

# STATUES

## AN ADVENTURE FOR 3-5 CHARACTERS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> TO 4<sup>TH</sup> LEVEL

by KAREL M.



Seen through an Advanced 1<sup>st</sup> Edition glass darkly

Translatable into other dead languages with effort

Legends and a famous book provoke half the city into a mad scramble:  
Ancient statues point to a fabulous mountain of gold hidden underground.  
But certain powers would much rather hidden things stay hidden.

Related material at [zrzavy.blogspot.com](http://zrzavy.blogspot.com)

## DM NOTES

In this adventure, the entire city is abuzz with treasure-hunting fever. Unknown to players (although their characters may eventually find this out), a critical mass of the corpses of hundreds of victims of organized crime were stuffed into a disused municipal underground cistern. These ghosts, bound by the arcane rules of the afterlife, cannot directly ask the living for proper burials, justice, and revenge. Using nightmares and widespread already-existing legends, they inspired the writing and serial copying of the book *Brief Antiquarian Notes* and its accompanying map. The ghosts also forced sleepwalkers to hide clusters of bronze letters “C” “IST” “ER” “N” and “Æ” underneath 5 statues around the city. The book advertises a hidden treasure – a mountain of gold- which can be found using clues from the statues (and the book’s map). The ghosts hope their corpses will be found and buried properly by the treasure hunters they have motivated by means of the book. Some of the hard-to-dispose-of treasure consists of records proving the guilt of organized crime and corrupt elements of the Night Watch and government in the murders of the cistern-stowed victims.

Some important provisos for the DM in running this adventure, many of which deviate from the classic advanced rules for the sake of increased fun:

- Show PICTURE APPENDIX to players for flavor, secret-door-detection, and for detecting or circumventing depicted traps. No skill rolls for these.
- Gold pieces = experience. Solving problems by creative means, not necessarily combat, is encouraged. Treasure items cleverly fenced or sold to the right buyer earn more gold, higher experience.
- Before running, DM should devote a laptop screen to, or print out, preferably in color and decently large, the maps (APPENDIX C), the PICTURE APPENDIX (D), and the book (B).
- The DM should have letters **C IST ER N Æ** ready before play, either as decorative letters from a craft store, wooden Scrabble tiles or printed and cut-out chits from Appendix F near the end of this adventure.

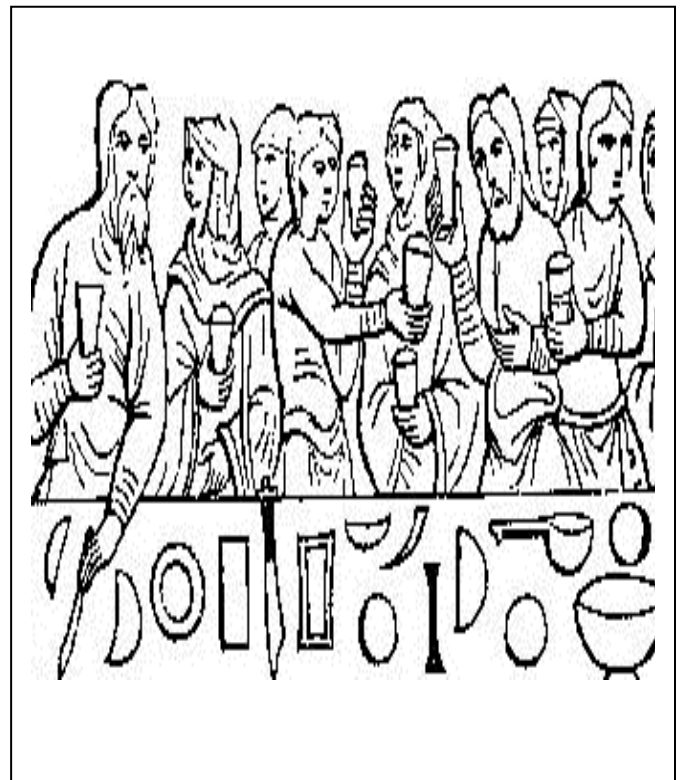
## START

The party starts at night under the porticos of a courtyard wine tavern in sprawling, ancient city of Khrysokeras, the City of the Golden Horns. A wooden sign of a pig eating grapes hangs outside. Not far away is the Anemodoulion statue, the center of the city. The place is very crowded and loud with dozens of people talking excitedly about something, most of them emphasizing points with the exaggerated traditional hand gestures of the region.

Whether the party stands or asks to sit on a bench next to someone, they will end up embroiled in a conversation with a group or several groups.

Roll a d12 for the INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART on the next page.

If the party wants to talk with these people, they will speak about “Initial topics”. If the party gets along very well with them/drinks/eats with them, use the column: “Will reveal after drinks/food/deeper interaction”. If the party wants to talk with additional people, roll again until DM calls a halt.



INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART			
	Who?	Initial topics:	Will reveal after drinks/food/deeper interaction:
1	A handsome young man in a homespun tunic who seems to be friends with the tavern staff. Overheard words through the din: “He only wants to read about it, not find it-HA!” - <b>Stilicho</b> , disgruntled ex-servant of <b>Cometas</b> .	In the city, there is a legend of 7 statues which each tell a part of a prophecy or secret that points to a “mountain of gold” treasure hoard. Before being fired, the servant, <b>Stilicho</b> , remembers <b>Cometas</b> always going on about a new book he got which gives details about the legend.	<b>Cometas</b> is an elderly bibliophile from an old wealthy family who has outlived his children. He lives in a crumbling, courtyard-centered family house in the Pera suburb, just north of a square built around a tall black marble pillar. Two remaining female servants, <b>Charito</b> and <b>Cyra</b> , and a burly ex-soldier bodyguard, <b>Megas</b> , take care of him. <b>Stilicho</b> , the terminated servant, bears a grudge vs. <b>Cometas</b> and doesn’t want to be seen near the house, but would gladly give others tips on how to rob it. See <b>COMETAS’ HOUSE</b> section. <b>Stilicho</b> says young maidservant <b>Cyra</b> is resentful like he was, but that she has an annoying unrequited crush on him and that she is insane.
2	Four young people wearing the uniform of apprentices, each embroidered with the monogram “S” and a stylized shape of a quill	These <b>apprentices of Sergios the Sage</b> point out that everyone in the city is talking about the treasure hunt clues indicated by the legend but that a book titled <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> is rightfully sought after by many for more accurate information.	The apprentices, <b>Simcitta</b> , <b>Zeno</b> , <b>Theon</b> , and <b>Eulogios</b> , respect and like <b>Sergios the Sage</b> , but for half a year he has been plagued with horrible nightmares and has been forcing all the apprentices to work overtime making multiple, painstaking copies of <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> . They fear he is going insane. The apprentices are very willing to introduce the party to <b>Sergios</b> . <b>Sergios</b> is eager to meet potential problem solvers and will give the party a valuable copy of the book and maps to use in finding the treasure. He thinks his nightmares will stop if the treasure is found.
3	Loud, friendly young men in black robes and caps. Snatches of conversation from their table can be heard over the din of the tavern: “They want the book back!” “Of course, I’ve read it!” and “Think of how – heh – well-endowed we’d be!”	These <b>7 novices</b> from <b>St. Pankratios</b> say their monastery borrowed a book – <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> – from a small, inferior, out-of-town monastery, <b>St. Euhemia</b> . The book tells of 5 statues which hold clues to the “mountain of gold”, and where to find it, unlike the vague legend of 7 statues.	The borrowed book is secured with a chain in the Scriptorium of <b>St. Pankratios Monastery</b> . All the young monks are poring over it for treasure hunt clues. Monks from <b>St. Euhemia</b> have been requesting it back. <b>St. Pankratios</b> has been stalling and the monks are preparing to defend themselves against armed in-person attempts at retrieval. Men who befriend the monks might be allowed to visit the monastery and read the chained book. Boisterous, hard-drinking young novices (level 1 clerics): <b>Nichomachus</b> , <b>Meletius</b> , <b>Batzas</b> , <b>Menas</b> , <b>Nicetas</b> , <b>Rogatus</b> , <b>Zenobius</b> .
4	<b>Disheveled older man</b> , bits of something in beard, ranting to anyone: “A fortune in gold!” “They must be warned!” “THE BOOK! THE BOOOOK!”	“ <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> is a trap in book form! What is it really leading people toward? What motive is there for writing a book laced with treasure lures in the first place?”	(Revealed only after buying the man food and drink, calming him down) <b>Sebastos</b> is a defrocked monk. He has read <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> . He says it was written 100 years ago & attracted little attention until 6 months ago, when many more copies became available and there was a renewed treasure hunting vogue. The book is available for sale in several book & copyist shops. <b>Marthanes</b> has a copy visible through the grille of his tomb. <b>St. Pankratios Monastery</b> has a chained copy borrowed from <b>St. Euhemia Monastery</b> .

5	A friendly group of young people wearing the academic colors of Magnaura Pandidactic University	Collegians <b>Cosmas, Zeno, Anthemius, Arsenius,</b> and <b>Rufus the Ruminator</b> say the book, <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> , supersedes the vague treasure-hunting information in the popular legend.	Recently deceased wealthy eccentric named Marthanes built a mausoleum in which a leather and parchment book emblazoned in gold with the words <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> is visible on a pedestal through the metalwork of its windows. The students – 4 friendly level one clerics, and a taciturn, very discreet first level magic-user, might show the party this mausoleum and want to hunt together for the treasure. Also, they know the Black Sun, Double Eagle and Owl bookshops each have copies for sale at exorbitant prices: “You need to <i>spend</i> a fortune to buy this book so you can use it to hunt for an even <i>greater</i> fortune”
6	Group of 3 young women in plainer dress listening intently to a flamboyant woman in clothes that indicate to locals that she is a “dancer”	The 3 women, <b>Appa, Anna,</b> and <b>Comito,</b> are newcomers from a rural area. They bottle <i>garum</i> fish sauce at a factory. The flamboyant woman, <b>Basilina,</b> is a PT dancer, PT circus performer, and (not admitted explicitly) PT strumpet	Basilina came from the same village as young women, but has been in the city for a year longer. She has been regaling them with stories about men she has encountered, including Prokopios and Diogenes. <b>Prokopios</b> knows “everything about the city and its history” and “that legend everyone is treasure-hunting about”. He holds court in the Lantern tavern near the Chain Bridge and Magnaura Pandidactic University. He is sometimes generous and once had great wealth, but is currently in a low period and his usual cronies have deserted him. <b>Diogenes</b> is a smelly, eccentric intellectual who wanders all night around town, considers himself beyond conventional mores and sleeps during the daytime in a huge clay jar at the old Forum Fenum – the Hay Market in the NW of the city.
7	A well-dressed, well-armed young man of aristocratic bearing talking quietly at the center of a group of soldierly-looking men and a well-dressed mature woman	Will discuss the common knowledge particulars of the legend and the fact of the popularity of <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> in the city.	Minor aristocrat <b>Kyrios Alexios</b> (Fighter Level 4, AC scale mail + shield, hp 37) and his band of retainers: F Level 3, MU Level 4, 6 Level 0 Fighters) are actively treasure-hunting. He owns a copy of <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> . Will not reveal these facts unless he feels that the party is useful to him in finding the treasure. He is highly competitive and suspicious to the point of paranoia.
8	Loud, ruddy-faced foreigners in the uniform of Palace Varangians (2 Level 3 Fighters hp 28 and hp 25, 1 Level 2 Fighter hp 18, 1 Level 1 Fighter hp 8, all armed with axes, short swords, armored with chainmail + shield)	They are <b>Palace Varangians</b> . They will discuss the rumors everyone is saying about the legend, admit they’ve heard about the book, enthusiastically discuss the “mountain of gold” rumo	They are PT treasure-hunting and trying to be somewhat discreet. Always semi-officially allowed to plunder the city a bit in the interregnum between the death of the old monarch they were sworn to protect and the crowning of the new one, they want to quietly do some treasure-hunting now, while the monarch is in perfect health. Those who can read know that they can’t read the local language well enough to figure out the sophisticated jokes, word-play and allusions in <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> . If they feel they can trust the party, they may join forces for a time. Varangians: <b>Rurik, Harald, Snorri, Olaf.</b>
9	Watchfully relaxed 5 people simply but tastefully dressed & wearing dark cloaks	Will steer the conversation to inquiries about books.	They are <b>book procurers</b> working for the Owl Antiquarian Book shop: 60% seeking more copies of the book to sell/40% seeking the treasure; Three Magic Users (Lvl 5: hp 15, Lvl 4: hp 14, Lvl 1: hp 4) and two thieves (Lvl 3: hp 12, Lvl 2: hp 7). Team Owl: <b>Athena, Smaragdus, Aetheria, Periclea, Crescens.</b>

10	Loud, laughing workers wearing stained tunics, one wearing a gently-used padded military jacket	Have heard the monks at their recent/current employer gossiping about <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> in detail, tells to others. Primarily they rant about the treatment of lay scullions by the abbot.	These <b>lay scullions/custodians</b> serving St. Pankratios have heard the younger monks talking about the treasure, have heard and remembered the essence of the book clues, and are searching for the treasure during their off hours/planning to join their friends who are AWOL from this job (6 fighters, Lvl 0, hp 4, 3, 2, 6, 5, 4 and a Lvl 1 fighter, hp 8, padded armor) They are inclined to go after the statues and treasure right away without getting a copy of the book. They might join forces with the PCs if treated well and split the treasure with the PCs afterward. Scullions/custodians: <b>Heraclius, Formosos, Sveta, Leszek, Anahita, Valamir</b>
11	A well-dressed young man approaches the party: “My Lady should like a word with you and will arrange for food and drink if you desire them.”	“Walk this way, if you please...” If the party accept, they will be conducted out of the tavern courtyard, under the portico to a room separated from the courtyard by an intricate wooden screen; will delay questions politely but firmly	In the dimly-lit chamber, a well-dressed woman with a veil of thin gold chains over her face reclines on a backless, armless divan with bolsters and bids the party to sit or recline on similar furniture. [Show players <b>Fig. 9</b> in PICTURE APPENDIX] -She says she is an aristocrat who needs commoners to secretly find the golden treasure everyone is talking about. She will provide the party with a copy of <i>Brief Antiquarian Notes</i> , a map, and equipment money if they sign a contract on lead sheets. She will let the party keep what is left of the treasure they find after she extracts a few items. Several hours after signing the contracts, party members will become aware of telepathic, spiky, centipede-like creatures coiled around their internal organs. The creatures will communicate that the signed contracts have summoned them, but that they will dematerialize and return to their extradimensional homes once the party finds the treasure. If they sense that a PC is delaying or deviating from the mission, they will slither painfully around the PC’s abdominal cavity and constrict around his or her organs. The aristocrat will take all possible pains to avoid revealing too much, but her name is <b>Lady Marozia</b> , she is a sorceress, and she is 300 years old.
12	Rough-looking men and low women with darting eyes, standing and laughing crowded at a counter, some drinking beer, others wine	Using a provocative, ironic, jesting tone, they’ll probe the party on the legend, the book, the “mountain of gold” treasure, then fill in PCs’ info gaps with local common knowledge	If these 2-5 thieves (Level 1-3) and 1-4 ruffian fighters (Level 1-3) think the party can be useful to them, they will adopt serious, hushed tones & enlist them to join forces in the search for the treasure. They are loath to reveal that they are minor members of <b>organized crime</b> networks. They will betray or kill the party once they close in on the treasure or the secret of organized crime’s involvement (which this group doesn’t know yet, but may learn as the search progresses). Everyone in group uses animal nicknames on jobs, like a zoological <i>Reservoir Dogs</i> : <b>The Rat</b> leads the thieves and <b>the Dragon</b> leads the fighters.

+++++

DAYTIME CITY ENCOUNTERS - (Check every 10-minute turn or 1 inch on map – PCs can avoid, engage or disengage – Cross off as encountered)

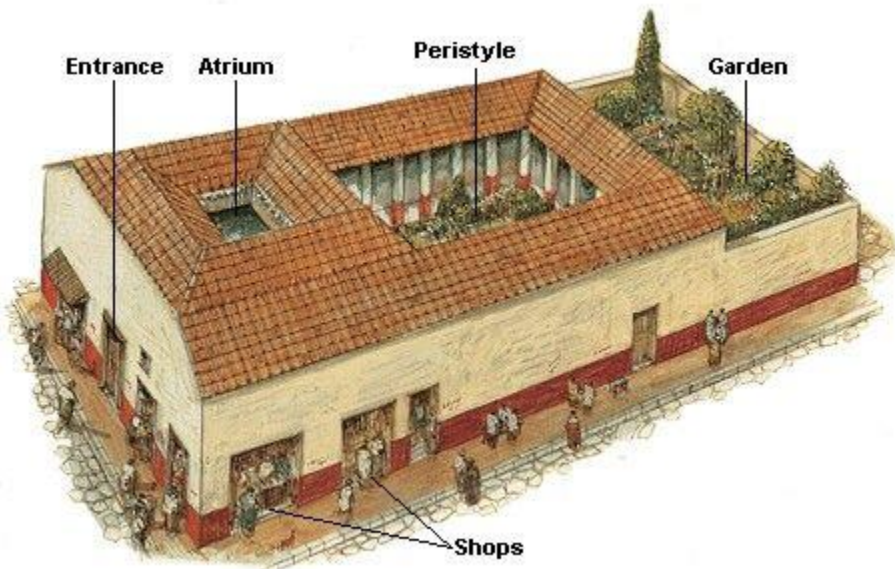
1. **Government procession** – government officials on horseback, soldiers, flags, standards, musicians, pomp and circumstance – Celebration of gov't accomplishment, commemoration of a great event in civic history, etc.
2. **Religious procession** – clerics, gold embroidery, semantha (wooden sheets struck like gongs), holy pictures, relics, periodic stopping to pray in unison. Outsiders disturbing these activities will earn the ire even of non-participants.
3. **Religious procession/political protest**- Protest against government and Night Watch corruption and collusion with crime, couched in religious clothing for protection from state violence, censorship; leaders stopping to pray at intervals making protest speeches in the form of prayers.
4. 1-6 **pickpockets skulking, stealing** in crowd
5. **Beggars begging**– 60% know the legend
6. Roll d6: On a 1-3, that number of **peddlers** pushing wheeled stoves or ovens on carts selling figs, bread, sausages; roll of 3-6, pungent peddlers selling *garum* fish sauce; 90% talk of legend, 10% book
7. **Merchants walking** to appointments w/1-4 guards– 60% know the legend, 40% know something of the book's clues
8. **Laborers walking to/from work** or **working**– 60% know legend, 10% know hearsay of book's clues
9. **Monks/nuns in transit** or on errands – 95% know the legend, 75% know some of the book's clues, whereabouts
10. **Storytellers, musicians busking**- 99% know the legend, 70% have clues related to the book and where to find statues or books
11. **Sailors on shore leave** or between jobs – 30% know the legend, none know much about the book
12. **Noblewoman on palanquin** (30% chance) & 5 bearers or **aristocrats on horses** (70% chance) & 3 armed retainers; dislike interruptions, haughty
13. **Diogenes the Dog**, a transgressive philosopher, usually sleeps in a large earthenware jar during the daytime, on an **"insomniac" daytime wander**, has abundant money hidden in various hiding places around the city, and seeks conversations with random people. Says legends are not fully accurate, but will paraphrase pretty accurately what he remembers from the book, which he bought, read, and then gave away about 2 months ago.
14. A player character, chosen by the DM, is seized for several seconds by an angry ghost and shown a **vision** of many people being killed by thugs in **Night Watch** uniforms, who freeze/hide as **Wall Guards** march past. Corpses secreted to overgrown area of ruins, ending up underground, amid stagnant water. Unpleasant feeling of pressure. The scene suddenly shifts to bronze letters being pulled from underneath statues. Calm feeling, pressure drop as each letter is pulled out from below the statues.
15. **City Watch on patrol**- 5 level 0 fighters, AC 6 studded leather + shield, club, short sword led by level 3 fighter AC 6 same armor & shield, club, short sword; will talk to people who walk with them; 70% know legend; 10% book clues; stop work at sunset
16. **Feral or domestic cats lazing around** - 1-12 individuals; there are many in this city
17. **Monks from St. Euhemia Monastery** who, discreetly armed with staves but not armored and en route to remind the monks of St. Pankratios to **return their overdue book** (AC 9, Lvl 3 cleric, hp 15 leading 10 lvl 1 clerics, AC 9, hp 3-8)
18. **Monks from St. Pankratios** (AC 7, 5 Level 1 clerics, hp 3-8, 1 Lvl 3 cleric, hp 22, in padded armor, armed with cudgels) **seeking the treasure** according to the book clues; they are doing this without the official knowledge or permission of the monastic hierarchy, but will be winked at if they find the treasure before rival monasteries; roll d6 for which statue they are currently seeking, may brawl with those who obstruct them, esp. monks from St. Euhemia
19. **Lay scullions/custodians AWOL** from St. Pankratios Monastery, hunting for legend's **treasure**. #10 on INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART. Roll a d6 for which statue they are en route toward.
20. Aristocratic **treasure seekers**, wary, suspicious, following notes from their own copy of the book. **Kyrios Alexios** (Fighter Level 4, AC scale mail + shield, hp 37 and his band: F Level 3, MU Level 4, 6 Level 0 Fighters). Roll a d6 for which statue they are en route to look at. See #7 in INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART.

## NIGHTTIME CITY ENCOUNTERS

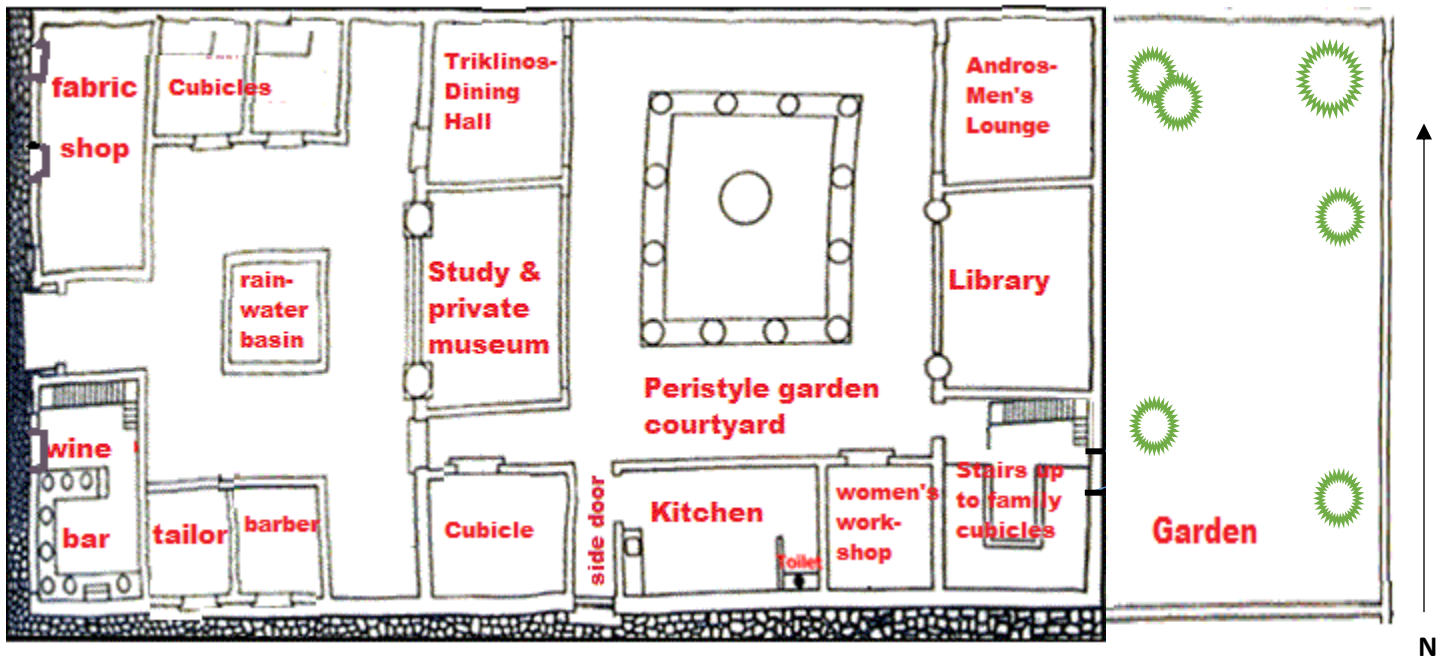
(Check every 3 turns/30 minutes or 3 inches on the map. Players can choose to engage or avoid encounters)

1. **Torchlight celebration** of a chariot racing team victory; crowd yells violent slogans in favor of **Skorprios**, major crime boss who backs team
2. **Torchlight religious procession** for a martyred saint; loud prayers vs. organized crime boss (**Skorprios**), murders, gov't corruption (**Psallidios "The Scissor"**, Count of the Exchequer)
3. 4-24 **men with torches**, dressed like monks, chanting, angrily **decrying** their idea of **moral turpitude** (work on holidays, drink, etc.)
4. 6-24 **angry drunks ambling** in several groups down street.
5. Roll a d4 –one of encounters #1-4 listed above is turning into a **riot**. Procession and reacting bystanders yell insults, cry in rage, damage nearby property or attack passers-by. 3-60 Level 0 fighters, AC 9, with clubs, daggers or ad-hoc weapons (e.g. torches). 2-8 Level 2 street-brawler fighters, AC 9, clubs, daggers or ad-hoc weapons (such as torches)
6. 1-6 **Robbers/pickpockets working or going to work** – 75% know the legend, 10% know book clues from hearsay/where to get the book
7. 1-6 **harlots working**– 75% know the legend, 15% know book clues/book whereabouts
8. 1-6 **friendly, wandering drunks** – 60% know legend; none know the real book
9. **Marines** in civilian clothes –7 fighters, levels 1-4, AC 9, daggers, short swords, **seeking recreation & dissipation**; 15% know legend; none know the book
10. -11. **Night Watch patrolling**- 10 level 0 fighters, AC 5: scale mail + shield, spear + short sword, led by level 4 fighter, AC 6: scale; not talkative
12. **Prokopios** (Described with #6 on INIT. CONV. chart). Drunk or wanting badly to be drunk. Walking to or from a bar.
13. 5 **novices** and 1 **monk** from **St. Pankratios** (5 Level 1 clerics, hp 3-8, 1 Lvl 3 cleric, hp 22, armed with cudgels, maces, padded armor) AWOL but winked at to search for treasure with map/notes from book. Brawl-prone, esp. vs. St. Euhemia monks.
14. **Lay scullions/custodians** AWOL from St. Pankratios monastery, **searching for the treasure** – See #10 INITIAL CONV. CHART.
15. One player character, chosen by the DM, is seized for several seconds by an angry ghost and shown a **vision** of many people being killed by thugs. Bodies are disposed of in an overgrown area of ruins, ending up underground, amid stagnant water. Unpleasant feeling of pressure. Scene suddenly shifts to bronze letters being pulled from underneath statues. Calm feeling, pressure drop as each letter is pulled out from below the statues.
16. **Aristocratic treasure seeker**, wary, suspicious, arch, haughty, seeking treasure with help of his own copy of the book. **Kyrios Alexios** (Fighter Level 4, AC scale mail + shield, hp 37; and his band: F Level 3, MU Level 4, 6 Level 0 Fighters). See #7 in INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART.
17. **AWOL Palace Varangians**: 2 Level 3 Fighters hp 28 and hp 25, 1 Level 2 Fighter hp 18, 1 Level 1 Fighter hp 8, axes, scale mail and short swords. Somewhat drunk, want to **find the treasure** for themselves. #8 on INITIAL CONV. CHART.
18. 1-6 **feral cats prowling**
19. **Book procurers** for the Owl antiquarian book shop seeking treasure: 3 magic-users, 2 thieves. See #9 on INITIAL CONV. CHART.
20. Talkative **homeless philosopher Diogenes the Dog**, sleeps in a large earthenware jar during the daytime, walks around at night with a lamp, has abundant money hidden in various hiding places around the city, begs for food from a circuit of regular donors. Says that the legends are not fully accurate, but paraphrases pretty accurately what he remembers from the book, which he bought, read, gave away about 2 months ago.

## COMETAS' HOUSE



floorplan scale: 1 inch = 10 feet



**Stilicho** the loudmouth disgruntled ex-servant (INITIAL CONV. CHART #1) will gladly lead characters to the Pera neighborhood and its black pillar, or they can find it themselves. Stilicho will not approach **Cometas'** house closely, though, especially during the daytime.

Some schemes players might undertake to get the book & map:

- Casing the building, stealthy book heist
- Home invasion, armed robbery
- Bribing spiteful young servant **Cyra** to try to steal the book or murder Cometas
- Buying the book from Cometas
- Asking Cometas if they could pay for the privilege of reading and copying from the book and map
- Befriending Cometas

DM can judge whether a book heist or armed robbery would work with his or her players' plan; See the picture and read on for details of the house.

Unstable, resentful maidservant **Cyra** misses would-be lover **Stilicho**, will take bribes, will try to steal book or even try to help brutal PCs kill gentle bibliophile homeowner **Cometas**.

Loyal servants **Charito** and **Megas** are watchful vs. **Cyra**, would vigorously oppose this, would certainly tell Cometas and the City Watch.

Cometas will sell his book and map to PCs for between 2000-5000 gold *histameon*.

Polite parties can pay him 10-100 gold *histameon* and spend the better part of a day skimming the book and copying out the most salient parts and the map.

Those who sincerely befriend Cometas and/or offer a share of treasure, are allowed to skim-read and copy the most potentially useful passages and the map for free.

Details of house for heist plans, etc.:

Stout FRONT DOOR is usually closed but not locked in the daytime; locked and barred after sunset.

SIDE DOOR is usually open in day, locked and barred late at night. Servants often work nearby.

Most of rooms are dingy, neglected, filled with once-elegant furniture that now has little value. OUTER ATRIUM is particularly lonely, dusty all day. Shops which rent space from Cometas open only to the street.

STUDY/PRIVATE MUSEUM: Musty taxidermy animals (zero current value) and ancient pottery shards (3 X 50 gp worth) on display, desk, chairs, quill, ink-making set, parchments, oil lamps hanging from tree-branch-shaped racks. Locked lockbox bolted to floor contains moldering financial documents.

Usually working and/or sitting and talking in KITCHEN or WORKSHOP:

**Megas**, the servant who is a burly **ex-soldier** (always carries a **dagger** tucked in belt, has **club** and **spear** stored in building, **level 2 fighter, hp 16**)

Middle-aged **female servant, Charito (hp 4, does not fight)**

Truculent young **maidservant, Cyra (hp 3, level 1 thief, dagger or kitchen knife)** tries to avoid others, works or slacks off or schemes elsewhere in house.

Outdoor WALLED GARDEN area: neglected and overgrown with trees and shrubs. Door from garden to peristyle/inside of house. No openings from the garden to the street. Glass shards embedded atop the high walls inflict 1-6 damage to people trying to go over them in normal clothing.

LIBRARY is exception to neglect elsewhere in house. Elderly Cometas is often here, day or night, reading or puttering with his books.

On display, hanging on wall: iron military mask once worn by a doomed ancestor, worth 50 gold as a curio, and 300-1200 to those who know its history. Unknown to anyone alive: 1 in 10 chance those wearing it will see last trauma of battle through ancestor's point of view.

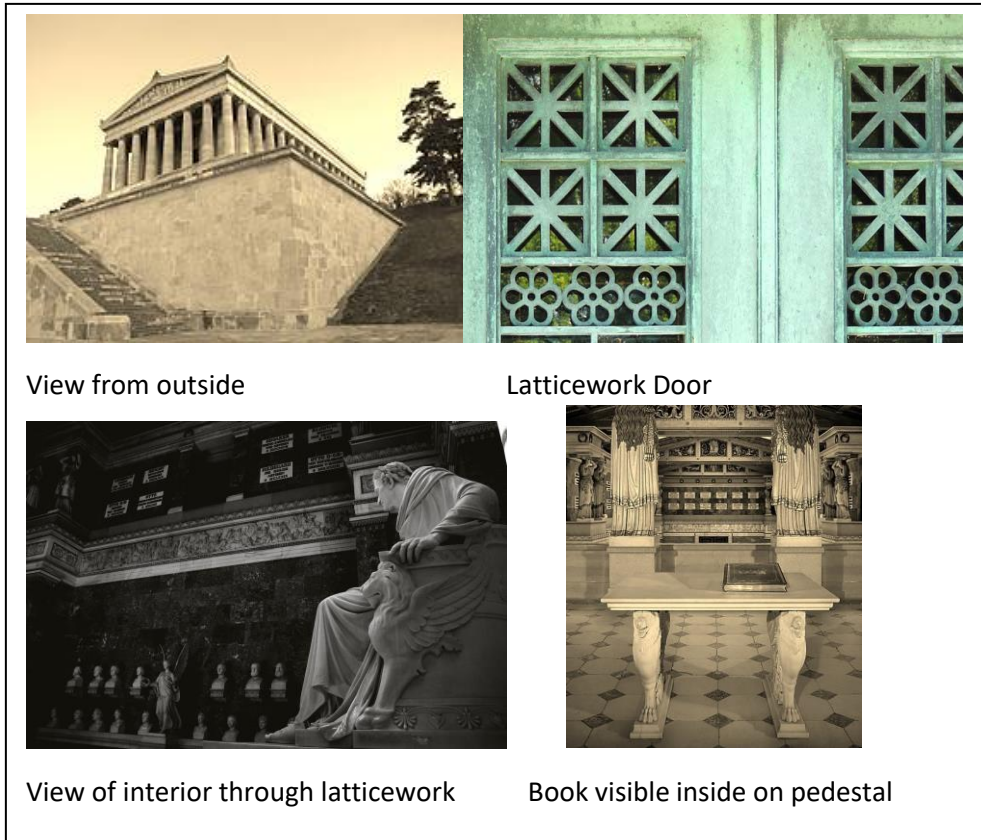
Elegant, quality furnishings: Oil lamps, a brazier, two chairs, a moveable reading desk, a lectern, reading niche built into the back wall with a silk-covered, wool-stuffed pad and pillows.

Cometas' dwindling personal and inherited wealth has largely all been invested in books.

The books are kept in two tall wooden cabinets flanking the reading niche. Double cabinet doors are usually closed and padlocked. 7 codices are in one (each worth from 600-1200 gold *histameon*) and 4 in the other (each worth from 300-3600 gold) as well as a beautifully illuminated version of **Brief Antiquarian Notes** and its map (worth 3000 gold on the open market).

COMETAS' UPSTAIRS BEDROOM: The only other valuable items in the house are some cloth-of-gold clothing (3 items worth 100 gold each, fitted to the wider frame he had when young), and cash rent money from the building's shop keepers- 304 gold *histameon* in a padlocked strongbox bolted to bedroom floor.

## MARTHANES' TOMB



View from outside

Latticework Door



View of interior through latticework



Book visible inside on pedestal

It is a well-known rumor that wealthy, recently-deceased eccentric Marthanes ordered that one of the many copies of *Brief Antiquarian Notes* he commissioned be placed on a marble table and shut up in the family mausoleum with him. Students from Magnaura Pandidactic University confirm this is true, because they have seen a likely-looking book dimly through the metal latticework. Tempted to break in and steal the book, they have been discouraged by the frequent visits to the tomb of watchmen hired by Marthanes' family.

The tomb is located in the necropolis built along the Via Antiqua road which exits a now-seldom-used NW gate in the city walls. Show the PCs Picture #5.

For someone who knows the way, has done research or visited an oracle, roll a d12 once on the ENCOUNTERS IN THE NECROPOLIS chart, then the DM should choose results 1, 2 or 3 (or roll a d4).

For PCs who do not know the way, keep rolling until results 1, 2 or 3 are achieved.

Reject any answers which don't make sense to you as DM. Cross off results as encountered. The party can, of course, try to avoid engaging with or fighting different encounters on this list. Cross off die roll results as they are encountered. Re-use the list if PCs return to the necropolis, looking for Statue #5, for example.

## ENCOUNTERS IN NECROPOLIS ALONG THE VIA ANTIQUA

1. An impressive mausoleum in good repair, on a stone platform – this is the family tomb of Marthanes.
2. The same mausoleum, but with **7 ex-soldiers** hired by the family to patrol or observe unobtrusively (**AC 5, chainmail, throwing axes, swords or spears, 6 Level 2 fighters, hp 12 each, led by a Level 4 fighter, AC 4, hp 32, with a blessed, silver-dusted sword and shield**)
3. Marthanes' family mausoleum, with the 7 ex-soldiers mentioned above.
4. Repeated hoarse whisper from deep under a broken marble column: "You pull, I'll push!"
5. (Only at twilight or at night) Mysterious, sad, beautiful woman in antique dress sighs to those who converse with her: "I am the Lamia Morthylla." [Show players Fig. 8, PICTURE APPENDIX] Either she is a *bustuaria*, an evening professional who caters to very particular tastes in graveyards (AC 9, Level 3 thief, hp 6, dagger) or, at the DM's discretion, she is truly the sad, beautiful, predatory ghost Morthylla. Clerics would turn her as a shadow, although **Morthylla** has different characteristics- **AC 7, HD 3+3, hp 27, Attacks:** Her arms move with uncanny speed to hold a victim still long enough to plant a **kiss**, draining **1-6 points of strength**; the victim dies at zero points; survivors can recover fully in 2-5 turns. Morthylla can cast **charm person** 3 times in 24 hours. She gains no real pleasure as she staves off pain and oblivion by feeding on her victims' essences.
6. (At twilight, at night, or inside tombs) – **3** fanged, man-shaped naked creatures with dust-streaked greyish skin tattooed with intricate diagrams and symbols- They are inhuman devotees of forgotten gods, treat as **ghouls:** (**AC: 6, HD 2, #AT: 3, DMG: 1-3/1-3/1-6, hp 12 each, spec. attacks: touch causes paralysis**). They snarl barbarous names in a mix of antique languages as they make their initial attack.
7. Encounter with another group trying to find the treasure, *Brief Antiquarian Notes* or Statue #5. DM should choose an appropriate group using the RIVAL GROUPS table.
8. Petty figures from the periphery of organized crime – **2-8 thieves (AC 7, levels 1-3, hp 4, 12, 10, short swords, clubs or daggers)** en route to stash ill-gotten gains (gold and silver jewelry worth 700 gp) in a cracked-open tomb.
9. An old **witch (AC: 9, MU Lvl 3, hp 7, dagger)** puts curses inscribed on lead sheets into tombs for chthonic deities to execute- a time-honored practice which the religious and secular authorities do not look kindly upon. The witch has 4 fill-in-the-blank lead sheets with spells and curses on them; if treated well and paid 99 *noummia* (treat as copper pieces), she can get the spirits to "reveal secrets hidden in the earth" and solve other riddles facing the party.
10. A **quartet** of middle-aged **witches (AC: 9, MU Lvl 2, hp 7 each, 2 with silver daggers, one with 2 vials of holy water and a silver birdcage under a velvet cover, one with a metal-tipped staff and a dowsing rod)** trying to find a particular curse tablet. A client in the city, who suspects she has been cursed by an enemy, has promised them a large sum of money to find, remove, and neutralize the leaden sheet.
11. Inscriptions on tombs such as: ΠΟΤΕ ΔΕΝ ΘΑ ΠΑΡΑΠΟΝΙΟΥΝΤΑΙ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΟΥΡΙΚΗ ΑΡΘΡΙΤΙΔΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΛΙ - I WILL NEVER COMPLAIN OF GOUT AGAIN or, on a broken-open slab over a gaping grave: ΔΕΣΜΕΥΕΤΑΙ, ΣΦΡΑΓΙΣΜΕΝΟ, ΑΝΤΙ-ΣΦΡΑΓΙΣΜΕΝΟ, ΕΞΟΡΚΙΣΤΟΥΝ, ΧΩΛΑΙΝΟΝΤΑΣ, ΚΑΙ ΦΙΜΩΝΟΝΤΑΙ - BOUND, SEALED, COUNTER-SEALED, EXORCISED, HOBbled, AND SILENCED
12. Crumbling tomb with the clear inscription PENETRANS AD INTERIORA MORTIS (If PCs decide to shinny inside, the section about Statue #5 comes into play. If they read the inscription and don't enter, they may return to seek Statue #5 later, when they know to look for it).

## MARTHANES' MAUSOLEUM

Sole entrance to Marthanes' family mausoleum: A set of patina-ed, locked, lattice-windowed double doors.

Show fig. 12 in the PICTURE APPENDIX.

*Brief Antiquarian Notes* is visible through the lattice-windowed doors on a marble table. This version's foreword details how Marthanes suffered terrible nightmares, felt an overwhelming compulsion to publish more and more copies.

Inside the spacious mausoleum: busts, plaques, pillars, statuary, but nothing easily portable.

Inlaid in the 4 corners of the newly-polished marble floor are 4 identical mosaic spirals of gold letters. IN GIRUM IMUS NOCTE ET CONSUMIMUR IGNI spirals inward, then outward. This means: WE WANDER IN CIRCLES IN THE NIGHT AND ARE CONSUMED BY FIRE. The palindrome is a spell to entangle dangerous spirits.

Ask PCs how they read these. If read from the outside to the middle of the palindrome by a human, nothing happens, but if continued from the middle to the outside, vague silhouettes of naked, emaciated old women emerge, darken, and attack.

**1-4 shadows** emerge from each spell-spiral. **AC 7, HD 3+3, AT: 1 chill touch, Dmg: 2-5**, each hit also **drains** one point of **strength**; victims reduced to zero die and rise as a shadow controlled by its killer. Immune to cold-based attacks; other usual undead immunities. Can only be hit by **blessed, silver-treated** or **magic weapons**. Not easily seen except in bright light – full daylight, *continual light* spells, etc.

There is no body in the loculus behind Marthanes' name plaque- instead, mysteriously, 3 copies of *Brief Antiquarian Notes* worth 100-1000 gold pieces each.

## ABOUT *BRIEF ANTIQUARIAN NOTES*

DM should read the player handout APPENDIX B: BOOK EXCERPTS thoroughly before running the adventure.

Recommended: make an additional copy to refer to behind the DM's screen.

Player characters, by the time they get a hold of a copy of the book, will likely have heard about its plot and supposed purpose of indicating where to find particular statues -in a city that has many statues- which point the way toward treasure. The book contains a lot of filler, a lot of humor ranging from subtle to stupid. A foreword to many copies of the book describes how the author became afflicted for years by nightmares and felt obsessively compelled to write down, or dictate to scribes, the material in this book. The book's changeable tone is strange. The loose plot has to do with friends who set off in search of treasure which can be found using clues revealed by 5 statues, but the friends also have a sincere antiquarian interest in the statues they seek out around the city.

Some players may want to read the book excerpts aloud to the gaming table when their characters acquire the book. Riddles in the book excerpts are meant to be interesting but easy enough for players without too much frustration or time involved. The PCs need to find a significant letter or several at each statue, which they will then form into a word in "the Old Tongue" of Khrysokeras: **CISTERNAE**. This will indicate, with the help of the map that PCs receive along with the book, where the treasure is. Despite the legend of seven statues, there are only 5 statues mentioned in the book.



## DESCRIPTIONS AND LOCATIONS OF THE STATUES

Finding these statues and their bronze letters is much easier if the party has bought, earned or stolen a copy of *Brief Historical Notes* and the map as seen in APPENDIX B: BOOK EXCERPTS and APPENDIX C: MAPS. Sharp players might figure out the “**CISTERNAE**” clue without needing to visit every statue and obtain every bronze letter in person.

Travel around the city to look at statues or for other purposes will incur rolling on the DAY or NIGHT CITY ENCOUNTERS tables, the RIVAL GROUPS table or ENCOUNTERS IN THE NECROPOLIS tables as appropriate. Accommodation, provision shops, and book shops are left for the DM to fill in if necessary. Just about any mundane business or resource is available in this big city.

### STATUE #1: THE “TALKING STATUE”

Location: a public square, near the Anemodoulion, the Servant of the Winds statue, the center of the city.

As a “talking statue” there is a tradition of nailing or wheat-pasting satirical, political, religiously heterodox, and scatological writings and cartoons on it. A glint of bronze plate is visible at the center of the double groined arched pedestal that supports the statue a foot off the ground, obscured partially by many overhanging paper scraps.

Potential difficulties: Removing too many handbills too obviously, e.g. in the daytime, will rile passers-by: 75% chance of yelling at defacers, 25% chance of raising a mob to “defend free criticism” – **2-12 Level Zero normal humans, AC 9, daggers or ad hoc clubs, hp 1-4 each.**

The bronze plate features a raised “**Æ**”.

---

### STATUE #2: THE PROPHETIC STATUE

Location: The Square of the Ox (Forum Tauri)

Locals and scholars from around the country try to decipher the portents in its stains. Churches, shops, factories, pick-pockets and prostitutes in the area keep the square busy day and night. At all hours, poor people are looking hard at the statue or putting their ears to its stone lips, trying to divine their futures. On

top of the upside-down face of the statue is a 20’ stone pillar.

On top of the pillar, facing upward to the sky and only visible from the ground in profile, is a bronze plate with “**IST**” on it in raised letters.

---

### STATUE #3: ITHYPHALLIC HERM

Location: the large walled garden of a well-to-do private residence to the north of Magnaura Pandidactic University.

The statue is a horned herm pillar with a leering expression and an obviously male and enthusiastic anatomy. The soft, wet soil of the garden makes the statue relatively easy to tip over and reveal the “**ER**” on the bronze plate beneath it.

The last of a long-established old-money crypto-pagan family, middle-aged lecher **Synetos** gathers his powerful friends to the ancestral mansion to discreetly worship the pagan god the statue depicts, as well as the rest of the pagan pantheon. Also, he hosts wild garden parties.

Some ways to come within tipping distance of the statue:

- Sneaking over the garden wall (see difficulties below).
- Replacing or mingling with delivery workers or cooks for party supplies and catering.
- Securing a party invitation through **Magnaura Pandidactic University students** (#5 on the INITIAL CONVERSATION CHART) or **Lady Marozia** (#11 on the chart).

All the garden parties are masquerades. **Synetos** and his mostly middle-aged *symposiast* friends dress in old-fashioned *himatons* and togas and wear beaten gold masks of gods, satyrs and nymphs. Beautiful young women and men invited to the party from the outside world are *not* allowed to wear masks, but have to change into provided silk togas or *peplos* in tents immediately upon entering the garden gate. Particularly favored young men are allowed to wear furry pants and goat horn head-dresses.

#### Complications:

- Glass shards (1-6 damage) are embedded in the top of the wall.
- On nights when no party is held, **20 fierce dogs** with spiked collars run loose on the grounds (**AC 7, MV 36", HD 2, hp 10 each, #AT 1, DMG 1-6**).
- Serving at parties, working in the house anytime, alert, especially in the day, for garden or house trespassers: **20 unarmored Level Zero servants/guards, club, dagger, or spear, hp 2-7**. Treasure in the house itself is mostly mosaics, frescos, heavy statuary- not easily portable.

---

#### STATUE #4: ICY, GRIM SAINT

Location: Church of St. Veneranda, SE Corner of city, SE of Square of the Oxen, near city's largest garden

Originally a long-forgotten pagan empress, for centuries this statue has been pressed into service to depict the eponymous saint in the city's main and oldest church of St. Veneranda.

Underneath the statue is a raised relief "N" on the usual bronze plate.

#### Complications:

- Church is open 24 hours, but is crowded all day and only depopulated at night between 10:30pm, midnight, 2:00am, 4:00am and 6:00am prayer times.
- Church staff and congregation will **whip up an angry mob of 2-40 Level Zero people, hp 2-7** each, to chase anyone who obviously tries to tip, topple or touch the statue.
- Religious equipment and votive offerings in precious metals are piled near the statue. Unless thieves melt them down, no pawnbroker for hundreds of miles will touch them.

#### Potential help:

**Grumbling novice monks** not very willingly attached to this church are obligated to perform menial maintenance tasks, can be bribed to allow player characters to examine the statue up close during lonely periods of the night, and even pocket the bronze plate underneath.

#### STATUE #5: SCREAMING STATUE

Location: Tomb in necropolis outside the city walls and the disused northwest gate, on the Via Antiqua road.

Scores of crumbling tombs line the overgrown Via Antiqua road. The ancient, desolate necropolis sees only the occasional living person passing through on a smuggling mission, prostitution or other unsavory business. Non-humans are involved in even MORE unsavory business, especially at night.

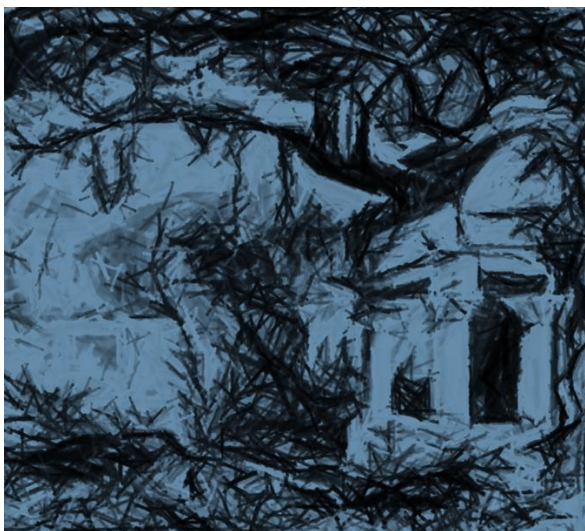
Show the players **Figure 5** in the PICTURE APPENDIX. Roll on ENCOUNTERS IN THE NECROPOLIS until #12 is achieved.

The mausoleum indicated by #12 is the only one inscribed with PENETRANS AD INTERIORA MORTIS. The inside of the tomb is reachable by shinnying through a low, sandy hole under the wedged closed stone doors. Like many other tombs, the interior has been strewn over centuries with many curse tablets- thin sheets of lead inscribed with barbarous names and entreaties to ancient underworld deities.

STATUE #5, an unrecognizably weathered pagan goddess, lies toppled at the farthest inside wall of this tomb. It emits **bloodcurdling screams**, struggles ineffectively to **roll** if touched. This may attract attention. Roll again on ENCOUNTERS IN THE NECROPOLIS, avoiding results which have been encountered already or don't make sense within the tomb context.

The letter under the foot of the statue is "C".

The 3 massive sarcophagi in the tomb are cracked open, empty. Recent, crude mortaring might be noticed in the wall behind the screaming statue. [Show players **Fig. 6** in PICTURE APPENDIX]. 10-40 minutes chipping away the mortar, incurring another roll on the NECROPOLIS ENCOUNTERS table, reveals a niche with treasure: The Cup of Nikephoros [Show players **Fig. 7** in PICTURE APPENDIX] whose skull is inside the cup, and whose name is inscribed on the outside, was commissioned by barbarian khagan Krum who killed Nikephoros I in a decisive battle. Church and civil authorities will pay 10000 gold histameon to recover this cup, but ask uncomfortable questions. North of the border, certain barbarians will pay between 100-400 gp for it.



### THE RUINS ABOVE THE CISTERNS

Once the party has visited enough statues, they should be able to rearrange the letters revealed into the word “**CISTERNAE**”. Players can see the word “**CISTERNAE**” toward the NW corner of the appropriate maps which come with *Brief Antiquarian Notes*.

These vast underground water-tight vaults were built several hundred years ago under a palace which is now in ruins. They have not been used by the municipal government for 200 years. They are, however, currently being used by organized crime to dispose of many of its victims’ bodies. Removing the massacred victims’ bloated bodies from the cisterns and giving them proper burial rites will appease their angry ghosts. The ghosts will make glowing indications of their approval and will guide the party near the treasure’s hiding place in the SE corner of the cisterns.

Rumors of hauntings by the long-extinct aristocratic family of pagan times who built the palace (not exactly true) and structural unsafety of the ruins (true) keep the neighbors away. A **stone spiral staircase** in the overgrown ruins leads down to the underground cisterns. There is also an old municipal **maintenance tunnel**, accessible from the street and barred by a heavily padlocked door. Breaking in to the old maintenance tunnel allows the party to avoid wandering around the ruins for a way to enter the cisterns, otherwise roll on **SEARCHING IN THE RUINS** table until #11 or #12 is achieved.

### SEARCHING IN THE RUINS - Cross off results when rolled

1. 1-6 **feral cats**
2. **Not-quite readable inscriptions** on masonry fragments, e.g. MAL ICT S
3. **Uneven surface** composed of vines, pottery shards, broken masonry, dirt – Roll under dexterity score on a d20 or slip/fall into **small hole** for 1-2 points of damage
4. **Column shards** visible rising out of undergrowth. They rest on one another precariously. Beaten animal track underneath them. Walking near or under them incurs 3 in 6 chance of knocking them down, 2 in 6 chance of them crushing nearest person – Damage: 10-40
5. **Asphodel flowers** poking up from other weeds
6. Two heaps, once walls, separated by shard-and-weed-choked pit, bridged by old log. To cross, roll under DEX or take 2-7 falling damage. Or go around: roll **SEARCHING IN THE RUINS** again.
7. **Lead tablets** with blanks for the name of the supplicant, which ask for chthonic deities to help “reveal the secrets of the earth” – this was/is commonly used by pagans to find treasure, but could also be used to find out what is being hidden in the cisterns.
8. **Rough trails** beaten by goats, feral pigs or people (add + 7 to party’s die rolls on this chart if they follow the trails)
9. One of the **groups** also seeking the treasure has been following the party at a distance: See **APPENDIX A – RIVAL GROUPS**.
10. **Two men** trying not to draw much attention **carrying a rug rolled up** around something lumpy and heavy (**Two dagger-armed level 1 thieves, AC 8, hp 4 each**, disposing of their superior’s victim) If uninterrupted and not tipped off, they will descend the **stone staircase** to the cisterns.
11. The **stone staircase** leading into the cisterns.
12. The **stone staircase** leading into the cisterns.

## INSIDE THE ABANDONED CISTERNS

There are hundreds of columns in the cisterns, interfering with visibility. There is a constant, echoing sound of dripping from many points into the shallow water on the floor. Filthy water ranges from inches deep to taller than a man's height in different sections of the room. An unsettling, vague whispering sound seems to be mixed in with the water sounds. A smell of mold alternates with a charnel stench. At the bottom of the stone spiral staircase is a "beach" of sand, mud, rubble and garbage. Two small pirogues are pulled up on the sand with 4 10-foot-long push-poles and 3 paddles nearby.

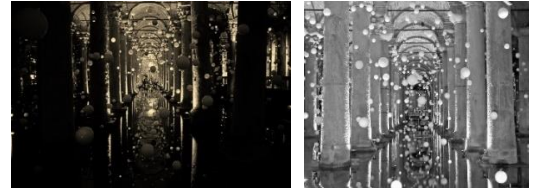
[See the **Fig. 10**- Views of the Cisterns pictures in the PICTURE APPENDIX and, for the DM only, the Map of the Cisterns at the end of this document].



The further the PCs go into the cisterns, the more they will see bloated bodies and slimy, blackened skeletons lying in the shallow water. Their movements, whether propelling the boats, jumping from one column to another, tapping with the 10-foot long poles, or wading through the black and deep green water, at some point will disturb a bed of **10-60 hissing eels (AC: 9 if immobilized, but AC: 4 due to speed, HD: 1/2, #AT: 1, dmg 1-4, hp 1, size: S – 2ft. long)** who will churn the water, stand up like cobras and hiss. The eels will not attack after hissing, except if stepped on or otherwise provoked. They are inclined to hiss from a distance and/or flee combat with larger creatures.

## WHISPERS AND GLOWING ORBS

The eerie whispers will reverberate louder the further characters enter the cisterns, even noticeable over the din of the hissing eels. Ask if characters are trying to understand the whispers. Discernable amidst the sibilance are repeated phrases from multiple **ghostly voices**: SO NOW IT CAN BE SAID. DO US THIS SERVICE. LAY US TO REST ON THE SUNLIT SURFACE. PRAYERS AND OBSEQUIES FROM CHURCHES. If at least one character announces an intention of removing the corpses and giving them a decent burial, hundreds of glowing, floating **orbs of light** will suddenly emerge from the mouths of the bodies and skeletons, make a loud whistling sound, flow at great speed toward the large crack in the SE corner cistern wall, and disappear.



PCs must make good within 2 days on their intention to remove the remains from the cisterns and arrange for proper last rites, or they will be plagued by debilitating nightmares, obtain a + 10% worse modifier in miscellaneous rolls, -2 in combat, compounding each day, until they fulfill their promise. PC will need a lot of help to remove the 316 sets of remains.

Some ways to do this might include:

- Hiring **unemployed laborers** in public squares
- Recruiting the **monks** of St. Pankratios
- Paying University **students**
- Pasting an **advertisement** on the Talking Statue promising gold for labor
- Getting help from **church officials** to clear the ruins above the cisterns, build a chapel, have graves dug
- Seeking out the daytime **City Watch** or the **Wall Guards**/the military

A good option to resolve the cistern problems:

**Basilios Pyravlon Xephos (Fighter – Level 8, hp 77, frequently AC 7, AC 4 when fully armored, wields blessed sword + 3 named *Kardiá Loulóúdition* – “Heart is a Flower”),** the Count of the Walls and *Strategos* for the entire military district. He would be especially attentive to PCs informing him of the contents of the cisterns since a popular political ally of his was assassinated by organized crime recently. Xephos would gain political leverage in his bid to get self-proclaimed “Clean Government” officials, especially military-aligned ones who are his friends, appointed to replace as many of the current civilian bureaucrats as possible. **Wall Guards** are usually with him or know where he is.

Some poor choices to resolve cistern problems:

- Many officials, patrolmen in the **Night Watch** collude with the crime families, will try to thwart the PCs if alerted to what was going on in the cisterns.
- **Psalidios “The Scissor”** is Count of the Exchequer in the government and is in cahoots with major criminals (**Fighter – Level 5, hp 40, AC 9 in office, has 2 daggers & sword at all times**). If asked for help with the burials or informed by the PCs of what they found in the cisterns, he will promise to help, but (discreetly, if possible) try to have the PCs killed and the information suppressed.

FINISHED ROOM-

Entrance is a heavy wooden door with a high, stone, flood-resistant threshold. A wide brick chimney stands in the NW corner which, with difficulty, could be climbed up to a thick tangle of rubble and trees in the ruins above. The room contains items for entertainment (dice, drugged and normal wine), nourishment, and keeping warm over several weeks of hiding, including a brazier, as well as thieves’ supplies.

The masonry walls are covered with vulgar graffiti complaining of boredom.

The **four men** inside have been hiding until the uproar from an assassination they have committed on behalf of **Skorprios’ crime family** dies down (**AC 8, Level 3 thieves, hp 12 each, daggers, slings**).

If encountered soon after the loud whistling of the bright orbs, these men will be alert and afraid. Hearing the party coming, they will bar the door, scatter hot brazier coals on the floor just inside it, and will try to climb up the chimney and escape.

Each one captured alive will earn a bounty of 500 gold *histameon* from State organs such as the **Wall Guards/Army**. The **Night Watch** is 30% likely to discreetly let them escape, 20% likely to be part of the honest minority and hold them for due judicial process, 50% likely to silence them by killing them “accidentally” and swiftly.

SECRET CHAMBER-

Players whose PCs are actively looking for a secret door in the walls of the rough cavern should be shown PICTURE APPENDIX **Fig. 24** in which the player might be able to discern the door. This method is strongly recommended to the DM vs. just having players roll for skill checks.

In the curving corridor leading up from the secret door, the natural stone floor gives way to large square tiles. 40 feet into the passageway is a mosaic labyrinth 10 feet long x 10 feet wide set into the floor.



An image of a minotaur is at the center. [Show players **Fig. 25** and **26** in the PICTURE APPENDIX] Fifteen rectangular wooden posts stand along the walls. A stone shelf is molded into the wall 6 inches off the floor on either side

of the labyrinth. The west wall has 5 posts running from the stone shelf all the way to the 12-foot-high ceiling, alternating with 5 posts standing on the shelf which do not reach quite all the way to the ceiling. The east wall has fewer: only 5 posts going all the way to the ceiling. The ceiling is hard to see: very irregular with deep shadowy gouges.

Stepping on any part of the labyrinth activates a bellows which puffs **poisonous, hallucinogenic spores** from nozzles in the ceiling immediately above the labyrinth. Those standing in the area must **save vs. poison twice**.

Failing the **first save** results in disorientation and nightmarish visual and auditory **hallucinations**. Effects last 3-18 turns (30-180 minutes) and there is a 1 in 6 chance that the effects will recur every 1-6 months for the rest of the character's life unless cured. Wandering while shrieking and hallucinating can be deadly among the hissing eels of the cisterns, the unstable ruins, etc. Roll a **second time vs. poison**, whether or not the save was made on the previous roll; this roll indicates whether the character will die, **cramping and gibbering**, in 1-6 minutes. Spells which would be useful: *slow poison*, *neutralize poison*, and *remove fear*. *Remove fear* prevents the poisons from binding with the victim's cells as completely, and will help the character to bleed or urinate the chemicals out of his or her bloodstream over time.

Pulling or knocking down the posts which don't reach to the ceiling makes them fall into place athwart the corridor, supported securely by the stone shelves lining each side of the corridor, kept in place by the shelf-to-ceiling bolted-in posts on either side. They are sturdy enough for a normal person and gear to cross safely over the labyrinth mosaic.

It is also possible to hug the walls and walk on the 4-inch-deep, 6-inch-tall stone shelf. A bulky-gear-balancing character must roll under

their dexterity on a d20 to avoid falling, triggering the trap.

There is a final locked wooden door, and then the secret chamber filled with **TREASURE** described below. The secret chamber is elevated relative to the cisterns and rough cavern, and much drier. It has finished ceiling-work, floor tile and masonry.

#### TREASURE

[Show players **Fig. 20-23** in the PICTURE APPENDIX – Several items not depicted]

It will be difficult, labor-intensive and possibly dangerous to maximize the cash value of many of these items, or even to convert them to cash at all.

Antique **silver church vessels**, worth 10-200 gp if sold to barbarians or others who see them as just silver items, worth 200-2000 (2d10 gp) to church officials or believers who recognize what they are.

A gold-wire-wrapped **bone flute**, inscribed NIKEPHOROS I, etched with sinuous barbarian-style beast designs, crafted from the thigh bone of the hapless monarch. Worth 600-1200 gp to the Church. Worth 1200-2400 gp to the State. Worth only 5 gp as a curio to those who don't know or care about its story.

3 gold, ivory, glass and silver **reliquaries**. The one labelled ST. VENERANDA has a wig made out of old hair. The one labelled ST. PANKRATIOS holds a shriveled umbilicus. The one labelled ST. EUHEMIA contains incorrupt-looking earlobes in a thin coat of transparent wax. The materials and craftsmanship make each reliquary worth 100-800 gp. The contents of each reliquary, if sold to believers in general, would earn 200-2000 gp. Sold to the church or monastery bearing its name, each relic is worth 2000-24000 gp.

Ornate stylized **bronze lion statue**, which "sneezes" when bronze pedals atop spring-augmented leather bellows are stepped on. The lion can hold a gallon of liquid (such as flammable oil, acid, Sticky Fire or ochre jelly) in a reservoir in its head and shoot this 50 feet. It can reload in 2 rounds (minutes). The statue is very heavy, but has wheels and multiple carrying handles.

It would be ideal in siege defense or some naval combat. The Navy would pay 1000 gp for this; the Army 2000 gp. Foreign powers would pay well, too.

A **copper scroll** relating, in not-too-difficult code, the formula for making Sticky Fire. This formula is a state secret. The State will promise 90,000 gold to have this scroll destroyed, but will permanently imprison or kill anyone who has seen it. Foreign powers will pay 50,000 gold for this. The Church wants Sticky Fire banned as too brutal. Some ecclesiastics would use the scroll in a secret ritual of exorcism and anathema, then melt it down. Church officials will discreetly take the scroll off the party's hands, reward them 1gp or nothing at all, but will let them go free if they seem not to have understood its importance.

An **iron cage with smoked glass panels**. A blackened, shriveled tongue is tied into place with copper network and is transfixed by a sharp piece of wood. Lady Marozia very much wants this item.

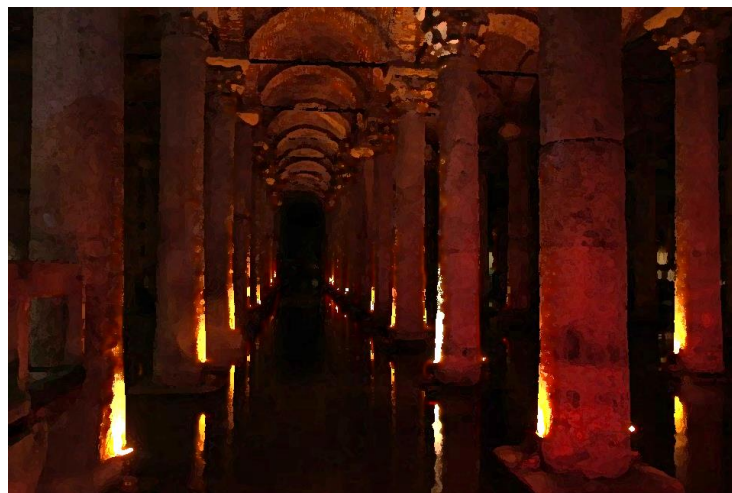
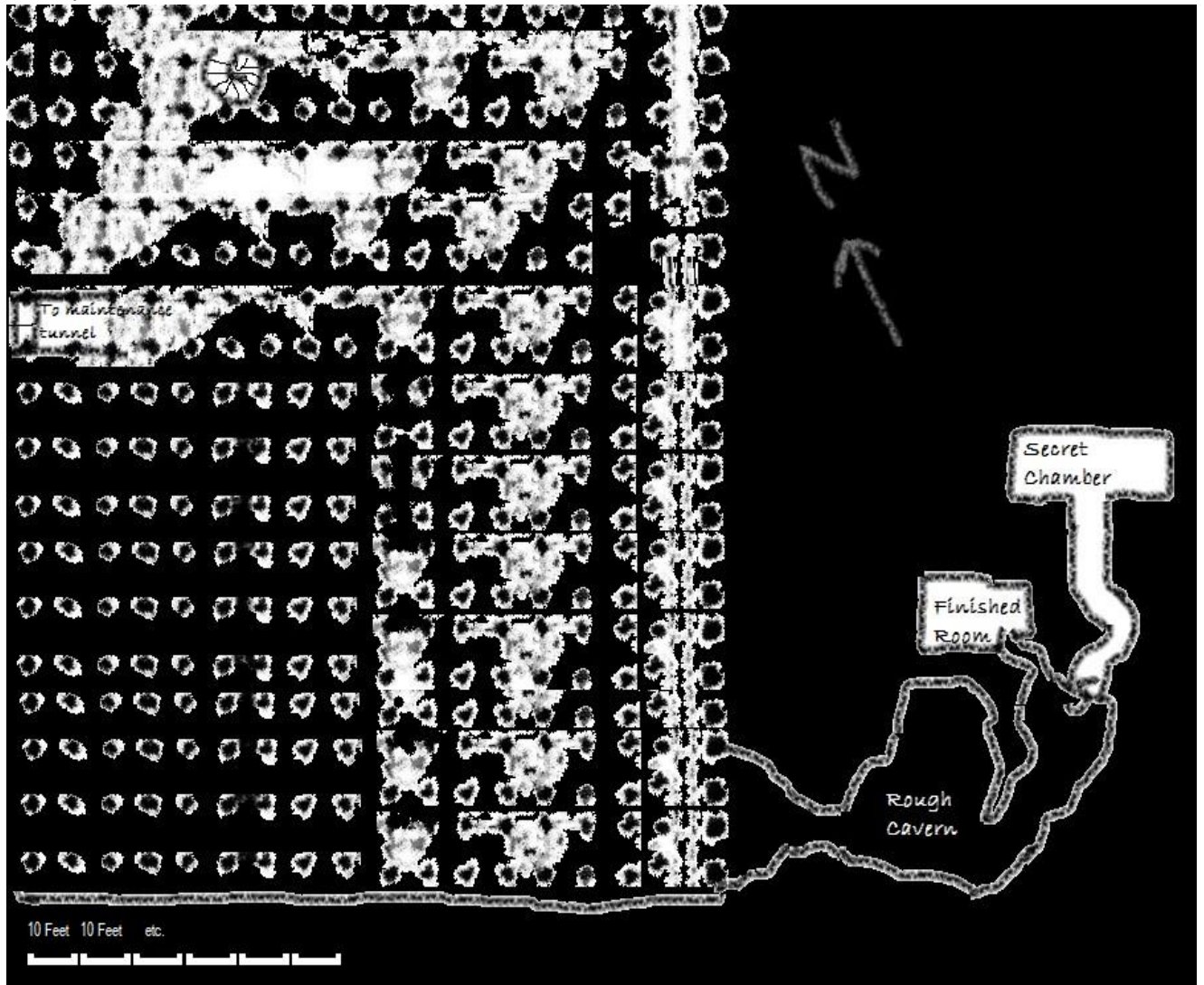
**Serpent's Tooth** – + 3 short sword with scabbard, those hit must save vs. poison unless they are immune

to poisons, sword is constantly generating and sweating poison, except when in scabbard. Wielder will slowly turn cold, calculating and neutral (with evil tendencies).

In 16 **lidded clay jars** are a number of **coiled lead sheets**- they look like curse tablets but actually are several decades' worth of crime families' **assassination contracts** as well as lists of government officials' names and how much they have been bribed and for which favors. The crime families would promise to pay 20,000 gp for these, but would make sure to kill any outsider who knew about them. **Basilios Pyravlon Xefos**, District Strategos and commander of the Wall Guards will pay 10,000 gp for these sheets. Other officers in the **Wall Guards** will pay 7000 gp for them. 20% chance that a member of the **Night Watch** tries to do the right thing and gets superiors to award the party 500 gp. 80% of the Night Watch and (100% certain) Count of the Exchequer **Psallidios "The Scissor"** would promise 20,000 gp but then imprison or kill the party.

**Mountain of gold**-shaped paperweight worth 10 gp.

↓ Map of the cisterns for DM:



APPENDIX A: RIVAL GROUPS SEEKING THE BOOK AND/OR THE TREASURE

If appropriate, roll a d6 to know the statue they seek.

1. **Aristocratic treasure seeker**, following notes from own copy of the book: **Kyrios Alexios** (Fighter Level 4, AC scale mail + shield, hp 37) and his band: F Level 3, MU Level 4, 6 Level 0 Fighters). See INIT. CONV. CHART #7
2. On-leave or AWOL **Palace Varangians**: 2 Level 3 Fighters hp 28 and hp 25, 1 Level 2 Fighter hp 18, 1 Level 1 Fighter hp 8, all armed with axes, scale mail and short swords. Always semi-officially allowed to plunder the city a bit in the interregnum between the death of the old monarch they were sworn to protect and the crowning of the new one. Now, despite the relative stability of the current regime, they want to find the treasure for themselves that so many people are talking about. They have figured out the location of several statues through talking to people who have read the book/heard the legend. See INIT. CONV. #8
3. **Book procurers** working for the Owl antiquarian book shop: 25% chance of wanting to find more copies of *Brief Antiquarian Notes* or other books to sell, 75% chance of having read the book and now seeking the treasure themselves. Three Magic Users (Lvl 5, 4, 1) and two thieves (Lvl 3, Lvl 2). See INITIAL CONVERSATION #9
4. **Novices and a monk** from St. Pankratios (5 Level 1 clerics, hp 3-8, 1 Lvl 3 cleric, hp 22, armed with cudgels, maces, padded armor) seeking the treasure according to the book clues; they are doing this without the official knowledge or permission of the monastic hierarchy, but will be winked at if they find the treasure before rival monasteries; likely to brawl with those who obstruct them, esp. monks from St. Euhemia; compare IC Chart #3
5. **Lay scullions/custodians** serving St. Pankratios who have heard the younger monks talking about the treasure, have heard and remembered the essence of the book clues, and have either no-showed at their work or are searching for the treasure during their off hours

(Six Lvl 0, hp 4, 3, 2, 6, 5, 4 and a Lvl 1 fighter, hp 8, padded armor)

6. 2-5 thieves (Level 1-3) and 1-4 ruffian fighters (Level 1-3), women & men, **minor members of crime families**.

+++++

APPENDIX B: BOOK EXCERPTS from *BRIEF ANTIQUARIAN NOTES* – See attached.

+++++

APPENDIX C: MAP INSERT to *BRIEF ANTIQUARIAN NOTES* – See attached.

If desired, email [machuvmajmn@gmail.com](mailto:machuvmajmn@gmail.com) for free jpg. files to print larger.

+++++

APPENDIX D: PICTURE APPENDIX – See attached.

+++++

APPENDIX E: PRE-GENERATED PC or NPC APPENDIX – See attached.

+++++

APPENDIX F: LETTER CHITS to CUT OUT -See attached.

+++++

APPENDIX N- INSPIRATION and GRATITUDE: Gary Gygax et. al., *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition books; David A. Trampier; Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*; Clark Ashton Smith, “Morthylla”; eldritchdark.com; Achaeology.org; Jack Vance, *Eyes of the Overworld*; George R.R. Martin, ed., *Songs of Dying Earth: Stories in Honor of Jack Vance*, M.R. James, *Mr. Humphreys and His Inheritance*; “The Nightingale Kratima”; Shimmy Disc Records; King Missile, “My Heart is a Flower”; Luc Sante, *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York*; Wikipedia.org; translate.google.com; Microsoft Word; Microsoft Paint; Pixabay.com; AF Vandervorst Belgium; chaotichenchmen.com; Bryce Lynch of tenfootpole.org

Player characters, by the time they get a hold of a copy of this book, will likely have heard about its plot and supposed purpose of indicating where to find particular statues which point the way toward treasure. The book contains a lot of filler, a lot of humor ranging from subtle to stupid. A foreword to just about any copy of the book describes how the author became afflicted for years by nightmares and felt obsessively compelled to write down, or dictate to scribes, the material in this book. The book's changeable tone is strange. The loose plot has to do with friends who set off in search of treasure which can be found using clues revealed by 5 statues, but the friends also have a sincere antiquarian interest in the statues they seek out around the city.

### THE FIRST STATUE

"Having nothing worse and nothing better to do, a bureaucrat and an accountant, the good friends Polybius and Himerios, went to find and read the inscriptions on certain old statues in districts of the Golden City which were familiar to them. The accountant Himerios, before he was dead, sought amusement at the feet of the Talking Statue which stands, very injured and very bandaged, near The Anemodoulion, The Servant of the Winds. Accompanying him was his friend Polybius, the inquisitive bureaucrat. Paper and levity obscured bronze and seriousness beneath. MORAL: 'The truth is supposed to be its own reward.'"

### THE SECOND STATUE

"Leaving off counting others' ill-gotten gains for one afternoon, Himerios made his way until the endless porticos finally ended and the wide street debouched in an even wider square, through which scores of oxen could be driven shoulder to shoulder. Himerios sought his future by reading marble carved in the distant past and in stains which grew yesterday. Polybius, professionally familiar with all manner of seals and stains, was by chance walking past and saw his friend concentrating on the oracle. He shook his head and said Himerios this MORAL: 'One concept shines like polished bronze - You'll never see the truth unless you get to the bottom of it. Also, try to understand things from another perspective.'"

### THE THIRD STATUE

"Polybius the tyrant of obscure state rules and official seals, was standing ill-at-ease next to his friend Himerios, the legitimator of illegitimate sums. They were at a garden party at the house of a wealthy old family known for generations as semi-covert heretics with sybaritic morals. Fortunately for the sake of their souls, the students of the nearby university were not invited, and indeed a wall ringed the garden to keep them and other interlopers out.

"That statue resembles you, you inveterate goat!" hissed Polybius to Himerios, "Let us leave here before we acquire diseases of the soul and body!"

"Not so fast, friend Polybius," soothed Himerios, as a beautiful woman with a hair color not often seen in the Golden City wandered between the two men and the rude statue they were regarding in the middle distance. "Perhaps there is yet a chance to win red-gold treasure tonight," he continued, smiling and speaking loud enough for the woman to hear.

MORAL: 'Truth lies underneath. It is actually red-gold-BROWN and sometimes crusted green. Also: those who give away too much, or take indiscriminately, gain suppurations.'

### THE FOURTH STATUE

“Himerios the Accountant and Polybius the Adjutant Sub-Procurator of Municipal Canalization rose between prayers to St. Veneranda, coughed, and regarded through billowing incense clouds the statue towering before them.

Himerios: She’s so beautiful – She’s more Venera Cytherea than St. Veneranda!

Polybius: The frankincense has blurred your eyes and addled your mind – she’s so icy, so grim! She’s a pagan, but not a goddess of love: I think she’s Ulpia Severina, the same Augusta who persecuted the predecessors of the very clerics who surround us now!

Himerios: Even if she’s not Cytherea, I still would gladly spy her skirts.

Polybius: Will you never reform, friend Himerios! I will be unsurprised if someday I have to pull your lifeless, broken body out from the crushing embrace of some fallen marble goddess.

MORAL: ‘No truth, no beauty can be won without danger.’”

### THE FIFTH STATUE

“Having repented, as usual, of his short-lived repentance, Himerios inveigled his friend Polybius into continuing their hunt for gold and knowledge. They exited the walls by the old northwest gate and wandered the tombs there. Himerios smiled at strange women working their way among the fallen marble. Just then they found a tomb built by a pagan family in past centuries inscribed with ‘Penetrans ad interiora mortis.’ Himerios saw something like gold glinting under the skirts of the antique statue in the tomb, so he crawled inside, and, while he was trying to tip the statue to get a closer look, the statue fell on him and killed him. There was much screaming, then a terrible silence. Polybius was hard put to explain to the authorities that he had not killed his friend, and had difficulty making them believe what drew the friends to the old necropolis.

MORAL: ‘Beware upsetting statues of pagans.’

APPENDIX C: MAPS FOUND IN *BRIEF ANTIQUARIAN NOTES* -SE Corner of City including Pera Quarter





APPENDIX D: PICTURE APPENDIX - Show to players at appropriate points. Cover up part of page if needed.

Fig. 1.

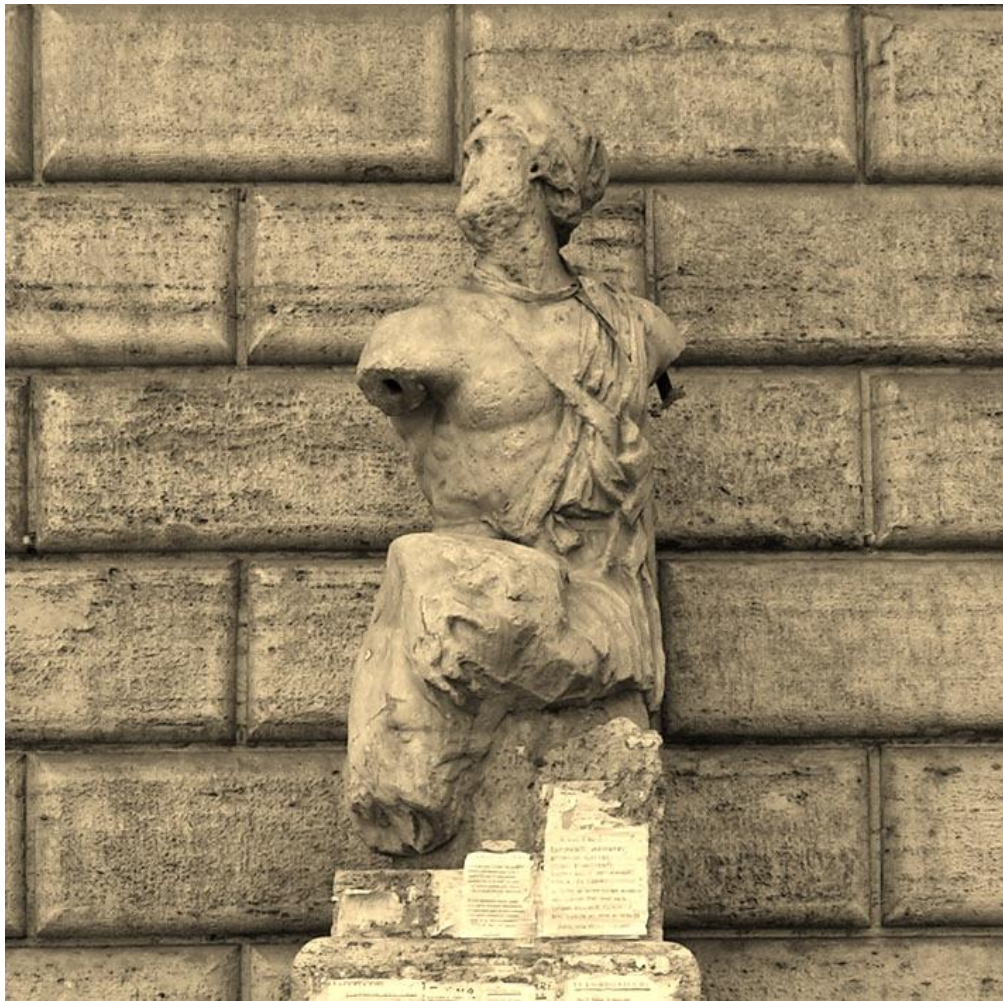


Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8. and Fig. 9. (DM Choice -Courtesy AF Vandervorst Belgium Spring Summer 2014 RTW)



Fig. 10. (four pictures)



Fig. 11. (two pictures)



Figure 12.

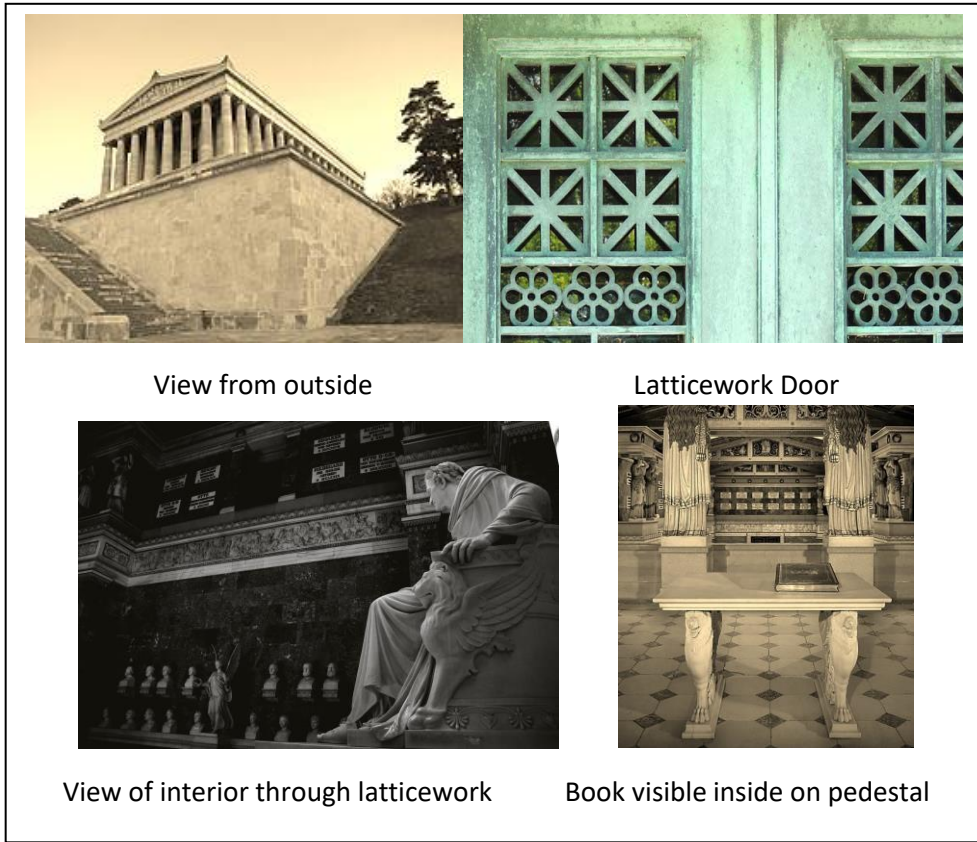
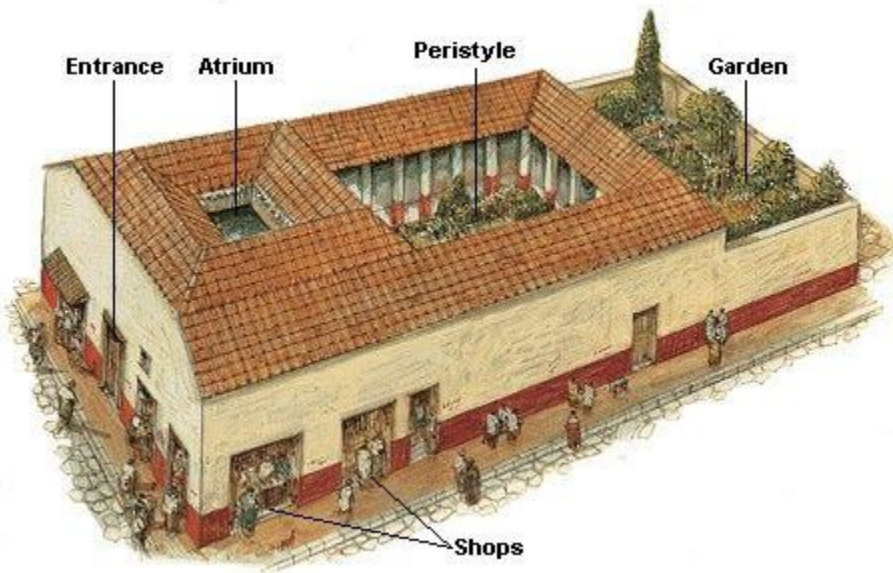


Figure 13.



Figures 16-19.



Figures 20.-23.

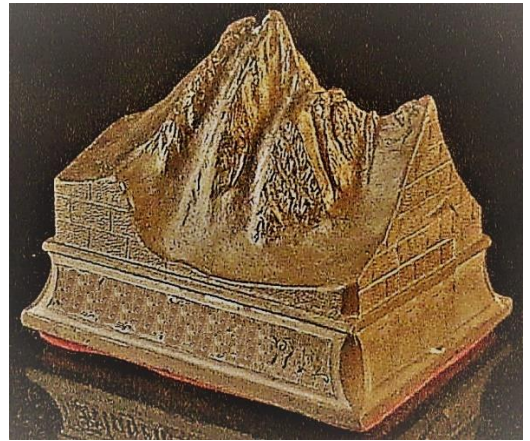


Fig. 24.



Fig. 25.



Fig. 26



APPENDIX E: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS FOR NPCs OR FOR PLAYERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ROLL THEIR OWN

(DM should allow players to customize names, gender, history, or other details, as long as game stats and other play-affecting details remain unchanged/reasonable)

	Name	Description	Stats	Equipment	Motivation
1	Veleda	Barbarian seeress from north of the border rivers; her visions were interpreted as criticizing the ruling warlord, so she had to flee to “civilization”, where she can melt into city crowds. In times of extreme stress, such as combat, she may be overtaken by a vision.	Str 9, Int 15, Wis 13, Dex 10, Con 7, Cha 13, Level 1 Magic-User, hp 3.	Large backpack, 3 smaller bags inside, money bag at belt, “fortune-telling” bones, 3 daggers tucked in belt & boots, iron-tipped wooden staff, hooded cloak, well-made boots, 15 gp, 30 sp, 5 cp; spell book contains: <i>charm person</i> ; scroll: <i>knock</i>	Wants to earn enough money to live a stable life, buy an apartment in a big city
2	Kyril	Young stonemason from the outskirts of Krysokeras	Str 13, Int 8, Wis 7, Dex 13, Con 15, Cha 8, Level 1 Fighter, hp 15	Large backpack, money bag at belt, mallet, folding shovel, club, chisel, wedges, spikes, boots, owns a small house in a village near a quarry just outside the city, 30 gp, 80 sp, 66 cp	Recently laid-off, Kyril is angry and wants to work in an interesting non-stone-related line of work located far away from the village
3	Bardas	Young traveler who has been long-estranged from his family and lives by his wits: gambling, street tricks, pipe & bowed lyra playing & singing, snake charming, and thievery	Str 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Dex 12, Con 9, Cha 13, Level 2 Thief, hp 8	Large backpack, wooden flute, pipe, bowed lyra, bow, case, dice, cards, 5 daggers, quiet but sturdy boots, supple gloves, leather armor, candles shielded lantern, firesteel, poison that smells delicious to dogs; renting a room at an inn in the city; 24 gp, 60 sp, 20 cp	Wants to survive and thrive, by any means necessary
4	Evdokia	Cash-poor minor provincial aristocrat, experienced vs. bandits & barbarians; not squeamish or snobbish, enjoys using crude humor to shock men	Str 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Dex 10, Con 13, Cha 11, Level 2 Fighter, hp 15	Large backpack, sword, shield, chainmail, helmet, turban, 2 short axes, silver dagger, tall well-made boots, leather coat with hidden pockets, concealable bag containing 50 gp, 25 sp, letter of credit worth 200 gp; rents fine room at inn in the city	Seeks adventure, to “find her own fortune”

APPENDIX E: PRE-GENERATED PCs and NPCs (continued)

5	Galla Pulcheria	Middle-aged ascetic who lived atop a pillar for two decades; recently arrived in Krysokeras; does not conform well to monastic rules or conventional roles for women in society; ruggedly “handsome” rather than pretty, high-cheek-boned, thin-faced, silver-haired; persuasive; projects kindly air; good at listening & advising	Str 10, Int 11, Wis 17, Dex 9, Con 12, Cha 15 Level 3 Cleric hp 18	Staff, large bag, small bags, belt with several bags, money pouch, religious items, firesteel, hooded homespun robes, sandals, 5 gp, 30 sp, 5 cp	Senses something is wrong in city; feels finding & giving away the fabled treasure will lift its curse
6	Gemistos	Elderly “scholar” from a city to the east—discreetly studies magic	Str 6, Int 15, Wis 11, Dex 10, Con 8, Cha 9 Level 2 Magic User, hp 3	Large backpack, long coat with inner pockets, belt, +1 silver dagger in boots, 10 gp, 6 sp hidden in purse in boots, ivory tube contains spellbook: <i>dancing lights, sleep, read magic, affect normal fires</i>	Curious about mysteries, but mostly just needs money
7	Usire the Crocodilopolitan	From the far southern desert cities; AWOL monk on years-long “extended furlough”; was at one time or another an adherent of 14 heresies until ardor burnt out	Str 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Dex 7, Con 14, Cha 11 Level 1 Cleric, hp 6	Staff, backpack, religious items, bedroll, bullseye lantern, phantasmagoria screens he shows to people for money, 5 vials of oil in belt, firesteel, sandals, 22 sp	Needs to earn money, buy food & lodging
8	Uldin	Disgraced barbarian ex-horseman without a horse; bowlegged, hides painful unhealed wound; short but tough; ritually scarred face; cannot grow a beard; bristling topknot hairstyle	Str 12, Int 10, Wis 7, Dex 14, Con 12, Cha 5, Level 2 Fighter, hp 12	Often wears some degree of fur/leather armor, wolf’s head over <i>spangenhelm</i> , boots, gaudy necklaces & other jewelry; silk underwear, the “Sword of Mars” +1, pick/axe, shield, wood/horn bow, quiver of 16 arrows, leather pants, purse on belt with 34 sp, 15 cp; friend in city can store items for him	Needs money, wants to heal wound, buy a horse, conflicted about returning to his own people. -1 in combat until embarrassing wound he hides is healed

APPENDIX F: LETTER CHITS

Before running the adventure, DM should prep the letters which players' characters find under statues.

DM is encouraged to hand these out to players as their characters find them in the game.

Use Scrabble tiles, craft-store or hardware-store letters, or cut out the letters below. Please note these are found in clusters. Whether Scrabble tiles or craft-store letters, hand letters out ONLY in these clusters.

