

RJK-1

FIRST  
EDITION FANTASY

Lake Geneva Castle & Campaign™

# Cairn of the Skeleton King™

by Robert J. Kuntz

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 4-7



You have been directed to stamp out the rising evil in the kingdom. Its source is the foul undead inhabiting an ancient cairn, and their king—whom legends say will not die!

Cairn of the Skeleton King contains two challenging scenarios in one: Cairn of the Skeleton King and Warrens of the Ghoos. If you can defeat this hold of evil, then the secrets of another realm of terror will be revealed—equally evil and deadly, and more ancient than the lands you venture beneath!

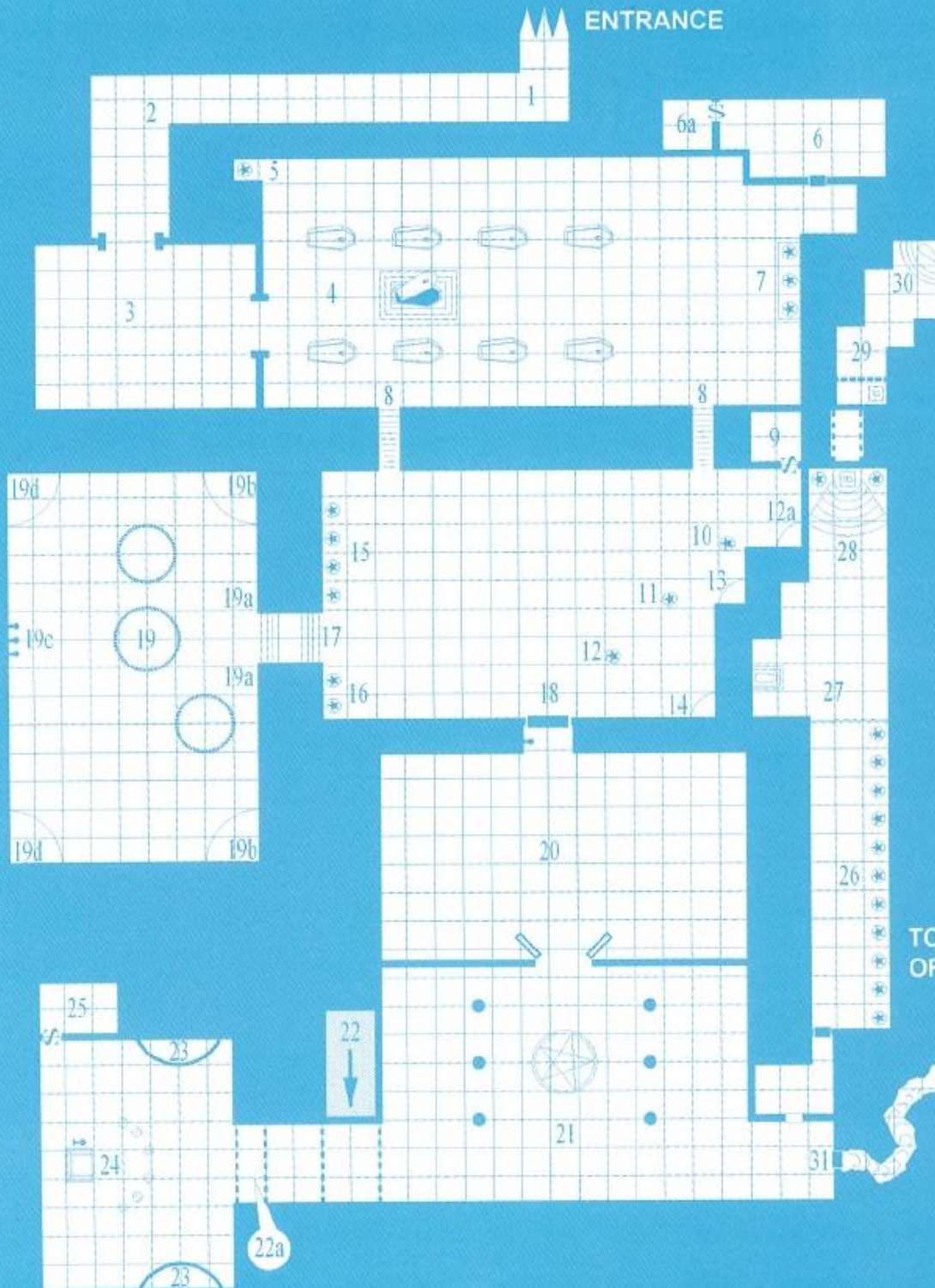
The two levels in this module can be run as a pair of stand-alone adventures, or be run together, and are designed for a party of 4-8 player characters from levels 4-7. Cairn of the Skeleton King can also be combined with RJK-2 Tower of Blood to form an extended campaign into the depths of the earth.

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# The Cairn of the Skeleton King



FROM  
THE

LEG  
One square

- Boulder
- Chasm
- Curtain
- Door
- Door, magical
- Door, secret
- Lever
- Magic circle
- Mound of bones
- Pit trap
- Pit with lift mechanism
- Sarcophagus
- Stairs
- Statue
- Throne
- Trap door

TO THE WARREN  
OF THE GHOOLS

# The Warren of the Ghoos

FROM THE CAIRN OF  
THE SKELETON KING

## LEGEND

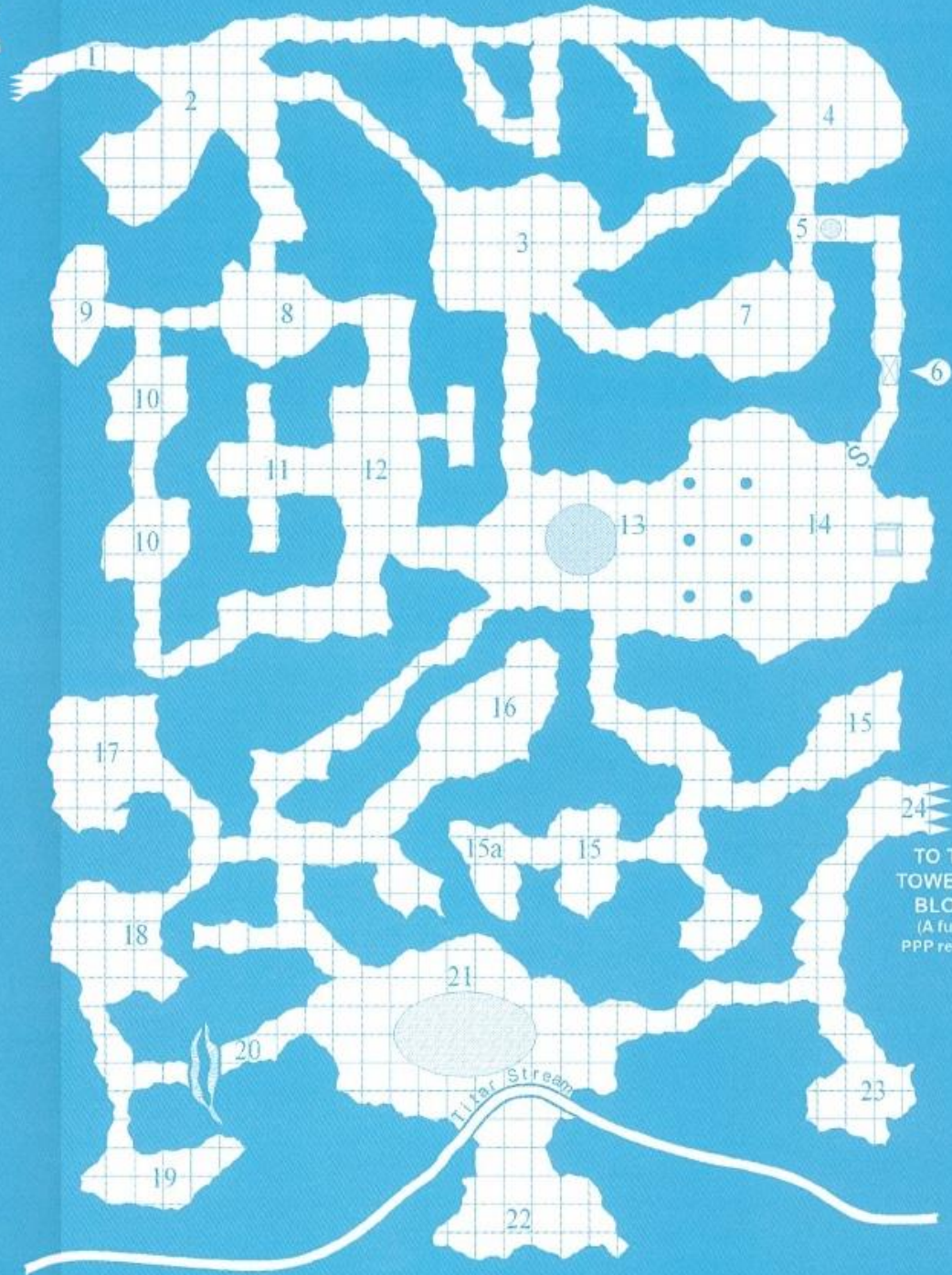
1 square equals 10'

Physically sealed  
Entrance

Empty  
Rooms

Entrance  
Mechanism

Trap




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Dungeon Module CAS2  
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by Robert J. Kuntz and Lance Hawvermale

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 5-8



Far below the earth, disaster has struck. Doody and red. The bastion home of peaceful gnomish miners has fallen prey to a shadowy and mysterious evil. Can a certain band of heroes drive out this menace from the gloom before it rises up to claim the unsuspecting world above?

This module provides the adventures with three distinct settings of peril, including the trap-filled Tower, the dark mines below it, and the deadly ice of a sinister and otherworldly evil.

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## RJK-2 Tower of Blood

by Robert J. Kuntz  
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BBP-4202, \$20

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This module details three distinct settings for adventure: a large cavern within which the three-level tower rests; two levels of mines below the tower; and the sinister lair of forces allied to the tower invaders. Tower of Blood also features two unique NPC foes, seven new magic items, and five new monsters. Tower of Blood can be run as a stand-alone adventure or as a sequel to RJK-1 Cairn of the Skeleton King.

For Use With  
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ROBERT J. KUNTZ

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AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 8-12



For use with 1st Edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Evil grows in Fang Forest! The Dark Druids commit foul atrocities, holding no respect for human, plant, or animal life. They abhor civilization, and have begun assassinating key political figures and destroying settlements. As their horrible influence expands, they have begun changing nature, distorting it to their evil ways. In doing these things, the Dark Druids threaten the very fabric of existence. Their terror must stop!

Chaotic  
Henchmen  
Productions

## Dark Druids

by Robert J. Kuntz  
56 page outdoor and dungeon adventure module  
CHP-2001, \$24

Evil grows in Fang Forest! The Dark Druids commit foul atrocities, holding no respect for human, plant, or animal life. They abhor civilization, and have begun assassinating key political figures and destroying settlements. As their horrible influence expands, they have begun changing nature, distorting it to their evil ways. The Dark Druids threaten the very fabric of existence. Their terror must stop!

Dark Druids details an outdoor area and a three-level adventure site. It also includes an outline for further adventuring, a selection of new monsters, spells, and magic items, plus Robert J. Kuntz's historical context and commentary on this module's relationship to his campaigns of the 1970's.



## RJK-1 Cairn of the Skeleton King

44 pages  
\$23 USD BBP-4201



# Cairn of the Skeleton King™

by Robert J. Kuntz



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**Special Dedication:** To my old friend Gary Gygax, who named all of the fantasy and S&S books on his shelves that I should read when I was a young lad.



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## Introduction to the Black Blade Edition

Many years ago, Creations Unlimited, Inc. published five separate works by Robert J. Kuntz under the World of Kalibruhn™ line of products—the four volumes in the Maze of Zayene series and the Garden of the Plantmaster. These works used an abbreviation set which allowed gamers a quick and easy way of incorporating the adventures into their own game system(s). The Pied Piper Publishing release of Cairn of the Skeleton King utilized that same abbreviation set which was popularized in 1986 and updated in 2007. The present release of Cairn of the Skeleton King™ employs the Open Gaming License (OGL) and therefore uses terms and abbreviations consistent with the OGL.

### Author's Special Preface

Welcome to the ways of Enchantment, *Old School* style. It is with deep pleasure that I present this work for your enjoyment! If you were one of the many fine people who voted for and supported this project to its end, I cannot thank you enough.

The adventure before you is my attempt to display the wonders of a supposedly “bygone era” of FRPG. Its outward design speaks enough for that without perusing the text, but between the covers is where you will find what has been lost to many adventures today, and hopefully what I have once again summoned for this particular product in whole or in part. And that is *Enchantment*. Pure and simple story-unfolding promoted by action and not dreary dialogue, with healthy doses of newness and mystery, a balanced narrative as opposed to frivolous, run-on descriptions—in summary, straightforward entertainment in a grand and invocative style.

Upon deciding to use such a product as presented here one must hearken back to the exhortations of Old School champions like Gary Gygax. The GM has, if you will, a “skeletal” framework to function with when incorporating material of this sort into their campaigns. No matter its size or how detailed a work becomes, it is impossible for anyone during its many phases to realize every idea presented. This work is no different from others in that regard, and there is actually more here than meets the immediate eye and which is easily expanded upon by the resourceful GM. I give guidelines where needed, but on the main the GM is the final arbiter of his or her own campaign and

the material they decide to use within that framework. In all such products you will find “wholes” which quickly become “parts” as GMs begin using their various creative inputs to make these distinctly their own. In my estimation this scenario provides ample room for them to do just that and then some.

I now welcome you most heartily to turn the ancient and time-honored page of Old School forward again! And not only in this offering but in those to follow, the fans and God willing!

Enjoy!

Robert Kuntz

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### Introduction

What you have before you is actually two scenarios in one. The first, “Cairn of the Skeleton King,” introduces the players to the Skeleton King’s problem and its solution; and the second, “Warren of the Ghools,” wherein the PCs can adventure further into the underworld beyond the Cairn.

Note that the scope of this work ties them loosely together so that you, the GM, can make use of them as you see fit. They are complete stand-alone adventures, usable on their own, but with slight conversions of their storylines they can surely present a related adventure sequence as well.

Additionally, this product links to others, most immediately *Tower of Blood*, also by this author and available soon from the publisher. As well, *Monastery of Evil* and *The Gates of Hades* are adventures slated as future additions, among others. Note that these adventure areas can be either used immediately or postponed for exploration at later dates. Thus they are not a series so much as extended branches wherein the PCs can employ exits located near their beginning parts to reach the upper world and then later reenter the same branch and continue, much like conveniently placed rabbit holes would allow. It is of course left to the province of you and your players to further which extension is championed.

### Game Master Notes

#### A Note on Skill Level and Party Composition:

This scenario is for PCs of levels 4-7. This author recommends a level of 6 as standard for a group of four adventurers, level 5 for five or six adventurers, and level 4 for seven or eight adventurers, with

a healthy mix of classes. As there are some very challenging encounters herein, 7th-level PCs are not immediately excluded from this equation.

An experienced player commanding a strong priest is highly recommended. The inclusion of a thief in the party is also encouraged. A good array of magic, including those of the healing varieties, will be

needed to see any party through this to the end.

**Descriptive Text:** Where appropriate for the encounter or location description, certain text has been provided which may be read aloud or paraphrased by the GM. This descriptive text is presented as boxed text for easy recognition by the GM.

## Part I: Cairn of the Skeleton King

**GM Background:** The Skeleton King was once a powerful local king who has arisen from the grave due to the necromantic powers of Heckazar the Black, a baleful necromancer whose purpose is to create legions of undead followers at various locales throughout the world and thus contrive as many bases of power as possible. Of late, the Skeleton King, who was in life a just ruler, is reflecting on its past and now seeks remedy to its undead life. It has recently sent a messenger to deliver its ancient royal signet ring to the current rulers of the kingdom, and with that token an entreaty to end its undead life.

This is an order from the past ruler and also a threat, for if the present rulers ignore the command to end Skeleton King's unlife so that it may be at peace, it promises a reign of destruction upon the kingdom that has not been seen in many, many years.

**Involving the Players:** The local rulers convene to solve this threat and decide to hire "outsiders" not familiar with the kingdom's ancient past to fulfill the deed. The current group of adventurers is sought out by a man from a local town who claims to be a wealthy landowner, which he is, though he is also secretly in the employ of the present rulers of the aforementioned kingdom. He promises a large sum of gold (4000 gp per PC) if they rid the area of marauding undead by traveling to the creatures' base and destroying their leader, a self-styled "Skeleton King."

The landowner feigns disgust for the local rulers, who cannot even guard his property from this monster, but he feels confident that the PCs can complete the quest with ease, for the rumors of their exploits precede them! He gives them a traveling map that notes the Cairn's location, and

heartily encouragements if they agree to the matter. Upon finishing the quest they are instructed to meet him in the town again, whereupon he will pay out the rewards.

**Traveling to the Cairn:** The GM can decide to either expedite the matter by having the PCs arrive at the Cairn without further adventuring, or to have them travel to the Cairn with the possibility of outdoor encounters along the way, as is suitable for his or her campaign.

### Immediate Outside Description:

Your party arrives before a series of hills, some loftier still and not as shorn by time as are neighboring ones, but all covered over with thick grass and surrounded by a dense overgrowth of shrubs and other mingling foliage. You follow the map to the entrance of the Cairn wherein you were told resides the hellish undead and their leader. But this is no ordinary mound like some others, for surely it must be the highest of those apparent here. Its entrance is set midway upon the mound, by estimate making the distance to its top 100 feet or more. Its double iron doors, approximately 20 feet wide, are thrust open before you and must have been in their positions for years, as grass and detritus have made a solid footing before them and now easily hold them ajar. The arch-stones above the doors, made of granite and wetted by a clinging dampness, reveal an inscription: "The Royal Family Archibald." There is no sign of what at one time held these doors shut other than their latches, which are now broken. Upon the outside of these valves are iron loopholes for chains, but the chains are nowhere apparent about the wet, clay grounds.



### Entering The Cairn:

You pass the doors and enter a 20-foot-wide corridor beyond. The place smells unwholesome, mixing moldy earthen odors with those of the grave, all of which are accentuated by the tomb's dampness. After traveling a few dozen feet east, the corridor turns south, again 20-feet wide. After traveling upon this for about 60 feet it empties onto a 20-foot-wide passage heading west.

**GM Note:** This begins the dungeon adventure into the Cairn. The ceiling here is 30 feet high unless otherwise noted. The wooden double doors herein

are 6 inches thick and their latches and locks have all been destroyed by the undead within, making them closable but not lockable. All other room doors are of 2-inch-thick iron and are intact unless otherwise noted. The ancient walls and floors have over hundreds of years emitted patches or small piles of granular dust that has mixed with the other silt here. The place smells of foul and impure odors and is perpetually damp.

### Keyed Encounters (Part I)

#### 1. Entry Corridor.

The passage here proceeds west. There are several frescoes, 6 feet high by 4 feet wide, painted upon the wall sections of this long corridor at the locations and intervals noted below. Upon the wall to the immediate east is a relatively newer fresco rendered in a crude style, but it is very effective at portraying the horror presented:

Framed in a colossal cavern is a hairy and bearded giant of great girth and height sitting upon a jet-black throne. About this cyclopean figure, like minikins, swarm thousands of human bodies. They seem forlorn and lost, and many cast about crying to the heavens above. Symbolically circling this setting are nine rivers, or perhaps one river that meanders in such a way to make it appear that the entire scene is circled by it nine times.

10 feet, N wall: This represents a young boy with a quarterstaff, battling an unseen foe.

30 feet, S wall: This notes a young man in ornately crafted plate mail. Upon his head is a golden crown inset with many large gems.

60 feet, N wall: This depicts a man of middle years seated upon a throne, with adherents rejoicing around him and heathen military men at his feet in chains.

90 feet, S wall: This depicts the same man as seen in the previous fresco, but older. He sits upon a chair and stares over the battlements of a grand castle at a setting sun. His sheathed sword lies across his lap.

120 feet, N wall: A bent, elderly man in ceremonial plate armor stands at the parting in a road before a beautiful meadow of poppies. Upon his white hair is a plain silver crown. The left part of the road proceeds towards a bluff with a crevice in it, into which runs a river. The right road proceeds towards a radiant sunrise.

## 2. Strange Light Ahead

(seen on facing wall at Key #3).

The passage turns south. The PCs can definitely see a strange, purple light further down the southern passage.

## 3. Skeleton Attack/Purple Light

As you enter an immense room filled with eerie purple light, you are attacked by a large group of **skeletons**, three of which are much larger than the rest.

The facing wall immediately opposite the entry doors is the source of this mysterious light. The necromantic light has been cast here from *Heckazar's Black Wand* and is known as the *Light of the Dead*. For more information about the **Black Wand**, refer to **Key #30**.

All undead in this room within its 120-foot radius are affected as follows:

- they are resistant to turning or banishing;
- they gain +2 to their levels and the corresponding hit points; undead which have already taken their non-adjusted max damage and which move outside of the circle have their remaining hit points lowered to "1"; regaining a position within the circle does not raise these hit points again;
- their saving throws are at +2 and damage sustained from magical spells is at half or none;
- the ogre skeletons gain an evil cunning, instilled by the artifact, and can make simple decisions (roughly the equivalent of a 6 intelligence);

Covering the light's 5-foot circumference source area with something that would mask it completely so that no ray can be emitted negates this light's effect. Powers that would *dispel magic* or *dispel evil* cast at the level of the wielder (in this case, 8th) will cancel its effect for 1-3 rounds only. Darkness spells have no effect and these only appear to be absorbed by the **Black Wand**, but a light spell has a 10% chance

per casting of negating it for 1-3 rounds.

**Ogre Skeletons (3):** AC 5, M 9", HD 4+1 (6 adj.), HP 22 (31), 18 (28), 17 (27), Atk 1, Dmg 1-8+2 (longswords), SA/SD see above for special, 1/2 dmg from piercing, or slashing weapons.

**Skeleton Spearmen (7):** AC 7, M 12", HD 1 (3 adj.), HP 3 (9) x7, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6 (short spears), SA/SD see above for special, 1/2 dmg from piercing or slashing weapons.

**Skeleton Swordsmen (7):** AC 7, M 12", HD 1 (3 adj.), HP 4 (10) x7, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6 (short swords), SA/SD see above for special, 1/2 dmg from piercing or slashing weapons.

**Skeleton Peltasts (7):** AC 7, M 12", HD 1 (3 adj.), HP 3 (9) x7, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6 (javelins x8 each), SA/SD see above for special, 1/2 dmg from piercing or slashing weapons.

There are 21 skeletons and 3 ogre skeletons that



## Cairn of the Skeleton King

attack in two groups. The skeleton peltasts hurl their javelins from the rear ranks as the remaining groups engage in melee. As the javelins do little damage to the skeletons themselves, these are even hurled into the melee once it is joined. The skeletons' orders are to not exit this room but to attack anything entering the room, excepting those allowed to pass here (the Skeleton King and Heckazar).

If the PCs retreat north back up the hallway, the ogre skeletons close the two northern doors here and stand guard to either side, ready to command their minions to action; if this course is impossible, the group splits and moves to the sides of each door to avoid spells and missile attacks. This same tactic is repeated for the eastern doors if the party flees east out of the room. If the ogre skeletons are slain, then the remaining skeletons merely wait to discharge their duties and without exceptional forethought.

**Aftermath:** The room appears to have once been used for burial preparation and for priests to gather to perform rites preceding this. Its chairs, tables, candelabra and one podium have either been crushed or have decayed over time and are now part of the debris noted in the southwest corner. The walls reveal many inscriptions upon them indicating life after death, not totally erased by newer markings of death and subservience meant to cover them over.

The second ogre body has a jeweled longsword, which appears timeworn but still usable. The three sapphires adorning its hilt are worth 500 gp (x2) and 750 gp. Two of the javelins now littering the floor are *javelins* +2. There is nothing else of interest here except a 20-foot-wide open doorway to the east.

### 4. Family Crypt.

The PCs enter a huge chamber that appears to be a classic tunnel vault. Its various dimensions and coigns are hidden to sight by its interior darkness. The concave and ribbed ceiling must be 40 feet high at its apex. The party notes nearby stonework reliefs upon the walls, the nearest ones being to the right and left of the doorway. These depict different male and female personages in full profiles, but are not notable otherwise except for their crocketing, which present many ivy leaf designs. This decorative motif repeats itself upon the remainder of the wall space.

This is the family crypt. The main sarcophagus lies 50 feet straight ahead. To its north are four of the

family members, and to its south are four more, making a total of nine. Each of these sarcophagi rests upon a 1-foot-high marble slab. Every sarcophagus save for the main one is made of granite.

**Main Sarcophagus:** This magnificent sarcophagus is made of copper, enameled with an intermingling of colors, predominately different shades of reds and yellows. The enameling depicts the King seen in the frescoes at Key #1 as he would have appeared in various phases of his life. The sarcophagus lid is ajar and there is nothing within besides a thick layer of dust and a shredded and badly decomposed corpse-bearing sheet. There is no front piece or plaque noting who was entombed here.

### Northern Sarcophagi (west to east in order):

- Empty. The plaque remains: "Algernon"
- Empty. The plaque remains: "Astassia"
- Empty. The plaque remains: "Belcgor"
- Trapped. The lid here is shut and there are stacks of ashlar (worked blocks of stone) placed upon it (80 in all, weighing a total of 360 lbs.). The plaque is torn off but a little corner of its brass still clings to a rivet. The stones are piled in a uniform pattern, forming a large rectangle across the top of the sarcophagus. This is a **magical trap**. If the four top-corner stones are first removed, this allows the removal of the others without springing the trap. Relieving the pile of its stones other than as noted causes it to explode in sulfurous flames. This flings stone fragments into a 40-foot radius area. Damage to beings within a 20-foot radius is 3-24 hit points from the flying debris and concussion. Those between 21 and 40 feet still suffer 1-10 hit points incidental damage due to the magnitude of the blast! Checking it for traps beforehand takes 8 rounds, and if a successful roll is made, a magical trap is revealed. The magical trap can be disarmed as noted above or through the use of a dispel magic cast upon it.

**GM Note:** This blast utterly destroys the sarcophagus and further flings the three iron rods within it to various parts of the room; roll direction for each as per an errantly thrown missile, but the distance is 10-80 feet for each.

**Three 1-foot-long iron rods:** These appear as normal rods with a thickness of 3/4" each. If one of each is dropped into the scepters that are part of the statues

at Key #7 (q.v.), the magical door at Key #6 unlocks and may then be opened.

#### Southern Sarcophagi (west to east in order):

- Empty. The plaque remains: "Xenophon"
- Empty. The plaque remains: "Estus"
- Empty. The plaque is missing, but a name is crudely inscribed upon the stone: "Baerwyn"
- Empty. The plaque is missing, but a name is crudely inscribed upon the stone: "Julia"

#### 5. Succubus Statue and Two Evil Cupids.

Upon a granite pedestal in this alcove is a life-size iron statue of a winged, nude female with small horns protruding from her head. At her feet are two Cupids fashioned from the same piece of metal, each wielding tiny bows and arrows. However, these are malign-looking representations, unlike those envisioned in storybooks.

If approached within 10 feet, the succubus statue speaks a riddling question:

*"Who is the master of this Tomb?"*

"Heckazar" is the correct answer, and any other answer given in response to this causes the Cupids to unleash a volley of arrows as the succubus enjoins, "You lie!" The arrows are iron and bite deeply, causing 2-7 hit points of damage each. All four that are fired (two per Cupid) hit without error in this case.

The only being on this level who knows this answer and who is willing to reveal it is the Skeleton King himself (Key #24). If the necromancer's name is spoken aloud before the statue, a lone Cupid fires an arrow that disappears to the east. If searched for, it can be found stuck into Key #6A's southern (facing) wall. That wall now has two paragraphs of light verse inscribed upon it:

*1 to 6 and 6 to 1, heft and haul my mighty one!  
2 to 5 and 5 to 2, heft and haul my mighty one!  
3 to 4 and 4 to 3, heft and haul my mighty one!  
North through door for secrets more,  
Beware the bones of moundly ones.  
And search in wood amongst the stone,  
Once you're done my mighty one!*

Note Key #6A to make sense of these verses.



If the statues are attacked, they animate and fight as fleshly beings with statistics that follow. Note: Due to the magic of the statues, they take only 1/4 damage from any attack prior to animating.

**Succubus:** AC 3, M 12"/18", HD 6, HP 34, Atk 2, Dmg 1-3 x2; SA/SD (many abilities and defenses—see rules); +2 saving throw vs. poison due to necklace (see below).

**Evil Cupids (2):** AC 6, M 9"/24", HD 4, HP 21, 18, Atk 2, Dmg 2-7; SA/SD all missile attacks are at +2 to hit, ignores charm and mind powers to control it, 10% chance that each arrow that hits induces hatred, causing the target to lose emotional control and make errors in judgment (-2 to attack rolls, -1 AC, spells have a 10% chance of failure if a mage or priest, effect lasts for 1-4 rounds, accumulative per hit).

Upon the last Cupid's death it fires an arrow at Key #6A's wall which sticks there, thus revealing the verse inscription as noted above.

Inspecting their corpses reveals the following: each Cupid has 4 iron arrows of hatred (as described

## Cairn of the Skeleton King

above). Their shortbows are smallish (75% value). The succubus wears a magical **gold-and-bloodstone necklace** worth 3,300 gp. If worn by a female, this bestows a +2 bonus to poison saving throws, but has the opposite effect upon a male, causing a -2 penalty to poison saving throws.

### 6. Troll Skeletons.

The door has a hatchment fully emblazoned upon it: A crowned tiger rampant, parti-colored yellow and red, with a chief ermine. There is a gold plaque affixed to the door inscribed with the following: "The King's Trove."

The door is magically locked at the 20th level of spell-use. For this adventure alone, the door should only be accessible by use of the magical unlocking device at **Key #7** (q.v.). The gold plaque is worth 170 gp.

Heckazar has placed three animated and fortified troll skeletons here (see Heckazar's **Black Wand** description, **Key #30**). Their instructions are to guard the room and let no one pass, especially into the adjacent area (**Key #6A**). They have keen undead senses and will be aware of any mortal activity within 30 feet of the door and are prepared to meet intruders entering here head on. They have nothing of value.

This room was once indeed the King's Treasury, with gifts and mementos piled high for the king's use while traveling in the afterlife, but the Treasury has since been looted by Heckazar for his personal and sacrificial whims and is now empty.

**Troll Skeletons (3):** AC 4, M 9', HD 6, HP 54, 50, 48, Atk 3, Dmg 5-8 x2, 2-12, SA/SD fortified with extra HP, do not regenerate, 1/2 dmg from piercing or slashing weapons.

### 6A. Secret Door/Room with Six Crates.

You discover a room containing six large crates, each 4 feet long by 3 feet deep. They all have lids that appear nailed shut.

The crates are arranged thusly: One to the immediate north, then proceeding counter-clockwise to the west along the walls, ending with one immediately to the south of the entrance here. Thus 1 and 2 are along the north wall, 3 and 4 along the west, and 5 and 6 are along the south wall.

If the PCs have discovered the verse riddle by

resolving the encounter at **Key #5**, then they must figure out what to do here from that scant clue. If opened, the crates reveal only common bricks of little worth. All crates radiate magic if this is checked for. Refer to the verses. By switching crate 1 with crate 6, crate 2 with crate 5, and crate 3 with crate 4, and then inspecting crate 1 again at its new position, an **obsidian statuette** may now be discovered hidden deep amongst the bricks.

**Obsidian Statuette:** This is roughly 18 inches high and weighs 8 pounds. The carving is ornate, expressing one dual being or an amalgamation of two, perhaps. Viewing it reveals a ram-headed being with wings and arms which stands upon two cloven feet; its reverse side, blended seamlessly with the first depiction, reveals a bearded giant as seen in the fresco at **Key #1**.

This rare magic item will protect the bearer and his allies from evil as per *protection from evil*, except at +2 instead of that spell's usual +1. The effect protects allies within a 15' radius of the statuette. The item need not be held to realize this innate power but must be present upon a PC in the party.

Upon its bottom are several words inscribed in a rare language—*novum inferiorum*— and after that two interspaced single words: *Tartarus, Hades*.

Any priest will recognize the latter words, which indicate two known planes, though Tatarus is spelled differently (indicating a more ancient usage). If the first words are resolved, they read: "Nine Hells." Again, a reference to another evil plane.

These inscriptions have power when upon these planes or any of their primary earthly tributaries. The radius effect then includes *protection from fire* and *protection from sleep*. The fire protection reduces such damage by one point for every four caused and further provides a +2 bonus to saving throw vs. *fire* powers or spells; the *sleep* protection provides a +4 bonus saving throw vs. powers of this nature, even when no saving throw is normally possible (a 17-20 would be the saving throw in those cases).

### 7. Three Bronze Statues (North/Middle/South).

The party notes three life-size bronze statues set upon large slabs of granite. From north to south they represent, in turn, a crowned man, a crowned woman, and a young boy wearing a coronet. Each holds a raised scepter before them.

Each scepter's topmost part can be inspected, thus revealing lengthwise holes the diameter of one of the iron rods found at **Key #4**. One rod may be slipped into each, and these disappear within except for a few inches that remain visible. Inserting all three rods in this fashion unlocks the magical door at **Key #6**. Thereafter removing any one of these rods relocks the door.

### 8. Stairs Down to South (Western).

The stairs empty into a gigantic chamber that the party cannot note for true distances or dimensions.

### 8. Stairs Down to South (Eastern).

These stairs empty into a huge chamber that the party cannot note in full until investigated.

### 9. Secret Room.

Within this secret room is a simple wooden casket crafted from walnut that, amazingly enough, has withstood the passing of time and appears in good condition.

Opening the casket reveals a great layer of dust and a few partial fragments of bone. Upon sifting through the dusty remains, the PCs find a scroll clutched in a skeletal hand. This is a **Scroll of the Cerement**, described below. The casket's plate is inscribed: "Great Grandfather Yorul."

**Scroll of the Cerement** (new magic item): The scroll is made from tough hide and treated with alchemical mixtures that preserve it. Its entirety is written over with priestly symbols invoking the sun god's favor. Holding this scroll allows a priest to turn or banish undead as if they were one level higher than their current level. Value: 8,000 gp.

### 10. Ivory Statue (Cenotaph).

Presented in detail is a sagely man with a long beard, holding a scroll in his right hand. Emblazoned upon its chest is the symbol of the sun god. Its right arm appears cracked. The left arm points north.

### 11. Stone Statue (Cenotaph).

You see a statue of a warrior-maiden holding a long spear.

Read **Keys #13** and **#14**.

### 12. Bronze Statue (Cenotaph).

You note a statue of a burly warrior holding a battle-axe. The symbol of war is inscribed on its chest.

Read **Keys #13** and **#14**.

### 12A. Coffin Reliquary.

Set upon a simple slab of granite here is an old, copper-inlaid coffin, which is three feet long, two feet wide, and one foot deep. It appears to be very corroded by time.

The coffin is trapped with a poison needle (damages for 2-24 hit points). It has a false right side that holds a **magic protection ring +1**. There is a very tiny inscription on the ring's reverse side which is one sentence written in an ancient tongue. If translated and then magnified, it reads: "Rub with silk." If rubbed with silk, the ring's protective value increases to +3 for 24 hours thereafter, after which time it reverts to +1 until rubbed with silk again. The coffin could be sold for 45 gp.

### 13. Reliquiae—Bronze Urn.

Placed upon a small pilaster here is a bronze urn inlaid with hematite and silver.

This urn is magically contrived and guarded. It can be lifted and carried (weighs 40 lbs.), but the top resists all attempts to open it. The only way to open the lid is to reposition the statue's hand at **Key #14**. If this is accomplished, two **spectral creatures** appear from within it to battle the defilers! Each appears to have blond hair, blue eyes, and other similar features which could possibly have made them brother and sister in real life!

**Spectral Fighter:** AC 3, M 9"/12", HD 7, HP 38, Atk 1, Dmg 1-10+3; SA/SD cannot be turned, takes x2 dmg from silver weapons, 1/2 dmg from cold or holy water, requires +1 or better weapons to hit.

**Spectral Amazon:** AC 2, M 9"/12", HD 7, HP 38, Atk 1, Dmg 1-8+3; SA/SD cannot be turned, takes x2 dmg from silver weapons, 1/2 dmg from cold or holy water, requires +1 or better weapons to hit.

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**GM Note:** If either of these specters is killed, there is a 70% chance that their weapons rematerialize and drop to the floor. Otherwise they dissolve into the ether.

**Battle Axe of the Berserk:** This finely made iron axe is light to the touch (1/2 normal weight) and does 1-10+3 damage per hit. GP Value: 10,000.

**Amazonian Battle Spear:** This exceptionally crafted spear has a very sharp steel tip and does 1-8+3 damage per hit. Further, the wielder's AC increases by +1 for as long as he holds it. GP Value: 12,500.

The urn (worth 600 gp) contains dust of the departed, but if emptied and sifted through reveals four diamonds in a very small, ornately crafted silver case (2,000 gp, 1,000 gp x2, 500 gp). The case is worth 10 gp. Two brass plates of the type missing from the sarcophagi at Key #4 are also found. Each has a name inscribed upon them: "Baerwyn and Julia."

### 14. Black Marble Statue of a Woman.

This full-sized statue depicts a veiled woman holding its right hand outward as if to invite. The other is set in declination behind her.

The left arm is movable; and if it is moved so that both hands "invite," this opens the magical urn at Key #13. If the PCs somehow remove this for its ivory value, they raise quite a suspicion amongst the locals and no one is likely to deal with them as they will be seen as suspected "defilers" of churches or graves and the like. The statue's real worth is 700 gp, but half or less of that if the word gets out about the PCs and their grave-robbing. The statue weighs 400 pounds.

### 15. Four Busts on Pedestals (trapped spirits).

Set upon granite pedestals are two male and two female busts crafted from porphyry and all having a rather noble or even royal cast to their features.

Heckazar has embodied spirits within these busts for later use, and collectively they are angry and distraught. If the PCs linger near these, consult the table below, as they immediately start hearing "voices," soft whisperings of the dead which become more dreadful for each round that they remain within 10 feet of them.

Round	Affect
1st round:	Intangible
2nd and 3rd rounds:	Rising tumult; may cause <i>fear</i> , saving throw at +2.
4th and 5th rounds:	The voices impart omnipresent impressions of mayhem or death; may cause <i>confusion</i> , saving throw at +2.
6th and later rounds:	Psychic babble. Automatically dumbfounds spell casters (no save) and causes riot ( <i>fear</i> and <i>confusion</i> as above, saving throw at +1 for each).

These busts may be silenced for 1-6 round if a priest turns them (as wraiths), or if a power is used upon them to *dispel evil*.

If attacked, the busts are easily destroyed, but the spirit from each then manifests as a purple-robed wraith with 20 HP that immediately attacks!

If all four of the wraiths are dispatched, the closest PC to the pedestals receives this psychic message: "We thank you for sending us onward." The PC receiving this impression automatically has a random ability permanently raised by +1 and hears these last words: "Press the second and fourth eyes at once." The area seems wholesome again—the spirits are gone. Their cryptic clue refers to the Demonic Bust, below.

**GM Recommendation:** It is recommended, though not necessary, that the PCs receive a 1.5 multiplier for experience derived from completing this challenging encounter.

### 16. Two Busts on Pedestals (active spirits).

There are two busts positioned upon granite pedestals here. Both actually appear alive!

The northerly of the two busts is inhabited by a demonic spirit; and as the PCs approach within 10 feet of it or its mate south of it, it roars an unearthly curse and spits flame! This appears to have been a human figure at one point, but now boils and rot have transfigured it into an evil visage. The thing attacks until dead.

**Demonic Bust:** AC 4, M 0", HD 8, HP 40, Atk 1 *fire breath*, Dmg 4-16; SA/SD immune to missiles, magical or otherwise, immune to fire, requires +1 or better

weapons to hit. The fire breath has a variable range each round of 11-20 feet.

The southerly of the two busts is another demonic face with four eyes and green, scaly skin. Though alive, it seems docile. It focuses its eyes upon those who approach it, but otherwise does nothing else. If its second and fourth eyes are pressed at the same time while opened (50% chance of each being open in a given round), it slowly disgorges a magic item of some worth, a **red centipede figurine**, which initially is animated and crawls forth from its mouth as the bust convulses while the centipede exits. Upon touching solid matter, the figurine turns into an amber statuette approximately 6 inches long.

If the bust is queried as to its name, it merely says, "Four-eyes," but never again speaks or answers another question. "Four-eyes" is actually the magical phrase to animate and control the centipede. This outlandish bust can be destroyed easily, as it cannot defend itself (it has 22 hit points), but if this is done before it dispenses the centipede, the figurine is destroyed.

**Red Centipede Figurine:** Upon speaking its command word, the owner causes the figurine to grow to the size of a giant, red centipede, about 3 feet long. It is AC 7, moves very fast at 18", and is HD 3+1. Its bite causes 1-3 dmg and is extremely poisonous (saving throw vs. poison at -2 or die). It is a favorite item among assassins and thieves, as they can easily decant from it 3 doses of its poison a month. If they decant more than that (up to 6 doses maximum per month) the figurine becomes inoperable for a full 30 days afterwards. The poison also has a 30-day limit on its efficacy and becomes inert and useless liquid after that time period (GMs should note times in between decanting and usage). Its value is 3500 gp.

### 17. Stairs Up.

There is a 20-foot-wide set of stairs going up and to the west.

At the top (midway) there is a small landing. The ceiling height here is 10 feet. The stairs now descend to the west.

**GM Note:** Read **Key #19** carefully, especially **#19A**, which is part of the lower staircase. Proceeding down the stairs, the PCs enter a large room (read **Key #19**).

### 18. Large Iron and Bronze Valves.

Before you are two large bronze valves banded with iron inlaid vertically from top to bottom. There appears to be no latches, handles, keyholes or other means to open them.

If the levers at **Key #19C** are all pulled, this opens these doors and they slowly swing outward to allow ingress. Unless the levers are reset to a locked position, this magical door remains operable even if it is afterwards closed.

### 19. Regalia/Armory Room.

The GM should read this complex and dangerous encounter carefully.

Your party enters a large gallery with pilasters decorated with carvings of shields jutting from the walls; depending from many are also various tapestries, brocades and other trappings.

The nearest ones, to the north along the east wall and to the south along the east wall, respectively, depict (north) a silver kite shield painted with a crossed battle-axe and spear, and (south) a large round shield painted gold and having a stylized sun upon it. Thirty feet ahead, in the center of room, is the glittering steel of many weapons.

There are four racks of weapons located at the extreme points of the center pressure plate here (see below). They do not touch the plate, but are within 1 foot of its western, northern, and southern boundaries. The racks contain (1) six long swords, (2) six throwing spears, (3) four halberds and (4) three battle-axes. GMs should assess what chances there are of those entering this area of stepping upon the pressure plate(s), with general advancement by the whole party to inspect the racks indicating a 100% chance that this occurs.

**Pressure Plates:** The three circular hashmarked map symbols represent pressure plates. Each plate sinks about 3 inches beneath the floor if stepped upon, and this level change is noticeable unless the triggering person is running or in combat. Several things immediately occur after any of their activations. Read **Key #19A** and **#19B**.



### 19A. Collapsing Stairs/Oil Trap.

Upon stepping on any of the pressure plates here, the stairs at Key #17 collapse and two 2-foot-thick copper ramps quickly rise at 60-degree angles in their places, forming an upside-down V with its apex above the landing proper. This cuts into the vertical space upon the stairs tremendously, leaving only a 6- to 8-foot-high space above the surface of the ramps. Any being standing on the landing when the trap activates has a 25% chance of immediate death as the two copper ramps shoot up and join at their tops, thus crushing or decapitating anything in between them. Otherwise a PC's only recourse is to duck below the ramps while avoiding them. There they remain trapped in a cubbyhole-like area until the middle lever at Key #19C is pulled, which causes the ramps to recede and the stairs to reappear.

Additionally, the two opposite holes indicated by Key #19A open and oil pours forth from these—this

immediately covers the western ramp and thereafter streams into Key #19 to cover an additional 10-foot radius area per round. Any PC standing upon either stair section as the ramps rise is propelled off of them, falling to the east and west, respectively. Those falling west have a 50% chance of avoiding the oil as they regain their footing; otherwise the oil's advance soaks them.

The last thing to occur is that the magical *fire-bolt* throwers start firing their bolts at random room-spaces (read Key #19B).

Note that exiting the room with the oil covering the western ramp, and with its incline being a steep 60 degrees, is problematical at best. GMs should assess these possibilities, making exiting very difficult to achieve without recourse to magic or some extraordinary strategy. Also note that the new (adjusted) 4-foot ceiling height on the landing requires human-sized beings to hunch and/or crawl through this area. For the possibility and effects of a **general conflagration** here, read Key #19B.

### 19B. Magical Fire-Bolt Throwers.

These two (2) magical constructions (NE and SW corners) are made of stone and take 40 hit points each to destroy (AC

4). Due to their nature, they take 1/2 or no damage from fire attacks of any type (saving throws as 4th level Fighters vs. *fire* attacks). Every round that they are active they lob a fiery projectile, with a 5% chance that these hit a random target (including enemies); there is a growing percentage chance per round that they may hit the radiating oil spill, thus igniting it and causing a **general conflagration** here! GMs must assess the total room area covered by the oil and deduce from that a percentage chance of each missile landing in the spill. The hit sequence is for random targets first, then for possible ignition of the oil. If no targets are hit, then roll to see if a bolt hits the oil spill. The bolts cause 1-8 *fire* dmg per hit and also ignites oil-soaked beings for the same amount of dmg for 1-3 rounds or until the flame is extinguished.

**General Conflagration:** The GMs must assess the spread of the flaming oil. If it at any time reaches 50% or more of the available room space, then PCs still

trapped here begin taking 1-3 hit points of smoke dmg per combat round. Most of the smoke is drawn east and out of the room, where it disperses upward and to the north, but if that channel is blocked then the smoke accumulates, causing twice the noted damage. If there is anyone trapped upon the landing they suffer similar damage but earlier, when the room is but 25% covered in burning oil.

### 19C. Three Levers.

There are three 2-foot-long iron levers embedded in the wall here, all in down positions. If both the north and south ones are pulled up, the doors at **Key #18** unlock. If the middle lever is pulled up, the room's trap mechanism is quelled—the ramps recede, the stairs reappear and the *fire-bolt* throwers cease firing. Stepping on any of the pressure plates again reactivates the trap and resets the middle lever back to its "down" position.

### 19D. 2 Teeth of Thanatos (Each).

Stationed upon each of the 10-foot-high raised areas (NW and SW corners) are two "Teeth of Thanatos" (see **Tomb Skeleton** in the appendix). These engage interlopers here with thrown javelins; if the party in any way moves towards the levers at **Key #19C**, these creatures jump to the floor for melee. They will not leave this room, as per their orders.

**Teeth of Thanatos (4):** AC 5, M 12", HD 4, HP 22, 20, 18x2, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6/2-5 (short swords/javelins x10), SA/SD bite, Dmg 2-12, 1/2 dmg from piercing or slashing weapons. Also note the appendix entry.

**Aftermath/Treasure:** Most of the valuable items in this room, with the exception of the weapons, are upon the walls. Besides the aforementioned normal weapons there are:

- two +2 battle axes
- +2 shield (kite)
- +2 shield (round)
- two +1 longswords
- +3 mace
- two +1 spears
- +1 quarterstaff (one is actually a healing staff with full charges)
- 3 foot × 6 foot red tapestry of two unicorns interwoven with golden thread: 60 lbs., 1700 gp.
- 4 foot × 4 foot blue and gold tapestry made of silk and sequined of a grand castle and knights

jousting upon its green: 40 lbs., 1500 gp.

- 4 foot × 6 foot green and yellow brocade, with silver and gold tassel ornaments, depicting a king on a throne: 80 lbs., 2200 gp.
- standing suit of plate mail +1, goldchased and silver-filigreed: 10 lbs. (magical), 7500 gp.

## 20. Major Reliquary/Family Specters.

Upon opening the valves to this room, you see a massive area that is replete with an abundance of stored items. This might be a major reliquary of the family. Upon the west wall just inside these doors is a lever in the "down" position.

**GM Note:** This lever locks and unlocks the valves from this side. It is currently in its "unlocked," down position.

The party soon notes three figures—spectres—moving towards them from different areas of the room—they are all tall humans in form and wear tattered grave cloths, and golden coronets. Each holds a shining sword etched with strange runes. One appears from behind a large chest of drawers 20 feet to the east, another from a behind a crate stood lengthwise 30 feet to the south, and the last appears from behind a large floor mirror 20 feet to the west.

**Family Spectres (3):** AC 4, M 12", HD 7, HP 32 each, Atk 1, Dmg 1-8+3 (**rune-inscribed, golden longswords**), SA/SD silver weapons cause 1.5 x dmg, turned as vampires, holy water causes x2 damage, immune to *charm*, *fear* and *cold*-based spells.

These creatures are what are left of three of the Archibald family's souls that Heckazar has summoned to do his bidding. They are completely and utterly under his control, and even ignore the Skeleton King's wishes. They attack without reserve until slain.

**Rune-inscribed, Golden Longswords:** The longswords are magically enhanced by an evil spell granted to the necromancer by his god. They have no plus to hit but score +3 on damage. The runes inscribed upon them, if deciphered, repeat an ancient fabrication of the word "Hades." Each sword is otherwise worth 1,500 gp if not combined. If all three are touched together at once, they magically fuse, creating one sword with the following powers:

**Sword of Hades:** +2 to hit, +3 on damage; wielder's AC increases by +2; 50% chance of not being

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effected by *energy-draining* attacks of undead creatures. Value: 14,000 gp.

**Coronets:** The coronets are made from silver and are each worth 475 gp.

Searching this chamber takes some time, as there is a veritable collection of odds and ends here. If its entire contents are carefully searched, the PCs spend no less than an hour doing so. There are open doors upon the southern wall revealing another massive chamber to the south.

### Item List:

- two chests of drawers containing fourteen quilts
- fourteen padded chairs
- 4-foot-high oval standing mirror (cherry wood)
- two long tables, all set with silver tableware (980 gp value)



- wardrobe with odd cloaks (musty and ruined)
- wicker hamper (empty)
- two cabinets (empty)
- four trunks with 28 pairs of footwear (one pair are **boots of speed**, but appear the worst of the lot as they are the oldest; there is a 40% chance that their magic has worn away with time)
- four wood and marble stands
- empty rack
- fourteen neatly folded blankets (the 13th contains between its folds 3 **potions of healing**)
- three large crates containing: (1) 14 pillows; (2) 14 bed sheets (two are silk, worth 60 gp each); (3) 140 long tapers
- two desks containing old parchment, ink bottles (hardened) and quills
- crate stood on end, empty
  - thirty barrels (once containing wine and water, now empty)
  - twelve casks with desiccated food (pickles and meats)
  - four large carpets (rolled, 8 ft. × 10 ft. each)
  - two large canopy beds (on top of the second is a slim journal containing a scroll with three random priest spells of the 1st-4th order, but it is hidden under a thick layer of dust and not immediately noticeable)
  - three boxes containing wilted leaves (of stale potpourri)
  - large armchair
  - old divan (beneath the center cushion are two 600-year-old platinum coins, worth to collectors of such rarities up to 100 times their value; roll d100 for each and add +30% per roll, with a maximum value for each coin of x100%)
  - large chest containing eight tankards and six goblets, all of silver make and filigreed (20 gp each for the tankards and 15 gp each for the goblets).

## 21. Summoning Area/Magical Circle.

You note another large chamber, this one seemingly used for occult practices, as a large magic circle is etched into the floor just south of the entryway. There are high-rising pillars to the left and right of the magic circle, and before and beyond it as well.

The pillars almost reach the 40-foot-high ceiling above and though fashioned in the Ionic style have no other markings upon them. The magic circle has many tapers about it and dust sprinkled at various parts of its interior, but appears to have been unused for some time. The walls here all have recent frescoes painted upon them.

### North walls, flanking doors, same on each side:

A large demon with black fur, cloven hooves and a head of a black ram. It holds a long red staff topped by a demonic skull.

**East Wall:** A representation of a black spider with long silver fangs; behind it is a ruined city from ancient times.

**South Wall (central):** A 20-foot-high by 10-foot-wide wide black ziggurat, about which curls a two-headed snake reaching for its top.

**West Wall:** The entire wall here depicts an immense kingdom enshrouded in shadow; a thin ribbon of ebony represents a road with leads to a gargantuan castle of inky blackness. Above its battlements flit indistinct demonic shapes whose jet-black forms are highlighted against the muted, gray sky.

## 22. Sliding Wall.

**GM Note:** This is a sliding wall that quickly moves south and covers the outlined area (see map) if the pressure plate at **Key #22A** is stepped upon. Once activated, it takes 2 minutes for it to completely block the corridor. This traps the party within the precincts of **Keys #23-#25** until either the Skeleton King releases them by activating the lever at **Key #24**, or upon the party defeating him and activating the lever themselves. Anyone trapped by this moving block of granite is crushed to death against the southern wall opposite it.

### 22A. Pressure Plate.

The area outlined on the map is a pressure plate, 10 feet wide by 30 feet long. If stepped upon, this activates the sliding wall at **Key #22**.

## 23. Sarcophagi on a Raised Granite Slab (x2).

Upon entering this room you note many chairs to the west and the indistinct forms of raised stone areas to the north and south, the latter each holding atop them a sarcophagus. The walls are covered with full-length, gray curtains.

**GM Note:** Also read **Key #24**.

If either of the sarcophagi are opened, the **barrow wights** inside attack. They will be ordered to stop attacking by the **Skeleton King** if the battle shifts in his direction.

**Barrow Wights (2):** AC 4, M 15", HD 6, HP 27, 28, Atk 2, Dmg 1-6 claw plus *energy drain* if both claw attacks hit at once, SA/SD turned as specters, immune to *charm*, *fear* and other mental attacks (Also note the appendix entry).

The sarcophagi contain the following treasures:

**Northern:** 570 gp, four vials of holy water, 1-6 peridots (base 500), **longsword +3**.

**Southern:** 200 gp, 150 pp, three vials of **super healing** (4-16+2), **composite longbow +2**, quiver of 20 +2 arrows.

The barrow wights wear gem-studded bracelets, armbands and rings, all worth a total of 1,100 gp. Another ring is hidden in the northern barrow wight's grave clothes and is a **ring of minor magery** (allows mages two extra spells to be chosen per day from amongst their 1st-3rd level spells). It is worth 10,500 gp.

**GM Note:** The barrow wights can and will be waved off during any fight between the party and the Skeleton King, but will be hostile to the party once the king is dead!

## 24. The Skeleton King.

**The Skeleton King's Dilemma:** Due to Heckazar's "magical sleep" (read **Key #30**) the Skeleton King has regained some portion of his former self, as the power of the necromancer that created him has lessened. Faint memories have stirred and his eternal will has taken hold, allowing him to realize his undead existence and thus do something about it.

As noted in the introduction, the Skeleton King wishes to be slain, but he does not want to cause the death of any of his kindred people in a kingdom he once ruled many hundreds of years before. Hence

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his need for assassins, which is what the PCs are to him, and gratefully so.

The Skeleton King is still invigorated by the power of the necromancer, which makes him a formidable opponent. Realizing this, he impresses this fact upon the PCs before they take up spell or steel against him, for surely in the latter case they will all be slain. He desires a noble death in combat and one administered by his own kind in real life, so he will endeavor to convince the PCs of these facts and will instruct them how to go about destroying the necromancer so that the Skeleton King may afterwards have his horrible existence concluded.

**GM Note:** When the PCs first confront him, read the following:

There are six chairs set in a semicircle before you. The chairs face a dais, atop of which is a very large padded armchair. Next to the chair is a long iron lever set into the floor. Sitting in the chair is a large, crowned skeleton, robed in tattered red and yellow garments. The skeleton immediately stands at your approach and draws a rusty-looking sword. Before you can react a voice issues from its area, though this seems not to emanate from the skeleton form itself:

"Know that I am King Archibald the First, once ruler of the kingdom above and of its peoples. It is the present rulers who have hired you at my prompting to end my undead life. I will speak further with you upon this. Please, sit and listen to my tale."

The Skeleton King motions them to the chairs, and whether they sit or not it continues to speak one minute later unless attacked. If he is attacked, his sword (see below) shouts, "You will be entombed with me if I am killed now!" This is one last attempt to forestall their actions. If they continue to attack, he combats them, but it will soon become apparent that he cannot be slain easily, if at all. If the PCs disengage, he ceases attacking as well.

To impress them in any case, he says: "You cannot slay me without first slaying the one who created me, for until then I am nigh invulnerable." He then lays a bony digit of his left hand across his chair arm and lops it off with his sword! Amazingly, and in but a matter of seconds, it regrows!

Once he has the party's full attention he relates the

tale as summarized for the GM above, while noting these important points:

"Heckazar is idle and has not been seen in some time. His power for some reason has waned. As I have been commanded to stay here, I cannot leave to enter his chambers, nor could I assail him even if I found him therein. Slay him and return to fulfill your quest and I will reward you. The door to his lair can be found far to the east upon the northern wall." He produces a large iron key attached to an equally large iron ring and tosses it to the floor before them. "That key will open what used to be the hall of my ancestors, which is now befouled by his presence. Look for his coffin, but beware his servants — they are many and strong."

The lever operates the stone wall now blocking this room in from the rest of the level. He will pull upon it to allow the PCs to exit.

**If they kill the false Heckazar and return:** If the PCs claim to have slain Heckazar, the Skeleton King will check their claim by again removing one of his left-hand fingers with his sword. "You are either lying or you have been deceived," he says, after the finger regrows. "His power still flows through me. Go back and search for him, for what you slew was not Heckazar."

**If they kill the real Heckazar and return:** The Skeleton King will have felt Heckazar's infernal power leave his body and will know immediately that he is truly dead. When the PCs arrive back in his quarters, read the following:

The Skeleton King's jaw opens in what can only be an undead grin. He rises from his throne and draws his sword and speaks through it again: "If I were still the ruling king of old, I would knight you all and give you treasures uncountable. You have my thanks for killing that foul being." He then jumps down from the dais and lands feet first upon the floor in an attack position, sword at ready, and says: "Now - DO YOUR DUTY!" With that said, he attacks!

The Skeleton King puts up a brave fight, trying his best to damage opponents, as he desires a noble death in combat. He doesn't wish to slay his executioners, however, so he will do such things as give ground to await the PCs' attacks if they withdraw to heal, for instance, or switch to attacking someone who he has



not already seriously damaged, allowing others to heal. To him, this drama is his final contest-of-arms, and one he looks forward to losing, but with head high while doing so.

**Skeleton King (Pre-Heckazar Death):** AL: N, AC 1, M 12", HD 9+6, HP 75, Atk 1, Dmg 1-10+2, SA/SD **Soul Strike** bastard sword (see below), immune to *sleep*, *fear*, *charm* or mind-affecting spells, immune to poison; edged, slashing or piercing weapons do 1/4 damage, others do full damage, *regenerates* 8 HP per round, not harmed by holy powers or spells which affect undead.

**Skeleton King (Post-Heckazar Death):** AL: N, AC 4, M 12", HD 8, HP 47, Atk 1, Dmg 1-8+2, SA/SD **Soul Strike** bastard sword (see below), immune to *sleep*, *fear*, *charm* or mind-affecting spells; edged, slashing or piercing weapons do 1/2 damage, others do full damage, not harmed by holy powers or spells which affect undead.

**Soul Strike (Bastard Sword):** This bastard sword +2 is crafted from fine steel and gilt in gold. It has three large emeralds (5,000 gp each) set into its hilt. This special sword has intelligence and extra powers as noted below.

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Intelligence:** 12

**Powers:** *Telepathy*, *Speech*

**Special Ability:** *Strike the Soul.* Three times per day the sword will *drain* 1- 6 extra hit points from the target if the bearer of it so commands.

**Note on Sword Usage:** As the Skeleton King does not wish to destroy his assassins, he only uses the *Strike the Soul* power in any given combat round 10% of the time, and then only because he momentarily forgets his situation whilst in the fury of battle mode.

**GM Note:** Upon the Skeleton King's death, his head flies to pieces, revealing a very small copper tube that rolls across the floor. Inside it is a map and a silver **skull ring** with a hematite face of a grimacing skull carved into it. The miniature map appears to have been recently drawn. It indicates that far to the east of this chamber is a secret or hidden door. There is a single word written upon it: "Ghools."

If worn, the magical **skull ring** reveals the concealed door at **Key #31** to the naked eye upon approaching within 10 feet of it; the key opens the door if inserted into the "key hole" there (read **Key #31**).

The sword, if claimed, immediately begs for the PCs to take the remains of its former master and itself and deposit them in the main sarcophagus at **Key #4**. If the party does this, and before closing the lid, the sword communicates via telepathy and tells them how they can open the secret door to **Key #25**, which is to take the arms from the Skeleton King's chair and switch them with each other. Sitting upon the chair thereafter causes the secret door to the

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north to swing outward, allowing ingress to the room beyond. This secret door can otherwise be located, but it cannot be opened with spells or by physical attacks.

If the PCs instead keep the sword, it remembers this slight in the future and plagues the bearer of it when possible, being as uncooperative and dismissive (i.e., king-like) as it can.

### 25. Hidden Treasure Room.

As noted, the only way to access this room is through manipulating the Skeleton King's chair. The PCs may then push the curtain here aside and enter the room.

You note a 30-foot by 20-foot room caparisoned with red and yellow curtains and laid with a thick maroon carpet. At its center is an immense pile of gold and silver coins. There are three ironbound chests near the pile. Depending from the northern wall is a silver shield emblazoned with the hatchment you noted upon the door of the empty King's Trove.

#### Treasure Details

There are exactly 23,243 silver pieces and 10,672 gold pieces piled here. The shield is magical **shield +3**.

**Chest #1:** 398 pp and 20 gems (500 gp total).

**Chest #2:** 1,554 ep and 4 potions: **increased speed**, **giant's strength** (random), **disappearance** (invisible for 2-12 turns), **draught of healing** (heals all poisons and diseases plus 12-48 damage)

**Chest #3:** Inside of this is a **mace +3**, two diamond rings (7,000 gp each, a matched set), and a **cloak of the dagger** (see below), and all set atop 435 gp.

**Cloak of the Dagger** (Thieves only): When worn by a thief, this either allows a +1 multiplier addition to backstabbing damage (x2 becomes x3, etc.) or otherwise increases wielded dagger damage by +2 per hit. Both damage modifiers cannot be realized at once. This gray cloak has a blood-red dagger emblazoned upon the front of it. Value: 25,000 gp.

### 26. Iron Door/Long Hall North (Iron Skeleton).

You stand before an iron door that has a keyhole in it.

This door can be opened by using the key the Skeleton King possesses, or through the greatest of giant strengths, or by an unlocking spell of at least 12th level. It takes 200 hit points of damage to otherwise destroy the door. Non-magical weapons striking it will break 50% of the time and all weapons deliver only 1/2 damage. Upon opening the door and proceeding into the room beyond the PCs note the following:

You stand in a large hall lined with pedestals and statues along its east wall at 10-foot intervals.

All but the sixth statue is crushed or defaced, revealing none of their former representations. The sixth statue is that of an iron skeleton that animates to attack intruders approaching within 20 feet of it. The skeleton is in fact imbued with a malignant spirit through necromancy and that is what empowers its diabolical form. If it is successfully banished or turned, the residing spirit flees the mortal realm, never to return. The skeleton form becomes inanimate in this case and is but a statue again.

**Iron Skeleton:** AC 3, M 9', HD 7, HP 35, Atk 2, Dmg 1-8 (claws), SA/SD immune to *charm*, *fear*, mental-based attacks, *sleep*, poison and *petrification*; takes 1/2 damage from piercing weapons, full damage from others; silvered weapons cause 1.5 x damage; can be banished or turned as a specter.

### 27. (Fake) Heckazar.

Upon entering the southernmost boundaries of this room you are assailed by two 6-foot skeletons [GM note: see **Handmaidens of Hecate** below]. To the west is a raised area with a black coffin atop it. As the skeletons attack, a shadowy figure in black robes rises from the coffin and begins making hand gestures that appear to signal spellcasting!

**GM Note:** Also read **Key #30**.

The **fake Heckazar** appears as a short, rotund man of shadowy features and dull, small eyes. It stands and delivers spells until it depletes these and then melees with its dagger. Upon its death it dissipates

into motes of shadow which all whisper death upon the air as they depart the mortal realm. Nothing remains to be recovered or examined from its once "physical" form.

**"Fake" Heckazar:** AC 8, M 12", HD 4, HP 20, Atk 1, Dmg 1-4 (dagger). Read **Talisman of the Shadow** described at **Key #30**, below.

**Spells Memorized:**

1st: *magic missile, protection from good, shield*

2nd: *knock, stinking cloud*

**Handmaidens of Hecate (2):** AC 4, M 12", HD 5, HP 26, 27, Atk 1 or 2 (50% chance, note appendix), Dmg 1-6 (short sword) or 2-7 (claws), SA/SD 1/2 dmg from piercing, slashing or cutting weapons; many immunities. Also note the appendix entry.

The coffin is lined with a thick black cloth but contains nothing.

**28. Stairs Down/Treasure Chest/Secret Trap Door Down.**

Upon descending the stairs here you note a sub-area of the room that appears to be a combination treasure-storage and simple worship area. To the right and left of a central raised area are medium-sized statues painted black and representing Hades' evil, ram-headed form, Orcus. Each statue presents in its right hand a staff topped by a demonic skull. The stone-worked details of these reveal upon their shafts evil glyphs representing death and demonry. Atop the raised central area is a large teakwood chest banded in bronze. It is open, and jewels and gold spill forth from it, with pieces even littering the floor immediately before it.

**GM Note:** Beneath the chest is a secret trap door that leads to **Key #29** and beyond. The chest must be moved to find it. The trap door is easily opened, revealing hand-rungs that proceed down for 20 feet.

The statues are painted-over silver, both weighing 500 pounds and worth 1200 gp each.

The treasure chest is mostly filled with baubles and trinkets, but to the unsuspecting eye appear as really expensive varieties. It contains 537 gp, 876 sp, and gems of the following value: 1 gp (x76), 5 gp (x38), 10 gp (x30) and 50 gp (x20). There are also 3 gem-studded daggers (worth 100 gp each), six golden anklets (25 gp each) and a **longsword +1** thrown in to make the whole mess look good.

**29. Secret Area/Trap Door Up.**

The hand-rungs go up for 20 feet and then there is a noticeable trap door above.

**30. (Real) Heckazar/Coffin.**

You enter a chamber that contains near its northeastern verge a raised area having atop it a large black sarcophagus carved from stone. You are then immediately attacked by the room's only inhabitant—a very large skeleton wielding a longsword!

**Hellion of Hades:** AC 3, M 12", HD 6, HP 36 (fortified), Atk 1, Dmg 1-8 (long sword), SA/SD drowsiness attack, 1/2 dmg from piercing, slashing or cutting weapons. Also note the appendix entry.

The hellion is the last defense for **Heckazar**, who is magically asleep in his sarcophagus. Upon its death the coffin may be investigated:

Interned within this black marble coffin is a squat, pudgy and hairless man of deathly pale features. Across his breast is a black wand carved from some precious stone. About his neck is a cord tied to a strange metallic ingot lying upon his chest. The man-figure does not move and appears so still that he may not even be breathing.

**The Necromancer, Heckazar:** Heckazar the necromancer is a worshiper of Hades in that god's malignant form as "Orcus." Heckazar decided to push his affairs too mightily with that obscure religion and has paid the price of "forfeiture" meted out to him by its high priests. This has in essence put him to sleep for one year as a penalty for having affronted the religion with a lie about his secreted wealth. Heckazar is powerless during this time and his major spell forms (c.f. the Skeleton King) have been weakened. However, he had taken precautions against just such a situation occurring, thus the reason for his duplicate (see **Talisman of the Shadow**, below).

Heckazar is helpless and can easily be dispatched. The results of killing him are immediate regarding all those things he created. The Skeleton King loses its extranormal powers (q.v.); any spirit still confined in the statues or cenotaphs here flee, and other placed spells or powers once linked to him (but



not the wand) are dispelled, such as the fire-bolt throwers at Key #19.

**Real Heckazar:** AC 7, M 0', HD 8, HP 22, Atk 0;  
SPECIAL: Helpless, can be administered *coup de grace*.

Heckazar did not keep his main treasure here for reasons relating to his religion, but has hidden it outdoors. Amongst his vestments is a map leading to a burial plot located in a long-forgotten graveyard. The treasure is roughly 50,000 gp in total worth and includes one magical ring - a **ring of spell storing** - and a magic item of miscellaneous power - **boots of levitation**. The guardians for this will undoubtedly be undead, and could even include more barrow wights (q.v.), but these details are left for the GM to fill in.

Note that Heckazar was a necromancer in Orcus's service, so in death he is immune to those spells or powers that would command his spirit to obedience. Speaking with his spirit is possible, but he ignores any control and is likely to give the PCs false information which could cause their ruin.

On a book stand located near the eastern wall is a journal; next to this is a small coffer with his spell books, containing 26 spells of the following levels:

1st: *charm, erase, friends, N's magical aura, protection from evil, read magic, shocking grasp, ventriloquism*

2nd: *darkness 15 ft radius, detect invisibility, invisibility, pyrotechniques, ray of enfeeblement, scare, stinking cloud, wizard lock*

3rd: *clairvoyance, dispel magic, flame arrow, hold person, invisibility 10 ft radius, suggestion.*

4th: *charm monster, monster summoning II (see below), R's Mnemonic enhancer, wizard eye.*

**GM Note:** Hidden under the fourth book's back cover are two thin, paper packets containing fine dust. These are two applications of vampire bone dust (see below). Unless a PC actively searches the book for hidden sections or abnormalities these packets will not be found.

**Summon Monster (Tomb Skeleton):** The fourth spell book contains a variant *monster summoning* spell of the 4th level, and this indicates that one of the "tomb skeletons" can be summoned in place of normal creatures summonable through such spells. The material components are in every case "two ounces of bone dust from a vampire" and the "gem associated with the type of tomb skeleton to

be summoned" (see the appendix entry regarding them). The vampire bone-dust is very rare and costs 3000 gp for one summoning application. One application is locatable at an apothecary shop or at other rarity/ odd-shops but once per month. The skeleton types are also briefly described, giving PCs access to the appendix information regarding these (q.v.).

There is also a note inscribed as an addendum to the spell about "memorizing the ritual of permanency and drinking from the 'stream' that will consign the spirit of the skeleton to this plane until dismissed." What this means in total is not elucidated upon.

**Heckazar's Journal:** The journal appears to be wrought from a supple hide (dragon) and contains many pages of transcriptions which to even those most versed in arcana do not make sense, as they deal with an area of study wholly unknown to most savants. However, there are some entries of note:

- "Demon skin - portions can be used to cover one's extremities in dealing with the stream, whether crossing it or whilst revitalizing the wand. Shoes and gloves, perhaps. Tied to fit. Must acquire a horn dagger for flaying purposes."
- "The ghouls are nigh uncontrollable and I fear that the priests err in dealing with them. They should be consumed to the last. Ah, but greed is the wont of those who worship our master."
- "The tower is next. He will not obey me outwardly, but I will bring him to bay with the help of Atarxes. Then his bones will be ground for my use. Blood to bone. Fitting."
- "She awaits my coming, but I must secure the tower first. The time of Atarxes is approaching with the red and gibbous harvest moon. Harvesting souls . . ."

**Talisman of the Shadow:** This appears as a black ingot, 1"×1/2"×1/2" in size. Made of some unidentifiable metal, the ingot is wrapped with a thick cord which fits about the neck. The power of the **Talisman** protects the bearer if he or she becomes incapacitated for too long, or dies. After six rounds of incapacitation, or upon death, a shadowy form issues forth from the ingot and 1-3 rounds later takes shape as the bearer's double, appearing as a dark-highlighted version of the real body. The shade has 1/2 the PC's hit points and HD, comes with a primary weapon of the lowest variety common to

the PC's class, and has the same general armor, but is minus anything magical or special which its real form possessed. If the PC is a spellcaster of some sort, the shade will have spells, but only one from each spell level that the PC knows. Depleted spells automatically become available again at a rate of one per day. The shade's almost inaudible speech compares to finely-tuned whispering.

The **shade** immediately acts to secure the body and transport it to a safe place, even going as far as to have its "master" *resurrected* if need be. It stands guard near or about the body for as long as it takes for it to revive, and will not willingly wander any farther than 200 feet from it. Upon the body's revival or awakening, or upon the shade's death, its form vanishes into the ether as many fragmented and dispersing pieces of shadowy substance.

The **Talisman** is usable once per year, though a legend concerning magic of this sort purport that upon the Realm of Shadow this usage limitation does not prevail and that other **talismans** of this sort, and greater, exist there. The duplicative power of this item does not extend to immortal beings, such as gods or demons, for instance, and generally only attunes itself to humans and similar bipedal races, like elves, etc. Value: 12,000 gp.

**The Black Wand:** This necromantic wand is a special minor artifact wrought from obsidian that was given to Heckazar by Orcus for his service to that dread god. Its primary powers are only usable by those of evil alignment or dispositions. It comes with 50 (minus 1-12) charges and can only be recharged by placing it in one of the Underworld's nine rivers, such as the River Styx, whereat charges replenish at a rate of one per hour. It has the following powers in the hands of a evil mage or priest, but otherwise functions as a wand which locates precious gems and metals if wielded by someone of any other alignment or class (see listing #3, below).

1- *Fortification:* When the wand is touched to an undead being, 1-8 hit points are automatically added to its point total for weeks equal to the wand-wielder's intelligence score. This may be accomplished twice only per being fortified and expends 2 charges per *fortification*.

2- *Light of the Dead:* Upon touch, this creates a 5-foot-circumference light source of eerie colors that radiate outwards for 15 feet per level of the wielder (i.e., 120-foot radius at 8th Level). Undead

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within its radius receive the following benefits:

- They become resistant to turnings or banishings.
- They gain +2 levels and corresponding hit points. Undead which have already taken their non-adjusted maximum damage and which move outside of the circle have their remaining hit points lowered to "1". Regaining a position within the circle does not raise these HP again.
- Their saving throws are at +2 and damage from magical spells is at half or none.
- Undead of 4 HD and beyond gain an evil cunning, instilled by the artifact, and can make simple decisions (roughly the equivalent of a 6 intelligence).

This light is permanent once placed and its effect can only be negated by covering its 5-foot circumference source area with something that would mask it completely so that no ray can be emitted. Powers which would dispel magic/evil cast at the level of the wielder will cancel its effect for 1-3 rounds only. Darkness spells have no effect and these only appear to be absorbed by it, but a light spell has a 10% chance per casting of negating it for 1-3 rounds. It expends 6 charges from the wand to place one of these light sources.

3— *Detect Precious Gems and Metals*: This allows the wielder to locate precious gems and metals in a 120-foot radius about him at no charge expenditure. The wand, through a "warm feeling" for metals or a "cold feeling" for gems, imparts a general indicator of the type located. If the wielder is a worshipper of Hades, the worth of gems or metals thus located are indicated by the intensity of the imparted feeling, growing diametrically throughout the range. For instance, metals detected at the highest levels are indicated as the hand is almost seared from the imparted heat, and likewise for gems, where at its highest

level the hand almost grows numb due to the imparted coldness.

Selling this item is problematic; and good-aligned persons aware of its existence will insist that it be destroyed. Most sane folk will shun it, and only a few brave or greedy merchants will have anything to do with it and then only at what they consider a risk while doing so. Given these circumstances, its worth is severely devalued unless some other eager source is located for its sale (1% chance per month, then triple its listed value). Value: 9000 gp.

### 31. Magical Concealed Door/Stairs Down to Tunnel.

The wall here contains a concealed door that can only be located by wearing the silver "skull ring" that is in the possession of the Skeleton King. If the party approaches within 10 feet while wearing the ring, the door becomes faintly visible and reveals a circular keyhole. If the ring is inserted into the hole for which it seems constructed, the door slowly opens outward, revealing a 5-foot-wide set of ancient, rough-hewn stairs leading downward. The musty smell of ages of decay assault the PCs as they stand there.

The stairs wind downward for 500 feet, taking twisting and circuitous routes by way of smaller interconnecting passages to continue their descent into the earth. The dusty air in these confines is oppressive and the party must stop frequently to take short breaks and regain their breaths. After a very long descent down these stairs, a 10-foot-wide passage northeast occurs which proceeds 100 feet onward to a point just southwest of Key #1 of Part II— Warren of the Ghools.

## Part II: Warren of the Ghoos

What is here presented is very simply an area that is a warren for a cursed race of beings—the ghoos. The GM should carefully study the appendix information regarding these creatures, as they are unique amongst fantasy beings.

Unlike the preceding adventure contained in this product, this scenario has different challenges to overcome, not the least of which is that the party has a lot of battling ahead to win through these caverns and thus be on their way into the mysterious confines of the Underworld, to which this warren links in many instances. **Key #13** is a pit that allows exit to the surface world, and more exactly near the *Monastery of Evil*, a forthcoming project from this author.

**Key #24** is an overgrown area which, when finally cleared, allows exploration of caverns hitherto only plumbed and investigated by the races of the Underworld, and more specifically by the gnomes of this region. **Key #23** allows access to the surface world near a small thorp which GMs may name and sculpt themselves, making that area exclusive to their own settings or campaigns. **Key #22** is a strange, icy stream, the Titar; the fresco near it allows access to major parts of the Underworld. Furthering the development of the latter adventure hook is the responsibility of each individual GM and no immediate guides are provided herein. However, the three-part adventure, *The Gates of Hades*, a future release penned by this author, will detail much of this matter.

### Continuing the Adventure (Prescriptions)

The prescriptions for this adventure for PC levels, magic and other relative parts are no different from those set forth in the preceding adventure. Refer to those sections there for guidance in readying the party for an adventure herein.

**GM Background:** The warren is loosely ruled by a King H'Lumrsh, in real life a great but eccentric artificer who insulted the gods and found himself cursed in his present form. Ghoos attack the party on sight as trespassers. They are liable to take prisoners, but consider humans ill-suited as slaves in the Underworld, so they will only do so 50% of the time.

**Demarcation Points:** These first occur at **Key #1**. The ghoos are very territorial and mark the extent of the warren with symbols common to them. Deciphering these is impossible through standard means or by normal magical powers as the glyphs are too new an occurrence and are not known by sages of the surface world. In fact, copying and bringing these back for future study by scholars might (75% chance) garner the party a small reward (200-500 gp), and they might even receive a quest from those interested in these glyphs (90% chance) which will guarantee an additional reward tripling the first payment if they secure a complete set of symbols and, along with that, information regarding their meanings (note **Key #14's** sub-section, **Booty Chest** contents).

**Ghoos Tactics:** The ghoos as a whole maintain a semi-cooperative community. If pressed with the possibility of their own destruction, ghoos located at the keyed encounter areas retreat and form up with others of their brethren. They may (50% chance) in any case warn other nearby ghoos that the warren has been attacked. The GM must note keyed encounters for this possibility. The warning will be sent via a single "runner" who will act, in turn, to alert the successive, remaining portions of the warren. No less than 50% of any keyed encounter's inhabitants respond to such intrusions. As ghoos do not cooperate together well, reinforcements will likely (75%) attack piecemeal as these arrive near battle scenes; otherwise they await further swelling of their ranks to surround and attack intruders. GMs must play out these scenarios intelligently, for this is the ghoos' home ground and they are not fearful of death (note the appendix entry for them).

**GM Note on Environment:** These are rough-hewn caverns, dust-filled and musty with the passing of years. Silt clings to the walls here and the corridors are layered with it. By the footprints left behind in the accumulated dust, it is easy to note that creatures or beings have recently passed here. The ceilings are 20 feet high unless otherwise noted in the encounter descriptions.

## Keyed Encounters (Part II)

### 1. Symbols on Walls.

Carved upon the walls here are many indecipherable symbols. They appear crudely etched into the stone and represent a variety of long and short strokes, circles and half circles, and other seemingly jumbled pictures and etchings.

This is a demarcation point for the ghoos, used to mark the extent of their warren. Crossing this point officially puts the party in "ghool territory" as far as the latter are concerned (also note the GM information on **Demarcation Points**, above).

### 2. Ghool Post.

You enter a large cavernous area having many corridors leading out of it. Near its center is a large grouping of strange **humanoid-like creatures** that immediately attack!

There is a 50% chance that one of the **ghoos** here



is dispatched to inform **Key #3** or **Key #8** of the party's presence within the warren. This starts a chain reaction of such warnings if the groups that are warned react in turn by informing other nearby groups (GMs, start your dice rolling).

**Ghoos (30):** AC 5, M 12", HD 2, HP 10 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

**Lord of the Hall:** AC 5, M 12", HD 3, HP 15, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

This group is merely a watch, set here to keep an eye on **Key #1's** corridor. They are lead by the Lord of the Hall. They have nothing of value except their base treasures.

### 3. Rabid Rat Den.

You enter a very large cavern that is apparently empty.

There are hundreds of holes in the walls and ceiling here, starting at about 20 feet. **Rabid rats** make their homes in them, darting back and forth at great speeds. They will be aware of the PCs entering their abode long before the PCs become aware of them. Increase their chances to surprise by +1 and their initial melee attacks by +2. They guard nothing of interest.

**Rabid Cavern Rats (12):** AC 7, M 12", HD 1, HP 4 each, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6; SA/SD size and speed reduces damage to them by -1, bite causes disease (20% chance) that does 1 HP damage per hour until cured.

### 4. Shrine to Hades.

This area is under constant guard by three **ghool priests** of Hades. Near the area's center point is a small shrine that may be investigated if the priests are dispatched.

**Ghool Priests (3):** AC 5, M 12", HD 5 (spells as Cleric 6), HP 15, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4 x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

**Ghoul Priest #1's spells:**

1st: *detect good, light, protection from good, purify food & drink*

2nd: *chant, hold person, slow poison*

3rd: *cure blindness, locate object*

**Ghoul Priest #2's spells:**

1st: *create water, light, detect magic, sanctuary*

2nd: *know alignment, silence 15 ft radius, snake charm*

3rd: *prayer, speak with the dead*

**Ghoul Priests #3's spells:**

1st: *create water, light, detect magic, protection from good*

2nd: *chant, hold person, silence 15 ft radius, snake charm*

3rd: *cure blindness, prayer*

**History/Odd Possessions:** These ghoulish priests are not really priests of Hades, but they believe that they are. They are actual priests, but they have been duped into believing that they are one with the main temple to Hades above, and have been accorded a sort of honorary status within the religion because of this. They are sincere, however, ever faithful in their thoughts to their perceived master even though they are not accepted by the temple priests as a whole, who secretly consider them abominations better put to servile use or otherwise exterminated. For more on this, read **Key #14**.

Each of them has collected odd items which they keep handy to offer their god or which they consider as tokens "given" to them by Hades.

**Priest #1**— rusty mace; three red rocks (granite-like deposits); a large, curved tooth (from a salamander, worth 700 gp if sold to an alchemist); four shiny, copper coins each etched with a large "H"; a pair of boots containing black silt (the boots were left by a thief who perished near a lava run many leagues from here; the left boot's heel is removable, and inside is discovered his "emergency stash" of three 500 gp tourmalines).

**Priest #2**— an old bronze buckler (cracked, aged and worthless); two 9-inch-high iron statuettes of gnomes with disfigurements to the faces as added by the priest; these items were trade pieces carried by a hapless gnome killed by this priest, and they are very heavy even for iron; if their bases are checked, a sly crafting technique is noted 50% of the time which as been used here to hide solid gold beneath the cast iron; each statuette is worth 300 gp if sold for its gold value or 10 gp each otherwise); a green wand carved from stone (calcified mineral painted green, no worth); three mummified fingers.

**Priest #3**— eight iron spikes (one is magical, and if pounded into a door or similar aperture to hold it shut it acts as a *wizard lock* cast at the 9th level; if it is *dispelled* it is made non-magical, but it can otherwise be used repeatedly. Value: 2,000 gp); a bronze helmet; a sack with gold dust (435 gp value); a goblin skull filed with 21 flints; a leather sack containing sixteen corroded arrowheads (the majority are useless, but four are **arrowheads +3** which can be fitted to shafts by a fletcher).

**Shrine of Rocks and Minerals**

This appears to be an agglomeration of rocks and minerals forming a seven-foot-high mound representing the god Hades, as indicated by the many religious pictures carved into it (skulls, gem, rivers, caverns, etc.). The head is made from a solid piece of granite; the arms are fashioned from clay and imbedded with rock and grit to hold them in place. The left hand holds a stalactite painted black, no doubt meant as the god's staff. Its torso is for the most part rock held together by mud-packs and grit, while its legs are each formed out of one piece of stone and are wide and thick. Its feet have wings etched into them with white dye. This edifice appears to be either a mere mockery of Hades, or at best a strange tribute to the god.

Hades, however, has not taken their toiling and sincerity as a joke. Anyone actually offering a sincere prayer (GM's discretion) before the shrine for at least 10 minutes is empowered by Hades as follows:

**Mages:** All used spells are immediately recovered. If none has been used, then all chargeable items on his or her person are recharged; if none of these circumstances exist, then nothing is conferred.

**Priests:** All used spells are immediately recovered. If none has been used, then the next time the priest prays for his or her spells they are fully conferred in only 10 minutes instead of the usual lengthy time.

**Fighters:** All weapons and armor gain a +1 bonus above their actual bonuses for a number of days equal to their Wis/2.

**\*Other Classes:** The next rock that they pick up reveals that it is a lump of coal containing a diamond worth 5,000 gp. There is a 50% chance that the diamond also has one special attribute as randomly determined from the table at **Key #19**.

\*Note that thieves/burglars gain no immediate

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benefit from this, but once at some future time they will have a lucky financial occurrence take place that will increase their profit from it by 100-300%. GMs must track the PC's dealings and determine when, and under what circumstances, this luck manifests.

Praying before this shrine can gain the above benefits only once yearly per PC. Those who at first disdained the shrine, and thus withhold praise for Hades, never thereafter gain benefits from prayers offered to the offended god.

**Destroying the Shrine:** Dismantling the shrine or otherwise destroying its image summons a calamitous curse. The dead ghoul priests' forms arise as spirits and join, creating a single seven-foot **spirit of retribution!** If the shrine is destroyed before the spirit-priests are killed, then each remaining spirit-priest is healed of all wounds sustained, thereafter each spirit-priest takes twice their regular hit points before being put to rest, they regain all spells if any have been used, and their armor classes increase by +4.

**Ghoul Spirit:** AC 3, M 15" (fly), HD 8, HP 50, Atk 3, Dmg 1-6x2 claws, 1-8 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-6 extra dmg, not effected by *light* as other ghouls, immunities as undead, cannot be turned or banished.

### 5. Boulder.

You note a large boulder wedged into a space to the east.

The boulder has a top clearance between it and the ceiling of one foot. The boulder's sides are not square with the adjoining walls and reveal small cracks through which the PCs may look. If the left-hand crack (northern side) is looked through while providing some light source in the space east of the boulder, a lever on the north wall there is noted. If the lever is somehow pulled upward, the floor under the boulder rises through some stupendous mechanistic action and the boulder slides west into the north/south passage. This unblocks the east corridor, creating a two-foot-wide crack on its north side, through which one PC at a time may proceed. The cantilever mechanism immediately resets itself and the floor is now at an even pitch again. The boulder weighs one ton.

**GM Note:** The boulder creates a thunderous noise as it impacts the western wall opposite it. If the **ghouls** at **Key #7** have not been dispatched, they investigate the noise. It is beyond their combined strengths to move the boulder, but they can circle around through **Key #4** to gain access to the PCs from that direction.

### 6. Pit Trap.

The floor here is trapped with a covered pit, 20 feet deep, with iron spikes on the bottom. PCs walking atop it automatically fall into it for 3-18 hit points of damage.

**GM Note:** If the Ghoul King escapes this direction he may jump over the pit trap's 8-foot length to the opposite side, as he has trained himself to do so. There is an 80% chance that anyone wearing less bulky than chainmail, or any magic armor, can jump over this obstruction without falling into it. Those wearing chainmail have a 70% chance, and those with platemail have a 50% chance, to clear it successfully.

### 7. Ghoul Post.

You enter a large cavernous area. Near its center is a sizable grouping of the same humanoid-like creatures that you encountered earlier. They appear to be of the same temperament, as they immediately pounce to the attack!

**Ghouls (30):** AC 5, M 12", HD 2, HP 10 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghouls.

**Lord of the Hall:** AC 5, M 12", HD 3, HP 15, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghouls.

**Aftermath (Investigating the room):** The room contains four old chests piled amid garbage and discards.

**Four Old Chests, Large:** Each chest seemingly contains garbage of the sort seen strewn about this room, such as old clothes, pitted boots, odd pieces of metal, cracked vases and dinnerware—the GM is encouraged to be as creative as possible here while providing a list. There is actually nothing within these of any value. However, the chests all radiate a faint magic, but of a diffuse variety not easily determined.

**Belcor's Box:** This initially appears as either a 2-foot-square golden-hued box or as four large chests, the latter each being approximately 3 feet long by two feet wide by 2 feet deep. If the chests are closely examined for size through use of a measuring stick or such, the first will be noted as being incidentally larger than the second, which in turn is larger than the third, which in turn is larger than the fourth, which of course means that the fourth is smaller than them all. Each difference in measure is minute (1/8 inch off for each). Starting with the smallest of the four, these can be deposited within each other, one after the next, until only one remains. Once accomplished, the remaining chest magically transforms into the square golden box. While the box is in this form, an inner handle is visible. If the handle is pulled, the box transforms back into the four chests. While in "chests form," the magic of **Belcor's box** is very dim and unrecognizable by any detection means. The golden box is of the **holding** variety, and its inner dimensional space has 48 square feet usable for storing items. When the golden box is transformed into the chests, the stored items are noted as divided between them, and in random order. This peculiarity was never conquered by the wizard (see below) who designed this.

**History:** This item was created by the wizard, Belcor the Blind, a reclusive man of great arcane powers. Legend notes that he affronted the gods and for this was permanently blinded by them. Having then little use for the surface world, Belcor traveled to the Underworld to seek an ancient remedy for his blindness. Popular belief places him there still, and it is further thought that someday he will return to the surface. Before he left on this fantastic quest, associates believe that he crafted many items which would ensure success in his travels, such as his namesake box.

This is a unique item that cannot be replicated unless one has in their possession the original **Belcor's Box** to use as a guide for doing so. Value: 15,000 gp.

## 8. Guardian Ghoos.

You are immediately set upon by 4 rather large-looking ghoos.

These **ghoos** have nothing of interest on their bodies. They are guardians, set by the King to guard

the corridors in this area, especially those leading to their sacred area (see **Key #9**).

**Earls of the Cavern (4):** AC 5, M 12", HD 4, HP 20, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

## 9. Burial Chamber.

This chamber has many mummified bodies in it, stacked neatly on top of each other. The whole area smells of some sort of chemical mixture. A very large copper tub is located near the southern wall. Near it are two large, covered barrels. The ceiling here is very high, perhaps higher than sixty feet. Its upper extremities appear, by comparison with the other walls here, to have been more recently excavated.

This is a sacred burial room for those ghoos who have honored the Warren in death by combat. The ceiling actually rises to 80 feet and was crafted this way to accommodate future internments, these being stacked as high as possible. The ghoos believe that in rising towards the surface world in this manner, they actually regain for the deceased in some small way the souls that they lost due to their curse.

In the room's northern section are 121 bodies arranged in four side-by-side, 50-foot-high stacks that buttress each other so that toppling does not occur. Investigating each stack of bodies will prove hazardous. As bodies are stacked atop each other, the only way to search any other than the topmost ones requires moving them, and this tactic is likely (90% chance) to cause the altered stack to topple. Climbing up or down a stack requires Dexterity checks at -1, or the same upset occurs. Moving even a portion of these bodies would take hours to accomplish and reveals nothing, as the ghoos return back to Hades all possessions which are left by the dead. These are either used by the Warren as directed by their priests or are sacrificed at appointed times to honor Hades.

The 7-foot-long copper tub is apparently intended to be used at some point to administer a single body, perhaps while interring them here. The two barrels contain a highly flammable embalming fluid. If open flame comes within 5 feet of these, they explode, causing 4-24 hit points damage to all those within 10 feet. There is a 50% chance that the stacked bodies

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combust due to fiery debris discharged by the blast. If this occurs, a toxic cloud of smoke erupts from the bodies, which if left unchecked over two hours' time spreads to encompass all of keyed areas #2 and #8 through #12. The smoke causes 1-4 hit points damage per round that PCs remain within it. The majority of it dissipates 2-4 hours afterwards to make the aforementioned areas breathable again without smoke damage occurring.

**Ghools** who discover the PCs here will be outraged at the trespass and for 4-40 rounds thereafter will fight at +1 to hit.

### 10. Ghool Guards (x2).

**Ghools** at both **Key #10** areas react to help defend the other if one or the other is attacked.

**Ghools (30):** AC 5, M 12", HD 2, HP 10 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

**Lord of the Hall:** AC 5, M 12", HD 3, HP 15, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

### 11. Armory/Ghool Guards.

The ghools here maintain great vigilance in guarding this room and ambush PCs, jumping out from around corners or otherwise reacting to their presence if noise is heard at **Key #11**.

**Ghools (30):** AC 5, M 12", HD 2, HP 10 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

**Lord of the Hall:** AC 5, M 12", HD 3, HP 15, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

A large collection of weapons is piled near the western wall:

- thirty longswords (two are +1 longswords)
- twenty-three short swords (three are flawed, breaking on the first hit)
- four flails (one is from a local baron and was stolen; it has armorer's initials on it and the baron's seal, though the PCs will not recognize it as they are, given the scenario's parameters, not from these parts; if they sell it within a 50-mile radius of the adventuring area, there is a 20% chance that the item will be recognized and that the PCs will be reported to authorities, with resulting investigations, fines, and/or possible arrests)

- +2 bardiche
- six crossbows
- a total of 407 crossbow quarrels

The northern alcove contains twenty mining picks and a dozen shovels, while the southern alcove has an assortment of odds and ends, such as a keg of nails, a box with various metal pieces, like doorknobs, hinges, spikes (153) hammers (3), wheel hubs, and other such miscellany which the ghools have accepted in bargain from surface merchants or the priests of Orcus for various reasons.

### 12. Goblin Slaves.

You see many goblins encamped here. Upon noting you they scuttle away in the opposite direction.

These are slaves of the ghools, workers here who help with menial labor and other tedious tasks. They are deathly afraid of anything in these caverns and retreat from the party unless directly ordered by a ghool of at least "Lord of the Hall" status to stand and defend or attack. There is a 25% chance that one of the goblins runs to inform nearby ghools (at **Key #11**, for instance) of the party's presence.

Their straw mats reveal nothing of value.

**Goblin Slaves (16):** AC 8, M 9", HD 1, HP 4 each, Atk 1, Dmg 1-4 (daggers); SD: will retreat if any of their numbers are killed.

### 13. Pit Down/Shaft Up.

Upon entering a gargantuan cavern you note that the floor before you is occupied by a 20-foot-radius pit that descends downward and out of sight. An identically sized shaft above this ascends upward and out of sight. A thick rope descends from the shaft to hang within reach along its eastern side. Beyond this and to the east are faint outlines of rough-hewn stone pillars.

The pit is virtually bottomless and cannot be descended except by magical or extraordinary means. The ghools typically cast renegades and other unfortunates into this pit. The upward shaft connects to the surface near an abandoned monastery now secretly occupied by the minions and priests of Orcus (Hades). More on this fanatical cult will be revealed in the adventure *Monastery of Evil*. The ghools have a special arrangement with

the cult's priests. In exchange for mining the lower levels of the monastery for some "sacred object," the ghoos receive from the priests certain mundane items from the surface world. In order to effect their transportation for these labors, the priests have contrived a mechanical lift. If the previously noted rope is pulled, this rings a bell near a guard post above to signal that cooperative ghoos have gathered in sufficient numbers to work.

An iron bucket is then lowered by way of a mechanical lift. Upon reaching the boarding area near the floor, the rope is again pulled upon to signal a stop, and then once again to signal a rise. Pulling upon the rope once at anytime afterwards signals stopping or going. Chains connecting the bucket to the lift provide a safe if unsteady ride at about 60 feet per minute

The entire upper shaft is 400 feet high. At 300 feet, tunnels to the right and left are seen. PCs on board the lift note that the air here is fresher. The left-hand tunnel continues on a slowly ascending and curving upward slant for 300 yards before finally breaching the surface. When at or on the surface, the PCs can see in the distance a monastery sequestered in a rocky vale surrounded by high cliffs. The right-hand tunnel dead-ends at 100 feet.

Proceeding past the two shaft-tunnels involves the PCs with the temple inhabitants. As noted throughout this work, the monastery and its ancillary areas will be described in a future adventure, though GMs are encouraged to develop the expansion adventure as needed before then, of course.



#### 14. Throne Area.

Upon nearing this area you note a large throne to the east, seemingly carved from a piece of solid rock. Gathered in this area are many ghoos. Rising from the throne is a ghoos wearing a bronze crown – the Ghoos King! He immediately snarls a command and the gathered forces attack!

The Ghoos King is very savvy and uses his magic to great effect in melee. If threatened with defeat, he attempts to escape via the secret door to the northeast, avoids the pit at Key #6, and moves the boulder at Key #5. He avoids the party while seeking

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access to the surface, whether that is by using the lift at Key #13, or by way of the Cairn.

If the King is killed, the PCs may claim his items for themselves. The key in his possession opens the **booty chest** which is behind the throne.

**Ghool King:** AC 3, M 12", HD 7 (HD 7 Fighter class ability), HP 42, Atk 2 (hell blades) plus bite, Dmg 2-5+ special x2/1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

**Personal Possessions:** Hell Blades (see below), +2 robe of protection, Crown of Havoc, booty chest key.

**Hell Blades:** These iron three-pronged blades are attached to the hands and wrists in some manner. When they strike there is a 50% chance that an additional 1-6 *fire* damage is inflicted. If both strike at once, the target automatically combusts and burns for 1-8 hit points for the next 1-4 rounds or until extinguished. It is believed that great Underworld elementalists contrive these weapons near an almost extinct volcano. Value: 10,000 gp.

**Crown of Havoc:** This bronze **Crown of Havoc** was given to the Ghool King as a strong bribe by the priest of Hades. Its origins are unknown, but undoubtedly it derives from the Underworld. The Crown is fashioned with a recessed hole in front where a magical gem made for it is placed. Note the list below. The Ghool King has three **black gemstones** (onyx) and three **white (pearl) gemstones**. Value: 8,000 gp +500 gp per gemstone.

**Black Gemstone:** These were specially crafted for the King. Once placed in the crown, the black gem permits the King to see as if he were in total darkness. It nullifies light sources which would otherwise cause him the abnormal fear ghoos have for these—instead these appear as grey areas to his vision. A single gem provides this magical power for 7 + 1-6 days before crumbling into dust. This new-found ability to brave the sunlit world again has put the King wholly in the passive control of the priests, who supply him with the black gems.

**White Gemstone:** Havoc! When inserted into the Crown, for the next 2-16 turns the wearer fights as a berserker. He sustains 1/2 damage from all attacks, gains a bonus of +1 to damage, but also fights at a -1 penalty to his attack rolls.

**Booty Chest:** This is a small chest with keyhole; it is always locked. Inside it are 300 gp, 600, sp, three 500-gp gems, five 100-gp gems and three 50-gp gems. Additionally, there are four stone tablets inscribed with ghool writing on their left sides and having common tongue translations on their right. These could be kept and read, allowing a PC studying it for 20-40 days to thereafter speak and understand a rudimentary form of ghoolish (good in 75% of all communication cases).

**Ghoos (30):** AC 5, M 12", HD 2, HP 10 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

**Lords of the Hall (4):** AC 5, M 12", HD 3, HP 17 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghoos.

**Giant Cavern Rats (8):** AC 7, M 12", HD 1, HP 4 each, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6; SA/SD size and speed reduces damage to them by -1.

### 15. Ghool Mages.

At the beginning of each of the passages to these two keyed areas are magic mouth spells which challenge those nearing them (within 10 feet). If the magic mouths are triggered at either of these locations (see below) there is a 50% chance that the noise created also alerts each mage's counterpart, with a corresponding chance that he appears 1-4 rounds later.

Carved into the wall here is a face of an ordinary looking ghool. As you approach, it shouts a challenge: "Speak the password so I know that you are from the King!"

The password is known only to the King or to those whom he informs. The actual password, as spoken in ghoolish, is something like *Ich-grag-nach-arh!* In the common tongue, this means, "It is I, the King."

This arrangement not only informs the mages that they have visitors (by them hearing the shouted challenge) but reveals whether or not the visitors are indeed interlopers, as well. In all cases, the mages will not be surprised when the party enters their respective quarters but instead both mages receive +1 on reaction rolls the first round. There is a 50% chance that they will use one of their **potions** (see below) before the party enters their chambers, but only if they are aware of the attack upon the Warren.

**Ghool Mages (2):** AC 5, Mv 12", HD 5 (spells as MU 8), HP 28 each, #AT 1, Dmg 1-4 by dagger.

**Ghool Mage #1 (SW) Possessions:** elixir of invisibility, draught of levitation, 135 gp in side pouch.

**Ghool Mage #1's spells:**

1st: *jump, magic missile, message, shield*

2nd: *detect evil, rope trick, strength*

3rd: *gust of wind, hold person, lightning bolt*

4th: *monster summoning II, plant growth*

**Ghool Mage #2 (NE) Possessions:** elixir of flying, draught of polymorph, 275 gp in side pouch.

**Ghool Mage #2's spells:**

1st: *comprehend languages, enlarge, friends, light*

2nd: *L's Trap, levitate, web*

3rd: *fireball, phantasmal force, protection from normal missiles*

4th: *extension I, massmorph*

Both rooms reveal poor appointments for these mages: a stone slab used to rest upon, tattered garments which appear just better than those they wear (actually used in ceremonies!), and sundry other items common to ghools, which for the most part are junk. The only useful item (SW room) is contained in a medium-size iron box, the top of which is inscribed with a skull and crossbones. If opened, the box reveals a small lantern with oil enough within it to burn for two hours.

### 15A. Large Armoire.

You see a decrepit armoire positioned against the western wall.

The ghool mages from both rooms (Key #15) have access to the "Great Armoire". It is their real and only treasure, and they jealously guard it from others.

The history of this piece of furniture is bizarre. It was stolen by thieves from a local Duke's estate along with the booty that they had acquired there. They were subsequently ambushed by raiders and killed, and the armoire was then transported to the temple of Hades (on the surface), where it was picked through. The contents were replaced with all manner of fake objects relating to spell-crafting and magery—old worthless tracts, phony treatises, books containing debunked philosophies and piles of other esoteric rubbish. It was in turn traded to the ghool mages for many rare items that they

possessed. However, two things were overlooked in the transferring of this piece: an old **magical pamphlet**, and a secret compartment containing an "incriminating letter" (see below).

**Magical Pamphlet.** This old and tattered pamphlet would seem just a piece of garbage if it weren't for its front cover, which details three obvious wizards (as denoted by their dress and the symbols thereon) sitting about a large table in conversation with one another. Between them, upon the table, is a large conch shell that one of the wizards is eyeing.

The pamphlet contains the following sentences:

1st Sentence: "I say it's a conch!"

2nd: Sentence: "It is not a conch!"

3rd Sentence: "You are both right!"

If a conch shell is produced (GMs must judge the availability of this item) and these sentences spoken one after another in its presence, the pamphlet's magic *identifies* magic items, going so far as to list them as appended descriptions following the third line of writing. These descriptions may thereafter be kept or erased at the owner's wont, but the total is limited to 12 item descriptions before erasure must occur to assure up-to-date descriptions as these are produced. The numbers of magic items identifiable per week are based upon the user's level × Intelligence divided by 20. Going beyond this number of identifications per week produces in the descriptor line gibberish or dubious descriptions which the GM should have fun creating. Value: 10,000 gp.

**Incriminating Letter:** If the armoire's back is carefully searched, a crack is found. If the nearby finishing nails are pried loose, or if the wood is peeled back in any case, an unmarked envelope is found. Inside it is a letter dated many years ago and addressed to "My Precious Duke and Master." Its contents reveal that a local Duke Verle was having an affair behind his wife's back. If the letter is made known to Duke Verle, he pays the PCs a "hush fee" of 5000 gp. If the PCs attempt to blackmail him, he has them assassinated within 1-4 days unless they flee the kingdom during that time.

### 16. Seer Wall.

This room contains what is in essence the history of the ghools to date. Inscribed upon the walls are their unusual glyphs, pictograms, and an endless array of partially recognizable words in the common tongue,

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Intelligence Range	Affect
3-9	Nothing happens.
10-12	An image appears of a sagely ghool with kind eyes. It looks over the party and reaches for the most unwise amongst them (compare Wisdom scores for all party members). If the PC resists or retreats, the phantom fades and nothing happens, but if the PC accepts this advance, he receives a Wisdom bonus of +1 for the next 50-300 days. This bonus can be gained once per PC and no more.
13-15	The PC gains insight into crafting a magic weapon or a scroll of up to 7 spells at 25% the actual cost and in 50% of the actual time it would normally require. If the PC is not the one crafting these devices, then they must spend at least 33% of their real time instructing the person who will be accomplishing this, as their unique insight and guidance is needed to accomplish the crafting without failure. This effect is not renewable by the same PC and it only manifests twice yearly.
16-17	The PC receives insight into choosing only the best of <b>Persophone's Crystals</b> at <b>Key #19</b> . This increases the chance of accruing a special <b>Crystal</b> by +10% per pick (20% chance each). This effect lasts 1-100 days and is not renewable by the same PC.
18+	<i>Jumrruuch's Possession:</i> The <b>spirit</b> of the dead mage manifests in the host PC's body, taking full control of it. Upon deducing the date, asking the PCs pointed questions about their histories and deriving as much from their collected knowledge base as possible (this takes from 12-24 hours total, as the spirit uses a limited form of telepathy to strain out indecision and confusing thoughts), the spirit relinquishes the body. The PC who was possessed now finds their Intelligence increased permanently by +1. The spirit possesses only one PC from the same adventuring party but will thereafter, in six-month cycles, do so again to update itself on accumulated data. However, the same PC can only gain the +1 Intelligence boost once, though the spirit still gladly uses them again as an information conduit!

and other etchings which in whole or part are all but nonsense even to the most learned PC.

One of the ancient Ghool Kings, Jumruuch the Learned, was a mage of some high ability; and it was his special interest as a worshipper of Persophone to record magical symbols here that would impart knowledge to those who touched them. Unfortunately the King who replaced him, one Gnash the Destroyer, had most of the symbols obliterated out of jealousy for Jumruuch's memory and accomplishments, so only one remains.

There is a 10% chance per PC per turn they are touching this wall that the last of Jumruuch's symbols will be activated. Its effect varies by the intelligence of those touching it (see chart above).

### 17. The Ancient Dead.

Upon entering this area you note four niches carved into the western walls and within these are ghoos. They are all crowned in gold and wield longswords. They immediately rush forth from their niches to do combat!

**Ancient Dead (4):** AC 5, M 12", HD 4, HP 20, Atk 3, Dmg 1-8 (longsword), 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes chillbane for 1-3 extra dmg, not adversely effected by light, note the appendix for ghoos.

There is a 20% chance per ancient dead that they carry one of the following random items of value (roll 1d6):

Roll (1d6)	Random Items
1	ring with a random gem (worth 100- 1000 gp)
2	necklace with random gems (worth 200-2000 gp)
3	a random <b>potion</b>
4	a random <b>magic weapon</b> (GMs be stingy with powerful ones)
5	a magic <b>scroll</b> of 1-3 spells (1st through 4th level)
6	roll twice, re-rolling on a 6

## 18. Ghool Ward.

This is a warding post, set up to check advances into the Warren's precincts by wandering beings. Its **guards** concentrate their attentions on the southern passage, so there is an initial 50% chance that they are surprised by an entry from the north unless they have been previously alerted to the party's presence.

**Duke of the Warren (1):** AC 2, M 6", HD 7, HP 35, Atk 2, Dmg 1-8 longsword/1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

Special Possessions: platemail and kite shield, two **healing draughts** (heals 1-10 HP each).

**Earls of The Cavern (6):** AC 5, M 12", HD 4, HP 20 each, Atk 3, Dmg 1-4x2 claws, 1-6 bite; SA/SD bite causes *chillbane* for 1-3 extra dmg, note the appendix for ghools.

## 19. Blue Crystals.

The party enters a small cave with walls covered in blue crystals of various shapes and hues. The crystals immediately react to your light sources by seemingly absorbing and reflecting them in bright, blue rays back upon you.

This is a rare find, a cave filled with **Persephone's Crystals**. Legends note that the wife of Hades has

touched certain objects or areas of the Underworld, which causes these to acquire magical, or other special, qualities. The crystals can be removed from the walls here if this is done carefully, such as with a small hammer and chisel and tapping lightly. Each crystal has a 10% chance of having a special property as delineated on the chart below (roll 1d12).

This concentration of crystals has an elemental **earth spirit** attached to it that guards them from outright pillaging or destruction. If PCs become greedy and take more than three crystals each, or if they indiscriminately start destroying them, the spirit immediately manifests as a 10-foot-tall elemental of earthen rock. The elemental attacks.

**Elemental Spirit of Earth:** AC 2, M 9", HD 12, HP 74, Atk 1, Dmg 2-24; SA/SD 1/2 dmg from cold but slows it by 3", fire increases its attacks to twice the normal number of attacks and adds an additional 1-3 *fire* damage per hit, +1 or better to hit, meld with rock, allowing no attacks against it to occur.

The elemental does not pursue adversaries beyond the cave, but merely remolds with the rock here if the PCs retreat and waits to ambush them again if they return. If it is defeated then all of the crystals can be taken without again summoning the elemental. There are a total of 60 crystals. They magically "regrow" here every 60 days.

Roll (1d12)	Special Property (Key #19)
1	ruby (500 gp)
2	sapphire (1000 gp)
3	Removes effects of <i>sleep</i> if touched to a sleeping being (one use).
4	Removes effects of the most volatile poisons if touched to a poisoned being (one use).
5	Resists 20 points of <i>fire</i> damage and then extinguishes.
6	Resists 20 points physical damage and then extinguishes.
7	Removes effects of <i>fear</i> if touched to a frightened being (one use).
8	Absorbs ambient light and reissues it as double the radius of the original light source (permanent).
9	Acts as a permanent flint when scraped against any type of rock.
10	Raises value of gems in its proximity (5-foot radius) by 20% if these are exposed to it over three consecutive days (one use).
11	<i>Raises the dead</i> if touched to a dead body (one use).
12	diamond (2000 gp)

## 20. Chasm of Echoes.

You see a chasm that descends downward and out of sight.

Talking within 10 feet of this chasm creates echoes from within it, but not in the speaking PC's voice; in fact, the echoing voices seem distantly familiar but the PC hearing these cannot pin down the intimate source. If anyone remains near this gulf for more than six rounds, 2-5 shades issue forth from the chasm. They float aimlessly upward to regard those whose voice(s) created the echoes.

One shade speaks: "We are the dead of Hades who have been turned away from his gate. We seek refuge from our suffering. Pay us gold to pass so that we may appease the Lord of the Undead with the offering and enter his realm in peace."

If a sum of 200 gp or more per shade is paid, the shade(s) depart back into the chasm with the gold, which magically disappears with them. They will never rise again to demand payment from a party that has previously paid this toll. If they are ignored, their forms change into those of terrible wraiths and they attack!

**The Forsaken Wraiths (2-5):** AC 5, M 12" (fly), HD 5, HP 24 each, Atk 1, Dmg 1-6; SA/SD touch causes *fear* (Save vs. spells to avoid), turned/banished as -1 level lower, holy or blessed water does 2-12 hit points damage, 1/2 dmg from *cold*, +1 or better to hit.

If the chasm is plumbed, at 100 feet down an audible echoing becomes apparent, which in turn creates a mild alarm in those at this depth. Continued descent to 200 feet causes the fearful echoing of dead spirits to increase and saving throw vs. spells at -2 are required for 1-2 turns while passing this point to avoid fear effects. Those failing these flee the chasm and will never enter it again. At 300 feet, the PCs locate a room. Near its center is a large treasure pile of 2006 gp, 3233 sp, and a **scroll of commanding undead** (which allows 2 uses, see below), the latter which can be located after several minutes of searching through the coins.

Those who successfully defeat the chasm's magic may freely enter it at future times with no ill effects.

**Scroll of Commanding Undead:** This item allows the wielder to either banish/destroy, command to service, or hedge undead, except the caster chooses which of these



three powers to execute in the closing mantras of each evocation. The effective banishing-destroying/commanding level is at +1 the caster's current level if he or she is a priest, or half that if they are otherwise. Hedging undead creates a 10-foot radius that moves with the caster and into which undead cannot enter. This effect lasts for one hour per 6 Wisdom points that the scroll wielder possesses. These scrolls are usually wrought from non-human flesh and have 1-3 commands inscribed upon them. Value: 1,200 gp/command.

## 21. Mound of Dead Bodies.

You see a bizarre sight. A large putrid mound of dead bodies has atop it a single ghoul who appears to be meditating in a lotus position!

This ghoul is a **demon** in disguise that has been cursed by Orcus for having done poorly in gathering souls for his realm; he has been consigned here until he has amounted 1,000 souls, a goal to which he is well on his way (he has 399). Attacking him as he wishes (to relieve him temporarily of his curse), instead summons the demon in real form, wherein it can attack. However, it cannot leave the area of the mound in its ghoul form so it must incite those nearby to attack it. Most of the dead bodies are those of ghouls who have over time attacked this demon.

The "ghoul" claims to be a mystic if talked with. It does not appear affected at all by the PCs' light sources, as they may readily note. The creature is far from affable, however, and it immediately castigates the PCs in the foulest terms for being here and orders them to return the way they came or face his wrath. He brandishes a long dagger and threatens the party with it. If the party proceeds around him, he incites them by saying: "You now have my curse! Any water you touch will cause you ill from here on!" This is a measured boast, taking into account that the PCs might proceed to **Key #22** and be adversely affected by the stream there (q.v.). If the demon is attacked, read the following:

The figure transforms into a seven-foot-tall human with a dark grey ram's head that draws forth a vicious-looking black dagger!

The Demon of Orcus may at this juncture move free of the mound, but upon killing or driving away all PCs it must return here, whereat its shape alters to that of the ghoul again as per the curse. It fights to the death to honor the orders of its master. Upon its death, the mound-bodies disintegrate into dust and are blown upon a chill wind into the Titar stream where they are borne to the lower depths of the Underworld.

**Demon of Orcus:** AC 1, M 12", HD 8, HP 44, Atk 2 (**horn dagger**), Dmg 2-8x2; SA/SD +1 or better to hit, MR 20%, immune to cold, at will it senses defensive weaknesses allowing it to either (50%) attack at +4 to hit in a combat round, or (50%) to do +4 damage from one of its attacks.

**Special Note:** The skin of this demon may be flayed from its body and used as articles to cover the feet and hands of four individuals. This is in keeping with the clue derived from Heckazar's journal in Part I, **Key #30**. It takes a matter of minutes while wielding the **horn dagger** (q.v.) to flay the demon's skin for these articles. They must somehow be fastened to the extremities they will protect. Refer to **Key #22**, Icy River, below, for uses of the demon's skin.

**Horn Dagger:** This 4-foot-long magical blade is carved from hornblende and has many curved flanges. It is especially useful for flaying, providing even the most unformed with proficiency in that task when used for such a purpose. This dagger is commonly possessed by demonic Underworld servants of Orcus. Roll d100 when one is located to identify its intrinsic plus to attack and damage.

d100	Magic Bonus
01-40	Normal to-hit and damage (2-8)
41-60	+1
61-85	+2
86-95	+3
96-98	+4
99-100	Slayer (GMs will need to determine what race the blade is aligned against. This variety is typically only given to Orcus's most trusted generals or servants)

## 22. Icy River (Titar Stream)/Huge Fresco.

You see a small stream, perhaps five feet wide, flowing west to east. Its waters appear almost black and clear in the underground light, and a faint mist rises from it. It appears no deeper than maybe a foot or less and can be easily crossed.

**GM Note:** Moving within this stream produces ill effects unless the PCs doing so are protected by the demon skin derived from Key #21. Roll 1d6 for the Titar Stream's ill effects and consult the table above.

Upon crossing the stream, the area south of it may be investigated.

Upon the southern wall here is an ancient fresco running the entirety of its west-to-east width. A panoramic view of the Underworld is represented, giving rough but critical details as if the artist had intimate knowledge of these areas: Caverns filled with many-limbed beings of fantastic mien never before seen rise like nightmares before you; rivers oddly pigmented in different colors flow in and out of the scene. Upon one of these watercourses is a man poling a small craft across it with two souls hunched low behind him and others pleading from a nearby riverbank. Further, you note a three-headed hound standing before a massive gate, with battlements rising high to the cavernous ceiling above; birds of prey or things resembling them swoop from another scene, driving a maddened group of souls beneath them into a gulf of fire. The last scene is a massive throne deposited

in a cavern sculpted from the rarest raw metals and gems. Sitting upon the throne is a man robed in black and silver, wearing a crown of darkest black. In his hand is a simple-looking black staff topped by a large, clear crystal.

Searching any section of the fresco causes a magical doorway in the south to open. This is a direct entryway into the beginning portion of *The Gates of Hades* adventure, a forthcoming project from this author.

**Following the Steam:** The Titar is a minor tributary of the River Styx. Its water feeds many leagues below and beyond. Proceeding along it either east or west eventually (after 100-600 yards) presents the party with an impassable area blocked by stone. These routes cannot achieve the way into the Underworld.

## 23. The Way Out.

In this room you espy a large 20-foot-wide circular pit in the ceiling above. It is covered over by thick vines that block any ascent.

The aperture provides a way back to the surface, but the vines completely block it for a distance of 20 feet. Thereafter, the pit rises 400 feet to the surface, crisscrossed along the way by the same thick, root-like vines that may be used as hand- and footholds to ascend. Upon reaching the surface exit, another 20-foot-thick agglomeration of these vines is encountered. In both cases, any strategy to clear

### 1d6 Icy River Effects (Key #22)

- 1 *Freeze.* Save vs. spells at -2 or the PC is frozen as an ice sculpture.
- 2 *Confusion* for 2-24 hours (no saving throw).
- 3 *Hades' Abrogation.* Complete forgetfulness sets in so that the PC can never find their way for more than one turn before stopping to ponder who they are and what they are doing. Spell-casting is not possible while under this effect. If this occurs while the PC is isolated from civilization, then there is a 1% chance per month that those affected by this potent curse can by themselves find their way back to it. Otherwise they become as one of the "Lost of Hades" and wander aimlessly, stopping only at times to eat available substances to sustain them. The curse is not curable short of a special rite performed by a priest of Hades (cost equals 25,000-75,000 gp, depending upon their avarice that day), by acts of equally powerful gods, or by drinking from a special fountain said to be guarded by the offspring of harpies, which legend locates upon an island accessed by one of the nine rivers of the Underworld.
- 4 *Energy drain.* The PC loses one experience level (no saving throw).
- 5 *Death.* Save vs. death at -2 or die.
- 6 *Fear.* PC suffers from fear for 2-24 hours (no saving throw).

the vines opens both apertures so that the PCs may ascend and/or exit the pit without difficulty. If the PCs do not immediately disguise the pit opening upon exiting to the surface, upon re-entering it 1-2 days later there is a 50% chance that a HD 5-7 monster will have made its residence therein. GMs must choose an appropriate beast. It of course attacks anyone entering its new lair.

#### 24. The Way Onward.

You discover that the passage ends ahead of you. Thick root-like vines choke the way onward, making it impossible to proceed without first removing them. Carved onto the tunnel's walls here are symbol patterns similar to those as first seen upon entering these caverns.

The symbols merely demark another boundary point for this Warren, and one that the ghouls have been recently avoiding due to the "demon on the mound" at Key #21 and amid rumors of a "powerful evil being" to the east. Read the following to anyone viewing the vines up close:

A small skeleton, perhaps no larger than three feet in height, is entangled amongst the vines. Its attitude indicates that it must have been trying to proceed west through the vines where it either became entangled and starved, or perhaps something killed it as it negotiated the passage. Its true history may never be known.

If the body is carefully examined, its size, shape and accoutrements—soft leather boots, a now dirtied and pitted but once well-made cloth hat,

a bronze belt buckle and a rusted hammer of iron—all indicate that it was at once a gnome. If a spell is used to speak with its dead spirit it answers only with this riddling poem:

#### The Dead Gnome's Lament

*It came and we went,  
Running or flying,  
Depending who's bent,  
To its evil, damn lying.*

*Cousins all rosy,  
Now white and so pale,  
Were dropping like posies,  
Into its veil.*

*Don't ask me to drink,  
From wells all so dark,  
It's not mead as you think,  
When teeth hit that mark.*



## Appendix: New Monsters

### Barrow Wight

Occurrence: Extremely rare

Number Encountered: 1-4

Armor Class: 4

Move: 15"

Hit Dice: 6

Lair: 100%

Treasure: Always special per area guarded; ornaments

Attacks: 2 claws

Damage: 1-6 plus possible energy drain

Special: Turned or banished as spectre

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Average (9-12)

Alignment: Evil (Lawful)

Size: M 5 ft. - 6 ft.

Psychic/Psionic: Nil

Barrow wights are similar to wights except for one formidable power, which invigorates their undead souls, constrains them to an exact area (a tomb, cairn, mound, graveyard, etc.) where they were summoned and empowered.

These superior undead appear as dark and fast-moving figures, usually clothed in shredded robes. Their claws are long and their nails thick from years in the grave, and their drawn and deathly faces sport distended mouths with long teeth. Their head hair consists of patches of various lengths. Barrow wights are summoned by necromancers and other fell mages to guard important areas such as treasure vaults, strategic entrance points in graveyards, secret passages into the Underworld, et al.

Barrow wights will sometimes (60% of the time) have ornaments upon their bodies, such as rings, necklaces, armbands, etc. In these cases, 1-4 pieces are discovered, each worth 10-60 gp, with a 50% chance that if four occur then the fourth is a gem-studded one worth 100-600 gp. However, GMs may vary this by area. For instance, if they occur summoned from poorer graves, then decrease the total value of each piece by 20-70% or more; if from richer sites, increase these values by 20-70% or more, depending.



They attack with two claws, and if both attacks impact the same target at once, *energy drain* occurs.

Due to the strong necromantic power that creates them, these beings are turned as spectres. They are immune to *sleep*, *fear* and mental-based spells which would control them, such as *charm*, etc. Holy or blessed water does only 2-7 hit points of damage per vial that strikes them. They are not affected by spells that raise the dead. Victims killed by barrow wights are not transformed into barrow wights themselves.

## Ghool

Occurrence: Very rare (never above ground during daylight)

Number Encountered: 20-200 if in Major Warren (20%), 10-40 if in enclave (50%), 1-6 otherwise (30%), including neutral outcasts

Armor Class: 5 base; or by armor

Move: 12"

Hit Dice: 2 standard, or above for specials

Lair: 50%

Treasure: 3-30 cp, 2-20 sp and 1-6 gp per level & special (see text)

Attacks: 3 or 1 (plus bite)

Damage: 1-4 x2 claw, 1-6 bite, or by weapon type (plus bite)

Special: Bite can cause extra disease damage; repelled by light (or -2 to attacks); specials may have various class abilities

Magic Resistance/Saves: Saves at highest per class or type

Intelligence: 3-18 range (average: 11)

Alignment: Any Evil (90%); and in very rare cases Neutral (10%)

Size: M 5 ft. - 6 ft.

Psychic/Psionic: Possibly (GM option)

A ghool appears as a misshapen human or humanoid, pale of features, wearing clothes of the grave or those chosen by them to imitate their former lives. They are indistinctly related to the voracious "ghoul" by name similarity only, and are a special form of undead.

A ghool is created by a necromantic curse visited upon them by a god who slays the individual and then gives him immediate life after death in ghool form. They are disenfranchised beings that collect in the Underworld, driven to it by the light of day they can no longer abide.

They neither hunger nor thirst and they have a limited immortality, as they do not age. They experience moments of their former existences where their will is strong and their memories clear, but these tend to fade over the years as the connections with their past lives become more tenuous.

For the most part, these creatures seek release from their curse in death, and thus are noted as evil abominations with no restraint in combat and no mercy for those whom they defeat. Their foreboding existence has made them fearless and dangerously potent in battle.

Their brood is led by a "King" who can be deposed or elected by majority vote at any time. The King's duties are sparse, but include that of teacher, and for these qualities is a King elected in particular, for he accumulates, organizes and retransmits knowledge from and between all ghoos so that it is thereafter known among them and is not forgotten. This strange work-around is due to the fact that most ghoos are too egotistical and selfish to share knowledge between themselves other than through the conduit of the King. The beginnings of this tribal dissemination of information has its roots in the ancient savagery of this peculiar group, and it is only recently that some headway is being made to revert to a customary knowledge base and communication standard. This which would forestall the loss of primary knowledge is subsequently lost over years of non-use.

The King also has in his charge many servants whose duty it is to carve upon the Warren's walls the glyphs which demark their territorial boundaries. These pictures are also memory codes that they have accepted as a secondary aspect of knowledge transference, and all in the community except outcasts knows these. Additionally, the King is oftentimes (60%) a sage of some ability, though GMs must ascribe the categories and knowledge spheres to which he has access. About 70% of the time this indicates some greater past association with his current knowledge base; otherwise such knowledge was acquired after death and most often concerns that of the local and/or greater Underworld and the pieces of information the King has absorbed over hundreds of years of receiving and transmitting such knowledge back to the community

As ghoos cannot reproduce, their numbers are only swelled in a haphazard way as the gods curse more beings that have lived abhorrent lives—murderers, assassins, thieves, and other wicked beings that have morally debased themselves. This outré repopulation method usually only maintains their numbers at a status quo, replacing those who have "escaped" their curse through a second death by combat with the many inimical creatures of the Underworld.

Ghoos can be solitary beings, preferring to live their lives away from the rigors and demands of the community, and this is in keeping with their past lives as miscreants and deviants who were at odds with their former societies. Some of these creatures

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(10% at most) are also neutral in outlook, but these are uncompromising ones who have in turn been outcast and on the main have not survived well as forsaken loners within the Underworld. If these types are found, they with others as true neutrals do, but they are always on guard. Outcasts are normally attacked by all other organized ghoos, who hold them in contempt for disdaining their society.

Befitting their wandering natures, ghoos form numerous enclaves beneath the earth, whereat

they gather others of their ilk. They also use their conniving intelligence to subvert and control lesser beings, and such slaves or beasts as goblins and giant rats are often found in their territory. Due to the vastness of the Underworld, however, where these enclaves might be located is questionable, but they must exist considering the ghoos' longevity and wanderlust nature.

A Major Warren is normally the hub from which such enclaves emanate, and this is where the main



concentration of these horrid beings resides with their King. Oftentimes this Major Warren is located nearer to the surface world, whereat the eldest of its members were first ensconced, there to build an ever-burgeoning enclave into what it now presents. Oftentimes these Major Warrens cooperate with evil beings from the surface world in return for information about that realm, or in exchange for arms and armor, spell components, books (which are highly prized) and other sundries.

Goblin slaves are common to the ghoos, who use them to scout the caverns and do excavations to expand Warrens or enclaves. For every 50 ghoos encountered in lair there will also be a 4-12 goblin slaves of the lowest levels. They also train giant rats as pets, and every Warren will have 2-20 of them and every enclave 1-6.

Ghoolish military is based upon a loose tribal organization, with special leaders of higher levels and assumed titles as follows.

- For every 30 ghoos there is an additional "Lord of the Hall" of the 3rd level.
- For every 60 ghoos there is an additional "Earl of the Cavern" of 4th or 5th level, with either a 10% chance of them being a mage or a priest, or a 5% chance of being a thief or assassin. Each Earl possesses 1-3 gems of 100-200 gp value and a 5% chance of possessing a low-level magic item (GM's option); this in addition to regular items.
- For every 120 ghoos there is an additional Dux de Warren, or "Duke of the Warren," a ghool of 6th or 7th level, with either a 25% chance of being a mage or a priest, or a 15% chance of being a thief or assassin. Dukes of the Warren have 2-12 gems of 100-200 gp value and a 20% chance of possessing a low-level magic item (GM's option); this is in addition to regular items.

Their king is normally a mage or priest (70%) or a fighter (30%), with thieves and assassins rarely, if ever, occupying this high seat. As they are elected for their community skills alone, their level can vary from 3rd-7th, though Underworld legend reveals that there was once such a King who was very powerful. In addition to regular gear, kings will possess 30-300 gp, 1-10 random gems, 1-3 random pieces of jewelry and one good magic item (GM's option). A fanatical guard of 2-5 Lords of the Hall and 1-6 giant rats always accompany them. A Warren has good

treasure of the type found amongst men or bandits. In addition to this, the Ghool King keeps a "booty chest" used for dealing with other members or enclaves and with those surface-dwellers with whom they have commerce, this amounting to 1,000-3,000 gp in various coinage, gems and jewels. Enclaves fair less well until their communities expand and have treasure equating to lesser creatures like goblins or kobolds until their numbers reach 50 or more and their increased wanderings and battles produce more wealth. Their "booty chests" are by comparison sparse, with 50-500 gp in total valuables.

Ghoos are armed with weapons 50% of the time, as follows.

- 20% short swords
- 40% axes
- 40% spears (50% throwing spears)

Even though ghoos have a natural Armor Class, they can also choose to wear armor that would improve this beyond 5, but only 10% of their numbers at any time achieve ownership of the following:

- 80% chainmail and shield (5% chance per set that 1 in 10 is +1 magical)
- 20% plate mail & shield (3% chance per set that 1 in 10 is +1 magical)

Whether attacking with weapon or claws, ghoos can still deliver vicious bites with their needle-like teeth. Additionally, every successful bite has a 10% chance of inflicting 1-3 additional hit points of chilling damage, which is caused by a low-level blood disease they carry called "*chillbane*." Their own bodies are immune to *chillbane* but it can otherwise affect flesh-bearing creatures with a numbing cold. The effects are temporary as the host's bodily defenses fight off the disease almost instantly, but not before the disease causes damage.

**Ghool Anomalies:** Though ghoos are unliving, they are not affected by holy banishings or turnings, as their beings do not derive from the Negative Plane, but from an earth-born curse of the gods. Spells that hedge or damage undead and blessed or holy water are not effective against them. However, they cannot stand the presence of light in great amounts (greater than torchlight), thus anyone wielding such light can repel them for as far as the light's radius commands. Note that ghoos are aware of these deficiencies and have strategies for defeating light sources, such as *darkness* spells and well-timed ambushes. They may

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also control other creatures to attack the bearer of such sources whilst they stand off hurling spells or missiles. Ghoul legend states that some of their most ancient dead can remanifest for short time periods and in strange forms that resist light. On the opposite end, ghouls can see in the dark as if it were daylight, so they can use this to their advantage in sighting instances.

For combat purposes, ghouls will abide certain lights if ordered to attack or are cornered and forced to defend, but will not do so in light as bright as daylight. They attack at a -2 penalty in these instances, and any of their mages or priests within this light will not be able to concentrate correctly to cast spells or summon their infernal powers. Their fear is such that they retreat great distances at the merest ray of daylight, though they are not otherwise affected by it except as noted above.

Ghouls worship all manner of Underworld gods and demons, but make special praise in their slaving language to Hades, God of the Dead. They have nothing but the most foul imprecations for the surface gods, and they see the gnomish and dwarfish deities and their offspring as interlopers in Hades' domain, reviling them as stealers of the god's wealth that is his alone to give.

Ghouls speak an uncomplicated, lower form of common tongue and ghoolish, the latter a slaving, inhuman intonation of sounds produced from screeching and guttural vocalizations of common words which have no meaning to any but themselves. The most intelligent of their brood may also speak, or at least understand, goblin, dwarfish, gnomish or even some rare Underworld dialects, such as that of the dark elves.

Ghouls are not affected by *sleep* or *fear*, though they may be controlled through mind-affecting spells that would *charm* or *control* them.

## Tomb Skeleton

Occurrence: Very rare

Number Encountered: 1-4

Armor Class: 4 (average)

Move: 12"

Hit Dice: 4-6

Lair: 90%

Treasure: None but weapons and special gems

Attacks: 1

Damage: By weapon type or special attack (see below)

Special: See text

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: 10-12

Alignment: Evil (Neutral)

Size: M-L 5 ft. - 7 ft.

Psychic/Psionic: Nil

Tomb skeletons, also known by their singular group titles (see below), are special undead created by archaic formulas, spells or magic items uncommon to most mages or priests. They are associated with the Underworld and with beings that derive their powers from there and are often created by ancient magic unknown to mortal mages.

Tomb skeletons obey the commands of their masters just as other created undead do, but like higher undead forms they have a raw, evil intelligence and thus have a limited reasoning ability.

A tomb skeleton appears in all cases with a gem embedded in its forehead that denotes what type of skeleton it is. Its armor is not representative of their Armor Class, as the necromantic magic which sustains them provides that base. They are often noted wearing whatever is brought with them from the grave.

Tomb skeletons take 1/2 damage from piercing or slashing weapons but full damage from other types. They can be *charmed* or otherwise controlled by mind-affecting spells, but their saving throw vs. these spells are always at +4. Holy or blessed water does 1-6 points of damage per dose striking them. *Sleep*, *poison*, *fear* and *petrification* have no effect upon them. These creatures never check morale and fight to the death. The various gems, which

are part of them, are recoverable upon their deaths (see below).

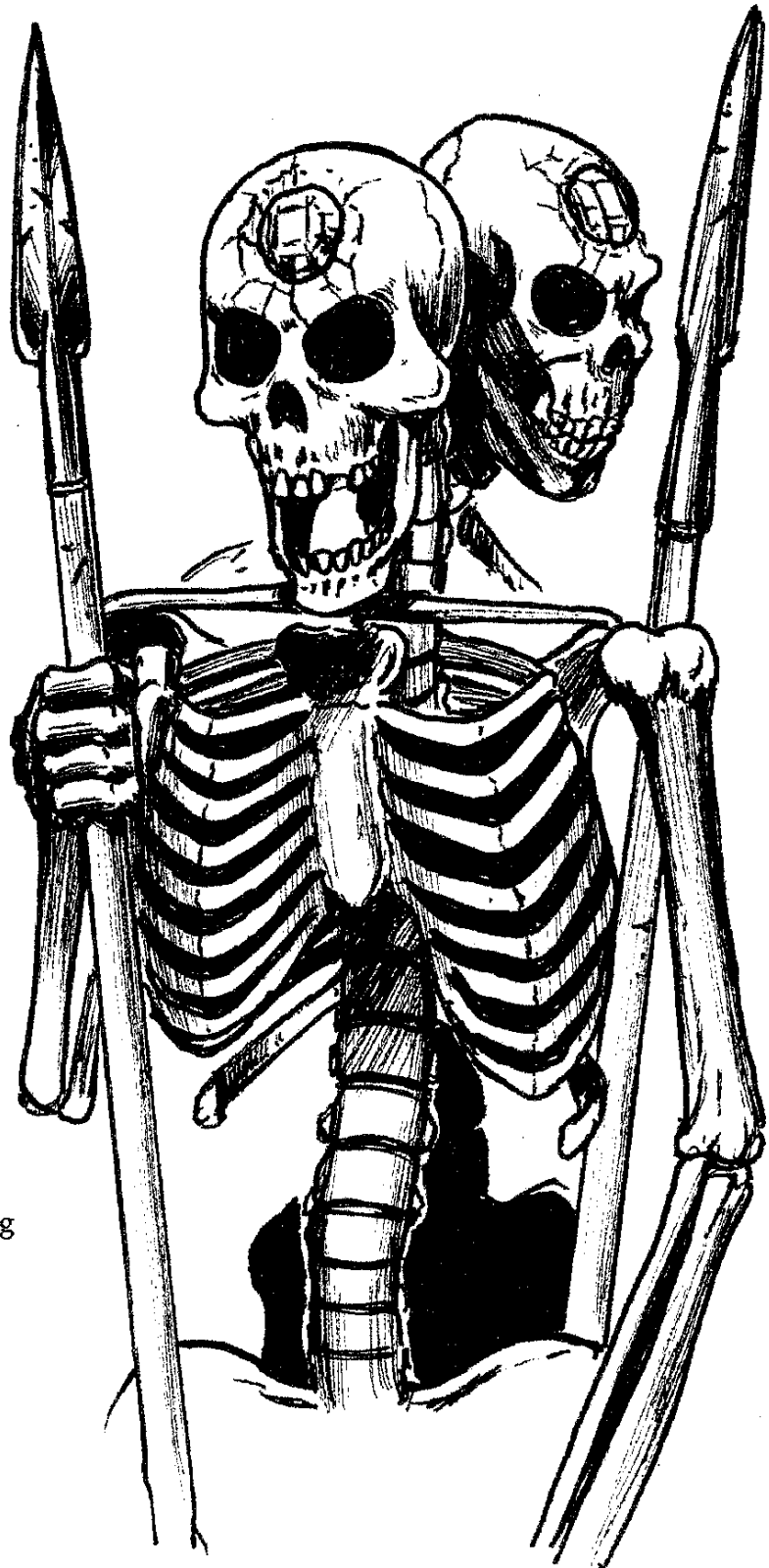
- d12 roll of 1 - 6: Teeth of Thanatos (emerald\*). AC 5; HD 4; Int 10; Size 5 ft.
- d12 roll of 7 - 10: Handmaidens of Hecate (sapphire\*\*). AC 4; HD 5; Int 11; Size 6 ft.
- d12 roll of 11 - 12: Hellions of Hades (ruby\*\*\*). AC 3; HD 6; Int 12; Size 7 ft.
  - \*250 gp value
  - \*\*500 gp value
  - \*\*\*1,000 gp value.

**Teeth of Thanatos:** In any given attack round, tomb skeletons may elect to deliver vicious bites (50% chance) with their razor-sharp teeth instead of using their hand-held weapons. The damage inflicted is 2-9. They otherwise come armed with long daggers and javelins.

**Handmaidens of Hecate:** These are always female skeletal forms. At the beginning of combat, these creatures elect what form of attack to use throughout the entire melee - hand-held weapons or their two clawed hands (50% chance of either). Their digits are thin but very sharp and pointed, delivering 2-7 points of damage per claw hit. They otherwise come armed with short swords.

**Hellions of Hades:** These creatures breathe a spout of shadowy **flame** as they attack, which induces *drowsiness* in opponents they are directly contesting, with no saving throw permitted. This *drowsiness* lowers defenders AC by 2 and attacks by -2. On the fourth consecutive round of exposure to it and for every round thereafter, those affected must make a saving throw vs. spells or fall asleep for 2-7 rounds. The accumulative effect of this latter magic is broken if the defender disengages and is not breathed upon for one round during the

initial four-round interval; this consecutive count is restarted from its base again if the victim is thereafter breathed upon again. Hellions of Hades come armed with longswords.



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