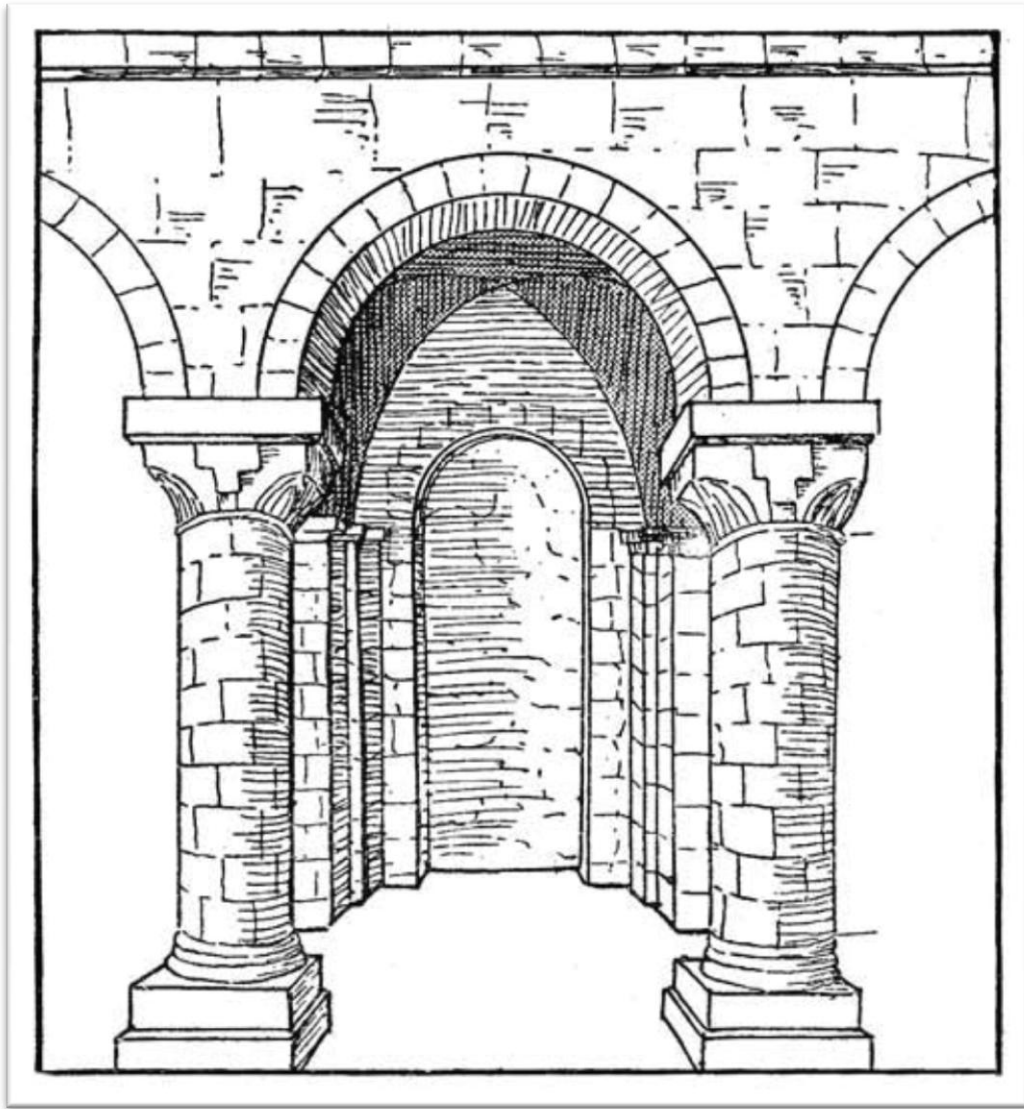


The Fane of St. Toad

*An Adventure Location for Original Dungeons & Dragons and Other
Fantasy Role-Playing Games*



By Michael Curtis

[The Society of Torch, Pole and Rope](#)

In memory of Dave Arneson (1947 - 2009)

*"Good men must die, but Death cannot
kill their names" - Danish Proverb*

Foreword

As I'm writing this, the news of Dave Arneson's passing is just a few hours old. While many in the role-playing community were aware that Dave was fighting cancer, his illness took a very sudden turn and, before we knew it, Dave lost his battle with the disease. It's still hard to believe that the man who was still visiting the [Original Dungeons & Dragons Discussion](#) board up until a week or two ago is gone. Despite the deep impact of his death on the role-playing community, it pales in comparison to the loss felt by his family and friends at this moment. My thoughts and prayers go out to them. I can only hope that Dave's passing was painless and done with his loved ones at his side.

It was only within the last year that I began to have a deeper understanding of Dave's role in the creation and development of Dungeons & Dragons. In my youth, I saw his name written along with Gary Gygax's on the credits page of my copy of Tom Moldvay's Basic D&D rulebook but I had no idea of who he was and what he had to do with my favorite game. Gygax's name was better known to me as it was Gary's name that appeared on my AD&D rulebooks, on modules, and in the pages of Dragon Magazine. With my participation in the Old School Renaissance, however, I've learned a great deal about Dave and his part in the creation of D&D. By reading quite a number of articles, interviews, player recollections, and other sources, I gained insight into both the man and the DM. With that new understanding, came a profound respect for the man, as well as the opportunity to learn several lessons as to how D&D can be played. His visits to the Original D&D Discussion board were always anticipated by me as they often brought some new kernel of knowledge or historical anecdote with them. Although Dave's visits there were as close as I ever came to interacting directly with him, just knowing that I was part of the same community as him was honor enough for me.

I have a personal tendency to gravitate towards individuals who, even while lending their creativity to grand works, shun the spotlight that often accompanies such projects. This respect for quiet talent can probably be best demonstrated by the example of the band, The Doors. I like The Doors quite a lot. To me they are one of the most influential bands to come out of the late 1960s and their music paved the way for many other musicians yet to come. Whenever The Doors are mentioned, whether in press or in conversation, it is natural for people to concentrate on Jim Morrison. Morrison's personality and position as the band's front man makes him the natural point of focus. But while I can't deny that Morrison was a talented performer, he's not the member that I respect the most. That honor goes to Ray Manzarek, whose quiet genius was just as important to the music of The Doors but without the entire spectacle that accompanied Morrison. It's easy to hog the spotlight but it's difficult to keep your head down and get the job done.

To me, Dave Arneson will always be the Ray Manzarek of Dungeons & Dragons: a counterpoint to Gygax's Morrison. Although Gary was the more visible of the two, largely because of the

legal limitations Dave was forced to abide by, the game would never have been what it is without Arneson's exceptional, albeit quiet, creative genius. For that he has my deepest respect.

When the news came that Dave had entered the final stage of his illness, I thought about what I might be able to do to honor his memory. I considered doing a lengthy blog post detailing what Dave meant to me and what I learned from him but such a post would be lost amongst the myriad others that will be and have been written. Instead I've decided to pay my respects in the way best suited for a game designer: by dedicating an adventure to Dave. This is especially appropriate as the Fane of St. Toad owes a great debt to Dave's *The Temple of the Frog*, which, if memory serves me, was the first published dungeon in TSR's history. Without the Temple, the Fane might never have been. It is a poor substitute for Dave himself but it is only thing that's within my power to provide. I invite you to gather some friends together, roll up a few characters, and venture into the Fane as a way to honor both the man and his work.

Goodbye, Dave. Thank you for everything.

- Michael Curtis
April 8th, 2009

Notes on this work: The Fane of St. Toad is a sub-level that appears in my megadungeon, Gloomrisk. This is the first time it appears outside of my own notes. The material that follows was written for my own personal game and was created for use with AD&D. To better honor the memory of Dave Arneson, I've rewritten the setting to comply with the Original Dungeons & Dragons rules and Supplement II: Blackmoor. All hit point totals of the creatures within were generated with six-sided dice according to the OD&D rules. Referees using the alternate rules from Supplement I: Greyhawk should adjust hit points and damage as per that rule set for their own campaigns.

The Fane of St. Toad was inspired by not only Dave's *The Temple of the Frog* but by the works of Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, and Howard Philips Lovecraft, although Arneson and Smith provided the biggest inspiration. The Fane of St. Toad, like much of D&D itself, owes a great debt to the pulp fantasy stories of the 1920s and 1930s and that heritage should be emphasized when running players through the Fane.

Acknowledgements: This is an unofficial fan-created work which was made available for free to honor the memory of Dave Arneson, the co-creator of *Dungeons & Dragons*. *Dungeons & Dragons* is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast and used here without permission. No infringement on that trademark is intended. The maps in this work were created with Dungeon Crafter V1.4.1 (© 2000-2001 by the DC Crew) using tiles created by Fingolwyn and Greg MacKenzie. The cover illustration is in the public domain and was found at Karen's Whimsy (<http://karenswhimsy.com>). Further thanks go out to Gabor Lux and Jeff Rients, whose magical items, *Wicked Frog Totem* (Rients, from *Fight On!* #1) and *Frogbringer* (Lux, from *Fight On!* #2) appear here with their permission.

Using this Setting

The Fane of St. Toad is one of the sub-levels of my megadungeon, Gloomrisk. Because of this, the Fane is self-contained and can easily be dropped into any existing campaign setting with little or no modification. It can be used as intended as a sub-level within a dungeon or it can be placed in a wilderness or even a city setting. Due its origins as a dungeon sub-level, however, there are no details provided for the exterior of the Fane. Referees wishing to place it in an above ground location should create a suitable description of the Fane's outward appearance. A similarity to Dave Arneson's Temple of the Frog – a great, hulking stone building in the form of a squatting toad – is one possible suggestion. Details such as windows, secondary entrances, and the like are left to the individual referee to place and to key.

Due to the strength and number of the creatures residing inside, either a mid-level party (4-6th level) or an extremely large one probably has the best hope of overcoming the challenges within the Fane. Actual play experience may vary according to the players and the luck of the dice, however, and the referee should gleefully increase the number or power of creatures in the Fane if the party is having too easy a time.

The History of St. Toad and the Fane

Many, many years ago, before the coming of Stephen the Rock (see **Supplement II: Blackmoor** for details), a schism occurred within the Brothers of the Swamp. This schism originated due to the beliefs of the apostate who would become to be known as St. Toad. Although his mortal name has long been forgotten, it is said that St. Toad began life as a simple man whose affinity with batrachia drew him into the fold of the Brothers of the Swamp. For many years, he served as a faithful adherent to the beliefs and goals of the Brother. One summer, however, the man who would be St. Toad contracted a particularly virulent strain of Swamp Fever and almost died from the fever. During his bout with the virus, he experienced bizarre visions and witnessed grand vistas beyond the realm of time and space. When the fever finally broke, he rose from his sick bed a changed man.

Denouncing the beliefs of the Brother of the Swamp as a corruption of a much purer truth, he left the order to search for a mysterious stepped pyramid that had been revealed to him in his sickness. After many years of searching across distant and foreign lands, he finally discovered this sacred site deep within the underworld. Upon entering that place, the ultimate fate of the man now know as St. Toad becomes uncertain.

Some members of the faith attest that he achieved apotheosis, become the deity known as St. Toad. Others believe that he sacrificed himself to that deity, which allowed St. Toad to be freed from its imprisonment beyond the stars and to reenter a world from which it had long been banned. Because of this uncertainty, both the man and the deity are referred to as St. Toad in the religious texts of the faith, creating much confusion for outsiders and lay worshippers alike.

What is know is that, following this event, the Followers of St. Toad began to appear in small congregations throughout many of the nations of Men. At first consisting solely of former Brothers of the Swamp who had been converted to this new, albeit similar, faith, the number of Followers soon swelled as some self-loathing members of humanity sought purpose in the service of St. Toad. The Followers established many small, secluded temples (or fanes) in secret places. From these fanes, the Followers

sought to bring about the final extermination of all sentient races so as to replace them with St. Toad more worthy children.

The Followers paid worship to St. Toad through human sacrifice and orgiastic rites, hoping that between the spilling of blood and a blending of the St. Children with humans, the world could be purified to receive his presence. Through these rites, they venerated the Three Aspects of the Toad by which it would make its presence known. These aspects are known by the names Tsathoggua, The Great Winged Toad, and K'Tehe, the Destroyer. Once the way was made clear for the deity, his Followers would be rewarded with great wealth and power during their lifetimes and dwell forever in a state of eternal bliss within the belly of the Great Toad.

Although the Followers of St. Toad are still active and a threat to the goodly races of the world, their numbers have decreased in recent years. Reports of fanes dedicated to St. Toad being found empty and abandoned have begun to spring up. The reason for these vanishings is unknown by those outside the fold but some sages and wise men speculate that a catastrophe might have fallen upon the Followers while on a grand pilgrimage, destroying entire congregations in one fell swoop. A conflicting hypothesis states that these disappearances are harbingers of something sinister on the horizon.

The Fane presented herein is one of those abruptly abandoned temples. Home to a very small congregation, its members disappeared before they could achieve much temporal power in the region. Despite their limited numbers and influence, this Fane still holds a fair amount of wealth, which now stands open for plundering at the hands of the first adventurers to enter its doors. Whether led here by rumor or through chance discovery, we join the party now as they stand before the entrance of the Fane, ready to test their mettle in the presence of a god...

The Fane of St. Toad - The Upper Level

The Entrance - A pathway of tile and mortar leads up to the portico of the Fane. The tiles are hexagonal, with images of flies carved into their surface and set into a grey mortar. In the center of the portico, placed between two thick pillars, are a large set of double stone door, which stand 10' tall and 8' wide. The faces of the doors have been decorated with a bas relief carving of a large toad watches those who approach. On the lintel above the doors the phrase "Abode of the Toad" has been inscribed.

1 - This area is the vestibule of the fane. The walls here are covered with frescoes depicting toads of various sizes engaged in activities such as catching flies, poised upon rocky outcroppings, and hiding amongst foliage. Others show toads amidst the passing feet of crowds on busy streets or sunning themselves in well-maintained gardens. The images are simple, almost charming, depictions and nothing about them hints at any depravity or sinister themes.

2 - At the first transept of the fane, a pool of scummy water fed by a trickling fountain stands. The fountain depicts a toad seated atop a rock, and the water issues from the mouth of the creature. The floor around this area is slimy and discolored, as if the fountain has cracked or sprung a seeping leak. The fountain is three feet deep, and its bottom is flush with the floor of the nave.

3 - The frescoes on the walls continue into this area. Now the toads are joined by the image of a bearded youth, who sits calmly amongst the animals. Toads perch on his folded legs, sit on his shoulders, and bask in his upturned palm. A careful examination of the image will reveal that toads are even nested in

the hair of the young man, with bulging eyes peeking out from his locks. As the frescoes continue, the youth has become a man and is now dressed in armor decorated with scroll-worked images of toads. A two-handed sword rests in his hands and an open helm sits atop his head. At the far end of the transept, an empty sarcophagus lies upon the floor. It is crafted from stone and the effigy of an armored man lies atop it. The man has the same features as the one depicted in the frescoes and, with closer inspection, it can be seen that the visor on the open helmet is crafted into the visage of a toad. The base of the sarcophagus is carved with bas-reliefs of toads of alternating size. This area is a cenotaph dedicated to the lost resting place of St. Toad.

4 - This transept ends in a series of shelves covered with stubby candles and melted wax. Some candles are unburned, while others are mere stubs with little burning time remaining. All are made from a grayish-green wax, and are dusty. There are more frescoes on the walls here. These show images of tadpoles spawning, maturing, and then leaving their pools. In two places, the toads are shown eating other, smaller toads. The images are small, subtle, and easy to overlook amongst the more benign depictions.

5 - Rows of 10' long pews, 16 in all, run along the nave. Separated by a 10' aisle between them, and 5' wide aisles along the walls, these provided primary seating for what was hoped to be a large congregation. A careful inspection of the seats reveals that only a few of the pews close to the apse show any sign of actually being used. The rest are unmarred. The frescoes continue along the walls, with identical images repeated on both sides of the nave. They show the same armored man moving through many locales - forests, swamps, deserts, thick jungles - before finally coming across a stepped pyramid deep in a cave. He pauses at the entrance, lit torch in hand.

A railing separates the nave from the apse. An opening in the center allows passage beyond to the altar. On the left-hand side of the opening stands a 2' tall toad made of an unknown metal, perched atop a 3' tall basalt column. The toad's mouth is open and the glint of gold and platinum can be seen in the darkness within. The toad served as an alms plate for the fane and the glint is that of the coins remaining from the last contributions left here. A careful inspection of the toad reveals a small keyhole in the back of the toad near the base. Inserting the proper key here disables the trap that protects the monies offered to St. Toad. If not disarmed, anyone reaching into the toad's mouth causes the jaws to snap shut, inflicting 1 die of damage and the need to make a save vs. wands to avoid losing the offending hand. The offering bowl contains 200 gp and 300 platinum disks. The disks bear the image of the statue in area 7 and are each worth 5 pp a piece.

6 - A simple stone altar, decorated with a faded green altar cloth, sits here in the apse of the fane. Resting atop it is a triptych depicting the three aspects of St. Toad (Tsathoggua, The Great Winged Toad, and K'Tehe the Destroyer). A 10' diameter open pit pierces the floor before it. From the darkness below comes the harsh croaking of toads. A fetid odor of moist air and slime wafts up from the pit, and the faint sound of dripping water can be heard. The pit is 20' deep, plus another 30' to the cavern floor below its open bottom. An inspection of the area around the pit will reveal that the flagstones have been discolored by faint rust-colored stains.

7 - A 5' high, 20' in diameter raised dais stands here. Atop the dais squats a giant stone idol in the form of a 15' tall toad. The toad bears vestigial, bat-like wings upon its back and a series of dangling barbels, like

those of a catfish, hang from its lower lip. The toad has four eyes, a pair of each residing on either side of its head. The eyes are crafted from toadstones, and are each worth 50 gp.

The statue is of no threat to the adventurers under most conditions. The gems may even be pried from their sockets without consequence. However, should the party attempt to leave the fane with the booty that has been secured in the lair of the Toad Thing (see area **23**) that's another matter. In that case, as the party makes its way towards the fane's exit, those doors suddenly swing shut as if by unseen hands. The doors are then magically secured (treat as a *wizard lock* spell cast by a 12th level magic-user). The spell remains in effect until either the treasure is returned to area **23** or the guardian (see below) is destroyed.

Once the doors slam shut, a horrible grinding noise arises from this statue, as the 15' tall icon comes to life. Hopping after the thieves, it leaves shattered pews and broken railings in its wake, as well as dislodging chunks of stone that fall from the ceiling (1 in 6 chance of striking a random member of the party for 2 dice of damage). The guardian will not cease its attack until either it or the party is destroyed.

Stone Toad Idol **AC 2 HD 6 MV 9**

Stone Guardian: 26 hp

Special – If active, the statue slaps at creatures with its stubby forelegs, giving it 2 attacks that inflict 2 dice of damage each. It suffers only ½ damage from normal weapons and all cold, fire, or electrical attacks. Normal missiles do no damage. It can be instantly destroyed by a *stone to flesh* or a *transmute rock to mud* spell. It gets no saving throw against these magics.

8 – This transept is gloomy: unnaturally so. Light sources brought into the area will provide illumination but it will be dim, as if struggling against the blackness. An altar stands at the end of the transept. Placed atop it is a weird idol. The image depicted by the idol is very squat and pot-bellied, possessing a head more like a monstrous toad than a deity. Its whole body is covered with an imitation of short fur. Sleepy lids are half-lowered over its globular eyes and the tip of a queer tongue protrudes from the fat mouth. Before the altar stands a bronze basin supported by three legs. The basin contains a viscous, soot-colored liquid, like black quicksilver. A marsh-like odor wafts from the liquid. The idol is that of St. Toad's aspect as Tsathoggua.

If the altar or basin is tampered with, the liquid in the basin begins to bubble and churn. Two rounds later, the party witnesses an amorphous head with dull and bulging eyes rise gradually from the basin on an ever-lengthening neck, staring with primordial malignity at the defilers. Then two arms – if one could call them arms – arise inch by inch and the adventurers can see that the liquid itself is putting forth this hideous neck and head, and is now forming these damnable arms, that groped with tentacle-like appendages in lieu of claws or hands! As it spills from the basin, it takes on an undulant ophidian form which immediately develops more than a dozen short legs. It is a Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua.

Formless Spawn **AC 6 HD 5 MV 6**

Formless Spawn: 15 hp

Special – Treat the Formless Spawn as a black pudding (q.v.) with 5 Hit Dice and an attack that does 2 dice of damage against exposed flesh.

9 – The air here is danker and colder than the rest of the nave. This transept ends in a small altar, atop which sits an idol that depicts a grotesque frog with razor-sharp teeth and talons. Its mouth is full of the mangled bodies of sentient races – humans, elves, dwarves, orcs, and even ogres hang askew in its maw; limbs dangling between the giant's teeth. At the monstrosities feet stand more of these races, each

groveling in supplication or gazing upon its visage in horror. The frescoes that adorn the walls here depict this creature before a crowd of supplicating beings. The members of the crowd are humanoid but more frog than man. In other scenes, these frog-like beings are depicted tearing humans apart with their talons and fangs. Yet other depictions show the frog-like creatures being impaled on long spikes by their fellows – the price for failing some unknown test. This shrine is dedicated to St. Toad’s aspect as K’Tehe, the Destroyer.

The Lower Level

10 – The door to this room is swollen by moisture, reducing the chance to open it to 1 in 6. The room beyond serves as a vestry, which holds three wardrobes filled with grey and white robes and assorted other religious accoutrements. A bookshelf holds a collection of mildewed hymnals and prayer guides dedicated to St. Toad. On another shelf lay strange horns and clarinet-like instruments, which produce a croaking sound if played. Sticks and cones of exotic smelling incense fill 10 boxes on yet a third shelf. Each box’s contents are worth 10 gp if sold in a major city – locals won’t want the marshy smelling stuff – or 25 gp each if followers of St. Toad can be found. In a covered bowl beside these boxes are a pile of crumbly and pitted wafers which exude a foul smell. If consumed, the eater must save vs. poison or act as if under the effects of a *confusion* spell for a full hour, with checks made to determine his actions once every full turn (10 minutes) for the duration of the wafer’s effects (6 checks total). A mottled green bottle sits here as well. It is filled with sweet-smelling syrup (*potion of human control*).

11 – The door to this room is locked and protected by a glowing rune that does 2 dice of damage to the first person who opens it with speaking the proper entry phrase (“Yea shall I dwell in the bowels of the Great Winged Toad”). A dispel magic will also render the rune harmless. Beyond the door, this entire room is done in a color scheme of grays, whites, and browns. A soft, but strangely damp, canopied bed stands in one corner. Next to it is a small table, atop which stands a water pipe. A low table serves as an altar, with a 1’ tall statuette of St. Toad displayed prominently. Also on the altar is a censer filled with the same incense as in area **10**, a chapbook containing devotional prayers, a silver and gold goblet decorated with carvings of dancing toad-like creatures (worth 600 gp), and a priestly stole embroidered with interlocking toads. Hidden in a small cavity on the underside of the altar is a *medallion of ESP*. A plain writing desk and stool stand in one corner but it is empty. If a successful check for secret doors is made, the party discovers that one of the flagstones here can be moved. In the dusty space beneath it lays a rusty iron box. The lock is trapped with a poison needle that is coated with the venom of a poisonous toad. Inside the box are 300 gp, 200 of the platinum discs, and a small key that disables the trap on the alms toad in area **5**.

12 – This small room is a monk’s cell and holds only a simple cot, a washing bowl and a meditation mat. An unholy symbol of St. Toad dangles from a peg on the wall. The cot is covered with a coarse blanket that is disheveled as if having been used.

13 – This room appears as room **12**, but the blanket is folded and there is no unholy symbol here.

14 – This monk’s cell is completely bare. It never saw use, lacking a convert to take residence here.

15 – This chapel once served as a location for the church’s more degenerate orgiastic rites. The walls of this chamber are decorated with peeling frescoes that depict humans and toads engaged in perverse acts of nature. In one gruesome scene, a woman is depicted giving birth to a strange hybrid creature that bears

the features of both parents. A statue of grey stone, flecked with white, has been placed on a platform at the far end of this chamber. The statue depicts a human male and female toad-like creature engaged in congress. At the base of the statue stands a 6" tall stone trinket in the likeness of a grinning ithyphallic toad. It is a *wicked frog totem* (see **New Magical Items**). The floor of this room bears a collection of divans, couches, mats, and heaps of pillows. A foul, obscene stench hangs in the air.

16 - The walls here bear reliefs of toad-like humans wrapping the corpses of similar beings with linens and performing bizarre rites over the bodies. A processional of batrachians then bears these macabre burdens through a portal bearing the carving of a mass of entangled tadpoles to inter them for eternal sleep. A large wooden door stands in the far wall, surrounded by a carved stone frame, step, and lintel that bears the same images as in the reliefs. Four torch sconces hang from the walls but each is empty. The door to area **17** is barred from this side but is otherwise unlocked.

17 - The air here is damp and bears the smell of faint spices and mildew. The walls of the room are pierced with interment niches, 30 in total. The floor is tiled in fired clay, each tile inscribed with the image of a toad and tadpole in a circular form, much like a yin-yang symbol. They represent the followers of St. Toad's belief in reincarnation and that all life returns to the cosmic pond to spawn anew. This room is dusty and dank, but it is of Spartan décor and seems to have seen very little use during the time when the Fane was still active. In fact, only two worshippers were ever interred here, which is a good thing since the unholy power of St. Toad has reanimated their remains. Two rounds after the party enters this chamber, the doors of their niches crash to the floor and the toad mummies crawl forth. They automatically lose initiative on the first round of combat.

Toad Mummies (2) **AC** 3 **HD** 5+1 **MV** 6

Toad Mummy #1: 17 hp

Toad Mummy #2: 16 hp

Special: If struck by a toad mummy, victim must save vs. poison at or contract a degenerative disease that slowly turns the victim into a toad-like monstrosity, causing them to lose 1 point of Charisma each day until that score reach zero. At such time, the victim dies in horrible agony. A *cure disease* spell will save the victim's life and reverse the degeneration. Only magic weapons will hit Toad Mummies and all hits and bonuses are at one-half value against them. They are vulnerable to fire.

Their niches hold only rags and dust. The followers of St. Toad were too miserly to bury their dead with items of value. The rest are completely bare.

18 - The great verdigris-covered doors of this area are locked. Despite their massive construction, the faint sounds of croaking can be heard from beyond them (no check necessary). This may give the characters a hint as to what's in store for them should they enter.

Past the doors is a small antechamber which is separated from the cavern beyond by iron bars and a gate. The iron is heavily corroded, requiring only 25 points of damage to break free of its moorings. The gate is latched and barred on this side, but is without a lock. In the cavern beyond, visible through the bars, is a nauseating sight.

More than a score of grayish-white, mottled toads lair here; their pale bodies sitting atop decades of filth and bones. A scummy pool fills the center of the cavern, a rocky islet rising above the surface at the center of it. The water's surface ripples with masses of black tadpoles that swim and slither through its depths.

And the croaking - yea gods, the *croaking!* Oily black beetles and other small bugs scurry through the waste on the floor, only to be snapped up by hungry toads as they pass. Other toads are not nearly as fickle in their dietary habits, snapping at their smaller kind to devour them in a single gulp. Four passages exit this foul chamber. One is barred by a set of rusty iron bars and an open gate, while another is monstrous of size, being some 15' wide and 20' tall. The other two passageways are nondescript. In the center of the 30' high ceiling, the bottom of the sacrificial well in area 6 enters the cavern. Amidst the filth that covers the floor, the occasional glint of platinum can be seen.

This cavern contains 30 giant toads of various types, each hungry and anxious to supplement their diet with meat of a new flavor. The party must forge a path through these beasts should they wish to probe deeper. The toads will keep a watchful eye on the party, leaping to attack if they exit from the safety of the bar-protected foyer of this cavern. If the characters decide to engage the toads using the rusty bars as protection, the toads will attack in force, hoping (and hopping) to get at the party. The bars will collapse under the toads' assault after 25 points of damage have been inflicted on the rusty barrier.

Young Giant Toad (20) AC 6 HD 1 MV 1/3/18

Young Giant Toads: 5x6 hp, 5x5 hp, 3x4 hp, 3 hp, 4x2 hp, 2x1 hp

Special - Due to their smaller size, Young Giant Toads cannot use their tongues to attack as their full grown counterparts can.

Giant Toad (10) AC 6 HD 2 MV 1/3/18

Giant Toad: 12 hp, 10 hp, 3x8 hp, 2x7 hp, 6 hp, 4 hp, 3 hp

Special - Can attack opponents within 15' with their tongues. A successful hit with the tongue means the victim is adhered to the appendage and will be drawn to the toad's mouth the following melee round and automatically bitten.

For each round of combat that takes place here, there is a 1 in 10 chance that the commotion will rouse the Toad Thing from its lair in area 23. Should it come lumbering out, there is a 50/50 chance that it will attack either the toads or the party. It cares not who or what it eats, only that it feeds. If the toads are dispatched and the party has a chance to explore this room unimpeded, they find that numerous loose disks of platinum are scattered throughout the area. For each full turn spent sifting through the filth, they can uncover 1d10x10 platinum disks. There are a total of 400 in here.

19 - This cave once served as a holding pen for future offerings to St. Toad. The original inhabitants either starved to death or were slain when the toads gained access to the pen. The gate to this area stands open and the space beyond is thick with both filth and the bones of toads and humanoids, with the later being more prominent. This place now serves as the home for 11 killer toads.

Killer Toad (11) **AC 8 HD 1 MV 9/12**

Killer Toad: 2x6 hp, 5 hp, 4 hp, 3x2 hp, 4x1 hp

A 3' long toad with sharp talons and teeth.

Special – Due to their sharp talons and teeth, Killer Toads attack twice each round.

20 – Another scummy, filth-ridden cave. A group of poisonous toads makes it lair here.

Poisonous Toad (8) **AC 6 HD 2 MV 1/3/18**

Poisonous Toad: 12, 11, 9x2, 7, 5x2, 3 hp

Special – In addition to taking normal damage, anyone bitten by a poisonous toad must save vs. poison.

If the debris-strewn floor is searched, the party uncovers a gold locket on a broken chain. The painting inside the locked is faded beyond recognition, but the locket is worth 800 gp.

21 – A feeding frenzy is occurring in this dank cavity. A group of giant toads hop about in pursuit of a swarm of gigantic crickets. The crickets leap about blindly in an attempt to escape the snapping jaws of the toads. Some settle on the walls only to be taken down by a leaping toad. A passageway exits this chamber to the south.

Giant Toad (12) **AC 6 HD 2 MV 1/3/18**

Giant Toad: 12 hp, 2x10 hp, 2x9 hp, 8 hp, 7 hp, 2x6 hp, 5 hp, 4 hp, 1 hp

Special – Can attack opponents within 15' with their tongues. A successful hit with the tongue means the victim is adhered to the appendage and will be drawn to the toad's mouth the following melee round and automatically bitten.

Poisonous Toad (2) **AC 6 HD 2 MV 1/3/18**

Poisonous Toad: 2x5 hp

Special – In addition to taking normal damage, anyone bitten by a poisonous toad must save vs. poison.

Giant Cricket (11) **AC 4 HD 1+3 MV 6/12 (hop)**

Cave Crickets: 9 hp, 2x8 hp, 3x7 hp, 4x5 hp, 4 hp

Special – Giant crickets do not have any offensive capability and never initiate combat. If frightened, however, a giant cricket has a 1 in 6 chance per individual of leaping on a character within hopping distance, inadvertently inflicting 1 die of damage.

22 – An odd decoration appears in the center of this cave. A 5' tall, 5' wide column stands here, decorated with a stone cricket 4' in length. Ten grossly fat toads sit complacently on the stone floor surrounding the pillar. So engorged with their meals, they will not disturb the party if left unprovoked. The cricket radiates an aura of magic if such dweomers are detected for. The statue provides a steady supply of cave crickets for the toads here to dine upon. During the time that the party is in this area there is a 1 in 10 chance that the statue will summon 1-8 cave crickets into the area. These will be unmolested by the toads here, since they are currently stuffed with a previous meal. The crickets may panic as usual, inflicting

damage to the party, but they will eventually flee the area and be devoured by the toads in the rest of the cavern complex. A few may linger here longer, clinging to the walls and ceiling, but their hours are numbered. The statue is movable but weighs 400 lbs and will not function outside of the Fane.

Cave Cricket (1-8) **AC** 4 **HD** 1+3 **MV** 6/12 (hop)

Cave Crickets: 1d6+3 hp each

Special – Giant crickets do not have any offensive capability and never initiate combat. If frightened, however, a giant cricket has a 1 in 6 chance per individual of leaping on a character within hopping distance, inadvertently inflicting 1 die of damage.

Giant Toad (10) **AC** 6 **HD** 2 **MV** 1/3/18

Giant Toad: 2x11 hp, 2x10 hp, 9 hp, 6 hp, 2x5 hp, 4 hp, 1 hp

Special – Can attack opponents within 15' with their tongues. A successful hit with the tongue means the victim is adhered to the appendage and will be drawn to the toad's mouth the following melee round and automatically bitten.

23 – A foul stench emerges from the mouth of the passageway that leads to this area, detectable even over the odor that fills the rest of the caves. The floor of this passage is cleaner than the rest of the area and is not as deeply coated with waste and bones. It is as if the rest of the toads fear to tread down this corridor. The passage winds a short distance before opening into a large cavity, its ceiling rising 25' feet into the air. In this cave sits a great beast – the Toad Thing. Resembling the statue in area 7 but in pasty gray-white flesh, the Toad Thing is ancient and uncaring, preferring to pass its nigh-endless years in the dank dark. It emerges periodically to feed upon its lesser cousins but spends years without moving from this space. Only the coming of men can disturb it, for it has been decades since it has tasted its preferred form of sustenance. It sits atop a mound of earth, bones, and glittering treasure as water drips from the ceiling onto its immense form. The coming of light and illumination to its abode has taught the Toad Thing one unforgettable lesson: when light comes to its cave, it is time to feed.

The Toad Thing **AC** 2 **HD** 6 **MV** 6

The Toad Thing: 30 hp

Special – The Toad Thing can spit viscous acidic mucus that does 2 dice of damage (save vs. breath weapon for ½ damage). It may do so up to 3 times a day (use rules for dragon breath weapons to determine if the Toad Thing spits on any given round). On a hit roll of a natural 20, the Toad Thing has swallowed its opponent whole. Anyone swallowed can attempt to cut his way to freedom by using a sharp-edged weapon but this requires a successful attack roll of 18 or better. If the victim does not escape in 3 rounds, he dies from asphyxiation. A successful escape kills the Toad Thing. If the Toad Thing is damaged while a victim is swallowed, that victim has a 2 in 6 chance of also taking the same amount of damage inflicted on the Thing.

The mound upon which the Toad Thing squats contains 500 gp, 300 platinum discs, a gold ring worth 900 gp, a *spear* +1, an *axe* +1, and a two-handed sword that looks similar to the one depicted in area 3. This weapon is *Toadbringer*, the sister sword to the fabled *Frogbringer* (see **New Magical Items**), which attracts various dangerous toads instead of frogs. In addition to this haul, the party uncovers a large toadstone that has been carved into the shape of a heart. The size of a cantaloupe, this gem is worth 1,000 gp. Unfortunately, both this gem and *Toadbringer* will trigger the stone guardian in area 7 should the party try to leave with either of these items. Furthermore, even if they escape with these treasures, the party

may come into conflict with other followers of St. Toad should the cult become aware that they are in possession of these unholy relics. But that is another story...

New Magic Items

I'd like to thank Gabor Lux and Jeff Rients for each allowing me to include one of their contributions to [Fight On!](#) in this adventure. I hope they'll both agree that they were well treated and most appropriate for the Fane.

Frogbringer: A seemingly ordinary +1 sword. However, the bearer is constantly harassed by giant frogs, killer frogs and assorted other batrachians, even in his most pleasant moments. This can be decidedly unpleasant. (Credit: Gabor Lux from *Fight On!* #2)

Wicked Frog Totem - This small stone statue of a grinning ithyphallic toad may be used by anti-clerics as an unholy symbol. The Frog Totem only works when mounted upon the top of a rod or staff. In addition to its use as an unholy symbol, an anti-cleric may use it to cast Charm Monster once a week. (Credit: Jeff Rients from *Fight On!* #1)

The Fane of St. Toad

