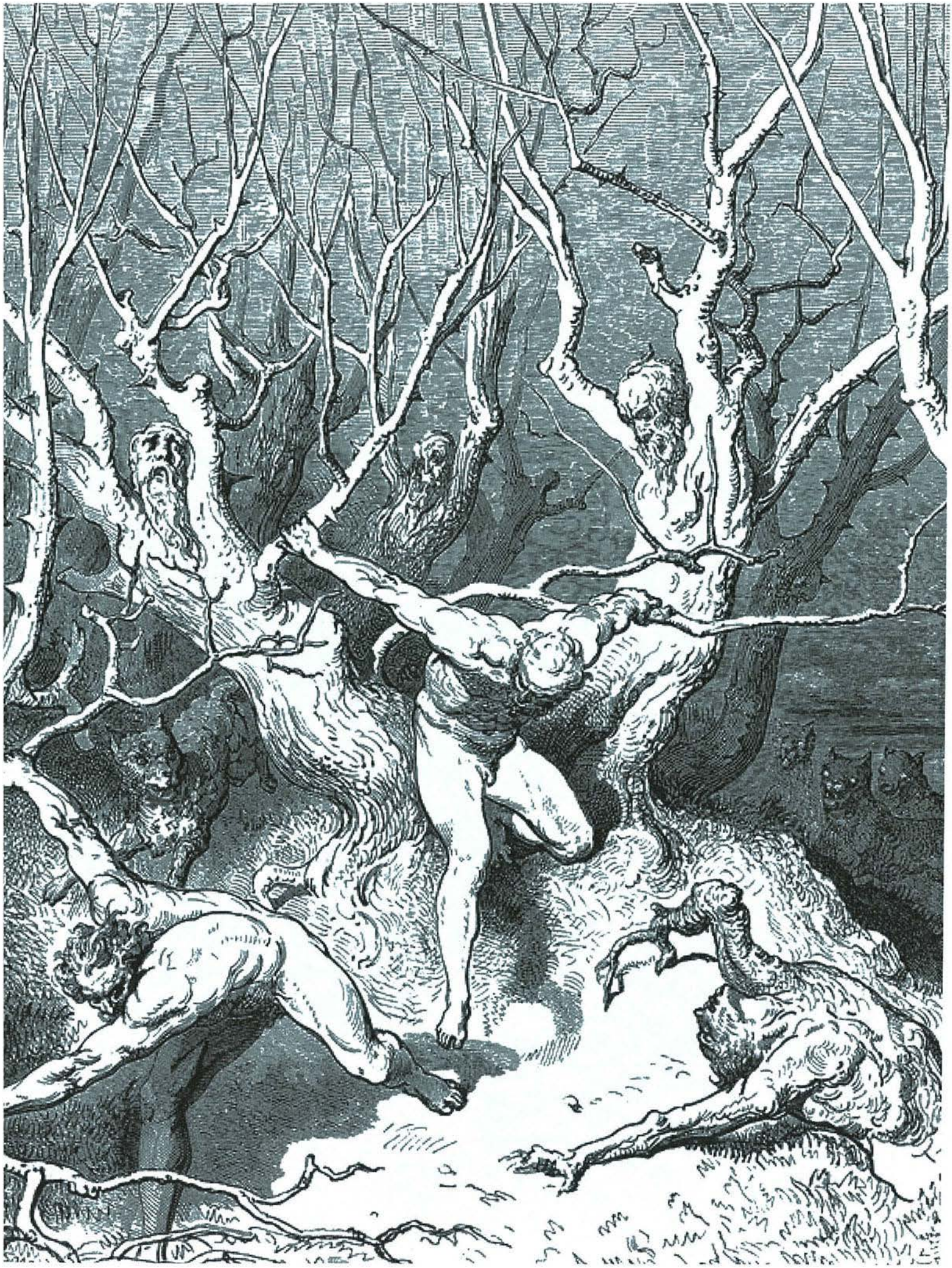

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OGRE SLUGS by Tim 'Turgenev' Hartin (Editor's note: These creatures originally appeared in Eye of the Beholder III copyright WOTC)

FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-2
ARMOR CLASS: 4
MOVE: 60' (20')
HIT DICE: 9 + 9
% IN LAIR: 15%
TREASURE TYPE: D, Q, R, S, T
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 Claws or 1 weapon attack or 1 spit
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2d4+6/2d4+6 or by weapon type (+6 strength bonus) or 3d8 acid spit
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Acid spit, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Slime climb
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: Low to average
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic evil
SIZE: L
SAVE AS: F9
MORALE: 10
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: **Nil**
X.P. VALUE: 1950 + 14/hp

The genesis of ogre slugs is believed to have arisen from some perceived slight to a vengeful dark deity. Ogre slugs speak Ogre, and those specimens who boast Intelligence scores of at least 10 also speak Common.

Adult ogre slugs stand 8 feet tall and are nearly 15 feet in length, weighing around 6,000 pounds. They are considered to have a strength of 26 (+6).

Ogre slugs relish battle, pounding adversaries with weapons or their beefy fists. They liberally use their corrosive spittle to burn the armor off their opponents.

Ogre slugs can spit a ball of caustic saliva with a range of 20 feet, as a ranged attack. This attack deals 3d8 points of acid damage on a successful hit. Clothing and armor worn by the target of this spit dissolves and becomes useless immediately unless the item succeeds a save vs acid.

Ogre slugs also have the natural ability to climb on vertical surfaces (works like the spider climb spell, but only works on vertical surfaces) due to the slime their bodies excrete.

Ogre slugs move silently and surprise on 1-3, on d6.
Description: This disgusting abomination appears to be an ogre from the waist up, but its lower half is that of a giant slug. Its skin is grayish-green on the ogre portion, fading to a deep, blackish green on its slug half.

MAN-SCORPIONS by Tim 'Turgenev' Hartin

FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-6
ARMOUR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 150 ft (50 ft)
HIT DICE: 9 + 9
% IN LAIR: 45%
TREASURE TYPE: D, E
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 (sword / pincer / tail sting)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 + 2 / 1-10 + 2 / 1-4 + poison
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Poison sting (-2 save), Strength 16 (+2)
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Save as 12th level fighters, infravision/ultravision 90'
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 10%
INTELLIGENCE: High (13-14)
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
SIZE: L (10' long, 7' tall)
MORALE: 11
SAVE AS: F12
XP VALUE: 2300 + 12/hp

Man-scorpions are the beloved of Set. They are often led by a man-scorpion cleric of Set (10th level caster level). Ten percent of man-scorpions have the ability to spontaneously cast magic-user spells with caster level equal to a tenth level M-U.

A man-scorpion has a dark-skinned human torso that sits atop a long, bony-plated, scorpion-like body supported by six legs. Bony plates completely cover the legs and his torso. The protruding spine continues along the abdomen and forms a tail 10 feet long. The tail can sting with a virulent poison (save or die with a -2 penalty).

Their right hand is human like and usually carries a sword while the left hand has a giant scorpion pincer. They are hairless, and their faces are handsome and noble, except for the red, glowing eyes. The lower body, legs, and tail are usually black, and blend easily with darkness (hide in shadows 78%).

Man-scorpions speak their own language, Common and Undercommon.

*Editor's Note - (more of Tim's gaming related work can be found at www.paratime. ca)

Adventure Ideas and Descriptions from

'The Uncharted Isle' by Clark Ashton Smith (by Jason Zavoda)

Armillary [ITM]

Edible Fruit [ITM]

Mu [PLC]

Oceanic Limbo - [PLN]

Orange-Sailed Vessels [VEH]

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Strange People [NPC]

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"I looked around, and saw that the boat was drifting rapidly in the wash of a shore-ward current, between two low-lying darkish reefs half-hidden by flying veils of foam. A steep and barren cliff loomed before me; but, as the boat neared it, the cliff seemed to divide miraculously, revealing a narrow chasm through which I floated into the mirror-like waters of a still lagoon. The passage from the rough sea without, to a realm of sheltered silence and seclusion, was no less abrupt than the transition of events and scenery which often occurs in a dream.

The lagoon was long and narrow, and ran sinuously away between level shores that were fringed with an ultra-tropical vegetation. There were many fern-palms, of a type I had never seen, and many stiff, gigantic cycads, and wide-leaved grasses taller than young trees. I wondered a little about them even then; though, as the boat drifted slowly toward the nearest beach, I was mainly preoccupied with the clarifying and assorting of my recollections. ...

I got out of the boat, feeling very weak and wobbly in the hot white sunshine that poured down upon everything like a motionless universal cataract. My first thought was to find fresh water; and I plunged at random among the mighty fern-trees, parting their enormous leaves with extreme effort, and sometimes reeling against their boles to save myself from falling. Twenty or thirty paces, however, and then I came to a tiny rill that sprang in shattered crystal from a low ledge, to collect in a placid pool where ten-inch mosses and broad, anemone-like blossoms mirrored themselves. The water was cool and sweet: I drank profoundly, and felt the benison of its freshness permeate all my parched tissue."

Edible Fruit -

"Now I began to look around for some sort of edible fruit. Close to the stream, I found a shrub that was trailing its burden of salmon-yellow drupes on the giant mosses. I couldn't identify the fruit; but its aspect was delicious, and I decided to take a chance. It was full of a sugary pulp; and strength returned to me even as I ate. My brain cleared, and I recovered many, if not all, of the faculties that had been in a state of partial abeyance."

Mu -

Plant Life (odd) -

"A medley of queer impressions thronged upon me, some of which could not have arrived through the avenues of the known senses. To begin with, I saw more clearly the abnormal oddity of the plant-forms about me; they were not the palm-ferns, grasses and shrubs that are native to south sea islands: their leaves, their stems, their frondage, were mainly of uncouth archaic types, such as might have existed in former aeons, on the sea-lost littorals of Mu. They differed from anything I had seen in Australia or New Guinea, those asylums of a primeval flora; and, gazing upon them, I was overwhelmed with intimations of a dark and prehistoric antiquity. And the silence around me seemed to become the silence of dead ages and of things that have gone down beneath oblivion's tide."

Strange Town -

"...I looked down upon a scene no less incredible than unexpected. The further shore of the island was visible below me; and, all along the curving beach of a land-locked harbor, were the stone roofs and towers of a town! Even at that distance, I could see that the architecture was of an unfamiliar type; and I was not sure at first glance whether the buildings were ancient ruins or the homes of a living people. Then, beyond the roofs I saw that several strange-looking vessels were moored at a sort of mole, flaunting their orange sails in the sunlight.

...When I drew nearer to the houses, I saw that they were indeed strange. But the strangeness was not wholly inherent in their architectural forms; nor was I able to trace its every source, or define it in any way, by word or image. The houses were built of a stone whose precise color I cannot recall, since it was neither brown nor red nor grey, but a hue that seemed to combine, yet differ from, all these; and I remember only that the general type of construction was low and square, with square towers. The strangeness lay in more than this - in the sense of remote and stupefying antiquity that emanated from them like an odor: I knew at once that they were old as the uncouth primordial trees and grasses, and, like these, were parcel of a long-forgotten world."

Armillary -

Scrolls, Paper-like

Strange People -

Then I saw the people - those people before whom not only my ethnic knowledge, but my very reason, were to own themselves baffled. There were scores of them in sight among the buildings, and all of them appeared to be intensely preoccupied with something or other. At first I couldn't make out what they were doing, or trying to do: but plainly they were much in earnest about it. Some were looking at the sea or the sun, and then at long scrolls of a paper-like material which they held in their hands; and many were grouped on a stone platform around a large, intricate metal apparatus resembling an armillary. All of these people were dressed in tunic-like garments of unusual amber and azure and Tyrian shades, cut in a fashion that was unfamiliar to history; and when I came close, I saw that their faces were broad and flat, with a vague foreomening of the Mongolian in their oblique eyes. But, in an unspecifiable way, the character of their features was not that of any race that has seen the sun for a million years; and the low, liquid, many-vowelled words which they spoke to each other, were not denotive of any recorded language.

...I went up to a group of three who were studying one of the long scrolls I have mentioned... I saw that the thing they were studying was a sort of chart or map, whose yellowing paper and faded inks were manifestly of past ages. The continents and seas and isles on this map were not those of the world I knew; and their names were written in heteroclitic runes of a lost alphabet. There was one immense continent in particular, with a tiny isle close to its southern shore; and ever and anon, one of the beings who poured above the map would touch this isle with his finger-tip, and then would stare toward the empty horizon, as if he were seeking to recover a vanished shore-line. I received a distinct impression

that these people were as irretrievably lost as I myself; that they too were disturbed and baffled by a situation not be solved or redeemed.

I went on toward the stone platform, which stood in a broad open space among the foremost houses. It was perhaps ten feet high, and access to it was given by a flight of winding steps. I mounted the steps, and tried to accost the people who were crowding about the armillary-like instrument. But they too were utterly oblivious of me, and intent upon the observations they were making. Some of them were turning the great sphere; some were consulting various geographical and celestial maps; and, from my nautical knowledge, I could see that certain of their companions were taking the height of the sun with a kind of astrolabe. All of them wore the same look of perplexity and savant-like preoccupation which I had observed in the others."

Primordial God -

Primordial God, Temple -

"I came to a large building, whose open door was dark with shadows of the interior. Peeing in, I found that it was a temple; for across the deserted twilight, heavy with the stale fumes of burnt-out incense, the slant eyes of a baleful and monstrous image glared upon me. The thing was seemingly of stone or wood, with gorilla-like arms and the malignant features of a sub-human race. From what little I could see in the gloom, it was not pleasant to look upon;..."

"The people were no longer standing about in groups, with their customary porings and discussions, but were all hastening toward the temple-like edifice. I followed them and peered in at the door.

The place was lit with flaring torches that flung demonic shadows on the crowd and on the idol before whom they were bowing. Perfumes were burnt, and chants were sung in the myriad-vowelled language with which my ear had become familiarized. They were invoking that frightful image with gorilla-like arms and half-human, half-animal face; and it was not hard for me to surmise the purpose of the invocation. Then the voices died to a sorrowful whisper, the smoke of the censers thinned, and the little child I had once seen was thrust forward in a vacant space between the congregation and the idol.

I had thought, of course, that the god was of wood or stone, but now, in a flash of terror and consternation, I wondered if I had been mistaken. For the oblique eyes opened more widely, and glowered upon the child, and the long arms, ending in knife-taloned fingers, lifted slowly and reached forward. And arrow-sharp fangs were displayed in the bestial grin of the leaning face... "

Orange-Sailed Vessels -

"Now I came to the water-front, where the vessels with orange sails were moored at a stone mole. There were five or six of them in all: they were small galleys, with single banks of oars and figure-heads of metal that were graven with the likeness of primordial gods. They were indescribably worn by the waves of untold years; their sails were rotting rags; and no less than all else on the island, they bore the impress of a dread antiquity. It was easy to believe that their grotesquely carven prows had touched the aeon-sunken wharves of Lemuria."

Oceanic Limbo -

"...there are so many things I can't explain. Is there a part of the Pacific that extends beyond time and space - an oceanic limbo into which, by some unknowable cataclysm, that island passed in a bygone period, even as Lemuria sank beneath the wave? And if so, by what abrogation of dimensional laws was I enabled to reach the island and depart from it? These things are beyond speculation. But often in my dreams, I see again the incognizably distorted stars, and share the confusion and bafflement of a lost people, as they pore above their useless charts, and take the altitude of a deviated sun."

Adventure Ideas

1). The Altitude of a Deviated Sun

These adventures are set in unexplored areas of Hyperborea, or outside the continent on the mist encircled sea. The players are on their way to somewhere else when they find themselves off-course or lost among hills, or in woods, or sudden valleys and ravines in what was seemingly a normal landscape.

On the sea, a sudden mist falls over their vessel and they soon find themselves amid half-submerged ruins, dark and brooding stone towers and obelisks carved with disturbing pictures half-erased by time,

some defaced by the hand of man trying to chip away the most eldritch and horrifying images. Their ship is becalmed, run aground on the shores of this nameless isle. Exploration discovers strange plants, edible fruits that heal and clear the mind, dangerous plants that are half alive and hungry for flesh, animals that are mere legend or precursors to some of the more dreaded inhabitants of present day Hyperborea.

On land it is much the same, a forest of strange trees, tangling vines, weed choked ruins that give way to clear and clean pools, then a stream, then a village, a town, a city, some lost citadel, but no longer ruined, alive with a people of a race never before encountered. They walk as phantoms, they are as insubstantial as the mist which hid this land. But they are stalked by a beast, as are the players...

2). The Beast Between

As the players view the town/city only the buildings are part of a reality that they can touch. While the people and their possessions appear as real as the stones of the decaying walls they are no more substantial than fog and any attempt, through physical or magical means, to harm or rob them is impossible. Blades and hands pass through them, their food, items and treasure as they would through a cloud. Magic does not affect them, and no visible results of magic are apparent while within the village. But the players actions do have an effect upon the ruined buildings and the terrain. A spell that sees through illusion can see both the underlying reality and the vision of the past that encompasses the town.

What does affect both players and townsfolk is the beast. A four-armed Albino-Ape Superior Alpha-Male that is worshiped by these townsfolk. The creature is stronger and larger than a normal Albino-Ape Superior, though not more intelligent. Its lair is in the ruins of the temple at the center of the town.

The creature will appear suddenly, strike down a townsman or woman, adult or child and devour it on the spot. All townsfolk will bow down in the streets but do nothing to stop the beast. If the players intervene, they will find that the creature can be struck and will strike at them. Suddenly it will fragment at the first blow and the players will find themselves fighting half-a-dozen normal Albino-Apes.

This type of encounter will occur frequently as the people of the town are devoured, one-by-one, by their deity. The players will find themselves harassed and attacked by these Albino-Apes until they enter the temple. They will have stones and feces thrown at them, ambushing attacks as they explore buildings, as well as encounters with various other beasts lairing within the town, monstrous tigers, and snakes, and living plants (oh my). If the players attempt to leave the town they will enter an area of swirling mist only to reappear on another street.

After a day of exploration the players will see a parade of torches and townsfolk pass down the streets and disappear into the temple. If they follow they will find a dark ceremony underway where the victims are given in sacrifice to the enthroned and deified Albino Ape Superior Alpha Male.

If the players enter the temple the doors slam shut behind them and cannot be opened again. They will find that the scene slowly begins to dissolve and the torches extinguish themselves in a wave of darkness. If they have their own source of light or can see in the dark they will discover that the temple

is now in ruins and if the doors are opened they are presented with a solid wall of mist. (Entering the mist simply leads back to the main hall of the temple).

3) The Beast-Gods Temple

The hall of the temple is littered with the gnawed bones of worshipers (and others who became trapped in this mist-surrounded town). The temple itself is the lair of a tribe of albino apes, home to the undead high priest and his minions, and finally the long-deceased but not quite dead Albino Ape Superior Alpha Male. Other lost adventurers and lost souls can be found wandering or trapped within the dungeons of the temple and in the dark bowels of the ruins can be found portals to other places and other times, within Hyperborea and without.

Remorse.

The Temple Of Death

by Arthur C. Benson

It was late in the afternoon of a dark and rainy day when Paullinus left the little village where he had found shelter for the night. The village lay in a great forest country in the heart of Gaul. The scattered folk that inhabited it were mostly heathens, and very strange and secret rites were still celebrated in lonely sanctuaries. Christian teachers, of whom Paullinus was one, travelled alone or in little companies along the great high roads, turning aside to visit the woodland hamlets, and labouring patiently to make the good news of the Word known.

They were mostly unmolested, for they travelled under the powerful name of Romans, and in many places they were kindly received. Paullinus had been for months slowly faring from village to village, without any fixed plan of journeying, but asking his way from place to place, as the Spirit led him. He was a young man, a very faithful Christian, and with a love of adventure and travel which stood him in good stead. He carried a little money, but he had seldom need to use it, for the people were simple and hospitable; he did not try to hold assemblies, for he believed that the Gospel must spread like leaven from quiet heart to quiet heart. Indeed he did not purpose to proclaim the Word, but rather to prepare the way for those that should come after. He was of a strong habit, spare and upright; when he was alone he walked swiftly, looking very eagerly about him. He loved the aspect of the earth, the green branching trees, the wild creatures of the woodland, the voices of birds and the sound of streams. And he had too a great and simple love for his own kind, and though he had little eloquence he had a plentiful command of friendly and shrewd talk, and even better than he loved to speak he loved to listen. He had a sweet and open smile, that drew the hearts of all whom he met to him, especially of the children. And he loved his wandering life in the free air, without the daily cares of settled habit.

He had spent the night with an old and calm man, who had been a warrior in his youth, but who could now do little but attend to his farm. Paullinus had spoken to him of the love of the Father and the tender care that Jesus had to His brothers on earth; the old man had listened courteously, and had said that it sounded fair enough, but that he was too old to change, and must stand in the ancient ways. Paullinus did not press him; his custom was never to do that. In the morning he had gone to and fro in the village, and it was late before he thought of setting out; the old man had pressed him to stay another night, but something in Paullinus' heart had told him that he must not wait, for it seemed to him that there was work to be done. The old man came with him to the edge of the forest, and gave him very particular directions to the village he was bound for, which lay in the heart of the wood. "Of one thing I must advise you," he said. "There is, in the wood, some way off the track, a place to which I would not have you go--it is a temple of one of our gods, a dark place. Be certain, dear sir, to pass it by. No one would go there willingly, save that we are sometimes compelled." He broke off suddenly here and looked about him fearfully; then he went on in a low voice: "It is called the Temple of the Grey Death, and there are rites done there of which I may not speak. I would it were otherwise, but the gods are strong--and the priest is a hard and evil man, who won his office in a terrible way, and shall lose it no less terribly. Oh, go not there, dear stranger;" and he laid his hand upon his arm.

"Dear brother," said Paullinus, "I have no mind to go there--but your words seem to have a dark meaning behind them. What are these rites of which you speak?" But the old man shook his head.

"I may not speak of them," he said, "it is better to be silent."

Then they took a kind leave of each other, and Paullinus said that he would pass again that way to see his friend, "for we are friends, I know." And so he went into the wood. It was a wood of very ancient trees, and the dark leaves roofed over the grassy track making a tunnel. The heavens too grew dark above, and Paullinus heard the drops patter upon the leaves. Generally he loved well enough to walk in the woodways, but here it seemed different. He would have liked a companion. Something sinister and terrible seemed to him to hide within those gloomy avenues, and the feeling grew stronger every moment. But he said to himself some of the simple hymns with which he often cheered his way, and felt again that he was in the hands of God.

Presently he passed a little forest pool that was one of the marks of his way. Upon the further bank he was surprised to see a man sitting, with a rod or spear in his hand, looking upon the water. He was glad to see another man in this solitude, and hailed him cheerfully, asking if he was in the right way. The man looked up at the sound. Paullinus saw that he was of middle age, very strong and muscular--but undoubtedly he had an evil face. He scowled, as though he were vexed to be interrupted, and with an odd and angry gesture of the hand he stepped quickly within the wood and disappeared. Paullinus felt in his mind that the man wished him evil, and went on his way somewhat heavily. And now the sun began to go down and it was darker than ever in the forest; Paullinus came to a place where the road forked, and thinking over his note of the way, struck off to the left, but as he did so he felt a certain misgiving which he could not explain. He now began to hurry, for the light failed every moment, and the colour was soon gone out of the grass beneath his feet, leaving all a dark and indistinguishable brown. Soon the path forked again, and then came a road striking across the one that he had pursued of which he did not think he had been told. He went straight forward, but it was now grown so dark that he could no longer see his way, and stumbled very sadly along the wet path, feeling with his hand for the trees. He thought that he must by this time have gone much further than the distance between the villages, and it was clear to him that he had somehow missed the road.

He at last determined that he would try to return, and went slowly back the way that he had come, till at last the night came down upon him. Then Paullinus was struck with a great fear. There were wolves in those forests he knew, though they lived in the unvisited depths of the wood and came not near the habitations of men unless they were fierce with famine. But he had heard several times a strange snarling cry some way off in the wood, and once or twice he had thought he was being softly followed. So he determined to go no further, but to climb up into a tree, if he could find one, and there to spend an uneasy night.

He felt about for some time, but could discover nothing but small saplings, when he suddenly saw through the trees a light shine, and it came across him that he had stumbled as it were by accident upon the village. So he went forward slowly towards the light--there was no track here--often catching his feet

among brambles and low plants, till the gloom lifted somewhat and he felt a freer air, and saw that he was in a clearing in the wood. Then he discerned, in front of him, a space of deeper darkness against the sky, what he thought to be the outline of the roofs of buildings; then the light shone out of a window near the ground; but presently he came to a stop, for he saw the light flash and gleam in the ripples of a water that lay in his path and blocked his way.

Then he called aloud once or twice; something seemed to stir in the house, and presently the light in the window was obscured by the head and shoulders of a man, who pressed to the opening; but there was no answer. Then Paullinus spoke very clearly, and said that he was a Roman, a traveller who had lost his way. Then a harsh voice told him to walk round the water to the left and wait awhile; which Paullinus did.

Soon he heard steps come out of the house and come to the water's edge. Then he heard sounds as though some one were walking on a hollow board--then with a word of warning there fell the end of a plank near him on the bank, and he was bidden to come across. He did so, though the bridge was narrow and he was half afraid of falling; but in a moment he was at the other side, a dark figure beside him. He was bidden to wait again, and the figure went out over the water and seemed to pull in the plank that had served as a bridge; and then the man returned and bade him to come forward. Paullinus followed the figure, and in a moment he could see the dark eaves of a long, low house before him, very rudely but strongly built; then a door was opened showing a lighted room within, and he was bidden to step forward and enter.

He found himself in a large, bare chamber, the walls and ceiling of a dark wood. A pine torch flared and dripped in a socket. There were one or two rough seats and a table spread with a meal. At the end of the room there were some bricks piled for a fireplace with charred ashes and a smouldering log among them, for though it was still summer the nights began to be brisk. On the walls hung some implements; a spade and a hoe, a spear, a sword, some knives and javelins. He that inhabited it seemed to be part a tiller of the soil and part a huntsman; but there were other things of which Paullinus could not guess the use--hooks and pronged forks. There were skins of beasts on the floor, and on the ceiling hung bundles of herbs and dried meats. The air was pungent with pine-smoke. He recognised the man at once as the same that he had seen beside the pool; and he looked to Paullinus even stranger and more dangerous than he had seemed before. He seemed too to be on his guard against some terror, and held in his hand a club, as though he were ready to use it.

Presently he said a few words in a harsh voice: "You are a Roman," he asked; "how may I know it?" "I do not know," said Paullinus, trying to smile, "unless you will believe my word." "What is your business here?" said the man; "are you a merchant?" "No," said Paullinus, "I have no business, I travel, and I talk with those I meet--perhaps I am a teacher--a Christian teacher." At this the man's sternness seemed a little to relax. "Oh, the new faith?" he said, rather contemptuously; "well, I have heard of it--and it will never spread; but I am curious to know what it really is, and you shall tell me of it." But suddenly his angry terrors came upon him again, and he said, with a frown, "But where were you bound, and whence come you?"

Paullinus, with such calmness as he could muster, for he felt himself to be in some danger, he scarcely knew what, mentioned the names of the villages. "Well, you have missed your way," said the man. "Why did you come here to the Temple of Death?" Paullinus had a sudden access of dread at the words. "Is this the Temple?" he said; "it is the place I was bidden to avoid." At this the man gave a fearful kind of smile, like a flash of lightning out of a sombre cloud, and he said, with a certain dark pride, "Ay, there are few that come willingly; but now you must abide with me to-night--unless," he added, with a savage look, "you have a mind to be eaten by wolves." "I will certainly stay," said Paullinus, "I am not afraid--I serve a very mighty God myself, who guards his servants if they guard themselves." "Ay, does He?" said the man, with a flash of anger, "then He must needs be strong;--but I wish you no evil," he added in a moment. "I think you are a brave man, perhaps a good one--I fear you not." "There is no need for you to fear me," said Paullinus, "my God is a God of peace and love--and indeed," he added with a smile, looking at the man's great frame, "I should have thought there was little need for you to fear any one." This last word seemed to dissolve the man's evil mood all at once, for he put away the club he held, in a corner of the room, and bade Paullinus eat and drink, which he did gladly. The meat was a strongly flavoured kind of venison, and there was a rough bread, and a drink that seemed both sweet and strong, and had the taste of summer flowers. He praised the food, and the man said to him, "Ay, I have learnt to suit it to my taste. I live here in much loneliness, and there is none to help me."

After the meal the man asked him to tell him something of the new faith, and Paullinus very willingly told him as simply as he could of the Way of Christ.

The man listened with a sort of gloomy attention. "So it is this," he said at last, "which is taking hold of the world! well, it is pretty enough--a good faith for such as live in ease and security, for women and children in fair houses; but it suits not with these forests. The god who made these great lonely woods, and who dwells in them, is very different,"--he rose and made a strange obeisance as he talked. "He loves death and darkness, and the cries of strong and furious beasts. There is little peace here, for all that the woods are still--and as for love, it is of a brutish sort. Nay, stranger, the gods of these lands are very different; and they demand very different sacrifices. They delight in sharp woes and agonies, in grinding pains, in dripping blood and death-sweats and cries of despair. If these woods were all cut down, and the land ploughed up, and peaceful folk lived here in quiet fields and farms, then perhaps your simple, easy-going God might come and dwell with them--but now, if he came, he would flee in terror."

"Nay," said Paullinus, but somewhat sadly, for the man's words seemed to have a fearful truth about them, "the Father waits long and is kind; the victory of love is slow, but it is sure."

"It is slow enough!" said the man; "these forests have grown here beyond the memory of man, and they will stand long after you and I have been turned to a handful of dust--and so I will serve my gods while I live. But you are weary," he added, "and may sleep; fear not any hurt from me; and as for the way you speak of, well, I will say that I should be content if it had the victory. I am sick at heart of the hard rule of these gods--but I fear them, and will serve them faithfully till I die."

And then he brought some skins of beasts and heaped them in a corner of the room for Paullinus, who lay down gladly, and from mere weariness fell asleep. But the priest sat long before the fire in thought; and twice he went to the door and looked out, as if he were waiting for some tidings.

Once the opening of the door aroused Paullinus; and he saw the dark figure of the priest stand in the doorway, and over his head and shoulders a dark still night, pierced with golden stars; and once again, when he opened the door a second time, the pure gush of air into the close room woke Paullinus from a deep sleep; again he saw the priest stand silent in the door, with his hands clasped behind him; and through the door Paullinus could see the dim ring of dewy woods, that seemed to sleep in quiet dreams; and over the woods a great pale light of dawn that was coming slowly up out of the east.

But Paullinus fell back into sleep again from utter weariness, as a man might dive into a pool. And when at last he opened his eyes, he saw that day was come with an infinite sweetness and freshness; the birds called faintly in the thickets; and the priest was going slowly about his daily task, preparing food; and Paullinus, from where he lay, smiled at him, and the priest smiled back, as though half ashamed, and presently said, "You have slept deeply, sir; and to sleep as you have done shows that a man is brave and innocent."

Then Paullinus rose, and would have helped him, but the man said, "Nay, you are my guest; and besides, I do things in a certain order, as all do who live alone, and I would not have any one to meddle with me." He spoke gruffly, but there was a certain courtesy in his manner.

Presently the priest asked him to come and eat, and they sat together eating in a friendly way. The priest was silent, but Paullinus talked of many things--and at last the priest said, "I thought I loved my loneliness, but it seems that I am pleased to have a companion. I believe," he added, "that I would be content if you would dwell with me." And Paullinus smiled in answer, and said, "Ay, it is not good to live alone."

A little while after Paullinus said that he must set out on his way, and that he was very grateful for so gentle a welcome; but the priest said, "Nay, but you must see the sights of my house and of the temple. Few folk have seen it, and never a foreign man. It is not a merry place," he added, "but it will do to make a traveller's tale."

So he led him to the door, and they went out. Paullinus saw that the house where he had spent the night stood on a little square island, with a deep moat all round it, filled with water; the island was all overgrown with bushes and tall plants, except that in one place there were some pens where sheep and goats were kept; and a path led down to the landing-place where he had crossed it the night before. But what at once seized and held the eyes and mind of Paullinus was the temple. He thought he had never seen so grim a place; it rose above the bushes and above the house. It was of very rough stone, all blank of windows, with a roof of stone; the blocks were very large, and Paullinus wondered how they had been brought there. In front there was a low door, and over it a hideous carving, that seemed to Paullinus to be the work of devils. Apart from the temple, rising among the bushes, stood a rude sculptured figure, with a leering evil face, very roughly but vigorously cut, with an arm raised as though

beckoning people to the temple. This figure, of a kind of reddish stone, seemed horrible beyond words to Paullinus. It seemed to him like a servant of Satan, if not Satan himself, frozen into stone.

The priest looked at Paullinus, who could not help showing his horror, with a kind of pride. Then he said, "Will you go further? Will you enter the temple with me, and see what is therein? Perhaps you will after all bow your head to the gods of the forest." And Paullinus said, "Yes, I will go," and he said a silent prayer to the Lord Christ that He would guard him well. Another path paved with stone led from the landing-place to the temple, along which they went slowly; the priest leading. Arrived at the door, the priest made another strange obeisance, lifting his hands slowly above his head and closing his eyes; then he opened the door into the temple itself. There came out a foul and heavy smell that shuddered in the nostrils of Paullinus and left him gasping somewhat for breath. The priest looked at him with a sort of curious wonder, which made Paullinus determine to go further.

The temple itself was large and dark, a sickly light only filtering in through a hole in the roof. The floor was paved, and the roof was supported by great wooden columns, the trunks of large forest trees. The greater part of the building was shut off by a large wooden screen, about the height of a man, close to them, so that they stood in a kind of vestibule. The whole of the building, walls, roof, and floor, had been painted at some time or other a black colour, which was now faded and looked a dark slaty grey. Over the screen in the centre was seen the head of what seemed an image, very great and horrible. The light, which came from an opening immediately above the image, showed a horned and bearded head, misshapen and grotesque. Possibly at another time and place Paullinus might have smiled at the ugly thing; but here, peering at them over the screen, in the fetid gloom, it froze the blood in his veins.

And now behind the screen were strange sounds as well, a kind of heavy breathing or snorting, and what seemed the scratching of some beast. The priest went up to the screen and opened a sort of panel in it; this was followed by a hoarse and hideous outcry within, half of fear and half of rage. The priest took from an angle of the wall a long pole shod with iron, and leaned within the opening, saying in a stern tone some words that Paullinus did not understand. Presently the noises ceased, and the priest, using a great effort, seemed to pull or push at something with the pole, and there was the sound as of a great gate turning on its hinges. Then he drew his head and arms out, and said to Paullinus, "We may enter." He then threw a door open in the middle of the screen and went in. Paullinus followed.

In front of them stood a great statue on a pedestal; the figure of a thing, half-man half-goat, crouched as though to spring. The smell was still more horrible within, and it became clear to Paullinus that he was in the lair of some ravenous and filthy beast. There lay a mess of bones underneath the statue. To the left, in the wall, there was a strong oaken door, made like a portcullis, which seemed to close the entrance of a den; something seemed to move and stir in the blackness, and Paullinus heard the sound of heavy breathing within. The priest, still holding the pole in his hand, led the way round to the back of the statue. Here, set into the wall, were a number of stone slabs, with what seemed to be a name upon each, rudely carved.

The priest pointed to these and said, "Those are the names of the priests of this shrine. And now," he went on, "I will tell you a thing which is in my mind--I know not why I should wish to say it--but it seems to me that I have a great desire to tell you all and keep nothing back; and I tell you this, though you may turn from me with shame and horror. We have a law that if a man be condemned to death for a certain crime--if he have slain one of his kin--he is bound to a tree in the forest to be devoured piecemeal by the wolves. But if there seem to be cause or excuse for the deed that he has done, then he is allowed to purchase his life on one condition--he may come to this place and slay the priest who serves here, if he can, or himself be slain. And if he slay him he reigns in his stead until he himself be slain. And the rites of this place are these: all of this tribe who may be guilty of the slaying of a man by secret or open violence without due cause are offered here a sacrifice to the god--and that is the task that I have done and must do till I am myself slain. And here in a den dwells a savage beast--I know not its name and its age is very great--that slays and devours the guilty. What wonder if a man's heart grows dark and cruel here; I can only look into my own heart, black as it is, and wonder that it is not blacker. But the gods are good to me, and have not cursed me utterly.

"And now I will tell you that when I saw you by the pool, and when you called to me in the night, I thought that perchance you had come to slay me--and then I saw that you were alone, and not guarded as a prisoner would be; but even then my heart was dark, because the god has had no sacrifice for many a month, and seems to call upon me for a victim--so I had it in my heart to slay you here. And now," he said, "I have opened the door of my heart, and you have seen all that is to be seen."

And then he looked upon Paullinus as if to know his judgment; and Paullinus, turning to the priest, and seeing that in his heart he desired what was better, and abode not willingly in the ways of death, said, "Brother, with all my heart I am sorry for you--and I would have you turn your heart away from these dark and evil gods--who are indeed, I think, the very spirits of hell--and turn to the Father of mercy of whom I spoke, with whom there is forgiveness and love for all His sons, when once they turn to Him and ask His help."

The priest looked very gently at Paullinus as he spoke; but there came a horrible roaring out of the den, and the beast flung himself against the bars as if in rage.

Then the priest said, "For twenty years I have heard no speech like this; for twenty years I have lived with death and done wickedness, and all men turn from me with fear and loathing, and speak not any word to me: I have never looked in a kindly human eye, nor felt the hand of a friend within my own. Judge between me and my sin. I had a brother, an evil man, who made it his pleasure to trouble me. I was stronger than he, and he feared me. I loved a maiden of our tribe, and she loved me; and when my brother knew it he went about to do her a hurt, that it might grieve me. One day she went through the forest alone, and never returned, and I, in madness ranging the wood to find her, found the mangled bones of her body. I knew it by the poor torn hair--she had been devoured by wolves--but burying the bones I saw that the feet were tied together with a cord, and then I knew that some one had bound her by violence and left her to be devoured.

"Then as I returned from burying her, I came upon my brother in a glade of the wood; and he looked upon me with an evil smile, and said, 'Hast thou found her?' And I knew in my heart what he had done, and I slew him where he stood--and then I returned and said what I had done. Then they imprisoned me--for my brother was older than myself, and my enemies said that I had done it to win his inheritance--and at last, after long consulting, they gave me the choice to be devoured of wolves or to become the priest of Death. I chose the latter, because I was mad and hated all mankind. I came to this place at sundown, and my guards left me. I swam the ditch, and knocked at the priest's door; he was an old man and piteous, who abhorred his trade--and there I seized him and slew him with my hands--he was weak and made no resistance--and I flung his body to the beast and carved his name. That is my bitter story--and since then I have lived, accursed and dreaded. These gods are hard taskmasters." He made a wild gesture of the hand and turned his bright eyes upon Paullinus, who stood aghast.

"The tale is told," said the priest. "I who have kept silence all these years have babbled my story to a stranger. Why did I tell you? I thought that with all your talk of mercy and forgiveness you might have a message for my bitter and tired heart--but you shrink from me, and are silent."

"Nay," said Paullinus, "shrink from you!--not so--nay, I cling to you more than ever; come and claim your part in the forgiveness that waits for all--you have suffered, you have repented--and the God whom I serve has comfort and peace for you and for all; His love is wide and deep--claim your share in it." And he took the priest's hand in both of his own.

There was a horrible roaring behind them as they stood: the great beast behind them struck at the bars, but the priest took no heed.

"If I could," he said, with his eyes fixed on Paullinus' face.

"Nay then," said Paullinus, "if you would it is done already, for He reads the very secrets of the heart."

There broke out a loud fierce crashing sound behind them; the great oaken gate heaved and splintered, and a monstrous beast as huge as a horse appeared at the mouth of the den; his small head was laid back on his hairy shoulders, his little eyes gleamed wickedly, and his red mouth opened snarling fiercely. The priest turned, and met the rush of the beast full. In a moment he was flung to the ground with a dreadful rending sound. "Save yourself!" he cried. The huge brute glared, with his foot upon the fallen form, and seemed to hesitate whether to attack his second foe. Paullinus, hardly knowing what he did, seized the great iron-pointed pole, and with a firmness of strength which he had not known himself to possess drove it full into the monster's great throat as it opened its mouth towards him. It made a wild and sickening cry; it raised one foot as though to strike, then it beat the air and struck once at the head of the prostrate form; then, with a gurgling sound, spitting out a flood of hot blood, it collapsed, rolled slowly on one side. Paullinus, watching it intently and still holding the pole, thrust it further in with all his might. It quivered all over, and in a moment lay still. Paullinus made haste to drag the priest out from beneath--but he saw that all was over; the last blow of the beast had battered in the skull--and besides that the body was horribly mangled and crushed. The limbs of the priest were heavy and relaxed; his

hands were folded together as though in prayer, and he drew one or two little fluttering breaths, but never opened his eyes.

Paullinus was like one in a dream at this sudden horror; but he kept his senses; once or twice the great beast moved, and drummed on the pavement with a horny paw. So Paullinus drew the prostrate body of the priest outside the screen and closed the door. Then he went with swift steps out of the temple and to the water's edge; he drew up a little water in his hand, looking into the dark and cool moat. Then he came back with a purpose in his mind. He sprinkled the water on the poor mangled brow; and then, choosing the name of the Apostle whom Jesus most loved, he said, "John, I baptize thee, _in nomine_, &c." It was like a prisoner's release; the straining hands relaxed, and with a sigh the new-made Christian presently died. "I doubt I have done right," said Paullinus to himself. "He was coming to the Saviour very swiftly, and I think was at His feet; and if he was not in heart a Christian, the Lord will know when he meets Him in the heavenly places."

When Paullinus went back to the hut he found a rough mattock. First he dug a great hole; the earth was black and soft, and water oozed soon into the depths; then with much painful labour he dragged the great beast thither, and covered him in from the eye of day; and then he toiled to dig a grave for the priest--once he stopped to eat a little food, but he worked with unusual ease and lightness. But the night came down on the forest as he finished the grave--for he did not wish that the priest should lie within the dreadful temple.

Then he went back, very weary but not sad; his terrors and distresses had drawn slowly off from his mind, as he worked in the still afternoon, under the clear sky, all surrounded by woods; the earth seemed like one who had come from a bath, washed through and through by the drench of wholesome rains, and the smell of the woods was sharp and sweet.

Paullinus slept quietly that night, feeling very close to God; but in the morning, when the dawn was coming up, he was awakened by a shouting outside. His sleep had been so deep and still that he hardly knew at first where he was, but it all came swiftly back to him; and then the shouting was repeated. Paullinus rose to his feet and went slowly out.

On the edge of the water, where the causeway crossed it, he saw two men standing, that from their dress seemed to be great chiefs. Behind them, with his hands bound, and attached by a rope held in the hand of one of the chiefs, was a young man of a wild and fierce aspect, in the dress of a serf, a rough tunic and leggings. His head was bare, and he looked around him in dismay, like a beast in a trap. Behind, at the edge of the clearing, stood four soldiers silent, with bows strung and arrows fitted to the string. Over the whole group there seemed to be the shadow of a stern purpose. At the appearance of Paullinus, the two chiefs hurriedly bent together in talk, and looked at him with astonishment. Paullinus came down to the water's edge, when one of the chiefs said, "We have come for the priest; where is he? For he must do his office upon this man, who hath slain one of his kin by stealth."

"It is too late," said Paullinus; "he is dead, and waits for burial."

Then the chiefs seemed again to confer together, and one of them, with a strange reverence, said, "Then you are the new priest of the temple? And yet it seems strange, for you are not of our nation."

"Nay," said Paullinus, "I am a wanderer, a Roman. It was not I who slew him--it was the great beast who lived in the den yonder; and the beast have I slain--but come over and let me tell you all the tale."

So he made haste to put out the bridge, and the two chiefs came over in silence, leaving the prisoner in the hands of the guards who surrounded him. Paullinus led them to the temple, which he could hardly prevail upon them to enter, and showed them the dead body, which was a fearful sight enough; then he showed them the broken gate and the empty den, and then he led them to the mound where the beast lay buried, and offered if they would to uncover the body. "Nay, we would not see him," said the elder chief in a low voice; "it is enough."

Paullinus then led them to the hut and told them the story from beginning to end. The chiefs looked at him with surprise when he told them of the beast's death, and one of them said, "I doubt, sir, you slew him by Roman magic--for he was exceedingly strong, and you look not much of a warrior." "Nay," said Paullinus, smiling, "I doubt he was his own death, as is often the end of evil--he leapt upon the pole: I did but hold it, and the Lord made my hand strong."

When he had done the story the chiefs spoke together a little in a low tone. Then one of them said, "This is a strange tale, sir. And it seems to us that you must be a man whom the gods love, for you stayed here a night with the priest--who was a fierce man and no friend of strangers--and received no hurt. And then you have slain the Hound of Death, unarmed. But we will ask you to go with us, for we cannot decide so grave a matter until we have taken counsel with our tribe. Be assured that you shall be used courteously."

"I will go very willingly," said Paullinus. "My God did indeed send me hither to do a work which He had prepared for me to do, and I would serve His will in all things."

So they first buried the body of the priest in his grave, and then they went together to the village, and messages were sent to the chiefs of the tribe, who came in haste, ten great warriors; and they sat and debated long in low voices. And Paullinus sat without wondering that he could feel so calm, for he knew that he was in jeopardy.

So when they had talked a long while they called Paullinus into the council, and the oldest chief, an ancient warrior with silver hair, much bowed with age, told him that they saw that he was a man favoured of God. "I hide it not from you," he said, "that some of my brethren here would have it that death should be your portion, because you have meddled with sacred and secret things. But I think that it is clear that you have done no wrong, or otherwise you would have been slain; you spoke but now of the God you serve, and we would hear of Him; for now that the priest is dead and the beast dead, we say with reverence that a cloud is lifted from us, and that we have served dark gods too long."

So Paullinus spoke of the Father's love and the coming of the Saviour on to the earth; and when he had finished the chiefs thanked him very courteously, and then they asked him to abide with them and speak again of the matter. So Paullinus abode there and made many friends, as his manner was.

Then came a day when the chiefs again held council, and they told Paullinus that if he would, he should be the priest of the temple and teach what he would there, and that the temple should be cleansed; and they said that they would not ask him to be the slayer of such as had killed a man, for that, they said, seems to belong rather to a warrior than a priest.

So Paullinus said that he would abide with them, but that he must first go and be made a priest after his own order; and he departed, but soon returned, and the Temple of Death was made a Church of Christians.

Paullinus is an old man now; you may see him walk at evening beside the water, under the shadow of the church. The images have been broken and defaced; but Paullinus often stops beside a mound, and thinks of the bones of the great beast that lie whitening below--and then he stands beside a grave which bears the name of John, and knows that his brother, that did evil in the days of his ignorance, but that suffered sore, will be the first to meet him in the heavenly country, with the light of God about him; "and perhaps," says Paullinus to himself, "he will bear a palm in his hand."

Table of Items: Moderate Treasures by Scalydemon, Datagoblin, MatthewD44, Iain_IF

1. A gold thumb ring, sized for a large human hand, set with a cluster of small diamonds [450gp]

2. A 1' tall green malachite statue of a sabre-toothed Tiger [275gp]

3. A wavy bladed silver dagger, with a skull etched in the blade and a black onyx stone set in the hilt [170gp]

4. Silver drinking horn with gold inlay of dragon on both sides [125gp]

5. Clockwork toy Rust Monster, 6" tall - gnomish make of brass and copper [75gp]

6. Etched silver knife & fork with pearl handles and small diamond set in the handle, complete with tooled leather carrying belt case [100gp]

7. Gold Torc with sculpted ends in the image of a Raven, with small rubies for eyes [200gp]

8. A 6" crystal figurine of a 4 armed gorilla (300gp)

9. A finely wrought gold broach of a willow leaf, elven made (410gp)

10. ceremonial mallet of judgement, comprised of walnut wood, with silver banding (115gp)

11. Fine small amethyst crystal decanter (460 gp)

12. Carved high back chair made from dark cherry with inlay pattern made from bloodwood shaped in the form of an unicorn head (470 gp)

13. 8 inch carved purple heart wood dragon (225 gp)

14. Oil painting depicting Karttikeya, demi God of War, (with 6 heads & 12 arms) - 225gp

15. Bracelet made of rhino hide, studded with garnets - 150gp

16. A 15' x 25' wool rug dyed with hunting scenes of different birds, including roc and axbeak. The edges are frayed and a large burn mar it. (400 GP)

17. A collection of 27 hand carved pipes in a display case. (200 GP if intact, 10 GP each if not).

18. A set of 7 iridescent glazed stoneware bowls, stacked within each other. (100 GP for the set, 10 GP each if not).

19. A mixed set of 140 4"x6" woodcut prints for learning elvish from a human tongue (140 GP)

20. A small humidor with 6 very fine cigars (55 GP for the humidor, 2 GP each for the cigars.)

Into the Black Kingdoms by Scott Moberly

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*Editors note – Conan and Hyboria are trademarks of Conan Properties Inc

This adventure is set in Hyboria. Player characters can be from anywhere in Hyboria. One of the PCs or perhaps an NPC should be from Cimmeria. Relating to this character the adventure begins here:

Recent travels brought you back to your homeland of Cimmeria where you visited your birthplace. While there you met with an old blind man named Nestor. A friend and sometime companion of your now deceased Uncle. In his shabby tent, next to a greasy campfire he grips your shoulder and tells you a tale:
"Two days journey, north of Kulalo, off the Black Coast....Up the river Zarkheba...through the Valley of Darkness you'll find a Ruin, ancient and nameless
Whatever cult of man lived there, they are long vanished....and only dead men guard it's treasure.
In my youth when I still had eyes to see, I worked as a sailor on a ship that went into the Black Kingdoms bringing back hoards of Ivory.
.....A jade Crocodile with Emerald eyes as big as a man's hand. The natives talked of in whispers after their tongues were loosened on our skins of fortified wine.
The ruins are thought to be cursed by the locals and are forbidden entrance. A village lies just to the south of the ruins along the River"

Following up on this, many arduous weeks have passed. Your travels have recently brought you to the Nameless Isle off the NW coast of the mysterious Black Kingdoms. You have made your way to the Black Coast and hired a local guide to take you up the River Zarkheba in a flat bottomed river boat. You have travelled 2 days now up the river fighting the oppressive heat and pestering jungle insects. Nightfall is setting in and up ahead on the river from the north bank you can see the orange blaze of a campfire and hear the steady droning of jungle drums...Your guide remarks, *"This should be the Village Gazabomwe."*

Gazabomwe Village:

In the blaze of a large bonfire to the east river bank ahead can be seen and heard dozens of mostly nude natives. Some dance feverishly around the large fire chanting and howling as a couple play drums made of animal skins. 5d20 fighting aged males (1HD, 5HP, AC8(Shield), ATK. SPEAR 1D6,) will be present here, as well as several dozen women and children of the Village. The Village Chief is Muobak, HD3, HP 20, AC 7, ATK +1 SPEAR,+2 STR DMG.

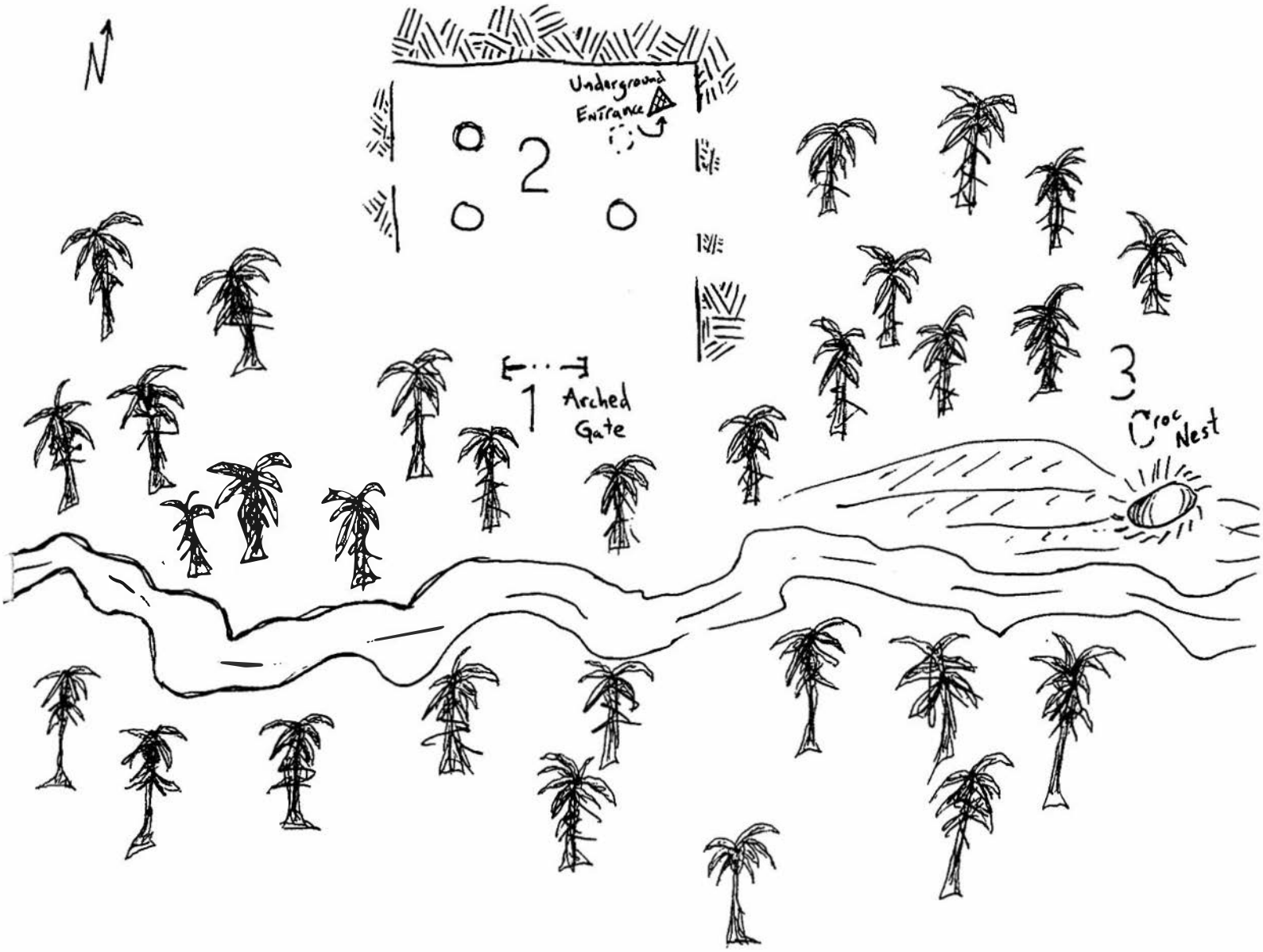
If the party beaches their boat here and approaches in a friendly open handed way, the natives will not attack. Small bribes of gems or gold will help their reaction to the party.

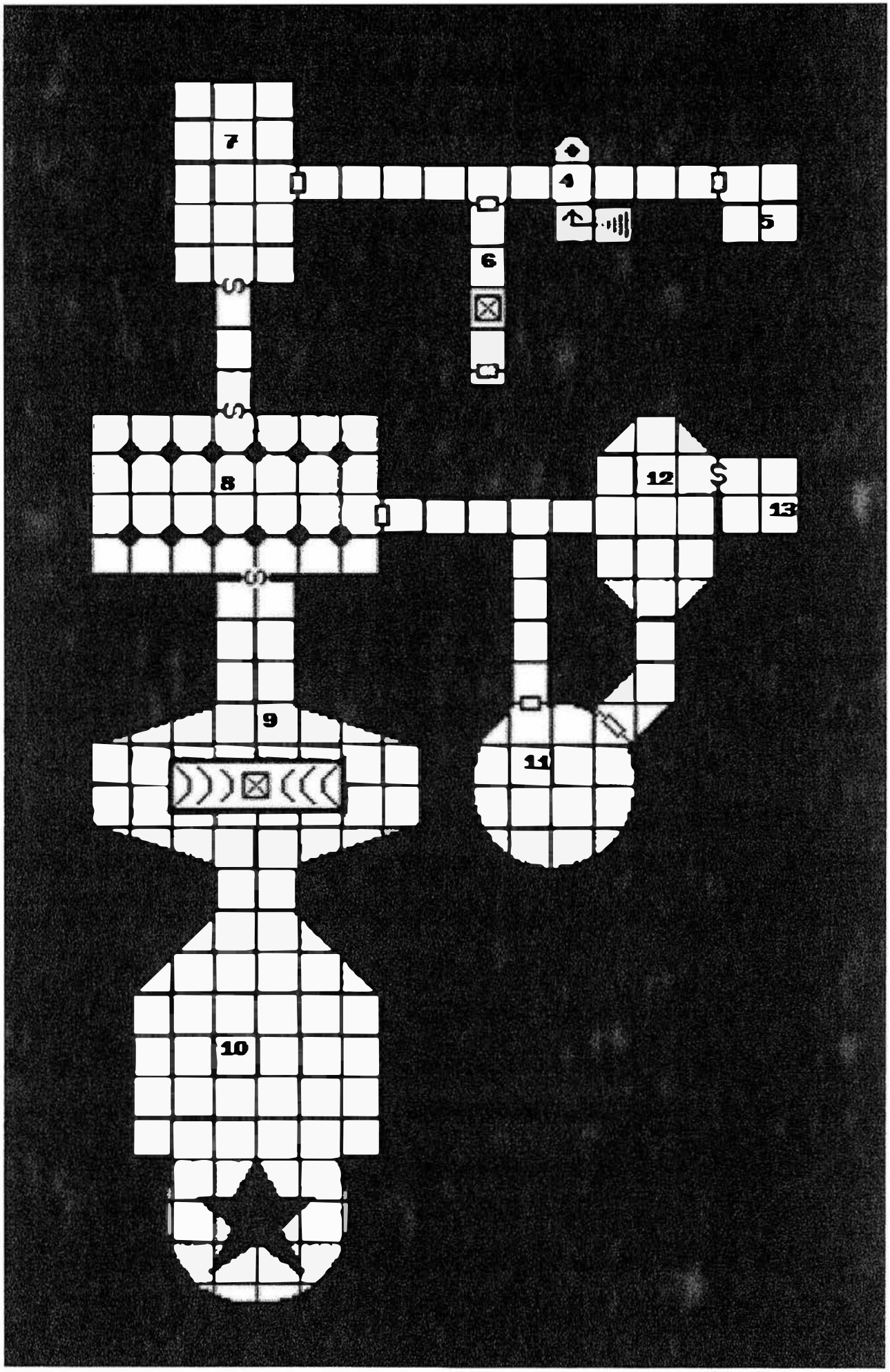
Language will prove to be a huge barrier in communicating with the Villagers and Chief Muobak. There is no 'common' here. The guide travelling with the party is their best bet and his comprehension of their language will prove scant. If the party has the guide act as a translator and asks relevant questions, they can learn: 1. The villagers consider crocodiles to be a sacred animal 2. Mention an ancient ruined Temple further up the river on the west side a half days journey or so. They won't give much info on the Temple but forbid their members from entering the ruins and that it is 'filled with evil spirits'. Given a small bribe the party members will be

able to stay the night here, though no shelter is offered. A large antelope is being roasted on a spit and jugs of palm wine are being freely passed around.

If the party chooses not to stop at the Village it is dark and boat travel up the river much further should prove perilous. Beaching the boat will prove difficult due to the river's edge being overgrown with dense jungle. A suitable landing spot can be found after a few hours of tiresome searching. While encamped, 50% chance of encountering a large wire-haired black Sabre-tooth jungle cat, HD 7+7, AC 7, ATK. BITE FOR 2D6 DMG. In this case the next day's journey up the river the ruins can be spotted on the left bank.

Into The Black Kingdoms

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Ancient Temple Ruins – Map key

(Unless otherwise noted ceilings are 15' high)

1. Remnants of a rusted black arching gate, overgrown with vines. The gate is closed, but the party can easily walk around. The nearly complete skeleton of a mountain gorilla lies nearby. The skull is missing

2. Scant ruins of an ancient Temple to a Nameless God. Heaps of mouldering stone bleached white by the sun can be seen. All that seems to remain intact are 3 ivory pillars, broken off at different heights. Searching the area a large triangular slab of slate can be found concealed in the NE corner of the ruins. It is hinged on the back and can be lifted with a strain.
Lifting the slab, a musty smell wafts up as of old bones and decay. A pitted gray stone stairway leads down into utter darkness

3. Nest of a large female river crocodile. She will angrily investigate any beached craft or landing party coming near this area within 2 rounds. Two more crocs clamber in from the river after 3 rounds of fighting with an interest in flesh. Giant River Crocodiles: HD 6, AC 4, ATKS: 1 BITE, DMG 2-16, SIZE L (22' LONG)

4. The stairwell curves spirally as it descends 25'. You find yourselves in a dark corridor heading E/W. A 7' tall statue of a horrid merman can be seen nearby in a recessed alcove. It stands on a broad circular plinth. Webbed hands and fangs. There is a metal lever next to the alcove on the wall in the up position. If the lever is pulled the hall begins to rapidly flood with river water piped in through circular vents in the corridor. Water animates the Merman Statue. MERMAN STATUE, HD 5, HP 30, AC 3, # ATKS: 2 CLAWS 1D8 EACH. *REQUIRES MAGICAL WEAPONS TO HIT*. The Merman Statue should automatically gain initiative after the first round in the water environment. The hall floods at a rate of 1' per round. A combined STR of 25 is needed to force the stuck lever back up

5. Stuck warped door. Forcing it open reveals a 20' square room choked with debris. A ruined canoe is here, as well as broken furniture and the remains of a dead black snake. A careful search will find a Bracelet made of rhino hide, studded with garnets - 150gp

6. This 10' wide corridor has empty sconce holders halfway along either wall. Between them is a 10' spiked pit trap/covered. The spikes were in the distant past coated with a local jungle poison. Dmg from fall = 1d8 + save vs poison or take additional 1d8 poison dmg. The door at the south end of the hall is a false door.

7. Stout metal door, showing signs of rust. Locked. If pick locks is unsuccessful it will take several rounds to beat the door down with a blunt weapon. Inside this room is shrouded in complete darkness. The walls are painted black and a permanent darkness spell is in place here covering the entire room. Continual light would work if the party casts it, otherwise normal torch/lanterns are ineffective. High up on the west wall hangs a large golden mask of an elephant face if the party can spot it, 3' and weighs 60lbs. worth 1000gp. Groping around in the dark along the walls , no obvious door can be felt. A secret door is on the south wall.

8. Two horizontal rows of bone white pillars reaching from floor to ceiling dominate this spacious room. The ceiling is decorated with etched stars and constellations which seem to glimmer in the torch's light. On the east and west walls are large open mouthed African devil faces. These are trapped magic mouths. Upon entering the room the west one says, "*You have entered sacred grounds....*" A few moments later the east one says, "*Leave now or die one thousand deaths..*" If the party loiters between the sets of pillars for more than 2 rounds following this warning each shoots out a 3d6 fireball affecting all within. Save vs Death Magic for half against each

9. Large rectangular sacrificial pit. The edges slope down at a steep angle. The bottom, 30' down can barely be made out via torch light. Mounds of bones can be seen. Watching closely for a few rounds and movement can be detected, as the ground beneath is aswarm with a mass (5D20) of shiny black beetles HD 1-1, AC 7, ATK. 1 BITE FOR 1D4, 5% CHANCE A BITE CAUSES A DISEASE. The beetles will swarm on anyone who decides to lower themselves into the pit. Digging amongst the bones the only thing of value is a suit of +2 lthr armour, human sized

10. A 12' tall statue of a male sitting cross-legged dominates the south alcove of this room. His face is a macabre cross of a crocodile and human. He is wearing a breast plate. His palms are upraised each holding large stone bowls which flood the room in a green fiery glow from magical flames which burn inside.
A close inspection of the room can reveal 2 stone discs the size of man-hole covers resting against the east wall.
There is a secret door contained in the statue's chest/breast plate. It is trapped. To avoid the trap the party would need to figure out that the 2 stone discs fit perfectly onto the 2 bowls which glow green fire and 'snuff' them out. If they fail to do so - opening the secret chest door causes the 2 green fire bowls to start billowing out an acrid dark green/black smoke. Save vs poison or start coughing up blood. Dmg 1d8 per round they remain in the room breathing the smoke

Inside the secret door is a hollow cavity which contains A large hand sized green gem (4000gp), 800gp in a sack, and a platinum figurine of a crocodile with green gem eyes(1500gp)

11. Large circular chamber. Black circle etched onto the middle floor 15' diameter. The circle contains a faded hieroglyphic African symbol of power. This could allow someone so inclined to step into the circle and attempt to commune. The blasphemous Crocodile God does not wish to be communed with. If this is attempted a minor devil will appear 2 rounds later to deal with the party

12. Two Resin Golems (see AFS zine Issue#2 for stats) silently stand guard here over a locked Iron Box. The chest contains: Boots of athleticism, high soft black rubber boots. Enables wearer to standing jump 6' high, Oil of Ogrishness, applied to person, grants ogre strength for 2-4 hours but reduces both intelligence and charisma (warts and skin discoloration) by -4, 10 hexagon shaped 3" platinum dics (80gp each) and 12 2" circular silver coins with a coiled snake constricting around an unknown planet (10gp each)

13. The former chief of this Cult makes his filthy home here. He appears as a ravenous African man with yellow filed teeth, red rimmed eyes, dreadlocks and a filthy green cape. WIGHT, HD 4+3, AC5 HP 26, ATK 1d4 + LEVEL DRAIN, SILVER OR MAGIC WEAPONS TO HIT.
The room is decorated with a large tan and green tapestry depicting a gorey scene of a muscular African male with the head of a crocodile is beheading a kneeling victim with a massive 2 handed sword.There is also a rotted leather couch here. Underneath the couch can be found, . Lizard Figurine, a minor FoWP that may be summoned once per 24-hour period to scout for 2-20 turns; AC10, 1-2 hp, MV 12" (silently), negligible attack

The Cult of Silence by Tim 'Turgenev' Hartin

Alignment: Lawful neutral
Sphere of Control: Silence and secrets
Clerics (Male): Yes
Clerics (Female): Yes
Weapons: Club, hammer, mace & staff
Holy Symbol: A bald human head with no mouth
Raiment (Head): Helm with face mask
Raiment (Body): White tunic
Colour(s): Blue-white
Animal: N/A

Holy Days: New moon
Sacrifice (Frequency): Monthly
Sacrifice (Form): Magic scrolls, preferably Magic-User scrolls, burnt on the altar
Place of Worship: Temple

The Cult of Silence is an ancient Cynidicean cult dedicated to the god of silence, Undnanar. It is an ancient Cynidicean belief that only when silence rules will Undnanar reveal the secrets of the cosmos. Only those of Cynidicean blood are known to worship Undnanar. It is believed that the Cult of Silence died out along with the Cynidiceans.

To become a cleric of Undnanar, one must take an oath of silence. This oath reigns supreme and any breach of this oath is punished severely – often with corporeal punishment up to and including the removal of the offending cleric's tongue. To facilitate communication without breaking their oath, the clerics of Undnanar use a sign language of their own devising, plus they have access to the Mindtouch power (see below).

The holy symbol of the clerics of Undnanar is their carved helms which have an attached metal face mask of a bald man's face without any mouth. Their helms are considered to be sacred and act as their holy symbols. Clerics of Undnanar can cast any of their spells without the need of a verbal component.

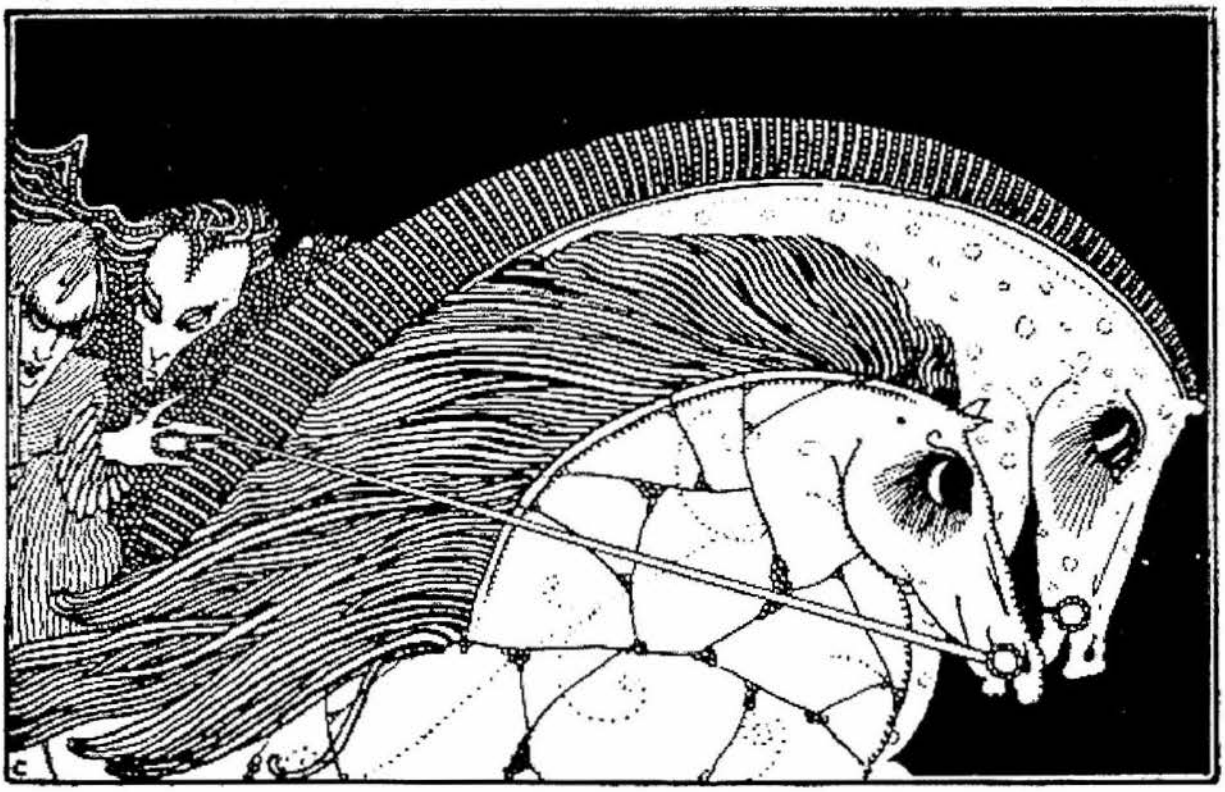
By paying an additional 10% of their experience points, clerics of Undnanar gain the following special abilities:
At 1st level, they can cast Mindtouch (see below) once per day per level of experience (i.e., a 6th level cleric could do a mindtouch 6/day).
At 2nd level, they can cast Silence 15' Radius 1/day.
At 3rd level, they can cast ESP (as per the M-U spell) 1/day.
At 5th level, they can cast Silence 15' Radius 2/day.
At 6th level, they can cast Claiaudience or Clairvoyance (as per the M-U spell) 1/day.
At 9th level, they can cast True Seeing 1/day.
At 12th level, they can cast ESP (as per the M-U spell) 2/day.
At 15th level, they can cast Claiaudience or Clairvoyance (as per the M-U spell) 2/day.

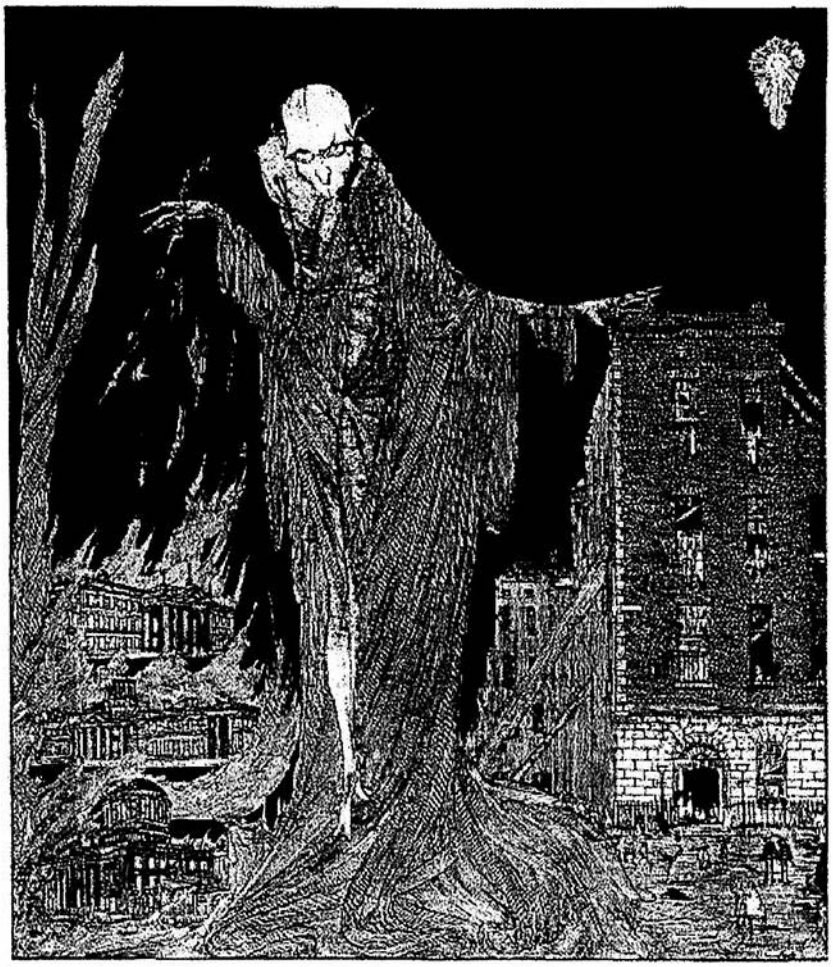
At 20th level, they can cast True Seeing 2/day.
At 30th level, they can cast Silence 15' Radius 3/day.
At 36th level, they can cast Claiaudience or Clairvoyance (as per the M-U spell) 3/day.

Mindtouch (Special Power)

Level: 1
Components: M
Range: 120'
Casting Time: 1 Segment
Duration: 2 turns
Saving Throw: None
Area of Effect: 1 creature/level

Mindtouch allows the user to communicate wordlessly with any intelligent creature he can contact (Intelligence 5 or greater on a human scale). This is two-way communication. It is not the same as mind-reading because the user only receives thoughts which the other party wants to send. Language is not a barrier.





The last hour of the Night.

Hyperborean Laboratories and Cave System

By Benoist Poiré

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. This article will be my first gaming piece formally published in English outside of the Internet. It would not have existed if it weren't for a few friends who made it all possible.
First, I want to thank Jeffrey P. Talanian and Ian Baggley for their most excellent game, Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea, without which the original ideas behind this setting would not have come to me. Thank you, gentlemen.

I also would like to thank my French-speaking gaming group, particularly Aurélien Collinet, Jean-Yves Eckert and Alexandre Pesanti, for all the fun we had so far playing the game. Thank you to Dan White, whose own creation, Muulu the Megaluvial, provided the inspiration for the Shambling horror at area 7. Thank you also to Ernest Gary Gygax, Jr., who has proven to be a most excellent friend, and gave me the opportunity of a lifetime.

Last but not least, at the risk of sounding a little corny, I would like to thank my family, and in particular my parents, Bernard Poiré and Marie-Catherine Poiré, who have been loving me and supporting me since I was born,

and Nerissa Ann Montie, who is my rock and my most ardent supporter. I love you dear.

INTRODUCTION. Welcome, dear reader. I hope you find this article, or module, as it were, to your liking. While reading through it, you will notice that it does not involve a great deal of numbers and statistics. You will also notice that some of the details pertaining to the campaign around this module have been left in the dark, sometimes alluded to, but rarely described comprehensively. It is by design, for I wanted to actually take a step back from the classic thorough description of an exploration area with this piece. What it is instead is a sketch based on the map accompanying it. It presents some basic facts about the way it was used in my campaign, what this all meant and how it fitted all together, with the clear intent to make **you** the master of this piece, so that in the end, what you will be running and playing with your friends will end up being your own creation, and not mine. It might get some getting used to, and I don't expect it to please everyone. But if you go about reading this piece with the intent to grab the information therein and twist it and tweak it to make it yours truly, you might end up happy indeed. I certainly hope so. Without further ado, let us begin.

INITIAL CAMPAIGN SET UP. In my campaign [IMC from now on], the Hyperborean laboratories and the cave system around them work as part of an area known as Kusu's Cove, a small sandbox-type adventure setting taking the shape of an underground bay opening on the sea and located somewhere on an island of Hyperborea's Skarag Coast.

Within the Cove, one can find a village of brigands built on stilts, several ruins of fortifications built into the face of the cave's natural walls, and a maze of corridors, some of them natural, some of them not, extending beyond, around and deep under the Cove proper. This network is home to some of the native half-blood picts who attempt to save the Cove from the nefarious influence of the brigands and their tainted, demonic orc allies, some Crab-men devoted to an ancient Atlantean cult of the sea, fish-men worshipping Kthulhu, some degenerate pygmy-like midgets believing some ancient machines deep under the earth are metal incarnations of their unknowable patron spirits, and many other factions besides.

The part of this network represented on the map accompanying this module is located on a beach not far from the refuge of the El'kuth, the half-blood picts just mentioned. The Cove slowly drifts into magical corruption due to the actions of the brigands and the orcs. The caves, the natural rock, crystals and animals, all the life within, under, and around the Cove, including the brigands and the El'kuth themselves, everything starts to fall apart as it changes and mutates to reflect the Chaotic Evil that is slowly taking hold of this place. People and things might change shape spontaneously, and seemingly randomly. Most victims become insane, turning against each other, harming themselves, or worse. This doesn't seem to have any rhyme nor reason. It can happen anywhere, any time, to anybody or anything.

To make an effective use of the area depicted on our map, it is important to include some type of Chaotic, alien, elemental and/or Evil form of corruption taking hold of the place. This magical influence and the energies permeating it are responsible for animating corpses, awakening the rock and minerals to semi-conscience, and changing animals or fungi into murdering machines.

Another element to consider for your game is the question of the origin of the partially flooded laboratory which can be found on the western side of the map. In my game, the ancient Hyperboreans built this place. They used it to perform experiments subverting Lemurian and Atlantean technologies in order to contact the archetypal waters and unknown depths between the worlds. In so doing, they hoped to find a way to reach the sunken island of Atlantis which, they theorized, might still exist in an alternate plane or dimension in a manner similar to their own realm.

In your campaign, [IYC from now on] you might replace the element of water for gazes, for corrupted influences emanating from some hell or alternate realm of power. Atlantis may be replaced by another mythical location, such as the City of Dis, the higher realms of heaven, or whatever else. Some ancient civilization in your setting might have used this place to exploit magical connections to these particular extra-dimensional places, and found their doom in so doing, just like the Hyperboreans did in my game by releasing Chaotic energies which

ultimately corrupted them, caused them to fight against one another, and led to their ultimate demise.

If your setting includes such elements as (1) an ancient civilization which dabbled into the dark arts and connections with other worlds and dimensions in the past or the present of your setting, and (2) the potential for these magical experiments to have gone horribly wrong and thus create a supernatural backlash which corrupted the entire place around them, you will be able to make use of this place with most efficiency.

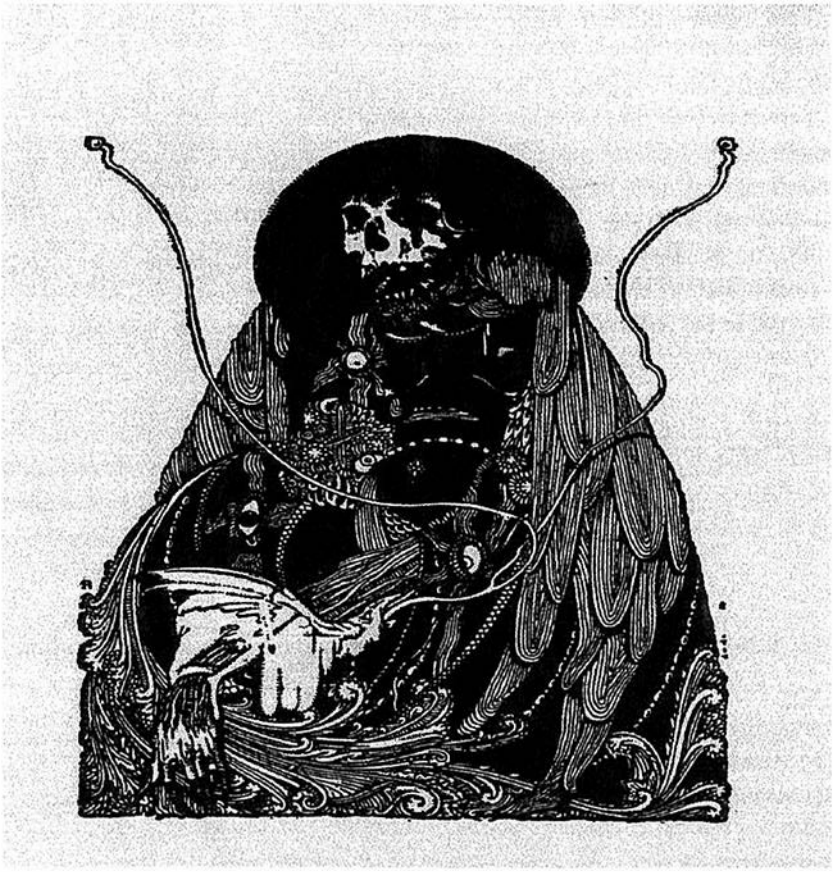
Anything is possible. The point of this article is to present this dungeon and cave system in an open-ended way which will hopefully inspire you to come up with your own adventure setting, however you want it to be: You should feel completely free to do with it as you will. Please, gentle reader, by all means, take these contents, and run with them. Take them apart, tweak them, reshape them to your own specifications. Go nuts, and have fun in so doing.

WANDERING MONSTERS. Checks are assumed to be made every turn. A random encounter occurs 1-in-6. I used a variety of wandering monster tables in my game in correlation to this map. For the tunnels leading to the laboratories, I had a custom table reflecting the variety of critters and population around this area. I reproduce it here :

Roll 2d6
2, El'kuth party from the Cove.
3, Diseased El'kuth party, Friendly.
4, Diseased El'kuth party, Crazed (Hostile).
5, Mutated Swine thing (Crab-men, prawns, fishmen, El'kuth, orc, etc.)
6, Undead (determine randomly)
7, Crab-men (from down atarea 9)
8, Fishmen (from down at area 9)
9, Shambling horror (see area 7)
10, Jelly (Gelatinous Cube, or generate randomly)
11, Giant moths.
12, Other (Gibbering mouther, creature emerged from the Cores at areas 30, 31, 32, etc.)

For the laboratories proper, I would either assume one of the NPC parties of the Cove would intervene, having reached the laboratories via area 26, or I would roll on an environmental table based on the closest Core to the party (e.g. If the party was close to the Ice Core I would assume they met some arctic creature, if underwater they would meet something that came to the laboratories from the Deep Core, and so on).

[IYC] It is important to keep this place dynamic. Do not hesitate to use a combination of custom tables and more general tables as it relates to the modifications you brought to this dungeon setting. Use demon encounters for abyssal themed cores. Use weird monster generation tables for cores linking impossible dimensions ruled by the great Yug (or Yog Sothoth, for the connoisseurs). The important thing is to use a blend of tables that reflect whatever may be found around this map in the physical world, as well as the extra-dimensional spaces connected to the cores leaking into this reality as well.



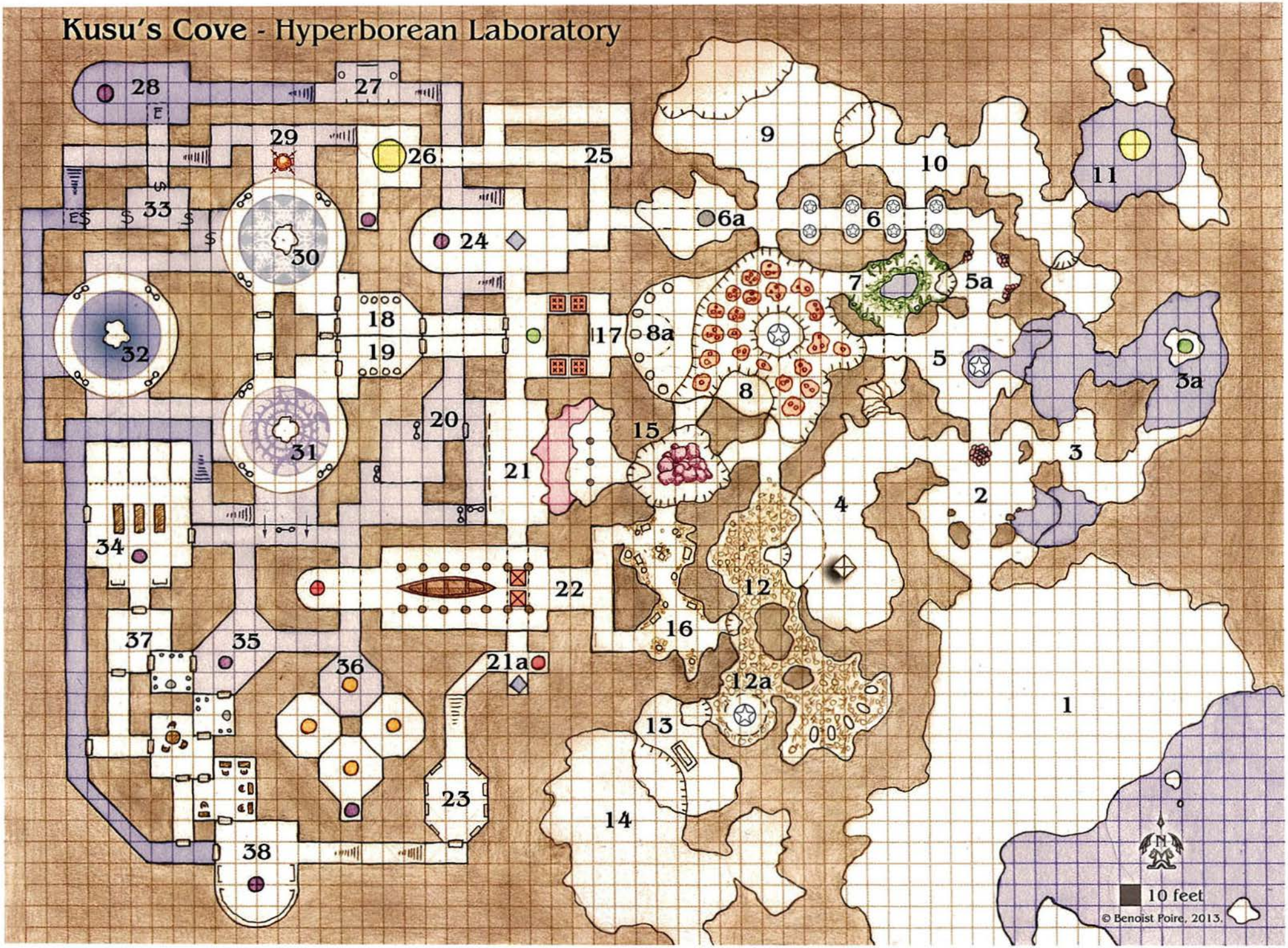
HYPERBOREAN LABORATORIES AND CAVE SYSTEM MAP KEY

1. BEACH. [IMC] this is one of the beaches surrounding the giant natural walls of Kusu's Cove. It stretches further south to another entrance of the cavern systems around the Cove. This entrance further south leads through natural chutes and corridors to the burial grounds of the El'kuth. These graves have recently become the refuge of the corrupt, crazed and mutated half-blood picts banished from the healthy population as the Chaotic energies emanating from the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32 were taking over the entire Cove (much in the way victims of leprosy and other such diseases might have been shunned by the general population in our own past). See area 14 for more information about these burial grounds and options to change these connections outside the map to suit your game.

[IYC] This beach in your game might open on a lake, river, or ocean above or below ground. The area beyond the map to the east might not even be flooded at all. It might be part of a much larger dungeon complex, or lead to any type of wilderness area of your own choosing. It could be a desert, or some volcanic field where lava would make for a sharp contrast with the frozen core within the laboratories (see area 30). This environment could be completely foreign to our own earthly experiences. You could even turn the tables around and make this location a foothold into another plane of existence the players access from their own world via one of the cores at areas 30, 31, or 32, in effect making one of the cores the point of entry on this map, and this area (and freedom, or access to the wider plane) the goal to reach by the party.

Whereas this beach IMC doesn't feature any inherent danger or hazard threatening the lives of the adventuring parties, you could decide to make it a lot more challenging. Maybe this is not a sand beach, but an ash beach with spirits raising from the swirling dust to prevent intruders from disturbing the burial grounds of area 12. Maybe the rock itself has morphed into something else, like living slimes and jellies, molten lava, or whatever

Kusu's Cove - Hyperborean Laboratory



else would strike your fancy.

2. ENTRANCE. [IMC] This room features two particular areas of interest. First, the pool of stagnant water on the eastern side of the entrance, which is much deeper than it looks and actually connects under the water line with the cave south of area 3 (note the continuation of the cave's wall above the water line running through this expense of water between areas 2 and 3, similar to the separation between areas 5 and 3a further north). Second, there is this weird organic lump of flesh hanging from the ceiling just before the corridor leading north to area 5 (looks like a 10-foot square blob of tiny red circles on the map). This is an organic growth born out of the Chaotic energies radiating from the laboratories west of this position (see areas 30, 31 and 32 for more information). If poked too hard this lump of flesh will detach itself from the strings of saliva keeping it glued to the ceiling; it will then explode on contact with the ground and project the gooey, hungry blood worms it contains in a 10-foot radius burst all around the point of impact (which would then suck blood at 1 HP per worm hitting per round afterwards, until they are gotten rid of, with 1-4 worms hitting on a failed saving throw). Inside this mass of worms a strange crystal can be found. It is quite valuable, and may be sold, but could be used inside the laboratory to repair the crystal shards at areas 30, 31 or 32 instead.

[IYC] The water in the cave system could be another type of liquid of your choice, from oil to ink to pools collecting the tears of the stars beyond the (potential) gates of areas 11, 22, 26, 27 or even the cores of areas 30 and 31, the obvious connection being with the Deep Core of area 32, which in my game is the source of the laboratories' flooding (see area 32 for more details). You could substitute the worms for a mass of black tentacles trying to grab people getting too close, an enormous conglomeration of overgrown, fluorescent worker bees swarming around a queen, a beautiful wasp nest with intricate swirling designs, a patch of mold or polen with various possible types of nefarious effects or damage if it is disturbed, a colony of sentient gems which reflect light sources and create charm effects out of these reflections, etc.

3. OLD TRIGGERED TRAP. [IMC] Between the pillar of rock in area 2 and this area I placed a pressure plate which had been triggered some time in the past. There, the skeleton of a victim of the trap lay dead, still holding a bronze, engraved disk telling part of the story of the laboratories west of this position (the disks contain logs from the people who led the experiments in the laboratories which I would hand out to the players when translated). The bones of the body are poisonous, and may be deadly to those who touch them.

[IYC] The trap could still be active. It could be a pit, or some sort of ray zapping those who step on it from the eastern wall of area 3 straight through the opening to the natural pillar facing it in area 2, anything up to a lightning bot bouncing back and forth on concealed metal plates from the natural pillar of area 2 to the wall of area 3. If the trap was triggered and then rearmed, you will need to come up with an explanation. It could be that the trap resets itself, or that someone or something else did. If you keep the victim, it does not have to be a humanoid. It could be something alien which evolved into something nastier as it decomposed. It could even be undead.

3a. TELEPORTER to AREA 17. [IMC] On a little island in this area of the caves the party may find a smooth pillar of wet clay. If touched by something organic and alive, it will animate. Faces will appear in the pillar as though they were just under a thin layer of wet clay. Arms will reach out and try to slowly embrace the people nearby. The pillar pulls the grabbed individuals in and consumes them. The subjects are then ejected out of the clay of the pillar at area 17. This process works both ways, to and from each pillar.

[IYC] These teleporters could take a number of different appearances, and their use could involve a variety of dangers. You could for instance decide that the pillars are coated with an acidic substance which will gradually damage clothing, metal, or flesh after the subjects emerge from them. The bodies and whatever they carry could be utterly deconstructed by the emitting pillar, the receiving pillar reconstructing whatever information would be sent its way, in effect creating copies of the originals who might still believe they are the originals, but are really not. There could be a chance (maybe one-in-six, maybe more, depending on the state of the teleporter) for such a process to cause unintended cloning, mutations, and various other effects on the subjects which could be really fun in your campaign, depending on your and your group's inclinations.

4. LEVITATING OBELISK. [IMC] This vast cavern has a very high ceiling (50 feet, maybe more in places). A 30-foot tall obelisk raised on a levitating block of rock just large enough to host its base floats approximately ten feet above the ground, its surface carved with strange hieroglyphs. This obelisk was built by the Hyperboreans studying other raised stones in the vicinity by the ancient Atlanteans who preceded them. Their function is now forgotten, but this particular obelisk here has been corrupted by the Chaotic energies emanating from the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32. When living creatures approach the obelisk, it will stop spinning. Eyes will open all over its surface, and the hieroglyphs themselves will animate, ripping themselves off the surface of the stone to get at the source of life so close to them and consume it. I had various types of hieroglyphs as 2 HD animated objects, such as bull heads, ibises, sun disks which had various types of attacks, either charging, flying and piercing through the ranks with their beaks, or shining so brightly they could blind their victims. The writings themselves translate as a prayer to the god Apollo, praying to keep the darkness at bay and to allow for an opportunity to heal the wounds which led the Hyperborean race astray...

[IYC] This obelisk would have been raised by whatever individuals, ancient or current, would have created the laboratories in your campaign. It could bear any type of prayer, or piece of background you would feel relevant to your game, this particular obelisk acting as some kind of charm keeping the place safe, the irony being that it has been completely overwhelmed by the corruption emanating from the cores, and has therefore failed at its principal function to become a threat to people exploring this place instead.

5. ANCIENT HORNED STATUE. [IMC] This statue represents a whale erupting from the surrounding water, its jaw wide open. A warrior carved out of the same stone and wearing a large horned helmet seems to be escaping from the gaping maw, but covers his face as he realizes the sun, carved straight above in the room's ceiling, is shining down upon him unhindered. It represents the Evil god Thaumagorga trapped between the (Atlantean) depths below and the (Hyperborean) light of Apollo above. The water pools around the statue and reaches the eastern wall of the cavern about 20 feet away from the statue. It is actually deeper than it looks. It is possible to reach area 3a under the water line.

[IYC] This statue could be replaced with another allegory relevant to your world, the crucial point being for it to make sense for those who used these laboratories in the past (or are still using them now, for that matter). Devil worshippers might have a statue of an archangel cast down from heaven being taken apart by a swarm of devils below, in the underworld. Worshippers of a natural lord might portray some elemental entity opposite to the figure they hail as their patron. A machine god emerging from the rock might be taken apart by vines reaching through its cogs and wheels. The subject depicted by the sculpture should resonate with your players, and tell them something about the beliefs of the people who lived here so long ago (or still are now).

5a. CYST ROOM. [IMC] Three "cysts", or organic protrusions similar to the organic lump of flesh hanging from the ceiling at the entrance, can be found sticking to the walls of this area. These cysts have grown around Lemurian crystals (both valuable and useful in repairing the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32) stolen from the laboratories in times past. The Chaotic energies of the place took hold of them since, generating the protrusions. Also note the hole in the floor opening on area 7 along the western wall of this room.

[IYC] See area 2 for suggestions of replacements for the cysts. These do not necessarily have to match the description of the organic lump hanging in area 2, nor do they have to match each other in type or appearance in this particular room either. So you could have different types of Chaotic growths close to each other with a variety of effects, some of which would surely combine for added fun and variety in your game.

6. TRAPPED CORRIDOR. [IMC] This corridor is not natural, but man-made, carved out of the surrounding rock. It features eight alcoves, four on each side of the corridor. Within each alcove stands the statue of a Hyperborea warrior wearing chain mail, helm, spear and shield. Each shield is decorated differently, each design representing the arms of one of the houses of the Hyperborean lords of the time. These statues (acting as Caryatid columns) will animate if at least one of the people walking through this corridor is not wearing a Hyperborea signet ring granting him and his companions safe passage (Hyperborean signet rings are one of those

signature noble items I use in my campaign as triggers to defuse and/or use some Hyperborean traps, items and similar adventure features. These can be found on the dead bodies of enemies, or bought in some markets as rare, ancient curiosities, or discovered as treasure in the dungeon. These rings are showcasing the arms of a particular noble house the wearer belonged to).

[IYC] Depending on the level of the party, you could substitute these Caryatid Columns for golems, or even more terrifying threats. The design of these statues should match the identity of the people who lived here in your campaign, as should the means to defuse the threat as well. If you like classical chess-themed elements in your dungeons, since there are eight statues total, you could have pairings of two rooks, two knights, two bishops or priests and finally the king and queen of a colour facing one another. Or you could shuffle them around to make more interesting pairings, such as queen-knight, rook-bishop, knight-rook and bishop-king, each type of statue having different modes of attack and defence, of course.

6a. TELEPORTER to AREA 6a. [IMC] This clay pillar, or short-range teleporter, leads to a similar pillar standing exactly below its position in a dead-end corridor leading to areas 24 and 25 of the laboratories, as indicated by the doted lines under this area on the map.

[IYC] See area 3a for a number of suggestions regarding the short-range teleporters.

7. SHAMBLING HORROR. [IMC] This area has been affected by the Chaotic energies emanating from the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32, which resulted in a rapid growth of moss and creeping vines all around and above that pool of water. This natural growth then acquired sentience, and may shape itself as a huge animated horror made of living plants, gravel, mud and water. If other (Chaotic) areas, such as the cysts of areas 2 and 5a, the obelisk at area 4 and so on are disturbed, this horror could awaken and wander the corridors of the cave system randomly. This would be extremely noisy, and likely heard by the exploring party, no matter where they would be in the cave system proper (as opposed to the laboratories). I conceived this creature as a 5 HD monster, a deadly creature for a low-level party, though it would actually leave intruders alone if they didn't attack it first. It has the ability to form different types of limbs out of its mass and alter its shape at will, allowing it to use different types of attacks and damage which in turn will affect its speed and Armor Class. It could shape its arms to use them as hooks or spikes, hammer heads, project dust, water and gravel from its body like a shockwave, reshape as a ball to roll over its aggressors, and the like.

This was inspired by Dan White's write-up of Muulu the Megaluvial for the DCC RPG, which one might still find at the RPG Site online.

[IYC] The plants in this area could be nearly anything you want them to be in your game: Flowers projecting polen, yellow musk creeper and associated zombies, and so on. I would avoid mushrooms and fungi, however, since that is the province of area 8, unless you switched both areas' threats altogether, of course. Be sure to choose a nature for the shambling horror that reflects something of the features of this area. It could be an amalgam of yellow musk zombies flailing arms and legs around as the whole fumbles awkwardly towards the party, or a mass of flowers rolling and spewing pollen all around, if you were to use the previously previously mentioned in this paragraph.

8. CHASM AROUND ANCIENT STATUE. [IMC] The ceiling of this area is very high (about 40 feet in its centre). Coming from areas 5, 8a or 9, this area looks like a vast, partially-collapsed cavern with, in its centre, a 10-foot tall statue of the god Apollo standing on an undamaged 20-foot wide section of the floor stretching out of a dark chasm occupying most of the space around it. There are no bridges nor ropes connecting the floor sections which still stand intact on the upper level of this area.

Reaching this same cavern from areas 7, 12 and 15 leads to the bottom of the chasm, which is hosting a whole colony of overgrown mushrooms, some of them vaguely sentient. They react to aggression by spraying spores around them rendering their victims unconscious. The fungi then slowly move over the inanimate bodies to consume them in a matter of hours.

[IYC] Reaching area 8a (assuming the explorers came from the beach at area 1, or the long-range teleporter of area 11, instead of another place or world connected to the cores at areas 30, 31, 32, the mirror of area 27, the long-range teleporter of area 26 or other such place within the laboratories) or moving from one area to the next on the lower level without triggering the danger or hazard you place at the bottom of the chasm is the real challenge, here. The fungi could be switched for any type of relatively static threat. The rock at the bottom could be incredibly hot or cold, sharp or brittle, change shapes or phase out of existence. Semi-sentient crystals could readjust to cut through flesh and feed on the life of those who fall onto them. Some slugs or weirder creatures might lurk here. The oozes born from the jelly tree at area 15 might use this area as their breeding grounds.

8a. MAIN LABORATORY ENTRANCE/PUZZLE. [IMC] The small dots in this area represent 5-foot tall cylinders of smooth aluminium-like metal rising from the grounds like that many raised totems. When touched by a Hyperborea signet ring, each cylinder's surface changes to a different shade of colour. Each tube as a unique, different shade of colour. One changes to red, another to orange, then yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The tubes are not disposed in that precise order. Activating the tubes in sequence from red to violet or violet to red, following the order of the rainbow's spectrum of colours one way or the other, will open the passage down to area 17. The floor will slowly lower itself in a concave, half-circled pattern forming a set of stairs leading down and west into the laboratories, as indicated by the dotted line on the map.

[IYC] You could change the nature of the puzzle altogether. Maybe the circles represent seven keyholes, with seven specific items needing to be recovered to open this door. Or maybe seven people need to be sacrificed in those spots to bring the blood together and open the door, if the previous owners of the laboratories were really terrible Evil-worshipping people. There are seven circles. The number seven can be associated with some lock having to do with the days of the week, the seven deadly sins, acts of mercy or virtues of myth and religion, the number of notes in the Western diatonic scale, or something else entirely.

9. CHASM DOWN TO THE UNDERWORLD. [IMC] This is a vast, empty cavern with actually two chasms or openings to the lower levels of the dungeon. The eastern opening leads to area 10, whereas the much larger north-western opening leads deeper, to a completely different map altogether. In my game, this is a large underworld hex map where one can find amongst other things a colony of Poseidon-worshipping crabmen at war with fishmen aligned with the forces of the dreaded Kthulhu.

One of the engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments conducted by the Hyperboreans in the laboratories (similar to the disk found in area 3) can be found on the ground, slightly covered by dust and mud.

[IYC] The north-western opening could lead to a different level of your mega-dungeon, or some deep area of the underworld where the dark elves or aboleths live, some gate to the lightless caverns of N'kai below Yoth, as is the case in my game with area 27, or some other dimensional space altogether. It could even lead to the tunnels of module D2, or some other published module of your choosing.

10. NATURAL CAVE CHIMNEY AND CRITTERS. [IMC] This area's floor is very muddy. Movement is impaired by half, or even a quarter if movement is erratic, as it would be in a combat situation. A colony of large mutated shrimp lairs in the mud. Their shapes have been twisted by the corruption of this place: Some now have the face of a pig, others the antlers of deer, the legs of a frog, the wings and sting of a wasp, and so on. These small 1 HD critters are starving and will attempt to ambush living pray in the vicinity. Examining the ceiling reveals a large 15-foot wide opening just above the written number "10" on the map. This opening leads to a natural, vertical chimney where giant moths currently nest. It leads to another area of the tunnels around Kusu's Cove.

One of the engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments conducted by the Hyperboreans in the laboratories can be found in the mud here (see area 3 for more information on the disks).

[IYC] The thick mud covering this whole area could be ice or lava or water in your game. If you keep this area as it found in my game, you could have giant lice, mud snakes or any other type of critter lurking within instead of the mutated shrimp. The chimney above might lead nowhere, or to some level or sub-level of your dungeon complex, or up to the surface.

11. LONG-RANGE TELEPORTER. [IMC] Unlike the small 5-foot wide coloured circles representing short-range teleporters on the map, this big yellow circle (like the similarly proportioned and coloured circle of area 26) is a levitating ball of goo acting as a long-range teleporting device in my game. These devices link areas of the tunnels around Kusu's Cove which couldn't be directly connected otherwise. They may be used by some critters or factions within the dungeon to reach this particular area, in effect flanking an exploring party unexpectedly. They could also be used by the player-characters themselves to reach these far-away places in the dungeon around the Cove. There is a chance these teleporters will malfunction every time they are used: In that event, they could send the party to the Brazen Crown, another dungeon setting located on the Savage Boreal Coast of Hyperborea.

[IYC] Another exit or connection to your other areas within dungeon complex or somewhere in the world around it. Keep in mind these long-range teleporters were built by the people using the laboratories when determining their specific appearance, mode of use and the specific places they would lead to in your own game.

12. HYPERBOREAN OSSUARY. [IMC] This area is literally covered with mounds of bones all over the place. It is the resting place of hundreds, possibly thousands of corpses, the result of large scale battles which took place a long time ago in Hyperborea's past. Whether these particular individuals were alive at the moment the laboratories were effectively used by the Hyperboreans, whether the bones themselves were accumulated here at the time to be used in some of their ongoing experiments, or gathered much later in a completely unrelated effort to change the destination of this place altogether, is most unclear. Needless to say, it is extremely hard to progress through the mass of bones in this room while keeping one's balance. Movement is greatly impaired. Brusk gestures might result in cave-ins swallowing individuals under several feet of bones. This whole area is a death trap, especially considering the bones themselves might suddenly reassemble and animate if disturbed...

[IYC] The bones buried here could belong to the victims of the people who used the laboratories. These could be the bones of people who have been killed in some cataclysmic event of your world's past. The walls of this particular area, or the whole cavern complex, could magically and/or randomly generate bones as a consequence of the corruption permeating this whole cavern system. These bones would then assemble and walk slowly towards the mass grave located in this area, perhaps to serve the mummies or the giant skeleton of area 12a.

12a. GIANT GUARDIAN AND MUMMIES. This area is heavily trapped with wires crisscrossing about 1 foot off the ground all around the gigantic statue of a skeletal warrior sitting on a throne. Round mirrors hang from the ceiling all around the statue. Some of the wires are connected to the mirrors. If the wires are cut or pulled, the mirrors will adjust their current position and rotate upwards to face the ceiling. The wires not connected to the mirrors lead to the ceiling where they disappear through an opening directly above the statue. This opening leads to another vertical chimney. If the wires are triggered, those leading to the chimney through the opening in the ceiling will adjust the position of other mirrors found at regular intervals and positions all the way up to the surface. These will redirect the cosmic radiance of the sun, moons, planets and stars of the Hyperborean sky and funnel the energies thus gathered all the way down the chimney. They will then strike the mirrors within this room which in turn will concentrate them all on the statue sitting in wait for the signal. The giant skeleton will animate as a 5 HD undead and attempt to defend this place. A shock-wave will rock the complex. The bodies of area 12 will begin to stir...

Due east of the statue, in a nearby natural cave, you will see five different elliptic shapes resting on the mounds of bones south-southeast of area 12. These are the mummies of ancient Hyperborean lords slumbering in separate sarcophagi laden with treasure. These will not awaken if the bones surrounding them are disturbed. They will only wake if their sarcophagi are opened.

[IYC] The statue and the mummies should help tell something of the ancient history of this place. Whether it is related to the builders and/or users of the laboratories nearby, or something else that occurred later in the distant past, make sure to make this area meaningful vis-à-vis your setting's broader history. The trap itself could be modified in any number of ways: It could involve crystal shards floating around the statue which then could be used with the cores of areas 30, 31 and 32, for instance, or it could be a permanent blade barrier stopping explorers from reaching the statue holding some magical weapon or artifact of great value.

13. ANCIENT ALTAR. [IMC] At some point in the past this area was used to perform some twisted last rites for the victims of the Hyperborean experiments. The altar was once dedicated to the dreaded toad-god Xathoqqua. It was then re-purposed by the Hyperborean followers of Apollo and later became irremediably corrupted by the dark energies emanating from the cores. It is now a pulsing mess of bulging eyes, gaping mouths and tentacles slowly humming, whistling, chanting, praying and begging the surrounding darkness to do its bidding. The altar can be conversed with, but it is utterly mad, its personality split between dozens of different minds experiencing all sorts of emotions and desires all at once. It will attempt to manipulate whoever talks to it pretending to hold the keys to the secrets of this place, secrets which of course it would reveal if the proper sacrifices were to be performed...

[IYC] The altar in your game could be much more traditional, in the sense it could just be a stone slab bearing some information relevant to your campaign carved onto its surface. There could be a puzzle associated to it, or some real secret to be revealed if the altar was used properly. Maybe the corridor stretching south away from area 14 could change destinations if the altar was used in connection to some specific prayer or ritual found elsewhere in the dungeon (such as area 38), for instance.

14. TO EL'KUTH BURIAL GROUNDS. [IMC] This area leads south to a maze of corridors ending with the burial grounds of the El'kuth. These burial grounds currently serve as the refuge of the mutated and crazed members of the tribe who have fallen to the nefarious influence released from the cores in the laboratories at areas 30, 31 and 32 on this map. Interestingly, there are no remains nor bones lying around in this particular area.

[IYC] This cavern could have occupiers of its own. The Chaotic corruption permeating the setting in my game causes the inhabitants around the cove to randomly and spontaneously mutate, showing porcine heads, having arms changing into black tentacles and the like. In your game, if you have some community nearby, whether it is in the underworld, or above ground, the areas the southern corridor ultimately leads to might serve the same general purpose, redesigned to accommodate your own setting choices. Of course, this corridor could just as well lead to a different level of your dungeon complex, or back to the surface. If you use the altar of area 13 as some type of puzzle or trigger that could be activated using the proper rituals, the destination of this southern corridor could change, leading to some other pocket plane or dimension of your choosing.

15. JELLY TREE. [IMC] An old petrified tree, perhaps the last standing trace of some ancient ritual that would have taken place here a long time ago, stands in the middle of this deep chasm. The tree has been completely altered by the corrupting energies radiating from the laboratories. It is now spawning all sorts of oozes and jellies as some sort of strange multicoloured mockery of a foliage hanging from its branches and dripping in long strings of goo at the bottom of the pit where it stands. It is a wonderful sight to behold, reminiscent of swarms of jellyfish underwater, each glittering independently with different hues on the perceivable spectrum of colours, but also a very deadly one. The bottom of the chasm is swarming with different types of oozes, green slimes, black puddings, ochre jellies, and more besides. The oozes, slimes, puddings and jellies hanging from the branches are also alive. Pieces of armour, weapons, coins and jewelry lie at the bottom of the pit, naturally, some of them damaged by acidic substances oozing from the surrounding miasma, and others still quite intact.

[IYC] This tree could be the lair of harpies, bats, or other completely unnatural things similar to my game's jelly tree. Whatever you choose to make of it, ensure this blends well with what is happening at area 21 (since the jellies here are the source of what I dubbed the "Prismatic Wall" in my game, see there for more details).

16. ARCHIVES AND OFFERINGS. [IMC] There are many rolls of parchment and quite a few riches stored

here as offerings and records belonging to the shrine of Demeter at area 22. The vast majority of these archives would have to be handled extremely carefully to be of any use to an exploring party: The sealed parchments could crumble in a manner of minutes if exposed to the air, and most of the tubes containing them are carved out of wood and quite fragile. One of the engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments the Hyperboreans conducted in the laboratories may be found here (similar to the disk of area 3). Getting all these items and riches back to town will be a challenge in and of itself, but there is also a Mimic hiding amongst the treasure.

[IYC] You could substitute the mimic for a guardian of the shrine at area 22 consistent with the way you re-purposed that particular area. A three-headed hound might guard the entrance of a shrine to a Cthonic god. Some demon might have been bound to this place to keep intruders from entering a place dedicated to his abyssal lord. This guardian might have accumulated the treasure stored here over the years. The monster and/or the treasure might have been spontaneously spawned out of the walls of the cavern, or constitute some kind of trap to those who would want to get to the shrine with ill intent.

17. MAIN LABORATORIES' ENTRANCE AND TELEPORTER to AREA 3a. [IMC] Once the puzzle of area 8a has been figured out the steps thus revealed lead down to an entrance hall. Right in front of the steps against the wall there is a circular panel with seven gems of different colours (the seven colours of the rainbow's spectrum, as in area 8a) spaced equidistantly along its rim. There is a small circular space in the centre of the panel which could be used with a signet ring to activate the device. It is a lock allowing the users to open and close the main entrance/stairs to the laboratories: Pressing the gems in the order of the rainbow's spectrum will close the entrance if already opened, or open it if currently closed.

From this entrance, two corridors both lead west via north and south passages next to the control panel just described. As soon as the exploring party moves west, it becomes obvious the temperature is dropping dramatically. Both of these passages are in fact trapped: Their floors are grilles concealing oil splashing devices. When weights are placed on the grilles, they are supposed to fire oil and light it at the same time (comparable to a direct oil flask hit, including possible splash damage). The trapped grilles of the northern passage are still armed, and working. The traps of the southern passage have been triggered and are no longer in working order. The party can find a Hyperborea warrior frozen in mid-air above one of the grilled floors in that southern passage instead. The corpse is actually suspended into a frozen gelatinous cube, though it is impossible to tell without getting much closer to inspect it. Poking at the cube would crack the layer of ice around it, and would set the monster free. How long the gelatinous cube has been trapped in this state is hard to tell.

Reaching the vestibule beyond these two corridors will reveal the presence of the teleporter leading to area 3a, and vice versa. Refer to this particular area for more information about this teleporter. The corridor leading from area 24 straight down to area 21a is dangerous: Every now and then (1-in-6 per round), a shard of ice will get ripped off the crystal at area 24 and fly at high velocity towards the other crystal located at the end of the corridor, in area 21a. Consult area 24 for more information about this danger.

[IYC] If you change the nature of the puzzle at area 8a, make sure the panel in this area reflects the same theme and functions. If you are using seven keys, then this panel uses these same seven keys as well. The effect of the traps in the corridors might be changed: They could be poison traps (maybe leaking gradually, making this whole area gradually more dangerous as time is spent exploring the rest of the complex) or pit traps with the grilles giving way when a weight is placed on them. The plates could trigger crushing traps with the huge stone slabs of 10 by 20 feet dropping from the ceiling in the middle of the corridors to kill whoever stands there. These blocks could even move east and west on their corridor's axis and block access to either the entrance or the vestibule as a result. In regards to the ice shards flying through the long corridor oriented north-south and stretching from area 24 to area 21a, please refer to the former.

18. ANTECHAMBER TO ICE CORE. [IMC] This frigid area leads directly to the upper level of the Ice Core at area 30. There are four environmental suits which vaguely look like Gothic suits of armour with a soft black metal cloth replacing the hauberk and completely enclosed helmets aligned against the northern wall. These were

the suits used by the Hyperborean researchers to enter area 30. These impair movement significantly (penalties to attack rolls, AC, no Dexterity modifier) but allow the wearer to breathe in a water or vacuum environment. The suits also provide a limited amount of protection against drastic changes in temperature. The protection granted is otherwise comparable to that of chain-mail. Every hit on the suit armour increases its chance to malfunction during strenuous movement or actions by 2%, cumulative.

[IYC] Depending on the way you choose to adapt the nature of the cores to your game, you might have to change the function of these environmental suits to allow for some manner of exploration beyond. If the core at area 30 really is a ball of lava swirling in mid air with a gate leading to the City of Brass, these suits will allow the wearers to breathe in such an environment and may even grant a very limited defence against the excruciating heat of the milieu.

19. ANTECHAMBER TO STORM CORE. [IMC] This area is very similar to area 18, except the temperature isn't nearly as cold. Instead, the door leading to area 31 is very visibly wobbling on its hinges, air whistling forcibly through its cracks. There is a strong smell of ionization in the air.

[IYC] As area 18, if you change the function of the Storm Core at area 31, you will need to think about the function of the environmental suits that can be found in this area, and how they will help explore the Core beyond.

20. MEZZANINES. [IMC] These are mezzanines linked to each other by ladders going down to the study level (see 34 and surrounding areas). These mezzanines, like areas 35 and 36, are actually not flooded immediately if the pumps at 33 are activated. The water flooding area 31 will overflow in the southern corridor running from area 34 to these mezzanines, however, which in turn will gradually submerge this whole section of the laboratories, as indicated by the blue arrows at area 31 on the map. This process will take some time, usually 3-8 turns to complete. For more information about the flooded areas of the dungeon and the machinery controlling the level of the water in the complex, see area 33.

The corridor running north-south right next to area 21 gives access to the machinery behind the plates facing the "Prismatic Wall" there. This corridor has a 15-foot high ceiling, with the circuits located about about 10 feet off the ground. There is no ladder to reach them.

[IYC] You will have to rework the flow of whatever emanates from the Deep Core at area 32, and revise the flooding or absence thereof based on that assumption. Use the areas and corridors shaded blue on the map from that standpoint (e.g. Showing the reach of such emanations, instead of gradual flooding of said areas). Make sure to match the circuits or mechanisms present in the corridor next to 21 to the function of said area.

21. PRISMATIC WALL. [IMC] This room once tested different types of energies and their manipulation as they were funnelled right out of the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32 to the three metal posts between this area here and area 15. These energies were then travelling from these posts to the five metal plates hanging approximately five feet above the ground along the western wall of this area. The metal plates could vibrate according to different magical frequencies which would affect the energies in this room and allow the Hyperboreans to use them for their own devices (possibly creating gates, syphons, summoning elemental entities and beyond).

This whole area malfunctioned some time in the past. The plates began vibrating constantly on the same frequency, which caused the oozes and jellies of area 15 to be propelled towards them. The magical energies of the posts between them solidified the jellies on their way to the metal plates, which in turn had the effect to form an agglomeration of different types of oozes in a semi-solid arc that now looks like a multicoloured jellied wall (pictured as a pink blob between the three posts and the plates on the map). Hence, the "Prismatic Wall."

The plates are now mostly dormant, but for the regular block of ice flying down the corridor from area 24. Whatever moves between the Prismatic Wall and the plates will activate them, causing more jellies to be propelled against the Prismatic Wall, which in turn might crack and either propel shards of oozes injuring those

who stand between the wall and the plates, or release an entire ooze instantly coming back to life. The wall will solidify again a few seconds later. Crawling on the ground below the level of the plates will not trigger them.

[IYC] Instead of acting like magnets to the oozes and jellies of area 15, the five metal plates on the western wall could act as the source of the Prismatic Wall, instead propelling energies away from them which solidify on their way to the posts between them and area 15, thus forming the wall we see here. Under that scenario, any type of energies could be used. It could be solid light or darkness, ice, glass, crystals, souls and spirits, anything that would fit the destination of these laboratories in your campaign.

21a. CRYSTAL AND TELEPORTER to AREA 22. [IMC] The two noticeable features of this area are first, a large levitating crystal linked to multiple iron spikes piercing its surface at random intervals, with the spikes attached to numerous copper wires stretching upwards through the ceiling of the corridor, and second, a pillar of clay, or small-range teleporter similar to the one found in area 3a, which leads to the pillar/teleporter of area 22, and vice versa.

[IYC] Refer to area 3a for a number of suggestions regarding the appearance and various effects the short-range teleporters might have in your game. Likewise, refer to area 24 for suggestions regarding the crystal found here and its twin there.

22. SHRINE TO DEMETER. [IMC] It is unclear why the Apollo-worshipping Hyperboreans who took control of these laboratories so long ago used this area as a shrine dedicated to a deity presiding over the harvest, the sacred law and the cycle of life and death. Maybe this had to do with the veil between the worlds, the passage between what is and what had been, what exists and what never was. The enormous ebony barge decorated with intricate plates of bronze along its hull laying on stilts in the middle of this shrine seems to be pointing out some relation to that effect.

Also note the pit traps activated by stepping on them at the entrance of the shrine, which cause the victims to fall way down into the corridor leading from area 21 to 21a, almost certainly awakening the undead of area 23, and the short-range teleporter at end of the shrine, west of the barge, which is leads to area 21a and vice versa.

[IYC] Somewhere in the logs of the laboratories' builders the function of this particular place and its barge could be described in detail, along perhaps with the rituals which could bring it back to life. There could be a way to make the walls of the shrine fade, for instance, and for the barge to sail the ethereal seas between the worlds using the Chaotic energies emanating from the cores of areas 30, 31 and 32 as a fuel. This would make the trips using this magical device particularly perilous, as long as said cores have not been stabilized, at the very least.

23. MORTUARY. [IMC] This is the place where the ancient Hyperboreans used to store the bodies which deserved to be autopsied, studied, or reanimated by magical means for some obscure purpose or other. When everything went wrong with cores, this is also where the victims of the chaos taking over the place were stored. This mortuary was thus used as a dumping ground of corpses shortly before the laboratories were abandoned altogether. It is filled to the rim of all these corpses, but they are now undead, zombies, to be precise, ready to animate at the first hint of the presence of living flesh in the vicinity.

A bronze disk detailing some of the autopsies that took place in this room may be found amidst the mess of intertwined corpses here.

[IYC] You can switch the type of undead for anything that would fit both your setting and characters' levels. Or you could take the corruption up a notch and have the bodies fused together to give birth to monstrosities akin to undead gibbering mouthers, gigantic undead flesh golems, or fouler creatures besides.

24. CRYSTAL AND PRISMATIC TELEPORTER. [IMC] This room is devoid of any furniture. Some ancient paintings which once adorned its walls have long since faded to the point of being nearly impossible to discern. It is colder here than it is in area 17 (and gets colder as the exploring party would proceed from this area to areas

25, 26, then 29 to finally reach the Ice Core of area 30).

The crystal levitating close to the centre of the room is similar to the one found at area 21a: It is a large levitating block of translucent mineral linked to multiple iron spikes piercing its surface at random intervals, with the spikes attached to numerous copper wires stretching upwards through the ceiling of the room. The significant difference here is that this particular block is covered with ice and vibrating at a high frequency audible to the naked ear. Some of the thick ice covering its surface will crack and get ripped off at random intervals (1-in-6 chance per round) to go fly at high velocity all the way through the corridor south of this area. It will trigger all the metal plates of area 21 on its way south and finally crash into the other crystal at area 21a.

Avoidance saving throws are allowed to avoid the chunks of ice if and when the characters are facing the crystal of this area. The damage of one such chunk of ice is blunt and deadly to mundane individuals (1-8, as a footman's mace).

The teleporter in the western corner of this room is similar to the one found at area 3a (a smooth pillar of clay animating upon activation and consuming the people walking through it), but for one critical difference: It bears a little circular dial with seven gems of different colours (you guessed it, following the seven colours of the rainbow's spectrum), one of them shining with an inner light. The shining gem indicates the colour associated with this particular pillar. Just stepping through it without any further action would just mean the users would be consumed by the pillar and emerge out of it in the same room. Pressing one of the other six unlit gems activates a receiving teleporter of the corresponding colour, and stepping through will allow the user to emerge at that particular location (just allocate the seven colours of the rainbow to the seven different pillars coloured on the map of the same mauve shade at areas 24, 26, 28, 34, 35, 36 and 38, respectively).

[IYC] The crystal could be spewing other types of substances, like acid, blobs of animated flesh, solid light and shadow, any particular element you could wish. The crystals themselves could perhaps be manipulated or altered in some fashion to produce different kinds of substances which in turn would affect the crystal at area 21a in a different fashion, perhaps changing it into a sentient being, a teleporter, or a gate to a secret sub-level of your dungeon complex.

The Prismatic teleporters (mauve dots on the map) could be altered as well of course, not just in their appearance, but in their use as well. Their activation process mirrors the puzzle at area 8a, the lock plate at area 17 and the other "prismatic" elements of the dungeon in my game, which is linked to a particular ancient Hyperborean NPC who effected the original reclamation of this place from the worshippers of Xathoqqua by the worshippers of Apollo who followed them (worshippers of Apollo who, themselves, fell in turn to the corruption of the place, as should now be quite clear). The activation of the these teleporters might serve the same purpose of mirroring the themes, secrets and mysteries from your own campaign world. Think about the coherence of the whole, how each element of your dungeon might or might not reflect some other element elsewhere, and go nuts from there.

25. CORRIDOR OF PRAYER. [IMC] This circular corridor is covered on its inner wall with paintings depicting the worship of the god Apollo by armies of faithful Hyperboreans, and on its outer wall is etched with verses giving praise to the deity of light, order and reason. Reading the verses out loud, and thus walking counter-clockwise all the way through this corridor back to the starting point (where the number "25" is located on the map) will, upon completion, activate the ancient dweomers of the place and heal a prospecting party (individual cure light wounds to all once a week).

One of the engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments conducted by the Hyperboreans in the laboratories (similar to the disk found in area 3) can be found on the ground of the northern corridor, half-way on the ritual path around the paintings.

[IYC] This corridor could be a curse, could activate the greater teleporters of areas 11 and 26, could even act as a whole teleporting corridor linked to a similar corridor in a completely different level of your dungeon complex. Even if the healing effet is retained in your game, there might be a chance of being possessed by Evil spirits, or

to invite the Chaotic energies within ones flesh, thus spawning a variety of mutations. Remain consistent with the original purpose and inhabitants of your laboratories. By answering the question of their identity, the purpose of this corridor of prayer, study, or introspection should become clear to you.

26. LONG-RANGE TELEPORTER. [IMC] The large ball of goo levitating here is similar to the teleporter found at area 11. In my game, this area was used by some of the bad guys who had come to completely dominate some other areas of the tunnels around Kusu's Cove to reach these laboratories without using its physical entrances at areas 6a, 17 and 22.

Also note the presence of the Prismatic teleporter at the end of the small corridor south of this area.

[IYC] Refer to area 11 for tips on the long-range teleporters and how to adapt them to your campaign. For the Prismatic teleporters, their triggers and how you can adapt them to your game, see area 24.

27. BLACK MIRROR. [IMC] A large, seven-foot wide disk of dark, polished metal hangs on the northern wall of this area. On each side of this metallic mirror, by the western and eastern wall of this room, respectively, a Hyperborea statue is standing. Each statue is wearing a toga and holding a scroll that is part of the statue's stone in one hand. In the other hand, each statue holds what looks like some kind of rod, about two feet long and one inch thick at the base, its wooden handle narrowing tremendously along its length to end with a two-inch wide round crystal ball at the top. This rod is not part of the statue itself, but can be taken off its grasp as an independent item. One rod has a black wooden handle with a white crystal round head, and the other has a white wooden handle with a black crystal round head. Facing the mirror, along the southern wall of this room, three small hooks are protruding from the masonry. The rods, statues and hooks do not radiate magic. The mirror does, however.

The rods are meant to be used as friction mallets on the surface of the mirror, which acts as some kind of gong producing notes at different frequencies. If played with the mallet with the black crystal head, the gong will play harmonics which will ultimately disturb its surface and change it into a gate to another dimension. Individuals will be able to step through the mirror into a netherworld best left undisturbed. Only the second mallet with the white crystal ball will be able to connect with the extradimensional surface of the gong at this point and play the harmonics which will close the gate and give it back its original, physical substance.

The Hyperboreans used this gate to explore the great N'kai below Yoth and K'n-yan which is reputed to connect in the dark with many underworld places of Hyperborea, including the Brazen Crown, Mount Vhuurmithadon, and other such locations. The hooks were used to hold ropes which some of the Hyperboreans staying in this room would hold while the explorers inside the mirror would have the other end tied up to their waist. The ropes have long been taken away from this area.

[IYC] In your game, the gong could actually have very different effects. It could affect the energies around the cores of areas 30, 31 and 32 for instance, maybe stabilizing them temporarily, or it could trigger some changes in the laboratories, blocking the teleporters, changing or exchanging their relative destinations. If you keep it as an experimental gate, the destination is of course totally up to you and the circumstances of your campaign.

28. SHRINE TO POSEIDON. [IMC] This underwater area is a shrine to the god of the seas the Atlanteans worshipped, and which the later Hyperboreans faithful to Apollo recuperated as part of their return to Hellenic traditions.

The teleporter at the western end of this room is a clay statue of the god himself bearing a small round dial with gems of different colours. It is in fact one of the Prismatic teleporters described at area 24. It will behave as such, with the additional twist that it is alive, corrupted by the energies emanating from the Deep Core, and will want to catch intruders to consume them by force. Such an act, aside from straight damage, might cause mutations and duplications if a saving throw against Sorcery is not made. If this creature is defeated, it will revert to a smooth pillar of clay, and will resume the functions similar to any other Prismatic teleporter of the level.

One of the engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments conducted by the Hyperboreans in the laboratories (similar to the disk found in area 3) can be found here.

The elevator platform protruding from the southern wall of this area is currently in the "up" position. There are controls at the bottom and top of the vertical rail on the wall controlling the movement of the elevator. Note the opening to the corridor stretching from this area south to a secret door leading to area 33 is clearly visible high up from the ground when the elevator is called down using these controls.

[IYC] Switch the deity to a relevant entity in your setting. Ideally, this entity will also be relevant to the builders of this place. Refer to area 24 for suggestions regarding the Prismatic teleporters, and area 33 regarding the submerged levels of the dungeon.

29. ANTECHAMBER TO THE ICE CORE. [IMC] This is a transitional area leading to the Ice Core at area 30. The temperature here is excruciatingly low. It will impair movement, and possibly damage people of a few HP per turn spent here and beyond without protection. The curved glass doors leading to the Core have been shattered. Rolling for random encounters in arctic weather is advised.

In the middle of the room stands a curious apparatus, a large bulb of metal, about 8 feet in diameter, with round windows in all four cardinal directions as well as the top of the sphere, mounted on four mechanical legs making one think of an overgrown mechanical insect of some sort. It is in fact a vehicle accessible by a trap door located just behind its top round window. The cabin can hold up to four individuals cramped together in this tight space, though it seems to have been intended to be comfortable for one or two people, a pilot and an observer beside him, most likely.

This vehicle is still functional. It can withstand high pressures, magically generates oxygen, and may be used underwater as well as vacuum conditions (though the manoeuvrability of the apparatus may be close to nil under these conditions, since it does not include any propulsion system beyond the legs its stands on). The windows and underbelly of the machine light up when it is activated. The commands are classic levers being moved back and forth, left and right for speed and direction. Two of the arms may be raised, their tips shifting to be used as tools - one becoming a mechanical arm with a pincher used to grab things when needed, and the other ending with a crystal able to launch electricity arcs which might damage and stun creatures on contact, or within ten feet around the submersible if used underwater.

The submersible was build by the Hyperboreans managing this place using bastardized Atlantean technology. This is what they used to explore hostile worlds through the gates generated by the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32.

[IYC] The function and mode of operation of the submersible will have to be reworked along with any modification of the cores themselves. If your cores lead to vacuum space, then the submersible would likely have some mode of propulsion beyond its mere legs. If they lead to hell, it will be impervious to heat as well. Whatever the case may be, this will be a tool for the players to use if they want to get beyond the gates generated randomly by the cores.

30. ICE CORE. [IMC] This core has gone wild and generates an intense cold emanating from a 10-foot wide ball of frost swirling wildly in the middle of this large cylindrical area. It has two main levels: the bottom floor connecting with area 29 to the north and the corridor leading to areas 32 and 33 to the west, and a 10-foot wide landing above, accessible from the bottom floor using the ladders around the shaft of the area, which leads to areas 18 and 31.

The ball of frost levitating off the ground could be reached by jumping off the upper landing of the area. This ball of frost is in fact generated by an ancient Lemurian crystal within. This crystal was used by the Hyperboreans ages ago to replicate the experiments of their inhuman predecessors which redirected the powerful energies beyond the veil tying this place to the primordial depths between the worlds to their own unknowable

ends (these experiments would ultimately aid the Atlanteans steal Kêr-Is from the influence of Cemunnos as it sank at the bottom of the seas of Old Earth, through time and space, and bind it extra-dimensionally to Kusu's Cove).

This Lemurian crystal, like the other two floating in the centre of the Storm and Deep cores at areas 31 and 32 respectively, has been damaged with time. Connecting any of the other crystals found within the caves of Kusu's Cove with any of these crystals will help regenerate them. Ultimately, after a few crystals have been absorbed by the cores, the central crystals will stabilize and the Chaotic emanations leaking from the cores and corrupting this place will be stopped.

In the meantime, adventurers exploring the Ice Core can see the frenzied crystal has connected this place to an ice world of some kind. Venturing on the bottom floor of the area to the centre, directly under the levitating crystal, will allow access to this world where all manners of dangerous arctic creatures roam forever in a desolated, unforgiving landscape unknown to them. Standing by the walls of the area, it is possible to catch glimpses of this world. Creatures of the other side might catch glimpses of this area as well, and they will be able to cross over just like the adventuring party is...

[IYC] Re-purposing the cores to fit your campaign will have domino-effect consequences on the rest of the dungeon. You need to think carefully about the types of worlds or extra-dimensional spaces which the original users of these laboratories might have contacted, and/or the consequences the destabilization of the crystals of the cores might have had on the worlds they are each connected with at this point in time. You might want to switch the element from the water/Atlantean-theme of my campaign to something else entirely. The laboratories may have been used by technologically advanced Cyclops, for instance, which would mean the cores could be connected with worlds of fire: The Ice Core might become the Volcano Core, the Storm Core might become the Brass Core (leading to the City of the same name), and the Deep Core might become the Fuming Core, which in itself would change the nature of the flooding affecting parts of the dungeon and the destination of area 33, where the spread and effects of the gazes and smokes emanating from the area could be controlled. Likewise, if you would prefer a race of genius minotaurs obsessed with the great equation running through the design of the mazes throughout the worlds, the cores might connect to three different mega-dungeons of your choice, where the creatures hoped to find the answers to their ages-long queries, with the essence of the dungeon linked to your re-purposed Deep Core actually bleeding into the rooms and corridors around it, as indicated by the shades of blue on the map, with the controls manipulating this blending effect being found in area 33. Whatever it is you choose to make this place ultimately about in your game, stay consistent, and think about the way it was used by the builders of the laboratories.

31. STORM CORE. [IMC] Similar to the Ice Core of area 30, this area is overtaken by very strong winds. High up where the ceiling would normally be, dark clouds seem to have been eviscerated, hollowed out, revealing cog wheels spinning within their depths. The Lemurian crystal levitating off the ground is barely visible as a variety of objects, furniture, bodies, pieces of armor, stones and even trees, swirl around it at high speeds. This place is connected with a world where the dark grey yellow skies are constantly heavy with clouds and generate tornadoes ad infinitum. This extra-dimensional space is the province of air sharks, storm giants on huge barges sailing the high winds, living lightning bolts and even more fantastical creatures. It would be deadly to venture there without the proper protections, magical and otherwise. One might be carried away to impossible cloud islands where ancient forts have been raised long ago out of the magical fabric of wind, light and shadow, and have to deal therein with the mysterious pre-human races who call these places home/ One could also crash down to hit the eternal seas rocking the surface below of all eternity, swirling around the great elemental maelstrom where the entity who crafted the primordial winds is said to reside...

[IYC] Refer to area 30 for more information about the cores and the considerations to keep in mind when re-purposing them to your game and campaign.

32. DEEP CORE. [IMC] Contrarily to the Ice and Storm cores of areas 30 and 31, the Deep Core is a cylinder stretching upwards on three levels, instead of two. The bottom level is completely flooded, and connects with the

Primordial Deep. The first level is a 10 foot-wide circular landing connecting to the passages leading north and south to the bottom levels of areas 30 and 31, respectively. The third level is another 10 foot-wide circular landing from which the large ball of swirling dark waters surrounding the Lemurian crystal levitating off the ground can be reached.

Very little is known about the Primordial Deep, this extra-dimensional realm where life may have been created aeons ago either by our gods, demons, or inhuman beings defying our limited understanding all the more. Some say this is the place where the Kraken, the Dweller between Worlds, resides. Others say it connects to the labyrinthine depths of the sunken R'lyeh, where the Great Kthulhu is rumoured to lay slumbering, surrounded by the hordes spawned from his dreams dancing slowly amidst the crumbling columns and the slimy green vaults which once overlooked the stars from whence they came.

[IYC] Refer to area 30 for more information about the cores and the considerations to keep in mind when re-purposing them to your game and campaign.

33. WATER LEVELS CONTROLS. [IMC] This area can be reached via secret passages from the ground floor of the Ice Core area (30). Its walls are covered with antique machinery and dials. These are the controls of the flooding systems of the laboratories. They were used to partially submerge some of the areas therein while performing some key experiments involving the Mirror of area 27 and the Ice Core at area 30, mostly. The magical wall of force which separated area 31 from the corridor directly south to its ground floor was dispelled with age, and now the waters rising from the lower level would flow over into areas 20, 35 and 36. The process would take some time, however, as described in area 20 (between 3-8 turns to complete).

Only the lowest level of the dungeon is flooded at present: It is symbolized with a deep blue color west of the map, and covers areas 28 and 32 along with the corridors connected to them. Activating the machinery here could randomly change these conditions, making the waters in the laboratories rise one or two levels upwards, flooding more surface in the dungeon, including areas 20, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33 here, 35 and 36 on the map at its highest flooding level, thus affecting the nature of the connection of the Ice Core and Storm Core to their respective worlds in the process (the locations they would lead to, and the creatures they might attract to the laboratories as well). It would also allow some of the marine creatures spawned by the Deep Core to reach farther into the dungeon, all the while keeping the protection of the waters that birthed them.

Note the two elevators directly north and west of this area. This are 10-foot wide platforms raising and lowering themselves to and from the lowest (submerged) level of the dungeon to and from the level of this area here (in effect acting like elevators, see area 28 for more information).

[IYC] The controls here should retain the ability to affect whatever is reaching out into the dungeon from the Deep Core of area 32, whether it is molted lava, gas, some extra-dimensional space blending with the laboratories, and so on. See area 30 for more ideas on the way you could re-purpose the cores to fit the specifics of your game.

34. DISSECTING TABLES. [IMC] This area was used to dissect and study creatures caught from the worlds beyond the cores at areas 30, 31 and 32. There are still some (now undead) creatures trapped in the pens located along the northern wall of this room. Some ghouls, an infant ice worm (which could have reached colossal size if it had been allowed to mature), a full-grown yeti and a still-born aboleth have died here and been reanimated by the Chaotic energies permeating the entire dungeon complex.

On one of the dissection tables of this room, a crustacean creature with wings, and molding grey tentacles for a head is still lying down, inert. If approached, it will animate, feeding on the life-force that came so close to it. It is much weaker than the usual Mi Go, its wings having partially been damaged, its organs atrophied to the point it cannot speak anymore, and the like, but it seems to have retained some of its original personality under the nefarious influence of this place. It will try to open the pens in an unusual move showing some sign of intelligence, and will then try to reach the Shrine of Leto in area 38 to find there some communicating device

allowing it to connect with other Mi Go spread in the lands of Hyperborea, the consequences of which are far beyond the scope of this module.

Also, as the undead Mi Go rises, it will drop something that must have been stuck under its corpse on the dissection table. It looks like like an eight-pronged golden star about three-inches in diameter. It is one of the keys allowing access within the cores' control chambers at area 36.

[IYC] Replace the creatures with some critters appropriate to your world. These do not have to be undead, since the energies of the cores might have kept them alive all this time. They might have mutated instead, or maybe their psyches all mingled into one single mind manipulating all these different bodies at once. For more information about the golden stars and the cores' control panels, see area 36.

35. CROSSROADS. [IMC] This area is devoid of any particular feature, except the clay pillar with the prismatic dial similar to the one found in area 24. Near the pillar, one can find the second eight-pronged golden star, similar in looks to the one found in area 34, which is another one of the keys allowing access to the cores' control chambers at area 36.

[IYC] For more information about the Prismatic teleporters, see area 24. For the golden stars, and the cores' control panels, see area 36.

36. CONTROL ROOMS. [IMC] The octogonal room found at the end of the northern corridor leading to this area is empty save for a clay pillar which does not react to the touch of living beings. There are three separate sockets found on the south-western, south, and south-eastern walls of this room: The eight-pronged golden stars found in areas 34, 35 and 37 may each find their places here. If the three stars have been slotted into their respective sockets, the clay pillar will activate, its surface showing subtle movement and vibration. Stepping through the teleporter will allow access to one of the three other octogonal rooms there, each one revealing itself to be a room filled with machinery controlling one of the cores at areas 30, 31 or 32, respectively. The cores will need to be stabilized first (see area 30 for more information) before any attempt to use the controls proves successful. When that is done, the cores could be used in the same manner the Hyperboreans did before their fall. Distant worlds, dimensions, spaces between spaces could be reached. The resulting adventures are beyond the scope of this module, but the rewards certainly could be great, and the consequences dire.

[IYC] These controls should retain the same basic functions in your game: allowing for the control of the cores once they have been stabilized, whatever this would mean for your campaign. Of course, the teleporters could be customized in any number of ways, as indicated in area 3a regarding all teleporters generally, and area 24 in regards to the Prismatic teleporters, specifically.

37. LOUNGES. [IMC] The rooms between this area and area 38 were used by the Hyperboreans to study and relax. You can see on the map various stools, tables, desks with chairs and the like. These have been trashed by the various creatures spawned by the cores over time, some of which might still be present now, as a matter of fact (implying wandering monster checks, of course). Amidst the mess of personal notes, rotten tomes, petrified meals and the like, one can find a engraved bronze disks carrying a log of the various experiments conducted by the Hyperboreans in the laboratories (similar to the disk found in area 3).

[IYC] Try to think about the ways the builders would like to study some of the things they found out using your cores at areas 30, 31 and 32, and implement that here in these various rooms. Cores linked to volcanic worlds could have a room dedicated to the study of various ores and minerals, for instance. Cores linked to heavens and hells might include some sort of arsenal with weapons being used against these angelic or demonic critters, based on what is known of them in the theology of the people who used this place first. Ascetic, strict monks might have some prayer rooms there, instead of lounges to chill and relax, and so on.

38. SHRINE TO LETO. [IMC] This room is dedicated to the mother of Apollo and Artemis, Leto. It is also the library of the Hyperboreans, with shelves along the walls holding rare tomes of knowledge, some of which might

not fall apart after all this time. There are magical scrolls to be found here, as well as one of the bronze disks/logs of the Hyperboreans explaining the purpose of this place, and their reverence for the Lady with the Golden Spindle (see area 3 for more information about the bronze disks of the Hyperboreans).

The third eight-pronged golden star, similar in looks to the ones found in areas 34 and 35, can be found stored here on one of the shelves, as well as the Mi Go communication device the creature lying on the dissection tables at area 34 would use if it could ever reach it.

The pillar in the middle of the room is one of the Prismatic teleporters described at area 24. Its dial includes a slot where one of the eight-pronged star could easily fit. Doing so redirects the destination of the teleporter to one of the teleporters of the ancient Hyperborean living quarters, located elsewhere within Kusu's Cove, this complex being well beyond the scope of this module. Without the eight-pronged star, this teleporter just fiuctions as described at area 24.

[IYC] As with the shrines of Demeter (area 22) and Poseidon (area 28), as well as the numerous statues found in this complex, it is important to re-purpose this place's patron to an entity that would both fit your world's cosmology and the beliefs held by initial builders and/or subsequent occupants of these laboratories. While the symbol of the eight-pronged star could be anything in your game, its purpose in changing this teleporter's target, or granting access to the control rooms of area 36, might not change. Of course, if you are changing the appearance and use of the Prismatic teleporters, make sure the key to this particular one also fit your overall scheme and background history.

The Wereshark by Chris Kutalik

Read as literature J. Eric Holmes' novella *The Maze of Peril* is fairly awful, but a read of the book as a window into the pulpy, exuberant kitchen-sink D&D of that good doctor it is supremely enjoyable. One of my favorite sections of the book occurs in a large underworld lake dominated by a pyramid-temple of Dagon.

After the protagonists loot the fishy demonic temple, they are confronted...

"Out of the black waters of the underground lake rose a triangular dorsal fin. The creature would have been immediately recognizable as a huge shark except for the thick muscular arms and hands with which it drew itself up upon the rocks. As the entire body became visible, the startled adventurers could see humanoid legs and bare feet supporting the fish-like tail."

Totemic beast cults—and their shape-shifting devotees--have run old in the Hill Cantons history, so I knew I had to have one for my campaign. Thus was born Andimachus, the wereshark cousin-antagonist of the resident godling of the Slumbering Ursine Dunes, the Master. Following are the stats I did for that game (he has been dispatched in a near-thing by the players long ago).

Wereshark

No. Enc.:	1d4 (1d4)
Alignment:	Chaotic (Evil)
Movement:	120' (on land)/180' (water)
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	2 (bite, clawed arms)
Damage:	2d6, 1d4, 1d4
Save:	F6
Morale:	10
XP:	1,000

Old salts will tell you of the subtle signs of the human-formed wereshark: a slight greyness of skin, a deadened, hard cast to the eye, a hint of razor among the teeth, a tendency to take positions in the banking guilds.

The monsterish version is inescapable obvious, rearing a full 8-foot tall with the pronounced snout of a shark, sharp-toothed grin, dorsal fin and muscular clawed arms. They are as fleet in the water as their fishy brethren. In this form they can only be harmed by silver or magical weapons.

Despite their bestial rapaciousness weresharks are drawn to soft luxuries in their off hours. Treasure hoards inevitably will take the form of soft, exquisitely-woven silks, velvet cushions, choice wines, fine silver dinnerware, and the like as opposed to straight cash.

Those unfortunates bitten by the wereshark will themselves become victim to lycanthropy on a 30% chance (remove curse to lift). On a full moon—at high tide—there is a 90% chance that the victim will transform into his new form and seek out others of his kind in the murky depths.