out, they may pick up the following pieces of information in Velft and/or Castle Evening.

1	The barbarians venerated four great spirit entities, patrons that had lived with the tribe in appropriate locales. These also represented stages in a man's life: worm (childhood), eagle (youth), wolf (young adulthood) and bear (late adulthood).
2	After the barbarians were slain, missionaries of Alliria and Mitra went to the valley to proselytize. Thus the place must have still been inhabited at that time.
3	Undead warriors will attack those who set foot in their valley. To stay is tantamount to suicide.
4	Where barbarians once lived, a dragon now hunts its prey. (False: the "dragon" is in fact two wyverns nesting in the valley's upper region, but they only hunt far from their nest.)
5	After their victory, the good-aligned gods called potent guardians to warn travellers of the dangers here.
6	The inquisitors of Talorn have forbidden anyone to set foot in the valley. Perhaps they are wary of the evil that lingers there, but it is more likely that they wish the old victory of Alliria and Mitra forgotten. (Half-truth: while the inquisitors do not condone visits to the valley, there is no specific interdiction.)

up to high mountains. The land is covered in mist day and night: only three or four hours around noon (ca. 11 AM to 3 PM) are clear. The majority of the land is covered with rich pastures, and only two mountainsides are forested.

The valley still bears the curse of evil memories and the unseen presence of the Barbarian King, alive even in entombment. In its center stands a small village populated by slave-pariahs, where the chains of servitude remain unbroken many years after the barbarians' doom. Nearly everywhere beyond its periphery the shades of warriors haunt when mists shroud the valley. When intruders arrive, they will have no random encounters until the mists fall on the first afternoon. However, every four hours after that there is a 1:6 probability of a random encounter with 1d10+2 phantom warriors or 1d6+2 shade wolves. After major confrontations the GM should immediately roll for another encounter with same. The shades will not rest until all intruders are driven from their homeland or killed. Only a few locations marked in the text (**C**, **H**, and **Q**) and some areas of the tomb can be made safe for uninterrupted rest. If the characters spend their night at an especially dangerous location, they will certainly encounter phantoms or shade wolves at least once. **Phantom Warriors (1d10+2):** HD 2; DC 7; Atk incorporeal spear 1d6 or incorporeal longsword 1d8 (ignores armour); immune to cold and mind-affecting. **Shade Wolves (1d6+2):** HD 2; DC 4; Atk incorporeal bite d8 (ignores armor); immune to cold & mind-affecting.

THE BARBARIAN KING



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

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

C. Memorial: At this memorial site lie the champions and priests of Alliria and Mitra, buried after their armies' great victory. Two great marble slabs embedded in the mountainside list the fallen, perhaps three or four hundred men. One name, that of Saint Bofred, was once gilded, but the paint and gold has faded, leaving behind bare stone which strangers have tried to smash on multiple occasions. To the south a steep mountain path ascends to the ruined watchtower, while between the marble slabs a dark entrance once sealed by portcullis opens to an underground hall. The chapel and tomb here hewn from the rock has been looted, and the statues of the Goddess of Knights and the God of Justice gaze disapprovingly with empty eye sockets on the makeshift fireplace, scattered bones, and smashed sarcophagi, which still bear skeletal remains and rusted equipment. If characters restore the memorial to a semblance of order, they may sleep safely here; and if they retreat here after a major battle good-aligned characters will sleep off all their injuries. After breaking the curse of the valley, the statues are able to raise one character from the dead, a one-time boon. In the pedestal under Alliria's statue there is a secret niche that can only be opened by Lawful Good characters, concealing a +2 *shield*.

D. Stockade: The remnants of the defensive line protecting the valley. Only a few moss-covered, rotten stakes

and the collapsed piles of towers remain. Discarded and useless equipment lies everywhere.

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



group of phantom warriors. Roll again if the mounds are excavated; each of them (one per mound symbol on the wilderness map) has a chance for treasure: 25% 1d12*50 electrum, 50% 2d4*50 gold, 10% 1d4 gems, 20% an object of art and 20% of 1d3 magic items.

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

G. Village: A settlement consisting of dismal stone huts half-dug into the earth, gaps reinforced with moss and mud, standing under a plateau bearing the burned-out timbers of a ruined longhouse. In the Valley of the Lost, usually believed uninhabited, there lives a small community descended from the barbarians' slaves. Two centuries have passed since the passing of the "Masters", but the bonds of servitude yet prevail. The villagers fear the memories of their captors as they once feared their physical presence. In their eyes, the barbarians have merely marched off to war, and may return at any moment; the Barbarian King is a living sovereign; and the longhouse over the village is an intact structure – although forbidden to mere thralls. If intruders claim the opposite, the villagers nod but do not believe them. They will go to any length to preserve their illusion (e.g. if the PCs bring a villager to the longhouse ruins to see the proof of its destruction, he or she will be killed soon after return). They have no accurate concept of

time, hopelessly confusing seasons, the valley's history, and even the narratives of their own individual lives.

The villagers do not leave the village and the poor ploughlands that surround it. They while away their days tilling the mud or tending their meagre crops, and do not venture further if they can help it. They consider the resting places of the Masters and the dwellings of the four spirits protecting the freemen (**L** – worm; **J** – eagle; **K** – wolf; **M** – bear) holy sites, and the ruins of Mitra's chapel (**H**) accursed. During the feared "Festivities" (occurring twice each year) they offer age-appropriate human sacrifices to each spirit in turn, ideally careless travellers (the bear's turn is due soon). These sacrifices are performed by the oldest member of the community, who serves as an informal leader of sorts – this person lives in the separate hut of the elderly villagers, and is distinguished by slightly nicer-looking rags than the others wear. The villagers are reserved and distrustful of strangers, secretly hating them for their freedom. Therefore, while they will offer food and shelter if asked, they will not bother to mention anything dangerous, and characters who appear weak and/or separated from their comrades will be killed and their bodies hidden. If the characters spend the night in the village, the kindling in the hut emptied for their use will be mixed with poisonous herbs, and the smoke-hole covered in the darkest night with a wet tarp to suffocate them.

The villagers have no knowledge of the King's tomb. If they are asked about Mitra's chapel and its priest, the most they say is "he came here once or twice" and "then he didn't come any more". The longhouse above the village is a ruin. A few wooden carvings are visible by the entrance, but nothing of interest is to be found among the wreckage. When the mists are thick, there is a 1:6 probability of an encounter by day and 1:3 by night, always with 1d10+2 phantom warriors – with another 1d10+2 somewhere in the vicinity. **Able-bodied Villagers (30):** HD 1; DC 9 (thick rags); Atk sticks and clubs 1d6; hp 2, 2, 8, 2, 7, 3, 2, 6, 7, 3, 1, 8, 1, 1, 4, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 6, 6, 1, 1, 7, 2, 2, 5.

H. Mitra's Chapel: This mission, erected after the death of the Barbarian King and the defeat of his people, succumbed soon thereafter to the curse of the valley. Its small stone structure with a simple tower, visible from a distance, stands open and empty. Wind blows through the entrance and windows. The head of the idol has been knocked off and smashed, and the symbols of crown, chalice, and sceptre have been effaced. The choir/attic above the chapel and the priest's adjoining dwelling (rough wooden chair, bed and lectern) contain only old knickknacks. If restored and blessed the chapel offers safe rest.

From the chapel, a small rock path leads to a well. Halfway there, a curious memento rises from the earth: a man buried upside down from the shoulders. The protruding body is long decomposed but still perceivable as a mixture

of moss-covered clay, earth, and a network of tiny roots that form a sort of mesh growing through it. This is how the surviving followers of the spirits slew Mitra's priest and condemned him to existence beyond death. By telepathy or similar means the man can be communicated with, but in this state is only occupied with his terrible torment. If the form is uprooted a crown of thick roots becomes visible where the head should be; the snaking roots attack to suck out the characters' brain fluids. If defeated, the vegetable horror collapses with a sigh. A *remove curse* slays it instantly, while a successful turning attempt by a Lawful Good cleric halts its progress, compelling it to fall to the ground and receive mercy in death. In the ground beneath the roots are objects buried with the body: a golden holy symbol of Mitra (25 gp), a +2 *mace*, a +2 *chain shirt*, and a *potion of improved healing* (2d8+3 Hp). If extracted in time, the resinous "blood" of the roots has the effect of a random potion with 1d3 doses. **Cursed Priest:** HD 6+6; DC 2; Atk 4*roots 1d6+2, save vs. paralysis or entangled; Spec entanglement (if roots are not removed, automatic damage for 2 rounds, after which the character's brain is sucked out of its skull), ½ damage from fire, electricity and cold, immune to mind-affecting; Str 18; hp 28.

I. Path: The rock path leading to the summit bypasses a number of graven stones. The writing is faded, but a character who understands ancient glyphs can identify them as the ancient magic of the Druids. Studying the writing, a successful spell learning roll allows a character to memorise the spells as extras over capacity (one-use only). Druids receive a +15% to the probability, but priests, mages, and illusionists may also try. Some of the stones are no longer legible, but the remaining six contain the following: *faerie fire*, *obscurement*, *flame blade*, *augury*, *call lightning* and *control winds*. The last two spells are learned at -5% and -10%, respectively. (*Illustration p. 19.*)

J. The Stone of the Eagle: A round, smooth boulder standing on the bare mountaintop, overlooked by a tall wooden structure constructed from decaying logs that may represent the shape of a man (this landmark is visible from all over the valley in clear weather if the characters examine the mountains). The boulder is surrounded by small bone piles, clay vessels, strings of beads and other worthless sacrificial objects. This is the holy site of the eagle, one of the spiritual beings protecting the barbarians, as confirmed by the carved symbol of an "M", or a bird with spread wings. If someone takes a careful look around, he may easily find smashed bones down the cliffs below the mountaintop, the remains of old sacrifices. The eagle ("The Spirit of the Sky") still slumbers within the boulder, and if sacrifice is performed or the site disturbed, it awakens from its sleep, demanding in a distant booming voice to know the purpose of the intruders' visit. It is evil, but not necessarily hostile. In exchange for revealing its secrets, it demands human sacrifice, or a character to survive its trial. However, appeals to its desire for freedom,

a precious (preferably shiny) gift, or a clever trick not described here may also work. If a character volunteers for the trial, he must remain standing on top of the boulder for four rounds without being swept off to his doom. One way to conduct the trial is saves vs. breath, where two consecutive failures mean disaster (7d6 damage). If the champion is victorious, the spirit reveals two pieces of information leading to the King's resting place (*"Two stand guard before the house of my Lord. And when the unseeing stone will see, will you see my Lord likewise."*), and if the party has not been disrespectful or hostile, it may gift them with its treasure: the boulder rises into the air, revealing a cavity with 370 gp, a 400 gp gold bowl with the figures of birds and a +1 *shield* made of supple dark wood strong as the best steel. If attacked or if the site is desecrated, the spirit fights until slain. **The Spirit of the Eagle (Lesser Elemental Force):** HD 8+6; DC 0; Atk slam 3d6 and save vs. breath or fall; Spec +1 or better to hit, invisible, immune to mind-affecting; hp 40.

K. The Stone of the Wolf: This smooth, round boulder stands on a peninsula at the confluence of two mountain streams, and bears the carved symbol of a stylised wolf's head. The surrounding half-ring of trees have ropes with nooses affixed to them, but the only thing remaining of the sacrifices tied up this way is the gnawed bones scattered over the area. This place is the holy site of the wolf (*"The Spirit of the Woods"*), one of the spiritual forces protecting the barbarians, which animates as soon as the characters approach, filling the boulder with its presence and bringing a chorus of howls from the forest. The spirit demands bloody sacrifice for its knowledge, or a character to stand its trial; however, someone who radiates power and shows no sign of fear or doubt may force it to back down through sheer confidence. Moreover, characters may also exploit its ravenous hunger. The spirit recognises deceit and if it does, it destroys the characters without mercy. If a character volunteers for the trial, he must remain standing atop the boulder while the spirit tries to devour him in the form of shade wolves leaping from within. There is one wolf in the first round, two in the second, three in the third and four in the fourth. The wolves don't bite at first, and a successful hit just means the character must save vs. paralysis or be knocked off. However, if the character is on the ground, they will have no mercy and attack until the character or the four shades are defeated. If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit reveals a piece of information leading to the King's resting place (*"When the falling waters show the way, will you see the house of my Lord."*), and if the character had fought without fear or hesitation, it may gift them with its treasure, which it retrieves from a buried cache: a leather sack with 440 electrum, 30 gp, two *potions of healing* and a +2 *scimitar* made of horn. If attacked or if the site is desecrated, the spirit attacks as a pack of eight shade wolves and does not rest until the characters are dead. **The Spirit of the Wolf (Pack of Shade Wolves) (8):** HD 2; DC 4; Atk

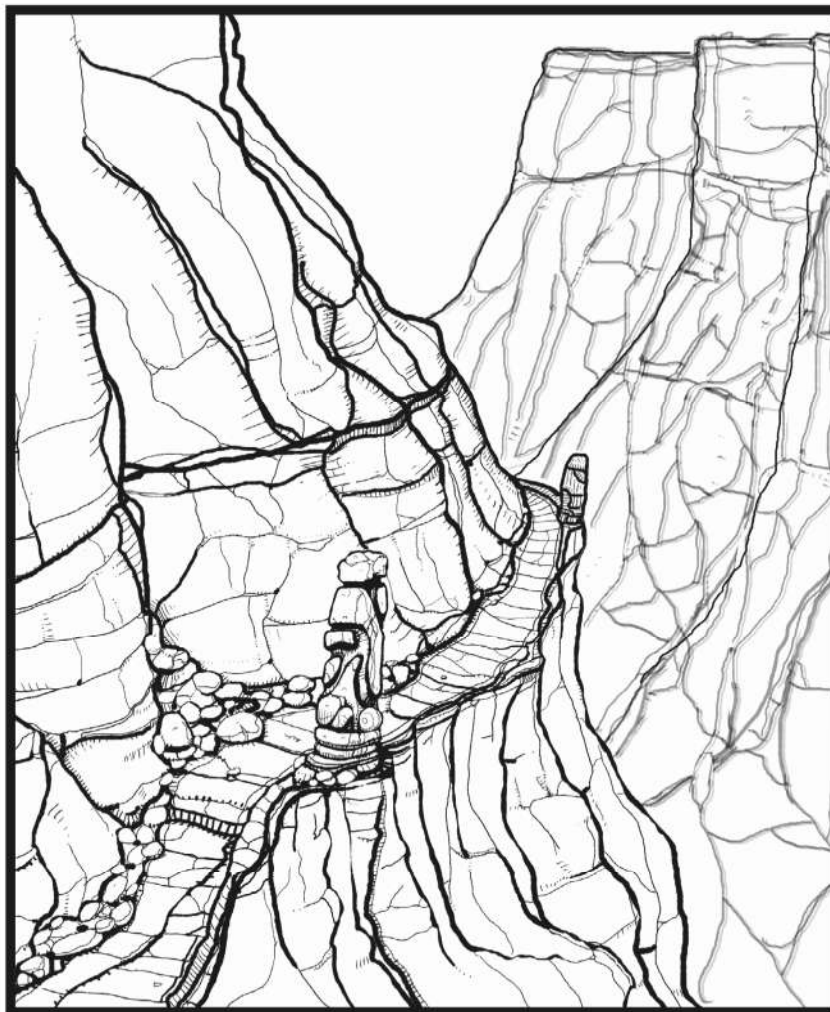
incorporeal bite 2d6 (ignores armour); Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; hp 16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16.

L. The Stone of the Worm: In the middle of a cluster of burial mounds gapes a wide 20' pit in the ground. Skulls of variable age from the relatively fresh to the mossy are mounted on spikes on the perimeter; the muddy interior resembles an opened grave. Bones intermixed with mud, clumps of hair, tangled muddy bodies and sacrificial goods of no value lie on the bottom. The sides are very treacherous to climb, and require a save vs. paralysis to climb out even with a rope, and two consecutive saves without one. On the bottom, the top of a large half-buried boulder is visible, carved with writhing shapes. Next to the boulder, the corner of a rotted wooden casket sticks from the mud. This is the holy site of the worm (*"The Spirit of the Dark Earth"*), one of the spiritual beings protecting the barbarians. Unlike its companions, the worm is not communicative but extremely malevolent. It only speaks to the characters if they call it out or disturb its pit, but even so, only reluctantly. It only offers a trial if asked for one; otherwise, it prefers human sacrifice, whether it is given one or if it can take it. If a character volunteers for the trial, he must stand on top of the boulder and defeat the worms emerging from the ground before they devour him. The worms come for three consecutive rounds, four each time. If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit imparts its piece of the puzzle leading to the King's resting place (*"When from the fivefold burial he is unearthed, will you see my Lord. He was buried under the mountain, under two stones, under the earth, under a hundred stones and under a double stone and wood. But if you see him, sees he you likewise!"*). The rotted casket can be broken with bare hands, and contains the worm's treasure, 470 electrum and four 300 gp opals, but anyone who steals from it earns the eternal enmity of the spirit. If attacked or if the site is desecrated, the spirit attacks first as a mass of worms emerging from the earth anywhere near the pit, and then, if 24 of the former, are slain, in its true form (a leathery rotund body supported by strong rubbery stalks which attacks with appendages sprouting from the top). **The Spirit of the Worm (Worms):** HD 1+2; DC 8; Atk bite 1d4; Spec attacks as 2 HD monster, immune to mind-affecting; hp 10, 5, 10, 9, 5, 5, 3, 4, 7, 5, 7, 9, 8, 6, 10, 4, 4, 9, 7, 10, 4, 6, 8, 9. **The Spirit of the Worm (Bonesucker):** HD 6; DC 4; Atk 4*arms 1d6 and save vs. poison or bones liquefy; Spec bonesucking (automatic damage until appendage removed and -2 to all rolls; permanent if not healed after combat as bones re-solidify in a wrong way); hp 29.

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

barbarians. The bear slumbers within the stone and is rather sleepy, but persistent disturbance draws it forth, roaring to ask who dares disturb its peace. It demands human sacrifice for its knowledge, or that a character stand its trial, but is actually in no mood for a fight – nagging requests, a sufficiently tasty treat or similar trick may win the secret. (Playtest note: rubbing the boulder with a piece of bearskin is NOT a good idea.) If a character volunteers for the trial, he must wrestle the spirit for four rounds without being crushed. The spirit does not attack to kill, but if it hits, it will hug for damage that round. If the champion emerges victorious, the spirit reveals a piece of information leading to the King's resting place (*"When you the mountain-depths see, will you see the house of my Lord. But if in his house my form you see, beware; for one alone is harmless, but more may kill you with but a sigh."*), and if the characters have been respectful or given him an especially tasty morsel, he gives them his gift: the boulder splits temporarily to reveal a *torc of bear power*, which grants 18 Strength when worn. If attacked or if the site is desecrated, the spirit attacks until dead. **The Spirit of the Bear (Lesser Elemental Force):** HD 8+6; DC 0; Atk paws 2d6+2 and hug 2d6+2; Spec +1 or better to hit, invisible, immune to mind-affecting; hp 48.

N. Smithy: Constant hammering sounds from this small plateau. The source of the noise is a primitive building constructed of stones; a long house ending in a large chimney. The forge is cold and the interior of the place is a wreck: the attic has collapsed on the lower floor, and the ground is littered with pulverised bones, destroyed brass objects and flat, mangled cakes of metal, once weapons, shields and armour. The invisible force holding the hammer is hammering on the shapeless remains of a helmet; if it is disturbed, it attacks. The hammer is a +1 weapon. **Phantom Smith:** War 4; DC 4; Atk +1 *smith's hammer* 1d8+3; Spec immune to cold and mind-affecting; Str 18, Con 18; hp 37.



O. Tomb Entrance: Here a narrow serpentine stair climbs the right side of a waterfall cascading down from the upper valley. It is treacherous without a rope – save vs. paralysis or fall for 6d6 damage. On the two sides of the falls stand two statues, each fifteen feet tall. The forms of Alliria and Mitra are barely recognisable beneath worn stucco. Only hints of the first's royal blue gown and the second's red-gold tunic are still visible. The faces are broken and pitiful. Once, these guardians warned men who stepped through the waters of the dangers facing them. Now, all they can produce is a strange, sad wail. Beyond the waterfall there is a large natural cavern filled with bones in its grotto-like recesses. A long, winding passage runs northwest to the tomb-complex proper.

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

Q. Wyvern Lair: The source of the river is a large cavern mouth, emerging from a shallow underground lake filled by many small streams. The rear chamber of the cavern is inhabited by two wyverns, usually away on a hunt (1:6 for each to be present). A horrid stench emanates from a pile of decomposing, mangled carcasses they have collected. Their single treasure is a golden ewer worth 1000 gp. From the wyverns' lair a small passage leads to a vertical chimney. Travelled upwards, it terminates in crags close to the mountain summit;

downwards it enters the tomb-complex at 8. Multitudes of bats lair in the chimney. 16 are vampiric, and attack if they detect characters ascending or descending. **Wyverns (2):** HD 7+7; DC 3; Atk bite 2d8 and sting 1d6 + deadly poison; hp 42, 41. **Vampire Bats (16):** HD 1+1, DC 8, Atk bite 1d4 plus drain blood 1d4/round; hp 2, 2, 8, 8, 8, 2, 4, 2, 4, 7, 4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 4.



The Tomb: The southern section of the dungeon complex (1–12) consists of rough-hewn passages covered in stucco. The northern section (13–17) is natural caverns, while the tomb of the Barbarian King (18–25) is mostly constructed of smooth stone with a stucco cover. Except in the caverns the walls are greasy and covered with ugly, primitive frescoes applied in black and red colours. These depict distorted, demonic animals as well as motifs hinting of vegetation and geometric patterns. In the southern part, random encounters occur 1:6 every 20 minutes, or 1:3 if loud noises are made (battle, loud spells, significant structural damage etc.). Each encounter is with 2d8 zombies until they run out; there are a total of 22 wandering zombies in the dungeon. **Zombies (22):** HD 2; DC 8; claws 1d8; hp 12, 8, 5, 14, 4, 14, 6, 7, 9, 9, 4, 13, 13, 12, 8, 8, 5, 10, 6, 9, 12, 6.

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

2. A burial chamber, entrance blocked by unclean, heavy cobwebs. Inside is the choking smell of dust and dried mildew; clay jars lie everywhere on the ground and in recesses. 6 wights lair here, wearing cobweb-heavy shrouds and a total of 20 gp worth of jewellery. **Wights (6):** HD 4; DC 5; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 22, 18, 6, 18, 16, 24.

3. A mural decorating the southern niche depicts a bearded man painted in grey colours with a piercing silvery stare. Before him on the ground are offerings of brass and silver vessels, glass beads, and the like, to a total of 220 gp. If someone steals from these he must save vs. charm or attack his companions in a shrieking frenzy until incapacitated. Destroying the fresco brings a *curse* (the character's desiccating skin gradually peels off like the grey fresco; losing 1d3 hp daily with no chance of natural healing and only half effect from spells) and uncovers a wall erected of rough stones. Breaking through this layer reveals the old man's dried-out cadaver wearing a +1 *cloak* – it attacks as a wight if disturbed. **Wight:** HD 4; DC 4 (*cloak* +1); Atk claws 1d6+LVL; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 14.

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

5. A stele standing by the northeast wall shows a muscular, bearded man with no face, and is flanked by two rampant

bear idols. The eyes are empty holes. If someone does not approach here in genuflection or crawling on the ground, 22 of the dead the in the previous cavern animate as zombies and attack. The bear idols have polished topaz eyes (4*160 gp), but if someone touches them, the statue to the left breathes flames, and the one to the right, acidic vapours (3d6 Hp each, save vs. breath halves). If gems are inserted into the eye sockets of the stele, the massive stone shifts with a grinding noise, revealing the crawlway to the inner tomb. **Zombies (14):** HD 2; DC 8; Atk claws 1d8; hp 7, 11, 8, 10, 6, 5, 6, 7, 16, 10, 11, 4, 10, 12.

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

7. This isolated, natural grotto is avoided by the undead. If the characters don't call attention to themselves, they may rest safely here. In a shallow basin, water dripping from the ceiling has formed a small pool. Within, there is a curious object resembling molten, clear green glass. It is actually green slime. **Green Slime:** HD 2; DC 9; Atk slime in 1d4 rounds; hp 13.

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

9. Burial chamber. On the ground, especially near the archway to the south, lie valuable offerings – metal vessels, ivory carvings, strings of beads made of semi-precious stones etc. – with a total value of 300 gp. Five withered, blackened corpses have been nailed to wooden racks by the walls with copper nails. The eyes of the slumped heads are shrouded with linen. If the offerings are disturbed or the southern chamber desecrated, these guardians exhale a black smoke, which coalesces into shadowy forms with burning eyes. **Shadows (5):** HD 3; DC 7; Atk touch 1d6 Str; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 10, 21, 11, 9, 16.

10. As the archway raised from smoothly polished blocks, the chamber's regular rectangular form, and the superior frescoes show, this is the resting place of a distinguished person. A short flight of steps leads up to a sarcophagus covered with beaten brass plates, before which stands a cauldron full of gold dust (630 gp). The linen-wrapped body in the sarcophagus is in good shape, wearing a copper mask, an instrument on his hands that transforms them into bestial claws, and several bracers, buckles and wires around his arms and legs. The corpse also wears a faded purple *cloak* +1. If it is disturbed, it attacks from sur-

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prise as a mummy, grabbing the closest character's throat. Due to the *ring of fire resistance* worn under the wrappings, it is not susceptible to fire like regular mummies, but it gains no special resistance from the ring either. There are 3 gems worth 350 gp apiece under the wrappings, two in the eye sockets and one on the breast. **Mummy:** HD 5+3; DC 2

(*cloak* +1); Atk slam 1d12+rot; Spec fear, +1 or better to hit, weapon resistance; *ring of fire resistance*, hp 21.

11. This elongated burial hall enters a round, domed chamber to the east, whose centre is occupied by a round pit. Seven wooden coffins stand by the walls. From the pit

issues the smell of rotting vegetation and damp earth. The occupants of the coffins are wights waiting to strike, six normal and one a magic-user who knows the ancient magic of the Druids. The valuables in the coffins are all together worth 510 gp; in addition to multiple normal weapons, there is a *dagger* +1. The pit is 30' deep and, like the inside of a jug, broadens downwards. Anyone who falls in suffers no damage from landing on the vegetation, but this awakens the otherwise dormant (unless grown by the wight druid) shambling mound that lairs in the pit. There are further valuables beneath the plant matter: 10 silver ingots worth 32 gp each and a *horn of blasting*. **Wights (6):** HD 4; DC 5; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; Spec silver or +1 to hit; hp 15, 18, 18, 15, 20, 13. **Wight Druid:** HD 6; DC 5; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; Spec silver or +1 to hit; robes of druid power (spells function 2 levels higher than normal); hp 24; *Spells:* 4/3/2; 1: *entangle**2, *feyfire**2, 2: *beat metal*, *produce flame*, *warp wood*; 3: *cause disease*, *plant growth* (used on the mound in the pit, it allows it to attack opponents in the chamber with its tentacles). **Shambling Mound:** HD 6; DC 0; Atk 2*tentacles 1d10; Spec entanglement, suffocation, immune to fire, electricity adds 1 HD per three dice, cold ½ damage; hp 33.

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

13. A large, natural cavern whose floor is covered in damp piles of soft earth. Poking through the soil are human bones, the final remains of odd rotted cadavers; from this rich environment sprout vines, ferns, small shrubs. In the centre of all this is a gnarled little tree radiating a golden light, bearing four fruits resembling yellow tomatoes. These juicy fruits restore 4d6 hp each and rejuvenate the

character who consumes them by two years. Since they are very ripe, they may not be kept for long.

14. Grotto with a pool of water. The water leads through an underwater passage to a different underground complex. At its tightest point, the passage is clogged by a gelatinous cube, nearly invisible in the water. **Gelatinous Cube:** HD 4; DC 8; atk gelatine 2d4 + paralyse; engulfment, transparency, immune to lightning and cold; hp 25.

15. A burial chamber decorated with several frescoes. By the walls stand six wooden coffins, containing wights waiting for an opportunity to attack. They have 320 gp worth of valuables in minor decorative objects; the rightmost coffin to the north also holds a vial of orange oily liquid, a *fire bomb* that explodes as a 5d6 fireball if subjected to fire or concussion. **Wights (6):** HD 4; DC 5; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; silver or +1 to hit; hp 22, 20, 14, 13, 13, 15.

16. The cavernous passage is blocked by a collapse here. On top of the jumble of stones, a skeletal arm tries to reach between the ceiling and the rocks, grasping a small metal tube. This is a scroll case covered in contact poison (save twice or take 2d6 damage on each failure) which contains a druidic scroll (*beat metal**2, *stone shape*).

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

18. This corridor is the entrance to the Barbarian King's inner tomb-complex. The walls are polished stone, decorated with frescoes of worshipping men and women, processing down the hall bearing gifts and lead by a priest wearing animal hides and a bear mask. On the other side, other men, this time armed, are going down the same hall, but they are stopped by animal-men (hybrid monstrosities) who hurl them into a fiery inferno. The corridor is trapped: there is a double pit in the middle. The first is badly concealed and only 30' deep; the other is more care-



fully hidden, 40' deep and lined with rusted spikes (1d6 spikes, 1d6 damage each plus save vs. poison or contract gangrene). The pits close on their own after eight rounds. Unarmed characters approaching in acts miming worship do not trigger the pits.

19. This used to be a sacrificial area before being converted into a tomb. Murals depict barbarians laying their offerings before huge, fearsome-looking animals (there are figures of the wolf, bear, eagle and worm), and in turn receiving blessings. The room has been set up as a false crypt: A crude stone bier, flanked by two idols depicting snarling bear idols painted red and black (magical but no discernible function) holds the remains of a warrior. He wears fine, if decayed clothes, an iron crown, copper plate mail (treat as scale due to age and poor materials), a battleaxe (also copper), golden jewels worth 300 gp around the neck and a +1 *shield*. There is a secret passage to the northwest. This is no secret door, but rather the entrance was closed off with a hastily constructed mortar-less wall of rough stones, the gaps filled with earth and clay, and the surface stuccoed and painted over. Removing the stones and creating a man-sized entry takes twenty minutes.

20. This circular hallway is vividly painted from floor to ceiling. The murals are a connected series, going clockwise from the entry point, depicting the soul's journey: first as a worm crawling up from the earth (southern quarter), then as an eagle (western quarter), wolf (north), bear (east), and finally as a worm once more. All depictions are unpleasant to behold: the worm feasts on terribly mutilated human corpses, the eagle claws out the eyes of bound captives, the wolf tears apart helpless infants, and the bear stomps small human forms to a bloody pulp. The inner ring has a number of small alcoves. These contain sacrifices appropriate for the creatures on the opposing side – clay urns of human ashes and dirt for the worm, crushed rodents for the bird, lamb skulls for the wolf and human bones for the bear. All exits to chambers are hidden as in **19**, but these entrances are easier to open, only needing ten minutes to remove the rocks blocking the way in.

21. The tomb of animals: this room has an arched ceiling and painted walls. The paintings are of animals and man-animal hybrids torturing and eating faceless human victims. The air is heavy and the lights burn with a faint greenish tint – there is a weird, unpleasant smell from the combination of musty spices used in mummification and old grave-stench. Heaps and heaps of carefully mummified animal remains lie along the walls, wrapped in dyed cloth and preserved with incense and herbs. At the end of the room, there is a sealed well (painted with the eye of a cat) covered in the same stucco as the doorways. If the stucco is scraped off and the lid of the well is removed, the noxious gases inside ignite if there is any sort of open flame, exploding in a ball of fire (6d6, save vs. breath for ½). The well is 30' deep with a 20' diameter lower room

below. This is filled with even more corpses, animals and humans alike heaped together pell-mell. If someone takes great pains to search these remains (six hours digging), he finds 210 gp worth of low-value jewellery and a *ring of protection* +1 – but must save vs. polymorph or contract lycanthropy and save vs. poison or contract grave fever (fatal in 1d3 weeks, character returns as undead monster).

22. The tomb of plants: arched ceiling, frescoes on the walls depict a dark and twisted forest where humans are strangled by tree-monsters. The air is heavy and fetid, smelling of earth and mould. Along the wall sit or lie a number of human mummies in contorted poses, betraying intense agony and pain. Roots and vines grow from their insides, tearing their grave-wrappings apart. The southern end of the room has a small depression filled with ceramic jugs, sealed with resin and tar. There are 15 such jugs, and each is completely intact. If the jugs or bodies are disturbed, four mummies (or rather, the vines under the wrappings animating them) attack, preferring to strangle intruders with their appendages. As to the ceramic jugs:

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

Killer Vine Zombies (4): HD 4; DC 4; Atk vines 1d6+entanglement; Spec strangle 2d6/round, immune to cold and mind-affecting; hp 10, 9, 16, 22.

23. The tomb of servants: similar but significantly less decorated. The murals, depicting servants working in a village, seem to have been hastily done and are of a uniformly poor quality. There are many human bones here, strewn about and mixed with rags. There can also be found 45 gp worth of jewellery, but taking it invites the Curse of the Servants (-4 to all rolls until removed).

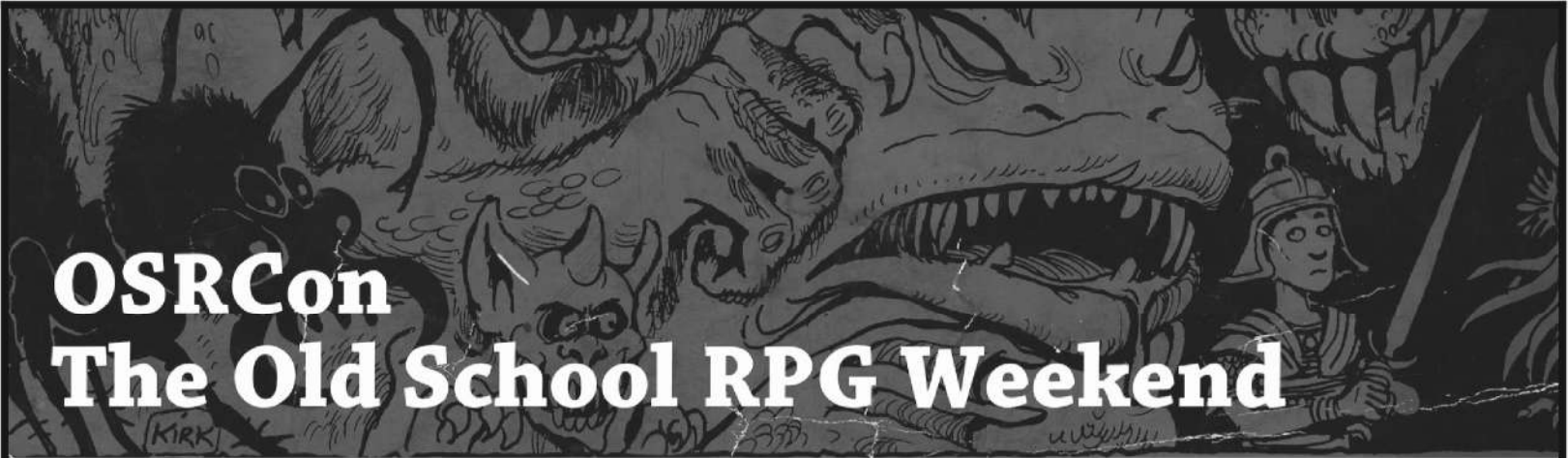
24. Collapse: opening the doorway to this area, it appears that the ceiling of the passage had collapsed and blocked

the stairs. This, however, is a ruse; the rocks are piled against a wooden door set at a 45 degree angle, and can be removed within an hour of work. The steep stairs leading down are flanked by frescoes of the tomb's builders, heaving the corridors, painting the walls and finally – just as the passage terminates – being immured.

25. The Barbarian King's burial chamber, consisting of a northern antechamber (10' ceiling), a more spacious inner tomb (25'), and a sealed burial vault. As always, the walls are full of frescoes, depicting conquests and war (burned villages, captives, the bloody sacrifices of animalistic priests), feasts and orgies. There are many miscellaneous items here, left for the afterlife: clay jars with wheat, knives and household tools (looms, hand mills etc). The inner tomb is where the Barbarian King's horse and wives were buried: unearthing these remains takes two hours of digging. The horse's saddle is too decayed to be used any more, but the golden bits and gems are still worth 300 gp, while the three female skeletons have 620 gp worth of jewellery and a tattered cloak that used to be magical. If these two locations are disturbed, however, the party will be attacked by a horse-shaped wraith and three shadows crying in mournful lament within the week. The southernmost wall contains the vault of the barbarian king: it is sealed by a pair of stone doors, which take a bend bars roll or three hours of work to open. Beyond is a short flight of stairs, leading up to a second (wooden) door. This door is covered in paintings, although badly deteriorated – a

depiction of the Barbarian King, a muscular, faceless man wearing an iron crown, sceptre and sword. If this wooden door is opened, the king's corpse, along with his surrounding cohort of 22 skeletons that have followed him into undeath, comes to life, issues a challenge to the intruders and attacks. If the undead warlord and his aides are defeated, his treasure is free for the taking: there is an iron pot filled with golden jewels (1600 gp total), 2 *potions of giant strength* and 2 *potions of heroism* in addition to the fallen warlord's personal equipment. **The Barbarian King:** HD 8; DC -1 (skeleton, *chainmail* +2); Atk *brass two-handed sword* +2 1d10+4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12; *sceptre of command* (as clerical spell, 2/day); hp 44. **Skeletons (22):** HD 1; DC 7; Atk *longsword* 1d8; hp 7, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 7, 4, 2, 6, 2, 4, 4, 5, 2, 5, 5, 8, 1, 5, 6, 5, 6.

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

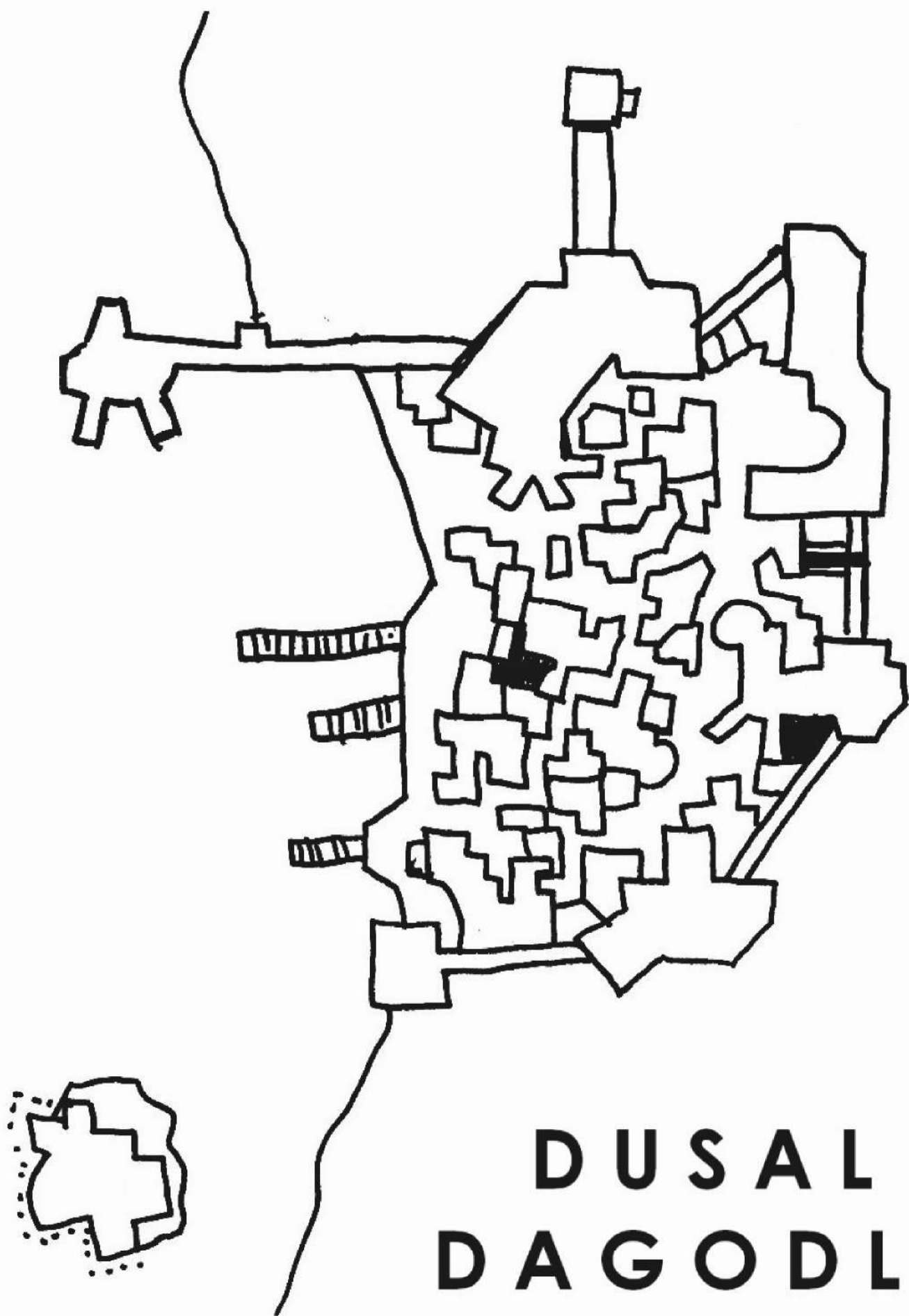


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**DUSAL
DAGODLI**

The City State of Dusal Dagodli

locale/adventure by Gabor Lux

playtested by Gabor Acs, Kalman Farago, Laszlo Feher, and Gabor Izapy; dedicated to Italo Calvino

The City: The City State of Dusal Dagodli (pop. 1200) is the calm holiday resort of a few comfort-loving deities on the Sea of Lost Days. The marketplace of ideas in this idyllic, peaceful, and for many dead-boring city state has lead to the flourishing of many competing schools of thought. Religious doctrines are only some of the options for discerning savants; other ethical and moral creeds, to suit most temperaments and provide proper justification for one's deeds, are in abundant supply.

The small, crowded city is ringed by tall and incredibly massive buildings. Most houses within the ring are also at least four or more stories, and they are linked by bridges, galleries and balconies. The lands outside the walls are wild, but not dangerous; the Dexad and the gods provide ample protection for the rocky hilltops, small valleys and miniature lakes within Dusal Dagodli's environs. A few small colonies and villas are found in this countryside.

Although the greatest power in Dusal Dagodli is held by the gods, administration and policing is provided by bureaucrats and soldiers under the control of the Dexad. Membership in this ten-person executive authority, which is open to foreigners as well as citizens, is earned by civic merit and esteem, calculated on the basis of a complicated and constantly re-tallied point system. Only members of the Dexad may make decisions in issues of the city state or gain access to its confidential archives. The Dexad also enjoys monopoly over the right of admittance to the city and the rest of the isle; the former is normally priced at 5 gp and the latter at 100 gp with a further 100 gp deposit; for outlanders, it is mandatory to wear a distinguishing armband while in Dusal Dagodli. The monopolist profits are redistributed among the Dexad's members on the basis of its current organisational structure, weighted by the points possessed by individual members. In accordance with the principle of Optimal Equilibrium, the Dexad may outsource specific public functions if they can be more efficiently fulfilled by private parties than its own corps.

The Places

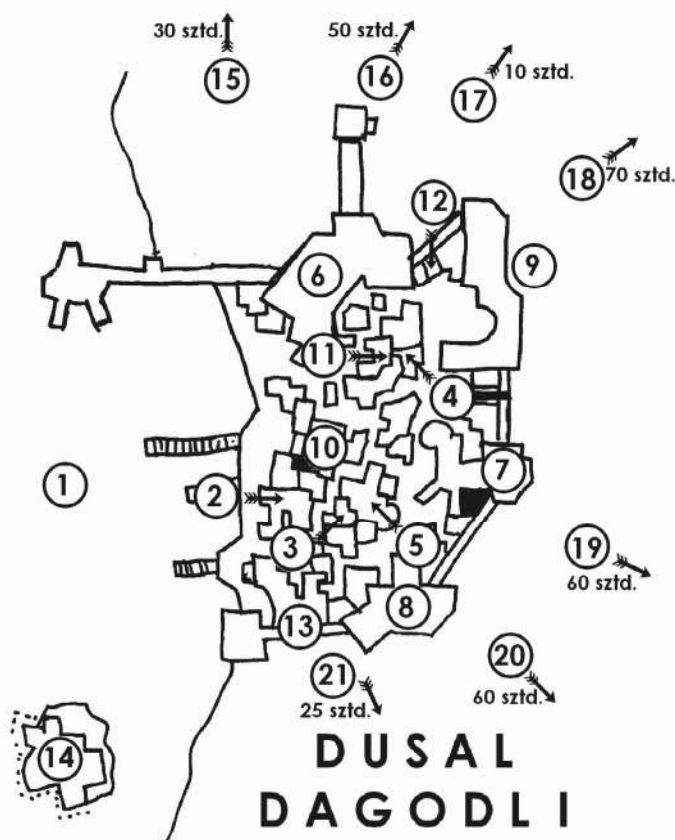
1. Port: Promenade with a long row of old bronze dolphins; teeming multitudes. Sunken marble slabs and torsos clearly visible under the clear water are remains of a fallen regime condemned to be forgotten.

2. Doaal's Star is the city state's best known serai. The prices are steep, reaching 5-7 gp per night, but the fare is very good and the premises entirely safe. A suite occupying the entire southern wing is on permanent reserve to an important client – a tyrant or a god, some say – and not available to guests.

3. The Greater Syncretistic Rabbinate, concerned with a synthesis of all religious and philosophical teachings, has evolved into a society celebrating abstract obfuscation for its own sake. Almost as skilled at sophistry as the Incrementalists, its followers are more concerned with a flamboyant lifestyle than the accumulation of power. The small but friendly structure is dominated by suites around an interior court rich with vegetation.

4. The Heterodox Teacrazy was once a place for lively debate and discussion. Now the sumptuous building of blue, gold and green stands empty. Seeing the only goal that united the adherents accomplished, they have scattered to the winds and left the city behind.

5. The Temple of Fedafuce is a place to buy and sell. Suitably exclusive for this city, its services here go beyond the usual loans, letters of credit and other deals in money: subtle and forbidden derivatives, a gambler's poisonous delight, are for sale; one may wager one's kin, one's life, or even one's soul, for buyers may here be found. In chains and fetters deep underground, the overlord of a now lost city state laments what he had sold.



6. The Northern Gate is in fact one of the fortress complexes overlooking the city, home to soldiers and bureaucrats. Punishments for transgressors of local law are here meted out. The only sentence is exile one stadion into the island: a round tunnel ending in a concrete wall and a massive ten-ton piston accomplish the deed.

7–8. The Eastern Gate and The Gate of Omerg Yemtri are half fortress, half a combination of residences, plazas, markets and places of entertainment. They are rather run-down, but possess a derelict charm.

9. The Incrementon: Pragmatic Incrementalism is a school of philosophy and governance which has gained worldwide interest due to its emphasis on achieving the general good through a series of small steps. It is easy to operationalise and implement, and perfectly able to supply an ideology for any regime or policy, making it one of the most popular self-justifying humbugs of ruling circles all over the planet, and contributing significantly to the material gain of Incrementalist philosophers. The faction has possessed the highest tally of points in Dusal Dagodli as far back as anyone can remember. Their headquarters, the Incrementon, is a futurist palace overshadowing the city with its eighteen levels, garden terraces and elegant cafés. As a consulting agency, it maintains a valuable historical archive and a cache of magical writings: these are available to outsiders at market prices, and to cathecumens at various discounts.

10. New Famful is an independent micro-state in the heart of Dusal Dagodli, with its own legislation, armed forces, and citizenship. The main inhabitants are exiles from the city state of Famful, mostly members of the old aristocracy and moneybags fleeing from the egalitarian rule of Mung – as well as its redistributivist policies and the throngs of beggars it has attracted to their ancient homeland. Preaching return to a sedate and simple pastoral lifestyle from the heart of a dense city, the emigrants ever scheme against the men of the Empire, and have been known to sponsor missions of espionage and terrorism.

11. The Mission of Mung, noting the affluence of the city state, has largely placed emphasis on questions of ideal

urban development instead of social progress. Archdeacon Thelanos has nevertheless been frustrated by constant administrative meddling: his petitions and generous funding have not yet warmed the city's authorities to him, while requests for an island pass have been entirely unsuccessful. For years, Mung's point value has not even achieved the minimal threshold.

12. The Council of the Transarchic Sages has seen better days, reduced to penury due to inflexible orthodoxy. Grandiose plans to support the constant adaptation of governance structures to public needs have yet to be taken seriously anywhere, and funding has completely dried up since the enthusiasm accompanying the initial charter. The old and bitter remnants of the council, who accuse the Incrementalists of offering a watered-down imitation of their own tenets, are known to pass their days in endless discussion of policy on the balcony of their dilapidated residence; the senile old fools have been known to insult strangers and hurl trash or other foul materials at anyone who approaches within throwing range.

13. The Temple of Bubeq Mor, a fanciful but uninviting complex, is sanctum to the exclusive religion of this inscrutable deity. Worshippers consider affiliation a great privilege,

for which they pay substantial sums. It is not known what form the returns take, or if they are even worthwhile: nonetheless, the austerity of the interior and the simplicity of the idol suggest a purpose beyond self-benefit.

14. The Palace of Beauty soars over the sea with marble and porphyry terraces. This sanctum to Xoé, the goddess of beauty and her all-female retinue is a gilded cage: the sea-side is surrounded by gold-plated poles in the water, a perimeter that keeps inhabitants in and interlopers out with its peculiar power. Only on select holy days, the lowest and highest tides of the year, does a large barge pass: disciples to beauty are then admitted, and those who no longer embody the criteria of Perfect Splendour are sent back to the world with a funeral dirge. A teleportation gate links the temple to Xoé's Aviary (22).

15. The Baths of the Bull's Well are noted for their cure of arthritis and melancholy. Old men retired in comfort are known to congregate here; women are not admitted.



16–18. Halidon and Aellos are pastoral settlements, as closed to the world as it is to them. Tremder Amath, on the far shore of the island, is a drab fishermen's village monitored by watch towers. Unlike the other two, it is off limits to both strangers bearing an island pass – and most autochthones as well.

19. **The Temple of Snolog** is the main centre of this hedonistic religion on Fomalhaut, where the slug-deity lives in pampered comfort. The orgies of the shaved priests and priestesses are most infamous; yet behind the easy façade are men and women who can kill with the mind as well as implements that send forth invisible forces, and a domed temple's mirages that are known to the wise as a separate, inverted (?) world.

20. **The Lakes of the Dexad** are named for the council which rules Dusal Dagodli. Half-submerged stone rods sunk to unfathomable depths send forth a steady vibration, with which those attuned to abstract mathematics may commune to gain understanding. Many gain nought; some gain too much and wander the land in empty glee.

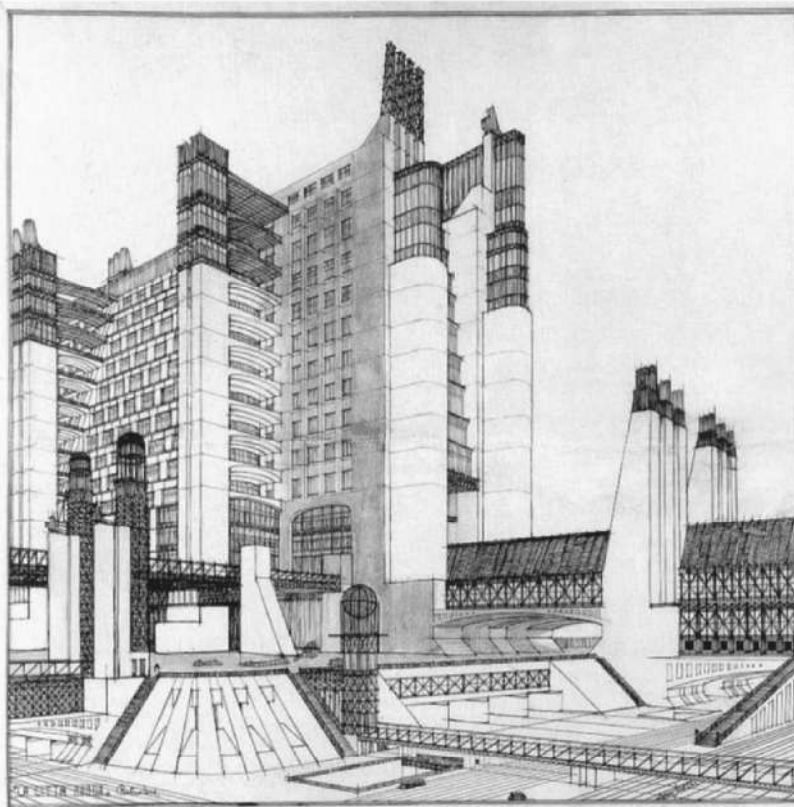
21. **The Temple of Mezeng** is a half-submerged sequence of terraces by a small but deep lake. Worship is highly methodical, organised around rote sequences which adherents follow unquestioningly and with exactitude. Each rote follows from directions revealed by the clerical hierarchy. Followers include multiple notables in the city, who claim their participation gives them a renewed sense of purpose in their ordinary life. Rumours of doppelganger infiltration in the faith have been denied with the usual vehemence by Mezeng's spokesmen.

22. **Xoé's Aviary** is a triangular group of empty glass-and-steel towers linked to the Palace of Beauty (14) via a gold-and-pearl gate – a refuge for colourful birds and the priest-esses who care for them. It is a self-contained biosystem of hunters and prey, some subtle and some not, where none may remain uninvolved. Every day, cries fill the glittering prison-paradise. Some say this place is the faith's perversion; others call it its essence, its holy of holies.

The Proclamations of Eidark the Gastronomer

☞☞☞ **The Incrementon:** This meeting point of enlightened governing philosophies, extravagant architecture and neo-avant-garde cuisine is a rare point of light under the dark skies of Fomalhaut. The entrées are characterised by platings seemingly irregular, but in fact meticulously composed with the most precise strokes – a feast of layers and textures in the sequence of dishes delicately juxtaposed with the thematically unified, but constantly and consciously varied, shapes of our plates. Unified yet nonetheless ultra-variant – here, then, is the very spirit of the New Cuisine in an unmistakably splendid environment!

☞ **Doaal's Star:** Famed, respected, but now overshadowed by the unstoppable minds of the Incrementon, this workshop of the Culinary is a locus of impeccable Chromatic traditions. Fundamental dodecahedron-signatures with a lopsided glint on the glaze – Doaal's consistent introduction – lead into a perfect order of the dip's dots, following the composition like an unvanquishable army. The bronze-hued dusts of the house bring calm and a sharp contemplation – and yet, one may not escape the impression that Doaal's star, after so many years, is a falling one.



X Bilbul's Roast:

Popular for unfathomable reasons, this place thrives on pseudo-cuisine dedicated to the basest and most animalistic vulgarities of self-nourishment. One finds here sea urchins served on "rectangular" wooden slabs with oil-and-vinegar garnish and limp piles of spuds. The forms are indeed ruled by chaos, but chaos without any hidden order – and elementary geometric principles are

trodden upon with the roast cornerfish, while the "dessert," sea gelatine, is little better. If one takes the time to sail to this city with all the alternatives it has to offer – what sort of stubborn bad taste would ever compel him to dine here?! Ω

Slaughter in the Salt Pits

by Gabor Lux

playtested by Gabor Acs (Gromm, half-orc Cleric 5), Akos Laszlo (Chaman the Permanent Fiend, Fighter 6), Simor Or Halp (Fighter 3, NPC), Zongar the Slayer (Cleric 4, NPC), and Yazov Tertax (Cleric 4, NPC).

Background: Nestled among the tall foothills of the peninsula, in the shadows of a ruined aqueduct raised by an ancient empire, Orthil's salt mines have passed from hand to hand enriching many warlords and petty rulers over the decades – above all the men of the cities, who deal with northern chief or southern wazir, nomad lord or imperial governor and never think twice about it. In this wild and lawless land, power is everything and nothing: it decides all, but at the wrong moment it slips from the grasping gauntlet as readily as from silken glove.

So it was that 110 years after its foundation by Governor Redion and thirty after Lord Armengart, who constructed the small keep over the settlement, Orthil fell under the sway of the evil cleric Narzugon, who marched into the village with his hired men, overthrew the ragtag garrison of a distant and crumbling empire, and established a rule of subjugation and unending labour. The men of the village now worked in the mines without compensation to pay for Narzugon's protection, and those who dared speak against him were enslaved, to work in the salt pits under the eyes of merciless overseers and giant ravens. Not even the dead could rest: Narzugon had the village cemetery dug up and animated the bodies to form an army to march against the surrounding lands. Still, the salt flowed as before; the men of the cities were content.

Orthil

A. Harrek's smokehouse: Tavern built from dark logs, consisting of a large common room and a separate chamber for Harrek (Warrior 3), his wife Dorna (Warrior 4) and their eight children. This is the only place in Orthil where strangers are permitted to stay overnight. While Narzugon's spies are often present, they aren't automatically suspicious of travellers – unless they appear unusually interested in village affairs, or spend too much time poking around where outsiders shouldn't be. Roll 1d6 6 times to see who is present in the smokehouse:

(4:6) Group of 2d6 local oldsters swapping tales about their glory years. Most of them were miners (1-1 HD), but five are retired veterans with combat experience, and

all are still up for a fight if it means they get to smash in the heads of Narzugon's thugs.

(3:6) Group of 1d3 spies, shady never-do-wells who loiter around the village and snitch on locals and strangers (Thief 1). They know they wouldn't last a day here if it weren't for their master, and behave accordingly.

(2:6) Salt merchant (Thief 3), five guards (Warrior 2) and six hands (HD 1) to watch after the wagons. There is a 50% chance they still have a chest with 1d3*100 gp to pay for their current shipment.

(2:6) Narzugon's men, 2d6 soldiers from the keep or the mines. They are unwelcome here, but don't particularly care.

(1:6) Cleric, one of the low-ranking acolytes from the mines or the keep, a hooded figure drinking in a corner.

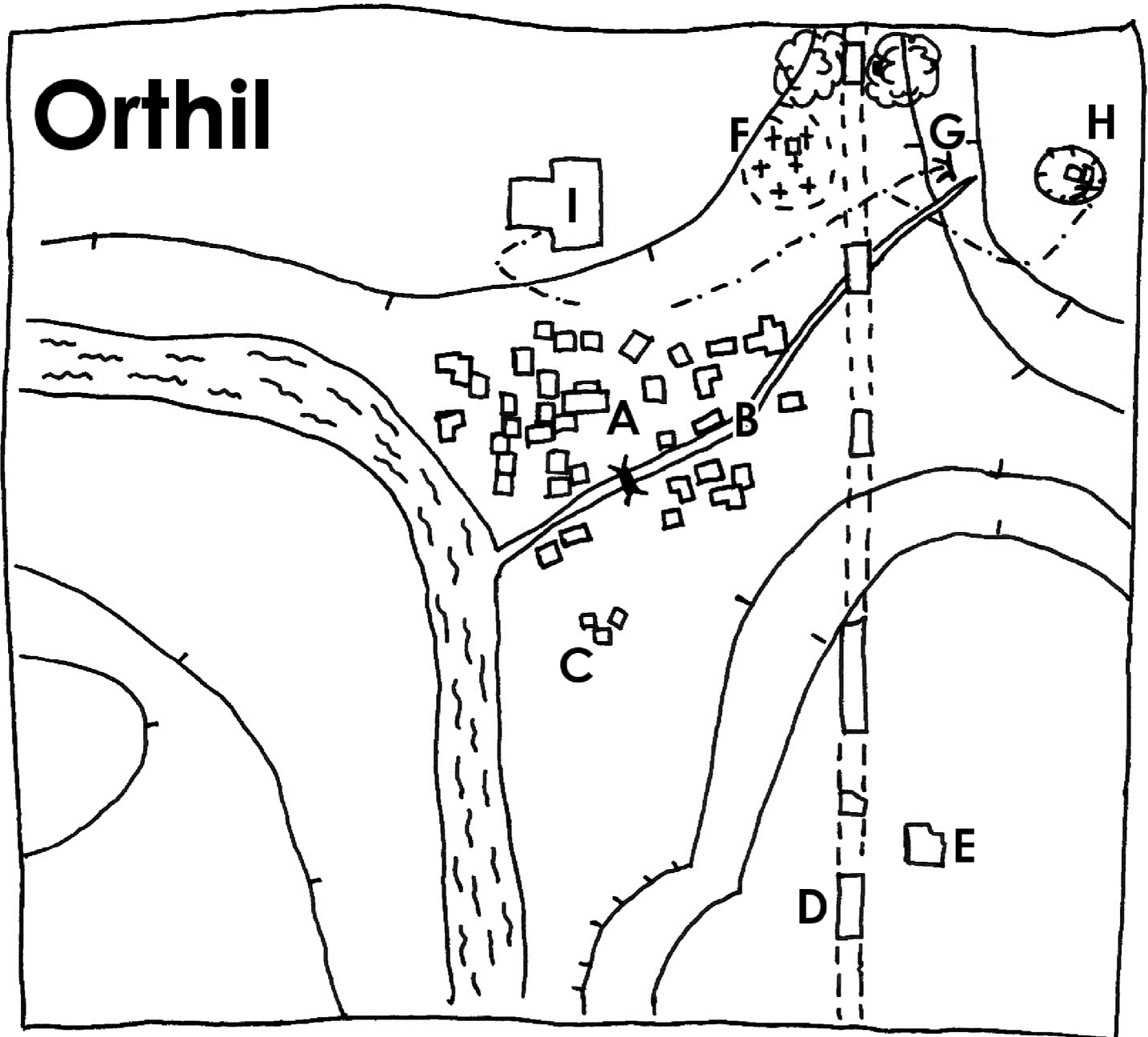
(1:6) Adventurers, three travellers: Simor Or Halp (Warrior 3), Zongar the Slayer (Priest 4) and Yazov Tertax (Priest 4). They have come to overthrow Narzugon, but aren't sure yet how they should go about it. They are considering sneaking into the mines and seeing where that takes them.

Harrek: War 3; DC 10 or 5 (chainmail); Atk battleaxe 1d8; hp 15. **Dorna:** War 4; DC 9 (Dexterity); Atk longsword 1d8 or longbow 1d6; hp 32. **Old Miners (7):** HD 1-1; DC 10 or 8 (leather); Atk – or miner's pick 1d6+1; hp 4, 7, 4, 1, 1, 1, 1. **Old Veterans (5):** War 2-2; DC 10 or 7 (ring mail); Atk – or battleaxe 1d8 or spear 1d6; hp 4, 5, 12, 4, 3. **Spies (1d3):** Thief 1; DC 9 (light leather); Atk dagger 1d4; hp 6, 2, 1. **Salt Merchant:** Thief 3; DC 8 (leather); Atk shortsword 1d6 or dagger 1d4; 2d6*10 gp, trading pass, crude trail map; hp 9. **Merchant's Guards (5):** War 1; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk spear 1d6; hp 4, 6, 1, 9, 6. **Merchant's Retinue (6):** HD 1; DC 8 (leather); Atk clubs 1d6; hp 7, 8, 2, 6, 3, 8.

Simor Or Halp: War 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield); Atk battleaxe 1d8; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 15; LG; hp 18; 30 gp, 150 sp, lantern, rope and rations, brown leather cloak. Simor has short-cropped blonde hair and moustache.

Zongar the Slayer: Pr 4 of Thor; DC 4 (chain, shield); Atk warhammer 1d8; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 7, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13; CG; hp 20; 35 gp, 3* holy water, 6* incense, torches, prayer book. Spells: 1: *command*, *cure light wounds*, *detect evil*, *protection from evil*; 2: *augury*, *hold person*. Zongar is clad in a green cloak, and is an expert woodsman.

Yazov Tertax: Cleric 4 of Orcus; DC 4 (chain shirt, shield, Dexterity); Atk mace 1d6+1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 17; CE; hp 18; 5 gp, scroll (*animate dead*). Masquerading as a bumbling, inept fighter, Yazov is a cleric of Orcus who has been sent along with these dupes to spy on the village and assess its weaknesses. He wields a heavy mace 'because they are more trustworthy against undead skeletons than swords'. Spells: 1: *command**2, *cure light wounds*, *detect magic*, *sanctuary*. Orcus is withholding his 2nd level spells until the end of this quest.



B. Alchemist: The only two-story house in Orthil, and the only one with glass windows. A painted board advertises Rozun Armis and his alchemical mixtures. The alchemist is a balding fellow in reddish clothing who wears a black stone amulet with a carved eye around his neck ("The Amulet of Vision" – in fact a cheap fake with *Nystulio's Magical Aura*). He is fond of rubbing his hands together and lamenting the lack of custom in his store. He concocts his mixtures from mineral deposits found in local streams, and there is a 1:6 probability he is currently out on an expedition. He sells the following mixtures:

- health tonic (30 gp): to be taken before great exertions, prepared with a long distillation process. Shake before use and don't consume with alcohol. Ineffective.
- invigorative tonic (5 gp): a mixture of spring water, alcohol, sugar and various minerals sold in glass bottles.

It has a pleasant fizz when shaken and tastes great, although the minimal opiate content makes it slightly addictive, and the minerals are also bad for you. This is the most popular product here.

- acid (10 gp)
- flaming oil (2 gp)
- love potion (40 gp): made from three herbal, two mineral, and two animal components and flavoured with sweet sugar for her enjoyment. Ineffective and fattening.
- balm against diseases (10 gp): a regular application is a sure way to prevent and alleviate swamp tetanus, giant gnat bites, fever and the effects of miasmatic environments. Ineffective.

Rozun Armis keeps a locked cabinet on his upper floor, where a wooden box contains his treasures: 500 sp, 250 gp, and a greenstone statuette of a cat. His laboratory occupies

most of the lower floor with its stills, barrels, copper coils, and wooden vats.

C. Ruined houses: A cluster of houses destroyed in a barbarian raid. They are shunned as haunted, although persistent rumour has it they still hold hidden valuables. A permit to explore and loot the place would cost 10 gp from the village authorities, but the only occupants are 7 small poisonous spiders and there is no treasure. **Spiders (7):** HD 1; DC 8; Atk bite 1 + poison; Spec poison; hp 8, 1, 2, 4, 5, 2, 6.

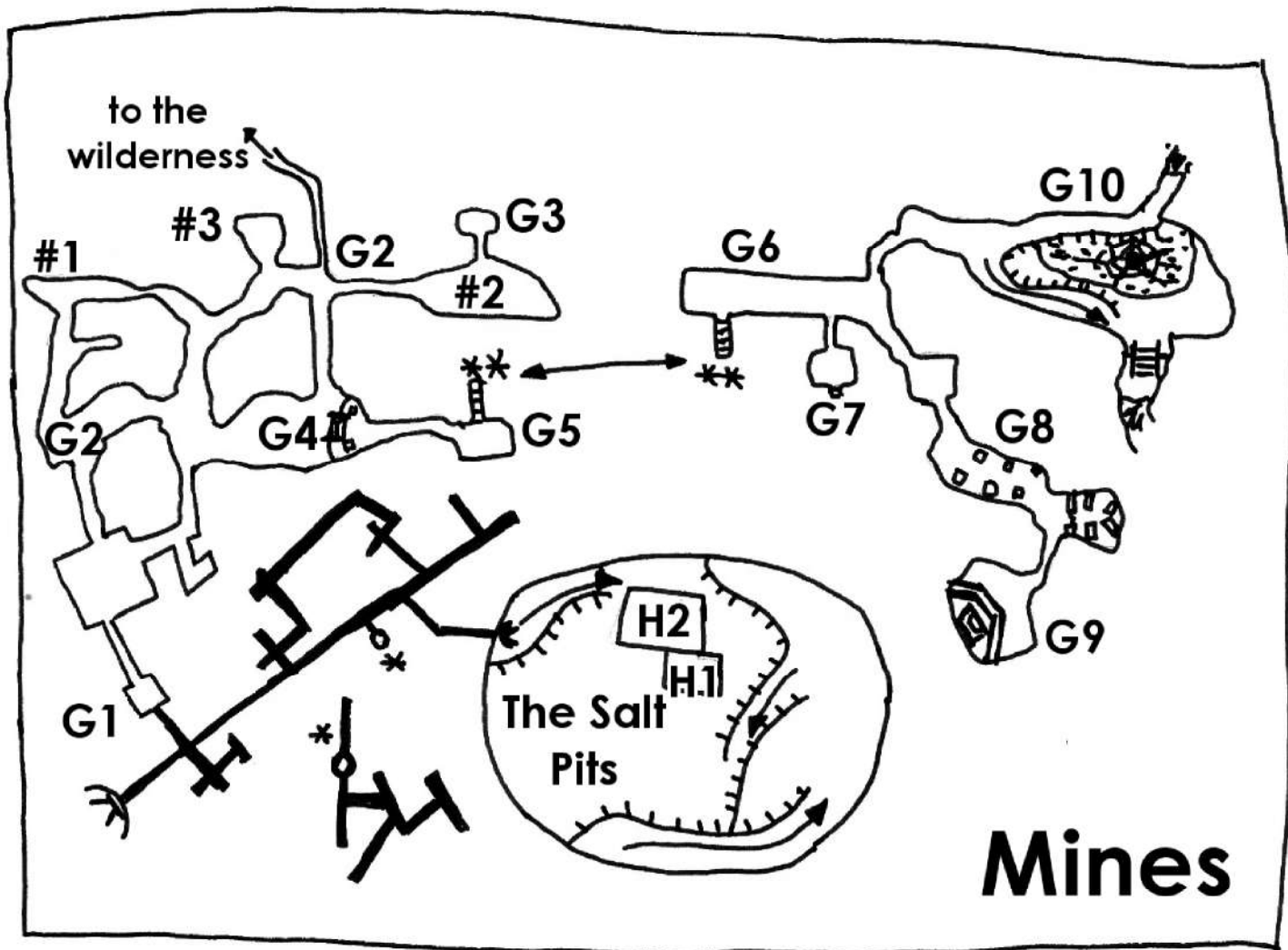
D. Aqueduct: This ancient structure lies in grandiose ruins; only a few pillars remain standing, and much of the rest has been carted off to build the keep and the village. It runs from north to south, and eventually leads into the swamps where it disappears beneath the water.

E. Watch tower: A squat ruin that dates back to the time of the empire that built the aqueduct. It is the refuge of herdsmen, who keep a large flock of sheep around here. Five of the eleven herders are miners who have fled Narzugon's influence and hide in a half-buried cellar if strangers approach. Their supplies – salted meat, firewood and hides – are worthless. **Herdsmen (11):** HD 1; DC 10;

Atk shepherd's staff 1d6 or sling 1d4; hp 5, 5, 1, 8, 8, 2, 4, 2, 7, 1, 4.

F. Graveyard: All the graves have been unearthed and reburied, and many mounds are visibly shallow. The only undisturbed resting place is the tiny mausoleum of Lord Armengart, whose heavy, rusted iron door is locked and protected by a dragon's head which breathes fire if disturbed (12 damage, save for ½). Armengart's armour-clad skeleton wears a gold ring with an azure stone (180 gp) and a golden pin with a finely detailed eagle (60 gp).

G. Mines: The mines are worked by 40 men. The passages marked black on the map are not to scale, and only represent the direction of passages, not their accurate length. The second level is reached by a crude hoist and contains the richer deposits. The mines are not patrolled, but the entrance is watched by the guards in room 1. The northern section of the mines – beyond the guards – is shunned by the villagers as this is where Narzugon keeps his undead army. There are three groups of undead, their initial positions on the map marked with #1, #2 and #3, and unless confronted, they remain stationary. However, a pitched battle or the call of a third or higher level priest draws them from their resting places.



Squad #1: 10 skeletons and 6 zombies. **Skeletons (10):** HD 1; DC 7; Atk shortsword 1d6 or mace 1d6+1; hp 2, 8, 1, 3, 1, 1, 5, 1, 2, 1. **Zombies (6):** HD 2; DC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec slow; hp 8, 2, 6, 9, 7, 7.

Squad #2: 30 skeletons and a wight wearing a ragged blue cloak. **Skeletons (30):** hp 1, 2, 4, 3, 8, 3, 1, 8, 6, 1, 5, 4, 1, 6, 5, 7, 7, 8, 3, 6, 8, 2, 8, 1, 1, 8, 1, 1, 7, 6. **Wight:** HD 4; DC 15; Atk claws 1d6+LVL; silver/+1 to hit; hp 23.

Squad #3: 10 skeletons and 8 zombies. **Skeletons (10):** hp 3, 1, 4, 6, 5, 2, 6, 1, 8, 8. **Zombies (8):** hp 9, 3, 8, 14, 9, 11, 9, 2.

G1. Guard room: A boring room with a wooden table, chairs, torches and salt-encrusted barrels. 5 guards (War 2) and 2 clerics (Pr 2), who are tasked with watching the mine entrance so nobody comes or goes without permission, and keeping miners away from the northern tunnels.

G2. Shafts: A ventilation shaft leads to the surface from both of these points – treacherous to climb, but not impossible for a skilled PC. In the northern shaft, the wailing wind conceals a Shadow, which tries to sneak up on PCs from behind to drain their Strength. **Shadow:** HD 3; DC 7; Atk touch 1d6 Str; Spec silver or +1 to hit, hp 7.

G3. Storage: Worm-eaten wooden chests contain several rusted weapons, mainly maces and shortswords. One of the rusty weapons is a magical *mace* +1.

G4. Guardians: A short flight of steps ascends to higher ground, where stand two short stone pillars. There is a darkened skull on each, licked by unholy fire. If someone approaches, they call out: “Do not pass the flames of the dead, mortal, for no water shall quench your torment!” If passed, the flames leap with a 3 HD attack, ignoring armour, and igniting struck PCs for 1d6 burn damage per round until death. The fire is unaffected by water, rolling on the floor or smothering, but susceptible to a sprinkling of holy water, as well as priestly turning, controlling or spells (e.g. *protection from evil* keeps them at bay, *command* can make them abandon a victim, and so on). With the display of an unholy symbol, the flames allow passage.

G5. Entrance to the temple area: Worked stone room, with traces of old frescoes depicting a colourful and lewd bacchanal, although the figures sometimes dissolve into swirls or clouds of colour. The frescoes significantly predate the current inhabitants.

G6. Ancient hall: More of the frescoes, from the orgiastic to the abstract. Faint sounds, sighs and titters are audible, but if they are reality or imagination cannot be determined.

G7. Antechamber: More vivid pigments, with a slight feeling of euphoria and disorientation. Colours appear richer, but visual details seem slightly out of focus. In the centre of the room, a black marble slab holds the statue of a naked, bat-winged woman with small horns, dark from



soot and ashes. Someone who kisses the statue on its mouth will nevermore be sated but by a demon's caresses. Beyond the idol, there is a gold-plated metal door of exquisite workmanship. The glyphs on the surface are ancient, and hard to decipher: “Kassethra, She Who Sighs”. The door is a mystery, and Narzugon's followers have never succeeded in opening it.

G8. Underground temple: Iron candelabra and infernal flames. Six human-sized cages hanging by chains from the ceiling are meant for sacrificial victims; four contain unfortunate wretches with small sacks full of salt stuffed in their mouths and a pitcher of clean water kept just out of reach. The eastern enclosure is separated by a plank wall and curtained doorway. Here are bare bunks for the clerics, currently reciting the doctrine of their master or doing their ceremonial duties before the idol, and three guards in black chainmail with two-handed swords. **Acolytes (3):** Pr 1; DC 5 (scale, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; hp 2, 8, 8; Spells: #1 *bles*; #2 *create water*; #3 *command*. **Cleric:** Pr 3; DC 10; Atk flail 1d6-1; hp 14. A toothless old man with wrinkled brown skin, coughing incessantly. Spells: 1: *command*, *protection from good*; 2: *hold person*. **Guards:** War 3; DC 5 (chainmail); Atk two-handed sword 1d10+1; hp 23, 15, 17.

G9. Sanctum: Black basalt altar and a rough humanoid idol, iron candelabra and flames. A character looking upon the idol must save vs. spell or be enthralled by it until dragged away or suffering a hit. Next to the altar, there is a chest of sacrificial offerings: a set of golden tableware (650 gp), a *dagger* +1 and a *potion of extra-healing*.

G10. Lake in the cavern: A larger domed cavern, whose lower portion is filled by a salt-encrusted lake. The surface crust looks like ice, and supports the weight of a man around the edges...but has a 50% chance to break near the central hole (25% for light characters). A greenish-blue light radiates from its depths. Someone attempting to swim

down must struggle against buoyancy. Also, crystals build up rapidly over the character and he must save vs. polymorphisation halfway down or turn into a salt-encrusted statue. There are at least a dozen of these human shapes on the bottom, and one of them still holds a glowing *longsword* +2 in its outreached hand. All exits from the cavern are blocked by tons of rock, and impassable.

H. The salt pits: This open-air mine becomes extremely hot by day, making work here hell on earth. The only water is brought from the village women, who arrive at noon carrying cauldrons of it. 50 slaves labour under the gaze of 17 guards (War 2), 4 under-clerics (Pr 2), a cleric (Pr 3) and 2 giant ravens nesting in the tower above the guardhouse (**H1**). The slaves sleep in a common barracks (**H2**); there are no amenities or windows, and the doors are locked and double-barred at night. About half of the slaves are former villagers, half travellers and purchased thralls. 30 are Warrior 1 equivalents, 10 Warrior 2 equivalents, and 10 noncombatants. All are aching to get back at their tormentors and grateful for any opportunity to do so. There is relatively little communication between this place and the keep; unless guards escape from a battle to tell the tale, destroying the mining camp does not alert Narzugon and his forces. **Guards (17):** War 2; DC 5 (scale, shield); Atk longsword 1d8; hp 17, 9, 15, 12, 11, 12, 18, 16, 10, 18, 12, 12, 20 [18/00 Strength], 13, 13, 8, 10. **Under-Clerics (4):** Pr 2; DC 4 (chain, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; hp 10, 8, 10, 9. They all hate to wear their black robes in this horrible heat, reducing their morale. Spells: #1 *command**2; #2 *cure light wounds*, *create water*; #3 *cause fear*, *command*; #4 *command*, *cure light wounds*. **Cleric:** Pr 3; DC 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; hp 13; Spells: 1: *cure light wounds*, *command*; 2: *hold person*. **Giant Ravens (2):** HD 3; DC 6; Atk peck 2d4+1; fliers; hp 19, 15, 21.

I. Narzugon's keep: A one-story building complex on the flat plateau above the village. The original tower (**I3**) lies in ruins, and is the roost of 3 giant ravens. The rest of the complex is defended by 23 guards (War 2), 5 under-clerics (Pr 2) and three more ravens, not to mention their Lord Narzugon (Pr 6). If they spot a lesser enemy force,

they sally out to deal with them; if they see a larger group, they stay inside and man the walls – even if it means the village's destruction. **Narzugon:** Pr 6; DC 2 (plate mail, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10; CE; hp 31; jewelled bracers (350 gp), golden pin with small gemstone (40 gp), *potion of extra healing*, unholy water*3. Spells: 1: *cure light wounds**2, *protection from good*, *command*; 2: *augury*, *hold person*, *spiritual hammer*; 3: *animate dead*, *bestow curse*. **Under-Clerics (5):** Pr 2; DC 4 (chain, shield); Atk flail 1d6+1; hp 13, 10, 11, 15, 9; Spells: #1 *cure light wounds*, *command*; #2 *create water*, *curse*; #3 *cause fear**2; #4 *command*, *sanctuary*; #5 *cure light wounds**2. **Guards (23):** War 2; DC 5 (scale, shield); Atk longsword 1d8; hp 9, 3, 11, 5, 13, 17, 18, 8, 5, 7, 19, 5, 16, 15, 7, 18, 8, 8, 13, 12, 8, 13, 15. **Giant Ravens (3):** HD 3; DC 6; Atk peck 2d4+1; fliers; hp 10, 8, 17.

I1. Courtyard: Dusty, with a well. Usually watched by five men above the gate and/or at the entrance to **I4**.

I2. Stable: 4 riding horses and Narzugon's light warhorse.

I3. Tower: The original fortification, a three-story tower. Currently abandoned and ruined, the floors have collapsed. The giant ravens nest high up within. Sometimes, prisoners are thrown in to be torn apart by the voracious birds.

I4. Great hall: Black and red banners, carpets, a long table and a wooden throne. If he receives guests or emissaries, which he does rarely, Narzugon will meet them here. The secret door is hidden behind one of the banners.

I5. Barracks: Four rooms with three double bunks each, various "cabinet contents" items.

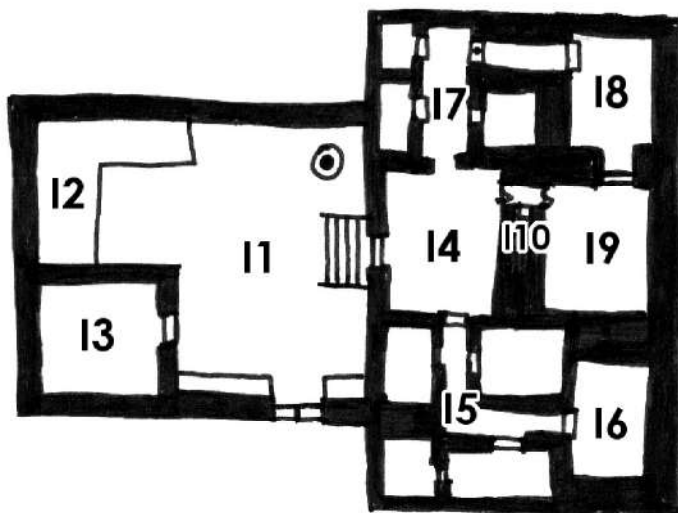
I6. Guard captain: A spartan but neat room for Bralzor, the morose captain (War 2, two-handed sword, hp 21). His footlocker is protected by a dagger trap (1d4 damage) and contains 47 gp and 3 fine silk undergarments (26 gp each).

I7. Clerical cells: These small cells are bare, each holding a double bunk and not much else.

I8. Antechamber: A long bench and more banners. Narzugon only receives clerical emissaries or very important potentates here, and then only when there is a need to talk in secrecy.

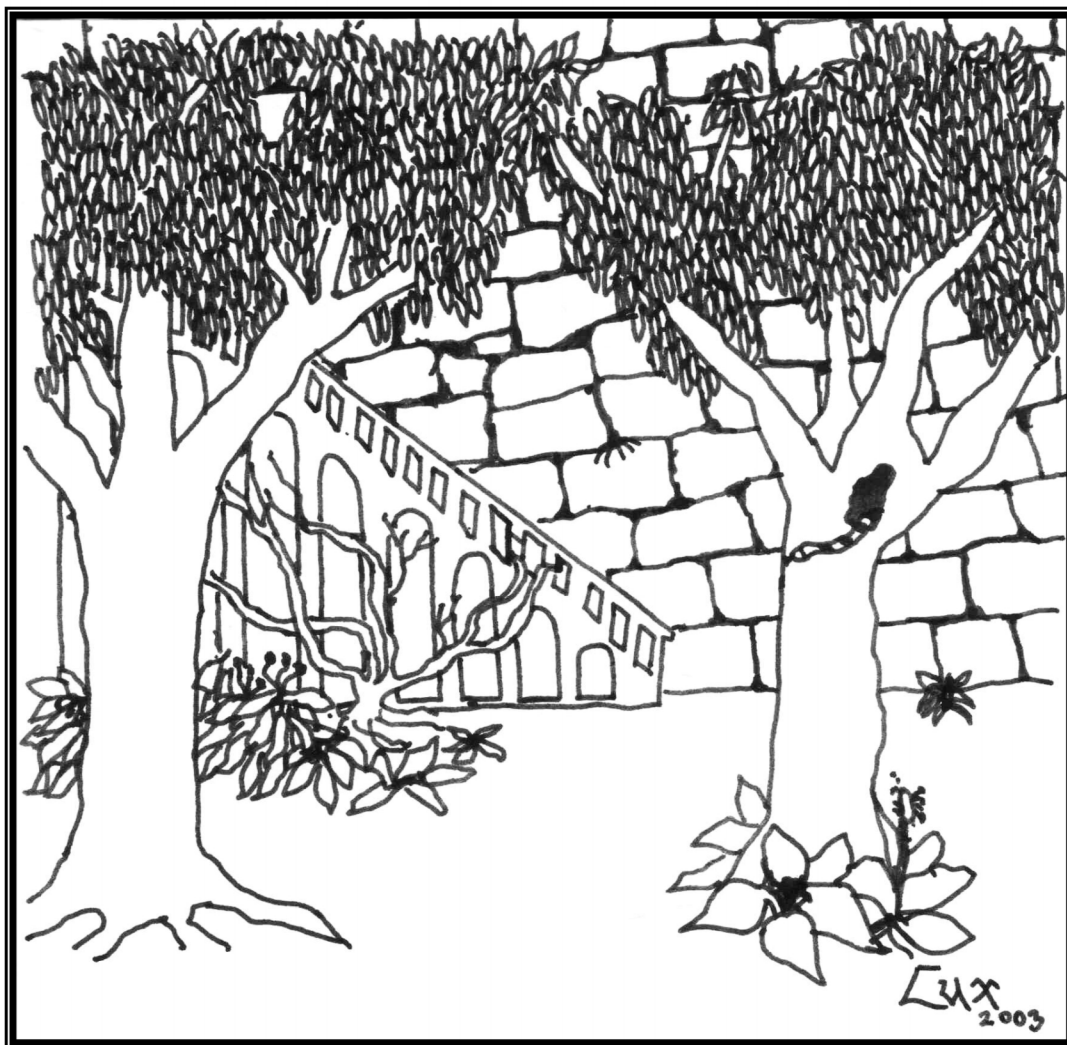
I9. Narzugon's chamber: A finely appointed room with a canopied bed, an expensive red carpet with golden trim (70 gp), and a scribe's stand with ink, quill, parchments and a book of religious doctrines. A large chest covered with black cloth contains 6 poisonous snakes; below the locked double bottom there are 200 sp, 750 gp and three opals (70, 100, 30). The secret door is behind a beautiful tapestry depicting a gloomy mountain peak (70 gp). **Snakes (6):** HD 1; DC 8; Atk 1d3 + poison; hp 5, 4, 4, 6, 8, 3.

I10. Secret passage: There is a wall niche in this passage. A round brass box holds 8 fine, magical *ivory sticks*, which turn into snakes when thrown on the floor or bisected dead snakes if snapped and a *potion of healing*. Ω



The Garden of al-Astorion

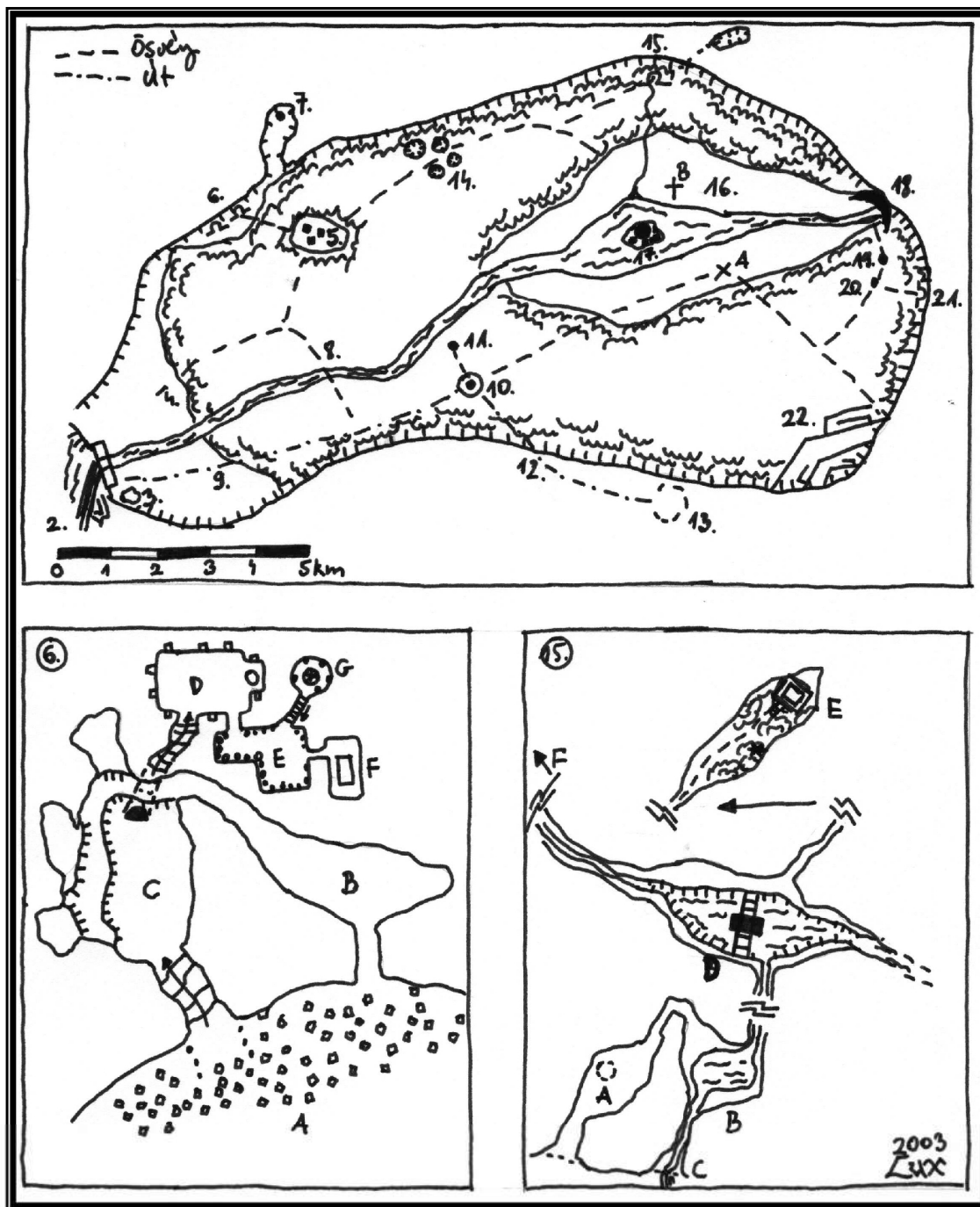
by: Gabor Lux



Castles & Crusades adventure module for six characters of 6th to 9th level

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E.M.D.T.



The Garden of al-Astorion

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Gentle Reader!

The Garden of al-Astorion is the translation of an adventure module I originally designed in a single evening for a Hungarian game convention and later revised and expanded for self publication on a whim. To this date, it remains the only adventure to be released in the country under the d20 license – although it was successful as an amateur effort, others were reluctant to follow in its steps, and I lacked the time to do a follow-up.

Although more than three years have passed since initial inception and almost three since first publication, I nevertheless decided to do a translation for the benefit of interested gamers who didn't have a chance to read the original – and this conversion for the *Castles & Crusades* ruleset to go with the translation. Although I would do some things differently if I designed the module today (hopefully better, too), I decided to preserve the original as well as a translation could allow instead. I believe it can and it should stand on its own merits. Let it be judged with this consideration – but let it be *Judged* with a critical eye towards its failings!

Gabor Lux

Background

It was many years ago that Rammah al-Astorion, a priest in the service of the goddess Emoré, had become disillusioned with city life. He tired of the busy markets, the beggars chanting on every street corner, the calculating and false women – and, first and foremost, his own flock, whose demands and empty promises had become all too transparent to tolerate any longer. It was just as well that Emoré, goddess of orchards and gardening had little to do with the bearded, round-bellied deities found in the City of the Vultures, and her doctrines were completely antithetical to those of Shakkur, the patron of degenerate beggars and outcasts, or Set, who is known to be even less benevolent.

al-Astorion, who was in his early forties at the date of his pilgrimage, only took a simple wooden staff and a set of traveller's robes with him and, having left the small chapel and equally small congregation to the care of a disciple, embarked on a journey to the unknown southern lands. For a month, he wandered the trackless wastelands of stone, where only his spells and faithful staff saved him from nightly beasts and curious monsters, but after these tribulations, he finally reached the great forests. One day as he passed between two high mountain chains, he happened upon an abandoned road built of rough stone slabs, which lead directly to a sheer cliff-face, and climbed upwards in a long serpentine, although much of it had been smashed and washed away by the waterfall plummeting from the heights.

His curiosity aroused, al-Astorion spent his night at this location, and in spite of the great difficulties involved in the climb, braved the treacherous incline. Much to his surprise, he had found an undisturbed and fertile valley hidden among the mountains, which bore an uncanny resemblance to a mythical place described in legends about the ancient cycles of the world and the long forgotten human races of the south. When he finally

beheld the great, crumbling stone terraces at the furthest end of the valley, he knew he had been brought here by divine intervention. This, at last, was the place to build the garden of his dreams, a proper monument to Emoré's arts, with well-tended orchards, meandering roads and small pavilions for rest and contemplation.

al-Astorion's work lasted decades, and during this time, he became well acquainted with his environment. His suspicions were proven correct when he discovered more of the old ruins he had read about, and on one occasion, he had to flee for his life from the strange, degenerate ape-men residing in the caverns to the north, clearly the descendants of old races from the ancient days. Additionally, it was clear that a magic-user had once inhabited the tower found in the middle of the valley's small lake – this building, and the surrounding cottages, were constructed in an architectural style he wasn't familiar with. He also paid close attention to the seemingly artificial passages radiating from an empty cave to the northeast, but abandoned his observations due to a sense of foreboding, and never dared to return.

During all this, work progressed smoothly on his grand design, but the initial feeling of triumph gradually turned into cruel doubt... something was never right about the garden, and his sleep brought feverish nightmares and faceless phantoms. Despite the magical fruit trees and pleasant terraces, rest and contentness proved elusive. He had not realized that all those years of solitude had finally taken their toll, and he was slowly going insane. He still possessed the powers granted to him by his goddess, but as his sanity began to fail, he made more and more weird things; vile monsters and blood-drinking flowers instead of Emoré's gentler creations. When, at last, strangers had discovered his retreat a few months ago, he mercilessly destroyed them all. Only two could flee his inhuman wrath, and of them,

only the fighter Mal-Bazhar made it back to the more civilized lands, the first among the garden's visitors. His wild tales didn't fail to ignite the imaginations of those seeking danger and prosperity, but thus far, no one has returned laden with treasure – even though, as it is said, that too is found in abundance, not to mention the magical fruit trees in the garden of al-Astorion...

Preparation and Adventure Hooks

Since the garden of al-Astorion is a perilous place far away from the densely inhabited lands, it is recommended that only a strong and well-equipped party should attempt to seek it out. Four 7th to 9th or six 6th to 8th level PCs would do reasonably well in most encounters, although there are some which may still prove fatal if they aren't accustomed to a strategic retreat. One cleric and two to three fighting types are highly recommended.

There are numerous ways a Judge could involve his group in the module, of which three ideas are described here:

- A merchant who had heard of the valley's enchanted trees believes he could make a fortune if he could plant their seeds in his own garden and sell the resulting fruits. He offers 400 gp for each seed sample he is brought, but he is prepared to pay up to 800 per type if the PCs bargain well. He has a method to know if he had been tricked (as he correctly guesses, the more valuable seeds radiate magic), and hires assassins to recover his money later on anyhow.
- The characters hear of the legend at the same time as one of their sworn rivals. Both groups are in pursuit of a valuable item or piece of information found in the garden. The rival party embarks on the journey with several retainers, and exploits every possibility to

violently dispose of the player characters.

- It is also possible that an NPC mentor or former companion disappeared in the same general area. The PCs are drawn to the valley to find this individual. In this case, Dahim ap Tolvin (location **22k**.) is a probable candidate, but he may easily be replaced by others if necessary.



At the Judge's discretion, he could reveal some of the following rumours to his group, employing random generation (1d12) or choosing as appropriate.

1. The original inhabitants of the region worshipped monsters and were themselves strange looking. It is said that they were struck down by a powerful curse, and haven't been seen since. (T)
2. A few months ago, a company of adventurers left to plunder a lost city, where magical opals are rumored to be kept. They didn't find the city, but the sole survivor spoke of a forlorn mountain valley and carnivorous apes. (T; however, the city isn't described here)
3. Salamar the wizard has inquired about the new rumours from the southern lands on multiple occasions, and was seen purchasing travel supplies. (T – Salamar indeed plans an expedition in pursuit of the valley's magical treasures, and he is looking for suitable hirelings as well)
4. The leader of those adventurers was a man named Mal-Bazhar. He soon fell ill after his return, and no priest could help him. I saw him myself – he was in a horrendous shape in his final days... (F – complete fabrication. Mal-Bazhar has left town on a new adventure, in perfect health)
5. The human inhabitants of the southern jungles are said to go naked and worship metal. (Who knows?)

6. Many years ago, a holy man was reputed to live in the same area these new tales speak about. He followed the goddess Emoré and was said to possess her special blessing... He could make plants grow and change into others as he willed. (T)

7. It is no wonder those careless fools met an untimely end. The holy books of Saz forbid visiting the dwelling places of the accursed peoples. Clearly, Mal Bazhar's men found such a place, and paid in blood for their transgression. Saz is indeed all-powerful, and his wisdom is without measure.

8. When the world was younger and the Sun shone with a stronger light, these lands were populated by an evil people. They allied with the denizens of the Underworld, until the true gods finally slew their kind to the last. Maybe it was one of their ruined settlements the expedition uncovered. (T)

9. This location Mal-Bazhar spoke of is no mystery to the merchants who dare the southern lands. The valley is beyond an abandoned stone road and a treacherous waterfall. Within the high valley, there is a large, clear lake, surrounded by forests with plant life uncommon in the surrounding wilderness. Since Mal-Bazhar spoke of strange and apparently magical trees, there must be some truth to the rumours. (T)

10. The place must indeed be full of treasure, as I know several men who had seen the gemstone fighter brought back. It was the size of a small egg, and worth 500 coins or even more. Where there is one, there are others, although it is a tall tale he had plucked it from a tree – magical plants or not, that is surely a fabrication!

11. A great stronghold of Set is said to be near that place. It is possible the expedition meddled with things they were not meant to know... Indeed, it is suspicious how many of the serpent-kissers embark on pilgrimages to the south... (Who knows?)

12. The wildlife in the southern forests is teeming with dangers: tigers, carnivorous giant lizards, flowers with a poisonous breath and birds of carrion. The ruins you

can find in some corners are even worse, though, and only in part thanks to the traps. Undead and stone golems are also found by the careless, and only the cautious and the swift return to tell their tales. (T)

Notes on rules and notation

This module uses the Castles & Crusades ruleset, but employs a somewhat different form of presentation than usual. Unless stated otherwise, monster Hit Dice are considered to be 1d8 and TNs (Target Numbers) to be either +0 or the level of the opposing force – e.g. HD in the case of a monster, level in case of a spell, etc.

A small number of extraordinary opponents are given bonuses to certain characteristics in order to preserve the play dynamics of the original module without unnecessary alterations. This appears as a singular bonus to hit points or a bonus on saving throws – represented by a plus, such as “HD 10+10” (10d8+10 hit points) or “SV P, M+2” (+2 on Mental saves).

Setting

It is possible to set this adventure in any warm, wet and mountainous area the Judge deems appropriate. It was originally located in the *Wilderlands of High Fantasy* milieu, in the jungles of Barbarian Altanis (hexes 3217 and 3318), whereas the City of Vultures replaced Kauran in the same region (hex 4502). Another possibility is the Desert Lands or even Lenap. In this case, one of the northern Viridian cities, such as the City State of the World Emperor, could serve the same function. The Underwing Jungle, or one of the other jungle areas of Lenap, could be the location of al-Astorion's garden. Note that nothing in this module requires the use of the Wilderlands setting, and placing it in

any other milieu will likely not pose any problems whatsoever.

The journey to the valley should take two weeks if the party is mounted, in a hurry, and has clear directions. Otherwise, up to one month may elapse before they reach their intended goal. The Judge is encouraged to present a number of encounters during this period.

The Valley – General Features

In general, it can be said that the valley is a much more tranquil location than the jungles below, since only a few animals can climb the steep cliffs by the waterfall which marks this lost world. Thus, if the Judge otherwise uses random encounter tables in his campaign (which habit is highly commended by the module's author), it is suggested that he stop this activity during this expedition.

Apart from the beasts described below, the valley's **fauna** is made up of a kind of quickly breeding rabbitlike mammals and large flightless birds nesting on the forested southern slopes. Four types of carnivores exist: to the northwest live the psionic man-apes, to the northwest an old smilodon, flesh-eating minisaur in the open fields around the lake and the weird monsters of the garden to the southeast.

Intelligent humanoids are not found anywhere here unless specifically indicated. For the people of the jungles, who have little civilisation but a long collective memory, this otherwise forgotten land is well known as a fastness of demoniac and primordial evil. None of these tribesmen can be persuaded, by gifts or coercion, to serve as guides or otherwise go beyond the abandoned road.

As for **movement** in the area, it is very hard to penetrate the underbrush beneath the trees without machetes or the equivalent. Both the old stone road and the forest paths are easily trod. Three men can progress abreast on the first and two on the second. On the valley map, the road is

marked with a -.-.-.- line, forest paths with -----.

Weather is predictable: rain falls every morning and afternoon, and the foliage is perpetually damp. However, the air is not as fetid as in the below jungles due to greater elevation and constant breeze. For the same reason, mist and haze doesn't linger too long. Storms are rare (3% probability one occurs during the expedition), are preceded by unnatural quiet and stillness, and last 1-2 hours maximum. Also, thanks to the favourable conditions, wearing heavy armour in the valley incurs no special penalties.



Key to the Valley of al-Astorian

1. Abandoned Stone Road

The old road starts approximately 500 metres from the entrance of the valley. It is made of small, longish stone blocks sunk into the ground. It is wide enough for a smaller cart, but it must have been in disuse for several years since immense trees have pried the stones apart at multiple locations. The road progresses due east, terminating in a small clearing and a waterfall.

2. Waterfall

The water of the mountain stream plummets from approximately 100 metres in multiple steps. The stone road must have lead upwards on the slope, and its remains are seen at several points. If the characters examine the clearing, they can establish others have preceded their party: in a cleared area surrounded by tall grass are charred logs from the remains of a bonfire, and from a stick in the ground hangs a sun-bleached tatter – the remains of a haversack.

Scaling the heights is no small undertaking, and pack animals may not be

taken along in any manner. Fortunately, the previous company has climbed the cliffs with success and placed iron nails at regular intervals. Two Dexterity checks and a large coil of rope are enough for one person to get up there, and once he is in place, others can easily follow (only one check must be made). The final few meters of the cliff are composed of piled rocks, clearly the remains of ancient construction. There is no sign of binding material, but the polished blocks are very sturdy and fit together well, stone roses in the gaps notwithstanding.

If the characters succeed at the climb, they can see the hidden U-shaped valley for the first time. To the northeast not far from the dam they are standing on, a plentiful mountain stream emerges from dark woods. To the left and right – and far forward – rise unscalable, sheer cliffs before even taller mountains. Northwards, beyond the trees, a rocky incline can be seen, and a good observer can make out dark cave entrances where it meets the cliffs.

3. Gravesite

Close to the dam, someone has erected a long, makeshift mound at the foot of the steep mountainside. The mound is five feet tall and a larger boulder is set on the top. The skeleton of a woman in chain shirt, with a small metal buckler and a scimitar lies under the rocks. She wears a silver bracelet on her arm (value 10 gp), and has 35 gp and 40 sp in her money pouch. The body belongs to one of Mal-Bazhar's followers, who received a mortal wound from the claws of a psionic ape. Mal-Bazhar could support her this far, but she had no strength to descend the way they came from, and died in a few hours.

4. Path

This is a wide, well-trod path in the dense, scrub-infested forest. There is a 20% probability of encountering 1d3 **psionic apes** (as described below), most likely hiding in the trees. The apes can be seen if

the characters exercise caution during travel; otherwise, they are ambushed from above. They are hostile and must be killed to the last.

5. Village Ruins

A larger clearing is the site of a primitive village consisting of numerous crude huts, long ago abandoned by their former inhabitants. Of the huts, only misshapen stone piles remain. However, gnawed bones, broken skulls and other remains, including those of human origin, lie by smooth, well-worn logs.

A truncated pyramid of black basalt in the middle of the clearing bears an enormous stone head. This image is a mix of anthropoid and apish features; its wide maw displays sharp, conical teeth. The idol's eyes must have been huge gemstones, but these are gone. Stone steps climb to a small platform before this monstrous effigy, where many more bones are set in a disorderly pile.

At night, the clearing proves to be far from uninhabited. Fire burns before the idol, and degenerate **man-apes**, each larger than a grown man, squat on the wooden logs in debased revel. 2d4+2 are encountered on this occasion, and there is a 10% probability their "**deity**" (as described under **6.d.**) is likewise present. The inarticulate howls and gibbers of the apes almost borders on human speech. If they spot intruders, they attack without hesitation and fight until heavily wounded. One of the apes, usually standing before the stone head, wears a golden skullcap. This decorative headdress is valued at 320 gp, grants a +2 on saving throws vs. psionical attacks and +4 to the TN of the wearer's psionic strike, if such an ability is possessed.

Psionic Apes (2d4+2): HD 5; hp 23 avg; Spd 30/30 Climb; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 or bite 1d8; SA psionic strike; AL CE; SV P, M.

Psionic Strike: once per hour, 30' range. Target must make an Int save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.

“High Priest”: hp 28; SV P, M+2; +4 to the psionic strike's TN.

6. Cave I. – Tomb of the Ape God

The large mouths of these caves can be clearly seen from almost every elevated observation point in the valley. When the village below was still inhabited by the ancient folk, they used the cave to worship the ape god Ooi, a demonic monster of antideluvian origins. His half-man priesthood held even these hardened people in fear, and regularly performed human sacrifice to sate the feral hunger of themselves and the hulking behemoth.

The current inhabitants, a dying and degenerate ape tribe, is what has become of the ancient race of the village. In addition to those encountered outside the cave (who are not counted here), they number 16 males, 10 females and 4 young. Half of the males are hunting outside, even going as far as to descend by the waterfall with devilish agility and ambush small merchant companies. Their intellect is basically barely exceeding animal level, and they can only employ the simplest tools. The “high priest”, recognized by his golden skullcap, is more cunning and knows how to make a fire or manufacture more complicated implements.

a. – Incline: The large open space between the woods and the caves is 50 to 60 metres wide (150-180') and consists of open ground with innumerable shifting stones and a few desiccated bushes. The black basalt heats up during the day until it burns on touch, and stays warm until midnight. Due to heat and treacherous footing, it is hard to run here – a character making an attempt must roll a Dexterity check or strain a leg, halving movement.

The caves are evidently inhabited: white bones are scattered here and there, and rotting animal heads impaled on sharpened

stakes attract buzzing black flies. The place is totally abandoned at noon (the heat is high unbearable), but any other time, **1d6 apes** guard their turf. They greet intruders with thrown rocks the size of a child's head.

Psionic Apes (1d6): HD 5; hp 23 avg; Spd 30/30 Climb; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 or bite 1d8 or thrown boulder 2d6, range 60'; SA psionic strike; AL CE; SV P, M

b. – Cavern of the Males: A large cavern-hall, with an area of 70' by 30' and a height of 50'. The walls are covered in faded frescoes depicting humans working in a village (the heads mounted on spikes suggest warlike tendencies...), hunting, gathering, etc. There are usually **5 males** in the room. They scratch, wrestle or gorge themselves on raw meat.

Psionic Apes (5): hp 23 avg; Spd 30/30 Climb; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 or bite 1d8; SA psionic strike; AL CE; SV P, M.

c. – Cavern of the Females: An even larger cavern – it is 50' by 70', with height reaching 100' at certain points. The western side is composed of 20' ledges leading to three smaller sub-caverns. Frescoes are found as above, richer in number but more faded. Naked, spear-armed warriors march towards the stairs leading down in a long file. The stairs are steep and wide: it is apparent that they were made for giant sized beings. The gaping hole was originally sealed by a carved stone slab, which lies broken and toppled before the entrance now.

The small side-caverns are where the females and young dwell. In case of a fight (very likely), and a young ape (who pelt the party with refuse and stones) is hurt, the females become enraged and gain a +4 bonus on attacks and damage, but are unable to concentrate on psionic strikes. Young apes are unable to do so in any case.

Psionic Apes, Female (10): HD 4; hp 18 avg; Spd 30/30 Climb; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 or bite 1d8; SA psionic strike; AL CE; SV P, M.

Psionic Apes, Young (4): HD 1; hp 5 avg; AC 16; Atk thrown stone 1d6; AL CE; SV none.

d. – Unholy Temple: The temple is a vaulted natural cavern modified to look less irregular. Grotesque humanoid idols squat and kneel in small niches in the wall, small stone bowls standing before them. Their depressions contain ancient grease mixed with soot, the remains of old fires. The paintings on the wall are much more vivid and almost completely intact: they depict grinning man-apes with sloping brows, clad in rich clerical garments. In the far end of the hall, there is a sort of altar stone supporting a large four-legged golden bowl. The bowl's monetary value is close to 7000 gp, and it is magical – after the blood of two medium humanoids is poured inside, it functions as a *crystal ball*. Unless previously encountered and slain, the characters come face to face with the “**High Priest**” and **Ooi the “Ape God”**, the terrible entity from the primordial eras! Ooi appears as an enormous four-armed gorilla with burning eyes that hint at a malignant intellect.

Ooi the Ape God: HD 10+10; hp 80; Spd 40/40 Climb; AC 17; Atk 4*claw 1d8 and bite 2d6; SA rending, smite good; SQ ½ damage from fire and cold, spell resistance 12; AL CE; SV P, M.

Rending: if Ooi hits with at least two claws, he inflicts an additional 2d8 points of damage. Since he possesses four arms, he can do so twice per round if lucky.

Smite Good: once per day, +5 damage versus goodly aligned beings.

Ooi may only be gotten rid of for good if his heart is cut out after being put to rest, or the body is burned to ashes. Otherwise,

he returns to life in 48 hours, fully rejuvenated.

e. – Crypt of the Lesser Priesthood:

Ancient, desiccated and blackened bodies are propped against the walls of this room. The bodies are a repulsive combination of ape and man – sloping forehead, deep-set eye sockets and prominent jaws. All in all, there are 23 preserved mummies here, all clad in mouldering rags and decorated with cheap, gaudy golden jewels. Some of them wear wooden masks. The jewels are worth 20 gp per mummy, but disturbing the dead is perilous: this also disturbs a dust carrying **Mindfire** (Con save, incubation period 1 day, 1d4 Int per day). If the high priests in room **g.** are animated, so are the members of the lesser priesthood. They are shambling **zombies** and shuffle forward to slay the defilers, spreading the plague as they move.

Zombies (23): HD 2d12; hp 13 avg; AC 12; Atk slam 1d8; SA disease (mindfire, as above); SQ slow; AL N; SV P.

Slow: never gains initiative, always acts last in any given round.

f. – Ooi's Crypt: Formerly the resting place of the Ape God, the lid of the giant sarcophagus is cast aside and broken. Dozens of niches contain piles upon piles of polished half-human skulls: as with the degenerates, they are half man and half animal, with filed teeth. A search of the room uncovers a chisel and a heavy hammer left lying in a corner.

g. – Crypt of the Greater Priesthood:

This round, domed vault is the resting place of the five ancient high priests. In the middle of the room, a thick stone wheel rests on a low dais – its surface is decorated with irregularly placed (?) radial grooves meeting in a round depression. The bodies of the high priests stand by the wall as the underlings did below; however, the ragged green and crimson garbs are much richer, and each **mummy** is



bedecked with crude but plentiful gold jewelry worth 200 gp each. One of them has a heavy gold chain around his neck, from which hang largish golden globes. These mummies are in better shape, smelling of the sweet odour of preservative resin. If any of them is bothered, all five animate!

Mummies (5): HD 6d12; hp 24, 47, 45*, 40, 43; Spd 20; AC 17; Atk slam 1d12+mummy rot; SA fear, mindfire, mummy rot; SQ weapon resistance (1/2 damage, none from non-magical weapons), fire vulnerability (+1 damage per dice and see below); AL CE; SV P.

Despair: upon animation, everyone within sight must roll a Cha save or stand paralysed for 1d4 rounds.

Mindfire: as above, but with a TN of +2.

Mummy Rot: Supernatural disease—slam, Con save. A character affected by mummy rot may not be affected by magical healing. For long term effects, see the M&T.

The golden chain worn by the mummy marked with the asterisk (*) is a *necklace of fireballs* with one 6d6, one 4d6 and two 2d6 missiles. The mummy doesn't normally use this item, but if it suffers but a single point of fire damage, the necklace must roll a saving throw (having a +7 bonus). On failure, all four missiles detonate. Everyone within the chamber (including the mummies) suffers 14d6 points of fire damage, successful Dex save halves (TN +6). Those standing on the upper one third of the stairs suffer 6d6 points, TN +4, but even if this is successful, they stumble over backwards unless a TN -2 Dex check is made, suffering 2d6 additional points of damage and landing in the midst of the zombies downstairs.

Apart from the gold and the necklace, one mummy has a clerical scroll (*dispel good, slay living*). The scroll may not be recovered if fire is used in this battle.

7. Calm Valley

The small valley may only be approached by way of a narrow ravine, whose sides appear exceptionally unstable, but are in fact perfectly safe. Protected from the winds and the weather, a small glade here has a shrine dedicated to Emoré, a pool of clear water and a gnarled, stunted little fruit tree. The tree bears five round, pale orange fruits. Each bestows +2 Intelligence and Wisdom for 1d6 hours. The fruits grow yearly. The seeds resemble those of a peach, and like al-Astorion's other creations, can only be planted under specific conditions: an open place with ample sunlight but completely free of winds.

8. Bath

Several deep footprints are found in the mud by the stream. By day, there is a 20% probability 1d6+2 **psionic apes** are bathing in the shallow waters.

Psionic Apes (1d6+2): HD 5; hp 23 avg; Spd 30/30 Climb; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 or bite 1d8; SA psionic strike; AL CE; SV P, M.

9. Stone Road

This is the continuation of the narrow stone road. The winding path is well maintained and looks like it had been renovated at one time (indeed, al-Astorion took good care of it until his mind faded). Here and there, low stone platforms on the roadside support squat basalt idols.

10. The Flaying Tree

Two major paths converge in this large clearing. In the middle, there rises a low mound with a huge, evil-looking tree. Although only twenty years in age, it has surpassed the size of many ancient oaks. Its bark is blood-red and black, and deep cuts on the trunk weep with dark, blackened resin. Veils of thin, flayed tree-bark hang from some younger branches, and it seems as if rotting skins were hanging from others... The large, leathery

leaves are deep purple, the bunched fruits vivid crimson. The heaps lying by the trunk happen to be bloody, formless masses, remains of the tree's victims – surrounded by clouds of buzzing flies. There are also a few scattered, rusting swords and a broken helmet at the foot of the mound.

The **flaying tree** would have been al-Astorion's most ambitious creation, a tree whose shade would grant a meditating sage dreams of divination. These plans went wrong when the blood of a dying tiger fell on the sapling's soil, and the resulting horror developed an evil intellect and twisted hatred. Its fury is such, that if a living being comes close, it slashes it beyond recognition with bladelike leaves and flays the dead or dying body with clinical precision. The plentiful energies in all the shed blood have only enhanced its rapid growth. The tree's creator couldn't check this development, and in fact had to abandon efforts to turn this part of the valley into a fertile paradise.

Fortunately for passers-by, the tree sleeps 80% of the time and may be easily avoided. If awake, it is able to communicate with murmuring leaves, demanding bodies or blood sacrifice for passing through or partaking of its fruits. It breaks the resulting promise 20% of the time, interpreting the command to "bring the bodiessss before meee" as one that includes the "bodies" doing the bringing! In combat, the flaying tree slashes with its leaves, which it can do in any direction, but with only four limbs per quarter. If pressed, it can uproot itself and follow the enemy, but seldom chooses to do so unless absolutely necessary. Dense wood slows movement to 10' per round.

Flaying Tree: HD 7d10+10; hp 64; Spd 20; AC 20; Atk 8*+7 sharp leaves 1d8; SQ regeneration 5 hp/round, ½ damage from piercing weapons, fire vulnerability (fails all saves vs. magical fire), smoke vulnerability (must save or fall asleep); AL CE; SV P.

The fruits are bunches of berries resembling grapes (14 bunches are available). Consumption results in a state of disorientation, during which the victim becomes gullible and easily controlled (TN +7 Constitution save negates). The tree's resin (16 doses) may be brewed into a balm healing 1d6+6 hp per application by a skilled herbalist. Another tree may be brought up only if the seeds and sapling are regularly fed by the blood of carnivorous beasts or humans, the more belligerent the better.

11. The Wool-Tree

Another abandoned experiment: this diminutive tree is like birch with white, hairy prunes growing all over the branches. The developed growth, when harvested, produces a woolly substance fit for the choosiest weaver. The small seeds are plentiful and easy to plant.

12. Incline

The steep mountain trail is very treacherous and narrow at this stretch; some sections were destroyed by landslides and flooding. Two successful Dex checks are necessary to go further. Failure results in 3d6 points of falling damage.

13. Outlook: Altar of the Iron God

The elevated vantage point in the mountains allows one to observe the whole valley and the position of most individual locations, provided they are large enough for the naked eye: the waterfall to the west, caves to the northwest and northeast, a wide pasture and the mountain lake (with the island and the metal-topped tower in its middle), not to mention the cycloptic hanging garden overlooking the eastern woods.

The jungle-road also ends at this location, with an old, carved slab. Old runes cover the surface of the granite table (TN +2 Int check to decipher): they praise Tazpaxol, the terrible and mighty God of Iron. Once, pilgrims thronged to visit the site and perform sacrifices. In our day, pilgrimage

site and deity are both lost to human knowledge, although the Judge may impart some made-up details upon a PC who knows enough history.

Upon offering a superior or magical piece of iron, lightning strikes from the skies, claiming this offering in a peal of thunder. A character who has sacrificed thus earns the favour of Tazpaxol, with the following results based on the nature of the offered item:

- weapons: within one year, if the character is locked in mortal combat with a superior foe, his weapon strikes and automatically inflicts double damage.

- armour, shield or any other item: the following weapon which would inflict a mortal blow upon the PC must roll a save vs. Constriction (Str) or shatter instead of inflicting harm.

Superior items confer these blessings for one time, whereas magical items increase this by one additional time per “plus” or special power. Mundane items are not accepted.

14. Stone Pits

Four very deep, circular pits found in the forest are the results of an ancient catastrophe. Each one has a 20' diameter (the upper part widens to 30' to 40' as a funnel). Two are 40' deep, one is 60' and one is 120'.

a. (40'): The bottom is covered with fallen rocks and lush green plants growing in the cracks.

b. (40'): As above, but **19 stirges** nest among the plants.

Stirges (10): HD 1d6; hp 4 avg; Spd 10/40 Fly; AC 16; Atk proboscis 1d3 hp plus 1d4 blood drain per round; SA blood drain (12 hp max); AL N; SV P.

c. (60'): This pit widens to 30' at the bottom. A small “lake” hidden here is surrounded by thick undergrowth... plants

with vines and black berries. **Assassin vines!**

Assassin Vines (4): HD 5; hp 15, 32, 22, 27; Spd 0, AC 15; Atk vines 1d8+grab; SA squeeze; SQ fire/cold resistance ½, camouflage; AL N; SV P.

Grab/Squeeze: an opponent hit by a vine must roll a Str check to avoid entanglement. Entangled opponents take automatic damage each round until they break free

Camouflage: surprises on 1-7 on 1d8.

d. (120'): The fourth pit is the deepest of them all. The lower reaches are as cold as a cellar, and equally damp. Even sunlight can barely illuminate this place: the gloom is constant, even at noon. The walls are curiously glassy, black in colour and slick from moisture. On a huge rock pile, covered by the leafy plants, there lie deformed, once painted and nailed metal sheets... the remains of a fallen starship. If one takes the time to thoroughly examine the weird wreckage, a miniature hexagonal metal block hanging from a fine, now torn golden chain is found. This “key” unlocks the **Tower of Ladgloun (17.)**.

15. Cave II. – the Tiger, the Valley and the City

The expansive cave system opening from the southeastern part of the valley is dangerous for three reasons. An old smilodon (sabre-toothed tiger) has made a lair in the entrance cavern, hunting at night but usually present during the day. An isolated, narrow valley – really a long crevasse – is the site of a wizard’s burial, empty of a corpse but still dangerous. Finally, an underground corridor leads to and beyond the cavern city of the debased deep ones, monstrous beings in the service of eldritch deities.

a. Sabre-toothed Tiger: The tiger’s lair and the entrance cavern is well illuminated and clean. The light comes from a circular hole above where the ceiling gave away.

Vines hang from this opening. Otherwise, the grotto is merely 15' tall. The sole inhabitant of the cavern is the **smilodon**, an ancient and cunning specimen. There is a 60% probability it is here by day, but only 30% it is found at night. If the beast is out, it is hunting and returns in 1d12 hours. If it senses intruders have been in the lair, it waits for them in hiding. The smilodon was once wounded by adventurers, which makes it enraged and particularly ferocious when fighting against humanoids – receiving a +2 bonus to attacks.

Smilodon: CR 5; HD 8+5; hp 40; AC 14; Atk 2* claws 1d6 **and** bite 2d6; SA additional rear claw attacks for 2d4 each if both paws hit; AL N; SV P+2.

b. Lake: The shallow (5' deep) lake is ice cold, being fed by a narrow underground stream from the north. Characters who wade in the deeps take 1d6 points of subdual damage each minute from hypothermia. This damage is regained if warmth is made available. The northern passage gradually rises while the stream by its side doesn't – the initial height difference grows to 20' by the time **d.** is reached.

c. Cascade: This is where the cavern stream emerges, and plummets 10' before reaching the ground. Its sound is loud enough to be heard from 500 metres.

d. Old Bridge: The chamber is a watery, wet grotto. An underground lake fills it 20' below the ledge the characters enter from – this body of water is inhabited by sightless fish and cave newts. An old bridge arches over the churning waters, its thick planks made of wet but intact wood, with pylons of carved stone. The writhing patterns on the pylons arouse a feeling of uncertain wrongness. The stones are magical but there is no *apparent* effect (if detected for, tell this to the players as matter-of-factly as possible). Destructive spells cast on the bridge are reflected on their caster.

Multiple exits leave the grotto. The majority of the water leaves eastwards, but after a few meters, it plunges underneath a ledge and vanishes underground, only emerging at area **18**. The northern passage is approximately 900' (300 m) long, and finally terminates in a hidden open-air crevasse (**e.**). To the west, the water comes closer and closer to the level of the ledge, until they are once more at the same height after some 300' (100 m). The path is underwater thereafter. Characters who wish to go further must wade hip-deep in the cold stream (breast-deep for small characters), which inflicts 1d6 points of subdual damage per minute unless some useful protection is employed. Finally, after a total length of 450' (150 m), the passage terminates in a huge natural vault, location **f.**

e. Ladgloun's Final Rest: Ladgloun the wizard, who once inhabited the tower on the lake (**17.**) built his elaborate burial crypt here, and also deposited magical items to accompany him to the Netherworld. Ironically, although he had later discovered a much more preferable alternative to death, his demise came here in the form of a carnivorous plant.

The crevasse containing the crypt is only 20' wide and 100' long. Its walls are very high, contributing to a shady, gloom-shrouded atmosphere with an earthy smell mingling with the crazed aroma of enormous flowers and wide-leafed plants of giant proportions. The enormous flowers belong to a **venus flytrap** marked with an asterisk on the area map.

Venus Flytrap: HD 6; hp 27; Spd 0; AC 14; Atk bite 2d6+grab; SA grab, scent, pollen cloud; AL N; SV P.

Grab: an opponent hit by the monster must roll a Str check to avoid being caught in its toothy maw. Once caught, the flytrap inflicts automatic damage every round.

Scent: due to the alluring scent of the monster, all within 30' must roll a Con

save or fall in a dreamlike state and walk towards the flowers.

Pollen Cloud: once per day, the plant can emit a cloud of pollens covering a 10' radius area. The pollens are poisonous – Con save, damage 2d6 hp/2d6 hp.

The crevasse ends in a rectangular marble hall. Short stairs lead up to a pleasant columned space with marble benches overlooking the flowers, whispering wind and a simple alabaster sarcophagus. Animals are unwilling to enter this place on their own and remain nervous while inside.

The sarcophagus, carved with gentle bucolic scenes, bears the following inscription: “LADGLOUN’S FINAL REST”. If someone touches the stone, a deep groan from beyond the grave emerges and (if the intruder perseveres) two transparent apparitions materialize. Both are regal, wizened old men in the fashionable and expensive, yet ragged clothes of local royalty. One of them intones in an emotionless, hollow voice:

“We are the kings of Nisir. Our empire lies in ruins, our garments are but tatters and our crowns worthless junk, all because we have opposed LADGLOUN. Depart in peace or share our vigil!”

The spectral images are illusionary, but this is rather hard to verify. If the characters don’t leave or disbelieve them, they attack.

Spectres (2): CR 7; HD 7d12; hp 28, 34; Spd 40/80 fly; AC 18; Atk touch 1d8+energy drain; SA energy drain (2 levels); SQ +1 or better to hit, illusion; AL LE; SV M.

Illusion: since the spectres are mere mirage, they are not powerless in sunlight, can’t be turned – and it is not they who bother animals here either.

If the spectres are done away, and someone lifts the lid of the sarcophagus, the second trap is also activated:

Horrendous Freezing Trap: TN +6 Cha save or victim is frozen solid. On a successful save, the damage is 3d8 hit points.

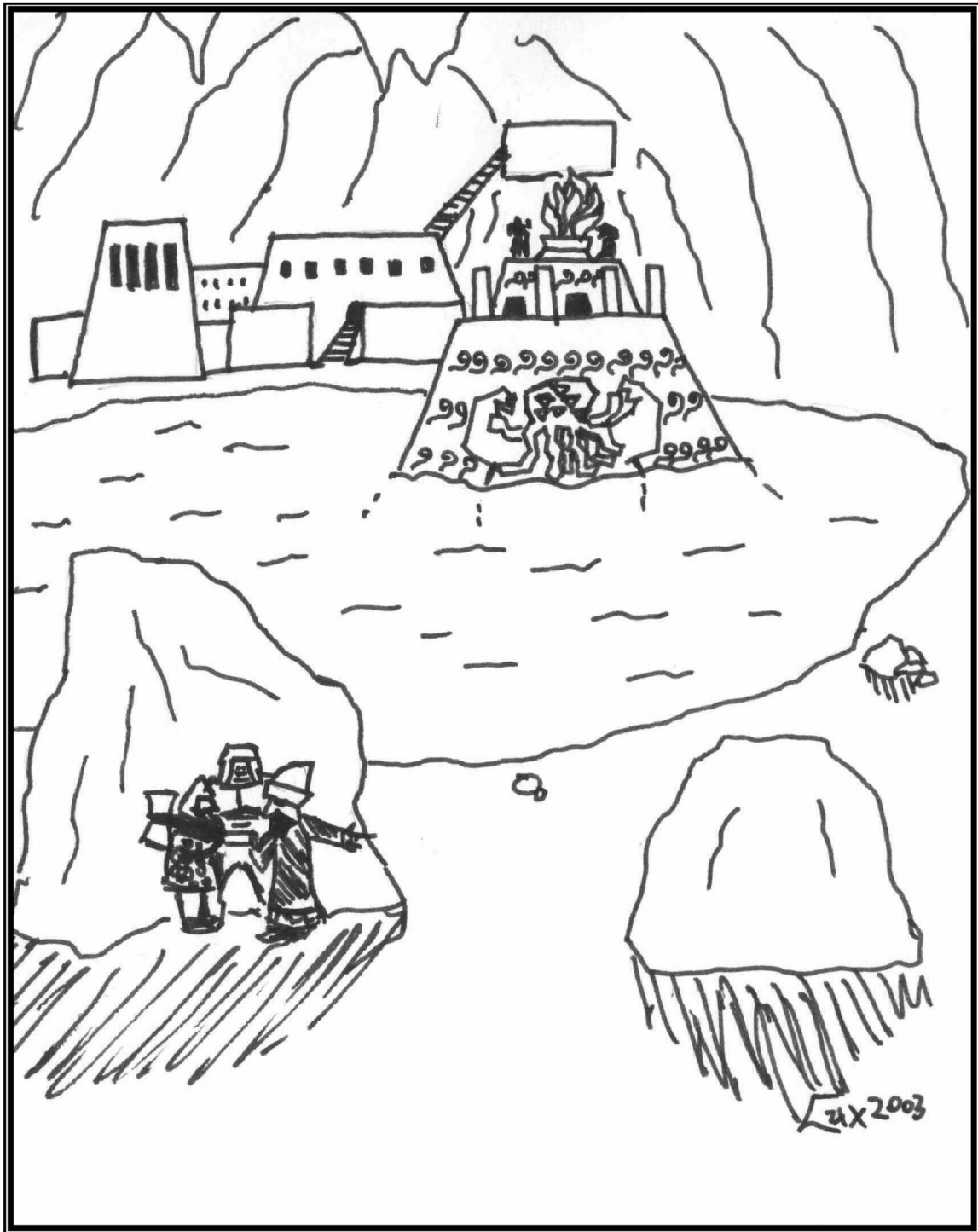
There is no body in the sarcophagus, only two items: a *rod of wonder* (it is shaped like a wand and possesses 27 charges) and a *ring of rainbows*. The ring, which may only be used by wizards, calls into being a shimmering rainbow bridge of the preferred dimensions on a verbal command. The bridge may not be larger than 4 metres by 100 metres. It persists for an hour and a minute, and the ring has five charges – it may not be recharged.

f. Temple of the Great Old Ones: If the characters desire an early demise, this is the place to find it! The large underground grotto is mostly occupied by a still lake. On the further shore stands an ancient, megalithic temple complex in the Preatlantic style, built from polished black blocks without any sort of mortar.

The greatest building is a half-submerged stepped ziggurat, whose mirror-smooth side is decorated with stone reliefs. These are writhing geometric patterns on one hand, and the vast portrait of a humanoid monstrosity on the other – the head of the curious entity bears resemblance to a cephalopod with uncounted tentacles; it has six malignant eyes and strong arms also. Only half of the monumental display is visible, however, as the parts below its breast are under water. Intense fire burns in a sizeable stone vessel atop the pyramidal ziggurat, the unnatural green lights casting a pallid hue on the entire scene.

There are multiple smaller buildings behind the pyramid: these form an unified whole with several small windows but only one entrance preceded by steep stone stairs. Another stair leads up to a much smaller edifice far behind and above the lower complex.

The temple complex was erected by the deep ones, servitors of the Great Old Ones.



These large-headed subterranean reptile/frog-beings are unreservedly hostile to everyone but their own degenerate kin. They are statistically equivalent to river trolls save for their inability to regenerate. They are largely too stupid to accomplish complex tasks, but the “priests” (whose powers are in fact arcane) are equal to an intelligent human. There are a total of 37 deep ones, two priests and one high priest in the grotto. In case of combat, the deep ones don’t employ delicate tactics, instead attacking opponents from underwater. When accompanied by a “priest”, however, they are capable of flanking, feints, faked retreats and so forth.

A few boulders in the cave are sufficiently large to conceal a normal party from the otherwise inept guards. A single guard appears every hour to check the flame on top of the ziggurat – if the characters don’t make a loud noise or don’t use light on their own, there is only a 5% probability of discovery. Moreover, every 20 hours, a procession appears at the gate of the temple complex; headed by the high priest and followed by two underlings and six additional deep ones, they proceed to the first level of the ziggurat by way of the back stairs and spend a full hour performing sacrifices to the Great Old Ones (the ritual is accompanied by a great deal of chanting and inarticulate screaming, as well as calling on strange gods in the Preatlantic dialect). Once finished, the group returns as they came. As the party enters the vault, the next ritual will start in 1d20 hours.

The waters of the lake are deep, very deep – they lead to the abysmal underworld of the deep ones. This location should be detailed by the Judge if necessary.

g. Ziggurat: There is only one chamber within the great step pyramid; a “sanctum” surrounded by monolithic stone slabs. The sole furnishing is a 2 m diameter stone wheel resting on a 1 m pedestal. The stone is black with chaotically meandering purple veins. It is covered in antediluvian

and worn reliefs of an open eye in an eight-pointed star, with writhing tentacles reaching outwards.

Even mere sight of the slab awakens an uncertain feeling of wrongness. If someone looks into the eye and concentrates, he must roll a TN +8 Int save or immediately and permanently go insane from the sight of foreign and inhuman dimensions. If the saving throw is a success, however, his mind can wander these strange realms freely, learning strange and terrible things within the blink of an eye.

A wizard or illusionist looking in the eye can memorize spells he is unfamiliar with – replacing his own with any spell of equal or one higher level (a total of 1d6+2 may be so replaced). If he possesses a spell book, the formulae may later be scribed with a successful Int check, TN equal to the spell level. (Obviously, the deep ones gain spells the same way, except they are unaffected by the madness.)

Clerics age 2d6 years if they are good, 1d6 years if they are neutral and gain +1000 experience points if they are evil.

Any character, including non-spellcasters, who rolls at least +4 above the TN gains the limited ability to employ a psionic strike. The ability works once per day with a 20’ range, affecting one individual, who must roll an Int save (TN= +½ character level) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

It is possible to destroy the altar using +3 or stronger weapons, a *holy word* or similar powers. No matter how the attempt goes, the **Guardian** of the slab immediately makes an appearance. This is a formless mass composed of rubbery black material forming a great, palpitating saclike body crowned by arm-thick tentacles. Statistics resemble those of a shambling mounds with a few key differences.

Guardian: HD 8+5; hp 41; Spd 20/30 swim; AC 20; Atk 4*tentacles 2d8+grab; SA squeeze; SQ spell resistance 7, electricity and mind effects immunity, ½ damage from fire; AL NE; SV P, M.

Squeeze: if the Guardian grabs an opponent (Str check), it can squeeze each round for automatic damage.

h. Hall: The hall of the vast temple is wrought from polished, soot-black stones. Pillars are 20', the reliefs on the walls chaotic and smooth from humidity. Like in all other rooms of the building, sounds are strangely distorted, as if they were resounding from a bottomless pit. Light is reduced to ½ strength; ranged attacks beyond a 5' range are at -2 to hit.

i., j. Deep Ones: there are **nine deep ones** in room **i.** and **five** in room **j.**

Deep Ones (14): HD 7+6; hp 33 avg; Spd 30'/40' swim; AC 16; Atk 2*claws 1d4+4 and bite 2d6; SA rending; AL CE; SV P. Rending: a deep one who successfully hits with both claw attacks inflicts an additional 2d6 damage that round.

k. Hidden Chamber: The small recess may be approached through two secret doors (they open by pressing a carving in the wall). Ghostly blue light peers from the thick darkness, coming from a floating glass ball the size of a human head. Next to the water-green globe, there is a curled-up, naked human body, his whole cadaver transformed into some hardened glasslike substance. Two yellow-green metal rods, each one meter in length, lies by the bizarre fossil. The globe may be smashed (16 hp), freeing the light within:

Will-o-Wisp: HD 9; hp 40; Spd 50' fly; AC 28; Atk touch (ignores armour) 1d6 Str; SA strength drain; SQ spell immunity; AL CE; SV P, M.

Strength Drain: a character fully drained by the wisp is glassed, forever gone.

Spell Immunity: the creature may only be affected by *magic missile*, *maze* or *protection from chaos/evil*.

The metal rods in the chamber may be forged into one +2 sword or 25 +2 arrows

each; together, they are enough for a +2 large metal shield. Each is valued at 3000 gp on the market.

l. Side Building: The further end of the small hall is occupied by an upright one-and-a-half men tall stone wheel. Its black surface is covered in radial, irregularly placed grooves meeting in a central hub (circular depression). Each groove runs through a number of smaller circular depressions, also irregularly appearing. This relic resembles the wheel found at **6.g.**, except it is of superior design. The purposes are unknown and it radiates no magic.

m. Hall: The low hall has an arched ceiling 10' above ground. Two statues standing by the stairs down depict robed deep ones, mouths open and full of teeth.

n. Deep Ones: another **seven deep ones**. There are five platinum disks in one corner of a smaller chamber. Each one is worth 150 gp, being palm sized and studded with elaborate patterns.

Deep Ones (7): hp 33 avg.

o. Hall: Squat columns and alcoves – they contain empty, ancient stone amphorae.

p. Hall of Columns: These chambers are brighter than those on the lower level, but still solemnly gloomy. The light streaming in the tall, narrow windows is unnaturally sharp (and much more strong than it was outside!), with extreme contrasts - ranged attacks beyond a 15' range are -4 to hit.

Unless the party took great pains to proceed silently up to this point, this is where they waltz into the greeting party of the deep ones lead by the clerics. **Six** are hiding behind the columns (surprising opponenets 1-6 on 1d8) and they attack from all directions. The **lesser priests** cast *darkness* and *fog cloud* from the back, but hurry towards the room maze if the slightest danger presents itself. Their

primary purpose now is to assess intruder strength, and let the troops here soak up spells before the final confrontation.

Deep Ones (6): HD 7+6; hp 20 each; Spd 30'/40' swim; AC 16; Atk 2*claws 1d4+4 and bite 2d6; SA rending; AL CE; SV P. Rending: a deep one who successfully hits with both claw attacks inflicts an additional 2d6 damage that round.

Also note that contrary to how it may seem, the windows from the *inside* don't open *outside*. That much should be evident from the unnatural light. If someone takes the pains to climb up to one narrow gap, it becomes apparent that he looks outside to *nothing* – open air stretching everywhere, and a bottomless abyss underneath. The source of the light is an immense green sun obscuring the horizon. Venturing out to explore is a death sentence, and radiation will finish the curious in 2d6 minutes.

q. Labyrinth: These rooms and corridors form a maze with the occasional stone bier (for sleeping) and wall reliefs. The walls to the south let in light, but everywhere else is dark. The **ten deep ones** in the labyrinth are lead by the **high priest** and **two attendants**. They know this place perfectly, using their knowledge to employ back or side attacks, hit-and-run manoeuvres, pick off individual characters or catch the enemy surrounded. The lesser priests occupy the party while the high priest and the others slaughter them. Spells marked with a + are cast right before the battle is joined.

Deep Ones (10): hp 33 avg.

Deep One "Priests" (2): HD 7+6; hp 35, 40; Spd 30; AC 16; Atk *obsidian sacrificial dagger* +1 1d4+1 or 2*claws 1d4+4 and bite 2d6; SA cast spells as 4th level wizard, rending; AL CE; SV M. Spells: 0:4; 1:3; 2:2; 0: *dancing lights**2, *light*, *ghost sound*; 1: *charm person**2, *protection from good*+; 2: #1 *fog cloud*,

darkness; #2 *darkness*, *protection from arrows*+.

High Priest: HD 9+10; hp 44; Spd 30; AC 16 or 18 with *shield*; Atk *obsidian sacrificial dagger* +1 1d4+1 or 2*claws 1d4+4 and bite 2d6; SA cast spells as 6th level wizard, rending; AL CE; SV P, M. Spells: 0:5; 1:4; 2:3; 3:2; 0: *detect magic**2, *light**2, *mage hand*; 1: *shield*+, *unseen servant*, *burning hands**2 (flames are greenish and leave black marks on the flesh); 2: *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *see invisibility*; 3: *dispel magic*, *fireball*.

r. Hidden Treasure Chamber: The small chamber hidden within the maze of many small rooms and corridors is closed by a secret door with an *arcane lock*. There is a minor "keyhole", a barely detectable pentagonal depression in the wall: it opens with a similarly shaped metal stick hanging from the high priest's neck. The treasures of the deep ones are within! This includes a +3 *dagger* forged from tung, a metal alien to our world (it is impossible to destroy in any known way), a *staff of fire* with 38 charges, a +2 *armour of rage* (beaten bronze, ugly and strange patterns) and a *periapt of foul rotting*.

16. The Field: Wild tropical flowers with an intoxicating aroma, vines and creepers and waist-high grass covers the gentle slopes. From all points of this open space, someone can see the mountain lake and the small tower on its island. Its steel peak glitters in the sunlight like a spear point! The perfectly intact structure is surrounded by a number of ruins in a dilapidated state. Although idyllic, the field isn't completely safe: the northern part is inhabited by **green carnivorous minisaurs**, who also venture beyond the stream on occasions and are thus encountered at that location too, mostly rollicking in the mud. Every hour spent in the field, there is a 1:8 chance to the south and 1:4 to the north 3d6 of these miniature horrors attack (4d6

to the north). The lizards live in passages resembling rabbit burrows; a total of 50 dwell in al-Astorion's valley. They rush opponents from all directions, preferably growing for unprotected throats, arms, etc. These ambushes are made all the more easy by the tall grasses.

Green Carnivorous Minisaurs (50): HD 2; hp 9 avg; Spd 30'; AC 15; Atk bite 1d6+maul; SA maul, jump; AL N, SV P. Maul: if the minitaur succeeds with a bite attack, it attaches to the victim and automatically inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round.

Jump: muscled hind legs allow the creature to leap to a distance of 20' and attack in the same round as if it were charging (+2 to hit).

a. Statue of Voltagama: The statue of a naked woman stands on a simple stone base. Her hands hold a sheaf of grain. The following words are seen on the base: "BEFORE VOLTAGAMA'S SIGHT IS PURIFIED ALL / WHOSE SOUL IS NOBLE AND WHOSE HEART IS WHOLE / LO, THE PROPHET OF EMORÉ THE GODDESS / POURS SPIRIT INTO THE HOPE-LOST / ANOINTS THE INJURED AND THE WOUNDED OF HEART"

The humble idol was al-Astorion's first work in the valley. He carved it in his free hours a long time before his mind was clouded or even before he acquired the ability to do greater works. His goddess rewarded the old hermit by imbuing the statue with a healing ability. If a good or neutral being prostrates himself before its sight and says a short prayer asking for healing, Voltagama rewards him with a *heal* spell. This miracle works only one time on any character.

b. Tree of Chimes: Even from far away, one can hear the pleasant chiming and resounding music caused by the treelet's fruits swaying in the winds. The trunk and

branches of the tree are brass, the leaves are silver and the fruits are three different types of metal. There are eight copper fruits worth 20 gp apiece, four silver fruits worth 150 gp apiece and two beautiful golden fruits worth 350 gp apiece. The eighteen leaves are 10 gp each. Every branch, leaf and fruit sways and makes pleasant bell-like sounds even in the smallest wind. If someone picks a fruit or leaf without the appropriate precautions (that is, a successful Pick Pocket check), the tree shakes and a hellish cacophony results. This immediately attracts 2d6+10 **minisaurs** from their hiding holes, who have already learned that this is the signal for lunch! Every three rounds, the lizards' numbers grow by 2d6 until all are defeated.

The fruits of the tree are seedless and there is no way to reproduce this musical miracle at any other location.

17. Ladgloun's Tower

Ladgloun the wizard came to this valley some 400 years before al-Astorion's arrival. He commissioned salamanders and denizens from the elemental plane of earth to build him an elegant steel-topped tower of outstanding stability, warded from ordinary and extraordinary forms of intrusion. He was well acquainted with the secrets of the valley as they then were: the pleasant calm of a secluded little crevasse to the north (15/e.) had especially enthralled him; in advanced age, he decided to choose this location as the site of his burial and to defend the crypt there with illusions and defensive spells. It was a strange turn of chance which brought him to the remains of a fallen starship in the nearby stone pits; and even more wondrous that he had later deciphered the secrets of the small ceramic tablets lying amidst several other curious items. The decoded text hinted at worlds foreign to our own, and Ladgloun decided to postpone death, instead choosing a lengthy trance so his mind could wander these spheres for a number of centuries. In preparation for the

undertaking, and to gain the materials required by the methods he sought to employ, he sold off most of his magical collection, only keeping a small assortment of sentimental valuables. Regrettably, his plans were disrupted once more, as, during a walk in his beloved valley, a carnivorous plant clouded the venerable magic-user's senses, and devoured him entirely. Since this occasion, the tower has been empty, although undisturbed.

Ladgloun's tower (indeed, the entire island) is surrounded by an anti-teleportation field, and the walls of the building are also reinforced to prevent entry or harm in any unlawful way. There are no apparent windows, even, only a single metal door.

a. Ruins: These are old, crumbling stone buildings surrounding the central tower. Some of the buildings still stand, but others are in various states of collapse, and a few are but formless stone heaps. They once housed the extraplanar architects, hence the "weird" style they were built in.

The front door is made of magically treated brass (may not be opened), and the singular distinguishing feature on its polished surface is a knocker in the form of a skull grasping a large ring in the mouth; astute observers may easily note a hexagonal depression as wide as a delicate human finger. The depression is a "keyhole", which only accepts the key found at area **14/d**. A skilful smith may create a duplicate with a bit of work if the proper tools are available, or a master thief could pick it with some difficulty (TN +10). Unsuccessful attempts or imperfect keys result in 2d6 points of electrical damage.

The knocker animates on use, inquires about the names and purposes of all present, but finally announces his regrets, as Ladgloun is unavailable, and has been away for the last 300 years. The personality within the skull is highly intelligent (16 Intelligence and Wisdom), and has a taste for philosophy. If the

characters show interest, he gladly engages in a lively debate; in fact, if he is impressed by the sufficiently deep knowledge and sharp wits of the participants, he could "make an exception" and open the door. This is a good opportunity for the Judge to test the roleplaying skills and eloquence of his *players*. The "ultimate dilemmas" proposed by the skull are inconsequential hogwash; e.g. *"It is a known fact that parallels do not intersect, but what consequences would result if they did?"* or *"Assuming that some things couldn't be imagined to exist, what would be their most probable characteristics? (And if these characteristics are X, why are they unimaginable; after all, they have just been proven to be within our imagination.)"* Only well grounded and theoretically sound hypotheses are acceptable.

b. Entry Hall: The floor and walls of the entry hall are covered in immaculate black and white tiles. Everything is perfectly clean without a single speck of dust. Even the air has a pleasant minty scent. The corridor to the left has racks to deposit clothes, which are arranged and dusted off by unseen servants.

c. Storage: Spoiled, rotten foodstuffs decompose in stacked crates and sacks. The only things of value in the room are five amphorae of wine – an excellent vintage worth 500 gp per container. Transportation may prove problematic, since the amphorae are bulky and weigh 100 pounds each.

d. Library: The old, slightly wormeaten (although dust-free) oak shelves are empty of books – Ladgloun sold or got rid of almost all. A few interesting works still rest on his writing desks. The five leatherbound booklets are about magical theory, and provide answers to dilemmas in this field if they are consulted (1d4*10 minutes, 60% chance of finding an answer). Titles are as follows: *"The eight*

radials”, “Talgamol’s Almanac”, “Mystics”, “Instructional tales from the history of magical philosophy” and “The projection of the Object on the immaterial milieu”.

Ladgloun has also left behind a bundle of vellum sheets collectively forming a sort of notebook or journal. The majority is clear, written in a tidy script – these are concerned with mostly mundane matters such as astrological observations, musings on magical theory and daily expenses. Later entries are less collected; it seems Ladgloun wrote them in a hurry. There are vague hints about “strange pits” in the scrawlings, and the “nigh-hypnotic ceramic tablets” found in their depths, which could “open the way to a myriad worlds, each unlike the others”. These passages are followed by a long series of names such as Cirkea, Yith, Aldebaran, Sol and Fomalhaut; many of them described in a few brief sentences. A few examples follow:

-“*Sfanomoe, a world of ever-present vines and flowers – I have observed a batlike monstrosity as it landed on the ground; in a few moments, the curling, long grasses entangled the avian beast and choked it to death.*”

-“*Xiccarp’s days pass under two suns, one white and one green. At night, they are replaced by a single red orb of enormous proportions. Maaldweb the wizard rules over everything like an omnipotent deity.*”

-“*I couldn’t determine the name of this world. Its entirety is covered by a strange protoplasmic ocean, occasionally forming fantastic shapes on its surface due to unknown forces.*”

-“*This day, I saw a world where only a handful of dwarves still oppose the attacks of the Prince of All Demons. The dwarves did battle against their enemies in a desolate gorge, their five hundred-strong force fighting against several thousand orcs and tower-high shadows with burning eyes. By the time I returned to my observations after the usual meditations, the visions had moved on to yet another*

dimension, or maybe another area of the previous world. Blackened, soot-covered icebergs, crushed rocks were everywhere, with an occasional grassy patch -- I would like to know what happened to the dwarves, but my attempts to locate them again have resulted in failure.”

The final sheets are barely legible, as if written in a state of panic – in these, the wizard complains about his mind dulling at a quickening rate. The last entry (surprisingly tidy once more) reads: “*All is finished, but not all is lost. It is time to use the long-prepared place for a new purpose – what had once seemed a fantastic folly is now the only rational action left to do.*”

e. Bedchamber: A small, cramped but richly furnished sleeping chamber. The heavy fragrance of spices wafts from a bowl of scented oil over greenish fire – the bowl is occasionally refilled by an unseen servant. Incense holders stand on both sides of a regal bed, and an old, empty hookah (decorative, 70 gp) rests on a large pillow nearby. Refreshments are always available in the form of a filigreed silver bowl (130 gp) always full of tantalizing fruits – as long as it stays within the tower. An ebony chest (100 gp) holds five outfits of clothing, including one with a +2 *cloak*. A painted linen map and a silver-framed, octagonal ebon-black mirror hangs from the wall. The map details the lands of another world; the mirror is a *mirror of exchange*, a magical device recovered by Ladgloun.

If someone incautiously peers in the mirror, he has to roll a TN +6 Cha save to avoid being replaced by **Vitold Vid the Valiant**, a knight of some renown. Vid possesses all faults usually found in an aristocrat – from looking down on his “inferiors” through overmuch courage to boasting. He could tell numerous tales about his heroic exploits (which, coincidentally, are true), although they had all occurred some centuries before. Naturally, he outright refuses to look in the

mirror again, or concede to be exchanged for the lost character. He happily joins the party, but gets irritated if he can't lead as he pleases, and leaves once the group is back to more civilised lands. The reappearance of Vid may be trouble for multiple notable families, not to mention the fact that inheritance rights are notoriously silent on the question of magical confinement...

Vitold Vid the Valiant, male human
Knt8: HD 8d10+8; hp 57; Spd 20; AC 20 (+8 full plate, +3 *large metal shield*+1); Atk +7 bastard sword 1d10+1; SQ embolden, demoralize; AL LG; SV Str, Con, Cha; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

The mirror may hold but one victim, who can only be freed by imprisoning another intelligent humanoid. It is very hard to transport due to bulk and fragility (Hp: 16). If the mirror breaks, the character contained within is instantly slain, only brought back by a *wish* or *miracle*.

f. Observatory: From the inside, the tower's steel cap has the properties of transparent glass, allowing one to observe the sky unhindered. Ladgloun's telescope lies on a metal tripod; both lenses are broken, but if the heavy apparatus is brought back to civilisation, it may be fixed for 600 gp, or sold for 400. A marble basin by the tripod is always full of clear water with a slight metallic taste. Two other treasures are found in the room:

- a **booklet** bound in grey silk contains tables for astrological calculations and fold-out star maps. A skilled astrologer (a cleric, wizard or illusionist who makes a successful TN +4 Int check) may prepare a horoscope once per month by following the book's procedures at a given date. The horoscope may concern himself, a chosen character or the party as a whole. The resulting omens are usually vague and challenging to interpret, but always correct – it is a good way for the Judge to pass on

hints and “messages” to his playing group. A failed check (whose results shouldn't be revealed to the player) will provide an incorrect or incomplete pronouncement.

- a **crystal icosahedron**, two of whose sides have round crystalline protrusions which may be pressed; one red, one yellow. The icosahedron is one of the objects Ladgloun found in the starship's wreckage and kept until his disappearance. On pressing the red button, the crystal shoots a heat-ray (150' range, 5d8 fire damage, TN +8 Dex save to avoid); pressing the yellow button produces a *prismatic ray* (as *prismatic spray*, but opponent can roll a TN +8 Dex save to avoid, 30' range). The crystal isn't completely trustworthy thanks to a hairline crack. Using the *searing light* power more than one time per day, there is a cumulative 10% probability the device explodes – for the *prismatic ray*, this is 20% on initial use and certain on the second. The detonation inflicts 6d8 points of damage within 20', TN +8 Dex save halves.

g. Basement: The basement was originally reserved for alchemical and magical experimentation, but most items therein were traded away in Ladgloun's last months. The sole remnants are a thaumaturgic triangle in the floor, with the stubs of wax candles, a small furnace, two acid-scarred tables and a brass mortar filled with cracked glass.

18. Cave III. – the Spring and the Sprites

The stream's clear water gushes forth from a large gap in the cliffside – 30' wide and 5' tall. This spring is fed by the underground lake in the northeastern cave (15/d.). The surrounding area is always wet from the fine spray the cascades produce. It is occupied by a small grove with emerald-green grass and beautiful flowers. A small grotto beyond the gap is filled with several stone columns and boulders standing in a 2' deep pool.

The grove is inhabited by a tribe of **38** diminutive **sprites**, each the size of a little finger. They are completely naked, and glow with an inner honey-coloured light. Their dwellings are nests woven from dried grass in the treetops. They usually hide during the day, only coming out to feast by the spring when the moon is up.

Unless they appear dangerous, a few emissaries cautiously approach the characters and beseech them to save their kind from the guardian demon who dwells in the grotto. This beast, as they claim, is “as big as a mountain, and its spittle instantly dissolves any opponent”. It also comes out at night and eats sprites if it can get them. The sprites are deathly afraid of the creature (whom they call “*giganticus terriblicus*”), and only a thorough questioning may reveal that it is, in fact, much smaller than any of the PCs...

In the unlikely case of violence or threats, the sprites flee from the characters and fly back to their nests on their gossamer wings. If they are still harassed there, about half of them rush out towards the attackers: they inflict 1d4+1 damage each as a *magic missile*, but die in the process themselves. The sprites are highly resistant to magic as well (Spell Resistance 14).

The “demon” in the grotto is a **water mephit**. It hides among the boulders, trying to scare away intruders with its booming voice. If surprised, it immediately casts *stinking cloud* and jumps into the pool of water while its foes are preoccupied. Otherwise, it tries to bargain with the party, agreeing to any and all demands they may have – of course, unless killed or chased away for good, it is going to return and resume its gruesome habits.

Water Mephit: HD 3; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30/40 Fly; AC 14; Atk 2*claw 1d3; SA spell-like abilities, summon mephit, breath weapon; SQ regeneration 2/round; +1 or better to hit; AL NE; SV M.

Spell-like Abilities: *mel's acid arrow* once per hour as a 3rd level wizard; *stinking cloud* once per day as a 6th level wizard.

Summon Mephit: summon one mephit of choice per day, 25% probability of success. **Breath Weapon:** once every 1d4 rounds, cone of acid 15', 1d8 damage, Dex save halves.

If the mephit is slain, the entire company of fae emerge to thank their saviours in high-pitched praise. The small creatures aren't too intelligent (and mortally afraid of leaving their habitation), but thorough questioning may lead to a few bits of interesting information:

- Their patron deity is called Father Fungus Godling the Honeybringer. He is an “omnipotentated” nature spirit who lives at the end of the world on a mountain reaching to the sky. He brought several gifts to the small folk, but stopped coming after an evil sprite stole his bewitched ring. (This curious entity is al-Astorion himself. The tale of the ring is just a fancy tale, though, and inquisitive questioning only leads to confused and contradictory tales about the palace of the evil sprite and her blood-sucking tiger butterflies.)

- The great lords of the forest have all been looking for the houses of the sprites, but thankfully couldn't find them. These shambling hills are the Ravening Bigheads, who serve the Bigheadeast Greatling, a monster of legend. (These would be Ooi and his apes.)

- Last but not least, if the great heroes have already saved the fairy-folk from this Tyrannical Peril, they could as well slay his brother; Horrendous Hornnose the Trollogre Malevolent. This new danger has only been spotted once thus far, but it proved to be even more cruel than the cave demon: it slew ten sprites with the snap of a finger by turning them and their surroundings into solid ice. He probably lives nearby, since his riotous singing is often heard. (This is Drahibadar the ogre mage from area 21.)

Finally, the sprites give a commemorative gift to the characters: a fine drinking cup roughly equivalent to a thimble in size. They may also show their greatest treasure

to a particularly friendly company. The “World-Gate” is a “major artifact” leading into another dimension, very similar to our own but entirely different! The “greatest archmages” of the tribe are currently working on getting the portal operational – after all, they had only seen pleasant woods and other sprites there, with no sign of any demons, ravening bigheads or trollogre malevolents. The item in question is a round mirror.

19. Fire nuts

Three stone benches encircle a knotted tree with several thin branches. The tree is similar to walnut in every respect, but the nuts have a ceramic shell (hp 6) and explode for 2d6 points in 5' when broken. Aside from this minor inconvenience, the interior is edible and sweet. There are 13 nuts on the tree; they may be cultivated if the ground of the saplings is regularly sprinkled with sulphurous ashes.

20. Warning

The path to the southeast is marked by two rows of stakes bearing skulls; among them two human ones wearing horned helmets. If someone passes between the skulls, one of the pair speaks: “*See, pal, these won't be getting far either...*” to which the other replies: “*Sure enough, they don't look so tough to me. The first Breath of Death would kill half of the bunch, maybe more. And remember when that guy was SQUASHED BY THE CEILING?*”

The speaking skulls are just a scare – the ogre mage living further on used a scroll to cast *magic mouth* on the pair of them to go off when a well-armed group approaches.

21. Cave IV. – The Den of Drahibadar

Drahibadar the ogre mage set up his base of operations a year ago in this 20' by 40' cavern. He spend most of his time in contemplation and counting his treasure – there is a 15% chance he is out hunting. Drahibadar, though evil, isn't automatically hostile, although he is always suspicious. Unless attacked on

sight, he is willing to parlay, and if convinced of good intentions, he welcomes PCs to a keg of homemade ale. Drahibadar knows a bit about al-Astorion's past and is familiar with his present state, but hasn't been to his garden beyond the first level. He is unwilling to go into details, except to note that “it is a dangerous place, where nothing is like it seems” (he was almost killed by the hermit's peacocktrices one time, and only survived thanks to his stone of good luck).

His knowledge on Ladgloun is extensive – he has come here to loot his abandoned tower, but couldn't bypass the outside door. If he learns the party has been inside, he offers up to 1000 gp for the secret, believing one of the wizard's spellbooks is still in a hiding place he had once heard about. Alas, the book in question is in the treasury of a salamander lord now, but Drahibadar will suspect the PCs...

In combat, the ogre mage is well prepared: he opens with *cone of cold*, followed by *charm person* on the strongest and dumbest looking (or sounding!) fighter type. The rest he tries to kill with his sword. If Drahibadar is “slain”, he lets the characters loot his lair, as his regeneration ability lets him return from the dead any time. In this case, he stalks his victims while flying invisibly, and picks them off one by one with his *cone of cold* or huge longbow. After every successful attack, he returns to his invisible state and waits for another opportunity. As he is calculating and shrewd, he can choose an advantageous ambush point instead of blindly getting himself killed.

The furnishings of Drahibadar's cave consists of a rough goat-legged table, a wooden stool, three barrels of his own ale and a barrel of vinegar, a whole lot of smoked meats, a straw bed and a lantern. Drahibadar also has a display of his more important victims on a shelf, each accompanied by a graven iron plate. In order: “Subrahin the Master Thief”, “Zathold the Strong” (in horned helmet), “Hollengrin the Modest” (wears a golden

crown which appears to be 4000 gp in value, but is in fact a 320 gp fake) and "Father Eric".

He keeps his treasure in an iron cauldron by the table, although it is usually spilled on the table as he admires the hoard. 6100 sp, 1100 gp and two golden ewers (2*400 gp) are found here. His only magical item is a *stone of good luck* woven into his hair.

Drahibadar: CR 8; HD 5+5; hp 33; Spd 30/40 fly; AC 18 (banded mail); Atk *huge two-handed sword* +1 2d8+1 or *huge longbow* 2d6; SA fly, spell-like abilities; SQ regeneration 2/round [also rises from the dead once hp is back to ½ of the total], Spell Resistance 4; AL LE; SV P, M. Fly: the ogre mage can fly for two hours per day through simple concentration. Spell-like abilities: *invisibility*, *darkness* and *polymorph self* at will, *charm person*, *gaseous form*, *sleep* and *cone of cold* once per day, as a 8th level wizard.

22. The Garden of al-Astorion

This gigantic terraced garden is al-Astorion's home and greatest accomplishment. Probably not even the hermit knows how much of the three levels had he built himself, and how much had he used from the ruins of the ancient past. In any case, the results are beyond mortal measure: three terraces strengthened by cycloptic stone walls rise above the valley, with a height of 90', 60' and 45' respectively. The stairs to al-Astorion's cave are an additional 30', for a total height of 225' or 75 metres.

The massive slabs of the repaired walls are supplemented by more recent construction. These additions are much more decorative, but also less durable. Whereas the terraces have weathered untold years, the intricate balustrades are falling into disrepair fast. Large blocks have already fallen along the edges, and the rest of the stonework is just as perilous. Using ropes and grappling hooks, there is a 60% probability of triggering an avalanche of rocks. If the PC fails to pass a Dex save, he suffers 1d6

points per 10' fallen from falling rocks, **in addition to** the usual falling damage.

Although it may look like a good idea on first sight, circumnavigating the garden by levitation and magical flight can be very dangerous: the vigilant **peacocktrices** from the higher garden (area I.) attack the character midair and try to turn him into stone. If they succeed, there is a good chance the petrified body is smashed to smithereens from the fall!

a. Entrance and First Stairs: Visitors to the garden are greeted by a decorative but crumbling stairway. A multitude of plants grow in the cracks or the shade of exotic trees, exhaling an intoxicating fragrance which seems to cause a drunken euphoria of joy and contentness. Strange birdcalls are heard from afar. The variety of the flowers is truly maddening, from round, bulbous pods to slender creepers, from flat leaves to curling stalks. Although all this vegetation grows wild, there is evidence of a creator here: someone once went to great lengths to bring order to the randomness. Even in abandonment, a sort of pattern can be discerned, primarily in the straight row of evenly placed rose bushes whose tendrils have entwined the stairs leading upwards. But again, the tiny red flowers point at a wild origin.

The astute observer can also note a metallic glint at the stone pavilion halfway the climb: someone has hidden a small coppery cylinder in the gaps of the wall. The case contains a single slip of parchment with a written warning: "*Nothing remains here but nefarious hatred and demented malevolence. If you life is dear, turn back – we didn't, and paid the price of our greed in full. – Tal Unnar*" The pavilion is deserted otherwise: it once served as a rest-stop, and its mossy stone benches are still as inviting as ever.

b. Clearing of the Statue: A life-sized statue stands on a rectangular pedestal not far from where the stairs end: it depicts a thin man in simple clerical robes. He appears to be in his mid sixties, with a bald head and a hairless, wrinkled face. The proud nose and piercing eyes (which seem oddly alive, as if they were following the onlooker) lend him an air of nobility. The following inscription is found on the pedestal: “BE WELCOME, TIRED WAYFARER, BE A HUNDREDFOLD WELCOME. YOUR TRAVELS WERE LONG, BUT YOU MAY FIND REFRESHMENT IN MY GARDEN IF YOU HAVE COME IN PEACE AND GOOD WILL.” A discarded pewter cup lies next to the statue.

This statue is al-Astorion’s self-portrait; even a look at the type of the robes reveals him to be a follower of Emoré. It was created in his sane years, before his mind became clouded. In madness, the cleric has imbued it with magical powers. Anyone looking into the statue’s eyes (such as a player who declares his character tries to determine whether the image is *really* following him with its eyes) must roll a TN +10 Wis save to avoid being changed into a random animal (as *polymorph other* spell) and a TN +10 Cha save to avoid psychological change. Roll on the table below for results.

Once covered or destroyed (Hp 30), the statue isn’t dangerous any longer. Multiple paths leave this clearing: a path marked by stone slabs sunk into the earth leads southwest, and two less distinct trails enter the northeastern woods.

c. Dark Wood: The narrow trails wind their way among thick-crowned, dark trees, whose twisted trunks and irregular knots make them look like ugly goblins. The air is perpetually cool and humid; a result of inadequate sunlight – even during the day, twilight gloom sits on this place. The undergrowth is rich in ferns, moss and all

Form (1d100)

01-20 Mongoose
21-35 Lizard
36-50 Rabbit
51-65 Ferret
66-75 Fox
76-85 Monkey
86-90 Wolf
91-95 Panther
96-98 Bear
99-00 Fantastic

Psyche (d10)

1-2 Afraid of former companions, flees in panic
3-4 Becomes completely apathetic
5-6 Hostile
7-8 As usual
9 All relations reversed
10 Servile and faithful

kinds of plants thriving in an environment of wet rot.

This secluded little corner of the garden hides **six beds of purple moss** clinging to the northern sides of the trees, as well as an inviting magical spring. In the sub-map, moss beds are marked by asterisks (*) and the spring by an encircled dot (⊙). Some beds are accompanied by items left by previous victims.

The spring is found in the middle of a small clearing where the foliage parts to let in some sunlight. A narrow creek flows from within a pile of rocks, collecting in a shallow, 5’ diameter pool created by human hands. The waters have two effects: first, every quaff heals 1d6 hp (6d6 hp per person per day maximum); second, it dulls the mind and makes the imbiber susceptible to mind control, with a –2 to all relevant saves per quaff. The latter effect lasts until it is “slept off” or the character is killed by the moss on his way out. Of course, at first, only a light-headed euphoria is felt.

The contents of the moss-beds are:

#1: the bones of various small animals

#2: the skeleton of a man, which barely protrudes from the soft hummus. It wears a totally corroded and acid-eaten full plate armour, but the magical *+1 heavy mace* is intact and usable.

#3: nothing

#4: small diamond ring (recovered on a thorough search) – non-magical, but worth 1300 gp.

#5: nothing

#6: three skeletons: an elf, a wolf and a human. The elf wears crumbling leather armour with a few intact buckles, and has five 20 gp gems in a leather pouch. The human's chainmail and the contents of his backpack are ruined.

Purple Moss (CR 2): This species of moss usually feeds on the fluids of trees, but also preys on “much richer” sources of nourishment such as animals or sentient creatures. It emits a sweet aroma in a 10' radius which has a strong soporific effect identical to a potent *sleep* spell (TN +4 Con save avoids). If someone falls asleep nearby, the seemingly innocuous moss spreads over the body with a devilish speed, covering small creatures in three and medium creatures in four rounds. Beings so covered begin to suffocate as per the DMG. Victims are completely dissolved by the growth's digestive fluids in 1d2 hours. Fire completely destroys purple moss.

d. Thorny Thicket: Unruly brambles have covered this entire area; they have even crept up the trees and started to choke their branches. They are very resilient and have reddish leaves. The growth has also blocked the path leading through it, so that only a sharp blade can create an opening. This thicket is identical to a permanent *wall of thorns* spell (damage 25-AC per round spent moving). Even if cleared away, the mass regrows in 1d4 hours as if nothing had happened. **Four cobra flowers** – sizable vegetable horrors with rubbery, serpentine stalks, “hoods” composed of serrated leaves and toothy

maws – hide by the path; they attack characters passing nearby.

Cobra Flowers (4): HD 6+6; hp 35, 40, 34, 36; Spd 20; AC 14; Atk bite 2d4+1d6 acid+grab; SA grab; AL N; SV P.

Grab: an opponent hit by the monster must roll a Str check to avoid being caught in its toothy maw. Once caught, the flower inflicts automatic damage every round.

e. Tool Shed: A 20' by 30' storage area lies below the second stairway. The wooden door has rotted so thoroughly that a good shove sets the pieces flying. Gardening tools: hoes, spades, rakes, shears and other implements lie by the walls, as well as a few wooden ladders, sacks of grain, etc. A monstrous wine press stands before the far wall. The mangled, pulped bodies of a woodsman and a fighter lie in its basin. All of the equipment here is too corroded to be useful anymore.

f. Second Stairway: The second stairway is much more intact than the first. The intricate stonework of the balustrade imitates curling vines and plant life – truly a magnificent work of art. A pleasant rest stop lies halfway, with a round marble table and two stone benches allowing one to observe the valley in comfort. A human skeleton sits on one of the benches, looking at the stairs leading downwards. The bones of the skeleton are covered by a glittering growth of limestone crystals, which also affix it to its seat. It appears inanimate on first sight, but a closer look reveals the ribcage is rising and falling rhythmically, as if the corpse was breathing... This is indeed correct, as although the pitiful being can no longer see or move, he is “alive” in a sense, and is able to communicate in a wheezing and asthmatic speech, even though this obviously causes it heavy discomfort.

The skeleton is the remains of Frederic, a swordsman who came to this land in pursuit of its treasures. Exhausted by a battle that claimed his companions, he

retreated to this easily defensible spot to rest before contemplating further actions. However, when he awoke next morning, he found he was unable to move his stiff limbs. He experienced slow and painful starvation during the next weeks, and was only sustained by the morning dew. Even so, he was delirious and close to death when “He” appeared. This mysterious saviour, a kindly old hermit, treated him with utmost consideration and even brought plentiful food and water to ease his suffering. When, however, Frederic asked him for freedom, he just smiled mercilessly and asked, “Are you not already free of your troubles?” After this, he saw the apparition again and again, always receiving the best treats – fragrant wines, juicy roasts and intoxicating honey “as sweet as sunlight”. Pleas for freedom continued to fall on deaf ears. When at last he cursed his captor and saviour, the old man grew angry and left, never to return. His final words were how he would “regret this despicable ingratitude” and also – even more disturbingly – that “it is useless to think of his freedom, as he has forfeited his soul and will nevermore reach the Netherworld, no matter what he did”. This was the last Frederic saw of the old man of the garden. After a prolonged suffering, he died, but some sort of evil sorcery kept him in a state of existence even in death – blind and immobile, but cognizant.

Frederic is deadly afraid of destruction, but also desires to end the pain. If this is done for him, either by physically destroying the body or clerical turning, he exhales his soul with a hollow sigh. Contrary to al-Astorion’s lies (who was also responsible for the curse that bound him here), he will not be denied the afterlife, whomever this detail may concern.

g. The Madman: Huge blocks have fallen from the walls of the third terrace at this location, creating a large rock pile in the bare clearing. Insane, loud sobbing and laughing is heard from underneath a sizable boulder. Characters who investigate

are greeted by a horrendous sight: a filthy wretch of a man writhing in his own waste lies buried by an avalanche of rocks – only the upper half of his body protrudes from the pile. His hair and beard is long and unkempt, his tanned skin wrinkled and caked with dirt, the eyes gleaming in insane glee. Any clothes he might have had have decayed so much that they may not be distinguished from the putrescence he wallows in.

This unfortunate is in an even sorrier state than Frederic, able to speak but mostly incoherent, babbling inarticulately and in a halting manner. He was once a priest, of which deity he no longer knows. He came here as a pilgrim, probably to relay some kind of good news to someone, a singular purpose that still fills him with joy as he tries to remember it, even though he can no longer do so, just like he no longer knows who he is and how he came to be in this position. All he can talk about is “The Holy Man” – he speaks of him in hushed awe – who saved him and nourishes him selflessly, with no concern for his own benefit. If someone dispells the comfortable illusion, a great change comes over the former priest: he becomes panicked, and beseeches the PCs in tears to end it all and save him from his sufferings – but as soon as someone would draw a blade, the recognition lapses, and he again wants to live with every fibre of his being – after all, “he had received such a beautiful and true promise that life is worth living to its inevitable conclusion!”

h. Apple Tree: This small, plain apple tree bears opalescent red fruits. If characters approach and touch either the tree or the apples, it withers before their eyes, collapsing into a heap of thick, grey sludge. It doesn’t attack in any noticeable way, but after receiving 25 points of damage, it emits a pitiful cry as it transforms yet again – into a bloody corpse, obviously bearing the mark of the weapons who destroyed her.

The *programmed illusion* – for it is an illusion – may be undone with *true seeing*, *dispel magic* or plain doubt (TN +10 Int save – if a character provides a good reason for being doubtful, he receives a +4 on the roll), revealing a paralysed young woman looking on the characters in mortal terror. It is evident she is trying to talk, but no words emerge from her mouth. If she is approached by an intelligent humanoid, the paralysis is dispelled for a minute (during which the “tree” changes into the “sludge”) and she tries to ask for help – unaware of the mirage covering her.

The woman, **Lita**, came to the garden with Mal-Bazhar’s expedition. When her companions encountered the peacocktrices in the higher garden, she fled in terror and got lost, too afraid to emerge even when the companions themselves were retreating. She was discovered here by al-Astorion later, who promptly changed her into a tree. Currently, Lita wears a linen shirt and leather pants, having lost the rest of her equipment. All she knows of the valley is what she has seen so far – which is the forest where the apes live (but not their cave), the huge open field with the lake, and the garden itself.

Lita, female human Ftr4: HD 4d10-4; hp 25; Spd 30; AC 13 (+2 Dex); Atk +5 (currently unarmed); AL N; SV Str, Dex, Wis; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11.

i. Gazebo and Statue: An artistic, pleasant little gazebo constructed of fine marble is found at this place. The statue of a woman wearing flowing robes stands underneath its dome. The sheaf in her hands and the arrangement of the garment reveal her to be Emoré, but the head has been broken off at the neck and replaced with the image of a cow. If the original stone is found (**j.** – not too far from here) and restored, the statue speaks: she asks the characters to heal Rammah al-Astorion instead of killing him. If this task is completed and the characters return before the image of the

goddess, the character who was most active in the undertaking receives a *limited wish*, and all PCs – including the previous character – find a magical fruit among their food rations. Eating the fruit permanently raises a randomly determined saving throw type (1d6: 1-Str, 2-Dex, 3-Con, etc.) by +2.

j. Silent Glade: Old trees cluster here in an open glade covered with knee-deep dry grass. The old head from the statue at **i.** lies here in the grass, but directly underneath is a colony of **witherweed**: this dangerous plant resembles dry grass in all respects, and covers a 30’ by 30’ area.

Witherweed: HD 6; hp 25; Spd 0; AC 12; Atk 17*fronds 1d4 Dexterity; SA dexterity drain, death smoke; SQ camouflage; AL N; SV P.

Dexterity Drain: the touch of a witherweed deals 1d4 points of Dexterity damage to a living foe. A creature can attempt a Con save to halve the loss.

Death Smoke: if subjected to fire, the witherweed releases a deadly cloud of smoke that billows forth, covering a 5’ radius in a single round and every round thereafter, until it reaches a maximum radius of 30’. Creatures caught in the smoke must roll a Con save each round or die.

Camouflage: since the witherweed looks identical to grass, it surprises 1-6 on 1d8.

k. Third Stairway – Dahim ap Tolvin: This stairway is the most ornate of them all. It was built from rosy and red marble, inlaid with jade, onyx and other precious stones. Its perfectly intact floral patterns – reliefs and stonework – betray an extraordinary artistic talent.

This beauty is marred by rusty stains and a steady trickle of blood which has eaten itself into the porous stone and fouled it. Halfway up the stairs stands a virtual embodiment of valour, a warrior of grey stone clad in stone armour, wielding a stone sword and looking upon the characters with unmoving stone eyes. Only

his blood betrays a human origin: it leaks in thin streams from underneath the mail, collects in a pool under his feet and runs down the steps until it is hungrily swallowed by the ground. The old knight's noble features, moustache and lined face betray age, yet he still bears himself proudly. The equipment he carries is exquisite, worthy of the greatest heroes even in stone form.

The warrior, **Dahim ap Tolvin**, was luckier than Frederic or the insane priest under the stones. He calls out aloud to the characters and warns them not to approach lest he be forced to slay them one by one in fair combat, as he is bound to do by a powerful geas. He asks them to stay where they are and don't violate his ward.

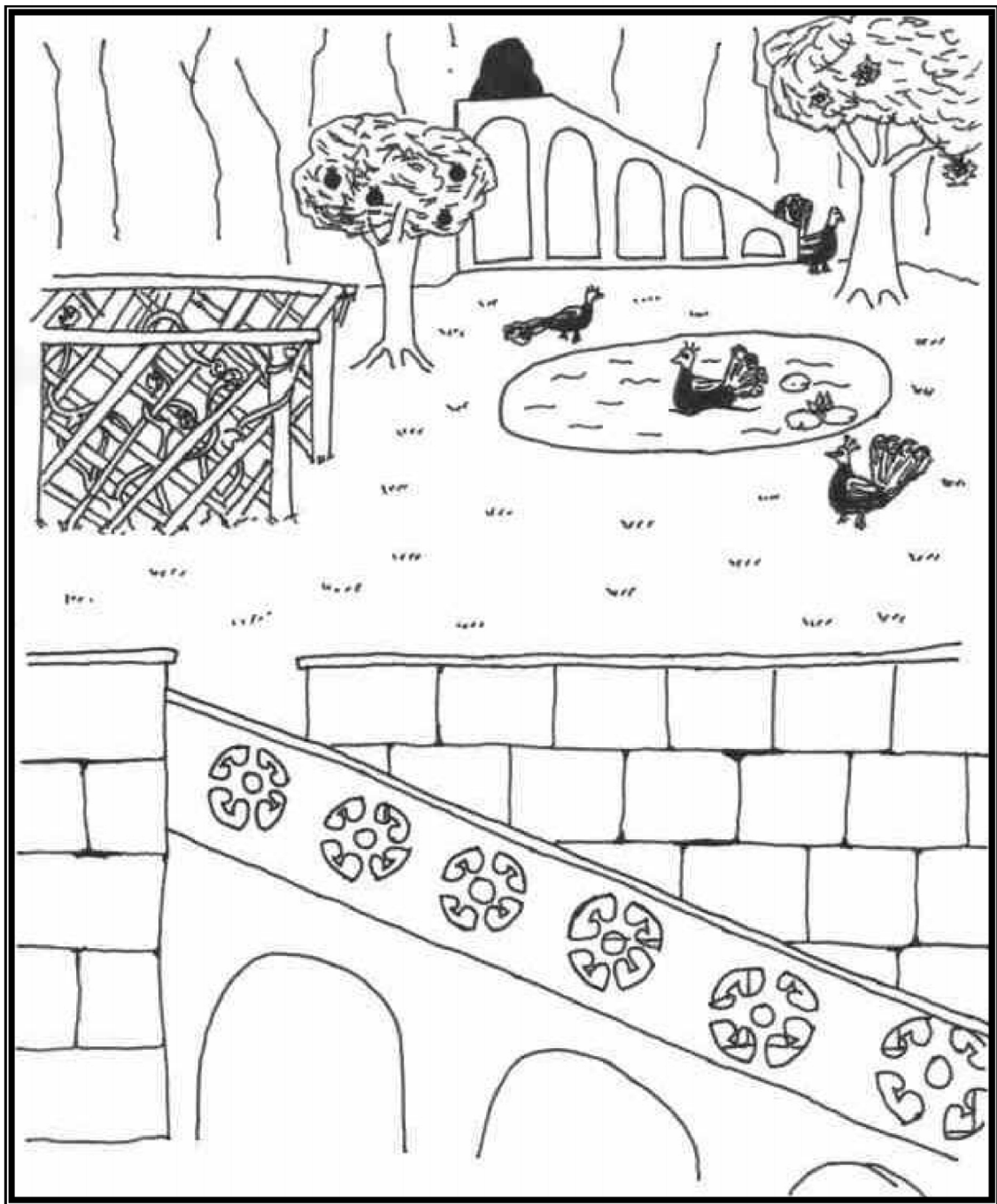
As long as his request is honoured, he remains friendly although resigned. He can tell the characters what he knows about the garden, or even its current master. In youth, he was Rammah al-Astorion's closest friend and companion, although instead of the clerical profession, he chose a life of swordsmanship and battle. Thus, he was a soldier in distant lands – with his men, he visited deserts where ancient magic has turned the sands into brittle glass; he breathed the poisonous air in jungle-caves to the south and fought with the crude-hearted, misanthropic nomads of the frozen wastelands. Only upon his return did he learn that al-Astorion had left the city they grew up in so many years ago; when he learned of the fate that befell Mal-Bazhar's companions, he decided to visit his former friend and somehow try to bring him to his senses.

He came alone and almost succeeded in the end. Al-Astorion immediately recognized the knight and gave him a warm welcome. However, he didn't want to speak of the horrors found in his garden, and downright refused to acknowledge he had ever done evil. When ap Tolvin wouldn't relent, he grew furious and hateful, accusing the old champion of betraying their friendship and before he could react, turned him into

stone with a snap of his fingers, forcing him to forevermore serve as his bodyguard. ap Tolvin bears no ill will towards the man who did this, and he is prepared to accept fate – someone who has seen so much in life will not be afraid of any destiny, even if it is worse than a clean death. Even now, he holds an unmovable faith that the hermit isn't beyond help and someone may yet break the insanity that befell him. Of course, he doesn't let anyone pass by his post alive, and fights to the end. If necessary, he suggests a fair one-on-one duel. It may also be possible to bypass him somehow – this is up to the players and the Judge. Note that ap Tolvin's spell resistance, high AC and *protection from normal missiles* makes him a formidable opponent even though he can't leave the stairs.

Dahim ap Tolvin, male human Ftr 10: HD 10d10+10; hp 67; Spd 20; AC 25 (+9 +1 *full plate armour*, +1 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +15/+15 +2 *bastard sword* (two-handed) 1d10+6; SA weapon specialisation (bastard sword); SQ spell resistance 14, *protection from normal missiles* (permanent, from a *wish* spell); AL LG; SV Str, Con, Int; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

I. Higher Garden: The terrace at the top of the stairs is al-Astorion's most beautiful achievement, intended to be the most flawless garden created by human hands. Even in abandonment and ruin, it is an impressive sight due to the inherent harmony created during its construction. The colourful flowers growing in the flower beds are exquisite both in variety and beauty. Five different kinds of roses grow on the rotting wooden lattices, and the five trees – each bearing a different type of enchanted fruit – would not look out of place in the inner park of an emperor. Glinting gems grow on the first, multicoloured glass globes on another, and the rest bear the most inviting peaches,



pears and apples one may see anywhere in the world. The grass (even though weedy) is fresh and emerald-green; the waters of the small round pool are clear and transparent, only obscured by the water lilies on the surface. Masterfully executed statues make the scene all the more pleasing: there is an elf reaching for something in the grass, a hunting dog, a morose dwarf brandishing his axe, a cleric with outreached hands and a calmly standing robed wizard. Four colourfully plumed peacocks look on the characters with lazy interest.

After a single moment of hesitation, the dreadful **peacocktrices** (unholy mixtures between peacock and cockatrice!) attack in a hissing fury. They spread their feathers to hypnotize these new candidates for their statue collection, and at least two rush the immobilized victims to turn them to stone one by one (of course, if their vile poison is ineffective, the hypnosis is broken immediately!). Of the peacocktrices, there are three roosters and one hen – the latter is incapable of hypnosis. If pressed, the monsters try to flee by flight, and return later to deal with the characters.

In addition to the avian horrors, there is another, more subtle danger in the garden: two rose bushes are **vampiric**, and attack as soon as someone is in range. The peacocktrices avoid the rose garden even in the heat of combat. The roses can also slither in the grass slowly and ambush victims from behind.

Peacocktrices (4): HD 5d10; hp 27, 29, 30, 15; Spd 20/60 fly; AC 14; Atk bite 1d3 plus petrification; SA hypnotic plumage, petrification; AL CE; SV P.

Hypnotic Plumage: as per *rainbow pattern*, peacocktrices are capable of hypnotizing up to 24 HD of creatures each. The hypnosis fails if the victim rolls a successful Cha save, or when the monster hits with its beak. Hypnotized beings stand around and gaze on the plumes – if, for some reason, the monster goes out of sight, the spell is broken in 5 rounds. One

character may only be hypnotized one time per encounter, although multiple saving throws may be necessary if more than one monster is encountered.

Petrification: a character hit by a peacocktrice must roll a Wis save to avoid being turned to stone by the creature's venom.

Vampire Roses (2): HD 5; hp 31, 24; Spd 5; AC 14; Atk stalk 1d6+grab; SA grab, blood drain; SQ camouflage; AL N; SV P. Grab: opponents hit by the vampire rose must roll a Str save or be held fast.

Blood Drain: the blood rose can drain blood at a rate of 3d4 hp per round from opponents it has held.

Camouflage: the rose looks innocent until it attacks. Surprises 1-7 on 1d8.

Once the monsters have been dealt with, the treasures of the garden are there for the taking. The most important, of course, are the magical trees. They are as follows:

#1 – pears: 4 fruits. Each pear decreases the consumer's age by 1d6 years. May not be reproduced.

#2 – apples: 2 fruits. Every apple increases Intelligence by +1 *permanently*, although one person may only benefit from a single fruit. The gain doesn't combine with any other form of supernatural ability increase. May not be reproduced.

#3 – peaches: 13 fruits. The peaches cure 3d8 hp each. They may be reproduced only in ground periodically consecrated by a priest of Emoré (such as a temple's garden). If the PCs successfully propagate this species in the temples of the goddess, the Judge should award extra experience points in addition to the eternal gratitude of the priesthood.

#4 – gems: 22 "fruits". Every gemstone is worth 200 gp. The tree may not be reproduced in any way.

#5 – glass globes: 4 transparent, fist-sized globes. Each globe is of a different colour and each has a different effect as long as it is kept in one's possession:

Blue: -5 to all electricity damage.

Green: -5 to all acid damage.

Red: -5 to all fire damage.

Yellow: +3 hit points.

Characters who thoroughly search the cliffs or use *detect magic* in the area may find the two eggs of the peacocktrices in a narrow gap. If they are eaten raw, they grant a permanent immunity to petrification to the consumer. It is also possible to hatch them in a warm environment (30% probability) or horse dung (80% probability). The hatchlings are faithful to the character they first see ("Mommy!") and may be trained for various tasks or employed as guardians.

The stone statues in the garden are former adventurers once belonging to Mal-Bazhar's expedition:

- **Elf:** Calithena, elf Fighter 5 (Neutral Good)
- **Hunting Dog:** Fifi, war dog (use wolf stats)
- **Dwarf:** Meilgan Erg, dwarf Fighter 5 (Lawful Good)
- **Cleric:** Father Damien, human Cleric 4 (Neutral)
- **Wizard:** Teath Dribble, human Wizard 5 (Lawful Evil)

m. Musical Stairs: the final flight of stairs is made of seven different metals. Stepping on every step produces a note, and going all the way up results in a melody – cheerful at first, but increasingly more sombre, finally culminating in a dissonant cacophony of chaotic accords. Anyone who would take the last step must roll a TN +4 Cha save or flee in terror. Another day must pass until a new attempt may succeed.

n. Hermit's Cave: al-Astorion's quarters are spartan and without any sort of decoration. The cave's furnishings consist of a wooden table, two rough benches, a cot and a woven reed mat. This is where characters may encounter the insane cleric... although his goddess no longer grants spells to her former servant, the priest still possesses the divine gifts of

Transmutation and Construction, two superhuman abilities granted at the beginning of his great endeavour. Together with the madness, the powers make al-Astorion a dangerous and unpredictable opponent.

al-Astorion is an old man in his 70s or 80s. His tanned skin is full of wrinkles but he has lost all hair – his head is smooth and round. He has a piercing gaze and, in his clear periods, a manner which is dry and factual. He wears simple robes, copper bracers and a staff that was once magical but has since run out of charges,

Rammah al-Astorion, male human ex-Cleric 10: HD 10d8+10; hp 46; Spd 20 (limp); AC 16 (+1 Dex, *bracers AC 15*); Atk +5 staff 1d6 subdual damage; SA transmutation, construction; AL **varies**; SV Int, Wis, Cha; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 14.

The Gift of Transmutation (Sp): al-Astorion is able to transform living or unliving matter into almost any other form he desires – practically, this ability is close to being unlimited except the following restrictions:

- a) it is incapable of raising the dead or healing
- b) the size of the transformed object or person may not change
- c) divine beings and artifacts are unaffected.

A person hit by the power may resist its effects with a Wis save. The effects are permanent unless reversed by appropriate spells.

The Gift of Construction (Sp): with this ability, al-Astorion is able to build any structure he desires up to the size of a smaller castle, or accomplish any manual task he could need to be done. The ability is only capable of actual building, and it isn't any faster than using human slaves or labourers – it is basically equivalent to the work of 100 people.

What happens to al-Astorion and how the expedition concludes is up to the player

Mood (1d6)

1. Depressed: Alignment Chaotic Neutral. In this state, al-Astorion is completely aware of every monstrous deed weighing on his conscience. The realization leaves him completely despondent and helpless – he can neither move nor act, and is in fact only able to stare vacantly or speak slowly.

2. Helpful: Alignment Lawful Good. This is more or less his true nature, with one crucial difference: he is completely incapable of admitting to any wrong, even if he is confronted with concrete evidence. Furthermore, he is amnesiac, and doesn't remember any of the dangers or traps in his garden or points of interest in the valley proper.

3. Fearful: Alignment Chaotic Neutral. He is mortally afraid of everything: the characters, himself, the open sky, stairs, or anything someone could be afraid of. Like depression, this mood essentially turns him into an invalid.

4. Scheming: Alignment Chaotic Evil. The personality appears to be friendly, but this is merely the surface: with every thought, he schemes and plans in order to bring about the PCs' downfall. He may purposely give out bad advice (e.g. „Wall of thorns? Easy enough, it is an enchantment. Say the word 'Azalam' and step through – after all, it is nothing more than an illusion!"), but never implicates himself (e.g. in the above example, he turns the thorns into thin air around himself and merely says that the characters might have „mispronounced the correct word – it is A-zalam, as I have said").

5. Hostile: Alignment Chaotic Evil. He attacks in a demoniac rage, with an equal chance for using his staff or his powers (if hard pressed, it will always be the latter). A few ideas are provided below.

6. Helpful: As point 2., but completely lost in thought.

characters – and the priest himself. His insanity manifests in quick and drastic mood swings, essentially multiple personalities which have manifested as an unconscious effort to survive his decades-long solitude. When the PCs arrive, roll 1d3 to determine which personality is dominant. Every hour, or any time al-Astorion is subjected to some kind of shock, roll again, but use 1d6 instead. For example, if someone accuses him of evil deeds – e.g. “It is you who have crippled

those unfortunates!” – another roll is called for. On the other hand, as long as conversation proceeds calmly and he is reminded of his fate, he may try to resist his mind slipping – as long as he keeps rolling successful Wis saves (TN +8).

What to do with al-Astorion?

There are several conclusions the characters may come to as far as al-Astorion is concerned. Three courses of action and their consequences are listed here for the Judge's convenience.

1. Attack: it wouldn't be surprising if the PCs decided that al-Astorion is thoroughly evil or at least a potent threat and beyond help. If they attack him, he immediately turns **hostile** and attacks with his powers of transmutation. This power is absolutely lethal and almost always results in painful death or total incapacitation. A few examples of what a character could be turned into follow:

- a body made up of swarming centipedes and worms
- skeleton without skin or flesh, but retaining interior organs
- screaming crystal statue (if the Judge is cruel, it could be ice...)
- boneless jelly – the character's skin stays intact, but the flesh and bones inside collapse into a jelly, turning the hapless victim into a pitiful blob
- bleeding and whimpering mass of flesh
- ashes and cinders: the entire body is turned into porous charcoal, and gradually falls apart as the character shifts and moves

Although multiple PCs may be totally destroyed in the fight, al-Astorion is hardly invincible – once killed, he is gone for good.

2. Capture: it is also possible that the characters intend to capture al-Astorion

and bring him back to one of Emoré's shrines for healing. This task is very hard, since his capabilities make escape an almost certain occurrence: if this happens, the priest returns to his domain or attacks his captors during the dead of the night.

3. Restoration: possibly the best course of action. A *heal*, *restoration* from a 9th level cleric or *regenerate* are all sufficient to restore the hermit's broken mind. Scrolls or magical devices may easily be used, or – if this location has been discovered – the statue of Voltagame (**16/a.**) could help if al-Astorian is brought there and convinced to prostrate himself before the image. Of course, such a trek will not be straightforward...

If al-Astorian is successfully restored, he initially listens to the list of his misdeeds with scepticism, and later with growing

agitation and finally total horror. With a great sadness, he starts to gradually undo the damage he had done and return his garden into what it was truly intended to be – not as a personal retreat, but a place where travellers may rest and recover under the watchful sight of the goddess Emoré. For this purpose, he recruits young disciples to aid in the task – someone who has seen the depths of isolation and insanity never wishes to return to it.

At first, al-Astorian may only offer his personal thanks, his magical bracers and the fruits found in the valley (which he gladly identifies for anyone). Later on, if his saviours return to the garden at some point in the future, he can also bestow a generous reward upon them in addition to his hospitality and the fruits of his labours.

THE END



APPENDIX – NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

Golden Skullcap (5; 6/d.)

This round headpiece is hammered from a single sheet of gold. It is usually worn by the psionic and clerical followers of certain mystical doctrines, and depending on the station of the person wearing it and the tenets of the doctrine, it may be as simple or elaborately decorated as one wishes. Common in the ancient days, it is no longer widely used. The skullcap gives a +2 to saving throws against psionic effects and a +4 enhancement bonus to the TN of the psionic strike ability if the wearer is capable of it.

Market value: 2.200 gp.

Ring of Rainbows (15/e.)

The Ring of Rainbows is an unique item – the sole specimen was owned and created by the wizard Ladgloun, who crafted it from a single piece of mountain crystal and a shimmering opal. With his disappearance, the secrets of its creation are lost to men.

The ring, which may only be used by wizards, calls into being a shimmering rainbow bridge of the preferred dimensions on a verbal command (this command is carved on the insides of the ring in the language of elemental air). The bridge may not be larger than 4 metres by 100 metres. It persists for an hour and a minute, and it may be used to span any gap as long as it is no larger than the maximum. It is able to support any weight placed upon it.

The Ring of Rainbows initially had seven charges; when it is found, it only has five. It may not be recharged.

Market value: 6.200 gp.

Mirror of Exchange (17/e.)

The Mirror of Exchange is similar to a Mirror of Life Trapping with an important difference. It appears as a large, octagonal mirror with a silver frame and an ebony-black surface – this material was recovered from another dimension beyond our own.

If someone looks inside, he needs to roll a TN +6 Cha save or disappear along with his equipment and change places with the mirror's previous occupant. The mirror may only hold one victim at a time, who can be freed by imprisoning another intelligent humanoid. Due to bulk and fragility, it is also hazardous to transport (Hp 16). If the mirror breaks, the character contained within is instantly slain, only brought back by a *wish* or *miracle*.

Market value: 16.000 gp.

The Book of Horoscopes (17/f.)

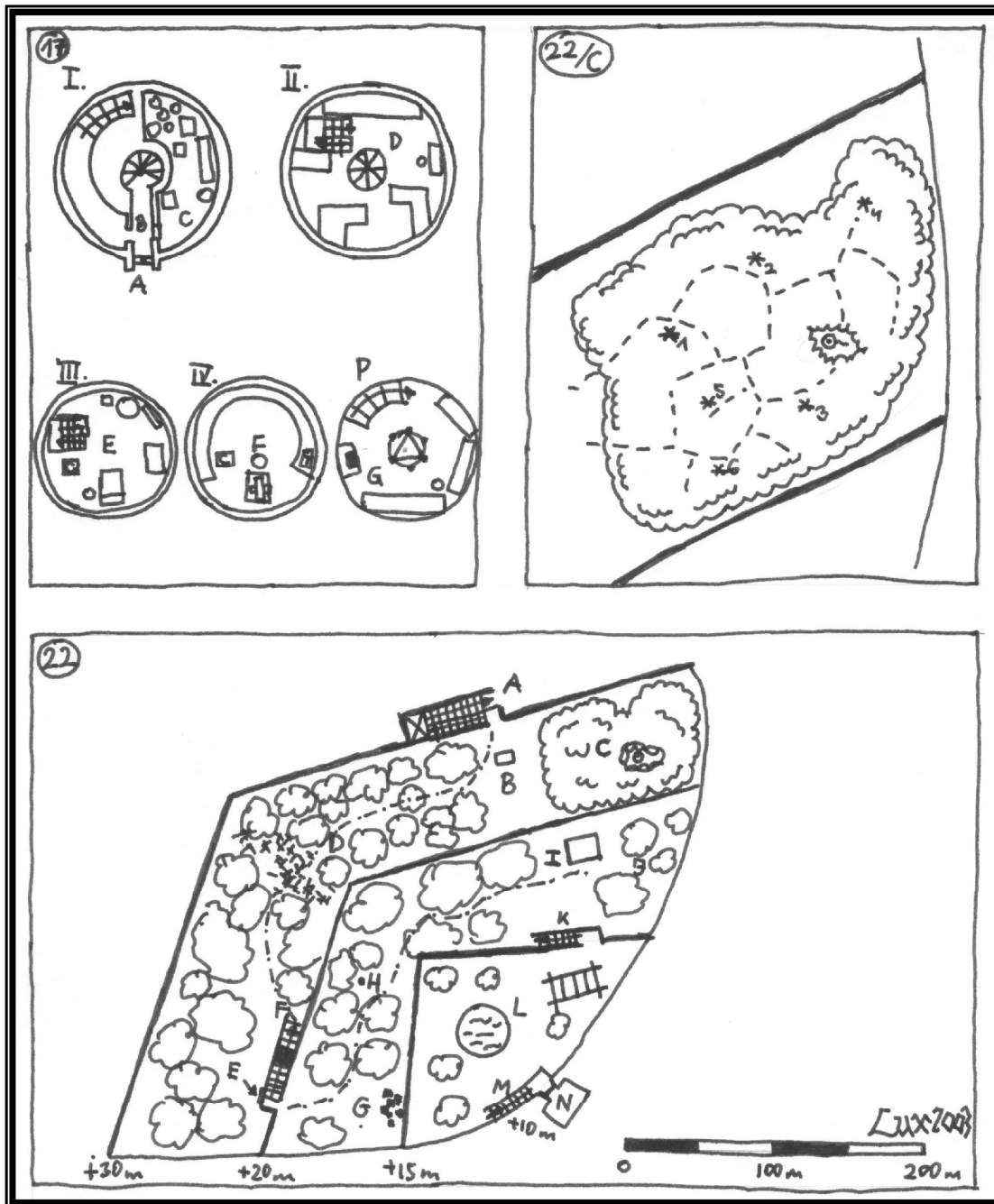
Only the greatest diviners are said to own a copy of this wondrous folio. The Book of Horoscopes is found in the form of a book in this module, but its form may be completely different in other cultures: it could be a series of acid-etched metal sheets, a bundle of clay tablets bound together by leather straps, or even a complete *building* – a series of murals in an observatory or temple, for instance! Regardless of outward appearance, it always contains accurate astrological calculations, tables and diagrams, as well as detailed star maps. Due to its reliance on the night sky as seen by an observer, it is impossible to use a given volume more than 2000 miles from the point of its creation, or on another plane or planet.

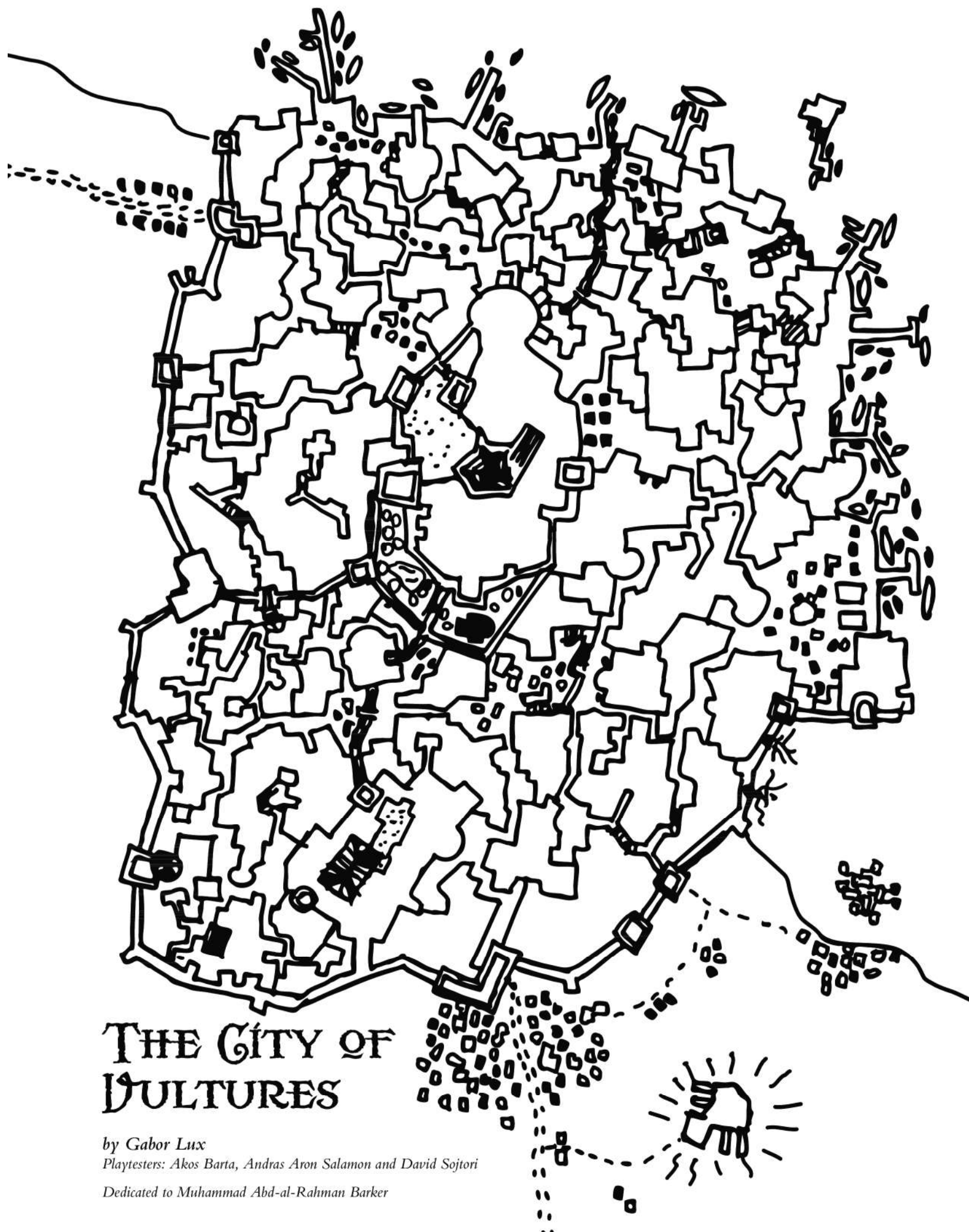
A skilled astrologer (a cleric, wizard or illusionist who makes a successful TN +4 Int check) may prepare a horoscope once per month by following the book's procedures at a given date. The horoscope may concern himself, a chosen character or the party as a whole. The resulting omens are usually vague and challenging to interpret, but always correct – it is a good way for the Judge to pass on hints and "messages" to his playing group. A failed check (whose results shouldn't be revealed to the player) will provide an incorrect or incomplete pronouncement.

Market value: 6.200 gp.









THE CITY OF DULTURES

by Gabor Lux

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Dedicated to Muhammad Abd-al-Rahman Barker



The City

In the arid lands of Thasan, there rises the City of Vultures, a metropolis whose original name is now forgotten to all – forgotten even to the ancient slaves who are keepers to Mirvander Khan’s library. Open and proud sins among the city’s inhabitants have aroused anger and contempt among the more orthodox nomads of the southern coast, who, under the banners of their new god, have sworn to conquer crumbling wall and gilt spire, and push the faithless into the sea. There is open war against the city, although not an intensive one: distance and terrain conspire to keep the foes apart, so larger clashes are not common.

Under the wings of the vultures that circle lazily above its towers, the city shows signs of rot and decay. Even the rich palaces are crumbling, stuccoes fall and statues are as worn stumps. The streets, redolent with sweet musk, rot and filth are populated by an ill folk, evil of visage and wretched. In contrast, the people of the palaces are marked with calculating indolence and the world-weariness of inherited status. The dwellers worship a lot of demigods native and specific to the city; either unambiguously evil, or indifferent to human suffering. The city is ruled by a grand master of mirages and lies, Mirvander Khan (11th level Illusionist). The khan is an evil man befitting his domain, and in his throne room, his safety is protected by a golden cage and trained tigers.

The Gods

Béthim Khanum: a female priesthood of magic-users has risen to protect the bronze-domed burial palace (1.) of this former imperatrix and await her glorious return at the fore of a dead army.

The Worshippers of the Columns are ascetics often seen whirling around the tall, primordial columns scattered over the city, and battering their heads against the stone until they fall unconscious. Prophesying in inarticulate screams, they sometimes lead the mob to do terrible deeds.

Ishab-Lambar, the new god of the southern nomads, was once tolerated in the city despite his moral certitude, but his worship was outlawed after Mirvander Khan had an ominous dream. Two nights and one day did the hunt for the worshippers last, and then finally was the faith eradicated. Yet ever since, more and more of the lower craftsmen have secretly thronged to its side, establishing the city’s first self-help organisation, **the White Hand**.

The Worshippers of Jeng, who perform obeisance before a curtain-shrouded idol. The temple (2.) is heavy with scented vapours and the smell of ash, while cultists with curved swords watch for those not of the faith. The worshippers are duplicitous, “letting the veil of Jeng fall before their nature”.



Karttekeza, the idealistic peacock-riding god in fact resides in the Citadel of the She-Sultan south of the city, but he has many followers among the fighting classes, and is popular for both valour and poetry.

Kéttki is a common good luck charm resembling a cross between a pangolin and a hedgehog, and his small idols are found in various forms over the city. Some of the more devoted worshippers have been known to flay themselves on the barbed spines, but this behaviour is atypical. No clergy or temple.

Kwárü Khan: a former ruler who has degenerated into a black, wormlike horror with the powers of a demigod. At night, the Khan's form prowls the back alleys of the city, whispering horrid secrets to those who walk outside on the darkest nights. What he has to say is often incomprehensible or allegorical to several degrees. None are brave enough to worship him.

Mezeng, a secretive clerical sect, is known for its charity, and feeding the poor with mezexin, a purplish pudding-like matter recovered from a foreign world. Thanks to the efficacy of polymorphic cloning, mezexin is both nutritious and easily produced. It eventually becomes a part of human cells and vice versa.

Ozolba, the zombie god, is not technically outlawed in the City of Vultures, but his worship must take place in secrecy, since **the Followers of Dókh** are hostile to any philosophy that does not properly dispose of the dead.

Sürü Miklári: the veiled priests of the rat god worship in a dank under-cellar (3.) closed off from the world by copper grilles in the company of the "little brothers", thousands of rats. Rat's stench and sweet perfumes mingle with the smell of milk, brought in a multitude of clay bowls by the worshipping poor.

Swahul the Prophet is a skeleton kept in a sealed iron casket, who prophesies through the metal sheath by mental transference. The temple of Swahul (4.) is covered in arrays of flowers, and the gardens are known for a multitude of birds singing among the splendid, colourful frescoes depicting the dead.

Yezud the spider god has left his temple outside the city gates (5.), and the worshippers have also departed for parts unknown. The gates are sealed, and only



the warnings are left in place: whoever enters shall nevermore leave the sanctum.

The Temple of the Delightful Scent is

not tied to any known deity; the only sacral object in the domed hall (6.) is the slowly evaporating block of camphor-like resin, prepared from a mixture of spices and the fats of subaquatic creatures by diligent hands. Every morning when the gates are thrown open, there is a new quantity releasing its aroma. All, from flies to men, are drawn inexorably to the smell, which is most pleasant and has no apparent ill effect.

The Societies

Deston: a secret society dedicated to weird harmonies, organised on the principles of terrorist cells. They employ oddly shaped metal tuning forks to produce their otherworldly tones, which are banned due to their danger to one's life, but sought obsessively by those who have partaken of it. The ranks of Deston reach from the most contemptible pariahs to the highest reaches of society. The head of the organisation, and the only man to know the entire cell structure, is Mirvander Khan.

The Followers of Dókh are a pariah-caste; it is their task to throw the dead to the vultures, and take away the bones once they have been stripped of meat. The followers use brass chains to bind the dead (and those declared legally dead) to the interior walls of roofless towers found all over the city. They constantly wear cowl'd robes, as well as an indigo strangling cord around the neck. On their orgiastic rites, they are known to asphyxiate themselves or each other in their frenzy.

The Followers of Hachur Khan are dedicated to the service of the former child-king, cast off from the throne by the severe Mirvander Khan and put to everlasting torment. The constantly regenerating, mind-wiped body of Hachur

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Khan is torn every day by vultures, only to regrow by the next morning. His remaining followers have, however, secretly stolen into the tower where the body is kept and recovered pieces of flesh which have now grown into a new race of men, beautiful of form and devoid of sin or intellect. The Followers of Hachur Khan are all high-ranking traditionalist aristocrats or their henchmen.

The Merchants of Death: these usurers are doing business with Oolar's time, a spell that can prolong life indefinitely as long as it is recast again and again. They live around **the Courts of Abulghazi Khan**.

Oom the Many is a society of illusionists, who have also infiltrated and taken over **the Seekers of the Starry Sky**. On their missions or gatherings, every member wears the face of Oom, the founder of the order. Therefore, Oom may be anyone: a novice or a master of illusions.

The Society for Optimised Objectivism, a conspiracy overseeing **the Market of Uugen**, is dedicated to upholding absolutely free market forces within their sphere of influence. They worship an ancient star vampire residing in a crystal globe; the "high priestess", An-Raydn, enjoys good relations with the Supreme High Bursator of Fedafuce, the venerable Grenspanios (now living in a distant city state).

The Seekers of the Starry Sky is a philosophy in vogue among the well-born and the affluent. In truth, the wisdom of the stars is a mirage created by illusionists, and the society is guided by **Oom the Many** towards unknown purposes.

Warriors of the Tiger: this military brotherhood, based on strong familial ties but open to valorous outsiders who have proven themselves, is sworn to serve the Khan at all costs. Their faces are recognisable by painted scars, although they often employ face-covering iron masks to strike terror into their foes. Women in the family are not expected to take up arms, but it is considered honourable to do so, and a normal occurrence. Once a year, they walk the city with their trained tigers, killing freely those they come across or whose house they break into. The brotherhood resides in **the Fortress of the Tiger**, the former summer palace of Yanar Khanum.

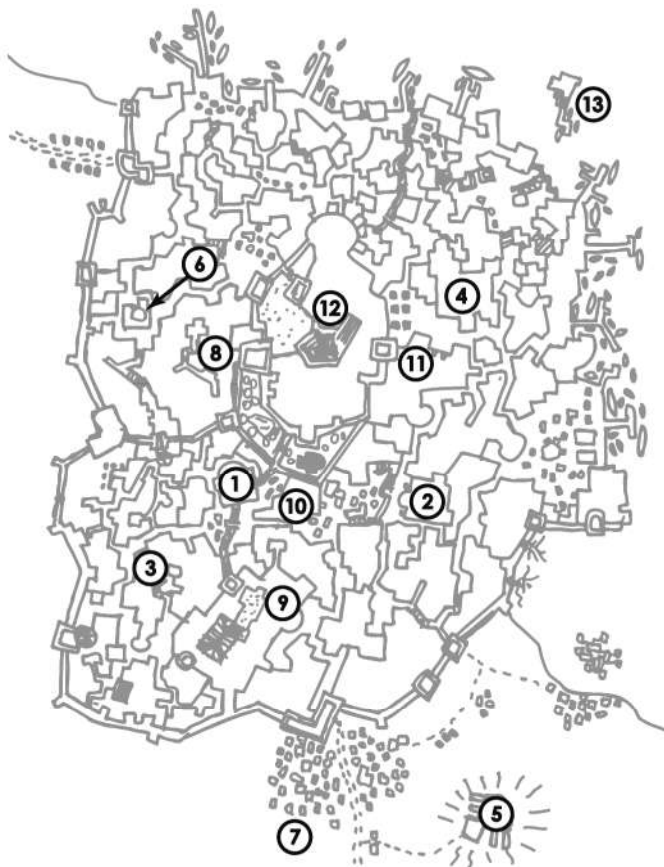
The White Hand, ostensibly a self-help organisation, is a network secretly dedicated to the worship of **Ishab-Lambar**. The network provides beneficial micro-credit to upstanding members (mostly craftsmen and lesser merchants) and those it seeks to convert; on the side, it carries out secret assassinations against those judged to be sinful. The White Hand has been infiltrated by some opportunistic thieves, who use it for a front and a source of income.

The Customs

Jewel Teeth: the aristocracy is distinguished from street scum by the partial or full replacement of teeth with sharpened gemstones. The pointed, glinting teeth lend their wearers a bestial appearance, and some enhance it with jewel talons mounted on brass sheaths worn over the fingers. As Mirvander Khan does not follow this custom, it has become a distinguishing sign of the

conservative traditionalists, who are almost without exception cruel for cruelty's sake (as opposed to simple pragmatism, more typical of the Khan's followers).

Burial Rites: in the City of Vultures, the dead are carried by **the Followers of Dókh** to roofless towers, where vultures feast on their bodies. The cleaned bones are then carried away and crushed unless a generous bribe is paid; the skulls of nobles are allowed to be taken back by their family as a matter of fact, and it is a typical custom among aristocrats to keep them as a part of the family treasures.



Key

1. The Burial Palace of Béthim Khanum
2. The Temple of Jeng
3. The Temple of Sürü Miklári
4. The Temple of Swahul
5. The Temple of Yezud
6. The Temple of the Delightful Scent
7. The City of Beggars
8. The Courts of Abulghazi Khan
9. The Fortress of the Tiger
10. The Market of Uugen
11. The Mouth of Mirvander Khan
12. The Palace
13. The Tower of Monodoios

The Places

The City of Beggars (7.) lies outside the southern gates. This stinking shantytown of tents, huts and improvised lean-tos, is a refuge for pariahs and diseased animals; murder, the basest vices, and unthinking brutality are all commonplace, and accidental or intentionally set fires are not unprecedented. The inhabitants here, existing in a half-human state, are in mutual hatred with the city folks, as well as the fishing village on the seacoast.

The Courts of Abulghazi Khan (8.): these isolated streets and courts have no apparent connection to the rest of the street system. Here, there is a perpetual full moon at night, and the pale sphere looks much closer than elsewhere. In the houses live ancient people who have outlived all: the "shareholders" and other beneficiaries of the Oolar's time spell, now administered by **the Merchants of Death**.

The Fortress of the Tiger (9.), which was originally built as the summer palace of Yanar Khanum, is by ancient rights the home of **the Warriors of the Tiger**, the military brotherhood sworn to Mirvander Khan's protection. The walls of the fortress are as vertical stone cliffs, and its splendour is much unlike the teeming slums that lie beneath.

The Greater Abyss of Khotek Kemri is a yawning chasm opening from a cellar in the slums, exhaling cold vapours like a sigh from the underearth. If talked to, the abyss, which is known to but a few, responds; sometimes with an answer, sometimes with a curse, a spell or a strange compulsion: for every visitor, there will be a different response.

The Market of Uugen (10.), a series of interconnected streets and courts, is found in the slums. Everything is on sale – hairy worms in crystal boxes, dried flowers that bring madness, children and dogs sold from cages and bar-covered houses, prophecies and mind-wiped slaves. Let the customer beware: while the wares are genuine, the hearts of the sellers are not; and he who is not cautious may become merchandise instead of buyer.

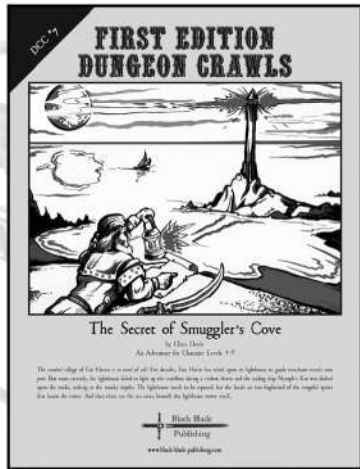
The Mouth of Mirvander Khan (11.) is a monstrous stone idol standing by the eastern gates of **the Palace**. The crumbling terror rests its clawed paw on a stone block, and, if the current Khan is so willing, its throat will speak to the city (and will obey none other). Thus far, Mirvander Khan has never taken advantage of the opportunity.

The Palace (12.): an immense complex rising from the city like a mountain of stone. Its gardens are islands of calm and beauty in the tumult of sin; the northern palace towering above the harbour a network of antique living quarters. The highest point in the Palace is the ceramic-studded central tower. Way up, on a landing platform supported by beams of steel, there rest glittering metal birds that can sail the skies.

The Tower of Monodoios (13.) is a half-ruined tower jutting from the waters of the harbour, and is the nest of the bandit leader known as the Fisherman Lord, his thieves, and their extended, interrelated families, which is the strongest criminal organisation in the city. 

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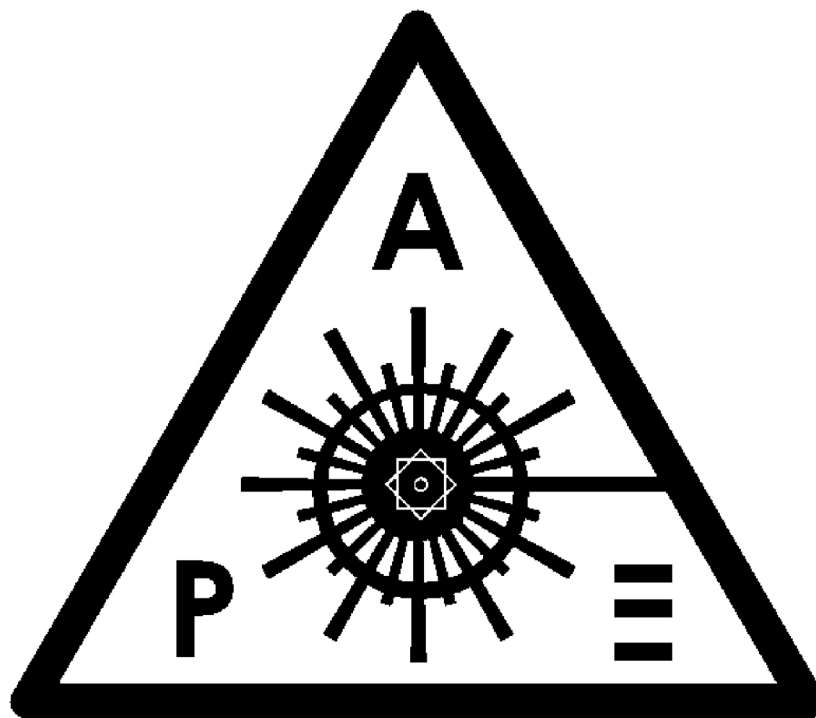
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In the Name of the Principle!

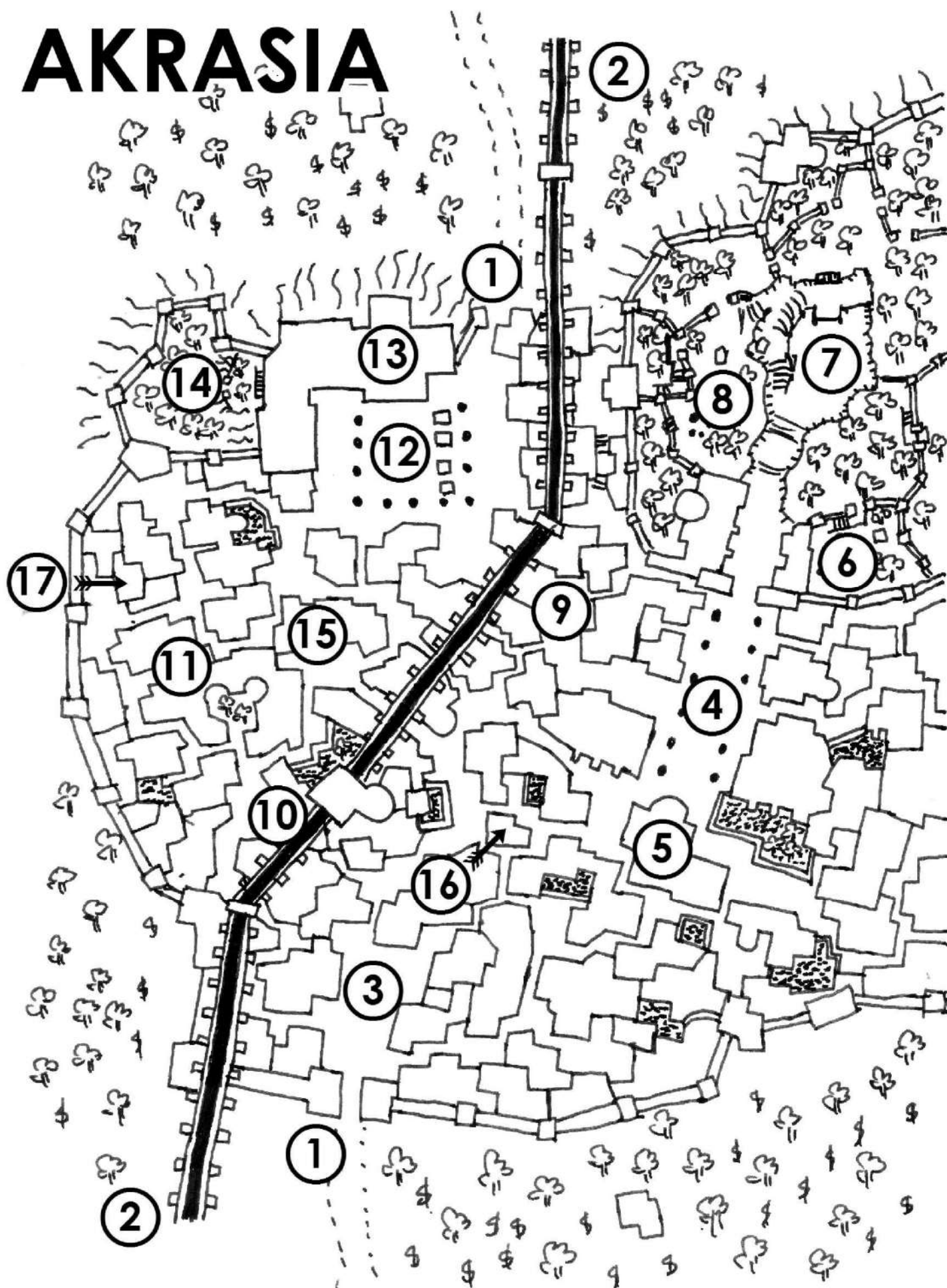
by Gabor Lux



Adventure module for characters level 5–7.

E.M.D.T. 22.-E

AKRASIA



In the Name of the Principle! *by Gabor Lux*

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*This module was first run on the Random Encounters I. mini-convention, 13 November 2010.
Certain results of the playtest were subsequently used within the scope of
the Global War on Terror.*

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Background

At the end of Summer in the year 3995, Solon's calendar, the Highest Synod of the ****Arx**** issued the following brief proclamation, numbered #3775 and disseminated through the usual venues:

***** ** In the name of the Principle!**

The ****Arx**** hereby declares that Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia has transgressed fundamental philosophical values in governing his city state, and, even after repeated calls to amend his erroneous ways, he has failed to issue the necessary corrections. Consequently, the Highest Synod of the ****Arx****, acting on a vote of eleven to ten, hereby sentences Megakrates and his unrepentant band of conspirators to DEATH, and, furthermore, orders the immediate seizure of all their movable and immovable possessions, including but not limited to the city state of Akrasia. The judgement is final and subject to immediate implementation. Swift and effective measures will be enacted by a special delegation of the appropriate experts, appointed on authority of the ****Arx**** to carry out the necessary operations in the city state of Akrasia. ***** ****
So declared in the city state of Propyla, in the year of Solon 3995, day 237.



Slightly later, a mounted company on picked horses left the city state of Propyla. Turning southwest from the major trade route, they rode on a less travelled road towards Akrasia. Shortly after their departure, the ****Arx**** issued a newer proclamation clarifying its exact intentions.

Central concept: Open-ended assassinations in the picturesque city state of Akrasia, with the most state-of-the-art implements of murder, including various futuristic devices.

The situation

The characters have a simple objective: eliminate Megakrates and his ruling companions (collectively known as the Tesserarchy), and carry out a *coup d'état* in the city state of Akrasia. Beyond their normal character abilities, they can rely on the devices provided by the organisation of the ****Arx****, and it is entirely up to them how they achieve their objectives in the calm, pleasant resort town preparing for its Autumn Mysteries and the corresponding deluge of pilgrims.

In fact, the mission goes wrong even before it can start. As absurd and impossible as the task of seizing an entire city state and murdering off its ruling clique might be, it is made worse by a sudden

change of plans. After passing proclamation #3775 with a minimal plurality and against significant objections, the Highest Synod is called again a few hours after the characters' departure. Acting on a vote of ten to nine (with two undeclared and rather mysterious abstentions), the ****Arx**** rescinds its death sentence, sending out a new team of skilled assassins to correct the previous mistake and protect Megakrates while wiping out the characters. Their session concluded, the members of the Synod withdraw for the hours before the evening *soirée* and informal social programme.



Dynamics

The essence of the scenario is open-ended, decisive problem-solving. The characters can act as they please in reconnaissance and action while in the city state, but they must take into account the reactions of their environment. By default, everyday life goes on in Akrasia, and the preparations for the Mysteries draw enough merchants and guests that the movement, innocuous questions and, to a certain extent, odd behaviour of a small group does not gain more than cursory attention.

The more suspicious, inexplicable events (especially crimes, disappearances or accidents) in the city, the more extensive the mobilisation and preparedness of its guards, informers, and ultimately the Tesseractarchy itself, increasing their ability to discover and intercept the characters. Outside the state apparatus and its supporters, the same escalation leads to increasing unease, then events of mass hysteria. Atrocities such as detonating the aqueduct or provoking civilian unrest will surely lead to these consequences.

If the party appears particularly well equipped for regular travellers, a few members of the secret police will try to gauge their intentions through discreet methods – e.g. posing as „the friendly merchant“, „the lost pilgrim“ or „the annoying but clueless bureaucrat“. Informers always make contact in plain sight of other

citizens (or other members of the secret police), preferably out in the open; they are hard to entrap unless caught unaware.

If the characters are judged to be a threat, their surveillance is discreetly increased to make it easier to neutralise them in case they make trouble. The agents relay their information to others in their team, making it likely that the appropriate decision-makers will receive note of dangerous irregularities. Most secret agents are 3rd level Fighters or 2nd level Thieves.

In a crisis situation, the four members of the Tesseractarchy react in different ways:

- **Megakrates** and **Strategos Brakton** typically stay in the palace (13.), and stick close to each other. Both have full control over the state apparatus, communicating through soldiers, bureaucrats and envoys. Megakrates is very hard to draw away from his protective glass bell, and if he ever leaves the palace, he will surely use it for protection.
- **Aymanz the Necropope** resides in the Temple of the Night (5.), being rather isolated from current events. He and the priests may miss lesser calamities, but if they receive a formal message, they may either choose to barricade themselves, or sally forth to protect the city state. If there is an attack on the temple, Aymanz tries to request help from Megakrates with his *scroll of sending messages*.
- **Yizil Doré, Mistress of Magic** lives in her tower (10.), trusting her safety to the superstitions surrounding her mystical powers and the giant ravens which dwell with her. Since the tower provides her with an excellent view, she can easily spot unusual developments in Akrasia, and find further information through her divination spells (*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *wizard eye*). If she is confronted by interlopers, she tries to escape, and give warning to others with a *shout* spell and her *staff of light*.

Since all lords of the city state except Aymanz are highly intelligent, and all of them possess a healthy degree of paranoia, they are unlikely to fall for badly planned schemes. They are highly loyal to each

other, and in case of a great upheaval, gather in the palace for mutual protection.

In Akrasia, the warrior-sect guarding the Mysteries form an independent power group, controlling the hill in the north-eastern quarter of the city states, including its buildings (6.), while the park (8.) is guarded by their trained black panthers and blue tarantulas. However, the guardians are motivated solely by defending their magical gateway (7.), and as long as the city itself does not appear to be in grave danger, and they remain unmolested within their complex, they do not get involved in the events of this adventure.

The final group is represented by the hit team sent out by the ****Arx****. They have the same black uniforms under their civilian clothes as the characters, but are slightly weaker and less well equipped. They only arrive a few days after the characters, and practically remain out of sight as long as they can protect the Tesseract without compromising their anonymity. They will adapt their strategy to the circumstances, and may be passive (protecting specific targets) or aggressive (hunting down the characters in a concerted effort). Negotiations are out of the question. All hitmen possess an information sheet with the most recent ****Arx**** proclamation (#3776).



The Tesseract

1. Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia is a middle-aged man, noted for a greying beard and wine-red nose. His gaze often appears confused and uncomprehending, but his thinking is fast and precise, and his nature merciless. He is limp in the right leg. Clothing is usually a simple toga, but he wears a pair of iron gauntlets either as a lucky charm or a sign of his station, and carries an ornamented, heavy metal rod. According to ****Arx**** sources, Megakrates is in the possession of multiple dangerous magical items, including a glass bell capable of locomotion, and affording him full protection against conventional weapons.

Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia: Fighter 6; AC 3 (Dex, *force field gauntlets*); Atk 2**touch staff of horrid decomposition* 2d4 Con; Str 14, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 13; LE; *glass bell, staff of horrid decomposition, force field gauntlets, 3*healing potion* (2d8+3 Hp).

Psionics: mental strike 1/3 rounds, one person, save vs. spell or take 4d6 Hp.

Hp 28

Glass bell: a thick, human-sized glass bell with a metal base, granting protection and some mobility to one person (~1m diameter, 2.5m tall). The bell is completely resistant against physical attacks, and has a 40% probability to deflect rays and force fields. It can levitate slowly in the desired direction, but has poor manoeuvrability.

Staff of horrid decomposition: the touch of this heavy metal staff causes the loss of 2d4 Constitution; a target reduced to 0 immediately decomposes. 20 charges.

Force field gauntlets: gauntlets surrounded by a scintillating cobalt field. Grants a DC of 2 and protects from the hazardous effects of the staff.

2. Strategos Brakton is the commander of Akrasia's armed forces. He is a fighting man of shaved countenance, restrained in his manners but unrestrained in his capability for violence. Only seen in his ceremonial armour, ****Arx**** sources also identify his hammer as magical. In spite of his formal rank in the city state, the ****Arx**** is on the position that he cannot be considered an independent political operative, being fully dependent on the guidance of Megakrates.

Strategos Brakton: Fighter 4; AC 1 (banded mail, shield, Dex); Atk *sparkhammer* +2 1d8+3 +2d4 sparks or +5 javelins 1d6+1; Str 13, Dex 15 [+1], Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10; LN; *sparkhammer* +2, *dust of disappearance**3, *rust dust**2 (rusts metal; magic can save at +2 per plus).

Hp 28

3. Aymanz the Necropope is High Priest at the Temple of the Night, and endowed with the sacred task of preparing the youths and maidens educated therein for the Autumn Mysteries. He is of middle age, corpulent, wearing black felt clothing and a heavy golden medallion. His unkempt appearance suggests a regular habit of alcoholism. ****Arx**** sources speculate that his debaucheries have taken a toll on his health, frequently rendering him infirm. In the Temple, he will be protected by numerous disciples and a mechanical servant.

Aymanz the Necropope: Cleric 5; AC 7 (ring mail); Atk trident 1d6+1; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 7; CE; *mechanical servant*, *clerical scroll* (*cure moderate wounds**2, *wind wall*, *send messages*); golden holy symbol (600 gp).
Spells: 1: 3, 2: 3, 3:1; 1: bless, detect good, command; 2: hold person, augury####, reversion; 3: cause serious wounds.
Hp 25

Mechanical servant: HD 5; AC 2; Atk heavy flail 1d6+1; Spec immune to mind-affecting, ½ damage from fire, cold and electricity.
Hp 22

4. Yizil Doré, Mistress of Magic is a powerful wizardess. Her hair is snow-white and tangled, but her brown face is smooth and youthful. Her purple hat is decorated with golden moons and stars, while her robes are a dull red. Known for infrequent public appearances, ****Arx**** intelligence suggests she keeps to her dwelling, where she might be protected by curious beings.

Yizil Doré, Mistress of Magic: Magic-User 8; AC 3 (*cloak* +3, Dex); Atk throwing dagger 1d4 + poison; Str 7, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14; NG; *cloak* +3, *potion of gaseous form*, *potion of fire breath* (1d4 quaffs, 5d4 Hp, save vs. breath for ½), *staff of light* (17 charges).
Staff of light: *light* (0 charges), *continual light* (1 charge); may also inflict a light strike on a selected area – 2d6 rounds of blindness (save vs. paralysis), undead take 8d6 Hp with no save (4 charges).

Spells (memorised spells underscored): 1: 4, 2: 3, 3: 3, 4:2; 1: sleep, light, identify##, unseen servant, shield, charm person, Tensor's floating disk, feather fall*2, magic missile, detect magic, read magic; 2: detect invisibility, levitation, Mel's acid arrow, gust of wind, locate object; 3: animate dead, haste, dispel magic, clairaudience/clairvoyance, lightning bolt, vampiric touch; 4: shout (5d6), the imperfect preservation, fire trap, wizard eye; 5: dreaming, stone wall.
Hp 32

The ****Arx**** agents

A unit consisting of 12 agents. All of them own a laser loaded with 15 shots, and the group also has a total of three random technological items, selected from the same list as the player characters. All hit-men possess an information sheet with the most recent ****Arx**** proclamation

****Arx** agents (12):** Fighter 3; DC 7 (uniform, Dex); Atk longsword 1d8+1 or laser 2d10+; Spec skilled in philosophy, aesthetics and subterfuge; LN; black uniform with the ****Arx**** sign, Proclamation #3776.

Hp	21	14	21
	14	13	18
	20	18	
	15	15	
	17	11	

Laser pistol: Damage 2d10+, values of 10 can be rerolled and the new roll added to damage. Loaded lasers have a capacity of 15 shots. A character moving unpredictably can avoid being hit by rolling a successful save vs. wands, but can't attack that round. There is a penalty of -4 against all subsequent shots.

PAKEMA: Spray equipment attached to tank and reinforced with gooseneck nozzle. Crystalline raptogen stored in the containers immediate sublimates upon aerial exposure, with an acute incapacitating effect upon inhalation (save vs. poison at -3 or loss of consciousness). Tank contains 8 doses.

Diambroid: x4 High-grade explosives in sealed and numbered metal canisters marked with the letters „ΔΙΑ”. Each canister causes 6d6 damage on explosion (save vs. breath for ½), radius 20' per canister.

Extractor: Photovoltaic analytical instrument with glass extraction tube. Radiation emitted up to a 100' distance removes the brain through the skull via the osmotic principle. The chances of withdrawal under **standard conditions** are 1:3 / round after the second round.

Kinetic Cube: Standard and specialised all-system forwarding device. Waves emitted by the cube are suitable for the levitating transportation of up to 500kg material. The accuracy and power of the kinetic force field is reduced after 2 rounds of operation. Energy supplies recharge automatically.

City NPCs

Secret agents: Fighter 3; DC 10; Atk shortsword 1d6 or dagger 1d4.

Hp	17	16	23
	13	16	13
	27	16	10
	10	15	20
	10	21	18

Secret agents: Thief 2; DC 9; Atk shortsword 1d6 or dagger 1d4 or 2*shortbow 1d6; Spec backstab.

Hp	9	3	6
	9	7	4
	7	5	12
	3	5	6
	8	6	7

Various guards: Fighter 2; DC 6 (ring mail and shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or halberd 1d10 [no shield].

Hp	15	13	12
	8	11	17
	6	10	11
	13	13	7
	10	11	17

13	13	11
18	19	3
5	14	6
3	13	14
20	14	12
5	9	9
10	7	11
12	10	3
5	2	9
10	14	16

Akrasia

The city state of Akrasia, situated close to the metropolitan bustle of Propyla, relaxed and quiet for most of the year except the bustle of the Autumn Mysteries, combines the worldly elegance of an expensive holiday resort (e.g. Karlovy Vary, Monaco or Marienband) with the well-mannered certitude of an impeccably organised fascist police state.

It is characterised by a certain melancholic *charme*; its inhabitants like decorative gardens, the orchards and vineyards around their city, and the feeling of slow decline. Most citizens are well to do, including several wealthy Propylans who retreat here from the noise of the big city (thus, many of the houses are left uninhabited through most of the year). The state apparatus is strong, although it has become a bit too comfortable due to decades of peace.

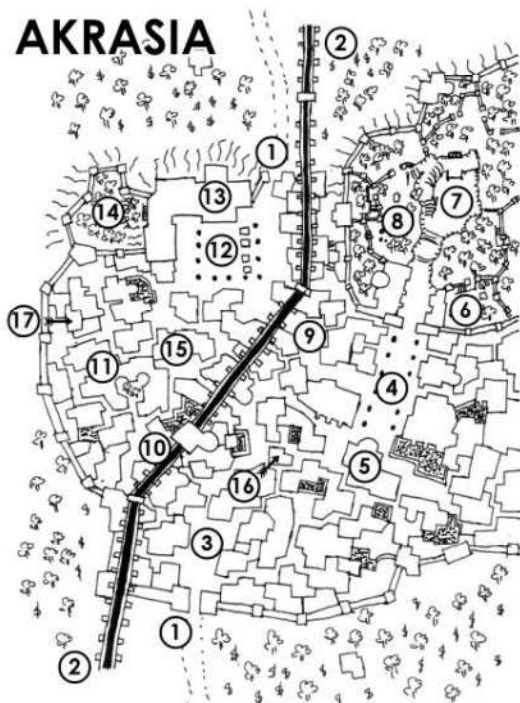
The Mysteries, organised annually every autumn, draw a throng of pilgrims. At the height of the festivities, youths and maidens brought up for this very purpose are admitted through a magical gateway, which sends them into an alternate world of happiness where everyone is free of want and drudgery. The warrior-sect guarding the gateway watches jealously for the sign of anyone unworthy who would try to go through it unbidden – in spite of the warnings, hunting beasts and patrolling sentinels, there are a few attempts every month, but the offenders are usually apprehended and cut down on the spot.

Random encounters are at the GM's discretion; before the Mysteries, the city is rather sedate and upper-class, while dur-

ing the festivities, it is full of chaos and movement where anything may happen.

1. City gates: Under normal conditions, the gates are open day and night, each defended by 20 soldiers. Most of the time, patrols on the walls are rare, and consist of 5 soldiers. The price of admission is 2 gp per person, 1 gp per horse, 5 gp per loaded beast or cart, and 2 gp per loaded slave. Armed travellers must leave their weapons at the gate or pay a 5 sp deposit. Armed groups which look organised are noted and tailed to learn their intentions.

2. Aqueduct: This tall structure links the fortress of Pandoramis to the metropolis of Propyla, and mostly travels along the road. It is inspected by regular patrols outside the city, and there are watchtowers built into the larger pillars (most of them sealed and empty). Within Akrasia, where the great structure towers above the cityscape, the easiest way to get on top of the aqueduct is through the stairways in the larger pillars. Both of these are guarded by 5 soldiers, but they don't normally expect intruders, or take their job seriously.



3. Marketplace: An upscale place mostly dealing in fruits, craftsmen's products and decorative objects. During the Mysteries, it gets filled with merchants from faraway lands, hawking expensive and useless trinkets to the strolling visitors. There are usually 10 guards, but this number is increased to 20 when the place becomes crowded. There is a small guard post with embrasures for arrow fire.

4. Processional: Ancient marble slabs cover the long plaza, which becomes progressively filled with people as the time of the Mysteries approaches. Even under regular circumstances, the walls of the houses are covered with large green, red and blue banners; there are many balconies and windows overlooking the place. Before the Autumn rites, an army of diligent slaves scrubs the pillars and stonework, workers hammer the marble slabs in place, stone-carvers replace the less suitable ornaments and limners repaint the house walls for the momentous occasion. The watch is ever vigilant here, especially at the southern end of the plaza; there are at least 20 men, increased to 30 once the pilgrims start to arrive.

5. Temple of the Night: This building complex is constructed from darkened stones, and all openings are decorated with ominous metal bars and grid work. There is an orphanage within the bleak edifice, where the disciples of the Night undertake their educational work. Youths and maidens who reach the age of sixteen are sent to the Autumn Mysteries and are never seen again, but until that special occasion, they receive education in a range of ethical, artistic and vocational fields.

The entrance to the temple is overseen by 6 guards, while the back door and the balcony are guarded by 2 each. Chambers on the lower level are low-ceilinged, cold and cellar-like, while those on the upper level – except for the cells – are tall and airy, although, due to scarce illumination through the narrow windows, they are shrouded in perpetual gloom.

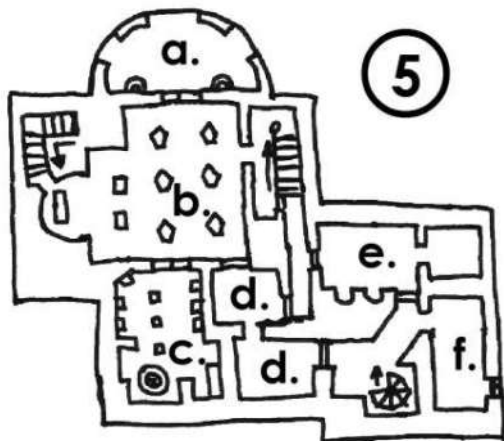
Disciples of the Night (12): Cleric 2; DC 7 (ring mail); Atk trident 1d6+1; CE.

Spells: 1:2; #1-6: bless, cause light wounds, #7-12: protection from good, command

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

Guards (10): Fighter 2; DC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8 or 2*longbow 1d6.

Hp	14	6
	2	13
	16	9
	16	15
	13	17



a. Entrance: ancient bronze door flanked by statues of cowled figures. During the preparations for the Mysteries, the entrance is under strict guard and no entry is permitted for any visitors.

b. Undertemple smelling of incense and cool water. The Disciples of the Night do their rounds and pray here when not otherwise occupied; the orphans take part in prayers at sunset, midnight and dawn. These rites are lead by Aymanz the Necropope. In the western apse, an old stone stele bears the Proclamations of the Night. On the worn surface, surrounded by three auras (green, red and yellow), a faceless figure raises a rectangle-bladed sword in one hand and a bundle of arrows in the other. Below are the following lines, in green, red and yellow letters:

- I. „Thus have I have sanctified thy sword with the passage of years and the measure of stolen days. Ever since thou hast brought this stone image into thy house, there has been no mountain that would deny thy due.”
- II. „Thus hast thou brought before me the procession of thy years, and I have given thee back thy days, as the river grinds stone into sand and the snow caresses the feathers of a lost bird.”
- III. „Thus have I given thee words and long countings, questions for thy statements and silence in testimony of thy doubts.”

c. Vaulted chamber bisected by a row of columns. The swirling tracings on the row of stones by the wall are unintelligible, but both the disciples and the orphans must learn them without fail. The barred well to the south is used for punishments: if an orphan is disobedient, makes a mistake or commits mischief, he or she will be lowered into a cistern where slimy giant leeches crawl over them to suck their blood. This pedagogic system is most effective to keep the little brats under control.

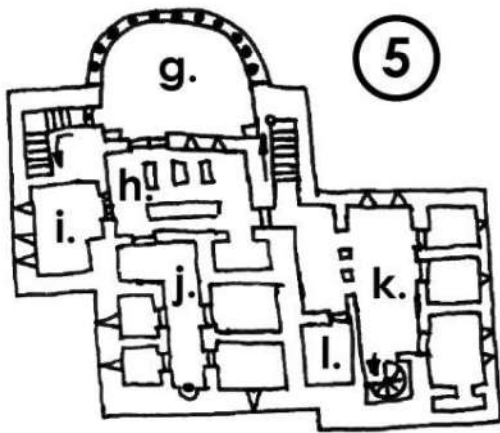
Giant leeches (10): HD 2; Atk bite 1d6 + blood-sucking 1d6/r; Spec immune to mind-affecting spells, vulnerable to salt.

Hp	13	14
	5	8
	9	9
	10	8
	7	12

d. Stores: food, torches, ceremonial objects...

e. Barracks: the guards' sleeping chambers with a small armoury. Marginal valuables.

f. Kitchen; the back door is watched by two guards on kitchen duty.



g. Tall and spacious hall overlooking the Processional and the entrance to the Mysteries. The balcony over the street is closed off by a dense row of vertical bars, too tight even for the leanest intruder. When they are not occupied with their studies or prayer, the orphans spend their time here, *very obediently*. Their attention is mostly occupied by the outside world, but only when nobody watches, lest they look too interested. At night, there are two guards here.

h. Refectory and scriptorium. Gloomy hall illuminated by ancient candelabra; coffered ceiling and dusty, ink-coloured banners. There is a larger dining table for the Disciples and three smaller ones for the youths and maidens. The southern room contains a small library.

i. The quarters of Aymanz the Necropope lie behind heavy double wooden doors. Peaked stained glass windows shed illumination on richly carved furniture. There is a poster bed, a writing desk, a kneeler and a locked cabinet. This contains a prayer book with a gilded cover (600 gp), and a small container with a *necklace of strangulation* and a *ring of comets*. If Aymanz is in the room, his mechanical servant stands by the entrance.

j. Cells for the orphans, separated by sex. The two crowded ones to the east have bunk beds for 20 boys and 12 girls of various ages; the more comfortable ones to the west are for the 5 youths and 8 maidens being prepared for the Mysteries. Si-

lence, order, discipline (occasionally, someone cries in their sleep).

k. Disciples' wing. Cells (3, 3 and 6 persons), a common room with carved wooden chairs, a few brass plates and tapestries to break the gloomy asceticism.

l. The treasury's iron door is locked (-25%), protected by a *glyph of warding* (12 Hp) and a poison pin trap. One treasure chest with 1400 sp, 500 gp, a brass pitcher (40 gp) and brass bracers (10 gp); and another with 150 electrum and 450 gp.

6. Entrance to the Mysteries: The cleft in the hill is surrounded by austere, domed buildings. The gates are open and the plaza is uninhabited, but this – except for the last day of the Mysteries – is forbidden ground. Anyone setting foot here will be rushed by the observant fanatics and beaten to death if they don't flee immediately. The facing buildings are inhabited by 30 fanatics; a further 20 are on patrol, 20 guard the central gorge and the gate, while 10 each are posted at the three towers (only two depicted on the map) – there are 100 in all on the grounds.

Fanatics: Fighter 2; DC 8 (shield, Dex); Atk heavy flail 1d6+1.

Hp	12	11	10
	7	17	13
	11	14	10
	15	10	4
	9	13	18
	18	5	15
	14	10	11
	13	12	14
	12	5	11
	11	12	16
	5	13	8
	10	5	10
	13	3	10
	13	6	13
	15	15	17

Veteran fanatics: Fighter 3; DC 8 (shield, Dex); Atk heavy flail 1d6+1.

Hp	6	11	17
	18	14	19
	18	16	14
	14	19	12
	15	10	16

7. Gate: The gorge widens into a round space surrounded by tall cliffs; stairs lead up to a terrace and a broad cave mouth. Cool air and vapours emerge from the dark opening. 20 fanatical fighters and two black panthers ensure nobody can enter the cave and pass through the magical gate of swirling blue mists concealed within.

Black panthers (2): HD 3; DC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d6 and bite 1d6; Spec move silently, pounce.
Hp 17 14

8. Park: Tall walls divide the dense orchards and shrubbery of the sacred grove into a labyrinth of death. Here and there are small gazebos, statues and rests; stairs connect the different elevations. Intruders are hunted by four patrols of 5 men each, as well as 6 black panthers (1d2 encountered) and 10 blue tarantulas (1d6 encountered).

Black panthers (6):
Hp 14 12 14
14 16 15

Blue tarantulas (10): HD 4; DC 5; Atk bite 2d4 and poison (save at -3 or dance in horrible convulsions for 1d6 Hp/round until dead); Spec immune to mind-affecting spells.
Hp 21 14 10
19 12 25
17 9 18

9. Avenue of Glory: This wide roadway connects the Agora with the Processional. Already crowded at the time of preparations for the rush of pilgrims, this is a place to buy all kinds of curios: glass items, exotic drinks, dead lizards preserved in oil, hookahs and lucky talismans made of Etunian amber. During the festivities, it is a riot of noise and movement, lit by lampions and braziers. There are 10 soldiers, 20 during the Mysteries, with a small post that can serve as a safe mini-fortress in case of trouble.

Among the main establishments lining the way, we should mention **Ollanar's Victuarium**, an expensive restaurant based on firm post-geometric principles;

the **Fire Snake**, the city's most expensive bordello (25+ gp/night); and the residence of Otag Gash the Factor, an ultra-rich patrician from Propyla. Otag Gash is one of the few who have an uninterrupted way into the palace, and to cultivate a personal friendship with Megakrates (he is a paid double agent of both city states).

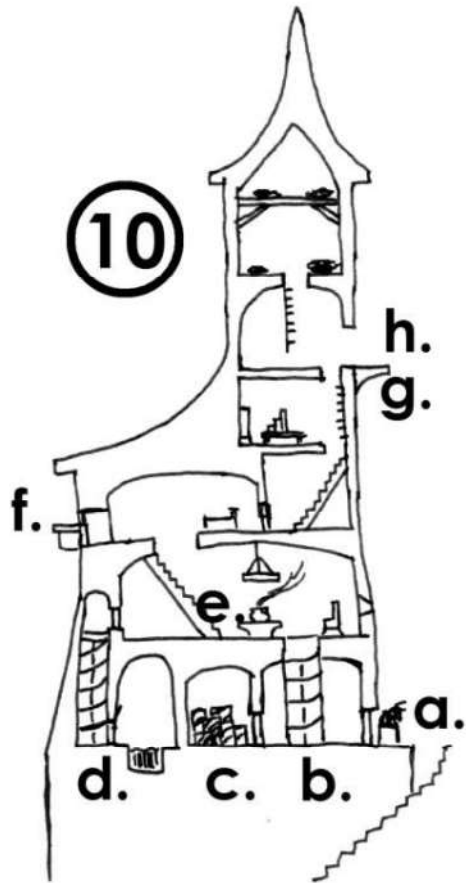
10. The tower of Yizil Doré: This peaked tower straddles the aqueduct, rising to dizzying heights above the city state with dazzling views all around. Long, meandering stairs climb up from a southern back alley with several twists and turns.

a. A gargoyle holding a lantern in its mouth perches on a pedestal next to the fortified wooden door. The knocker is a bearded satyr's face, inquiring about the cause of disturbance in a booming voice if it is disturbed. It never opens the door, and raises the alarm if there is trouble.

Gargoyle: HD 4+4; DC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d4 and bite 1d6 and horns 1d6; Spec gore (send people over the parapets for 6d6 falling damage), +1 or better to hit; CE.
Hp 23

b. Gloomy reception room; heavy cloud of pulsating crimson mist in an enormous metal mirror, with a mass of observing eyes in its depths. This is an extranatural entity trying to get free. Characters looking into the mirror for too long will see the eyes appear on their reflected bodies – if nothing is done against this (blinding the eyes, *protection from evil*, getting out of the mirror's sight etc.), there is a 1:3 probability the eyes will manifest physically, and only cutting them out (4d4 damage), or removing them with *remove curse*, *cure disease* or a similar method can prevent hideous death within 1d3+1 turns as the victim's body collapses into red mush under the strain of the entity's magical might.

c. Storage with piles of unused rugsm candelabras and old drapes. In a corner, there is a marble column with the bust of a young woman whose eyes are gemstones (300 gp each). If the stones are removed, the blind sockets will bleed uncontrollably.



d. Rear entrance from the channel of the aqueduct flowing through the tower's foundations. Golden glyphs traced on the locked iron door form a *fire trap* (1d4+8 Hp).

e. Scented vapours from brass pitchers envelop a chamber decorated in hues of black and golden brown. Small hassocks around a low table, dried fruits, violet wine in filigreed golden pitcher (380 gp) with accompanying goblets (5*40 gp).

f. Bedroom and balcony. A +2 *shield* hanging on the wall is accompanied by a bow and a quiver of 11 +1 *arrows*. The stone behind the shield can be removed – this cavity is where Yizil Doré keeps her spellbooks, and a 1800 gp opal wrapped in fine linen. Next to the bed, there is a footlocker with clothes, dried herbs and sack of 430 gp.

g. Cramped study. Column-sized brass tubes emitting a resonant sound which changes according to the way the charac-

ters move or position themselves. Slow movement brings slowly rising, barely audible reverberations, and the more sudden and violent the movement, the louder it gets, until it becomes a crescendo that inflicts 2d6 Hp (save vs. death magic to avoid). The tubes are partially cleaned, and their surface is etched with the glyphs of unknown spells. There is also a thick glass tube filled with feeding fluid and an amorphous black blob – a black pudding!

Black pudding: HD 10; DC 6; Atk pudding 3d8; Spec dissolve wood and metal, ooze.
Hp 41

h. This level of the tower and the attic above it is an aviary with a pungent smell. Five giant ravens are at the call of the wizardess. One of the nests has a skeletal hand and a skull with a helmet belonging to one of Akrasia's soldiers.

Giant ravens (5): HD 3; DC 6; Atk beak 1d10.

Hp 13
13
4
18
14

11. The garden of Mesten: A public garden surrounded by villas, given over for every citizen and well-born visitor by the will of the late patrician Mesten. The nearby homes are the trendiest upmarket pieces of real estate in Akrasia, and the garden is a beloved meeting place. It is under constant surveillance of the secret police, but considered a neutral area – informants refrain from any violent activity here.

12. Agora: Four large pillars, three of them bearing the ancient statues of philosophers from prehistoric times. Their features have been worn away, but the names in the marble are still legible: Mnason, Polythesis, Sergius (empty) and Creon. According to tradition, Mnason is the founding father of algebra, Polythesis of dialectic philosophy, Sergius of modern racial eugenics (a lost science reputedly focusing on the physical and spiritual advancement of individuals and communities), and Creon of military strategy.

Before each, there is a polished brass bowl burning fragrant incense, and the steps are covered in flower petals and bayleaf in honour of the Ancients. Near the pillars, elderly citizens congregate for discussion. At night, this is a place of sacrifices and mystical rites.

The agora is watched by archers (by default 10 Etunians) from the balustrades of the palace. The steps are guarded by a honour guard of elite soldiers, and there are always 20-30 extra veterans on reserve nearby.

On the southern side of the square lies the **Chimera**, a restaurant popular among tourists. The prices are two to three times the normal level, the food is bland, and the cowed figures sitting at the back tables, babbling strange prophecies or selling treasure maps have been hired for the main season by Stammas, the proprietor.

13. Palace: Neoclassical, clean-lined building complex in the manner of Albert Speer. The northern tract was built in the times of immeasurable antiquity, miraculously surviving the historical upheavals. The south-western wing is a more recent addition in the same general style. A balustrade decorated with less tasteful marble statuary has been added on the top, and this is now patrolled by nomad archers.

The gate is always open, but the guard and the secret police watch movement around it with exquisite interest. If a company inquires about entry more than it would be polite, they will suddenly become very interested.

The Etunian nomads who make up the archer detail only care about doing their job, and are less concerned about the palace's safety. Public opinion on them has been exceptionally hostile since recent instances of brawling and bride-napping, and the proud Akrasians are growing resentful that the protection of Megakrates has had to be entrusted to this rag-tag band of foreigners. Therefore, patriotic groups (mostly organised by members of the watch) have been holding archery practice, waiting for the opportunity when they can upstage these intruders and 'make this fair city safe again for its own people'.

We will not venture to give a full description of the hallways and chambers within the palace; thus, the map and key will only serve to divide up the complex into sections and outline the main connections.

Veterans (45): Fighter 3; DC 5 (chain shirt, shield) or 4 (breastplate, shield); Atk longsword 1d8 or halberd 1d10.

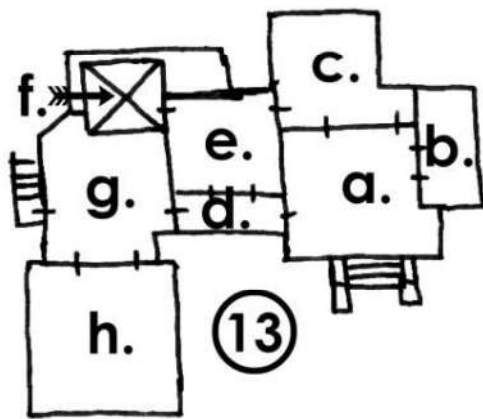
Hp	6	11	17
	19	14	19
	19	16	14
	14	19	12
	15	10	16
	18	21	17
	14	11	23
	7	20	18
	8	8	8
	13	19	21
	9	9	13
	19	10	27
	25	16	12
	17	18	19
	17	25	12

Elites (15): Fighter 4; DC 4 (breastplate, shield) or 3 (banded mail, shield); Atk bastard sword 2d4 or heavy crossbow 1d6+1.

Hp	20	24	27
	32	28	18
	19	23	26
	28	15	24
	26	22	14

Etunian bowmen (30): Archer 2; DC 7 (studded leather); Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or shortsword 1d6.

Hp	20	10	3
	10	6	13
	18	4	11
	4	7	5
	11	13	17
	7	12	3
	14	17	6
	15	15	9
	5	4	14
	12	10	9



a. Columned reception hall and side-chambers beyond entrance stairs; crowded day and night by porters, soldiers, officials and citizens (who have free access here). During the Mysteries, security protocols are stricter, and with the exception of widely respected elder citizens, soldiers and those with a job within the palace, people can only enter with a good justification, after brief questioning. During the preparations, Megakrates appears only once, receiving a delegation from Propyla under the protection of his glass bell.

b. Servants' quarters. Kitchens, dormitories and crowded storage rooms. No guards, but there is constant activity.

c. Military barracks and armouries. Strategos Brakton works and rests in his own room close to Megakrates' quarters (**e.**). The nomads have a common room to the northwest, avoided and treated with disdain due to their messy and loud habits. Certain overzealous officers have suggested they *might* be making secret signs with the light to hostile forces outside the walls.

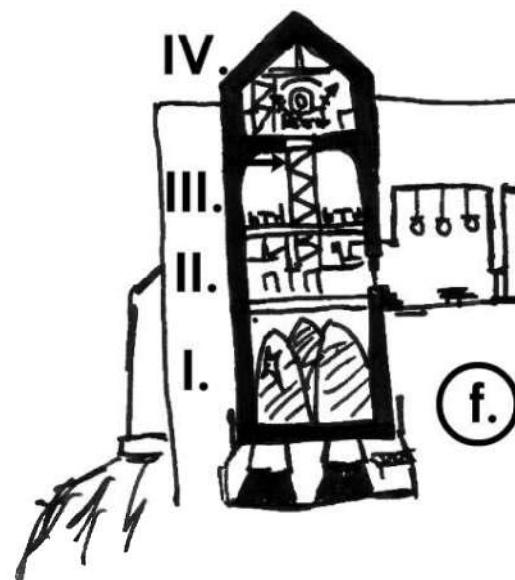
d. Passage; essentially a long portico. High traffic during the day; the two entrances to Megakrates' quarters (tall, heavy wooden doors) are always watched by at least two elite guards, while four more check them on their regular patrols, and they will raise the alarm if they see anything out of the ordinary.

e. The suite of Megakrates consists of multiple large chambers linked by door-

ways. Aura of neglect with human-sized vases and huge tapestries covering entire walls; ceilings once lit up by large glass globes but now all dormant and useless.

There is a small bathing chamber with rare salts and perfumes, an archive with documents from Akrasia's former masters (including a few ancient fragments from the time of the civilisation that had terraformed Fomalhaut), a small altar room (idol removed from its place), and to the northwest, a large sleeping chamber. From here, a brass security door that can be sealed hermetically from the inside leads to the „pyramid“; there is also a star globe worth 3500 gp with the constellations of the sky, a scroll printed on thin golden foil with indecipherable letters (???), and a crystallised eye that had belonged to a god.

During the day, if he has nothing else to do, Megakrates spends his time here with a 80% probability, and a 50% chance he will sleep here at night. However, he is afraid of assassins due to an uncertain bad feeling, and might choose the „pyramid's“ control room with 30%, and a random room in the south-western wing with a 20% probability.



f. „Pyramid“. This structure, constructed of ancient, time-worn iron, is embedded within the palace and looms above the flat roof like a black pyramid. In fact, it is not just the top, but an entire „tower“ that encom-

passes this place, forming a separate, well-defensible unit within the palace. Unlike many of his predecessors, Megakrates likes to spend his time here, lost in thought in the solitude of the control room. In a time of need, he retreats here with the surviving members of the Tesseract.

The tower's interior is filled with corroded brass instruments, metal grilles, dials that have gone blind long ago, and tanks and containers with an unknown purpose. The place is divided into four levels:

I. Propulsion: below the entrance level. Narrow walkways around the huge, faintly glinting fuel tanks.

II. Entrance: machinery, storage rooms with inscrutable metal ingots and dusty equipment. A locked side storage contains a stash of 6 laser pistols, a laser rifle (3d10+ damage!), 16 cartridges, 9 antitoxins (sure-fire poison removal), 7 integrators (one-use super-hot welding sticks) and three cans of chromathrope (spray paint).

III. Communal: one level above the entrance, a large single room, patrolled by a sizeable spider robot. Metal tables affixed to the floor, 12 thick glass bells in a semi-circle around the walls; defective companions to Megakrates' protective unit. Everything is covered with dust and cobwebs.

IV. Control room: the top of the „pyramid“. Screens and commanders' chairs, levers and roasting gauges, ladders and girders climbing all the way up. An emergency cabinet holds an empty laser pistol, a dose of raptogen (sublimates; save vs. poison at -3 or fall unconscious), 6 antitoxins and 10 stims (patch, heals 1d4 Hp on application).

In the middle, inserted into a circular pedestal, there is a faintly glinting metallic cube, a communication and advisory device linked to Fomalhaut's decaying ring of geostationary communication satellites. The device is inactive, but may be turned on for the equivalent of a *divination* spell – the answers are vague and abstract as the questions are processed by the machine gods.

If, for whatever reason, the characters dedicate an unusual degree of attention to the pyramid's control system, and touch things they should not be touching, there is a 1:6 probability they will bring the long-dormant machineries into motion. The

massive metal body, emerging from its shaft on a column of superheated flame, engulfs the building below in a firestorm, and, leaving behind the sphere of Fomalhaut-I., heading for the blind depths of interstellar space. There is a 1:3 probability of some dreadful catastrophe on takeoff: the propulsion unit, left so long without proper maintenance, splits under the immense stress, and, above the collapsing palace, a deadly bloom of light emerges to consume Akrasia and all who are left within.

Robot spider: HD 8; DC -2; Atk bite 2d6+3 or 2*mandibles 1d10+3; Spec lightning strike 1/3 rounds for 4d6 Hp (save vs. breath ½), immune to mind-affecting and electricity, ½ damage from cold, fire and acid.

Hp 55

g. Wing for officials and storage.

h. South-western wing: the newly built section of the palace consists of spacious guest rooms and bright, open community spaces. Since the palace complex is rather oversized for Akrasia's needs, the wing is not in use, and will stay that way during the Mysteries.

14. Palace gardens: This garden is one level above the city proper, and surrounded by walls yet taller. There is only one entrance, from the palace's south-western wing (**13 g.**). Stone statues stand in the dense, overgrown place, which is inhabited by three peacocktrices – unholy fusions of peacock and cockatrice. In the middle, the statue of a bearded old man wears a golden crown (*crown of hubris*; wearer is overtaken by megalomania and a sense of superiority over his peers). The statue can be moved aside on its pedestal to reveal a secret passage to the streets. This escape route is only known by Megakrates.

Peacocktrices (3): HD 5; DC 6; Atk beak 1d3 and petrification; Spec flies, hypnotic feathers (save vs. paralysis or be transfixed, max 24 HD); CE.

Hp 22
27
20

15. Soman's caravanserai: A favourite of travellers stopping in the city state, with very favourable prices by local standards (double normal during off season, quintuple during the Mysteries, 4 gp or 10 gp per night). Soman's men are well trained and keep order without the aid of the watch.

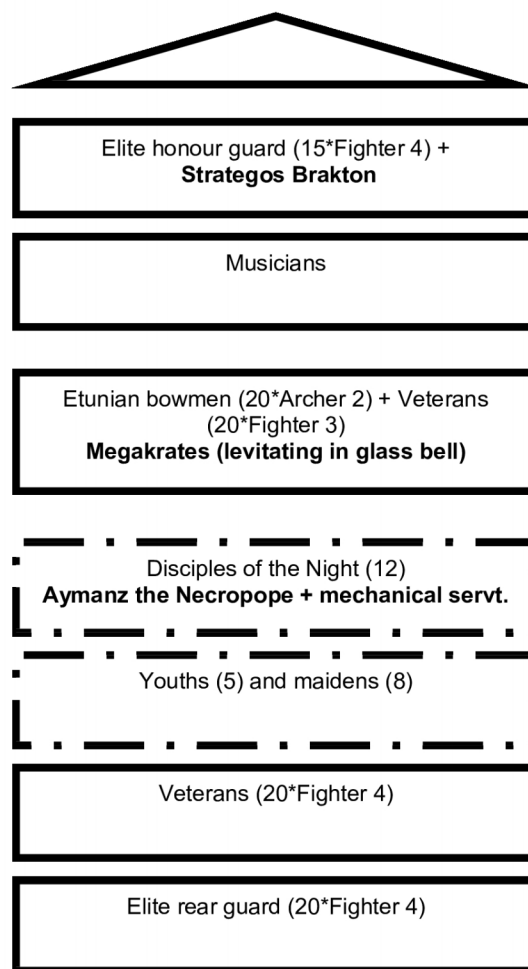
16. The Tavern of Diocles: Lesser guest-house (6 gp per night off season, 12 gp during the Mysteries) and wine seller for the sophisticated clientele. Usually packed to the gills and hard to find a place.

17. Brass Serpent baths: Metal-domed little building in a back street. Rumours say the baths were established in a former temple, and the brass serpents spouting hot water are remains of its decorations. Legends of hidden chambers and pits full of treasure invest the locale with an allure of the exquisite. Elder citizens of Akrasia can enter under a state-funded scheme; citizens must pay 2 gp, foreigners 4 gp. As a well-liked place for relaxation, it is well suited for gathering information.

The Mysteries

By default, the characters arrive in Akrasia a few days before the week of the Mysteries begins. At this time, travellers and merchants already begin to filter into the city, but the big rush is still a way off. In the following days, more and more groups arrive, and the originally calm and deserted streets begin to seethe with traffic, noise and movement. This makes it easier to mingle in the crowds, but harder to move about entirely unseen – after a while, even at night.

On the main day of the Mysteries, when the festivities are at their peak, the order of the grand event is as follows. The exultant crowd starts from the Palace (13.), proceeding in order through the Agora (12.) and the Avenue of Glory (9.), arriving at the Processional (4.). The route is secured by Akrasia's soldiers, and, if mischief has taken place, the flower of its patriotic youth.



At the Processional, the Disciples of the Night sally out of their Temple to join the column, followed by Aymanz the Necrope, his mechanical guardian, and the group of maidens and youths selected for this momentous occasion. The full company arrives at the gate at the northern end, where the human wall of the fanatical guardians parts to admit first the column, then the colourful multitude into the gorge and the final gathering place. On this day, the sacred groves are only protected by the free-roaming beasts, and all members of the warrior-sect (100 men and women) stand as honour guard by the walls, the sides of the gorge and the Gateway to the other world.

When the procession reaches the Gateway, the various groups occupy their pre-determined places by the walls. Megakrates, remaining fully under the protection of his glass bell, extends a short ceremonial speech to the crowds, then

gives word to Aymanz the Necropope. Aymanz, describing in detail the virtues and education of the youths and maidens, then the universal delights that await them, calls upon them by the teachings of the Night to speak in their own words. After a musical interlude, it is the orphans' time. Emotional farewells to the crowd, moments that touch everyone's hearts, then they enter the dark cave to pass through the Gateway of swirling deep blue and nevermore be seen again on the world of Fomalhaut. Thereafter, the column returns

to the Palace, the warrior-guardians escorting the crowds from the sacred grounds, and the festivities are over.

After the Mysteries are finished, things in the city soon return to their regular order. A group of strangers who might remain will arouse automatic suspicion, not the last because the secret police and the local youth, not overly fond of foreigners, need to vent off a little steam. If the characters do not leave the city state, they can expect constant attention and frequent harassment in Akrasia.



Legal Appendix

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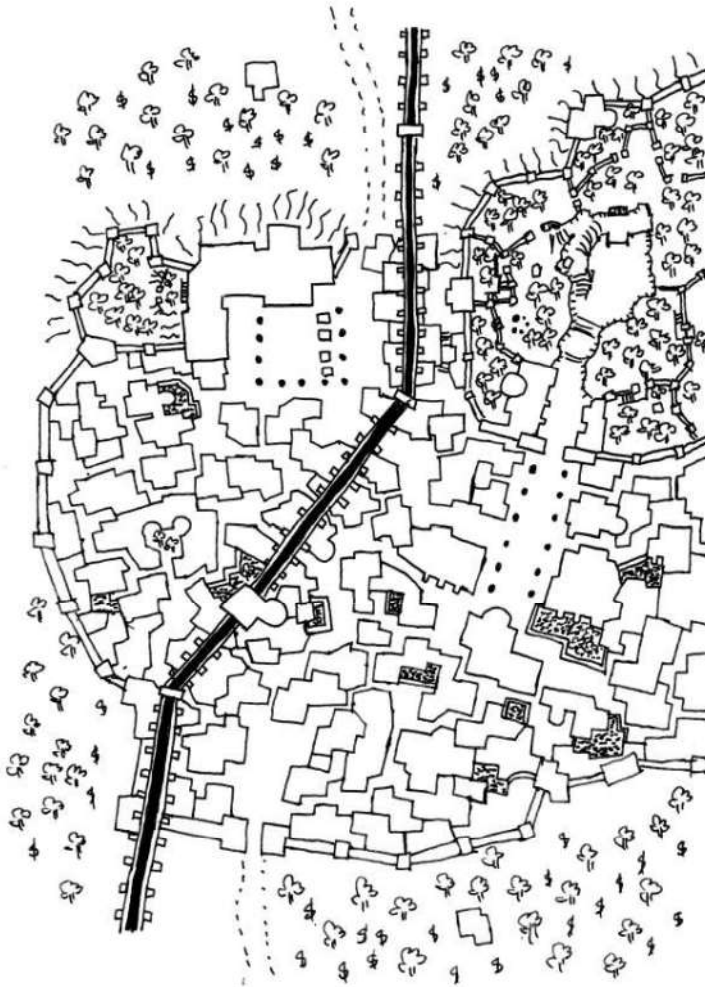
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*** BE VIGILANT! ***

Laser Pistol Damage 2d10+, values of 10 can be rerolled and the new roll added to damage. Loaded lasers have a capacity of 15 shots. A character moving unpredictably can avoid being hit by rolling a successful save vs. wands, but can't attack that round. There is a penalty of -4 against all subsequent shots. **WARNING!** **Laser may cause serious sight impairment. The **Arx** assumes no responsibility for accidents and injuries.**	**Laser Pistol** Damage 2d10+, values of 10 can be rerolled and the new roll added to damage. Loaded lasers have a capacity of 15 shots. A character moving unpredictably can avoid being hit by rolling a successful save vs. wands, but can't attack that round. There is a penalty of -4 against all subsequent shots. **WARNING!** **Laser may cause serious sight impairment. The **Arx** assumes no responsibility for accidents and injuries.**
PAKEMA Spray equipment attached to tank and reinforced with gooseneck nozzle. Crystalline raptogen stored in the containers immediate sublimates upon aerial exposure, with an acute incapacitating effect upon inhalation (save vs. poison at -3 or loss of consciousness). Tank contains 8 doses. **WARNING!** ** "Γ" class fire hazard. Inhalation may cause respiratory problems. In case of allergic symptoms, stop using the unit and contact the appropriate organs of the ** Arx **. **	**Diambroid** x4 High-grade explosives in sealed and numbered metal canisters marked with the letters „ΔΙΑ“. Each canister causes 6d6 damage on explosion (save vs. breath for ½), radius 20' per canister. **WARNING!** **Highly explosive. May explode on a strong impact, electrical impulses, electromagnetic radiation or concentrated heat. Do not leave the box unattended.**
Extractor Photovoltaic analytical instrument with glass extraction tube. Radiation emitted up to a 100' distance removes the brain through the skull via the osmotic principle. The chances of withdrawal under **standard conditions** are 1:3 / round after the second round. **WARNING!** **The Extractor may only be used by trained and certified personnel in possession of the appropriate permits. **	**Kinetic Cube** Standard and specialised all-system forwarding device. Waves emitted by the cube are suitable for the levitating transportation of up to 500kg material. The accuracy and power of the kinetic force field is reduced after 2 rounds of operation. Energy supplies recharge automatically. ** WARNING!** **Kinetic force field. Under prolonged use, wear protective clothing to avoid harmful electromagnetic radiation. In closed spaces, ventilate after usage. **

****INFORMATION SHEET********AKRASIA****

and precise, and his nature merciless. He is limp in the right leg. Clothing is usually a simple toga, but he wears a pair of iron gauntlets either as a lucky charm or a sign of his station, and carries an ornamented, heavy metal rod. According to ****Arx**** sources, Megakrates is in the possession of multiple dangerous magical items, including a glass bell capable of locomotion, and affording him full protection against conventional weapons.

2. Strategos Brakton is the commander of Akrasia's armed forces. He is a fighting man of shaved countenance, restrained in his manners but unrestrained in his capability for violence. Only seen in his ceremonial armour, ****Arx**** sources also identify his hammer as magical. In spite of his formal rank in the city state, the ****Arx**** is on the position that he cannot be considered an independent political operative, being fully dependent on the guidance of Megakrates.

3. Aymanz the Necropope is High Priest at the Temple of the Night, and endowed with the sacred task of preparing the youths and maidens educated therein for the Autumn Mysteries. He is of middle age, corpulent, wearing black felt clothing and a heavy golden medallion. His unkempt appearance suggests a regular habit of alcoholism. ****Arx**** sources speculate that his debaucheries have taken a toll on his health, frequently rendering him infirm. In the Temple, he will be protected by numerous disciples and a mechanical servant.

4. Yizil Doré, Mistress of Magic is a powerful wizardess. Her hair is snow-white and tangled, but her brown face is smooth and youthful. Her purple hat is decorated with golden moons and stars, while her robes are a dull red. Known for infrequent public appearances, ****Arx**** intelligence suggests she keeps to her dwelling, where she might be protected by curious beings.

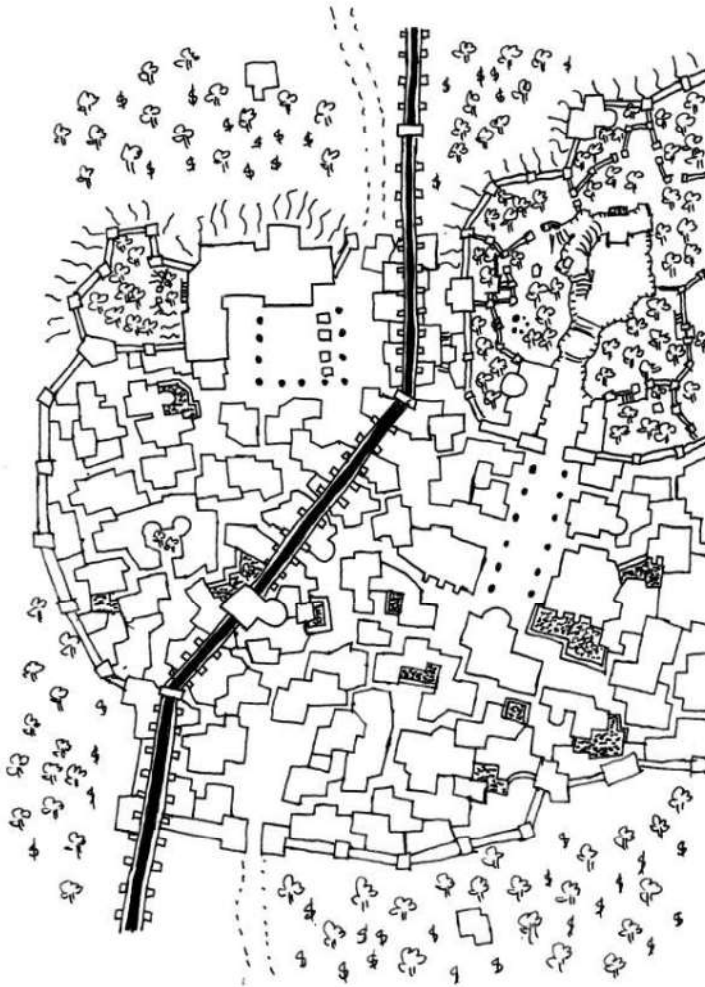
*** ** In the name of the Principle! The ****Arx**** hereby declares that Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia has transgressed fundamental philosophical values in governing his city state, and, even after repeated calls to amend his erroneous ways, he has failed to issue the necessary corrections. Consequently, the Highest Synod of the ****Arx****, acting on a vote of eleven to ten, hereby sentences Megakrates and his unrepentant band of conspirators to DEATH, and, furthermore, orders the immediate seizure of all their movable and immovable possessions, including but not limited to the city state of Akrasia. The judgement is final and subject to immediate implementation. Swift and effective measures will be enacted by a special delegation of the appropriate experts, appointed on authority of the ****Arx**** to carry out the necessary operations in the city state of Akrasia.

*** **

So declared in the city state of Propyla, in the year of Solon 3995, day 237.

****THE TESSERARCHY****

1. Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia is a middle-aged man, noted for a greying beard and wine-red nose. His gaze often appears confused and uncomprehending, but his thinking is fast

****INFORMATION SHEET********AKRASIA****

*** ** In the name of the Principle! The **Arx** hereby declares that Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia has exercised entirely **Arx**-compatible philosophical values in governing his city state, doctrines which have aroused the interest of malignant elements infiltrating the **Arx** hierarchy and operating contrary to its intentions. Consequently, the Highest Synod of the **Arx**, acting on a vote of ten to nine, with two undeclared absentions, hereby DECLARES that Megakrates and his valuable associates, the Tesseract, should be protected by all available means; and, furthermore, orders the immediate liquidation of the conspirators who would do them bodily harm. The judgement is final and subject to immediate implementation. Swift and effective measures will be enacted by a special delegation of the appropriate experts, appointed on authority of the **Arx** to carry out the necessary operations in the city state of Akrasia. Declaration #3775, made on the basis of erroneous information, is hereby declared null and void unless it has already been executed. *** **

So declared in the city state of Propyla, in the year of Solon 3995, day 237.

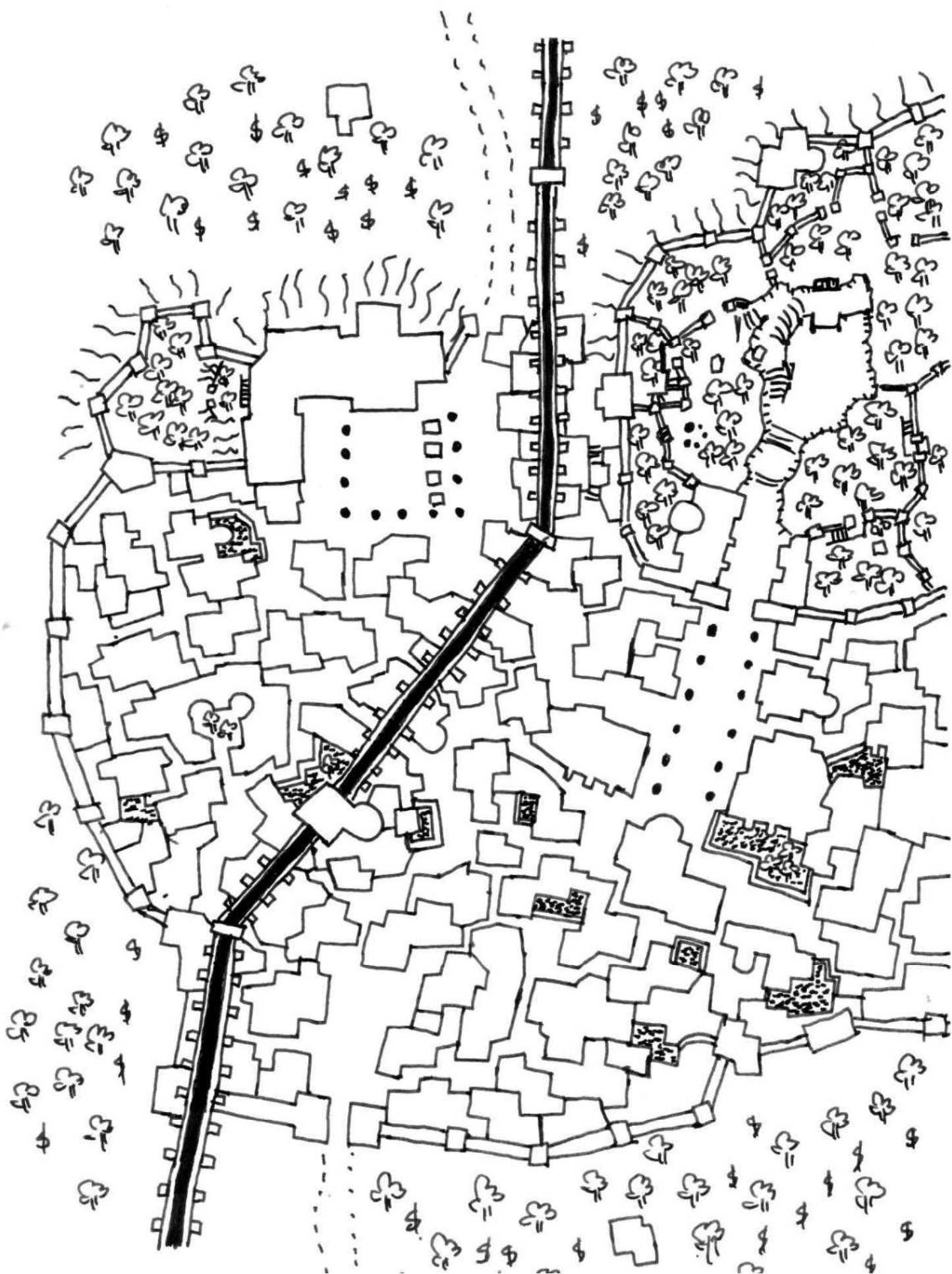
****THE TESSERARCHY****

1. **Megakrates, Lord of Akrasia** is a middle-aged man, noted for a greying beard and wine-red nose. His gaze often appears confused and uncomprehending, but his thinking is fast and precise, and his nature merciless. He is limp in the right leg. Clothing is usually a simple toga, but he wears a pair of iron gauntlets either as a lucky charm or a sign of his station, and carries an ornamented, heavy metal rod. According to **Arx** sources, Megakrates is in the possession of multiple dangerous magical items, including a glass bell capable of locomotion, and affording him full protection against conventional weapons.

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The Smugglers of Cliff Point

by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: Gabor Acs (Gromm, half-orc Cleric 5), Akos Laszlo (Charnan the Permanent Fiend, nomad Fighter 6)

Background

Slovenly Olaf's boys are well known around the Land of the Thanes and the Peninsula: there is no cargo they wouldn't carry, and no dirty deed they'd shirk from. Kidnapping, slave trade, sabotage and murder are their daily bread; and Windswift, a longship with several more boats are their steeds on the high seas. They only pay geld to Lady Ivlan, the dreaded head of the Assassins' Guild – for her alone, they respect for her cruelty.

The smugglers' lair is hidden in the caverns honeycombing a bare cliff point surrounded by roaring seas. The windy outcropping is known to local sailors for its shoals and the man-eating lizards who nest in its caverns: those who can, give it a wide berth. Only a few disreputable wanderers haunt the area – the smugglers' eyes and ears – but not even they know where the entrance lies. In truth, the cave system of the cliff has three exits: a lizard-inhabited cavern by the southern beach (**S.**); a hidden cave mouth among the rocks where the boats are moored with their cargo (**T7.**); and a lookout higher up, from where they watch the sea (**R2–R3.**).



R. The cliff point

R1. Lost trail: A twisting path overgrown with heath. At some points, there are old, carved steps. At night, **1:3** of two lookouts guarding the top, who report to the caverns if they see strangers approach.

R2. Lookout: Rocks surround this resting place. Charred pieces of wood, **1:10** still smouldering. Great bonfires have been lit here to guide ships. To the SW, looking down over the precipice, an iron chain trails down onto a narrow ledge (**R3.**).

R3. Ledge: Here lies the smuggler den's upper entrance at the bottom of a narrow, steep stairway. An armoured man can barely pass sideways through the gap. If the smugglers are waiting for the characters, they lurk in the dark, and try to push or toss them into the sea.

R4. Hidden treasure: A rusty anchor hangs from an iron ring in the cliffside. This marks the spot with a heavy iron chest sunken into the sea and weighted down with stones, containing 1200 gp and 3600 electrum. The chest was hidden here by Slovenly Olaf, but he cannot retrieve it after **three giant clams** settled in place. Pearls: 180 gp, 40 gp, 40 gp.

Clams, giant (3): HD 4+3; AC 3; Atk bite 2d6 and grab (2d6+3/r); Spec immune to mind-affecting; ML 10; N.

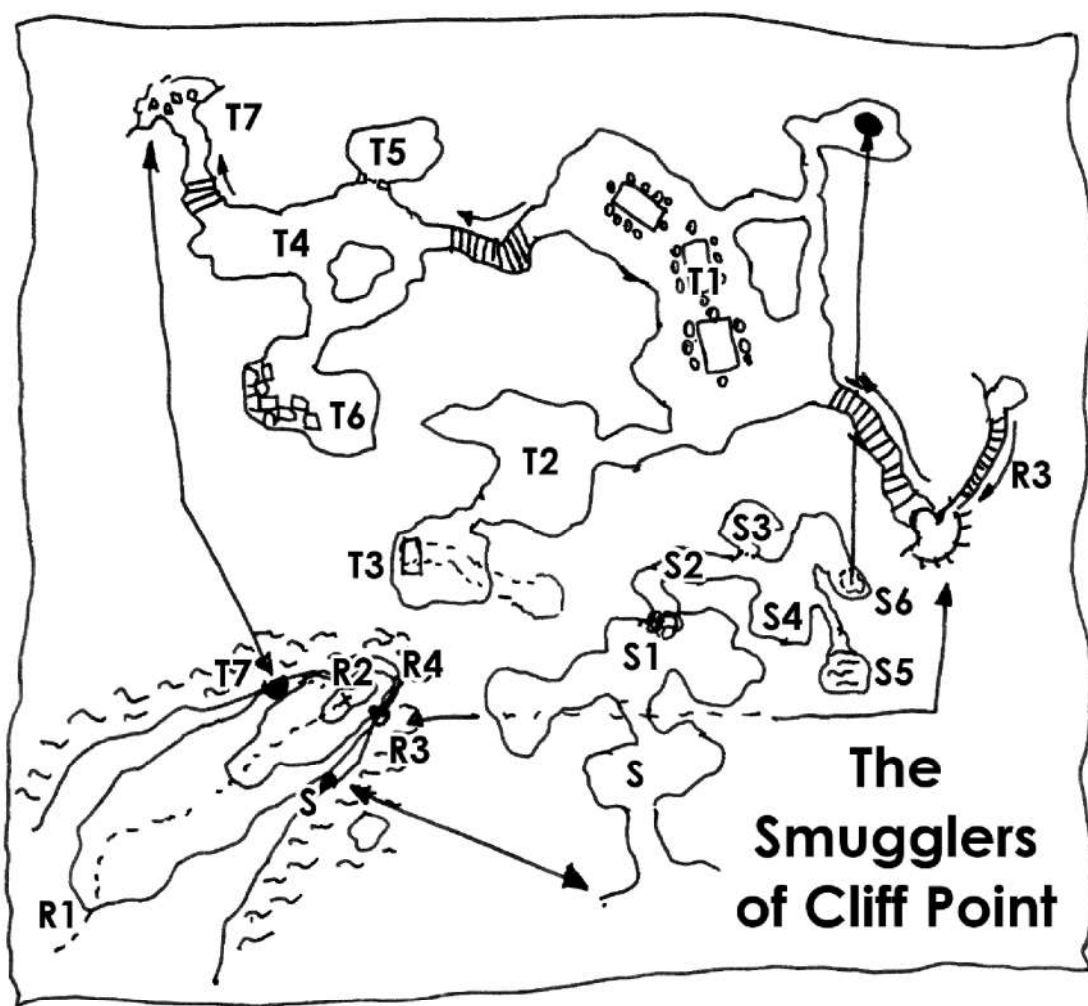
Hp	23	24	23
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S. Cavern of the giant lizards

The lair of the **19 giant lizards** is easy to find by day, for the lazy beasts enjoy sun-bathing on the flat rocks outside, or fishing in the shallows. Their trail leads back to a low but wide cave mouth, leading to their caverns. The lizards attack those who look like easy prey, but don't try their luck with a large, well-armed group. If a third of them are slain, they seek refuge in the sea. In their caves, there are 15 eggs buried in the sand.

The smugglers know this place, but only Slovenly Olaf and two of his mates dare to use it as an exit – by throwing a skewer of meat to the lizards.



Giant Lizards (19): HD 3; AC 5; Atk bite 1d8; ML 6; N.

Hp	16	14	5
	12	15	15
	19	14	14
	7	10	13
	15	4	15
	14	14	20
	19		

S1. Entrance: A sizeable boulder has been rolled to one of the grotto's walls, and it can be moved with some effort. The careful observer can note a faint draft, and the barely audible rattling of chains.

S2. Secret passage: Natural fissure widened with picks and reinforced with wooden supports. Rusty, extinguished lanterns sway on iron hooks, and a few abandoned, worm-eaten barrels lie by the walls.

S3. Lockup: A hollow closed off with crudely made wooden bars. Old rags on a stone ledge; straw and manacles affixed to the wall. Someone has decorated the walls with meticulously detailed, obscene charcoal drawings.

S4. Deserted guardroom: Straw beds by the wall, a warped wooden table in the middle, old pots and pans hanging on the wall. Everything is covered with cobwebs. In a metal tube full of tiny spiders which scamper away in a dozen directions, there is a ragged piece of parchment: *"If ye don't croak, you will find the deposited reward in the Stone Tackle or Megron's Drinking Hall. Bifur the Axe must die!"*

S5. Latrine: Plank over a chimney whose bottom is connected to the sea and filled with water. The plank is so rotted that it collapses under any weight.

S6. Storage: Five bins of disintegrating sailcloth, thoroughly ransacked. A hanging rope leads up to the smugglers' lair (T.).



T. Smugglers' lair

The northwest entrance to the upper caverns opens at sea level (T7.), the one to the southeast below the cliff summit (R3.) – leading to considerable height differences. The first is very hard to spot due to being hidden by shoals and rocks; and the second because it is a narrow gap only visible from the sea, and then only at a specific angle. Unless the characters catch themselves a tongue, or proceed through the caverns of the giant lizards, they are unlikely to find their destination.

Smugglers (10): HD 2; AC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk sabre 1d6 or #2 shortbow 1d6; Spec some thief skills; ML 7; CN.

Hp	7	8
	7	11
	7	9
	9	7
	8	8

Veteran Smugglers (10): Thief 3; AC 7 (leather, buckler); Atk sabre 1d6 or #2 throwing dagger 1d4; Spec thief skills, backstab; ML 8; CN.

Hp	12	7
	6	10
	6	7
	10	14
	7	7

Slovenly Olaf: Thief 5; AC 3 (chain shirt, cloak +1, Dex); Atk #2 dagger +1 1d4+1 + poison or #2 throwing daggers 1d4; Spec thief skills, backstab; ML 9; AL N; cloak +1, spyglass, key, purse with 35 gp, 500 gp ruby ring, colourful red and green clothes, poison.

Hp 19

T1. Smugglers' cavern: The smugglers spend their days here drinking, playing cards, wrestling and similar amusements. Three long tables surrounded by chairs and

kegs, lit by lanterns and torches. The walls are decorated with tapestries, and there are a few dirty carpets on the floor.

If the company is here, there is constant presence day and night, although the cutthroat scum sleep off their revels in the morning hours, retreating to their bedrolls and straw mats. They possess the following treasures among them:

- 25% of 1d12*50 electrum, 50% of 2d4*50 gp, 10% of 1d6*10 platinum, 10% of 1d4 gems, 20% of 1 object of art, and 20% of 1d3 magic items.

T2. Guardroom: Four veterans, Slovenly Olaf's trusted men occupy this room. Two bunk beds and a week's worth of rations. Old carpets are stacked in the corner.

T3. Slovenly Olaf's quarters: Gaudy leather curtains separate this place from the guards, but the furnishings are just as sparse – only a wardrobe and a locked sailor's chest provide an exception.

The wardrobe contains five sets of colourful clothing – various disguises representing merchants, officials and sailors, all worth 75 gp each.

The chest holds two months' wages, 2500 sp and 350 gp, and in a separate compartment, Olaf's personal share in a sack bound with golden thread: 150 electrum and 75 gp.

Underneath the bed, a trapdoor covered with a dirty shag carpet leads to a narrow little crawlspace. At the bottom, a small chamber holds Olaf's "mystical oracle", a small idol of a hydra. The seven-headed idol is not magical, but six of the mouths hold a poisoned pellet each (may be used on weapons or dissolved into light sources). A secret compartment in the idol's base contains two small diamonds (2*650 gp) and a *scroll of protection from fire*.

T4. Lower cavern: This cavern is quiet and much more damp than the one above. **Two sentries** watch by lanternlight, watching the exit, the lockup, and especially the storeroom – but none too diligently.

T5. Lockup: Wooden bars close off this relatively comfortable cell – there are regular beds, a table, and four three-legged stools. The smugglers rarely keep prisoners, and if they do, they are lead here blindfolded. **1:3** of someone here, but **1:2** it is a smuggler who was confined here for drunkenness or brawling, who will try to lure the party to an ambush with rumours of treasures.

T6. Storage: The barrels, sacks and foot-lockers contain food and ship supplies (sail-cloth, tar, nails, spare oars, etc.), but there are some stolen goods as well:

- bale of fine linen (300 gp)
- 12 well-oiled sets of chainmail
- chests filled with 30 maces and 20 picks
- a small ceramic box holding six vials wrapped in velvet (deadly poison from Lady Ivlan's private reserve)
- noble wax (150 gp)

T7. Lower exit: Small shelter between the wave-battered rocks. If the smugglers are here, there are one or two boats dragged into the cavern.



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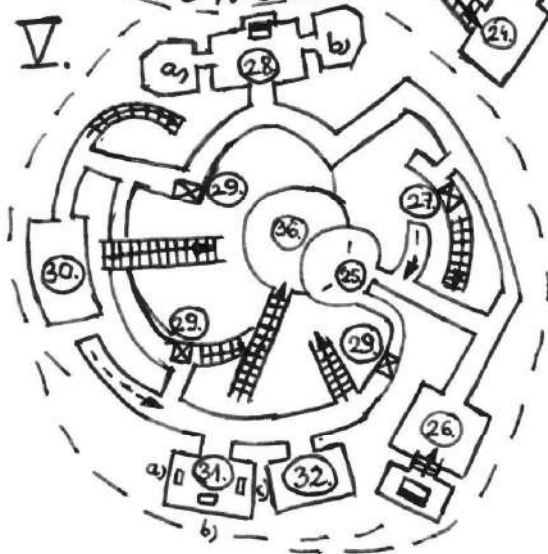
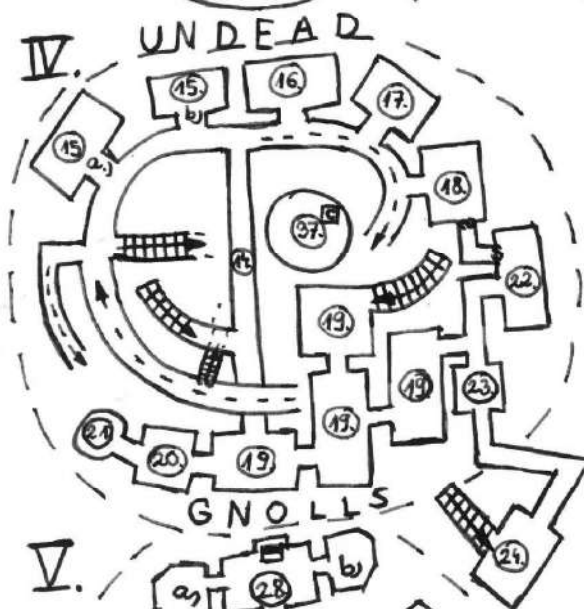
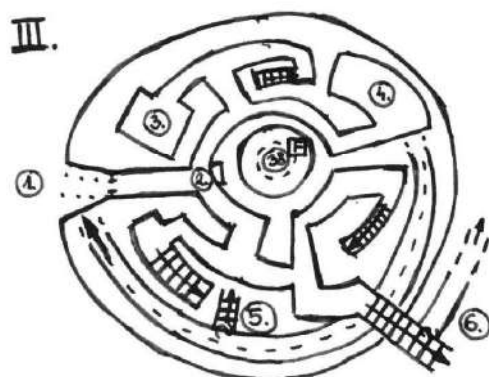
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Strabonus

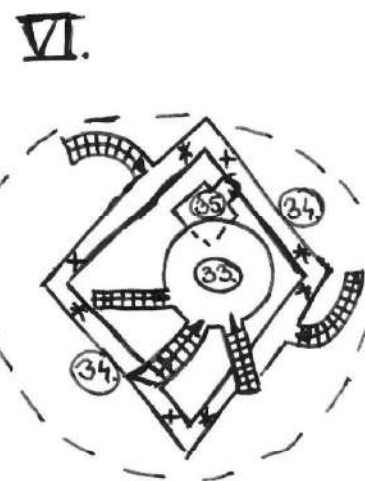
by: Gabor Lux



Castles & Crusades adventure module for six characters of 6th to 9th level
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Games (registration pending)



ΣΤΡΑΒΟΝΥΣ
 ΜΜVI. ΒΥ ΓΑΒΟΡ
 ΛΥΚΣ



Strabonus
(ΣΤΡΑΒΟΝΥΣ)
by: Gabor Lux

Illustrations and cartography: Gabor Lux

Playtesters: Akos Laszlo, Gabor Acs, Zsolt Badi, Tamas Striczky and Istvan Veres

Special thanks to: the geographer Strabon, founder of regional geography, for tolerating this abuse of his name.

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Introduction

The warlord Strabonus, in his time known as the Lord of the Middle Seas, was a mighty conqueror in the years after the fall of the dragon kings, noteworthy for his cruelty and the decimation of small city states, whose destruction was so thorough that even their names and locations are lost to history. His own conquests were short lived, and soon after the news of his demise came, a slave uprising swept away what remained of them. It is written that the hatred of these slaves was so all-consuming that they tore down the very rocks of his city, and, paying no heed to pillage and loot, destroyed every living being they found.

The resting place of Strabonus was never located, although it was said to have been very rich and to have also contained the bones of the warlord's old companions, who, it is written, were the only people he would trust. The whole place was constructed in utmost secrecy far from civilisation by slaves and architects who were killed after everything had been finished. This burial mound was only discovered through an accident much later. The original treasure hunters who found it met their end inside the labyrinth Strabonus commissioned, and the groups who followed them were either unsuccessful or not thorough enough to loot it. Attracted to such environments, a minotaur and his 80 gnoll followers settled the upper levels, driving out much of the undead they found. With their raids on surrounding settlements growing bolder and bolder, rumours of the once unknown vault have spread to the cities on the coast, where there are always those whose pursuit of heroics is aroused by the possibility for material gain.



Location and preliminary notes

This small dungeon was originally placed in Judges Guild's *Wilderlands of High Fantasy* setting, at hex 4006 of Map 5, City State, but almost any other location along the Pazidan Peninsula's eastern coast is appropriate. Play may start with rumours of the dungeon and its wealth, and proceed with a trek to the mound of Strabonus and an encounter with the minotaur and the gnolls. One hex away from the dungeon, there is a 1:6 chance of a random encounter, while in the densely forested hex surrounding it, this increases to 1:3. Roll on the table to determine what is encountered (1d6):

1-4: 1d2*10 gnolls

5: minotaur

6: minotaur and 20 gnolls (raiding party)

Once the PCs reach the mound, the gnolls will sound the alarm and meet the intruders on the entry level, using the layout of the dungeon to surround and destroy them from both sides. The available forces move in groups of ten and may feign retreats for strategic advantage. They use volleys of javelins, the flaming oil, oil kegs and the vial of choking gas they possess. Only the first is available if an encounter occurs outside the dungeon. If there is heavy fighting, the minotaur investigates the commotion and joins the fray. If the defenders are reduced to ½ strength and the invaders seem to be in good strength, the females and young are evacuated through the secret escape route (6.) and the rest retreat, abandoning this hideout for a less conspicuous one.

Minotaur (1): HD 6+3; hp 27; Spd 30'; AC 14; Atk +6 huge flail 2d6+2; SA charge for 3d6 points; AL CE; SV P.

Gnolls (80): HD 2; Spd 20'; AC 15; Atk +2 halberd 1d10 or +2 javelin 1d6; AL CE; SV P.

Squad #1: hp 12, 2, 9, 4, 6; 10, 4, 13, 12, 11.

Squad #2: hp 3, 12, 9, 12, 5; 13, 7, 8, 7, 9; 3 HD leader (17 hp, two-handed sword for 2d6).

Squad #3: hp 9, 4, 13, 15, 16; 12, 7, 7, 12, 7.

Squad #4: hp 6, 6, 16, 14, 7; 7, 5, 9, 9, 11; 3 HD leader (17 hp, battleaxe for 1d8).

Squad #5: hp 8, 12, 8, 10, 14; 9, 5, 8, 8, 7.

Squad #6: hp 10, 12, 12, 14, 10; 11, 7, 14, 6, 6.

Squad #7: hp 6, 11, 8, 9, 14; 10, 13, 6, 3, 11.

Squad #8: hp 6, 13, 15, 15, 9; 12, 9, 10, 6, 12.

War cache (to be distributed in case of siege):

Flaming Oil (7): 2d4 points on a direct hit, Dexterity save to put out.

Oil Keg (4): 4d6 points of damage, explodes as *fireball*.

Choking Mist (1): this vial contains a mold-grey mist that requires two saving throws over two consecutive rounds. Damage is 3d6 for every failed save. 10' radius.

Designer's note: this battle, although hard, is possible for a 5th to 6th level party of six characters. Succeeding in one go, or succeeding without casualties is another matter.



Key to the dungeon

The mound of Strabonus is a round pile of earth surrounded by dense forest and covered by grass. The entrance is immediately visible, since numerous paths converge there at a dark opening. The only other entry is a secret passage created by the gnolls (6.). It is not in use and thus impossible to find without a thorough search of the area.

Passages in the labyrinth are wide enough for two to fight abreast. Walls are made of stone blocks piled atop each other without mortar. On higher levels, they are covered in colourful but crumbling stucco with geometric patterns.

Note: Undead are considered to be one category higher as far as turning is concerned. No teleportation is possible within the labyrinth.

Level III.

1. Entry

This gentle slope leads into a half-sunk opening. It is flanked by six spears holding human skulls. Some of these have metal helmets. The capstone above the opening has a relief depicting a man struggling with a bull and the following inscription: „*I am Strabonus, hated enemy of Atlantis and the scourge of its proud kings. Look upon my last great work and marvel at its ingenuity. I say unto you, neither the gods above, nor the gods below can help you unravel it.*”

Originally, the entrance was sealed by a stone slab, but it lies broken by the entrance now.

2. Alcove

A greenish bronze bust of a bearded, balding human sits in an alcove. Its features are somewhat goat-like – the eyes are slanted and cynical, the mouth smiling and the beard unkempt and wild. The gaze of this metal warden is rather unpleasant, almost indulgently evil.

3. Fountain room

This is a pleasantly cool room with water flowing into a large rectangular basin from the mouths of three bronze figures depicting fish. Murals on the wall depict people picking grapes, making wine and drinking from thin vessels. The water of the basin spills out and drains through gaps in the floor. There is a copper decanter by the basin. If someone drinks directly from the water without using the decanter, a **drench** – an enchanted creature composed

of animated water – emerges to attack. If the decanter is used, there is a 10% chance the character doing so retrieves the monster in stead of normal water.

Drench: HD 3+3; hp 16; Spd 30'; AC 16; Atk +3 special; SA drown, immunities and vulnerabilities; AL CE; SV P.

Drown: on a successful attack, the drench paralyzes and draws its opponent into the water. The victim immediately begins to drown.

Immunities and vulnerabilities: the creature is invulnerable to edged and piercing weapons, and even if it is slain, it reforms at full strength in two rounds. Fire does normal damage, and *purify food and drink* or *bless water* dispels it instantly.

4. Storage

Part broken, part intact clay amphorae are piled atop each other. Their contents are moldy grain, which has attracted **31 giant rats**.

Giant Rats (31): HD ½; Spd 20; AC 13; Atk +0 bite 1d4; SV P.

Squad #1: hp 3, 2, 2, 2, 4; 1, 1, 1, 2, 2

Squad #2: hp 1, 3, 2, 1, 2; 1, 1, 3, 2, 3

Squad#3: hp 2, 1, 3, 2, 1; 1, 8, 1, 2, 2, 1.

5. Secret Door

This secret door opens by pressing a stone in the ceiling, but operating the mechanism also triggers a boulder trap. The huge boulder rolls down the circular slope. Anyone in the way who fails a Dex save (TN +6 unless the character ducks into the opening) suffers 10d6 points of damage.

6. Escape Route

A crude tunnel beyond the secret door serves as an escape route if the fighting goes wrong for the gnolls. The passage exits into the forest 100' from the labyrinth.



Level II.

This level is more intact than the one above, and its walls are of stucco instead of bare stone.

7. Observation room

This domed room is illuminated by a beam of sunlight coming from glass-filled openings in the ceiling, relayed by cunning mirror-mechanisms from outside. A larger and indestructible glass plug in the floor allows one to see the burial chamber of Strabonus just below. The body of Strabonus rests on a bier in an antique bronze plate mail and like death mask displaying his features, surrounded by mounds of pale electrum coins, as well as a number of sizable golden vessels likewise overflowing with treasure. He clutches a long brass-tipped spear still, and also has a small shield on his left. His chamber is deserted, dusty and has obviously lain undisturbed for ages.

8. Spear trap

A small, formless heap rests on the passage floor, the desiccated remains of a gnoll who had fallen prey to a spear trap triggered by stepping stones. Wicked brass spears emerging from cunningly hid gaps in the wall skewer for 6d8 points unless a TN +6 Dex save is made. The trap is repeated once more, and the walls appear safe after this, but only because the third array comes from above.

9. The sword of Hereklitae

A caption above the doorway to this chamber reads: "*THE SWORD OF HEREKLITAE*". There are three trapezoidal stone slabs here, and each has a sword thrust into a slot on the top. The grip of the first sword is wrapped in blue cloth, the second in black silk, the third in red leather. A fresco on the wall depicts three allegoric figures; women with veiled eyes. The first is clad in blue, holds a bunch of grapes and an inscription identifies her as "*Plenty*". The second wears black, holds a

scroll and is named "*Contemplation*". The third woman holds a sword and her name is "*War*". Above these three is yet another caption with these words: "*Take that which you genuinely desire.*" If the characters take any of the swords except the red one ("*War*"), all three animate and attack.

Swords (3): HD 7; hp 19, 33, 39*; Init +3; Spd 40; AC 20; Atk +7 strike 1d8+3; AL N; SV P, M.

The sword marked with an asterisk is the sword of Hereklitae, a *+1 longsword*. In battle, it gains the appropriate bonuses to hit and damage. If the swords are "defeated", they cease animation and fall on the floor.

Level I.

10. Dusty dome

This chamber is just above the observation room (7.), and its purpose is to collect beams of light from small openings in the wall and channel them towards glass-filled openings in the floor. Dust is everywhere and there is nothing else save a few dead bats.

11. Shrine

This is a small altar-room dedicated to Baphomet, demon lord of minotaurs. The altar is a stone pillar with a brass bull's head on the top. The eyes of the effigy are mother of pearl with obsidian inlays, altogether worth 5 gp apiece. Around the pillar are rotting hunks of meat, bones and a gnoll's severed head with copper earrings.

12. Hidden treasure

The wall has been disturbed at this location. The stucco is missing and there is a thing gap barely enough for a small man to squeeze through. The crawlspace

beyond is dusty and narrow. There are broken stones on the floor, mason's tools, dust, and a curled-up skeleton who still clutches a dagger in his right and a leather bag of 280 gold in his left. This man was Solataz, a member of the original looters and a thief from the City State. He has been dead for some 80 years, and retreated here after his companions were killed by the undead and he himself was mortally wounded.

13. Minotaur den

The stench of rotting meat and unclean filth is overpowering in the minotaur's lair. The beast has a straw pallet, which is surrounded by scattered bones and piles of hay. Hidden in a pile is a large silver drinking vessel with bone inlays. Its sides have been decorated with small bull's heads with pearl eyes (some missing), and the whole is worth 480 gp. The lid of the cup is a round helmet scavenged by the minotaur.



Level IV.

Level IV. is divided into two regions. The chambers to the south belong to the gnolls, who have succeeded in driving out the former undead inhabitants and erected a barrier in the middle of passage 14. The undead hold the northern rooms and level V. (they don't venture below that unless in pursuit of intruders). They are mummified bodies wrapped in gauze, walking in a tiptoeing manner and fighting with clawed, deformed paws. They smell of dust and ancient spices.

Mummified corpses (35): HD 3+3; Spd 20; AC 15; Atk +3 claws 1d8; SQ fire inflicts +2 hp/damage dice, holy water inflicts 2d6 hp; AL CE; SV P, M.

Squad #1: hp 17, 14, 13, 15, 16; 9, 7, 21, 17, 20.

Squad #2: hp 11, 23, 17, 18, 16; 18, 21, 15, 12, 14.

Squad #3: hp 15, 19, 16, 20, 15; 18, 22, 15, 18, 15.

Squad #4: hp 13, 22, 12, 23, 18.

Note: these undead are turned as 4 HD. They may be turned by clerics but not destroyed or commanded. They desire blood above all, so a heavily wounded character will be targeted by an inordinate amount of attackers. In fact, some will pause to grab a recently slain foe and carry it away for devouring.

14. Barrier

Like the rest of the level, this passage is dry and dusty. A barrier constructed of large stones, pieces of wood and other material has been erected in the middle. Normally, a gnoll sentry checks for undead every ten minutes. To the north of the barrier are two dead gnolls. Anyone checking them will likely be attacked by the undead (80%).

15. Burial chambers

These two chambers are the resting places of the mummified corpses. Each is filled with 30 wormeaten sarcophagi made of wood and decorated with hammered copper sheets. Most of the undead (10-10 to a room) slumber here, but emerge at once if there is rummaging or loud talk. The sarcophagi are empty of treasure, but a character investigating them contracts crypt fever (TN +0 Constitution save, 2 Constitution lost per day, incubation period 1d6 days).

15/a) The caskets in this room surround a truncated pyramid. Its flat top has a carving – an eye from which straight sword-blades radiate. The pyramid is magical but has no apparent power.

15/b) This room is much less orderly than the other, and most of the sarcophagi are in a worse shape too. A constant sound of murmuring, as if someone was praying, is

audible. The sounds come from a row of magic mouths placed along the top of the wall. If the sounds are somehow muted, there will be a feeling of a threatening presence, and each PC will receive a psionic strike (TN +4 Intelligence save negates) for 5d6 points of damage. A character who dies due to this will have his head explode in a bloody mess.

16. The daggers of Parathor

A caption above the doorway reads: „*THE DAGGERS OF PARATHOR*”. The chamber seems deserted, but just opposite the entrance, a pile of rags slumps against the wall, surrounded by scattered coins. This is the mouldering body of a thief who fell victim to a trap. Careful examination reveals sticks protruding from the body. Next to the thief is a skeleton in leather armour, who is reaching into an open chest.

The first one through the door will be in for a nasty surprise as the 20 daggers currently in the thief's body are hurled at him. Roll to hit 20 times.

Daggers (20): HD 1; Atk +3 strike 1d4+2.

Once they have attacked once, the daggers are once more lifeless for the duration of this expedition. One of them is a particularly nice and well-balanced weapon, its hilt wrapped in gold wire. It is a +1 dagger and vampiric – on a 20, the inflicted damage is transferred to the user. This weapon is the dagger of Parathor. The thief's wealth is 29 gp and a few thieves' tools. The chest is empty.

17. The arrows of Ag

The caption above the doorway reads: „*THE ARROWS OF AG*”. A stone statue of a naked archer is the only thing in this room. He holds a stone composite bow in one hand and grasps five stone arrows in the other. There is a plaque on the statue's stand with the following words: „*Here is Ag, who was the greatest archer before death dulled his eyes.*” If cure blindness or

a similar spell is cast on the statue, it relaxes its grip and five iron arrows with glowing, orange crystal tips tumble to the floor. The arrows are +2 and cause +2d6 fire damage on a successful hit.

18. The breath of Afamagon

The caption above the entry to this empty chamber reads: „*THE BREATH OF AFAMAGON*”. If the PCs wait and listen, they can hear soft murmurs, like gentle wind. The breath Afamagon is a concentrated *gust of wind* hitting those who enter (unless they are undead) and repeating every minute. It may be inhaled by a character who so desires, and may be exhaled later for the same effect. However, if it isn't used in three hours, the force of the breath causes interior concussion for 3d6 points of damage.

19. Gnoll rooms

This is the place where the gnolls live. In addition to any males who may be here, there are 20 females and 15 adorable, spotted young. The females are ferocious in the defence of their non-combatant young, but they prefer to flee at once through the secret escape and let the males defend them. There is no treasure.

Gnoll Females (20): HD 2; Spd 30; AC 13; Atk +2 knife 1d4; AL CE; SV P.

Squad #1: hp 2, 7, 6, 2, 3; 3, 9, 9, 4, 3.

Squad #2: hp 9, 7, 9, 5, 5; 3, 7, 8, 7, 9.

20. Larder

Sacks, barrels, hanging smoked meat, sausages and other goods stolen in raids are stored in this room. A fading fresco on the wall depicts a battle scene.

21. Room of the guardian

A caption above the doorway reads: „*ROOM OF THE GUARDIAN*”. The round chamber is now used as the chief's room, but there are remains which suggest it might have been a living room even before this: an elegant wooden couch (or bier, probably?) and dusty cushions lie

here, accompanied by moth-eaten tapestries on the wall. Next to the rest, there is a round steel shield (*shield +1*, brass, with entangled snakes on the rim), a silvered brass bowl (90 gp) full of small bones, a shoddy chain shirt, and a locked iron chest (TN +6). The key to the chest can be found in one of the cushions. It contains 650 gp and six beeswax-coloured vials, all labelled: #1 *potion of dragon control* (the imbiber will instantly be controlled by the next dragon if he drinks this), #2 *super-heroism*, #3 *diminution*, #4 *flying*, #5 *climbing*, #6 *healing*. Note that the +1 *shield* is in fact the shield of Haiar (see 30.).

22. Shunned room

The gnolls are deathly afraid of this place, since – unknown to them – there is a secret door which the undead occasionally use to kidnap one of their kind to feed on. Four asphyxiated human bodies (withered and black) lie on the floor, a torn black string about the necks.

23. Sacrificial stone

This is a small, rectangular chamber with a marble dais in the middle. Red traces indicate that the gnolls have been using it as a sacrificial altar in an attempt to placate the undead.

24. Guard post

Unless a battle is in progress, at least five gnolls are stationed at this location.



Level V.

Level V. is ruled in its entirety by the undead, who may be encountered in every corridor, although not the rooms excluding 25.

25. The image of Strabonus

This domed room has a rather low ceiling. Opposite the entrances stands a bronze

bust on a rectangular slab. The inscription is simply „STRABONUS”; the face is identical to the one found at 2. A knee-rest of stone lies before the bust.

If a player character follows the instructions given at 33. and kneels before Strabonus, the results depend on what items he has on his person. The „armament of companions” consists of the following:

- the armour of Xatolún (28.)
- the helmet of Zoimión (26.)
- the shield of Haiar (21.)
- the vestments of Melanos (31.)
- any of the following: the sword of Hereklitae (9.), the arrows of Ag (17.) or the dagger of Parathor (16.)

If any of the five are missing, all items vanish from sight and nothing happens (they will reappear in exactly 8 years but not a day before). If the items are on the kneeling person, he has to roll two Charisma saves, both at TN +6. If the first save (versus Curse) is saved, the character’s body becomes stronger, gaining +1 hit points per HD, +1 to all subsequent saving throws, +1 AC and immunity to hunger, thirst or weariness. If the second save is failed (versus Geasing), the character becomes a champion of Strabonus. As such, he is the new guardian of the tomb; his intentions being to defend it from any looters – including former companions. This may involve violence, trickery, persuasion, straight talk or any means. Although the character normally prefers to reside in room 21., he is relatively free to go, and may even venture seven days from the mound. If he dies, he returns as an undead with equal HD.

26. The helmet of Zoimión

The caption above the doorway reads: „THE HELMET OF ZOIMIÓN”. The interior is filled with the broken remains of six stone statues, fallen stucco, a suit of full plate armour mangled beyond usability, two broken sword hilts and piles of assorted rubble. Something glowing under a pile turns out to be a gauntlet with *continual light* on it. The steps leading to

the inner chamber are littered with the colourful shards of a shattered glass shield. The sarcophagus – and the entire inner chamber – is blackened by soot and ashes. The lid is easy to remove since the whole place has been looted. There is nothing inside but an old mummified cadaver with a parchment scroll stuffed into its mouth. The scroll bears a puzzling message:

„This treasure was taken by Thagon the Thick,

And if that's a problem, you can come and we shall talk.”

Thagon the Thick is an 8th level fighter. He lives on the isle of Croy (hex 4710) where he has a small tower in the mountains and some 40 men. It is no great accomplishment to find him; however, he considers the helmet a valuable trophy and isn't going to part with it easily.

27. Pit trap

This is a 60' deep pit trap (Dex save to avoid). Its walls are close to collapsing, so a character attempting to scale its walls before examining the stonework has a 50% chance of bringing the whole thing down on himself.

28. The armour of Xatolún

The caption above the portal reads: *„THE ARMOUR OF XATOLÚN”*. This is accompanied by the following words: *„Come, mighty hero. The further your pride, the greater you fall; the more humble you are, the better the surprise.”*

Across the room, a stone sarcophagus is visible. The walls of the chamber have the usual stuccoes – wide bands of geometric patterns. However, these have been painted to present an elaborate optical illusion. In truth, there are almost invisible side passages leading to rooms each containing a giant magnet. A character wearing metal armour must roll a Strength and a dexterity save to keep his footing and avoid falling either way (TN +1 for every sizable metal item, +2 for shields, +3 for medium armour, +4 for heavy armour), while a TN +6 save must be made to keep metal

weapons in hand. The „fall” in both directions is 50'. Once stuck to the magnets, a character must roll a TN +6 Strength save to break free of the magnetic columns and another one halfway out to avoid „falling” back. Letting go of metal items is an easy way out; of course, it also means these items are lost!

28/a) There are two skeletons in this side chamber. Both wear chainmail and horned helmets. Their shields have Warvik's coat-of-arms. One has a pouch with 25 gp.

28/b) This chamber has a fellow in full plate, still trying to hold on to his dagger with gauntleted hands. A longsword is stuck to the column next to him. On his side, he wears a haversack filled with broken potion bottles.

It is possible to navigate the magnets if the character wears no metal items. The sarcophagus of Xatolún is a simple stone coffin standing on a raised platform. Behind the sarcophagus (and thus invisible from the entrance) lies a dusty skeleton clutching a gnarled club. If the sarcophagus is opened, the mummy-skeleton of **Xatolún** springs forward to attack! He fights in bronze plate, using a huge bronze two-handed sword. He is also *hasted* and has a 18 Strength. If his opponents managed to bring metal armour or weaponry, his first thing to do will be to hurl these opponents backwards, hopefully into the range of the magnets. He wears *+1 bronze plate mail*. This is the armour of Xatolún.

Xatolún: HD 7; hp 36; Spd 40; AC 21; Atk +12/+12 two-handed sword 2d6+5; AL N; SQ *hasted*, may not be turned, Str 18; SV P.

29. Pits

These three pit traps are 60' deep and need a Dexterity save to avoid.

30. The shield of Haiar

The caption above the entry reads: *„THE SHIELD OF HAIAR – VENOMOUS TREA...”* [the rest has been scraped away].

Around the walls in this rectangular chamber are a total of nine round metal shields, three to the sides and three on the facing wall. They are engraved with the likenesses of various animals. There are also two statues by each wall (between the shields). They depict stone warriors. Taking any of the shields without replacing with another animates the statues.

Living Statues: HD 4; hp 22, 16, 19, 22, 20, 10; Spd 20; AC 18; Atk +4 strike 1d8; SQ ½ damage from slashing and piercing, magic immunities; SV P, M.

All metal shields except the eighth are magical and detect as such. Touching one triggers the sorcery within (TN +0 unless noted).

#1 lotus flowers: Constitution save or fall asleep for 1d6 hours.

#2 fly: Constitution save or contract disease.

#3 bull: Charisma save or berserk rage for 1d6 rounds.

#4 fish: Intelligence save or silenced for 1d6 hours.

#5 jellyfish: Wisdom save or paralysis for 1d6+4 rounds

#6 lizard: Dexterity save or *heat metal*.

#7 vulture: Charisma save or character develops a taste for cadavers (1d6 weeks).

#8 blank: nonmagical.

#9 scorpion: save versus poison or die (TN +6).

None of these are the shield of Haiar as it was removed from this chamber by the gnoll chieftain and is currently found in his room (21.).

31. The vestments of Melanos

The caption above the entry reads: „*THE VESTMENTS OF MELANOS. UNDOER OF THE UNBELIEVERS, HE WHO IS OF THE LIGHT AND THE GIFT OF GODS*”. There are three wooden chests in the room, and each has a cloak inside.

a) A red cloak embroidered with a golden crown and a sceptre. This is a **cloak** monster. It waits until worn and only

strikes with its poisonous teeth at an opportune moment.

Cloaker: HD 6; hp 22; Spd 30 fly; AC 14; Atk 2*+6 claws 1d4 and +6 teeth 2d4 plus poison plus blood drain; SQ blood drain, poison; SV P, M.

Poison: Constitution save or fall into a catatonic, nightmare-filled dream.

Blood drain: 1d6 hit points per round are lost.

b) A blue cloak decorated with a multitude of golden stars. The stars surround a crescent moon glowing with magical light. This is a *cloak of poisonousness*, and anyone wearing it will be dead.

c) A white cloak embroidered with a decorative war hammer surrounded by a halo of golden light. This is a *cloak +1* and also the cloak of Melanos.

32. Tomb of dust

The words above the entry have been chiselled away. The interior of the room is covered with a thick layer of dust. Upon entry, this dust is disturbed as sounds of running feet, muffled shouts and such are audible... only to fall silent once more. If magic is used in here, the dust briefly coalesces into a human form before falling back to the ground.

Level VI.

33. Room of invocations

The walls of the circular room are domed, their colour red except a yellow sun at the top, surrounded by yellow light-beams. In the middle, there is a small circular depression with a round basin. The basin is made of red marble and is half filled with clear water. Two invocations are found on the wall. The left reads:

„*Praise Strabonus, praise! Praise him above and praise him below, but above all praise him in your descent and ascent, for*

what is in between as you make your rounds is the matter. Lest laxitude crush you, take of his companions seven: six without and one within. Thus serve in prayer, thus serve in sacrifice."

The one to the right reads:

„Follow Strabonus, follow! Follow him here, follow him by the plentiful shedding of your blood and above all follow him in the garbs of companions four. The armaments and one instrument of slaying shall do good as you kneel before his image. Thus sacrifice in servitude, thus in servitude pray."

If a character cuts himself with a weapon and pours blood into the basin, the water becomes unclear and the wound keeps bleeding at the rate of the damage the weapon he used usually inflicts (bonuses excluded). The minimum is 1d6 per round. Every curative spell halts the flow by one point per round. For full healing, points equal to the maximal damage must be cured in this way. If a character dies by bleeding out, he will soon rise as an undead with one HD lower than his level. This undead form compulsively desires blood.

After filling the basin with 18 hp worth of blood, the fluid ignites and burns. These flames burn for as many hours as the number of hit points expended. They cause a further 1d6 damage but seal all wounds.

34. Shadowy passages

These narrow but high tunnels are carved out of the bare rocks. They are unnaturally dark; all lights cast long, dancing shadows. Characters may only progress in single file, unless they are of small stature and employ spear-type weapons. Dust is everywhere.

At eight locations, there are swinging traps in the tunnel. Markings of an asterisk (*) indicate blades waist-high and markings of a plus (+) indicate skewers from above and below. In both cases, a Dexterity save is needed to avoid suffering 2d6 points of damage.

In addition to the traps, **10 shadows** roam the corridors. They hide in the walls and

always emerge en masse to attack the character in the back (preferably all shall strike simultaneously). Once the victim is dead, they move on to the next until detected. Upon discovery, they flee back to safety.

Shadows (10): HD 3; Spd 30; AC 13; Atk +3 touch strength loss; SQ silver to hit; AL CE; SV M.

35. Corpse room

Ten shrivelled corpses are tied to iron rings set in the wall, heads bowed. Drops of water from the ceiling drip with regularity into a copper bowl. If a sacrifice has been performed in room 33., the water is bloody.

The demesne of Strabonus

This is not so much a level as three rooms forming the core of the burial mound. The only way to gain access here is through the secret door at 5. The warlord Strabonus rests here, but so do puzzles and fiendish dangers...

36. The room of companions

The stairs descend into a brightly lit domed room filled with masterful frescoes – in fact, the entire wall is one fresco, united in a cloudy sky above the centre. Three steps lead down into a wide depressed area. The floor is of white marble with letters in mosaics running around: „*ROOM OF THE COMPANIONS*“. There are six figures in the fresco.

a) A woman wearing a multicoloured gown of blue, red and black. She holds up a longsword in preparation to defend herself from advancing enemies. If the sword of Hereklitae is placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

b) A nude man struggling with three harpies. One has been run through and slain by an iron arrow, yet the two others

are upon the muscular archer and flanking him. If the arrows of Ag are placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

c) The twin brother of the previous man, except he wears a large face-obscuring helmet (somewhat resembling a kabuto, except of metal) and wields a heavy iron mace against a giant lizard. If the helmet of Zoimión is placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

d) A man of bronze skin and bronze armour, proud of stature and hooked of nose. His hair is a mane of black and his eyes are slanted and green. He tries to escape from the claws of a gigantic armoured crab. If the armour of Xatolún is placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

e) A woman of similar features. She raises her small metal shield to avoid the fiery breath of a great bat-monster. If the shield of Haiar is placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

f) A short man with short black hair, moustache and beard, a black cloak on his shoulders. He smiles as an unkempt savage behind his back gazes in disbelief on a broken sword. If the vestments of Melanos are placed before the figure, it disappears from the fresco.

Finally, once all figures have disappeared and the scene is empty, a character who had inhaled the breath of Afamagon may exhale it to part the clouds and reveal a circular shaft to the next level. The shaft remains in place for one day.

37. The room of worshipping

Yet another round, domed room. Emerging from the shaft leading down, the following words are visible around its rim: „*THE ROOM OF WORSHIPPING*”. There are six pedestals around the perimeter and a bronze bust on a square slab to the northeast. The pedestals each hold a potion. In order:

#1: *potion of heroism*

#2: *potion of haste*

#3: *potion of strength*

#4: *potion of cure serious wounds*

#5: *potion of deadly poison*

#6: *potion of levitation*

The bronze bust is yet another image of Strabonus. If respectful sacrifice is performed before the idol of the warlord, all participants (but not those who just watched the proceedings) benefit from the following *permanent* gifts: +1 hp per level (ex-post only), +1 to all saves and +1 AC. However, defilement yields the exact opposite (TN +12 Constitution save avoids, but three saves must be rolled for each decrease).

Just above the idol, there is a thin shaft in the ceiling (hard to spot in the dark, especially since the stuccoes are a dark indigo brown here) leading upwards. The shaft ends in a stone plug that may with some difficulty be pushed aside on hinges to enter the treasure chamber of Strabonus!

38. The room of burial

Just atop the plug (if the PCs care to investigate) are the following words: „*THE ROOM OF BURIAL. IT IS A HERO'S FATE, TO BE BURIED WITH SUCH GAINS.*” However, it is more likely that attention will be drawn to the piles of glittering coins, the golden vessels, and the bier of Strabonus, the fallen tyrant! There is a total of 22.000 electrum pieces in the burial vault, in mounds and mountains, dusty but still glinting. There are large, hammered plates of gold also (these are valued at 120 gp, and ten may be recovered), four golden decanters, three at 500 gp, and one at 800; and finally five golden candelabra of 100 gp value apiece. This whole scene, illuminated by the beam of light from the large glass slab above, is a stuff of dreams.

The riches of Strabonus are not any less impressive. He wears a +3 *full plate armour* made of enchanted bronze. His weapon is a +2 *long spear*, his shield is +3, and the javelins by his feet are *javelins of lightning bolts* (each strikes for 1d6+20 points on impact or 20 points for all in its path, TN +4 Dexterity save for half in the latter case).

Those who would believe that Strabonus is undead will be disappointed. Those who thought the loot would be so easy will be likewise. In fact, the whole room is a **null-magic area** where no enchantment functions. Spells may not be cast in, into and out of the room. There are, however, appropriate mechanical traps. The heavy stone plug is balanced by a counterweight connected to an ingenious pulley system. After some time, the descending weight reaches a certain point and the entire plug is pulled down from below into its place with a tremendous force! This is strong enough to crush or dislodge lesser items placed just to avoid this. Opening the plug again requires a narrow yet strong tool such as a better crowbar or a magical sword, plus about half an hour of work. That might be too much! Just as the plug returns to its position, the same mechanism activates stone pistons that push

compressed air into the room through cunningly hidden openings in the wall. The resulting draft disturbs the thick dust – this is intermixed with black lotus concentrate, the deadliest poison known to man. Two TN +6 Constitution saving throws are necessary. Each failed throw results in the loss of 3d6 Constitution points. And even if the lotus dust settles, sudden movement may trigger it once again (with a TN of +0). Handling the treasure causes another disturbance, etc., etc., etc. Those who remain still and wait under the glass will chose another form of unpleasant dress: during the day, the focused sunlight from above will result in 1d6 points of damage for every hour, not to mention the perils of starvation... Clearly, those who are of adequate merit to claim the treasures of Strabonus deserve no less than the amount they can so recover.

THIS ENDS THE EXPEDITION TO THE ΜΑΘΣΟΛΕΟΝ ΟΦ ΣΤΡΑΒΟΝΟΣ



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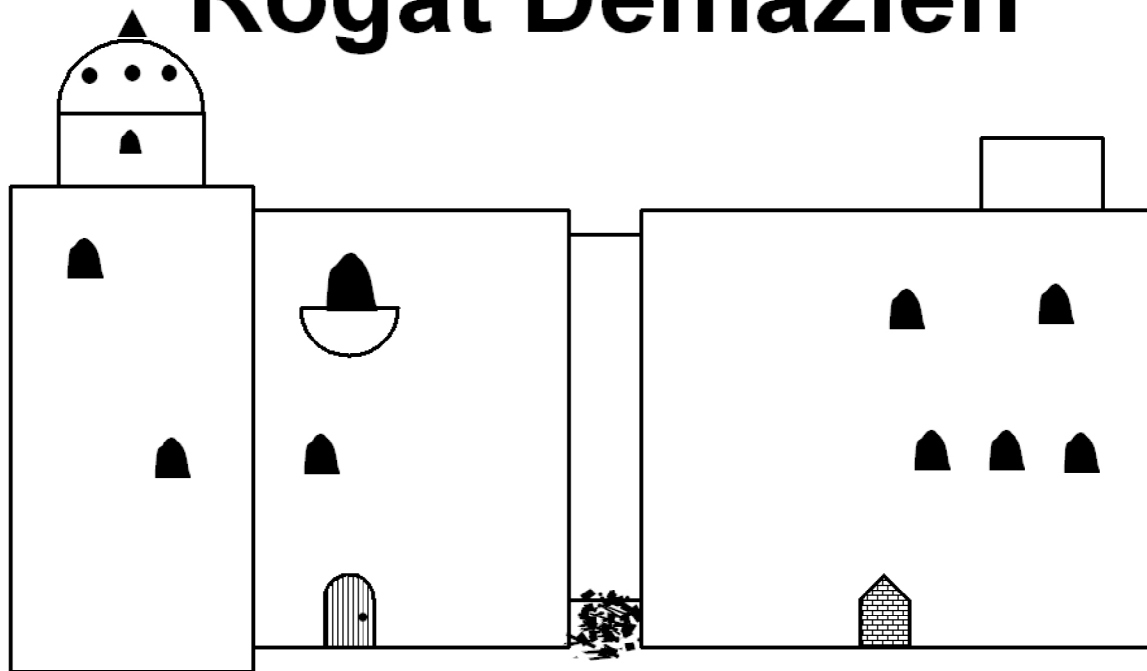
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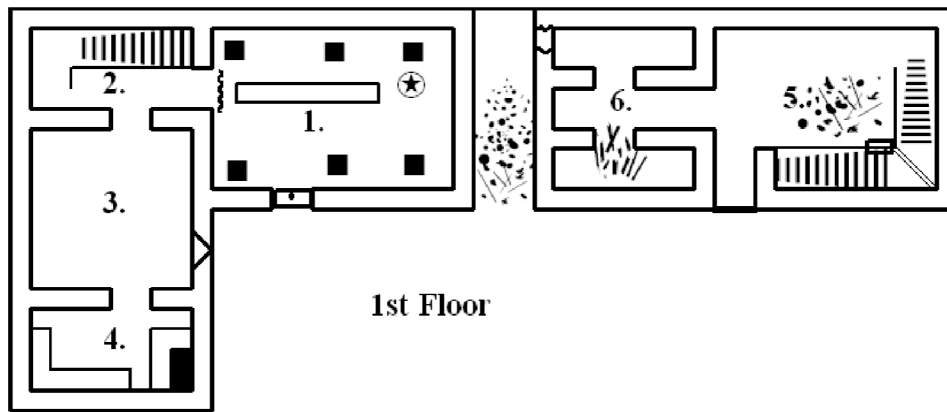
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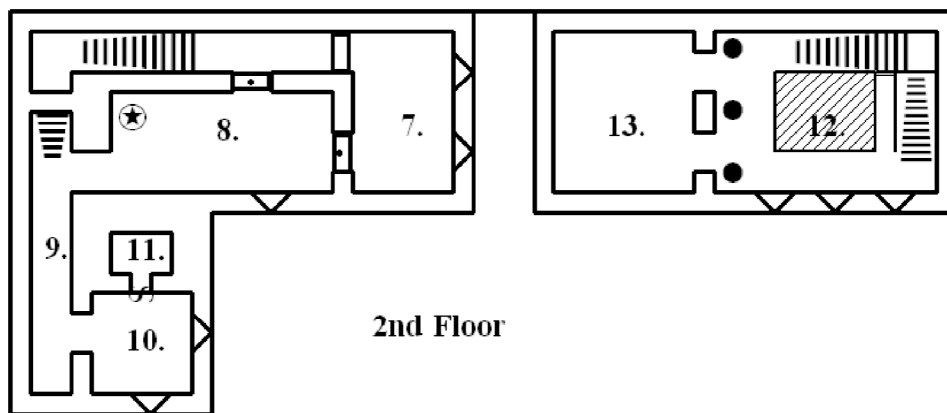
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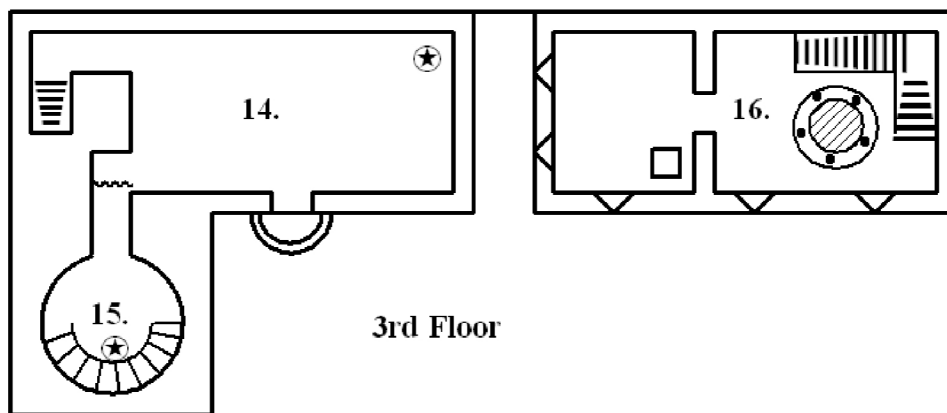
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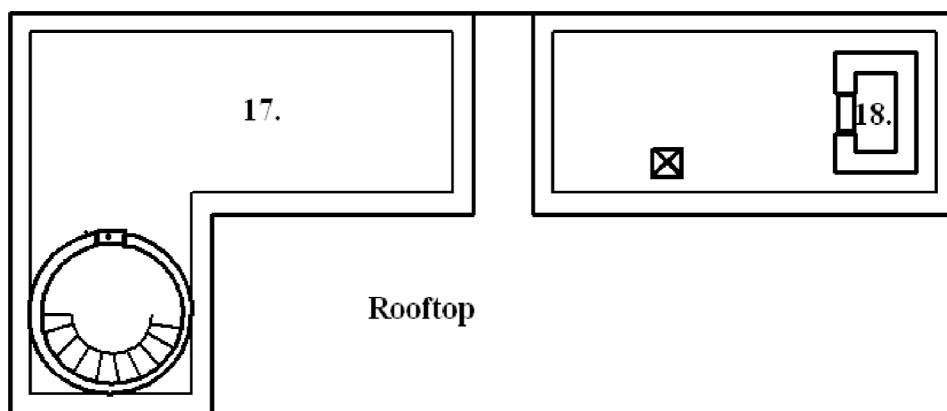
1st Floor



2nd Floor



3rd Floor



Rooftop

The House of Rogat Demazien

Writing, cartography, cover and layout: Gabor Lux

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Introduction

The House of Rogat Demazien is a low- to mid-level adventure location for use with the *Wilderlands of High Fantasy* boxed set and the *Castles & Crusades* role-playing game. It is by no means a complete adventure; rather, it is expected that the Judge will insert it into his campaign as appropriate, and devise some sort of plot hook to motivate his players to seek out and explore Rogat Demazien's strange dwelling. It is also a matter of taste and convenience where the module is located in the milieu: although originally created for *Zothay* (also available from the Judges Guild home page), any sufficiently large town will do, as long as a crowded slums/inner city area is present.

Once more, this supplement is just a starting point. Whether approaching the house on a mission of burglary, or investigating a series of strange disappearances, there are multiple paths a party could take: how the eventual adventure proceeds is a matter of focus and player choice, as there is no shortage of potential outcomes. Exercise good judgement when running your scenario, and don't let preconceptions get in the way of the game experience.

Gabor Lux

Background

Rogat Demazien's house is an old, crumbling building located in the Beggars Quarter of Zothay, right next to its western gate. It is surrounded by empty houses; some of these are sealed to prevent unlawful entry, whereas others are known to be the dwellings of thieves and vagrants. In any case, this is a place where few choose to live, unless they are short on money or don't mind the proximity of the vilest city scum. Since the entire quarter is protected by a treaty that keeps out the watch, one can only count on his own devices to guarantee the safety of his life and valuables.

Despite the squalid conditions, it is precisely this house – formerly a prosperous cloth merchant's home – which Rogat Demazien purchased a year after the previous owner died without leaving an heir. He paid the authorities a modest yet fair amount and moved in with his simple belongings. Since then, he has become known as an authority on the strange and unusual, with an interest in subtle enchantments and ancient history. Such skills have attracted the interest of Kritas, Zothay's tyrant, who has consulted him on multiple occasions – a development which has, in turn, aroused the suspicion and dislike of other magic-users living in the city. The only exception is Beshtal Teg, a morose Ghinoran known to sell strange

idols: he and Rogat are apparently on good terms.

Despite his apparent favour with Kritas, Rogat Demazien lives alone without any outwards sign of much wealth; his sole servant, an elderly man many have seen but none have talked to, visits once a week to deliver supplies to his master, but otherwise lives somewhere else. Rogat himself is very rarely seen, usually only when he leaves the city to visit Khauran, his former place of residence. This he does three to five times every year. In his absence, thieves have tried on two occasions to burgle his house. Both expeditions resulted in a failure, and none of the perpetrators returned, although one was found with a broken body before the front door, apparently having fallen from the roof or the balcony below. There was no other sign of injury, and no sound of struggle during that night – just the disappearances, the body and nothing more.



Key to the Street Level

A. Street

Unlike the southern streets of the Beggars Quarter, this place sees little traffic. The old houses which had once belonged to prosperous families are empty; some are close to collapse, but even those in a relatively good condition have seen better days. Pigeons and seagulls nest in the empty windows. All four keyed houses have a flat roof and three to four stories. Walls are easy to climb (TN -2) but there is a 20% chance on every attempt that a stone is loose and the climber must roll a Dex save or fall and suffer 3d6 points of damage. During the night, there is almost no chance of interruption; roll for random encounters

every hour spent outside. Encounters occur on a 1:6 chance.

Roll Result

1. Beggars of Shakkur (3d6, see undercity area 10. for more)
2. Drunks (2d4)
3. Giant rats (2d10)
4. Stray dogs (3d4, 30% hostile)
5. Robbers (2d6, only approach small groups)
6. Prostitutes (1d3, passing through)

Beggars of Shakkur: HD 1-1; AC 9; dmg 1d6-1 crutches (club); SV P. [Do not count as losses for the underground area.]

Drunks: HD 1+1; AC 10; dmg 1d6 shortsword or club; SV P.

Giant Rats: HD ½; AC 13; dmg 1d4; SA disease; SV P.

Stray Dogs: HD 1; AC 13; dmg 1d6; SV P.

Robbers: HD 1d6+1; AC 14 (+3 studded leather, +1 buckler); dmg 1d6 shortsword or 1d4 thrown dagger; SA back attack, thief abilities; SV P.

Prostitutes: HD 1; AC 10; dmg 1d4; SV Dex, Con, Cha.

B. The house of Rogat Demazien

This is the most intact house of the four. It has a strong wooden door that is always locked (TN +6), and multiple windows too narrow to squeeze through. On the third floor, there is a small balcony and an unguarded archway covered by a simple curtain. Interior areas are described below.

C. Alley

The narrow alley between the two houses is full of fallen debris. A crack in the wall to the east leads into the abandoned building.

D. Poorhouse

This once prosperous building is inhabited by cannibalistic beggars, and is described below. The front door is walled up, but there is a gap in the western wall which allows easy entry.

E., G. Houses

These two ruins are connected by a small bridge on the second level. Both are in a run-down condition.

F. Alley

Another narrow alley. Set in the passage below the overarching bridge is a rusted iron gate. The gate is locked (TN +0), and seems to have been left unmolested for years. However, it is in fact well oiled, as the small room opening from the alley's end is used by the thieves guild to hide items and people. The current resident is **Fik**, a 3rd level thief hiding from the authorities.

Fik: male human Thf3; hp 9; AC 15 (+3 studded leather, +1 buckler, +1 Dex); Atk +1 shortsword; SA back attack, thief abilities; SV Int, Dex, Cha.



Key to the Houses

Defenses

Although Rogat Demazien doesn't employ any guards, he has his own ways to take care of thieves. Deadly illusions and enchanted statues – special gargoyles – protect his premises. The traps are activated as indicated in the text. The statues are another matter: they become self aware when the first intruder crosses their line of sight, but don't attack until a favourable opportunity presents itself. They try to use their innate abilities for maximal effect before entering melee. In combat, they fight as **gargoyles**; however, they also project a 15' radius area of absolute silence while they move. The statues communicate telepathically. If one is destroyed, the rest animate and converge on the enemies to eliminate the threat.

1. Shop

The cloth merchant's store is a dark, cramped room smelling of dust and stale lamp oil. Wooden chests full of decayed cloth are piled up under the blackened beams. Miscellaneous tools – scales, shears, measuring sticks – lie on the counter top. Nobody has disturbed the place for a long time. The only detail that looks out of place is a heavy basalt idol in the north-eastern corner. It appears as a squat reptilian beast with a grotesque horned head, stunted bat-like wings and crooked claws. The bestial image is a **gargoyle**. It can command the front door to shut and lock at will. It doesn't attack unless someone attempts to leave the house through this exit.

Gargoyle: HD 4+4; hp 22; AC 15; #AT 4; dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SA silence; SD DR 5/+1; SV P, M.

Silence: as long as the gargoyle is in motion, all sound within 15' is negated. There is no saving throw against this ability.

2. Stairway

More chests full of cloth are kept here. The stairs are of cedar, and appear to be well cared for if a bit dusty. A trapdoor leading down is hidden behind some crates. It is hard to open from below (Str check, TN +0).

3. Servants' Quarter

The merchant's apprentices lived and slept here. Their belongings are all gone – only four cots, chairs and a table remain.

4. Kitchen

A counter and a fireplace. The soft veil of cobwebs covers everything. Only rats disturb the place.

5. Entry Hall

This decorative hall was once used to welcome the guests visiting the prosperous inhabitants of the house. Frescoes and

mosaics remain, but furnishings do not. Debris has fallen from above, and weeds have sprouted in the gaps. There is a foul, unclean smell. A stairway leads to the floor above, while another leads into the basement. A pile of soiled rags lies in a corner.

6. Dens

These side rooms once housed servants or slaves. They have recently been used as sleeping chambers by the degenerate beggars. The rooms smell of urine and human waste: the sole contents are a few discarded blankets, too decayed even for the current inhabitants. A narrow crack from the northern room leads outside.

7. Bedroom

This is a simple yet tidy bedroom, with a double bed, a wardrobe and a faded brass mirror on the wall. Like the rooms on the first floor, it is completely abandoned. A chest contains a gown, various headpieces, sandals, etc.

8. The Room of Endless Night

A perpetual gloom shrouds the room. Both natural and magical light turns into a strange phosphorescence that barely illuminates the immediate surroundings. Shutters close the only window and inky drapes cover the walls and ceiling. The material is dotted with a myriad silvery white dots glowing like stars. The effect is that of the night sky, presented with a lifelike accuracy right down to the smallest constellation. A sizable water basin stands in the middle of the room. There is also a wardrobe by the east wall and a stone pedestal with another **gargoyle** in the northwest corner.

The water basin is made of marble and looks like fonts typically found in large temples. At night, the image of the moon may be seen within, just as it appears outside the house. This image possesses an unnatural magnetism: anyone looking in the water has

his gaze transfixed, and if he fails a saving throw vs. Charm (Cha, TN +0), he falls into the water and sinks towards the pale reflection. Unless rescued in four rounds, a save vs. Illusion (Int, TN +6) is required to avoid drowning in this abysmal well. Of course, this is all an illusion. The victim merely stands immobile by the basin, and even if he is „killed”, he may be returned to his senses by vigorous shaking. Of course, approaching with opened eyes may just as well capture more characters...

The wardrobe is made of the darkest cedar, and appears to be of extraordinary craftsmanship. A silver pentacle is set in its doors. If opened, a cloud of icy darkness swirls outside and attacks. The darkness fights as a monster, but its damage is illusionary, „disappearing” in an hour.

The **gargoyle** is just like its companion in area 1., but instead of the ability to lock doors, it can use a powerful mental strike. It prefers to attack once multiple PCs have fallen prey to the well or they have released the darkness. It also attacks anyone returning from area 9.

Gargoyle: HD 4+4; hp 24; AC 15; #AT 4; dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SA silence, mental strike; SD DR 5/+1; SV P, M.

Silence: as long as the gargoyle is in motion, all sound within 15' is negated. There is no saving throw against this ability.

Mental Strike: once per day, the gargoyle can employ a mental strike against a single opponent. The victim must roll a save vs. Constriction (Str, TN +4) or suffer 6d6 points of damage.

Darkness: HD 4; hp 14; AC 18; dmg 2d6; SD incorporeal; SV M.

Incorporeal: the darkness is immune to physical attacks. Fire and magical spells harm it, but clerical turning has no effect.

9. Corridor

Wispy sheets of spider webs hang from the ceiling. The passage is perpetually dark (just like area 8.). Ghostly sounds of laughter and merrymaking float through the air. Sparks of multicoloured light seem to have been ensnared in the webs like simple flies, but they are another illusion. The sparks are extinguished on touch with a hollow sigh.

10. Workroom

Rogat Demazien's spartan office is kept in a neat order. His writing desk is covered by a stack of scrolls; a portrait hangs above, and a brass brazier sits by on the carpet to provide light and warmth at night. The portrait is that of an attractive young woman with sable hair and a warm smile, clothed in silk and rich velvet. The scrolls are letters addressed to this (unnamed) beauty, expressing the illusionist's longing for her and lamenting Rogat's exile to this city. None of the letters have been sent, and an astute reader may realize that the object of Rogat's affections is no longer among the living. Depressing a stone under the portrait opens the secret door to the secret storage.

11. Secret Closet

The closet's walls are covered by wooden shelves. Most of them are empty, but the centremost holds a fair number of odds and ends:

- gnarled pieces of dark wood wrapped in red string
- a bundle of sparkling glass prisms
- a scroll with a *shadow monsters* spell protected by *suggestion* (save vs. Spell, TN +6; the suggestion is „put it back, it is useless”)
- two vials of exotic oils (a dream-drug)
- a lacquered, black wooden skull
- a leather-bound booklet wrapped in black silk
- a keg of green light with all – except tactile – properties of a liquid

- a transparent lizard preserved in an alcoholic solution

- [while at home, Rogat's travelling spell book is also found here]

The booklet contains a key to decode secret messages, and reports on the politics and notable personalities of the city state. The booklet is warded by a cunning illusion: as soon as it is removed from the closet, a spectral apparition materializes, seizing the volume and disappearing with its prize through the north wall. In reality, the book is simply turned invisible and transferred back on the shelf where it came from – and may be safely removed if found for the second time.

12. Gallery

This gallery overlooks the entry hall. The balustrade's decorative stone carvings have mostly fallen, or are close to collapse. Debris litters the floor. The columns before room 13. are carved into the shapes of nubile women clad in silken gowns and holding fans made of palm leaves. Each carries a symbol resembling a fish around her neck.

13. Abandoned Suite

Gilded frescoes cover the walls, depicting an undersea environment – mermen, mermaids, giant sea-horses, seaweed and so on. A large gathering of mer-people appears to be nobles judging by the rich jewellery they wear.

14. Rogat Demazien's Living Room

The spacious quarters almost occupies a whole level. The star-sewn black drapes found at location 8. dominate, but here, they are pleasantly contrasted by rich brocades of royal purple and golden yellow, as well as pillows in a dozen various colours. The room is illuminated from the archway to the balcony. Another source of light is found by the low table in the centre of the room: a small brazier that burns perpetually, emitting a heavy, spice-laden fragrance. It guarantees pleasant dreams but doesn't have any immediate effect.

A gold-inlaid decorative wooden box on the table (65 gp) holds a rainbow crystal glowing with an inner opalescent light. Anyone possessing the stone will *fail* all saving throws vs. Charm, Spells (including spells that require other types of non-Int based saving throws) and Illusions. The stone may be discarded with a *remove curse* spell.

Another **gargoyle** is concealed in the shadows of the NE corner. It can take control of one opponent on a failed saving throw vs. Charm (Cha, TN +4). Control lasts for 1d6+4 rounds; it is merely physical and rather clumsy, so that a character controlled and used to fight companions will use the idol's attack values, and may not simply commit suicide – even though it could „hit” itself with a weapon. The gargoyle prefers to act after someone takes possession of the rainbow stone. It makes the victim attack companions, and when control is close to expiring, leap out of the balcony (3d6 points of damage).

Gargoyle: HD 4+4; hp 30; AC 15; #AT 4; dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SA silence, mental strike; SD DR 5/+1; SV P, M.

Silence: as long as the gargoyle is in motion, all sound within 15' is negated. There is no saving throw against this ability.

Control Opponents: once per day, the gargoyle may attempt to control an opponent who fails a saving throw vs. Charm. Control lasts 1d6+4 rounds, and is physical only.

15. Stairwell

Beams of sun- or moonlight stream in through small glass windows. A spiral staircase climbs upwards below a web-shrouded cupola. The original stuccoes of the wall are starting to peel and crumble, forming a fine layer of dust on the floor.

In front of the northern passage (and just under the stairs) is yet another stone idol. It has already dispatched a thief: a young man with contorted limbs and fear in his open

eyes lies in the centre of the room. He wears a dark silken shroud, has a rope & grappling hook, a dagger and an empty sack.

Gargoyle: HD 4+4; hp 24; AC 15; #AT 4; dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SA silence, mental strike; SD DR 5/+1; SV P, M.

Silence: as long as the gargoyle is in motion, all sound within 15' is negated. There is no saving throw against this ability.

Mental Strike: once per day, the gargoyle can employ a mental strike against a single opponent. The victim must roll a save vs. Constriction (Str, TN +4) or suffer 6d6 points of damage.

16. Upper Suite

This suite is similar to the one on the floor below, but much better illuminated. Decorations are primarily geometric, in red and green colours. There is a marble dome in the eastern room supported by five thick columns. It allows one to observe the lower floors. There is still a small silver lantern hanging from the top of the dome. Its value is some 25 gp, but a Climb check (TN +2) is needed to reach it. Falling damage is 4d6 (3d6 for the height, +1d6 for the hard floor).

17. Rooftop

A flat rooftop.

18. Rooftop Shack

This windowless stone shack was once used by the guards serving the lord of the mansion. It looks abandoned on first sight, and its entrance is bricked up. However, it isn't uninhabited: a trapdoor in the shack's flat roof allows entry. Habitation is evident from the straw mattress, pewter tankard of water, clay lamp and the small wooden table with a selection of thieves tools: levers, crowbars, drills, small hammers and so on. Also, very thorough searching reveals a stone in the floor, which may be removed to reveal a large cavity – and a sparkling golden decanter worth 280 gp.

There is a 20% by night and 60% by day that **Radmeras**, the shack's inhabitant is about. Radmeras is a half-orc assassin, currently being employed by a fence in the city state to reacquire sold goods, but occasionally selling his services to the cultists of Set. He wears a filthy green cloak, likes to pick his teeth with a knife and is a lot more intelligent than he appears. He prefers to attack from complete surprise, and if a hit fails, he immediately flees the scene.

Radmeras: male half-orc Asn6; hp 36; AC 17 (+4 chain shirt, +1 buckler, +2 Dex); Atk +3 longsword 1d8+1 and poison (2d6/2d6 hp); SA case target, poison, sneak attack; SD climb, disguise, hide, listen, move silently, traps; SV Dex, Con, Int; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8; 34 gp, 11 sp, five doses of blade venom (2d6/2d6 hp), thieves tools, crowbar, three doses of healing balm (1d4 hp), two doses of anti-toxin.



Key to the Undercity Level

1. Cellar

The limestone vaults under the cloth merchant's house are cool but reasonably dry. Lime dust lies on the floor. The large wooden dying vats are empty now (although their colours are still apparent), save for one: a wooden pressing lid doesn't go all the way in because of the two corpses underneath. These victims were killed by the gargoyles and carried down here by Rogat Demazien. On a whim, Rogat added some water and a block of indigo dye to see how the bodies would look after a few months, but forgot about the incident. The results aren't pretty.

2. Circle in the Dust

Someone has drawn a chalk circle on the floor and enclosed it within a triangle. If detected for, the circle and the air above it appears magical. If disturbed, a disembodied head of an old man appears and exclaims: „*Do not call me into this world, sorcerer: will you do, will you regret it...*” The image is harmless and disperses if hit by magic (weapon or spell). It can pronounce a vile curse („*May that which crawls within the earth crawl within you, and may that which devours the earth devour your being.*”), but this curse is *ineffective*. The illusion appears again and again if the characters return.

Suspended above the circle is an invisible chest supported by invisible chains. This is what the illusion is meant to protect... and to confuse magical search. The chest is trapped with an envenomed needle: save vs. poison (TN +6) or die. The contents are the following: 3900 electrum, *potion of undead control*, *scroll of travelling to the netherworld* (reader and everyone in a 30' radius – 10% chance of being sent to an „upper” dungeon level, 30% of being sent to a „lower” dungeon level and 60% of actually being sent into some underearth domain of the Judge's choice) and a spellbook with illusionist spells.

3. Sealed Chamber

Only a character adept at construction or detecting secret entrances has a chance of noting that a doorway was walled up here. The stonework is roughly two or three years old; Rogat Demazien is unaware of its existence. If it is broken through, a small chamber is revealed as a gust of dry, dusty air escapes. Desiccated corpses with cracked skin huddle inside... their body is more dust and earth than conserved flesh, and the once rich garments are mere rags, the golden embroidery having faded into putrid corruption. One of the gnawed-on hands bears a golden signet ring with a trident-armed warrior (250 gp). A pewter plate in

the centre of the room is full of 45 ancient gold pieces. The stairway to the south has collapsed and is impassable.

4. Clerical Chamber

A few steps lead down here. Wall carvings over an altar stone depict wave-like motifs. Uncertain whispers may be heard – „...yes, yes... *that is it... yes...of course...*”). The wave-like motifs are a form of Ancient Viridian script; together, they form a prayer to this fell undersea deity.

5. Secret Passage

Rogat Demazien doesn't know about the passage. Its western terminus is behind a wall niche, the other end is hidden by the undertemple's stone stele. The passage is narrow and may only be travelled single file. Midway along its length, there is an arrow trap: the first and last character is both attacked by 2d4 arrows (+5 to hit, 1d6+1 dmg).

6. Undertemple

A larger underground area formerly used as a chapel dedicated to the worship of the Viridian overgod Armadad Bog. The ceiling is low and covered by still vivid blue stucco. A stele stands at the far end. A relief on the stele depicts Armadad Bod as he holds two struggling heroes under water.

7. Room of Consecration

A wall basin on the west wall is always full of pure water. An inscription in Viridian reads: „*Deeper and ever deeper, until you return to your creator.*”

8. The Vault of Sacrifice

The salty smell of the sea fills the vaulted chamber. The deep pool's waters are a turquoise green and very dark. Its source is a wall font in the shape of a bearded head contorted into a crazed grin. Ghostly whispers emerge from the pool, one after the other. A few examples follow: „*No! Do not*

do this to us!” „*Save me, please, I implore you by our benefactor, save me.*” „*Do as you please, just don't take my only son! Please...*” „*You can follow through with your madness, and the gods see I am prepared, you madmen. You have been blinded by the Lie and become as animals. Do you already believe that every thing is yours to do?!*” and so forth. The pool is abysmal and whosoever tries to enter it will be hypnotized (save vs. Charm, TN +5) and drown.

9. Gallery

From this overhead gallery, one may freely observe the columned hall and the bacchanalian feast of Shakkur's degenerate beggars.

10. Hall of Columns

This cellar is vast, a veritable forest of thick rectangular columns. It is the home of the degenerate beggars who live in the undercity. An overbearing, greasy stench assaults the senses of those who enter. The beggars are stooped, gaunt humans wearing filthy garbs. They are physical and mental wrecks, and no longer human: this is betrayed by their possessed gaze and simpleminded, obsessive muttering. The entire band lives, eats, sleeps and couples in the columned hall. They cook a vile stew in a gigantic iron pot... maybe dog, maybe human. They attack in a frenzy of hunger, bloodlust and debased hatred.

Beggars of Shakkur (20): HD 1-1; AC 9; dmg 1d6-1 crutches; SV P.
hp 2, 6, 5, 1, 3 / 1, 2, 6, 6, 2 / 4, 2, 6, 1, 4 / 5, 1, 2, 5, 2.

Shakkur's Blessed (10): HD 1-1; AC 9; dmg 1d6-1 crutches or 2d4-1 bite and grab; SD immortality; SV P.
hp 4, 1, 6, 1, 1 / 1, 6, 4, 5, 6
Grab: once one of Shakkur's Blessed bites someone, he latches on the victim and

automatically inflicts damage every round until killed.

Unmortality: Shakkur's Blessed raise from the dead after being killed, and must be killed *again* to be gotten rid of. They regain all hit points and receive a +4 to hit and damage in this state.

11. Bronze Portals

These heavy gates have not opened for time immemorial, but may be thrown open by the appropriate incantation. The words are lost, but there is some chance they may be recovered...



Map of the Street Level

