

**ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF**

# **HYPERBOREA™**



**GHOST SHIP OF THE DESERT DUNES**

**BY JEFFREY P. TALANIAN**



# ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF **HYPERBOREA**™

## GHOST SHIP OF THE DESERT DUNES™

*An adventure in Hyperborea  
designed for from four to six characters of 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> level*

by Jeffrey P. Talanian



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*Ghost Ship of the Desert Dunes™* takes players into an action-packed realm of adventure: the mythical world of Hyperborea, a sword-and-sorcery campaign setting inspired by the fantastic fiction of Robert E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and others. This adventure is designed for *Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers of Hyperborea™* (*AS&SH™*), a role-playing game descended from the original 1974 fantasy wargame and miniatures campaign rules as conceived by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. Therefore, *AS&SH* is compatible with most traditional fantasy role-playing games (c. 1974 to 1999) and their modern simulacra, such as *OSRIC™* and *Swords & Wizardry™*.

For more information about *AS&SH*, please visit us at **hyperborea.tv**.

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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** This adventure was inspired by Robert E. Howard's "Rogues in the House" and by the shipwrecks of Namibia's Skeleton Coast.

*A mountaineer, storm-stained and brown,  
From farthest desert touched the town,  
And, striding through the crowd, held up  
Above his head a jewell'd cup.  
He put two fingers to his lip,  
He whisper'd wild, he stood a-tip,  
And lean'd the while with lifted hand,  
And said, "A ship lies yonder dead,"  
And said, "Doubloons lie sown in sand  
In yon far desert dead and brown..."*

—Joaquin Miller, *The Ship in the Desert*,  
(Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1875)

## PART I: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

### INFORMATION FOR THE PLAYERS

Read aloud or paraphrase "The Legend of the Ghost Ship" to the players:

Somewhere in the depths of Diamond Desert lie the skeletal remains of *Ymir's Serpent*, a legendary Viking longship. In days of yore, Sigtrygg Forkbeard led his company upriver, piercing the desert's hostile heart. There the Vikings unearthed a lost mine brimming with green diamonds, but the River Æolus desiccated as the *Serpent* prepared for launch, and the ship was swallowed by the dunes. Forkbeard and his company were never seen again, but tales of a shimmering Viking ghost ship gliding over the dunes persist to this day.

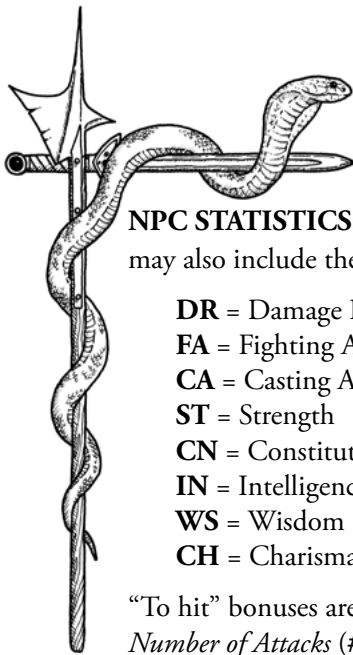
The preceding is a popular tale shared amongst thieves, prospectors, and other fortune seekers across the realm. At present, in the City-State of Khromarium, an elderly *wizard* (male witch) called **Vul Kovtu** claims to have devised "irrefutable means" to locate the legendary wreck and reap its treasure trove of **green diamonds**<sup>[1]</sup>, but he requires able-bodied assistance. Word has reached the ears of the player characters, for the wizard's reward is said to be substantial, his coffers deep.

### INFORMATION FOR THE REFEREE

**MONSTER STATISTICS:** All monsters and non-player characters (NPCs) have the following statistics, abbreviated as noted:

**AL** = Alignment  
**SZ** = Size  
**MV** = Movement  
**DX** = Dexterity  
**AC** = Armour Class  
**HD** = Hit Dice  
**hp** = Hit Points  
**#A** = Number of Attacks  
**D** = Damage  
**SV** = Saving Throw  
**ML** = Morale  
**XP** = Experience Point Value  
**Special** = Special Abilities

1. Crystals that demonstrate bright green effulgence. They are charged with potent energy that in antiquity was harnessed by Atlantean and Amazonian scientists. See **APPENDIX C**.



**NPC STATISTICS:** Non-player character statistics may also include the below abbreviations:

**DR** = Damage Reduction  
**FA** = Fighting Ability  
**CA** = Casting Ability  
**ST** = Strength  
**CN** = Constitution  
**IN** = Intelligence  
**WS** = Wisdom  
**CH** = Charisma

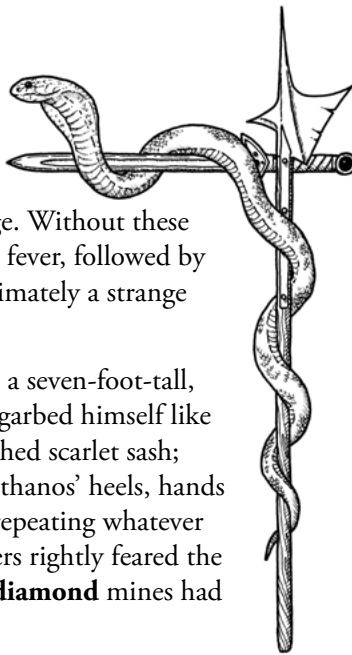
“To hit” bonuses are noted for each weapon in the *Number of Attacks (#A)* entry. *Armour Class (AC)* and *Damage (D)* figures are calculated to include all pertinent modifiers from attribute scores, magic items, *weapon mastery*, and the like.

**BACKGROUND:** During the Dark Age that followed the Green Death<sup>[2]</sup>, an Ixian sorcerer called **Karsas Xarthanos** discovered a derelict **Amazon skyship** on the desert island of Xenadon. The ship’s log revealed that it was powered by radioactive crystals called **green diamonds**. Naturally, the sorcerer schemed to rebuild the vessel and locate a **green diamond** source.

As Xarthanos’ men scoured the island, they captured a young **winged carnivorous ape**. Xarthanos was fascinated by the simian, so he kept it for his own, naming it **Thakos**. This creature would prove to be the sorcerer’s undoing.

After six exhausting years of prospecting, Xarthanos finally located a substantial **green diamond** deposit deep in Diamond Desert, by the banks of the dwindling River Æolus. Soon the sorcerer mounted a full-fledged mining operation and established a nearby research facility whence he could rebuild the **skyship**. By that time Thakos had grown as large as a man and demonstrated crude intelligence, capable of mock speech and simple feats of ratiocination.

Four more years passed. Xarthanos and his team of engineers and metallurgists had rebuilt the **Amazon skyship**. Too, they had developed methods by which **green diamonds** could be safely harvested: The radioactive crystals necessitated manipulation with iron tongs, handlers were required to wear lead gauntlets and lead-filled aprons, and containers of



lead alloy were needed for storage. Without these safeguards handlers would suffer fever, followed by homicidal mania, death, and ultimately a strange species of zombiism.

By then, Thakos had matured to a seven-foot-tall, 500-pound brute. The beast oft garbed himself like his master, wearing a gold-brooched scarlet sash; moreover, he would pace on Xarthanos’ heels, hands folded behind his back, angrily repeating whatever the Ixian would say. The engineers rightly feared the ape, but the slaves in the **green diamond** mines had begun to worship him.

Thakos found perverse pleasure in the slaves’ adulation, so he began to spend more time in the mines. Then one fateful night the beast entered an intractable primal rage, perhaps instigated by radiation poisoning. He murdered several key personnel, freed his followers, and before a gathered throng of venerators he snapped his master’s neck like a stalk of wheat.

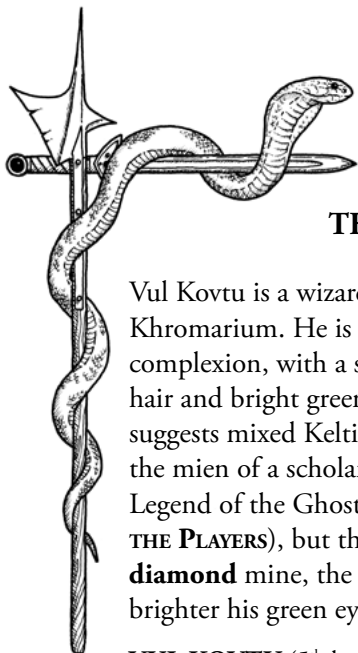
Thus had Thakos become a savage godhead to dozens of emancipated slaves. But with their protections cast aside like the fetters of bondage, soon the **green diamond** sickness claimed the former slaves one and all. Lunacy prevailed, and butchery ensued. The dead subsequently rose to become the **radioactive berserker zombie** servants of a winged simian god.

Enter the irascible Viking **Sigtrygg Forkbeard**, who arrived at the **green diamond** mine in the wake of this turmoil. Forkbeard and crew had a simple agenda: to raid the mine for its green-glowing riches. They had not expected to encounter radioactive zombies commanded by a winged carnivorous ape.

The Vikings quickly retreated, but fate struck them a final blow: A cataclysmic sandstorm grounded their longship and swallowed what was left of the River Æolus. The Vikings were trapped and slaughtered. Their restless spirits have since haunted Diamond Desert for centuries, becoming the stuff of legend.



2. Plague that swept across Hyperborea about 1,000 years ago. It annihilated villages, towns, cities, and entire kingdoms; sages estimate that the Green Death may have claimed ninety percent of mankind. It heralded four centuries of chaos oft referred to as the Dark Age.



## THE WIZARD

Vul Kovtu is a wizard from the City-State of Khromarium. He is a peg-legged old man of freckled complexion, with a shock of grey-streaked red hair and bright green eyes; his physical appearance suggests mixed Keltic descent. Initially he exhibits the mien of a scholarly chap as he references “The Legend of the Ghost Ship” (see **INFORMATION FOR THE PLAYERS**), but the closer he gets to the **green diamond** mine, the less rational he becomes, and the brighter his green eyes shine—unnaturally so.

**VUL KOVTU** (5<sup>th</sup>-level witch): AL N; SZ M; MV 10 (peg leg); AC 9; HD 5 (hp 13); FA 2; CA 5; #A 1 (quarterstaff or dagger [-1 hurled]); D 1d6 (quarterstaff) or 1d4 (dagger); SV 14 [*transformation* +2, *sorcery* +2]; ML 9; XP 225; ST 9, DX 7, CN 10, IN 15, WI 12, CH 16.

*Special:* Witch spells (*charm person, friends, light, sleep, goodberry, hold person, locate object, wraithshape*).

*Gear:* dagger, quarterstaff, backpack, **knots string**<sup>[3]</sup> (5 knots), **potion of paralysis** (*death* [poison] save or paralyzed for 15 turns), **rod of iron detection**<sup>[4]</sup> (25 charges), **wand of magic missiles** (19 charges), **spell book** (contains all prepared spells), ink and quill, sheet of parchment, tinderbox, torch, **2 gold ingots** (100-gp value each), **18 gp, 15 sp.**

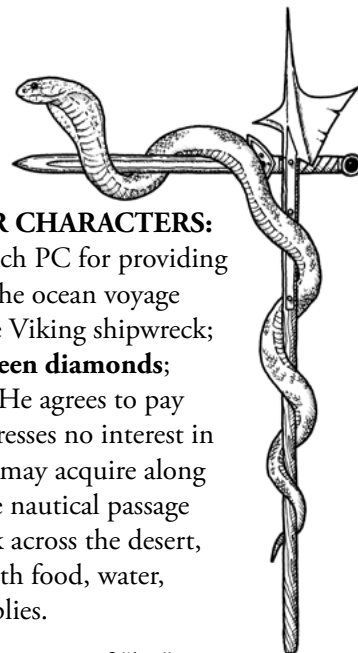
Vul keeps his **wand of magic missiles** in the sleeve of his robe, sewn into a pocket for quick use. He is willing to use his **knots string** if the ship is in great danger, but he might also offer this item to a trustworthy PC. Lastly, in a hollow of his metal-plated peg leg he keeps a tiny **green diamond** shard; this radioactive crystal endows him with sensitivity to the presence of other **green diamonds**. Because this shard is so small, and because it is encased within his metal-plated peg leg, its effects are not deadly—yet it fuels his mad craving for more **green diamonds**.

**Mordag** (bat familiar): AL N; SZ S; MV 0 (fly 80); DX 15; AC 5; HD ¼ (hp 2); #A 1 (bite); D 1; SV 17; ML 12; XP 9.

*Special:* Has spiritual bond of unlimited range with master. Wizard can see (tunnel vision) and hear (thin and metallic) through familiar. If familiar is killed, wizard must make *death* save or lose 3d6 hp; if save fails by 5 or more, wizard dies.

3. See **APPENDIX B**.

4. *ibid.*



## VUL'S OFFER TO THE PLAYER CHARACTERS:

Vul offers to pay **1,000 gp** to each PC for providing his personal protection during the ocean voyage and desert crossing; locating the Viking shipwreck; securing the treasure trove of **green diamonds**; and returning to Khromarium. He agrees to pay half if the mission fails. Vul expresses no interest in any other “loot” the expedition may acquire along the way. The wizard will arrange nautical passage to Diamond Desert; for the trek across the desert, he will supply donkeys laden with food, water, excavation tools, and other supplies.

**N.B.:** Vul cares only for the acquisition of “his” **green diamonds**; he refuses to spare a one of them. If questioned, he may reveal that he prizes the **green diamonds** not for their pecuniary value, but rather for his personal research. He discloses no more. In truth, he suffers a craving sickness for **green diamonds**; this affliction evinces itself further as the expedition progresses. Vul will not even afford a handful of them to power the **Amazon skyship**, should it be discovered.

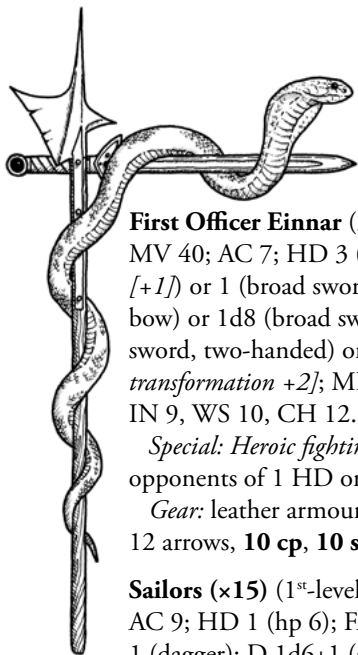
## JOURNEY ACROSS THE SEA

**THE SHIP:** The 14-day sea journey is made on the *Desert Nomad*, an old **cog** (*large sailing ship with single mast and square-rigged single sail*; MV 120 feet/round, 72 miles/day; AC 8; 19 hull points) that Vul Kovtu owns outright. The first stop is Cape Calencia, about 10 days' sail from Khromarium. Player characters with any navigating or sailing skills will be encouraged to assist, but inexperienced hands will be asked to take on menial tasks or stay out of the way. The crew are of mixed Keltic ancestry:

**Captain Finnean Macc Finnean** (5<sup>th</sup>-level fighter): AL CG; SZ M; MV 30; AC 4; DR 1; HD 5 (hp 36); FA 5; #A 3/2 (scimitar [+4]); D 1d8+4 (scimitar, one-handed) or 1d10+4 (scimitar, two-handed); SV 14 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 9; XP 41; ST 16, DX 10, CN 13, IN 12, WS 12, CH 14.

*Special:* **Heroic fighting** (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). **Grand mastery** (scimitar).

*Gear:* chain mail, small shield, **+1 scimitar, 55 gp, silver ring** set with bloodstone (55-gp value).



**First Officer Einnar** (3<sup>rd</sup>-level fighter): AL CG; SZ M; MV 40; AC 7; HD 3 (hp 20); FA 3; #A 2 (short bow [+1]) or 1 (broad sword or dagger); D 1d6+1 (short bow) or 1d8 (broad sword, one-handed) or 1d10 (broad sword, two-handed) or 1d4 (dagger); SV 15 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 9; XP 41; ST 12, DX 12, CN 13, IN 9, WS 10, CH 12.

*Special:* *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (short bow).

*Gear:* leather armour, broad sword, dagger, short bow, 12 arrows, **10 cp**, **10 sp**, **10 gp**.

**Sailors (×15)** (1<sup>st</sup>-level fighters): AL CG; SZ M; MV 40; AC 9; HD 1 (hp 6); FA 1; #A 3/2 (short sword [+1]) or 1 (dagger); D 1d6+1 (short sword) or 1d4 (dagger); SV 16 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 9; XP 13; ST 11, DX 11, CN 11, IN 9, WS 10, CH 9.

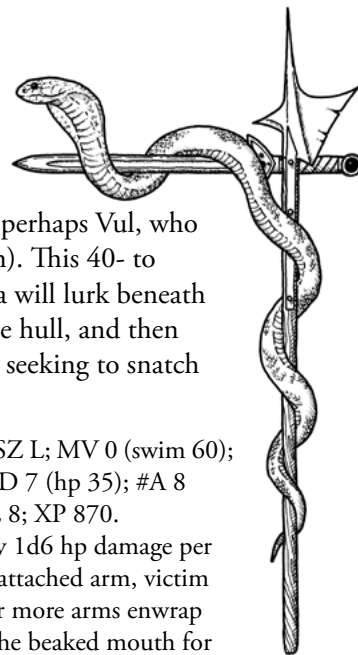
*Special:* *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (short sword).

*Gear:* short sword, dagger, **2d4 cp**, **2d4 sp**.

Below decks are **10 donkeys**, several casks of water, food, excavation tools (crowbars, hammers, picks, shovels, wedges), and other supplies (bedrolls, blankets, cords, ropes, wind-retardant tents, etc.). Minimal cabin space may be found under the forecabin, with slightly more under the aftercabin; the latter is shared by the wizard, the captain, and the first officer. Six hammocks crowd the forecabin; generally, these berths are shared by the crew on a revolving basis, with the rest sleeping on the *Desert Nomad's* deck.

**N.B.:** In the forecabin Vul Kovtu keeps a lead box that measures 2½ × 1½ × 1½ feet, intended for the storage of **green diamonds**. He also has an iron padlock with key for this box. Vul is ignorant of other measures used in the past, such as leaden aprons, gloves, tongs, and so forth.

**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS AT SEA:** An immature **giant squid** is active along the coast as this adventure proceeds, which consequently has attracted giant crabs, great white sharks, and killer whales. These latter predators of the sea are not inclined to attack a ship whilst easier feeding is available, but future naval excursions may not prove the same. For each day of the journey (or, alternatively, for every three or four sea hexes travelled), the ship will be attacked by the squid on a 1-on-6 chance. If so, the referee should assign equal probability for PCs and crew



members to be targeted (except perhaps Vul, who scarcely leaves the aftercabin cabin). This 40- to 70-foot-long leviathan of the sea will lurk beneath the craft, anchor two arms to the hull, and then attack with its other eight arms, seeking to snatch men from the ship's deck.

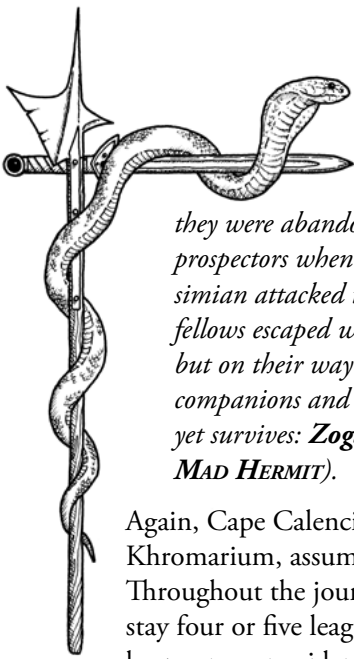
**Squid, Giant (Immature):** AL N; SZ L; MV 0 (swim 60); DX 9; AC 4 (body) or 8 (arms); HD 7 (hp 35); #A 8 (arms ×8); D 1d4 (×8); SV 13; ML 8; XP 870.

*Special:* Successful hit followed by 1d6 hp damage per round from constriction. For each attached arm, victim suffers -1 "to hit" penalty. If two or more arms enwrap the same man, victim is pulled to the beaked mouth for bite attack, which causes 1d8 hp damage. An arm struck for 6 hp damage is severed or rendered useless, but does not detract from monster's overall hp total. If squid loses four or more arms, it jets away at ×3 movement whilst releasing a cloud of ink.

**THE WIZARD TELLS SOME TALES:** During the 14-day journey, Vul Kovtu shares some rumours he claims to have gathered throughout his exhaustive research:

- ★ Not all the crew of *Ymir's Serpent* perished; a pair of Vikings are said to have escaped with their lives. They aspired to one day return to find the wreck, but then came the Little Green Death<sup>[5]</sup>, and the two Vikings took their knowledge to the pyre. *False: None survived.*
- ★ A shimmering, ghostly longship glides over the sand dunes of Diamond Desert, revealing itself to lost prospectors shortly before they perish. *True: A popular rumour, a few PCs in the party may have heard some variation of it.*
- ★ About thirty years ago, a trio of diamond prospectors discovered a skeletal Viking ship half-buried in the sands of Diamond Desert. Beneath the wreck they gathered as many **green diamonds** as they could carry, but upon their return, greed overcame good reason, and the ensuing bloodshed left but one survivor. That man was later captured, robbed, and abused by cave-men of the island Tarath, until he escaped a decade later. Recently, that survivor died of old age in his home in Khromarium. *Mostly true, but with some significant omissions: Firstly, Vul is that same old man who supposedly "died of old age". Secondly, a dozen miners were involved, but*

5. The veracity of the so-called "Little Green Death" is the subject of conjecture. Folklore collected from various rustic communities suggests that a series of smaller, localized outbreaks of the Green Death occurred throughout Hyperborea during the Dark Age that followed the true plague years, but supporting evidence is lacking.



they were abandoned by Vul and his two fellow prospectors when a massive, bloodthirsty, winged simian attacked their group. Vul and his two fellows escaped with a stash of **green diamonds**, but on their way back to the coast he betrayed his companions and left them for dead. One, however, yet survives: **Zogal the Mad** (see **PART III, THE MAD HERMIT**).

Again, Cape Calencia lies about 10 days from Khromarium, assuming favourable conditions. Throughout the journey, Captain Finnean prefers to stay four or five leagues (12–15 miles) offshore (and keeps an even wider berth near the Islands of the Ape-Men.)

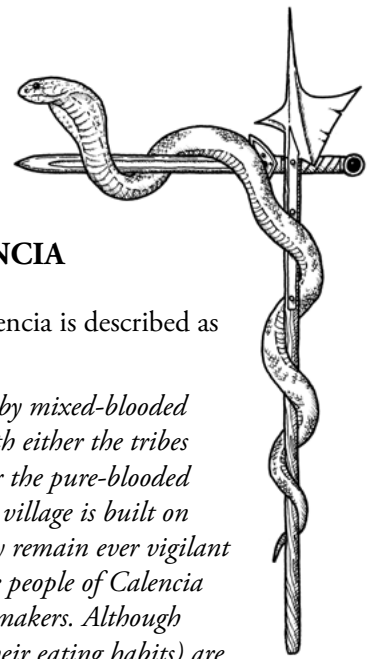
**REFEREE'S NOTE:** For campaign play, the referee should continue to **PART II: THE CURSED AMPHORA**. The adjunct quest at Cape Calencia is appropriate for 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-level characters. Betwixt **PART II** and **PART III**, some players may wish to have their characters train to gain a level of experience. Calencia Village includes several potential opportunities for such training, the development of which is the purview of the referee. For quick play, such as a one- or two-session game, the referee may opt instead to “fast-forward” to **PART III: DIAMOND DESERT**, which is suitable for 3<sup>rd</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-level characters.

## PART II: THE CURSED AMPHORA

### INFORMATION FOR THE PLAYERS

Ten days into the trip (four days from the final destination), the expedition's sponsor, the wizard Vul Kovtu, calls for the *Desert Nomad* to put in at Calencia Village. He seeks to investigate the tale of a villager who went mad seven years ago. The man's madness is oft attributed to “green-glowing glassware”. The glassware in question was a crystal **amphora**<sup>[6]</sup> etched with the portrayal of a kithara<sup>[7]</sup>.

The wizard suspects that the reported “glassware” contains **green diamond** material. He would like the PCs to spend a day or two interviewing the locals. He instructs them not to handle any such green-glowing glassware, should they locate it. For his own part, Vul intends to remain aboard the *Desert*



*Nomad.*

## CAPE CALENCIA

In the *AS&SH* game, Cape Calencia is described as follows:

*This forested horn is peopled by mixed-blooded Picts no longer associated with either the tribes of the Savage Boreal Coast or the pure-blooded Picts of New Pictland. Their village is built on 40-foot stilts from which they remain ever vigilant to the threat of ape-men. The people of Calencia are expert weavers and rope makers. Although their customs (particularly their eating habits) are rather eccentric, they are generally regarded as an hospitable folk.*

The old cog will sail along the south coast of the cape until its lookout spots the mouth to Lith Fjord, where Calencia Village lies (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE MAP**).

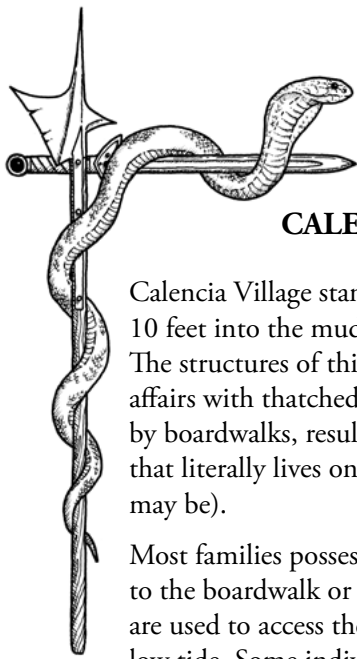
## LITH FJORD

This small, secluded cove features a narrow inlet surrounded by precipitous, moss- and scrub-covered limestone cliffs, upon which stand **18 totem poles** (see **CAPE CALENCIA MAINLAND**), artistic representations of guardian spirits ancestral, animistic, and deific. The narrow mouth of Lith Fjord demonstrates hazardous reefs. Owing to its sheltered geography, the cove is not typically subject to violent waves or winds. Low tide exposes mudflats in Lith Fjord; at high tide, the water rises to 15- to 20-foot depth, weather and moon orientation effecting additional 5- to 10-foot swells.

**WHEN FOREIGNERS ARRIVE:** A pair of stone watchtowers (#1) overlooks the fjord. At first sight of a foreign vessel, a small war canoe is deployed from the seaside cave (#2). If new arrivals prove friendly and respectful, the Calencians present as smiling, helpful, and affable; they welcome foreigners to their quaint village. (The exception to this general rule is Ixians, with whom the Calencians have had tragic dealings in the past.) If new arrivals seem hostile or rude, or otherwise behave in an untoward manner, they are asked to leave straight away; failure to cooperate may lead to violence.

6. Tall, two-handled jar with a narrow neck, which is used to store or carry wine or oils.

7. Ancient Hellenic stringed instrument similar to the lyre; oft associated with Apollo and his worship.



## CALENCIA VILLAGE

Calencia Village stands on 40-foot stilts (embedded 10 feet into the mud) on the tidal flats of Lith Fjord. The structures of this curious village are cedar plank affairs with thatched roofs. They are interconnected by boardwalks, resulting in a tightly knit community that literally lives on the water (or mud, as the case may be).

Most families possess one or more canoes, these tied to the boardwalk or one of the piers. Rope ladders are used to access the boardwalks and piers during low tide. Some individuals hoist their boats using a capstan.

Calencia Village consists of **42 families** that comprise **476 individuals**. Their ancestry can be traced back to two embattled clans of racially commingled ancestry, including Pictish, Tlingit, and Viking derivation. Over 200 years ago (c. 262 CÆ), these forebears migrated to arboreal Cape Calencia. After enduring several ape-man raids, they ensconced themselves in Lith Fjord and established the stilted village where they have thriven.

Physically, Calencians most resemble half-blood Picts, short and compact. They have bronzed skin, blue or hazel eyes, and sandy-blond or reddish hair. Females trim their hair short and comb it neatly to one side using fish oil, whereas men tend to grow their hair long, knotting and twisting it to braids. Calencians predominantly speak the Common tongue. Their names are a strange amalgam of Pictish, half-blood Pictish, and Viking, a product of their heterogeneous lineage. Half-blood Picts use only two different surnames, those of their two moieties<sup>[8]</sup>: *Gooch* (Wolf) and *Yéil* (Raven).

The villagers primarily subsist on fish and crustaceans, with shrimp paste a staple of their diet. Grains and vegetables are grown in stream-cut gorges on the mainland; seaweed is also cultivated along the beaches just outside the fjord. Many families raise chickens, small coops placed betwixt the houses or on the boardwalks; some chickens roam free, oft corralled by children and a small breed of herding dog raised by the Calencians. Internally, the village supports barter and trade for the exchange of goods

and services, but foreigners typically spend money using the customary exchange rates seen in the City-State of Khromarium and other centres of civilization.

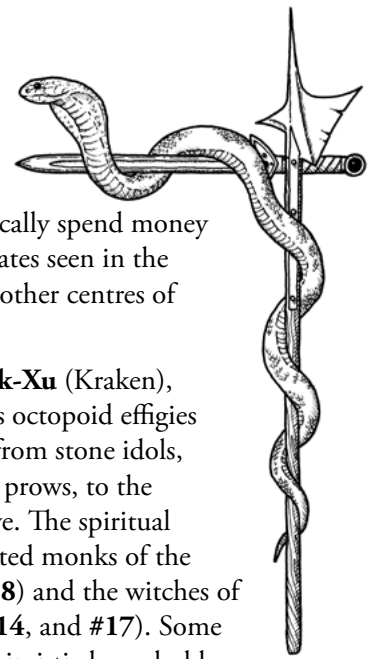
These folk pay homage to **Khalk-Xu** (Kraken), “The Dimensional Dweller”; his octopoid effigies are found all about the village, from stone idols, to drinking mugs, to war canoe prows, to the totem poles that hem in the cove. The spiritual elite of Calencia are the bare-pated monks of the **Brotherhood of Khalk-Xu (#18)** and the witches of **Calencia’s Peculiar** (see #10, #14, and #17). Some villagers also venerate various animistic household gods; examples include aurochs, bat, bear, crab, dogfish, elk, ground sloth, lion, raven, salmon, snake, weasel, whale, and wolf.

**FESTIVALS OBSERVED:** With the exception of Bealltainn and the idiosyncratic Ceremony of Light, Calencians do not observe the typical festival weeks of Hyperborea.

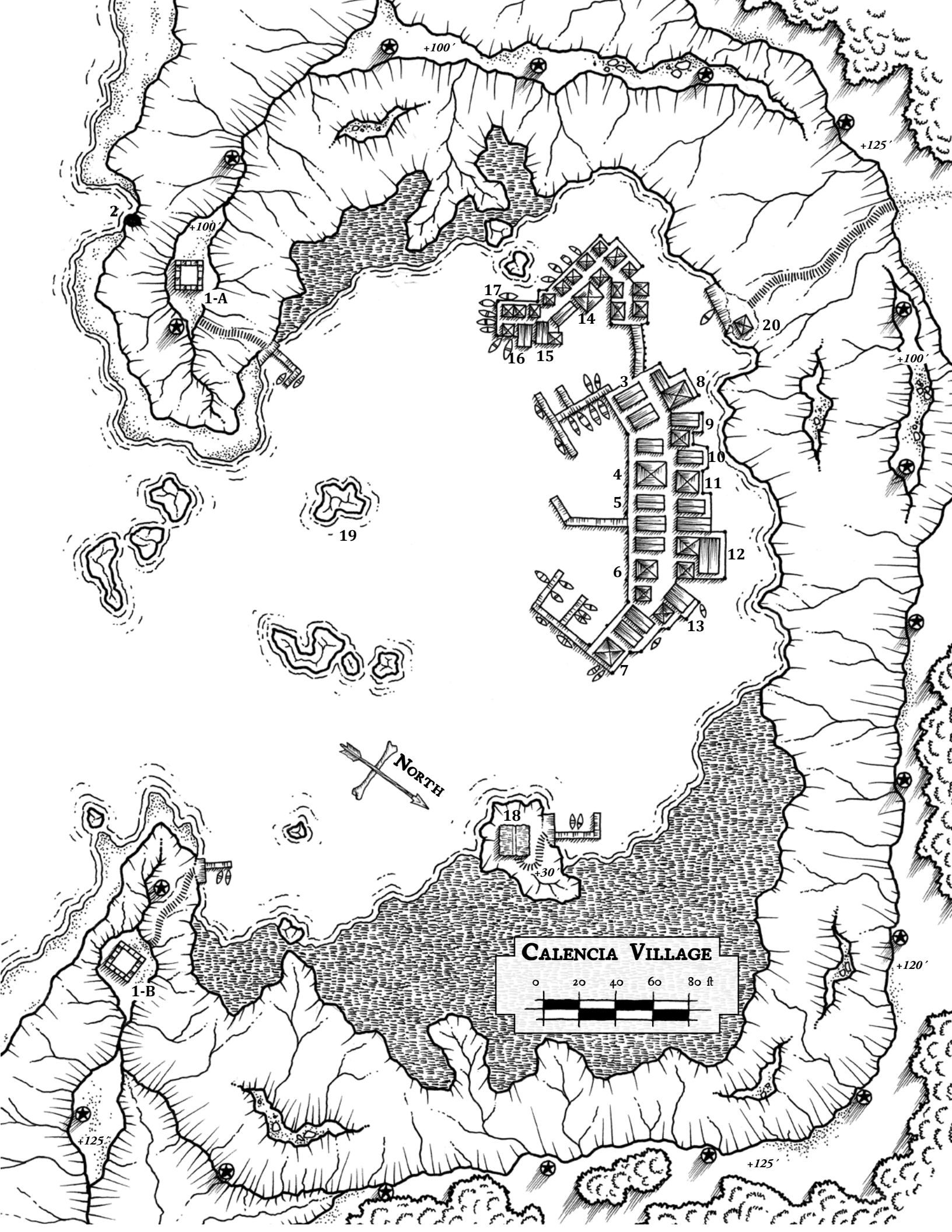
**Bealltainn:** A celebration of fire, rebirth, atonement, cleansing, fertility, and purification, marked by the lighting of great bonfires, plenteous imbibing of wine, lotus chewing, and sacrificial fires in which animals and men (criminals or thralls, typically) are immolated. Bealltainn celebrants will oft paint their naked bodies red, green, or yellow; tint their hair copper, silver, or gold; and wear garlands of mistletoe and holly leaves. They will beat drums, dance wildly, and engage in salacious acts fuelled by wine, lotus, and religious fervour. The music is intensely rhythmic, its vibrations permeating far and wide, and it is not unusual for the most feverish of these celebrations to be met by lightning storms.

**Ceremony of Light** (*Sacrifice to Khalk-Xu*): Once per 13-year cycle, on the eve of *Genesis* (last day of *Nightfall*), a human sacrifice is made to Khalk-Xu, “The Dimensional Dweller”. The sacrifice is always female; indeed, young women petition for the honour to be “taken”. On that fateful, torch-lit night, the yellow-gowned sacrifice stands atop the Altar of Sacrifice (#19), shackled at the wrists.

Concurrently, the monks of the Brotherhood of Khalk-Xu stand atop the roof of their monastery (#18), joined by the witches of Calencia’s Peculiar.



8. Social groups into which some primitive cultures are divided. Marriages within the same moiety are taboo.



+100'

+125'

2

+100'

1-A

17

14

20

16

15

+100'

19

4

5

6

7

10

11

12

13

NORTH

18

+30'

CALENCIA VILLAGE

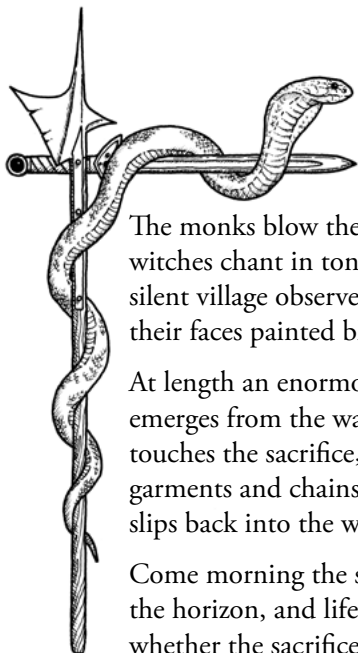
0 20 40 60 80 ft

1-B

+125'

+125'

+120'



The monks blow their great trumpets, whilst the witches chant in tongues and sway like cobras. The silent village observes from the boardwalks and piers, their faces painted black.

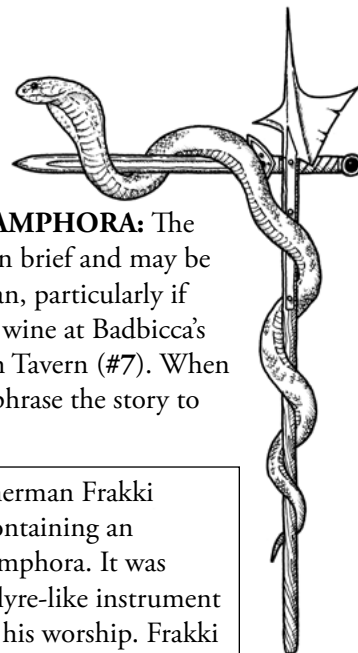
At length an enormous, mauve-glowing tentacle emerges from the waters of Lith Fjord. When it touches the sacrifice, she at once disappears, her garments and chains falling limp. Then the tentacle slips back into the water.

Come morning the sun momentarily peeks above the horizon, and life resumes. No one can say whether the sacrifice is destroyed or taken elsewhere. What they do know is that Khalk-Xu has been sated.

**WHAT TO DO IN CALENCIA VILLAGE:** Despite their eccentricities, the folk of Calencia Village are a gregarious people, proud of their culture and happy to share it with foreigners. At the referee's discretion, a typical Calencian might direct visiting PCs as follows (roll a d10):

1. Visit Badbicca's Place (#4) for excellent food and lodging.
2. Visit the distillery (#5) for the finest whiskey on the coast.
3. Visit the Sleepy Lantern Tavern (#7) for the best food in town.
4. The blacksmith (#9) has tools and other metal implements for sale.
5. If feeling ill, visit the medicine shop (#10).
6. Visit the trading post (#11) for provisions.
7. If planning to go fishing, see **Wormie** (#15) for the best bait.
8. Seek out **Leifr Yéil** (#16) for the finest canoes in all of Hyperborea.
9. Seek the Oracle (#17) for true wisdom.
0. Seek not the Monastery of Khalk-Xu (#18) unless the monks seek you first.

**N.B.:** Most of the crew of the *Desert Nomad* will migrate to Badbicca's Place (#4) or the Sleepy Lantern Tavern (#7). As previously noted, Vul Kovtu intends to maintain a low profile, because of past disputes with the witches of Calencia's Peculiar (see #10, #14, and #17).



**THE TALE OF THE CURSED AMPHORA:** The following account is presented in brief and may be gleaned from most any Calencian, particularly if tongues are loosened by beer or wine at Badbicca's Place (#4) or the Sleepy Lantern Tavern (#7). When appropriate, read aloud or paraphrase the story to the players:

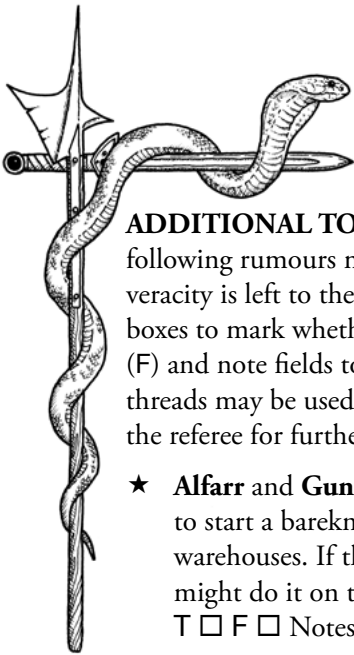
Seven years ago, Calencian fisherman Frakki Yéil dredged up a metal case containing an extraordinary, green-glowing amphora. It was stylized to portray a kithara, a lyre-like instrument oft associated with Apollo and his worship. Frakki intended to give the piece to his wife, so he asked his older brother Leifr Yéil, a canoe carver, to keep it safe. Leifr placed the box in his home and thought no more of it—until his erratic twin Lodinn opened it.

Lodinn was at once enamoured of the piece. When younger brother Frakki came around to retrieve his property, Lodinn beat him savagely; Frakki crawled home bloodied and toothless. Later, when Leifr returned from his canoe work on the mainland, his neighbours relayed the news of the incident. Consequently, Leifr administered a sound thrashing to his deranged twin and then took the boxed amphora to poor, abused Frakki.

The matter appeared settled. That night, Lodinn murdered Frakki with a knife and fled into the forest with the amphora. Folks say he's lived out there as a wild man ever since; some suggest he is more beast than man nowadays.

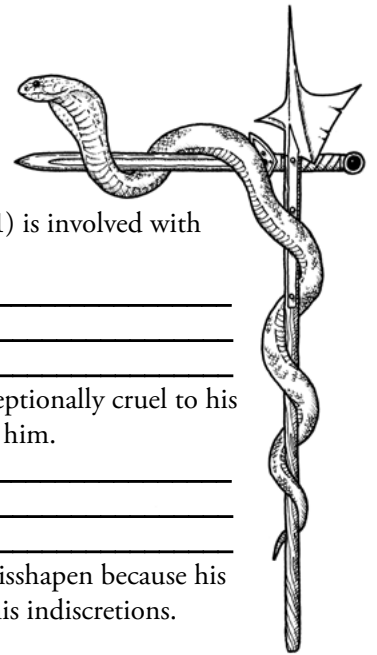
Further amphora rumours might be garnered from various individuals, if the right questions are asked:

- ★ Frakki's widow, **Mær Yéil**, is now engaged to marry the butcher (#6). *True.*
- ★ Frakki's widow, **Mær Yéil**, kept the metal box that encased the **amphora**. *True, but she gave it to the smith, Ulldr Sacciosson (#9).*
- ★ Leifr Yéil (#16) sometimes travels the length of the cape searching for his mad twin. *False. He already knows where Lodinn is.*

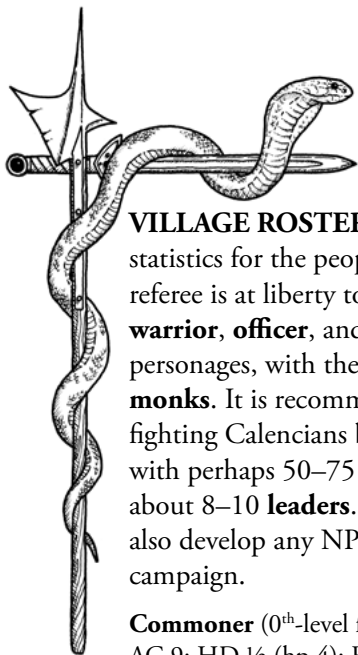


**ADDITIONAL TOWN RUMOURS:** The following rumours may be learnt about town. Their veracity is left to the referee to decide, with check boxes to mark whether a rumour is true (T) or false (F) and note fields to jot any pertinent details. These threads may be used as red herrings, or developed by the referee for further adventures in the region.

- ★ **Alfarr** and **Gunnkell Gooch** (#5) are looking to start a bareknuckle fight club in one of the warehouses. If the monks don't approve, they might do it on the mainland.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Some bow hunters chased a pair of ape-men to the coast, but the creatures escaped.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Taan Croti** (#7) will pay five gold pieces per live monkey captured, but the primates are migrating off the peninsula and into the mountains.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Ketill Frakkason** (#8) has been taking liberties with some of the wives and daughters who flense whales for him.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ Several months ago, **Ulldr Sacciosson's** nephew **Vindek** (#9) murdered a foreigner who insulted his honour. Most say it's not the first time.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Shaa Yéil** (#10) is a dangerous witch who is in league with Ixian necromancers from Scythium. She'll take a man to her bed, but he won't live to tell his sordid tale. Her antidotes and cure-alls are effective, though.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



- ★ **Ivomagos Dagssonn** (#11) is involved with Ixian slave traders.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Steinn Gooch** (#12) is exceptionally cruel to his family and those who serve him.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Dumnocoveros** (#14) is misshapen because his witch wife cursed him for his indiscretions.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Crotos "Wormie" Motii** (#15) murdered his first wife so he could marry that pretty young bride he has now.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Leifr Yéil** (#16) has killed more ape-men than any other man in the village.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ **Inga Gooch** (#17) ruins people's lives; her prophecies pollute their minds with fancy ideas.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ The monks of the Brotherhood of Khalk-Xu (#18) have been quiet of late. Something untoward is going to occur, and they know it.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ★ The witches of Calencia's Peculiar (see #10, #14, and #17) have been working a spell to summon a dæmon that will slay the ape-men. They'll bring ruin to the whole village.  
T ☐ F ☐ Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**VILLAGE ROSTER:** What follows are typical statistics for the people of Calencia Village. The referee is at liberty to use the following **commoner**, **warrior**, **officer**, and **leader** statistics for NPC personages, with the exception of noted **witches** and **monks**. It is recommended that the bulk of capable fighting Calencians be considered **commoners**, with perhaps 50–75 **warriors**, 15–18 **officers**, and about 8–10 **leaders**. Of course, the referee may also develop any NPC as deemed appropriate to his campaign.

**Commoner** (0<sup>th</sup>-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 9; HD ½ (hp 4); FA 0; #A 1; D 1d4 (knife or sling); SV 17; ML 8; XP 7; ST 9, DX 10, CN 9, IN 9, WS 10, CH 9.

*Gear:* knife, sling, 10 sling stones, **1d6 cp**.

**Warrior** (1<sup>st</sup>-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 9; HD 1 (hp 6); FA 1; #A 2 (short bow [+1]) or 1 (long spear or knife); D 1d6+1 (short bow) or 1d6 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8 (long spear, two-handed) or 1d4 (knife); SV 16 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 9; XP 13; ST 11, DX 11, CN 11, IN 9, WS 11, CH 9.

*Special:* *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (short bow).

*Gear:* knife, long spear, short bow, 12 arrows, **2d6 cp**, **1d6 sp**.

**Officer** (3<sup>rd</sup>-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 8; HD 3 (hp 16); FA 3; #A 2 (short bow [+1]) or 1 (long spear or knife); D 1d6+1 (short bow) or 1d6+1 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8+1 (long spear, two-handed) or 1d4+1 (knife); SV 15 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2]; ML 9; XP 41; ST 13, DX 11, CN 12, IN 10, WS 11, CH 11.

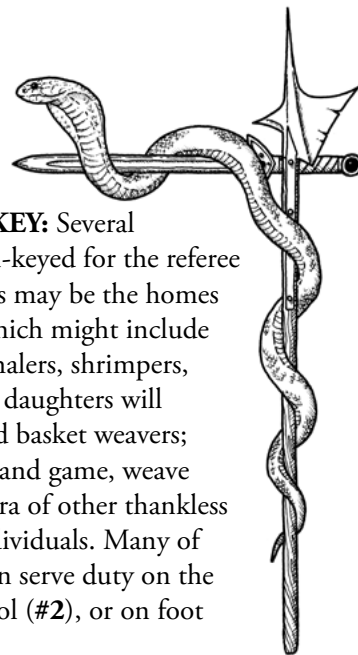
*Special:* *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (short bow).

*Gear:* small shield, knife, long spear, short bow, 12 arrows, **2d6 cp**, **2d6 sp**.

**Leader** (5<sup>th</sup>-level fighter): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 5; HD 5 (hp 26); FA 5; #A 2 (short bow [+2]), 3/2 (long spear [+2]), or 1 (knife [+1]); D 1d6+2 (short bow) or 1d6+2 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8+2 (long spear, two-handed) or 1d4+1 (knife); SV 14 [*death* +2, *transformation* +2, *avoidance* +1, *other dodging* +1]; ML 9; XP 41; ST 15, DX 15, CN 12, IN 10, WS 11, CH 11.

*Special:* *Heroic fighting* (double normal melee attacks vs. opponents of 1 HD or less). *Weapon mastery* (short bow, long spear).

*Gear:* leather armour, small shield, knife, long spear, short bow, 12 arrows, **2d6 cp**, **2d6 sp**, **1d6 gp**.



**CALENCIA VILLAGE MAP KEY:** Several locations on the map remain un-keyed for the referee to develop as desired. These sites may be the homes of typical Calencian families, which might include hunters, trappers, fishermen, whalers, shrimpers, and/or clam diggers. Wives and daughters will oft function as rope braiders and basket weavers; furthermore they will dress fish and game, weave clothing, and attend to a plethora of other thankless tasks. Families average 6–12 individuals. Many of the village's capable fighting men serve duty on the watchtower (#1), on canoe patrol (#2), or on foot patrol (village or mainland).

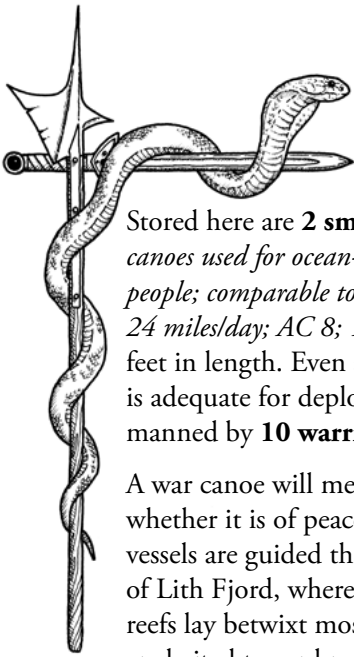
**1. WATCHTOWERS (A + B):** These 25-foot-tall, square stone towers are the primary means of village defence. Each stands atop a steep 100-foot cliff and has three storeys, all of which are notched with loopholes. The ground floor of each tower has cots for guards on duty but at rest. The first floor is stocked with weapons, arrows, and supplies (including emergency food stores and water casks). The uppermost floor has a conference table, a shelving unit with detailed maps of the region, and more ammunition and supplies.

Each tower's roof features a machicolated battlement. Both towers are prepared for extensive warfare. Whilst Ixian slave raiders and the monstrous inhabitants of Hyperborea are always a concern, the primary fear is from the Islands of the Ape-Men.

Tower #1-A has a **secret trapdoor** with a tunnel that leads to the seaside cave (#2) where the village war canoes are stored. Hence, tower #1-A has significantly more personnel on duty than tower #1-B. It is staffed by **16 warriors**, **3 officers**, and **1 leader**. If a war canoe is deployed, it is crewed by **10 warriors** and **2 officers**.

Tower #1-B is staffed by **6 warriors** and **2 officers**.

**2. SEASIDE CAVE:** A 15-foot-wide cave mouth accesses a 40-foot-long waterway ranging 10–15 feet wide. The waterway opens to a water-filled cave approximately 35 feet in diameter, with a stalactite-toothed ceiling that arches 50 feet in height. An ample shelf overlooks the water, accessed by a worked tunnel that spirals up to a **secret trapdoor** in tower #1-A.



Stored here are **2 small war canoes** (*Tlingit-style canoes used for ocean-crossing raids, seating up to 20 people; comparable to a snekke; MV 60 feet/round, 24 miles/day; AC 8; 12 hull points*), each nearly 30 feet in length. Even at the lowest tide, water depth is adequate for deployment. A canoe is typically manned by **10 warriors** and **2 officers** (from #1-A).

A war canoe will meet a foreign vessel to determine whether it is of peaceful or hostile intent. Peaceful vessels are guided through the dangerous shallows of Lith Fjord, where hidden and partially exposed reefs lay betwixt moss-covered islets. Hostile vessels are baited toward reefs where the Calencians will proceed to barrage the threat.

**3. COOPER:** Run by **Ivomagos Ivomagsson (warrior)**, the head of a 12-person family. This establishment creates and mends barrels and casks; furthermore, Ivomagos and kin maintain and repair the boardwalk decking that spans the entire village.

**4. BADBICCA'S PLACE (Hostel):** Inexpensive food and lodging for travellers. The three-storey dosshouse is run by a stout old woman named **Badbicca**, the matriarch of a 13-person family, most of whom work here. The ground floor includes the kitchen, lounge, and washroom. The lounge has three long, battered tables flanked by wooden benches that seat up to 36 people (12 per table). For 1 gp the patron receives a decent meal (fried grasshoppers, boiled eggs on raw eel grass, shrimp paste, tea and/or beer) and a bed in the dormitory. The first floor is the public dormitory with bunks that sleep up to 44 people. Typically 3d6 non-residents stay here. The top floor contains the family's chambers.

**N.B.:** Most of the *Desert Nomad's* crew will stay at this location, though some might mæander down to the Sleepy Lantern Tavern (#7).

**5. DISTILLERY:** An establishment for the production of whiskey. The grains are grown over the cliffs in a fertile, stream-cut gorge. The distillery is run by the brothers **Alfarr** and **Gunnkell Gooch (officers)**, beefy, blond-haired men who head families of 10 and 12, respectively.

The ground floor contains the stills, 30-gallon barrels, and all related apparatus. The brothers sell

whiskey at 2 gp per one-gallon cask, or 25 gp for an 18-gallon cask. Alfarr's family dwell on the first floor, and Gunnkell's family on the second.

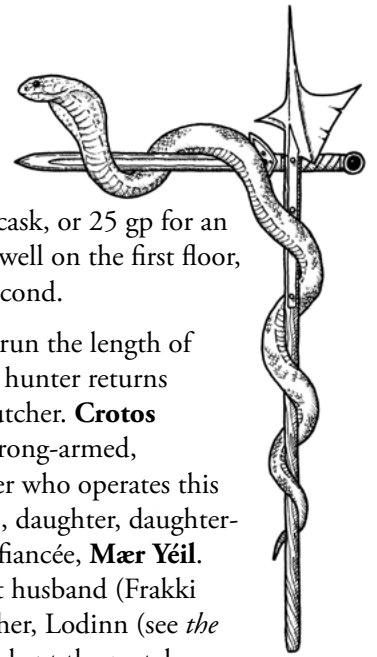
**6. BUTCHER:** Deer and boar run the length of forested Cape Calencia; when a hunter returns with game to sell, he sees the butcher. **Crotos nepos Arnthórr (officer)** is a strong-armed, swarthy complexioned widower who operates this establishment with his two sons, daughter, daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, and fiancée, **Mær Yéil**. Mær is a widow herself, her first husband (Frakki Yéil) murdered by his mad brother, Lodinn (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*). Mær kept the metal case that contained the **amphora** for many years, but recently Crotos encouraged her to be rid of it, so she gave it to **Ulldr Sacciosson (#9)**.

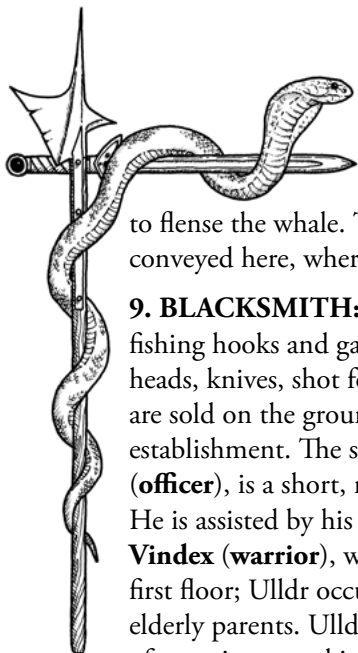
**7. SLEEPY LANTERN TAVERN:** Popular local tavern, frequented by villagers and travellers alike. A square-jawed man called **Taan Croti (warrior)**, the head of a 14-person family, runs the place. His comely wife (of whom he is insanely covetous) and their daughters serve tables. The ground floor includes the kitchen and the lounge; the family's dwellings are on the first and second floors.

The lounge features a central hearth surrounded by 10 round tables, each set with a small, dimly lit lantern. Every Moon Day, the locals pull the tables back for the weekly cockfight—quite a spirited affair. A variety of food and drink is available here: shrimp paste (5 cp), whale soup (1 sp), live baby crabs in whale oil (3 sp), steamed clams (3 sp), chilled monkey brains (10 gp), beer (1 sp), wine (5 sp), and whiskey (5 sp).

**N.B.:** Some regular patrons are hunters who know about Lodinn Yéil and the green-glowing **amphora** (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*). If loosened up with a drink or two, they will say the madman lurks about the **RUINED FANE OF APOLLO** (q.v.), 10 miles southwest along the coast.

**8. OILMONGER'S BOILING HOUSE:** Run by **Ketill Frakkason (officer)**, whose staff includes 2d10 men and women, depending upon the need. When a whale is spotted from atop the watchtowers (#1), whalers are sent forth to harpoon and drag the leviathan to shore. Men and women disperse





to flense the whale. The strips of blubber are then conveyed here, where the oil is rendered via boiling.

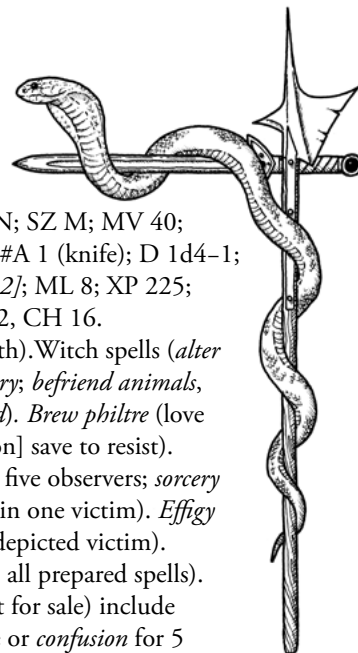
**9. BLACKSMITH:** Tools, nails, spikes, and hinges; fishing hooks and gaffs; arrowheads, spearheads, axe heads, knives, shot for slings, and other sundries are sold on the ground floor of this overly cluttered establishment. The smith, **Ulldr Sacciosson (officer)**, is a short, red-faced, barrel-chested man. He is assisted by his quiet and brooding nephew, **Vindex (warrior)**, whose family of six reside on the first floor; Ulldr occupies the second floor with his elderly parents. Ulldr and Vindex are offsite 40% of mornings, working an outdoor forge on the mainland. Various youngsters may accompany them to perform menial labour.

**The Metal Case:** In his shop, buried under various miscellanea, Ulldr has the metal case that once contained the **amphora** believed to have driven Lodinn Yéil to madness and murder (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*). The case's dimensions are 24 × 18 × 8 inches. It is composed of a lead alloy, the interior padded with red silk. Ulldr has no use for the thing and wishes to be rid of it.

**The Seal of Inga Gooch:** If the party bring the seal of **Inga Gooch (#17)** to the smith, Ulldr's brow darkens as he hands over the **6 silver-tipped arrows**. He understands what is afoot and grimly bids the party good luck.

**10. MEDICINE SHOP:** Herbs and medicaments are sold here, including all manner of fungi, roots, herbs, powders, oils, tree saps, and animal urine. The face of this building is hung with dried fish bladders, a popular local cure-all (*5 sp per bladder; wards off common ailments*). Here is also sold an **antidote** to giant bee stings (*10 gp per dose*). This small establishment is operated by the witch **Shaa Yéil**, a not unattractive middle-aged woman with an hourglass figure, neatly combed red hair, and scintillant blue eyes.

Shaa runs this shop with her three teenage nieces, who serve as her apprentices. All four women are members of the local coven called Calencia's Peculiar. Shaa's discreet sale of powdered black lotus to Ixian traders has netted her a substantial amount of money: **17 gold ingots** (*100-gp value each*), which she keeps buried in the forest.



**SHAA YÉIL** (5<sup>th</sup>-level witch): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 9; HD 5 (hp 22); FA 2; CA 5; #A 1 (knife); D 1d4-1; SV 14 [*transformation* +2, *sorcery* +2]; ML 8; XP 225; ST 7, DX 11, CN 9, IN 15, WS 12, CH 16.

*Special:* *Brew potion* (×2 per month). Witch spells (*alter self, charm person, ferie fire, goodberry, befriend animals, hold person, levitate, speak with dead*). *Brew philtre* (love potion, ×1 per month, *death* [poison] save to resist). *Dance of beguilement* (entices up to five observers; *sorcery* save to negate; can plant *suggestion* in one victim). *Effigy* (create puppet to control or harm depicted victim).

*Gear:* knife, **spell book** (contains all prepared spells). Brewed potions at her disposal (not for sale) include **hallucinogens** (*death* [poison] save or *confusion* for 5 turns) and **soporifics** (*death* [poison] save or *sleep* for 15 turns).

**Kóon** (owl familiar): AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 80); DX 15; AC 7; HD ½ (hp 4); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1/1/1; SV 17; ML 12; XP 11.

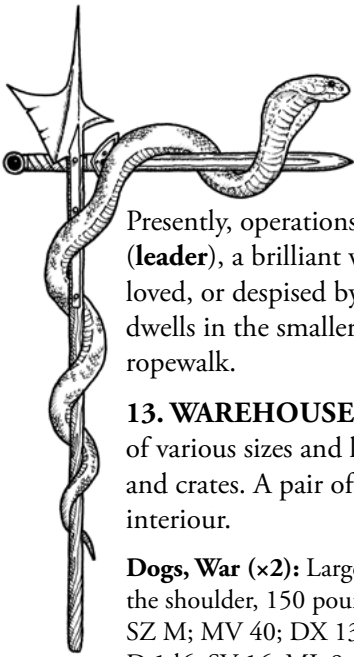
*Special:* Dive bomb attack (claws only) from 50+ feet at +2 damage, -1 AC. Silent flier; surprises 5-in-6 at night. Has spiritual bond of unlimited range with master. Witch can see (tunnel vision) and hear (thin and metallic) through familiar. If familiar is killed, witch must make *death* save or lose 3d6 hp; if save fails by 5 or more, witch dies.

**Apprentices (×3):** 0<sup>th</sup>-level young women (AC 9, hp 2) in the early stages of learning witchcraft.

**11. TRADING POST:** This establishment is owned by **Ivomagos Dagssonn (commoner)**, who runs it with his family of nine. The ground floor houses the shop, and the upper floor comprises the family dwelling. Clothing, provisions, and general equipment are sold here, usually +10–30% over standard rates.

Dagssonn has a good eye for rare and exotic items and is open to trading. Weapon seekers are referred to the blacksmith (#9), but Dagssonn does sell a form of scale armour composed of animal horn (*75 gp*). The referee should employ common sense regarding the availability of certain items in the trading post of this small village.

**12. ROPEWALK:** The ropewalk is the largest business in town, employing some 30 men and women. The braided ropes produced in Calencia (woven of hemp cultivated in the forest) are considered amongst the finest in the realm, save perhaps those produced in far-off New Amazonia.



Presently, operations are overseen by **Steinn Gooch (leader)**, a brilliant warrior and tactician feared, loved, or despised by many. With his family he dwells in the smaller building appurtenant to the ropewalk.

**13. WAREHOUSE:** Lines, cords, and rope baskets of various sizes and lengths are stored here in barrels and crates. A pair of **war dogs** guards the facility interior.

**Dogs, War (×2):** Large, short-haired beasts, three feet at the shoulder, 150 pounds, in leather harness. AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 13; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 7); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 9; XP 20.

**14. BASKET WEAVER:** This small establishment is run by **Hilldr Goochdóttir**, a witch of no small repute and a member of Calencia's Peculiar, the local coven. Hilldr oversees the manufacture of rope and reed baskets, woven by her daughters and nieces: nine young women in all, two of whom also double as her apprentices. Her oddly misshapen husband **Dumnocoveros (officer)** and their two sons harvest grasshoppers in the forest. Hilldr takes in baskets woven by other wives about the village, selling to and trading with visiting merchants.

**HILLDR GOOCHDÓTTIR** (5<sup>th</sup>-level witch): AL N; SZ M; MV 40; AC 8; HD 5 (hp 21); FA 2; CA 5; #A 1 (knife [+1 hurled]); D 1d4-1; SV 14 [transformation +2, sorcery +2, mental sorcery +3]; ML 8; XP 225; ST 8, DX 14, CN 9, IN 15, WS 15, CH 13.

*Special:* Brew potion (×2 per month). Witch spells (*alter self*, *charm person*, *mending*, *spider climb*, *befriend animals*, *hypnotism*, *speak with animals*, *summon insect swarm*). Brew philtre (love potion, ×1 per month, *death* [poison] save to resist). *Dance of beguilement* (entices up to five observers; *sorcery* save to negate; can plant *suggestion* in one victim). *Effigy* (create puppet to control or harm depicted victim).

*Gear:* knife, **spell book** (contains all prepared spells). Brewed potions at her disposal include **hallucinogens** (*death* [poison] save or *confusion* for 5 turns) and **soporifics** (*death* [poison] save or *sleep* for 15 turns).

**Fródi** (raven familiar): AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 80); DX 12; AC 9; HD ¼ (hp 2); #A 1 (bite); D 1; SV 17; ML 12; XP 9.

*Special:* Natural 20 indicates raven has struck an eye and may have plucked it out (2-in-6 chance; 1-in-6 if wearing a helm, no chance if wearing a great helm). Has spiritual bond of unlimited range with master. Witch can

see (tunnel vision) and hear (thin and metallic) through familiar. If familiar is killed, witch must make *death* save or lose 3d6 hp; if save fails by 5 or more, witch dies.

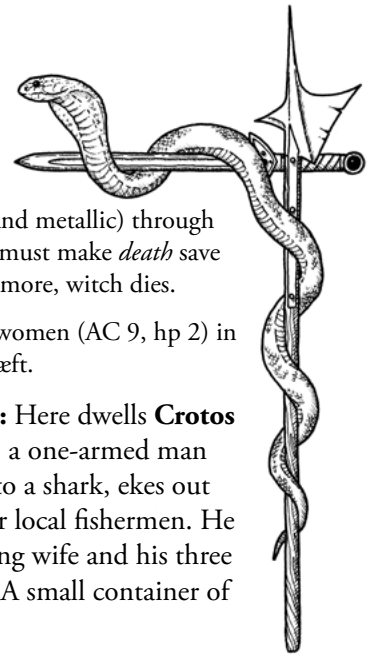
**Apprentices (×2):** 0<sup>th</sup>-level young women (AC 9, hp 2) in the early stages of learning witchcraft.

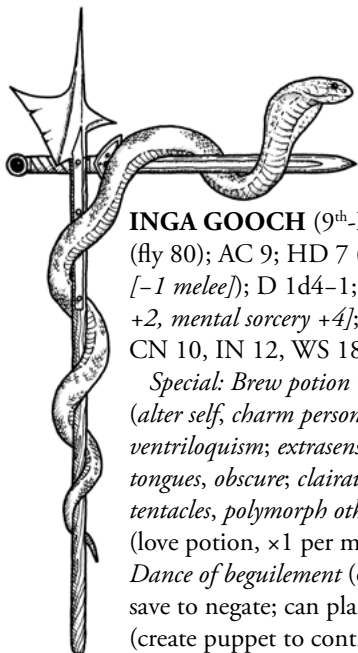
**15. WORMIE'S BAIT SHOP:** Here dwells **Crotos "Wormie" Motii (commoner)**, a one-armed man who, after losing his good arm to a shark, ekes out his livelihood harvesting bait for local fishermen. He is assisted by his handsome young wife and his three children from a prior marriage. A small container of bait costs 2 cp.

**16. CANOE MAN:** This is the dwelling of **Leifr Yéil (officer)**, widely regarded as the finest boatwright in Calencia; many Calencians seek to send their sons to apprentice under him. Although Leifr is some 60 years of age, he has the wolfish vitality of a much younger man. His canoes are hand carved from red cedars, sculpted and painted with delicate care. They are sold in 19-, 21-, and 24-foot lengths (400, 450, and 500 gp, respectively). Private commissions take 9–12 (1d4+8) weeks to complete.

**N.B.:** Leifr's twin brother Lodinn Yéil is the subject of many whispers in town (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*). Lodinn is regarded as a murderer and a madman. Many speculate that Leifr occasionally searches the cape for his insane twin; he does not, for he already knows where Lodinn is: in **THE RUINED FANE OF APOLLO** (q.v.). Leifr blames the **amphora** for his brother's madness and would like to see the thing destroyed, but he wishes no harm to befall his sibling.

**17. ORACLE:** This is the home of the witch **Inga Gooch**, village fortune teller and preeminent member of Calencia's Peculiar, the local witch coven. Inga's home is overrun with chickens. She lives here with her toothless, elderly mother-in-law **Xík**, the oldest person in the village at age 101. Inga's husband and two sons died defending the village during an ape-man raid 13 years ago. Inga foresaw their deaths, and since then she has displayed an aptitude for soothsaying. Locals and foreigners alike seek Inga's counsel; she is oft assisted in her divinations by Xík.





**INGA GOOCH** (9<sup>th</sup>-level witch): AL N; SZ M; MV 40 (fly 80); AC 9; HD 7 (hp 24); FA 4; CA 9; #A 1 (knife [-1 melee]); D 1d4-1; SV 12 [transformation +2, sorcery +2, mental sorcery +4]; ML 10; XP 1,500; ST 6, DX 9, CN 10, IN 12, WS 18, CH 17.

*Special:* Brew potion (×3 per month). Witch spells (alter self, charm person, locate the dead, spider climb, ventriloquism; extrasensory perception, hypnotism, infernal tongues, obscure, clairaudience, clairvoyance, tongues; black tentacles, polymorph other; cause lycanthropy). Brew philtre (love potion, ×1 per month, death [poison] save to resist). Dance of beguilement (entices up to nine observers; sorcery save to negate; can plant suggestion in one victim). Effigy (create puppet to control or harm depicted victim).

*Gear:* silver dagger, magic broom, spell book (contains all prepared spells). Brewed potions at her disposal include **hallucinogens** (death [poison] save or confusion for 9 turns), **paralytics** (death [poison] save or paralysis for 27 turns), and **soporifics** (death [poison] save or sleep for 27 turns).

**Brúnkell** (viper familiar): AL N; SZ S; MV 40; DX 10; AC 6; HD ½ (hp 4); #A 1 (bite); D 1; SV 17; ML 12; XP 25.

*Special:* Bite injects venom once per day; victim must make death (poison) save or suffer 1 hp damage per round for 3d4 rounds. Witch can see (tunnel vision) and hear (thin and metallic) through familiar. If familiar is killed, witch must make death save or lose 3d6 hp; if save fails by 5 or more, witch dies.

**Seeking the Oracle's Wisdom:** The supplicant must sit still and silent as the witch decapitates a chicken, drenches her hands with its blood, and then smears it across his forehead. Her eyes then roll to whites as she speaks in a multilayered dæmonic voice, prognosticating her client's future. The veracity of Inga's words depends upon the amount paid: Every 10 gp spent (in coin, gems, or jewellery) grants a 1% chance of reliability, but this mechanical aspect should not be revealed to the players. Ultimately, the referee should determine how specific the answers are, what may be revealed, and so forth.

If asked to reveal the location of Lodinn Yéil and/or the **amphora** he possesses (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*), Inga will divulge this truth without error. She says her coven promised the canoe maker (Leifr Yéil) they would not kill his brother, so instead they cursed Lodinn to the fate of a beast. Inga advises silver weaponry to destroy the creature, offering the use of her personal **silver dagger**. She also tells the

party to see the smith, Ulldr Sacciosson (#9), for the coven bade him to construct **6 silver-tipped arrows** for just such an occasion. The witch provides her candlewax seal on parchment for the acquisition of these arrows from the smith.

#### Examples of Inga's "Wisdom":

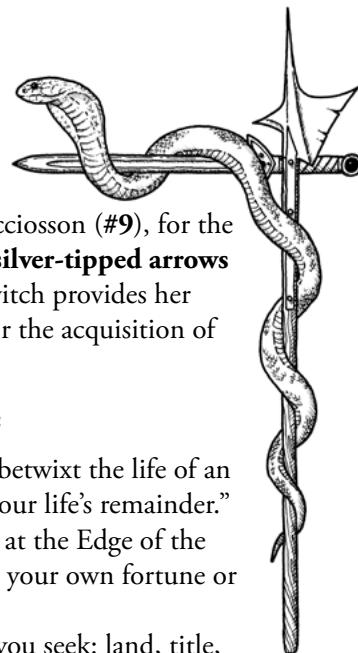
- ★ "One day you must decide betwixt the life of an ally and riches to comfort your life's remainder."
- ★ "Your personal paradise lies at the Edge of the World; seek lost Lemuria at your own fortune or peril."
- ★ "One day you will have all you seek: land, title, gold, and glory. And yet serpents lurking in shadows will seek to effect your ultimate doom."
- ★ "A trusted ally will one day besmirch your good name; if you do not permit your personal dishonour, a loved one will suffer a nameless fate."
- ★ "One day you will seize the throne of a small kingdom by strangling its corrupt monarch on the very steps leading to that seat."

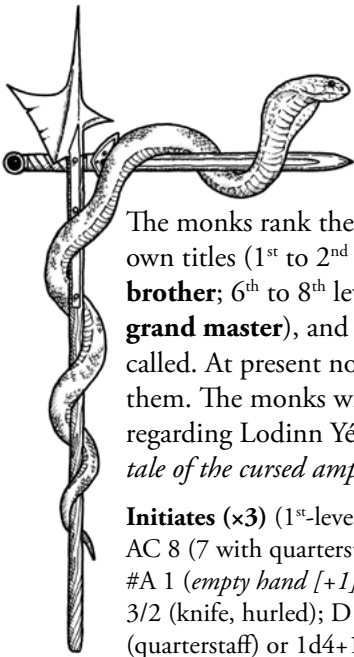
**N.B.:** Inga Gooch has long prophesied that Calencia Village will one day succumb to flames during the Bealltainn festival. Most villagers accept this fate as unassailable truth; they shrug and say, "Our own little *aldar*," which in the Old Norse tongue means, "End of the Age".

#### 18. MONASTERY OF KHALK-XU (Kraken):

This cedar log temple is built atop a tall islet in Lith Fjord. The islet is accessed by a small dock. Stairs are carved into the limestone, ascending 30 feet to the monastery at the summit. Here dwell the Brotherhood of Khalk-Xu, bare-pated monks who are both the political and religious elite of Calencia Village.

The order comprises **9 monks**, who lead celibate lives dedicated to art, governance, and their Tlingit-inspired species of spirituality. Their craftsmanship in woodcarving and painting is masterly. Indeed, it is the Brotherhood who carve, paint, and maintain the totem poles that line the ridge surrounding the village; additional totems are being prepared for deeper in the forest, to ward off encroaching apemen.





The monks rank themselves according to their own titles (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> level: **initiate**; 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level: **brother**; 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> level: **master**; 9<sup>th</sup> level and beyond: **grand master**), and it is by these titles that they are called. At present no grand master resides amongst them. The monks will not speak to foreigners regarding Lodinn Yëil and/or the **amphora** (see *the tale of the cursed amphora*).

**Initiates (×3)** (1<sup>st</sup>-level monks): AL N; SZ M; MV 50; AC 8 (7 with quarterstaff); HD 1 (hp 5); FA 1; #A 1 (*empty hand* [+1], quarterstaff, or knife, melee) or 3/2 (knife, hurled); D 1d4+1 (*empty hand*) or 1d6+1 (quarterstaff) or 1d4+1 (knife, melee) or 1d4 (knife, hurled); SV 16 [*transformation* +2, *avoidance* +2, *mental sorcery* +2]; ML 8; XP 25; ST 10, DX 10, CN 10, IN 9, WS 9, CH 9.

*Special: Block missile* (avoidance save, ×1 per round). *Cellular adjustment* (heal 2 hp ×1 per day, *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* ×1 per week). *Controlled fall* (no damage from 10-foot fall if within 5 feet of wall). *Empty hand* (on natural 19–20, target must make *transformation* save or be *stunned* 2d4 rounds). *Climb* 8-in-12. *Discern noise* 4-in-12. *Hide* 5-in-12. *Move silently* 5-in-12.

*Gear: 2 knives, quarterstaff.*

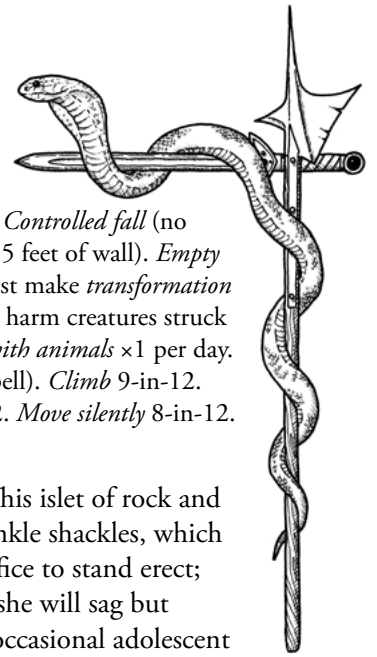
**Brothers (×3)** (3<sup>rd</sup>-level monks): AL N; SZ M; MV 50; AC 7 (6 with quarterstaff); HD 3 (hp 16); FA 2; #A 1 (*empty hand* [+1], quarterstaff, or knife, melee) or 3/2 (knife, hurled [+1]); D 1d4+1 (*empty hand*) or 1d6+1 (quarterstaff) or 1d4+1 (knife, melee) or 1d4 (knife, hurled); SV 15 [*transformation* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1, *mental sorcery* +2]; ML 9; XP 65; ST 12, DX 15, CN 10, IN 9, WS 11, CH 9.

*Special: Block missile* (avoidance save, ×3 per round). *Cellular adjustment* (heal 6 hp ×1 per day, *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* ×1 per week). *Controlled fall* (no damage from 30-foot fall if within 5 feet of wall). *Empty hand* (on natural 19–20, target must make *transformation* save or be *stunned* 2d4 rounds). *Climb* 8-in-12. *Discern noise* 5-in-12. *Hide* 6-in-12. *Move silently* 6-in-12.

*Gear: 4 knives, quarterstaff.*

**Masters (×3)** (7<sup>th</sup>-level monks): AL N; SZ M; MV 60; AC 5; HD 7 (hp 38); FA 5; #A 1 (*empty hand* [+2], spiked staff [+1], or knife, melee [+1]) or 3/2 (knife, hurled [+1]); D 1d6+3 (*empty hand*) or 2d6+3 (spiked staff) or 1d4+3 (knife, melee) or 1d4+1 (knife, hurled); SV 13 [*transformation* +2, *avoidance* +3, *other dodging* +1, *mental sorcery* +2]; ML 10; XP 750; ST 15, DX 15, CN 10, IN 9, WS 11, CH 9.

*Special: Block missile* (avoidance save, ×7 per round). *Cellular adjustment* (heal 14 hp ×1 per day, *neutralize*



*poison* or *cure disease* ×1 per week). *Controlled fall* (no damage from 70-foot fall if within 5 feet of wall). *Empty hand* (on natural 19–20, target must make *transformation* save or be *stunned* 2d4 rounds; can harm creatures struck only by magical weapons). *Speak with animals* ×1 per day. *Simulate death* (as *cataleptic state* spell). *Climb* 9-in-12. *Discern noise* 7-in-12. *Hide* 8-in-12. *Move silently* 8-in-12. *Gear: 4 knives, spiked staff.*

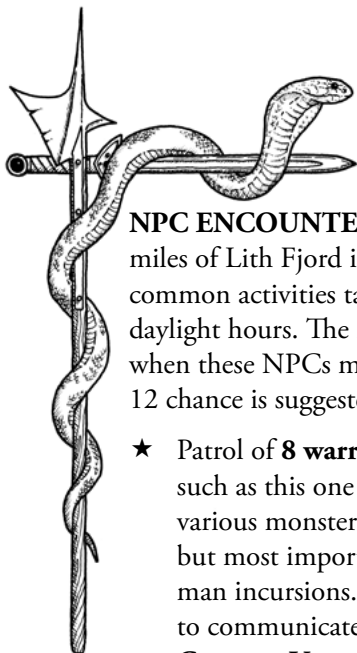
**19. ALTAR OF SACRIFICE:** This islet of rock and moss is drilled with wrist and ankle shackles, which are positioned to force the sacrifice to stand erect; even if the victim should faint, she will sag but remain upright. Excepting the occasional adolescent dare, the islet is avoided year-round, save on the eve of *Genesis* (see *festivals observed*).

**20. MAINLAND SHED:** This ramshackle shanty is stored with tools and implements utilized for mainland ventures, such as barrels, carts, crates, hemp sacks, hoes, machetes, shovels, wheelbarrows, and so forth. Beside the shed, stairs are notched into the cliff, beyond which lie the forest and the gorges where fresh water is gathered and various grains are grown.

## CAPE CALENCIA MAINLAND

Lith Fjord is hemmed in by limestone cliffs that rise to elevations of 100–125 feet. Here range the village's **18 totem poles**, oft referred to as "The Guardians". Each totem pole is of red cedar and averages 20 feet in height. The base of each is carved to the likeness of Khalk-Xu, "The Dimensional Dweller". The forms sitting atop the deity represent ancestral and animistic crest symbols, including aurochs, bat, bear, crab, dogfish, elk, ground sloth, lion, salmon, snake, weasel, whale, and wolf; several are topped with a Tlingit-styled portrayal of **Raven**, "The Trickster".

Beyond the cliffs lies the mainland of Cape Calencia, a predominantly coniferous forest that includes impressive redwoods and several stream-cut gorges. Various ruins can be found about the cape, the remnants of Hyperborean settlements from immemorial times long before the advent of the Ashen Worm, the rise of the orthodoxy of Xathoqqua, and the arrival of the barbaric races. Most such ruins have been claimed by the forest.



**NPC ENCOUNTERS:** The mainland within two miles of Lith Fjord is actively accessed. The following common activities take place in the forest during daylight hours. The referee must decide where and when these NPCs may be encountered; a base 1-in-12 chance is suggested.

- ★ Patrol of **8 warriors** and **1 captain**. Patrols such as this one are charged with beating back various monsters that encroach on the village, but most importantly guarding against ape-man incursions. They employ smoke signals to communicate with the watchtowers (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #1**). Sometimes they will bring down big game.
- ★ **Alfarr** and **Gunnkell Gooch** (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #5**) grow wheat and rye in a gorge; these grains are used for both food and the production of whiskey from Year 3 (Wolf) through Year 10 (Aurochs) of the 13-year cycle.
- ★ **Ulldr** and **Vindex Sacciosson** (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #9**), the village blacksmiths, work an outdoor forge in the forest, at the end of the trail. Typically they have 1d4+1 young men assisting them. The brothers keep tools in the mainland shed (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #20**).
- ★ The witch **Shaa Yéil** (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #10**) wanders the forest, gathering various roots and herbs. In a narrow gulch concealed by ferns she cultivates black lotus, a dangerous plant which she uses to produce **dust of death**. Shaa also conceals her fortune, **17 gold ingots** (100-gp value each), in a shallow pit within the forest.
- ★ Hemp grows wild in gulches, gorges, and fertile meadows. It is cultivated from Year 3 (Wolf) through Year 10 (Aurochs) and gathered by rope makers (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #12**), who work in groups of 1d6+6.
- ★ A misshapen man called **Dumnocoveros** (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #14**) and his two sons harvest grasshoppers in the forest from Year 3 (Wolf) through Year 10 (Aurochs).
- ★ The canoe man, **Leifr Yéil** (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #16**), oft works in the forest and may be found felling, carving, splitting, and steaming a red cedar, assisted by two or three young apprentices.

- ★ A trio of **monks** from the Brotherhood of Khalk-Xu (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #18**) may be in the forest, working on a new totem pole.

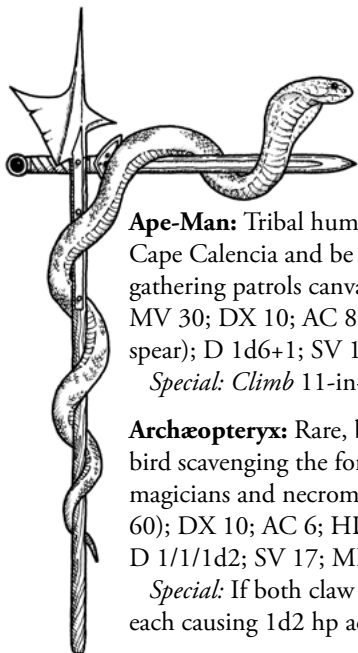
**WANDERING MONSTERS:** Check for wandering monsters once per hour whilst the party traverse the mainland. By day, most will not approach the village; they can be encountered on a 1-in-12 chance within two miles of the village, or on a 1-in-6 chance beyond two miles. At night, however, the encounter chance should always be 1-in-6, regardless of distance. If an encounter is determined, next roll d% to determine the type. **N.B.:** These encounters are not “balanced”; the wilderness is not friendly, and neither should it be.

**Table 1: Cape Calencia Encounters**

d% Roll	Result
01–20	Ape-Man (1d6)
21	Archæopteryx (1)
22–23	Aurochs (1)
24–28	Bat, Giant* (1d6)
29–35	Bear, Black (1)
36–40	Bee, Giant (1d6)
41–55	Boar (1d6)
56–57	Deer, Giant Elk (1d2)
58–65	Deer, Red (2d6)
66	Harpy (1)
67–75	Lion (1)
76	Lycanthrope, Werewolf* (1)
77–78	Sloth, Ground (1)
79–80	Snake, Python (1)
81–83	Snake, Viper (1)
84–85	Spider, Giant Crab (1)
86–89	Stirge (3d4)
90–93	Tick, Giant (1d4)
94	Weasel, Giant* (1)
95–00	Wolf (2d4)

\* Strictly nocturnal; reroll if daytime.





**Ape-Man:** Tribal humanoid invaders seeking to control Cape Calencia and be rid of humans; their intelligence-gathering patrols canvass the forest. AL LE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 10; AC 8; HD 1+2 (hp 5); #A 1 (short spear); D 1d6+1; SV 16; ML 9; XP 24.

*Special:* *Climb* 11-in-12, at full MV.

**Archæopteryx:** Rare, beautifully plumed, crow-sized bird scavenging the forest; valued potential familiar of magicians and necromancers. AL N; SZ S; MV 20 (fly 60); DX 10; AC 6; HD ½ (hp 3); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1/1/1d2; SV 17; ML 5; XP 9.

*Special:* If both claw attacks hit, uses wing claws to rend, each causing 1d2 hp additional damage.

**Aurochs:** Massive bovine; temperamental and aggressive. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 9; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 20); #A 1 (gore); D 1d10; SV 15; ML 6; XP 90.

*Special:* Initial gore as *charge attack* at +2 “to hit” and double damage dice. Can gore two adjacent foes on a single attack roll.

**Bat, Giant:** Bloodthirsty bat with four-foot wingspan emerges by night to feed. AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 70); DX 12; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 9); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 7; XP 64.

*Special:* Bite causes paralysis for 1d10 rounds unless *death* save made; will then drain blood for 1d4 hp damage per round for 2d4 rounds before flying away. 1-in-4 bats carries disease; bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or die in 2d6 days unless *cure disease* is cast.

**Bear, Black:** Woodland beast stalks forest scavenging; can be pacified if tossed food. AL N; SZ M; MV 60; DX 13; AC 7; HD 3+3 (hp 18); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d3/1d3/1d6; SV 15; ML 8; XP 105.

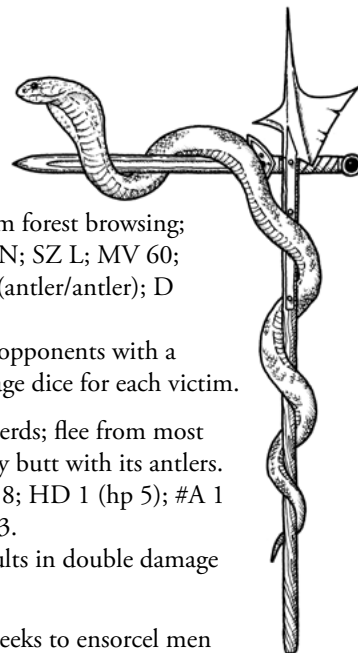
*Special:* If bear hits same victim with both claw attacks, it hugs for 2d4 hp damage.

**Bee, Giant:** Swarms of these one-foot-long bees nest in redwoods and cedars; easily agitated. AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 50); DX 10; AC 7; HD ½ (hp 2); #A 1 (sting); D 1d3; SV 17; ML 12; XP 17.

*Special:* Sting victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage, plus 2-in-6 chance of death in 1d4 turns from intensely painful inflammation and organ failure. Giant bee dies when it stings.

**Boar:** Herds run the forest, capable of intimidation through voluminous stamping and roaring. AL N; SZ M; MV 50; DX 10; AC 7; HD 3+1 (hp 15); #A 1 (gore); D 2d4; SV 15; ML 9; XP 90.

*Special:* Initial gore as *charge attack* at +2 “to hit” and double damage dice.



**Deer, Giant Elk:** Massive deer roam forest browsing; adult males fear few predators. AL N; SZ L; MV 60; DX 7; AC 7; HD 4 (hp 19); #A 2 (antler/antler); D 1d8/1d8; SV 15; ML 7; XP 90.

*Special:* Can attack two adjacent opponents with a single *charge attack*, doubling damage dice for each victim.

**Deer, Red:** Skittish deer move in herds; flee from most everything, but a cornered hart may butt with its antlers. AL N; SZ M; MV 70; DX 13; AC 8; HD 1 (hp 5); #A 1 (gore); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 3; XP 13.

*Special:* Charging gore attack results in double damage dice.

**Harp:** Legendary winged horror seeks to ensorcel men through enchanting song. AL CE; SZ M; MV 10 (fly 50); DX 14; AC 7; HD 3 (hp 13); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d4/1d4/1d6; SV 15 [*sorcery* +2]; ML 7; XP 113.

*Special:* Song charms all within 60 feet who hear it, unless *sorcery* saves made; charmed individuals stand dumbly, allowing harpies to do as they will, even kill them.

**Lion:** Deadly feline predator stalks the forest for prey. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 12; AC 6; HD 5 (hp 25); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d8+1; SV 14; ML 9; XP 200.

*Special:* If lion hits with both claw attacks, rear claws rake for 1d6+1 hp damage each.

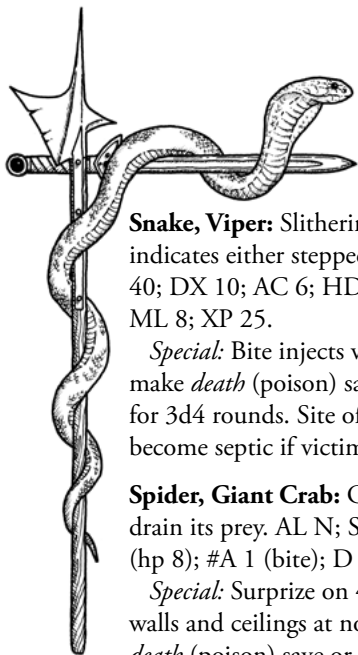
**Lycanthrope, Werewolf:** This is mad **Lodinn Yéil**, stalking the forest for his next meal (see **THE RUINED FANE OF APOLLO**, #13).

**Sloth, Ground:** Lumbering plant eater too large to be preyed upon; oft giant tick-plagued. Will ignore humans unless attacked. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 6; AC 4; HD 12 (hp 60); #A 2 (claw/claw) or 1 (tail lash); D 2d8/2d8 or 3d4; SV 11; ML 7; XP 1,500.

*Special:* Tail lash lifts and propels smaller prey 1d20+20 feet in the air; additional damage caused upon landing.

**Snake, Python:** Reptile 11–20 feet long; preys on small- to medium-sized mammals. AL N; SZ L; MV 30 (swim 20); DX 8; AC 7; HD 3 (hp 15); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 15; ML 9; XP 95.

*Special:* Upon successful bite, python constricts for 2d4 hp damage per round. Victim can escape via *extraordinary feat of strength* or *dexterity*; allies whose strength totals at least 60 can remove snake in 1d4 rounds. Whilst constricting prey, python may be attacked at +2 “to hit”.



**Snake, Viper:** Slithering through underbrush; encounter indicates either stepped on or nearly so. AL N; SZ S; MV 40; DX 10; AC 6; HD ½ (hp 2); #A 1 (bite); D 1; SV 17; ML 8; XP 25.

*Special:* Bite injects venom once per day; victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1 hp damage per round for 3d4 rounds. Site of wound is purple and swollen; may become septic if victim survives (*cure disease* heals).

**Spider, Giant Crab:** Giant, chameleonic arachnid seeks to drain its prey. AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 7; HD 2 (hp 8); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 16; ML 7; XP 32.

*Special:* Surprise on 4-in-6 chance. Able to move across walls and ceilings at normal MV. Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1d8 hp additional damage.

**Stirge:** Feathered, volucrine monsters 12 inches long, with long, mosquito-like proboscises for sucking blood. AL CE; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 60); DX 10; AC 7; HD 1 (hp 5); #A 1 (sting); D 1d3; SV 16; ML 8; XP 19.

*Special:* +2 “to hit” on initial attack; drains blood for 1d4 hp damage per round until sated (~12 hp).

**Tick, Giant:** Three-foot-diameter, parasitic arachnids that drain blood. AL N; SZ M; MV 20; DX 5; AC 3; HD 3 (hp 14); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 15; ML 12; XP 107.

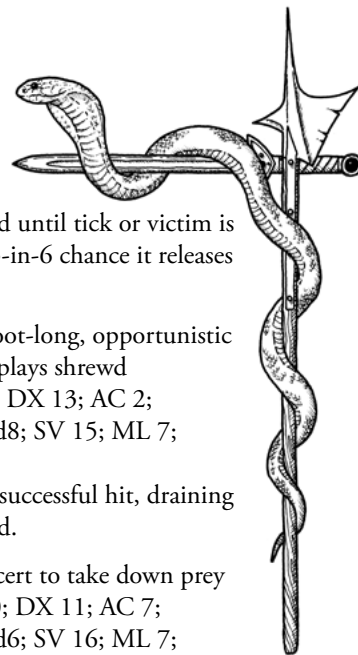
*Special:* Surprise on 3-in-6 chance. Bite transmits venom: make *death* (poison) save at +2 bonus or suffer paralysis for 1d2 turns. Tick remains attached, draining

blood for 1d6 hp damage per round until tick or victim is dead. Can be driven off with fire; 3-in-6 chance it releases if attached.

**Weasel, Giant:** Enormous, eight-foot-long, opportunistic scavenger seeking easy prey; oft displays shrewd intelligence. AL N; SZ M; MV 50; DX 13; AC 2; HD 4+3 (hp 22); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 15; ML 7; XP 175.

*Special:* Latches on to prey upon successful hit, draining blood for 1d8 hp damage per round.

**Wolf:** Pack carnivores work in concert to take down prey big and small. AL N; SZ S; MV 60; DX 11; AC 7; HD 2+1 (hp 10); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 7; XP 35.



## THE RUINED FANE OF APOLLO

Ten miles along the coast, southwest of Calencia Village, lies the Ruined Fane of Apollo, where in immemorial times Apollo-worshipping Hyperboreans held sacred rites and services. Over time Apollo's veneration fell out of style and was replaced by Xathoquua worship, accompanied by slothfulness, decadence, and lotus leaf-chewing. Hence, this fane was abandoned long before the advent of the Ashen Worm.

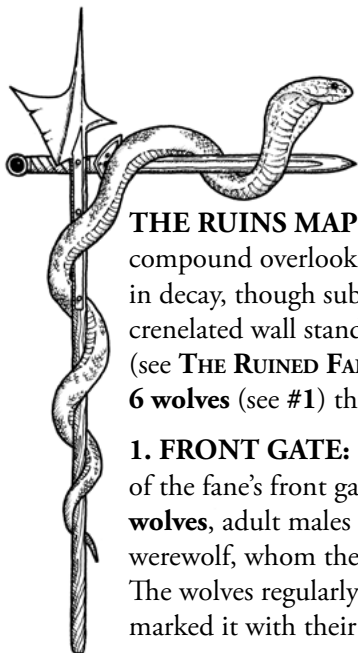
Seven years ago, a maddened Lodinn Yéil, his hands red with his brother's blood, chanced upon the ruined fane (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, the tale of the cursed amphora**). To his chest he clutched the green-glowing **amphora** with its kithara symbol of Apollo. The **amphora** was infused with **green diamond** material, and Lodinn had become subject to its poisonous effects. Discovering the ruined fane provided the madman with a sense of validation, and there he dwelt, a raving lunatic.

Then one day came the witches of Calencia's Peculiar, out to settle the score. Using witchcraft, the coven captured the madman and lashed him to an old tree. Under the light of the two moons they carved a six-pointed star on his naked chest.

Next Inga Gooch (see **CALENCIA VILLAGE, #17**) cast her spell, and Lodinn Yéil was made to forever suffer the curse of the wolf. He now dwells in the ruins, part man, part beast: a **werewolf**. He holds dominion over other local animals, and he retains an unquenchable desire to protect his **amphora**.







**THE RUINS MAP KEY:** This hexagonal compound overlooking the Hyperborean Sea lies in decay, though substantial portions of its 10-foot crenelated wall stand, gripped by vines and creepers (see **THE RUINED FANE OF APOLLO MAPS**). Note the **6 wolves** (see **#1**) that patrol the grounds.

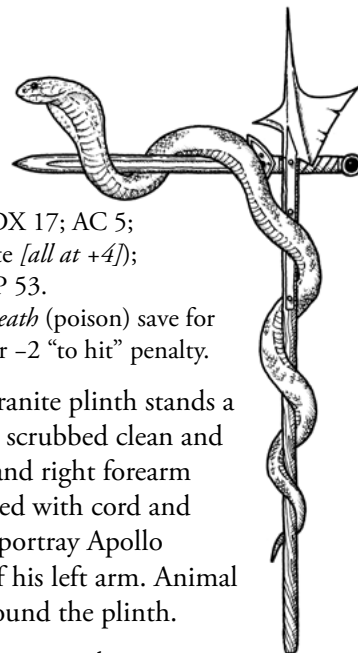
**1. FRONT GATE:** Here lie the rusted remnants of the fane's front gate. Guarding this entry are **6 wolves**, adult males controlled by Lodinn Yéil the werewolf, whom the wolves recognize as their alpha. The wolves regularly patrol the perimeter, having marked it with their urine.

**Wolves (×6):** AL N; SZ S; MV 60; DX 11; AC 7; HD 2+1 (hp 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 7; XP 35.

**2. WELL:** This old, dry well is used as a means of egress for the werewolf. Vines cling to it, providing ample footholds and handholds. At the bottom of the well, he has carved a tunnel to **#13**, but a **deadfall trap** lies in the tunnel: a piece of twine affixed to a stone block. If tripped, the block strikes the intruder on the head for 2d6 hp damage; during hours of daylight, this noise will also alert the werewolf (see **#13**), who will then attempt to ambush the party.

**3. DORMITORY:** In ancient times, this stone block building served as the residence for the Apollonians. Although the building is in disrepair, the front door appears to have been rebuilt. Furthermore, the destruction of the north and west corners has been mended: Stone blocks and debris have been piled up to cover the breaches. A spiral stair in the south corner descends to **#15**, below.

Lodinn Yéil has tamed a robust **wolverine**, a 90-pound carnivore that guards this building and protects what is now the main entrance to the dungeon. The wolverine will attack intruders with utter ruthlessness, frothing all the while. If the interior of this dormitory is spied from one of the narrow exterior windows, the wolverine will be seen pacing back and forth; it smells or hears the observer(s) on a 1-in-6 chance per round. Furthermore, combat with the wolves at **#1** will alert this creature to the presence of intruders.



**Wolverine:** AL N; SZ S; MV 40; DX 17; AC 5; HD 3 (hp 18); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite [all at +4]); D1d4/1d4/1d6; SV 15; ML 10; XP 53.

*Special:* Offensive musk odour: *death* (poison) save for any creature within 10 feet or suffer -2 "to hit" penalty.

**4. APOLLO STATUE:** On a granite plinth stands a broken marble statue of Apollo, scrubbed clean and pieced back together; the head and right forearm (severed at the elbow) are fastened with cord and twine. The statue is sculpted to portray Apollo bearing a kithara in the crook of his left arm. Animal entrails, rotting and foetid, surround the plinth.

**5. TOWER:** This ruined tower is set with a **spear trap**. It is unsophisticated and could be evaded with a successful *avoidance* save; otherwise it causes 1d6+1 hp damage when sprung. The wolves know to avoid this area.

**6. STABLE:** The smell of urine permeates this space. The ancient building lies in ruin. Amongst the broken masonry can be found a hollow dug into the soil. This is the wolves' den, currently inhabited by **2 wolves** (both female, one pregnant) and **4 pups** (defenceless).

**Wolves (×2):** AL N; SZ S; MV 60; DX 11; AC 7; HD 2+1 (hp 8, 9); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 7; XP 35.

**7. PENS:** Two of these old animal pens (**#7-A** and **#7-C**) have been restored; pen **#7-B** lies in ruin.

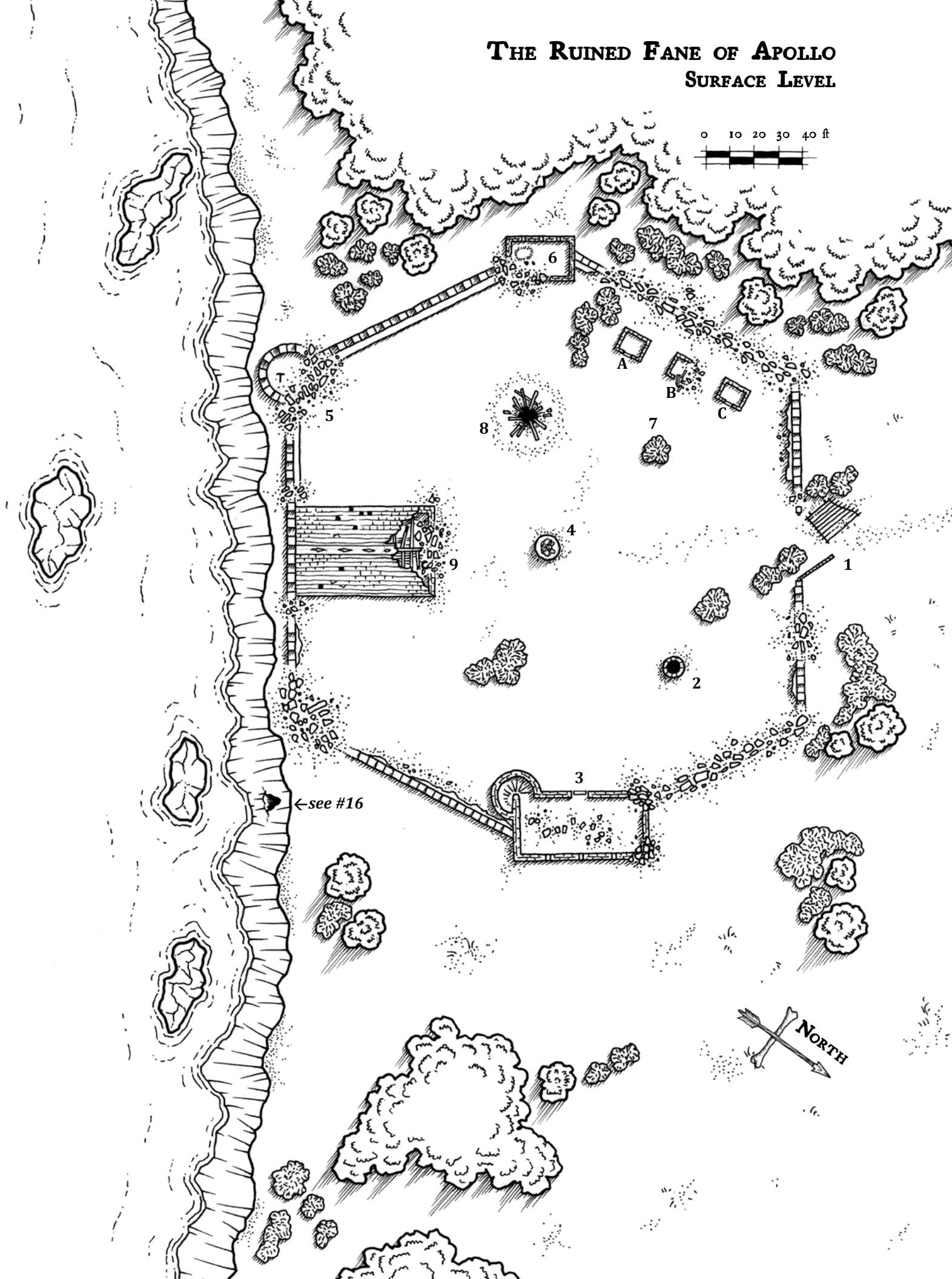
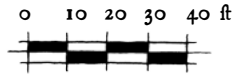
**7-A:** This pen is stocked with tools and implements: chains, hammers, hoes, nails, rakes, ropes, saws, shovels, spikes, and so forth. Also here are two sacks of grain. This equipment has been stolen from the mainland operations of the werewolf's former village.

**7-C:** This pen serves as a coop for about 20 chickens. The werewolf retains enough of his humanity to want to raise his own chickens, and he oft provides a plump bird to one of his wolves.

**8. FIRE PIT:** The werewolf has built a fire pit here, which he lights when he is fuelled by the desire to perform wild and lewd ritualistic dances and other debauches.

# THE RUINED FANE OF APOLLO

## SURFACE LEVEL



**9. THE FANE:** Here lies the ruined fane of Apollo, where countless ceremonies were observed in days of yore, long before the orthodoxy of Xathoqua dominated Hyperborean thinking. The edifice was erected at a time when Hyperborea was still a continent of Old Earth, when the old ways prevailed, before the young races migrated to the Arctic continent. At present, the fane lies in ruin, its slate-tiled roof sagging over scattered piles of broken masonry. Roosting here are **4 giant bats**, present by day, but out feeding from dusk till dawn. The broken masonry **conceals** a spiral stair that descends to the Esoteric Shrine of the Delphic Oracle (#10).

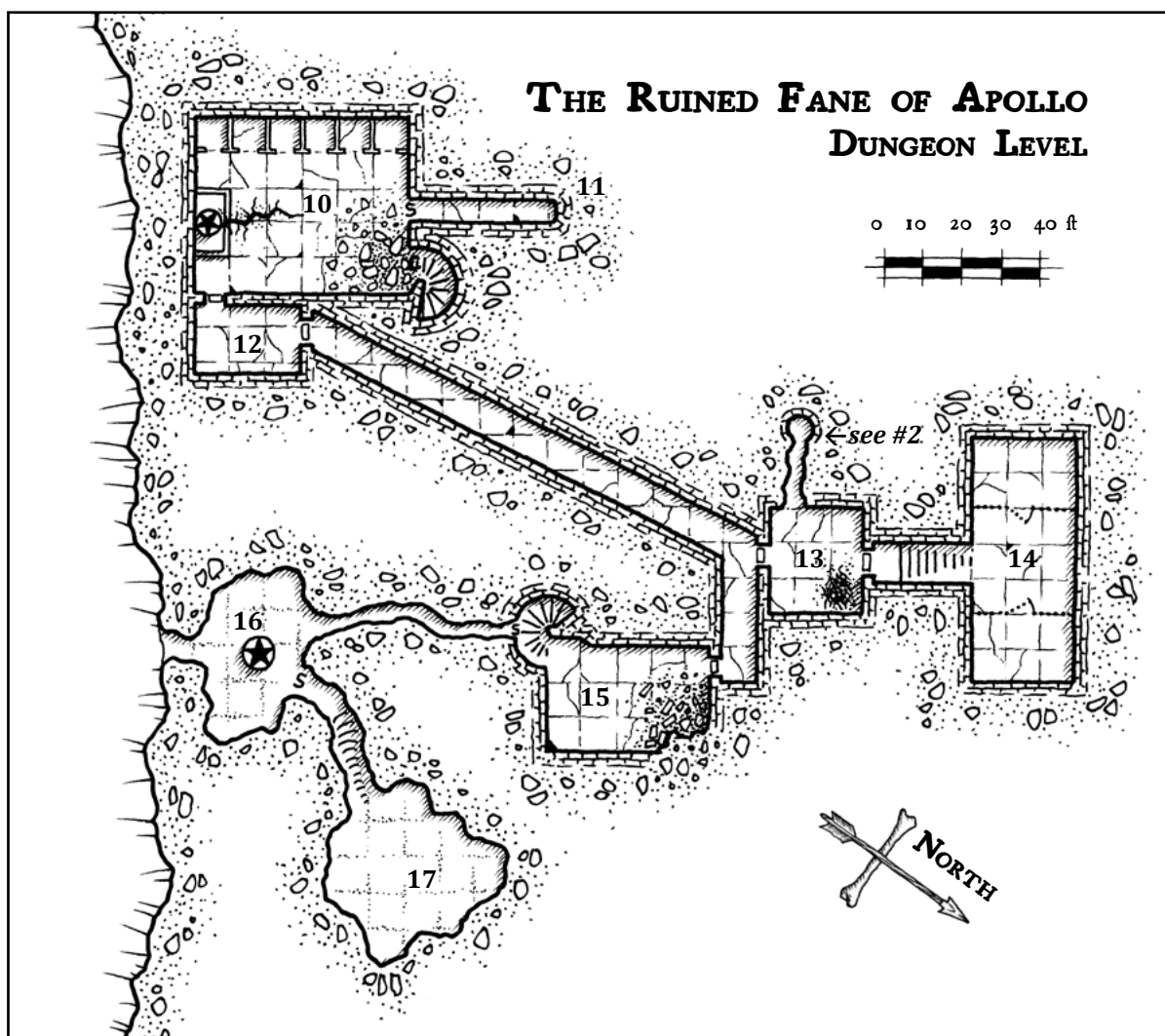
**Bats, Giant (x4):** AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 70); DX 12; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 6, 7, 9, 13); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 7; XP 64.

*Special:* Bite causes paralysis for 1d10 rounds unless

*death* save made; will then drain blood for 1d4 hp damage per round for 2d4 rounds before flying away. 1-in-4 bats carry disease; bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or die in 2d6 days unless *cure disease* is cast.

#### 10. ESOTERIC SHRINE OF THE DELPHIC ORACLE

**ORACLE:** On a dais of polished stone at the west side of the shrine stands a white marble statue sculpted to portray a blessed virgin sibyl, nude and seated on a high stool. The dais is split by a deep crack, which begins at the foot of the Delphic Oracle statue and extends halfway across the chamber. Open cells, once curtained in velvet, line the southwest wall. A hardwood door in the east corner appears to be of recent manufacture. Broken masonry covers the north portion of this chamber to a height of five to six feet, the result of an apparent cave-in. This rubble effectively **conceals** a doorway



that gives egress to the spiral stair to #9, above.

In olden times, wisdom-seeking Hyperboreans were directed to consult the Delphic Oracle, here in the fane's dungeon. Petitioners were instructed to sit in the cells, on stone benches projecting from the wall, whilst awaiting the oracle's wisdom. Priests would hide in the Oracle Chamber (#11) behind the **secret door**, a sliding pocket door that blends with the surrounding masonry. From there they would employ sorcery to prognosticate each supplicant's future.

**11. ORACLE CHAMBER:** Long ago, when supplicants sought the wisdom of the Delphic Oracle, they were bidden to wait in the cells lining the north wall of the shrine (#10), behind the velvet curtains that once adorned them. When a petitioner was directed to emerge from his cell and face the blessed virgin statue, the priests hiding here would declare the oracle's sagacity, their words trumpeting through the outer chamber.

A rusty iron chest is at the northwest end of this chamber. It contains **350 gp**, **225 sp**, **2 pewter chalices** (15-gp value each), and a **cleric scroll** (hold person; cure disease; neutralize poison). The coins are etched with symbols and images of Apollo (currency later abolished by the Xathoquans). Furthermore, strapped to the chest's inner lid is an aurochs hide **prayer book** sewn with parchment sheets. Amongst various chants and prayers, it holds the following cleric spells:

- Level 1:** *bles*, ceremony of consecration, light, omen, sanctuary;
- Level 2:** *augury*, cure moderate wounds, hold person, incantation;
- Level 3:** *glyph of warding*, prayer, remove curse;
- Level 4:** *divination*, scrying font;
- Level 5:** *commune*.

**12. VESTRY:** Both wooden doors in this room appear to be of recent construction. This chamber once served as a vestry for the Apollonians; nowadays, Lodinn Yéil uses it for storage. It contains several five- to seven-gallon casks of ale, beer, mead, wine, and pickled herring. One small box amongst the casks holds a pair of gold-chased steel *vambraces*<sup>[9]</sup> (25-gp value each). The werewolf brutally slaughtered the passengers and crew of a small sailing vessel that made the mistake of anchoring just offshore of the fane; these goods are the spoils of his butchery.

9. Pieces of armour for the arms, especially the forearms; typically components of plate armour.



**13. GUARD ROOM:** Long ago, sentries were stationed here. **Lodinn Yéil**, the **werewolf**, has turned this room into his personal bedchamber. A pallet of fur, straw, and moss lies in the north corner. By day Lodinn is usually here, resting, drinking ale, or gnawing the marrow from animal bones; by night he stalks the forest. Lodinn is insanely protective of his **amphora** (see #17) and is convinced that any visitation or intrusion is intended to separate him from his prized possession, which he feels is a divine blessing from Apollo intended for him alone.

Lodinn Yéil presents as a sinewy wild man in obscenely tattered rags. His skin is black with soot and grime; his patchy, grey-streaked hair is a tangle

of knots. His eyes are a brightly glowing green. Jagged yellow teeth smile from his grey-bearded face. He can transform to a werewolf at will, but is always in werewolf form during Phobos' and Selene's full moons.

**Werewolf:** AL CE; SZ M; MV 60; DX 14; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 26); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d4/1d4/2d4; SV 15; ML 8; XP 285.

*Special:* Horses keen to presence of lycanthropes and will snort with fear when they approach. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. If wolfsbane wrapped about the point of a spear, and werewolf is struck, it must make *death* (poison) save or flee in panic (or cower and surrender). Bite confers lycanthropy unless *death* (poison) save made. If killed, lycanthrope reverts to human form.

Can summon **1d4 wolves** thrice per day, these arriving 1d4 rounds later.

Several empty casks are in here, of five- to seven-gallon capacity. Also present are many bones—animal and human alike—broken and gnawed to bits. Under the pallet of fur and straw are a **+1 bastard sword** with golden pommel etched with the symbol of Apollo, a small leather pouch that contains **4 bloodstones** (50-gp value each), and an iron key ring with one **key** (which opens the jail cells in #14).

**14. JAIL:** In ancient times those who offended the priests of Apollo were incarcerated here. This dungeon is littered with parched and broken bones, and it smells of rodent urine and fæces. Both jail cells are **locked**; the northeast cell is empty, save for bones and debris.

The southwest cell holds **Étaín Inghean Ross**, a young Keltic woman. The desperate waif is pale and emaciated, with long red hair, emerald eyes, and pale, freckled skin. Lodinn Yéil captured her when he recently slew the crew and passengers of a stranded Keltic sailing vessel. The werewolf has kept Étaín fed whilst contemplating whether to take her as his wife, sacrifice her to Apollo, or eat her for dinner.



The girl is terrified, having seen her father, her betrothed, and several others slain by the beast before it carried her off. She also suffers fever as a result of having been fed raw, worm-ridden flesh. Étaín has about a week to live. If returned to the village, the monks or the witches can purge her of disease.

**15. LARDER:** This is where, in olden times, the priests of Apollo stored food and wine. The north corner of this room has caved in, leaving a significant pile of rubble. The spiral stair holds a **secret door**, a hinged step that slides into a pocket, allowing one to lower himself into the secret passage that leads to #16. An astute observer may note that the secret step is scratched and grooved from recent use; too, oftentimes the werewolf is careless and does not close this secret door very well, allowing for a greater chance of discovery (at the referee's discretion).

**16. WARRIORS' CAVE:** A vicious **dire wolf**, standing five feet at the shoulder, guards this cave. The beast was ensorcelled and lowered by harness into the cave by Lodinn Yéil, and it cannot escape.

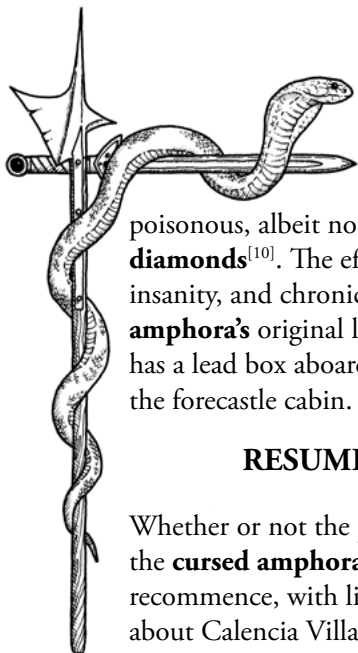
**Wolf, Dire:** AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 10; AC 6; HD 4+1 (hp 25); #A 1 (bite); D 2d4; SV 15; ML 8; XP 150.

This cave once served as a place of meditation for those Hyperborean fighting men and warlocks who sought the benisons of Apollo's warrior aspect. The cave is mouldy and damp. A gleaming white marble statue of Apollo is centred within, sculpted to an attitude of aggression: sword in right hand, bow in left. An astute observer may note that the forearm of the white statue's sword arm is rather dirty with muddy handprints for an otherwise clean statue. The **secret door** in this cave is opened if the sword arm of the statue is pulled down, revealing a narrow passage with crude stairs cut into the stone.

**17. SECRET CAVE:** Here lies the **cursed amphora**, set upon a natural, pedestal-like projection of stone and glowing brightly in the centre of this dark, damp cave. Its green radiance can be seen from the stairs north. The item is 19 inches tall, a double-handled vase composed of transparent crystal that glows bright green. The body of the vessel is intaglio engraved with a kithara symbol. This *objet d'art* is the prized possession of Lodinn Yéil, and it is likewise sought by the wizard, Vul Kovtu.

**Handling the Amphora:** Due to radioactive **green diamond** material, this item is considered





poisonous, albeit not as dangerous as pure **green diamonds**<sup>[10]</sup>. The effects are limited to greed, insanity, and chronic nausea, but not death. If the **amphora's** original lead case is not used, Vul Kovtu has a lead box aboard the *Desert Nomad*, stored in the forecabin.

### RESUMING THE JOURNEY

Whether or not the party successfully retrieve the **cursed amphora**, the journey should soon recommence, with little time allowed for loafing about Calencia Village; notwithstanding, exceptions may be made for those characters seeking to train (though Vul may prove impatient). As previously noted, the voyage from Cape Calencia to Diamond Desert should consume another four days. Refer to **PART I, JOURNEY ACROSS THE SEA** for further information.

## PART III: DIAMOND DESERT

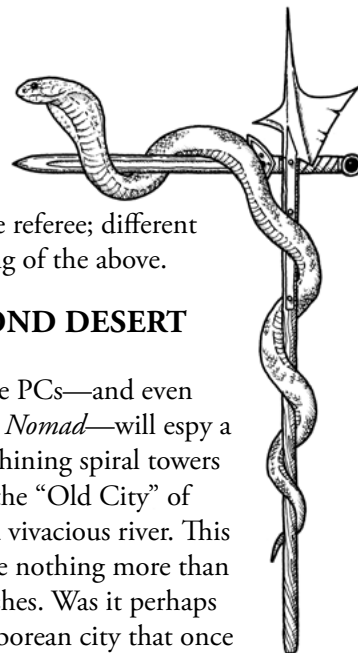
In the *AS&SH* game, Diamond Desert is described as follows:

*This coastal desert region boasts the highest-swelling sand dunes in all of Hyperborea, some rising as high as 1,000 feet. The desert teems with horrifying beasts, such as the giant scorpion, the sting of which is amongst the deadliest in the entire realm. Every attempt at establishing a settlement in Diamond Desert has failed, due to the blasting sand and aggressive monsters. Here purple worms congregate; in fact, sages posit this desert serves as the mating ground for these massive creatures.*

*Diamond Desert is aptly named, for it contains the most abundant diamond deposits in the realm, but mining operations almost always come to unfortunate ends (particularly when greed overcomes good sense). The region is also believed to be haunted by spirits of the damned, for its coastline is a graveyard of shipwrecks recent and archaic alike. Ancient shipwrecks are reputed to exist in the desert depths, reason to believe that much of this desert was once part of the Hyperborean Sea, or perhaps an inland lake that evaporated.*

How much of the above information is known by

10. See **APPENDIX C**.



the player characters is up to the referee; different PCs may each know a smattering of the above.

### ARRIVING AT DIAMOND DESERT

Upon arrival, one or more of the PCs—and even some of the sailors of the *Desert Nomad*—will espy a mirage of a fabulous city, with shining spiral towers not unlike those that rise from the “Old City” of Khromarium, at the mouth of a vivacious river. This phantasm, however, proves to be nothing more than an hallucination that soon vanishes. Was it perhaps the shade of Xuthus, the Hyperborean city that once existed here?

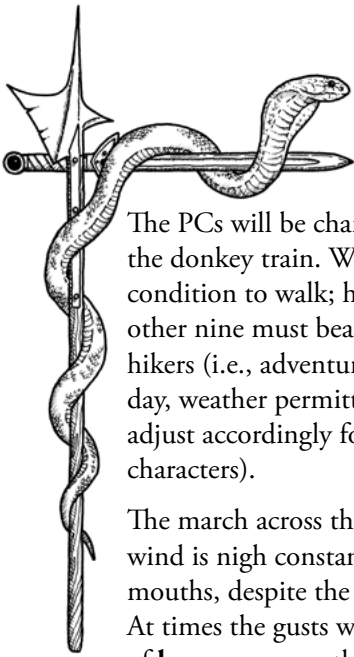
The wizard Vul Kovtu is intimately familiar with the local geography. The banks of the extinct River Æolus are clearly demarcated on the coastline, including a massive quay built of cyclopean masonry. Here Captain Finnean will berth the *Desert Nomad*. Vul may inform the PCs that this pier is the last known surviving structure of the great city of Xuthus, once populated by a most puissant Hyperborean people, masters of astrology and dweomercraft.

After the *Desert Nomad* berths, the 10 donkeys, several casks of water (c. 100 gallons), food, tools, and other supplies will be unloaded. The captain is concerned about the ship hanging up on the sand and silt that have built up; hence, after drop-off, he intends to anchor about a quarter-mile offshore. He will wait for up to a week.

### TREK ACROSS THE DESERT

The Viking shipwreck is 28 miles inland, near the banks of the extinct River Æolus (see **DIAMOND DESERT MAP**). Vul's plan is to follow the river's course. Where both banks are exposed (which is not always the case), the old riverbed ranges from 50 to 100 yards wide, its craggy, sand-whipped banks rising 10–30 feet on average. Where the river is swallowed by the dunes, the wizard intends to activate his **rod of iron detection** to discern the correct course; the extinct river is anomalously high in detrital iron deposits, which his magical rod divines. The rod is heavy; Vul may hand it to a PC to use, for its weight is hard for him to bear.





The PCs will be charged with the arrangement of the donkey train. With his peg leg, Vul is in no condition to walk; he must ride a donkey, and the other nine must bear the supplies. Note that skilled hikers (i.e., adventurers) should achieve 14 miles per day, weather permitting (assuming a base 40 MV; adjust accordingly for armoured and/or encumbered characters).

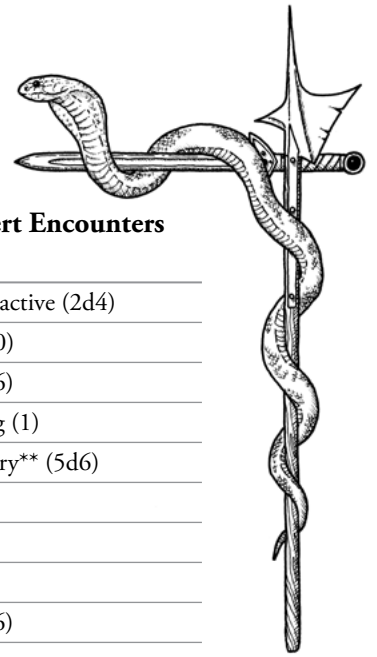
The march across the desert is treacherous. The wind is high constant; sand will enter ears, eyes, and mouths, despite the most fastidious preparations. At times the gusts will carry the chattering laughter of **hyæna men** or the warbling whistle of **giant radioactive ants**.

Diamond Desert is not sweltering—summer midday temperatures scarcely climb above 80°F (~25°C)—but it is quite arid, and water is a concern. Adventurers will require three to four quarts per day. The donkeys can go three days without, but will begin to shew ill effects on the second or third day; they will likely keel over by the fourth or fifth day.

**WANDERING MONSTERS:** Check for wandering monsters every six hours. Generally, one can be encountered on a 1-in-6 chance, a 1 on a d6 indicating an encounter. At night, however, a roll of 6 yields the legendary **Ghost Ship of the Desert Dunes**.

If a standard encounter is determined, next roll d% to determine the type. If the Ghost Ship is encountered, refer to *event (ghost ship of the desert dunes)*. Also, in addition to wandering monsters, the occasional mirage might be glimpsed: perhaps a distant lake, a tower, or the like.

**N.B.:** These encounters are not “balanced”; the desert is not friendly, and neither should it be. Also, many of the predatory creatures listed (**wild dogs, hyænas, lions, giant spiders, giant ticks**) will likely be more interested in the donkeys than in the humans.



**Table 2: Diamond Desert Encounters**

d% Roll	Result
01–10	Ant, Giant Radioactive (2d4)
11–15	Bat, Giant* (1d10)
16–20	Bee, Giant** (1d6)
21–25	Beetle, Giant Stag (1)
26–32	Camel, Dromedary** (5d6)
33	Cockatrice (1)
34–37	Dog, Wild (2d8)
38–41	Hyæna (2d4)
42–51	Hyæna-Man (1d6)
52–56	Lion (1d6)
57–61	Lizard, Giant Chameleon (1)
62	Manticore (1)
63	Pegomastax (1d6)
64	Purple Worm (1)
65–69	Rust Monster (1d4)
70–74	Scorpion, Giant (1d4)
75–78	Snake, Asp (1)
79–82	Snake, Rattlesnake (1)
83–84	Spider, Giant Crab (1d4+1)*
85–87	Spider, Giant Wolf (1d3)
88–90	Tick, Giant (1d6)
91–00	<i>Hazard (Sandstorm)</i>

\* Strictly nocturnal; reroll if daytime.

\*\* Strictly diurnal; replace with giant scorpion at night.

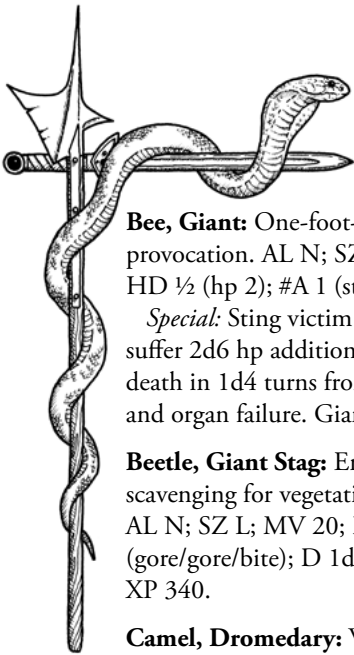
**Ant, Giant Radioactive<sup>[11]</sup>:** Massive, irradiated insects hunting for flesh. AL N; SZ M; MV 60; DX 13; AC 3; HD 4 (hp 20); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 15; ML 8; XP 180.

**Special:** Whistle can mesmerize a single mammal within 240 feet; make *sorcery* save or enter a trance, dropping anything held and blindly walking toward the whistler. Upon successful bite, 1-in-6 chance to sting target at +2 “to hit” and 1d3 hp damage. Sting delivers radiation; make *death* (radiation) save or die in 1d6 turns. If save succeeds, victim suffers recurrent nausea and complete and hair loss within 24 hours.

**Bat, Giant:** Bloodthirsty, nocturnal hunter of four-foot wingspan. AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 70); DX 12; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 10); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 7; XP 64.

**Special:** Bite causes paralysis for 1d10 rounds unless *death* save made; will then drain blood for 1d4 hp damage per round for 2d4 rounds before flying away. 1-in-4 bats carries disease; bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or die in 2d6 days unless *cure disease* is cast.

11. See **APPENDIX A**.



**Bee, Giant:** One-foot-long killer bees attack without provocation. AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 50); DX 10; AC 7; HD ½ (hp 2); #A 1 (sting); D 1d3; SV 17; ML 12; XP 17.

*Special:* Sting victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage, plus 2-in-6 chance of death in 1d4 turns from intensely painful inflammation and organ failure. Giant bee dies when it stings.

**Beetle, Giant Stag:** Enormous, 20-foot-long beetle out scavenging for vegetation; only attacks men if incited. AL N; SZ L; MV 20; DX 7; AC 3; HD 6 (hp 30); #A 3 (gore/gore/bite); D 1d10/1d10/2d8; SV 14; ML 7; XP 340.

**Camel, Dromedary:** Wild, single-humped animals that roam the desert by day; will run from danger. AL N; SZ L; MV 60; DX 7; AC 7; HD 2+1 (hp 10); #A 1 (kick); D 1d4; SV 16; ML 5; XP 35.

**Cockatrice:** Mythical cock with two-foot-long serpentine tail seeks a fleshy morsel, with dire consequences. AL N; SZ S; MV 30 (fly 60); DX 15; AC 6; HD 5 (hp 23); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 14; ML 7; XP 300.

*Special:* On successful hit, victim must make *transformation* save or be turned to stone.

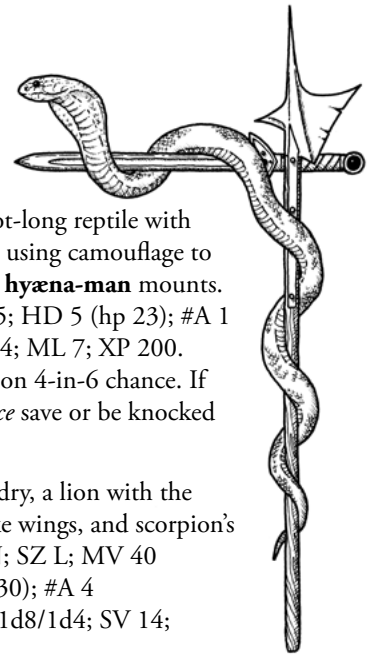
**Dog, Wild:** Carnivorous pack animals that wander about the desert. AL N; SZ S; MV 50; DX 14; AC 7; HD 1 (hp 4); #A 1 (bite); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 7; XP 10.

**Hyæna:** Hysterically howling, carnivorous pack animals seek carrion and easy prey. AL N; SZ S; MV 50; DX 13; AC 7; HD 3 (hp 22); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 15; ML 7; XP 35.

**Hyæna-Man:** Seven-foot-tall, vicious humanoid, covered in ruddy-brown fur and letting loose with terrifyingly hysterical laughter. For every three in a hunting party, one will ride a tamed **giant chameleon lizard** (q.v.) as a mount. These humanoids and their mounts come from **THE OASIS** (q.v.); if eliminated, remove them from the roster there. AL CE; SZ M; MV 30 (40 mounted); DX 9; AC 5; HD 2+2 (hp 13); #A 1 (bite or weapon); D 1d4+1 (bite) or 1d6+1 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8+1 (long spear, two-handed); SV 16; ML 8; XP 35.

**Lion:** Large, powerful, carnivorous cat seeks prey. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 12; AC 6; HD 5 (hp 25); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d8+1; SV 14; ML 9; XP 200.

*Special:* If lion hits with both claw attacks, rear claws rake for 1d6+1 hp damage each.



**Lizard, Giant Chameleon:** Six-foot-long reptile with 10-foot-long tail prowls the desert, using camouflage to catch prey unawares; some serve as **hyæna-man** mounts. AL N; SZ L; MV 40; DX 10; AC 5; HD 5 (hp 23); #A 1 (bite or tail); D 1d10 or 1d6; SV 14; ML 7; XP 200.

*Special:* Blending allows surprise on 4-in-6 chance. If tail hits, target must make *avoidance* save or be knocked down (*prone*) for 1 round.

**Manticore:** Horrific beast of legendry, a lion with the goat-horned head of a man, bat-like wings, and scorpion's tail; seeks to prey upon men. AL N; SZ L; MV 40 (fly 60); DX 14; AC 4; HD 6 (hp 30); #A 4 (claw/claw/bite/sting); D 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d4; SV 14; ML 9; XP 580.

*Special:* If stinger hits, victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer paralysis in 1d4 rounds; death follows in 1d3 turns.

**Pegomastax**<sup>[12]</sup>: Clever, cat-sized, reptilian biped, with hooked beak and grasping forelimbs; prized as a magician's familiar. Scours desert for small prey. AL N; SZ S; MV 50; DX 12; AC 6; HD ½ (hp 3); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1/1/1d3; SV 17; ML 5; XP 7.

*Special:* If both claw attacks hit one opponent, rear claws rend, each causing 1d2 hp damage.

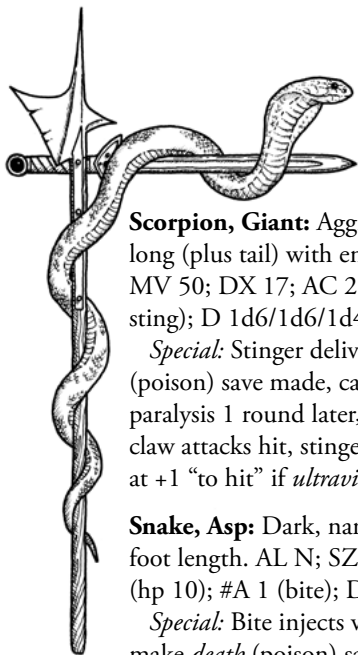
**Purple Worm:** Gargantuan segmented worm of 100-foot length and 10-foot diameter; will emerge from sands to devour prey. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 4; AC 6; HD 14 (hp 76); #A 1 (bite or sting); D 2d8 or 2d6; SV 10; ML 10; XP 4,000.

*Special:* If bite hits by margin of 4 or more (or on a natural 20), victim swallowed whole. Swallowed prey can cut its way out with a WC 1–3 blade, with “to hit” penalty equal to weapon class. If 10 hp damage inflicted from within, large enough rent is cut for escape. Tail sting used when confronted from rear, or if space allows beast to curl its posterior. Sting delivers venom that is immediately deadly unless *death* (poison) save made.

**Rust Monster:** Four-foot-long, armadillo-like creature that consumes rust; its touch oxidizes iron and steel. AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 2; HD 5 (hp 24); #A 1 (antennæ); D —; SV 14; ML 7; XP 175.

*Special:* When contact with metal made, rust is immediate. Metal armour and weapons oxidized to complete disrepair. Magical armour and weapons have 1-in-6 chance per “plus” to not be affected. Such magic items lose one “plus” per hit if not resisted.

12. See **APPENDIX A**.



**Scorpion, Giant:** Aggressive, nocturnal arachnid, five feet long (plus tail) with enormous pincers. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 17; AC 2; HD 4 (hp 19); #A 3 (claw/claw/sting); D 1d6/1d6/1d4; SV 15; ML 7; XP 180.

*Special:* Stinger delivers deadly venom unless *death* (poison) save made, causing immediate loss of speech, paralysis 1 round later, and death in 2d4 rounds. If both claw attacks hit, stinger attack is at +2 “to hit”. All attacks at +1 “to hit” if *ultraviolet vision* in effect.

**Snake, Asp:** Dark, narrow-hooded cobra of two- to five-foot length. AL N; SZ S; MV 40; DX 10; AC 7; HD 2 (hp 10); #A 1 (bite); D 1; SV 16; ML 7; XP 60.

*Special:* Bite injects venom thrice per day. Victim must make *death* (poison) save or die at once; if save successful, 3d6 hp damage sustained. Wound may become septic if victim survives (*cure disease* heals).

**Snake, Rattle-:** Reticulated rattler of 5- to 10-foot length slinks about searching for small prey. AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 15; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 10); #A 2 (bite/bite); D 1d2/1d2; SV 16; ML 7; XP 60.

*Special:* Bite injects venom twice per day. Victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage, dying in 1d6 turns. Site of wound is purple and swollen; may become septic if victim survives (*cure disease* heals).

**Spider, Giant Crab:** AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 7; HD 2 (hp 11); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 16; ML 7; XP 32.

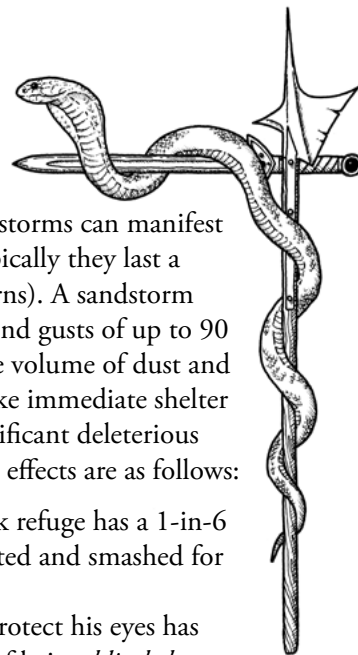
*Special:* Surprise on 4-in-6 chance. Move across walls and ceilings at normal MV. Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1d8 hp additional damage.

**Spider, Giant Wolf:** Aggressive, nine-foot-long arachnid that chases down warm, fleshy prey. AL N; SZ L; MV 50; DX 14; AC 5; HD 4 (hp 17); #A 1 (bite); D 2d6; SV 15; ML 8; XP 255.

*Special:* Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or be paralyzed in 1d2 rounds, lasting 2d6 turns. Wound becomes necrotic in any event, with 3-in-6 chance of infection unless *cure disease* is cast. After 30 days victim must make another save or die; otherwise, infection subsides.

**Tick, Giant:** Two- to three-foot-diameter arachnid seeks to satiate itself on warm blood. AL N; SZ M; MV 20; DX 5; AC 3; HD 3 (hp 13); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4; SV 15; ML 12; XP 107.

*Special:* Surprises on 3-in-6 chance when dropping from suitable hiding place. Bite transmits venom; make *death* (poison) save at +2 bonus or suffer paralysis for 1d2 turns. Tick remains attached, draining blood for 1d6 hp damage per round until tick or victim dead. Can be driven off with fire; 3-in-6 chance it releases if already attached.



**HAZARD (Sandstorm):** Sandstorms can manifest suddenly and unexpectedly. Typically they last a half hour to an hour (1d4+2 turns). A sandstorm moves as a cyclone, produces wind gusts of up to 90 mph, and carries an incalculable volume of dust and sand. Characters who do not take immediate shelter risk exposing themselves to significant deleterious consequences—even death. The effects are as follows:

- ★ A character who fails to seek refuge has a 1-in-6 chance per turn of being lifted and smashed for 3d6 hp damage.
- ★ A character who does not protect his eyes has a 1-in-6 chance per round of being *blinded* (always lose initiative; -4 “to hit”, AC, and SV).
- ★ A character who does not protect his nose and mouth has a 1-in-6 chance per round of choking and becoming *stunned* (½ movement; opponents gain +4 “to hit”; no shield or DX bonuses to AC). Furthermore, a choking character who does not receive aid (e.g., another PC helping to clear his airways) within 2d4 rounds must make a *death* save or choke to death.

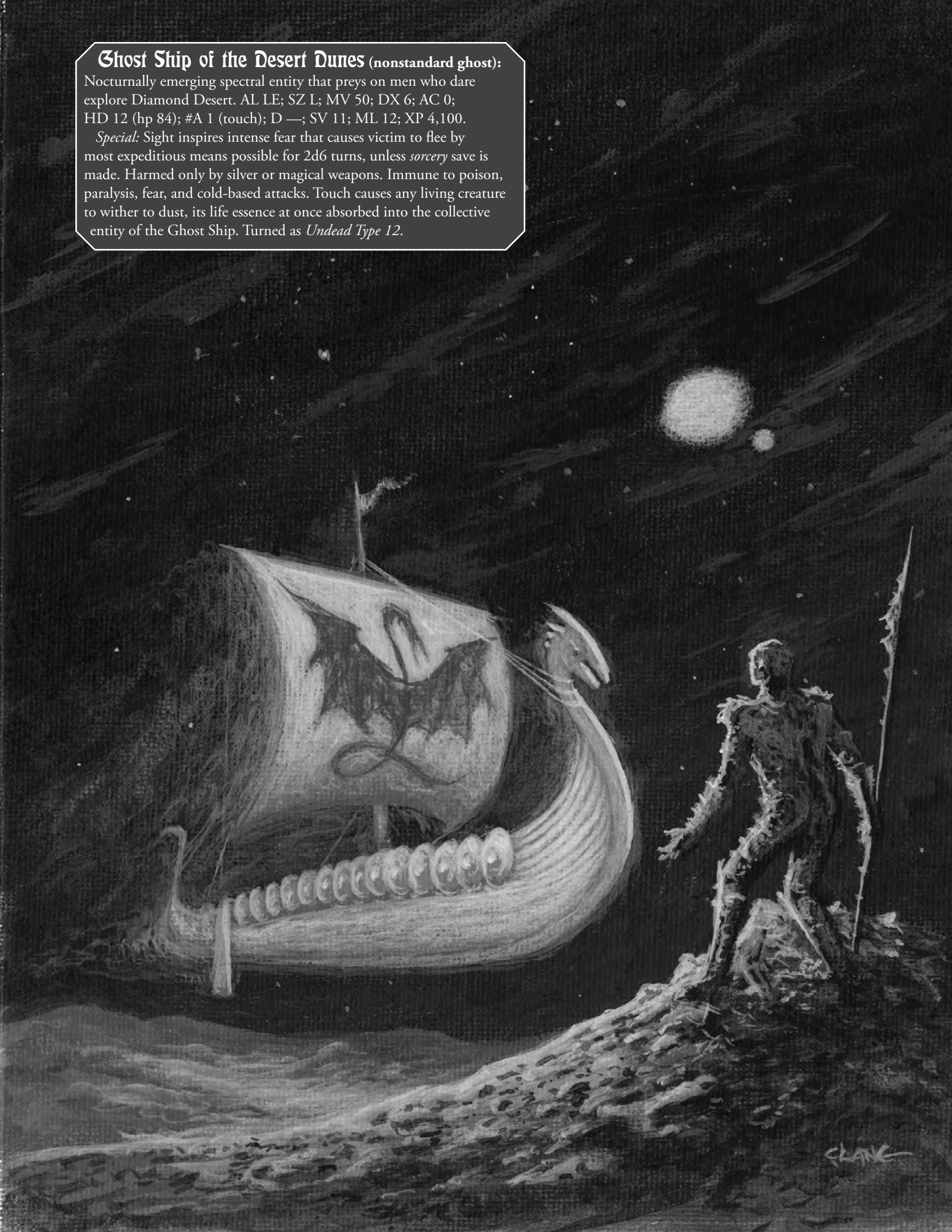
**EVENT (Ghost Ship of the Desert Dunes):** This occurrence is the ghostly haunting of popular legend. Every night at midnight (save during the years of *High Summer Waxing* and *High Summer Waning*, when nighttime is minimal to nonexistent), the **ghost** of *Ymir's Serpent* rises from its own fossilized wreckage to search in vain for disremembered glories and treasures. It has plagued seekers of mineral riches in Diamond Desert for untold centuries.

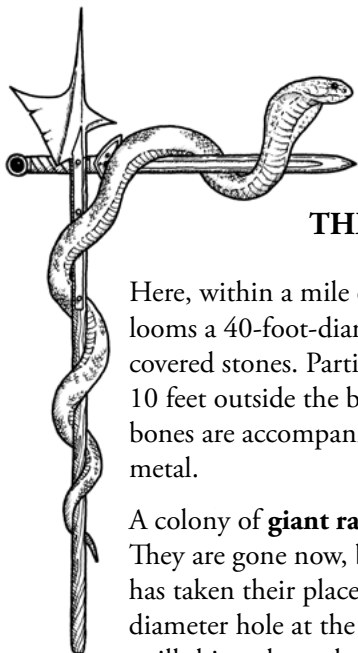
The **Ghost Ship of the Desert Dunes** presents as a spectral Viking longship crewed by a rabid horde of Viking apparitions. These spirits are led in undeath as they were in life: by the mad Captain Sigtrygg Forkbeard. As the wraithlike vessel floats over the dunes, the inarticulate cries of the Viking ghosts reverberate, as well as creaking ropes, groaning boards, and the slow-flapping sail. The sight and sound of this phenomenon inspires supernatural dread; those who resist are invited by the shimmering apparition of Captain Sigtrygg himself to go *viking* with his fearless band of reavers. Acceptance spells doom, for those who board the ghost of *Ymir's Serpent* become the victims of a potent, vampiric entity.

### Ghost Ship of the Desert Dunes (nonstandard ghost):

Nocturnally emerging spectral entity that preys on men who dare explore Diamond Desert. AL LE; SZ L; MV 50; DX 6; AC 0; HD 12 (hp 84); #A 1 (touch); D —; SV 11; ML 12; XP 4,100.

*Special:* Sight inspires intense fear that causes victim to flee by most expeditious means possible for 2d6 turns, unless *sorcery* save is made. Harmed only by silver or magical weapons. Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Touch causes any living creature to wither to dust, its life essence at once absorbed into the collective entity of the Ghost Ship. Turned as *Undead Type 12*.





## THE ROCK PILE

Here, within a mile of the extinct River Æolus, looms a 40-foot-diameter, 18-foot-high pile of sand-covered stones. Partially exposed human skeletons lie 10 feet outside the base of the mound. The parched bones are accompanied by the glint of polished metal.

A colony of **giant radioactive ants** once nested here. They are gone now, but a **giant trapdoor spider** has taken their place. It has plugged the five-foot-diameter hole at the summit of the mound with a silk-hinged trapdoor. Nigh invisible trip lines surround the rock pile; when the lines vibrate, the monster emerges to take its provender.

**Spider, Giant Trapdoor:** Camouflaged, seven-foot-long arachnid awaits the arrival of prey. AL N; SZ L; MV 30; DX 13; AC 6; HD 3+2 (hp 16); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 15; ML 7; XP 105.

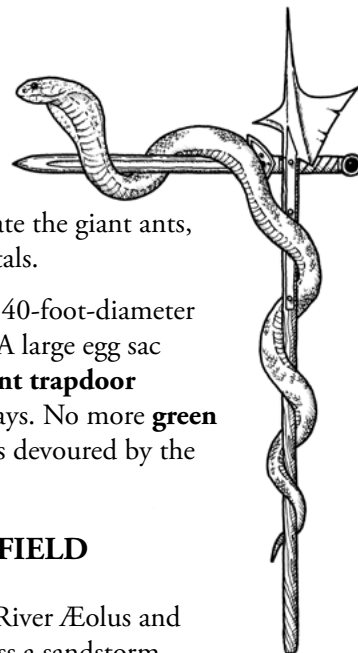
*Special:* Surprises on 4-in-6 chance from trapdoor nest. Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1 hp damage per round for 2d6 rounds.

Shifts in the desert winds have recently exposed the five skeletons here; close inspection will attract the spider. These bones were a quintet of Atlantean scientists who long ago sought the bounty of a local **green diamond** vein. They were killed by a violent sandstorm and buried for many years. The following items may be recovered if six man-hours (e.g., six men working for about an hour apiece) are spent excavating the area:

- ★ **3 aluminum shovels** (3-foot length, lightweight, noncorrosive)
- ★ **2 aluminum picks** (4-foot length, lightweight, noncorrosive)
- ★ A **lead box** (1 × 1 × 4 feet) that contains two pairs of leaden gloves, two sets of aluminum tongs, a 12 × 10 × 1-inch aluminum case, and **Atlantean documents** (see below)
- ★ A **flamethrower**<sup>[13]</sup> (metal harness that supports a 5-gallon tank; from the tank extends a short, corrugated metal hose with a triggered nozzle; contains enough fuel for 5 rounds of usage)

*Atlantean Documents:* These synthetic paper documents, written in Atlantean, outline the objectives of the deceased scientists: to lower

13. See **APPENDIX B**.



themselves into the nest, eradicate the giant ants, and harvest the radioactive crystals.

The hole descends 110 feet to a 40-foot-diameter chamber lined in silk webbing. A large egg sac is within; scores of fist-sized **giant trapdoor spiderlings** will hatch in 2d4 days. No more **green diamond** material is here; it was devoured by the ants long ago.

## THE CACTUS FIELD

Seven miles west of the extinct River Æolus and visible from the riverbank (unless a sandstorm develops), this 30,000-square-foot area (c. 300 × 100 feet) teems with giant cacti, dark green in colour and brimming with five-inch needles. The cacti range from 10 to 40 feet in height, with a maximum girth of six feet. They grow in candelabra-like shapes, with up to a dozen arms radiating upwards.

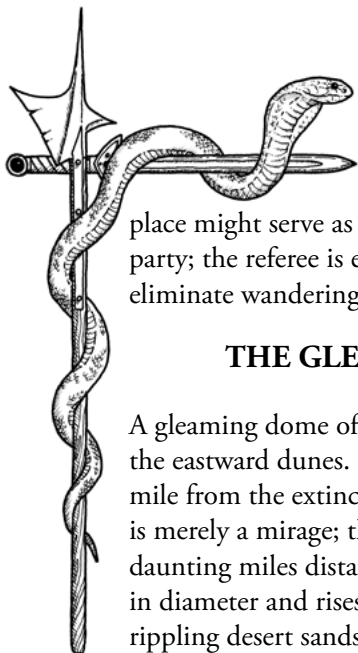
From early *Tempest* (Year 4) to mid-*Autumnal Equinox* (Year 10), the cacti produce fist-sized, ruby-red fruit that is both edible and refreshing. However, the water yielded from the pulp of the cacti's stalks is toxic. Imbibers must make *death* (poison) saves or suffer sporadic diarrhoea and vomiting for 24 hours (–2 “to hit”, damage, and saving throws during this period, plus greater risk of dehydration unless water intake is increased).

Many small woodpeckers, owls, and desert hares have made homes of this cactus field, and small bats pollinate the pink and white blossoms of early *Tempest*. Most dangerous to travellers, however, is the colony of **40 giant bees** that have made a home here. Daytime visitors to the cactus field risk a 1-in-6 chance per hour of being attacked by 1d4 giant bees.

**Bees, Giant (×40):** One-foot-long killer bees attack without provocation. AL N; SZ S; MV 10 (fly 50); DX 10; AC 7; HD ½ (hp 2); #A 1 (sting); D 1d3; SV 17; ML 12; XP 17.

*Special:* Sting victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage, plus 2-in-6 chance of death in 1d4 turns from intensely painful inflammation and organ failure. Giant bee dies when it stings.

The bees' nest is located at the north end of the cactus field. The thrumming and buzzing of the swarm can be heard up to 50 yards away. With the dual deterrents of the bees and the cacti needles, this



place might serve as a fine sanctuary for the PC party; the referee is encouraged to reduce or eliminate wandering monster checks here.

### THE GLEAMING DOME

A gleaming dome of white marble rises from the eastward dunes. It appears to be less than a mile from the extinct river, but this impression is merely a mirage; the dome is actually nine daunting miles distant. The dome is 128 feet in diameter and rises about 50 feet above the rippling desert sands. The windswept stone shews neither door nor window, but a large breach presents in the north side: massive, broken blocks of white marble masonry extending away from the dome, mostly swallowed by the dunes.

Sand fills the interior of the gleaming dome. The inner walls are scarred and etched with runes and symbols. A skilled sorcerer who can *read magic* may decipher that these glyphs were intended for binding dæmons. However, in various subtle ways, the runes and symbols have been altered and defiled—and thus rendered impotent.

A Hyperborean in the party may well know the following legend; otherwise, Vul Kovtu might shed light on it:

Long ago, the Hyperborean sorcerer-prince Volomar Vheez of the extinct city Xuthus gathered his servants to build a dome of white marble blocks. The vault was intended to imprison a star-borne dæmon called Nak T'ghai, reputed to be kin to Xathoquua. Through dark divinations and astrological precision, the sorcerer-prince had calculated the arrival of the beast. When at length it tumbled out from the hoary depths of the illimitable Black Gulf, Volomar Vheez entrapped it inside the gleaming dome, sealing it within by rune and symbol. Some Hyperboreans aver that Nak T'ghai escaped imprisonment through trickery and guile, but no one knows for certain.



In brief, this is what happened: The dæmon **Nak T'ghai** (possibly a **class VI dæmon**) inveigled one of **Volomar Vheez's** apprentices to crawl into the dome through a loose block. The apprentice, convinced that he was freeing a desirable woman, then defaced and neutered the runes and symbols that bound the dæmon within. Thus unshackled, the dæmon slew the apprentice and smashed through the marble wall of the dome. Nak T'ghai sought out Volomar Vheez, dragged the sorcerer back to the dome, and cursed him for all eternity. When the Hyperborean's servants searched for him, they too were made to not only share, but contribute to his fate.

If a human now enters the gleaming dome, the sound of coughing and choking will be heard from its centre, just under the sand. Here lies the centuries-old, tortured

form of Volomar Vheez, mad and babbling, begging in the Hyperborean tongue for it all to end. He is shackled by an iron collar chained to a block of marble buried underneath him, his face barely exposed from beneath the sand. Within a minute or two, or if any attempt is made to free the man, **12 skeletons** (his “servants”) rise from the sand to attend their charge. Normally they rise to slay him, dropping grains of sand in his face until he suffocates, only to regenerate and suffer it anew. The skeletons will attack intruders on sight.

**Skeletons (×12):** AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 11; AC 7; HD 1 (hp 4); #A 1 (short sword); D 1d6; SV 16; ML 12; XP 16.

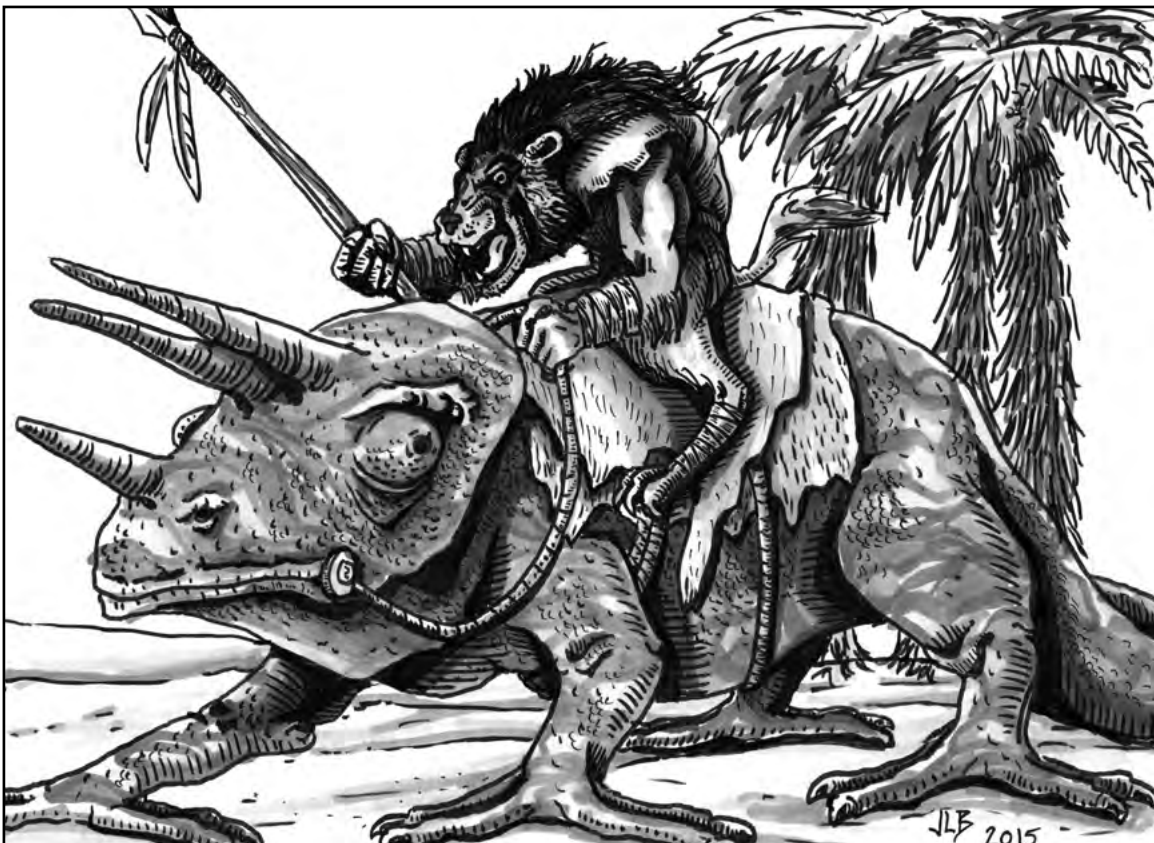
*Special:* Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. Edged weapons cause ½ damage.

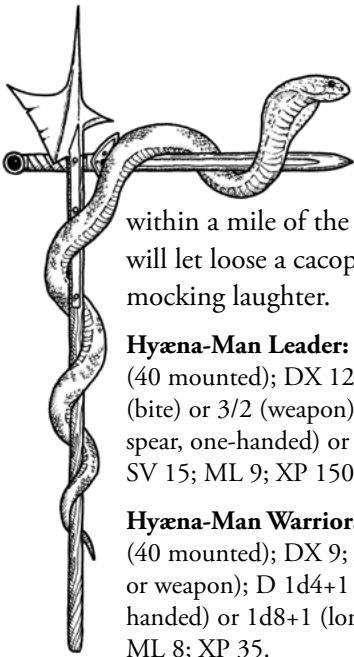
If the skeletons are destroyed or turned, they will re-form in 24 hours, even from the tiniest fragments of bone. The only way to free the man and truly end the imprecation is if a *remove curse* spell is cast on Volomar Vheez. What ensues thereafter is the purview of the referee.

Vheez is a rightful Hyperborean king with no kingdom, though surviving descendants are scattered about the realm. He is mad, but once he regains his faculties, he is a 10<sup>th</sup>-level magician of significant resourcefulness. Perhaps he will attempt to rebuild Xuthus, perhaps conjure its ghost to rise from the blasting sands of the Diamond Desert coast, or even effect the resurrection of the city itself. Anything is possible, fellow referees.

### THE OASIS

Three miles east of the extinct River Æolus lies a 200,000-square-foot oasis (roughly 400 × 500 feet) inhabited by a tribe of **26 hyæna-men** (plus 12 helpless pups) and their **3 giant chameleon lizard** mounts. Under normal conditions, the oasis is visible from the riverbank. On a 2-in-6 chance, **1d6 hyæna-man warriors** are out patrolling and/or hunting. If such is the case, they will be accompanied by **1 giant chameleon lizard** for every 3 patrollers; the third such beast belongs to the **hyæna-man leader**, back at the oasis. Advancing





within a mile of the oasis will incite the tribe, which will let loose a cacophony of gibbering cries and mocking laughter.

**Hyæna-Man Leader:** AL CE; SZ M; MV 30 (40 mounted); DX 12; AC 5; HD 4+4 (hp 27); #A 1 (bite) or 3/2 (weapon); D 1d4+1 (bite) or 1d6+2 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8+2 (long spear, two-handed); SV 15; ML 9; XP 150.

**Hyæna-Man Warriors (×11):** AL CE; SZ M; MV 30 (40 mounted); DX 9; AC 5; HD 2+2 (hp 13); #A 1 (bite or weapon); D 1d4+1 (bite) or 1d6+1 (long spear, one-handed) or 1d8+1 (long spear, two-handed); SV 16; ML 8; XP 35.

**Hyæna-Man Females (×14):** AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 9; AC 5; HD 1+2 (hp 6); #A 1 (bite); D 1d4+1; SV 16; ML 8; XP 20.

**Lizards, Giant Chameleon (×3):** AL N; SZ L; MV 40; DX 10; AC 5; HD 5 (hp 23); #A 1 (bite or tail); D 1d10 or 1d6; SV 14; ML 7; XP 200.

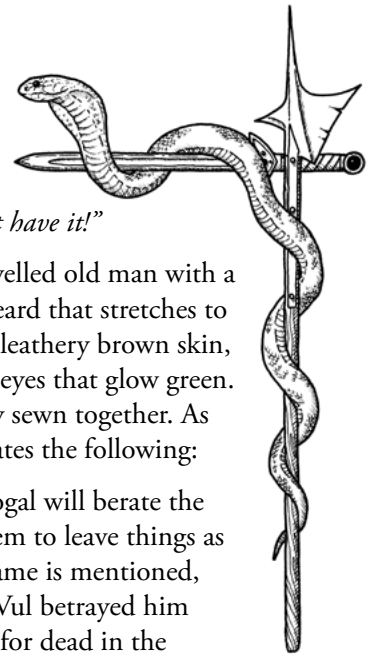
*Special:* Blending allows surprise on 4-in-6 chance. If tail hits, target must make *avoidance* save or be knocked down (*prone*) for 1 round.

The oasis comprises low-lying apple shrubs at ground level, 25-foot-tall date trees that form an understorey, and 40-foot-tall poplars that form an upper canopy. Lichen beards depend betwixt the terraces. A spring oozes from the centre of the oasis; many birds, bats, and insects flock here. Hidden under the shrubs lie the corroded remains of ancient stone foundations. Amongst these can be found several old wells, still rich with water.

The hyæna-men bed down in the oasis. Their social structure is dominated by their leader, who also controls most of the mating rights. A broken wagon lying near the east-central portion of the oasis contains the tribe's treasure: **310 ep**, **185 gp**, a **potion of extraordinary growth**, a **potion of giant power**, a **potion of invisibility**, and a **potion of levitation**.

### THE MAD HERMIT

On the craggy east ledge of the bank overlooking the dried-out riverbed, a mad hermit (**Zogal the Mad**) stands at the mouth of a cave. He begins to shout incoherently at the party and then hobbles toward them, waving his arms and screaming obscenities.



"Go away!" he yells. "You cannot have it!"

He presents as a scrawny, dishevelled old man with a bald head and a scraggly grey beard that stretches to his knees. He has liver-spotted, leathery brown skin, an eagle's beak nose, and beady eyes that glow green. He wears desert hare furs rudely sewn together. As he approaches closer, he articulates the following:

**If Vul Kovtu is not present:** Zogal will berate the party for being there, telling them to leave things as they are and go away. If Vul's name is mentioned, however, Zogal will reveal that Vul betrayed him and their partner, leaving them for dead in the desert. The wizard wanted all their **green diamonds** for himself, but Zogal got the last laugh when Vul flagged down a group of **cave-men** in canoes. The cave-men beat Vul down and took him away.



**If Vul Kovtu is present:** The mad hermit's jaw drops when he sees Vul Kovtu, and his beady, green-glowing eyes widen. He points at Vul and says,

*You! I knew you would return! Murderer! Betrayer! You thought I was dead, didn't you? You think I don't remember your face after all these years? You think I am too old and mad to recall? Ha!*

Presently, Vul glances nervously about and shrugs. If asked, he denies everything. The hermit continues his accusations:

*You conspired against us! Shortly after the three of us fled the mine, you slit our waterskins, and then you pitted us against each another with false accusations. It's because you wanted it all for yourself—all the green diamonds—but it was I, Zogal, who got the last laugh when I saw those cave-men beat you and take you away in their canoes! You thought you'd left me for dead out there in the sands, but I was alive! I was—*

Suddenly Vul brandishes his **wand of magic missiles** (which he keeps sewn in the sleeve of his robe) and blasts two holes through Zogal's chest, complete with exit wounds. The mad hermit drops dead. Vul will claim that he felt threatened and that he was merely defending himself against a deranged lunatic.

The party's response to these circumstances can be wide-ranging. In sooth, everything the mad hermit said was true.

**ZOGAL'S CAVE:** The narrow (2½ × 5½-foot) mouth of this cave is set in the east ledge, 15 feet above the riverbed. The climb is vertical but undemanding, with many handholds. This 30-foot-diameter cave contains a central fire pit, over which hangs a spit with two scorched desert hares; a stone table, upon which rest a dozen ruby red cacti fruit (edible and nourishing); a stone basin collected with dirty water; and a bed of hare fur blankets. The limestone walls are painted with crude images, including a massive ape with bat-like wings, a Viking ship flying in the air, giant ants, and walking dead men wearing horned helms.

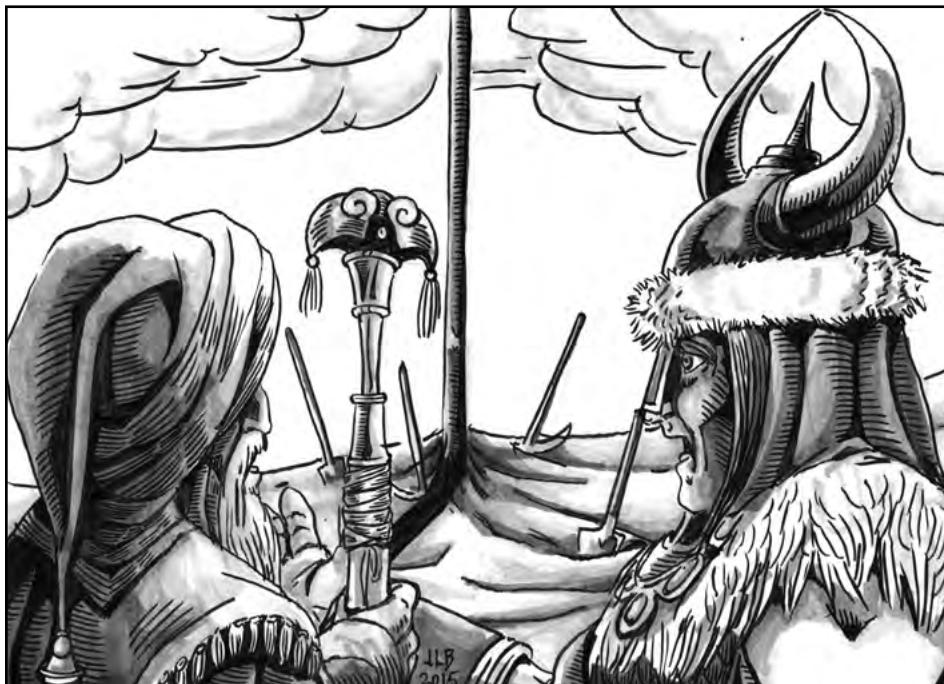
A single **green diamond** lies under a stone in the fire pit. Vul Kovtu will sense its presence if he enters the cave. He will begin to sweat and lick his lips, searching frantically until he finds it. Beside the bedding of fur blankets can be found a metal scroll tube, which contains three rolled papyrus sheets. The sheets are inked in the runic alphabet of the Esquimaux, but all around these runes appear translation notes to the Common tongue, made in charcoal. Refer to **PLAYER HANDOUT #1**.

## THE MAST

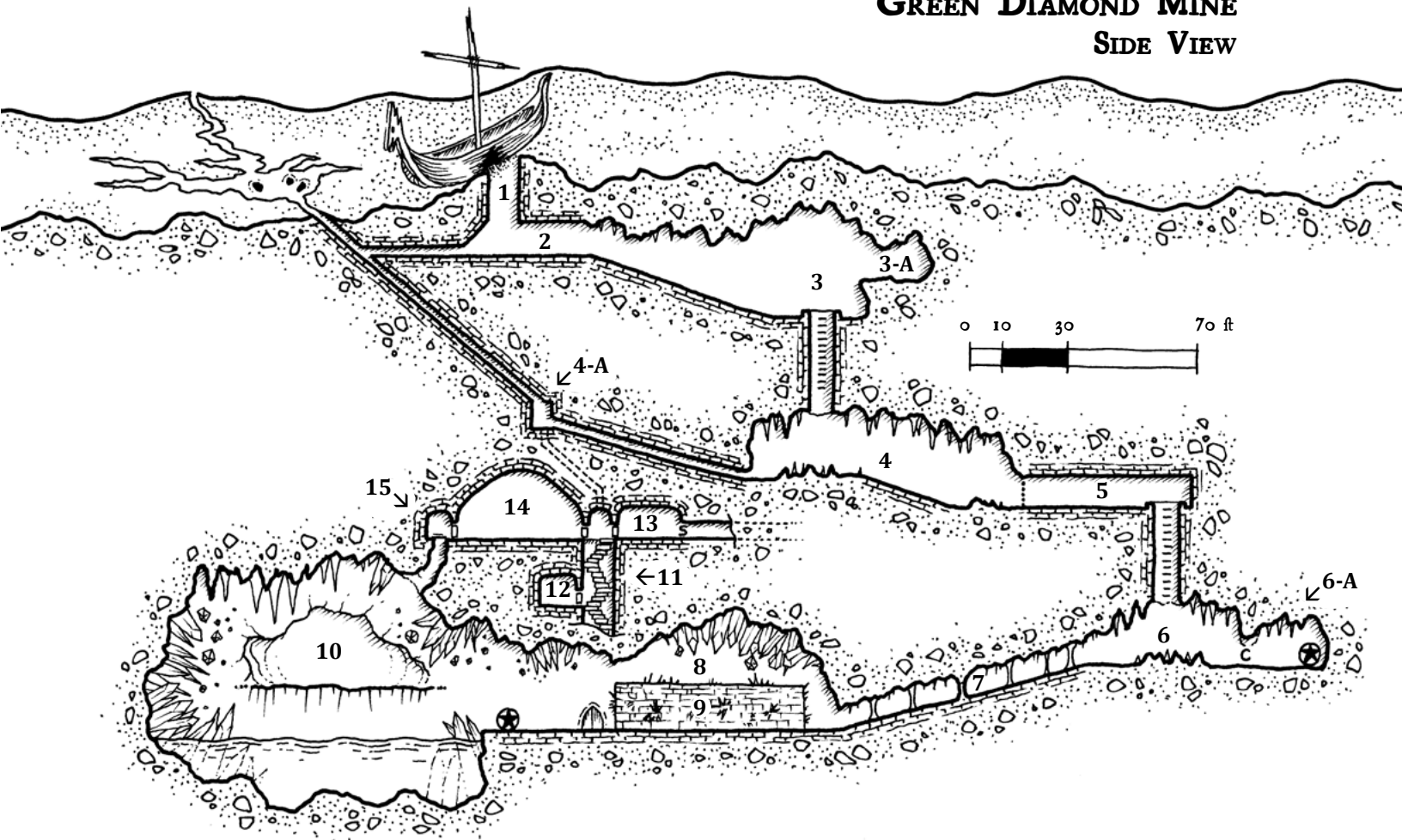
The petrified mast of a Viking longship rises from the desert sands a half mile west of the extinct RiverÆolus. Here lies the buried wreck of *Ymir's Serpent*, a 48-foot-long, 8-foot-wide *snekke*. Wooden staves of five implements protrude from the sand, conspicuously arranged in a circle around the mast: three shovels and two picks, their staves weather-beaten, their blades rusted.

**N.B.:** If the party linger here by midnight, when the **ghost** of *Ymir's Serpent* rises from its own fossilized wreckage, refer to **TREK ACROSS THE DESERT**, event (*ghost ship of the desert dunes*).

Presently, Vul Kovtu becomes agitated,



## GREEN DIAMOND MINE SIDE VIEW



barking out orders, hobbling about on his peg leg, and tugging at his grey-streaked red hair. Of course, diligent adventurers might want to consider what to do with the donkeys before beginning any kind of excavation project. The desert winds are howling, the sand is whipping, and the beasts of burden have been under much duress throughout the journey.

The shovels and picks left here mark the point of entry to an old mineshaft now covered by sand. Four man-hours of shovelling (i.e., four men digging for one hour, or six men for about 40 minutes) will excavate about 2,000 cubic feet (20 × 10 × 10 feet) of sand here. This work will reveal the petrified hull of *Ymir's Serpent*, which appears to have been breached.

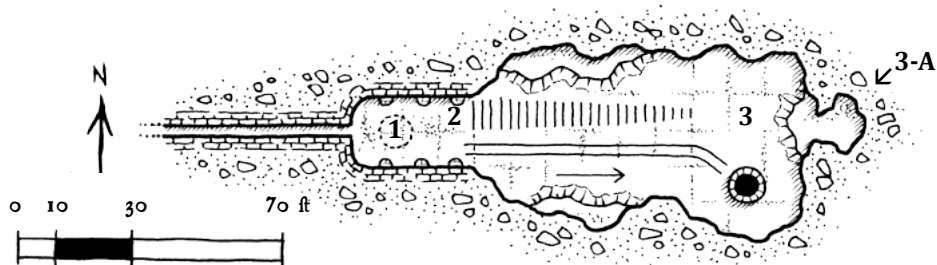
**HAZARD (SINKHOLE):** Once 2,000 cubic feet of sand has been cleared, the sand will suddenly sift and then funnel, revealing the mouth of an old mineshaft. Anyone in the hole must immediately climb out, or perhaps step into the breach of the *Serpent's* hull (see **GREEN DIAMOND MINE, #1**); otherwise, they must make *avoidance* saving throws or plummet 30 feet (for 3d6 hp damage) to **GREEN DIAMOND MINE, #2**.

## GREEN DIAMOND MINE

This site is the green diamond mine once governed by the Ixian sorcerer Karsas Xarthanos. The operation produced elevator shafts, galleries (horizontal passages), and graded slopes to access a vein some 200 feet below the surface of Diamond Desert (see **GREEN DIAMOND MINE MAPS**). Now the mine is the lair of **Thakos**, a **winged carnivorous ape** who rules a band of **radioactive zombie berserkers**.

One-legged Vul Kovtu will require assistance if he is to be taken into the mine. As exploration progresses, he will begin to experience the full extent of the **green diamond** madness, hyper-aware that he draws closer to his objective. If left behind, he might send his **bat familiar** to be his eyes and ears, following the party wherever they go.





**1. YMIR'S SERPENT:** Descending the shaft reveals the buried remains of *Ymir's Serpent*. Its hull is breached amidships. A ruddy glow emanates from within the narrow, sand-filled hold. **Giant fire beetles** have made a nest here. They delight in devouring warm flesh and will attack with gusto. Combat in the hold is at -2 "to hit" and AC for combatants who stand six or more feet tall; too, large weapons may be unusable.

**Beetles, Giant Fire (×10):** AL N; SZ S; MV 40; DX 9; AC 4; HD 1+1 (hp 6); #A 1 (bite); D 2d4; SV 16; ML 7; XP 20.

*Special:* Glands above eyes and by abdomen radiate red light in 10-foot radius; if carefully extracted, they continue to glow for 1d6 days.

Searching the sand-filled hold of the *Serpent* yields the fragmented skeletal remains of Vikings (evinced by their rusty helmets and battle axe blades), a carved yellow ivory **drinking horn** stylized in Viking fashion (25-gp value), and numerous tarnished silver coins (287 sp) marked with Old Norse runes. Sifting through these materials may unearth pockets in the sand containing dozens of fist-sized **fire beetle larvæ** (harmless).

**N.B.:** If the party ignore the longship and descend directly to #2, the fire beetles will soon pursue, scampering down the shaft; in fact, their primary point of egress is located there.

**2. UPPER GALLERY:** Sand is piled about the floor of this stone-pillared gallery. To the east, a graded slope descends to a larger cavern (#3). The slope, which is notched with cart tracks and stairs, is flanked by ledges north and south.

To the west a three-foot-diameter, brick-faced tunnel admits warm air. This old airshaft may be entered by a lightly armoured or unarmoured crawler under six feet in height; otherwise, assistance is required. Naturally, a thief is best suited to this activity. **Giant fire beetles** (see #1), **giant black centipedes** (see #3-A), and **giant crab spiders** (see #4) access the airshaft from dusk till dawn, so those traversing it risk a 1-in-6 chance per turn of encountering 1d4 of these critters whilst within.

**3. UPPER CAVERN:** This natural cavern was worked to a gradient to accommodate the mining operation that took place here. Cart tracks notch the slope. At the bottom of the slope lies a 10-foot-diameter shaft, its lip built of stone blocks. Rusty brackets and the remnants of a windlass indicate that an elevator once existed here. The depths of the shaft shew naught but inky blackness.

**N.B.:** Activity in this cavern will attract the **giant black centipedes** of #3-A to emerge and attack on a 2-in-6 chance per turn.

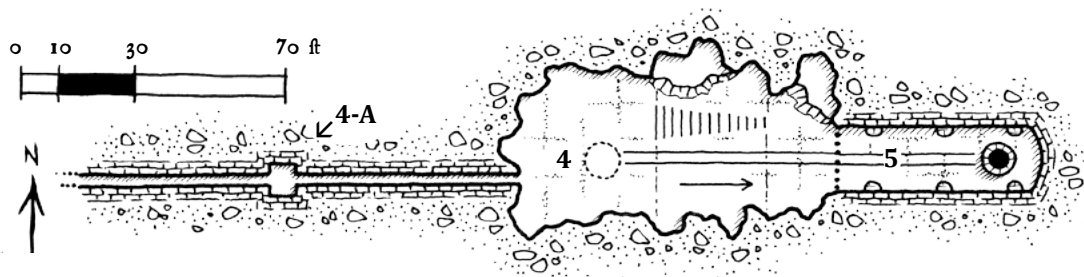
Iron rungs are drilled into the side of the shaft; these handholds are rusty, but still serviceable as a ladder, and descend 30 feet to the roof of #4. Any rung bearing weight greater than 250 pounds will snap on a 2-in-6 chance. The plummet to the floor of #4 below is 20–50 feet, inflicting 1d6 hp damage per 10 feet fallen. (The referee might allow an *avoidance* saving throw to catch another rung—which likewise stands a 2-in-6 chance of breakage.) From the bottommost rung, ropes must be tethered to allow continued safe descent for the final 20 feet to the floor of #4.

**3-A. Centipede Nest:** This mouldy pocket of limestone serves as a **giant black centipede** nest. They are slimy creatures about 2½ feet long, black with orange bands, and they relish the taste of warm flesh.

**Centipedes, Giant Black (×6):** AL N; SZ S; MV 20; DX 13; AC 9; HD ½ (hp 3); #A 1 (bite); D 1d2; SV 17; ML 7; XP 25.

*Special:* Bite delivers poison; make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage.

**4. UPPER MIDDLE CAVERN:** At the bottom of the elevator shaft lies another cavern, this one moist and presenting greater limestone deposition, hence the formation of stalactites and stalagmites. To the west, another three-foot-diameter, brick-faced shaft (sloping up at a 15° angle) admits air from without. To the east, a slope notched with steps and cart tracks descends to a heavy portcullis (see #5). **Giant crab spiders** frequent this cavern, accessing it by the same network of airshafts as seen in #2. These



creatures prowl the desert by night and lurk here by day, typically on the ledges overlooking the cavern proper.

**Spiders, Giant Crab (×4):** AL N; SZ M; MV 40; DX 12; AC 7; HD 2 (hp 11); #A 1 (bite); D 1d8; SV 16; ML 7; XP 32.

*Special:* Surprise on 4-in-6 chance. Move across walls and ceilings at normal MV. Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1d8 hp additional damage.

**4-A. Airshaft Hub:** The airshaft hub is a cubical chamber measuring six feet on each side. Here lies a cobwebbed nest of **30 baby giant crab spiders**. These fist-sized, white arachnids (not yet having developed chameleonic ability) are quite attracted to the smell of blood and sweat.

**Spiders, Baby Giant Crab (×30):** AL N; SZ S; MV 20; DX 8; AC 9; HD ¼ (hp 1); #A 1 (bite); D 1d2; SV 17; ML 7; XP 7.

*Special:* Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or suffer 1 hp additional damage.

The bones of small mammals and reptiles lie scattered here. Under the cobwebs lies an iron grate that covers a one-foot-square shaft. The shaft descends to a similar grate that opens to the ceiling of **#11**.

A loose stone in the hub of the airshaft conceals a **secret compartment** in the wall. The stone was greased, but over time the grease dried and left a red stain; the compartment is thus discovered on a base 3-in-6 chance (4-in-6 for thieves and the like). Sliding out the stone reveals the hidden weapons of a sorcerer (posing as a slave) who once aspired to steal Karsas Xarthanos' **Amazon skyship**. Wrapped in a hemp sack are a **potion of diminutiveness**, a **ring of invisibility**, a **wand of phantasms** (10 charges remaining), and a papyrus scroll with a message written in Thracian (Ixian) hieroglyphs (see **PLAYER HANDOUT #2**).

**5. MIDDLE GALLERY:** At the east end of **#4**, a latticed iron portcullis, mottled with rust, bars entry to the pillared gallery beyond. The centre of the portcullis is fitted with a tarnished sign, etched with nearly indecipherable characters. In the

Thracian (Ixian) tongue it reads, "AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY". Lifting the gate or bending its bars requires an *extraordinary feat of strength*; two characters may combine their probabilities for a single percentile roll.

By the elevator shaft at the east end of the gallery, **6 radioactive berserker zombies** repose. They stir at any undue noise, arm themselves with hand axes and large shields, and at once approach the gate. They present as zombified Vikings with green-glowing eyes and jaundiced, ulcerous skin shewing patchy hair loss. They unleash ghastly shrieks and bite their shields as they approach. The zombies at first stagger as the walking dead do, but their movement is uninhibited, and soon they break into a full run, frothing and screeching as they charge the gate.



**Zombies, Radioactive Berserker**<sup>[14]</sup> (×6): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 8; AC 6 (5 vs. missiles); HD 3+6 (hp 22); #A 2 (pummel or weapon) or 1 (bite) [*all at +2*]; D 1d4+2 (pummel) or 1d6+2 (hand axe) or 1d3+2 (bite); SV 13; ML 12; XP 180.

*Special:* Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. *Delay poison* puts zombie to sleep for spell's duration; *neutralize poison* destroys one. 1-in-4 chance per round of bite attempt. Bite inflicts radiation poisoning; victim must make *death* (radiation) save or die in 3d12 hours.

**N.B.:** One radioactive berserker zombie has AC 4 (3 vs. missiles), because he is equipped with a gold-chased **+2 large shield** that once belonged to Sigtrygg Forkbeard, the captain of *Ymir's Serpent*. The shield is etched with Old Norse runes that indicate the supremacy of the frost giant Ymir.

Like the one above, the shaft at the east end of the gallery has no elevator. The windlass remains intact, but it lacks a proper rope or chain. The shaft descends 30 feet to the ceiling of **#6** below, with secure iron rungs. A silk rope ladder is affixed to the last few rungs, allowing for safe descent to the cavern floor below.

**6. LOWER MIDDLE CAVERN:** This limestone cavern is embedded with thousands of ancient seashells. The cave is warm and moist, and it presents several stalactites and stalagmites. Mouldy puddles dot the floor. Evidence suggests old cart tracks descending west to a wide ramp (**#7**), but they are largely calcified. A **slithering slime** dwells here. The monster lurks amongst the stalactites of the eastern ceiling and will aggressively pursue potential prey.

14. See **APPENDIX A**.

**Slithering Slime:** AL N; SZ S; MV 30; DX 7; AC 5; HD 5 (hp 30); #A 1 (touch); D 1d6; SV 14; ML 9; XP 300.

*Special:* 4-in-6 chance of surprise. Touch paralyzes for 2d6 turns unless *death* save made. Drains fluids from paralyzed victim at rate of 1d6 hp per round; typically sated after draining 1d20+20 hp.

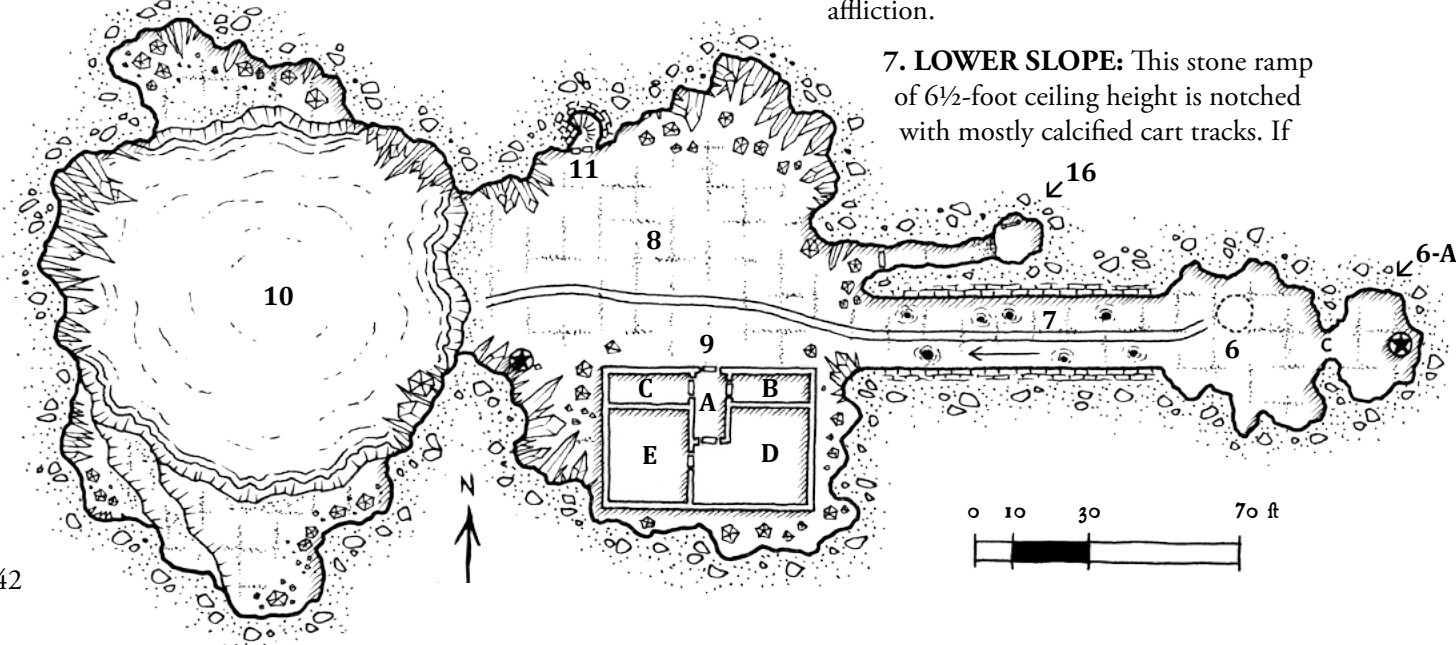
A **concealed door** lies at the east side of the cavern. It is mostly crusted over with limestone, which must be chipped away to reveal a bronze door. Upon the door is a symbol shewing two cobras facing each other. A cleric, a priest, or the like can identify this mark as an emblem of the snake god **Yig**.

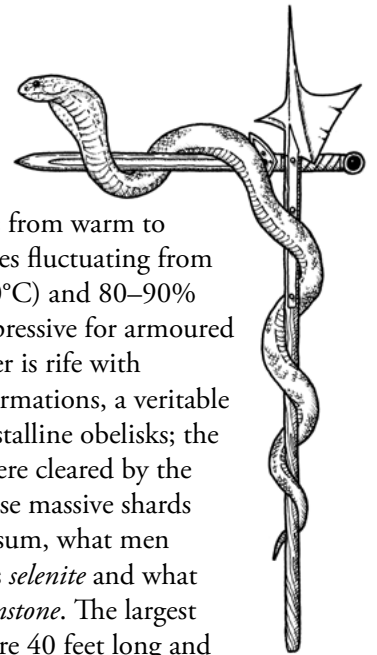
**6-A. Lost Shrine of Yig:** Like the adjoining cavern, this chamber is moist, mouldy, and heavily calcified. It appears to have been a shrine of sorts, with stone benches carved out from the floor, but these features are now lumpy with limestone. A three-step dais rises from the east side of the chamber.

The dais is dominated by an eight-foot-tall, verdigris-encrusted bronze statue of a cobra set within a glyph-incised alcove. The cobra is portrayed in an erect posture, with hood expanded and forked tongue jutting from its lips. The glyphs are etched in the Thracian (Ixian) tongue and extol the virtues of Yig, the serpent god.

A stunning **pale yellow topaz** (1,000-gp value) gleams from the bifurcate tip of the serpent's tongue. If the gem is appropriated—it is easily pried loose—the responsible thief will be cursed to forever attract the aggressive attention of all manner of deadly snakes. For example, should the party encounter a python, the snake would immediately target the thief first. Only a *remove curse* spell can end this affliction.

**7. LOWER SLOPE:** This stone ramp of 6½-foot ceiling height is notched with mostly calcified cart tracks. If





ever stairs were carven here, they are now buried. The slope is columned by several joined stalactites and stalagmites, its walls and ceiling studded with crystalline daggers delicate as glass.

The slope is wet and glistening, quite slippery. Negotiating it requires at least two *tests of dexterity*, unless proper measures are taken (e.g., a rope affixed to a column) to avoid slipping, falling, and sliding to the bottom (#8). A tumble down the slope will cause 1d6 hp damage and alert the **radioactive berserker zombies** guarding the Reintegration Facility (#9).

**8. LOWER CAVERN EAST:** Note that PCs entering this cavern may well alert the **6 radioactive berserker zombies** guarding #9. This enormous

natural cavern ranges from warm to hot, with temperatures fluctuating from 85 to 105°F (–30–40°C) and 80–90% humidity—quite oppressive for armoured seekers. The perimeter is rife with transparent crystal formations, a veritable forest of leaning, crystalline obelisks; the central formations were cleared by the miners long ago. These massive shards are composed of gypsum, what men of learning refer to as *selenite* and what gemologists call *moonstone*. The largest of these formations are 40 feet long and several feet thick.

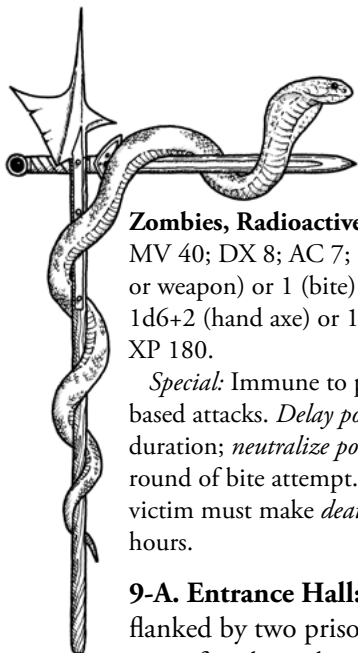
Hemmed in by the towering shards of this massive cavern can be seen a stone block building (the Reintegration Facility, #9). Muffled howls and gibbering laughter resound from within. Beyond the building, at the west side of the cavern, a 12-foot-tall shard of gypsum has been crudely carved to resemble a massive ape with bat-like wings. Scattered about the statue are various trinkets: coins (**23 cp, 6 sp, 5 ep**), teeth, smooth stones, polished skulls (lions and hyænas), snake skeletons, dried entrails, and some humanoid fingers on a string.

#### 9. REINTEGRATION FACILITY:

This limestone block building was originally built to provide the master with a cooler, more comfortable work

environment, isolated from the oppressive heat without. At present, it bristles with patches of dagger-like crystals. Thakos has this building guarded at all times, because it was important to his master. Indeed, the simian continues to oversee the guardianship of things he was charged to protect by the very master he slew ages ago.

The rusty iron door of this subterranean building is guarded by **6 radioactive berserker zombies**. They appear to be in a state of torpor: seated on their bottoms, backs against the door, legs splayed, heads drooping. Noise will awaken these undead sentries, but stealthy PCs might surprise them.



**Zombies, Radioactive Berserker**<sup>[15]</sup> (×6): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 8; AC 7; HD 3+6 (hp 24); #A 2 (pummel or weapon) or 1 (bite) [*all at +2*]; D 1d4+2 (pummel) or 1d6+2 (hand axe) or 1d3+2 (bite); SV 13; ML 12; XP 180.

*Special:* Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. *Delay poison* puts zombie to sleep for spell's duration; *neutralize poison* destroys one. 1-in-4 chance per round of bite attempt. Bite inflicts radiation poisoning; victim must make *death* (radiation) save or die in 3d12 hours.

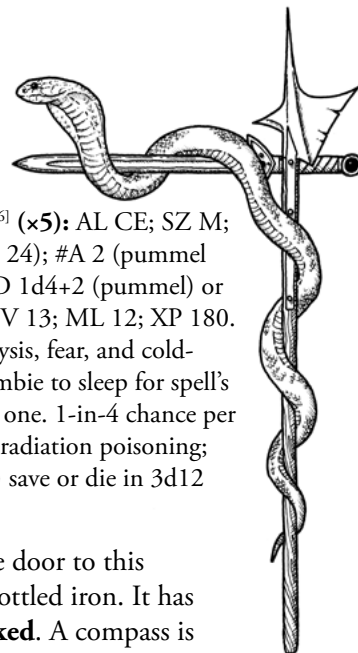
**9-A. Entrance Hall:** This 20-foot-long hallway is flanked by two prison cells. Each cell door features a 2 × 2-foot barred window. At the end of the hallway is an iron door with a ship's wheel for a handle. As soon as the outer door to this hall is opened, the imprisoned **hyæna-men** of #9-B will begin to howl and thrash quite noisily. This uproar will also stir the **radioactive berserker zombies** of #9-C to react, groaning and reaching through the bars of their respective door.

**9-B. Prison Cell East:** This cell holds 4 **hyæna-men** that were captured by Thakos several weeks ago. Since then, he has been torturing them to death one by one. He suspects they are spies come to steal his master's secrets, so he brutalizes them to learn what they know; of course, they know nothing of the mine or its history. Until a day ago, five of the humanoids were in this cell, but they cannibalized the weakest of their number. The hyæna-men are frothing mad, demanding release in their primitive, barking, yipping tongue.

**Hyæna-Men** (×4): AL CE; SZ M; MV 30; DX 9; AC 9; HD 2+2 (hp 13); #A 1 (bite or weapon); D 1d4+1 (or per weapon +1); SV 16; ML 8; XP 35.

**9-C. Prison Cell West:** This cell holds 5 **radioactive berserker zombies**. Long ago they were captured and force-fed **green diamonds**, but these particular Vikings would never submit to the will of Thakos. Even in undeath they remain recalcitrant, answering to no man or beast save their long-dead leader, Sigtrygg Forkbeard, who was slain by Thakos. Their wilfulness also provides them a glimmer of intelligence; despite their unquenchable desire to kill, they may in the Old Norse tongue ask to be slain and/or freed of the curse they have suffered for untold years.

15. See APPENDIX A.



**Zombies, Radioactive Berserker**<sup>[16]</sup> (×5): AL CE; SZ M; MV 40; DX 8; AC 7; HD 3+6 (hp 24); #A 2 (pummel or weapon) or 1 (bite) [*all at +2*]; D 1d4+2 (pummel) or 1d3+2 (bite) (or per weapon +2); SV 13; ML 12; XP 180.

*Special:* Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. *Delay poison* puts zombie to sleep for spell's duration; *neutralize poison* destroys one. 1-in-4 chance per round of bite attempt. Bite inflicts radiation poisoning; victim must make *death* (radiation) save or die in 3d12 hours.

**9-D. Extraction Chamber:** The door to this chamber is composed of rust-mottled iron. It has a ship's wheel handle and is **locked**. A compass is etched in the centre of the wheel. Turning the wheel in either direction produces clicks.

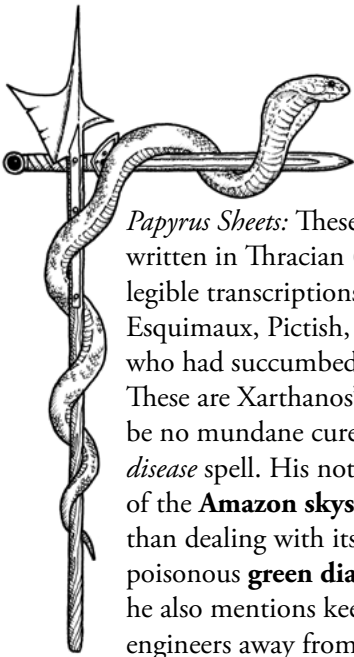
To begin, the wheel must be oriented with "north" straight up. To reset the "north" orientation, the wheel must be spun left two full revolutions. Then, to unlock the door, the wheel must be turned right 11 clicks, left 13 clicks, and right 17 clicks. The correct combination produces a louder click and release sound, the door unlocking. At present, only Thakos knows how to open it.

**N.B.:** In lieu of *open locks*, an adept thief can unlock this door by carefully listening to the tumblers whilst turning the wheel. (Most thieves will apprehend the left-right-left requirement.) This technique will require success at two consecutive *discern noise* checks.

The chamber beyond reeks of rotting flesh. In the centre, strapped to one of three metal tables, lies the ravaged body of a hyæna-man, brutally opened up by the same vivisection instruments once employed by Karsas Xarthanos. Thakos was once again parroting his master, albeit in complete ignorance. Now all the implements of dissection (bone saws, forceps, hand drills, needles, pins, scalpels, etc.) lie scattered about the floor and around the table, bloody and fur-covered. Small beetles have found their way within and now feast on the carcass.

A large metal shelf spans the southwest wall. The shelf is littered with dented metal boxes (all lead alloys, of various sizes), beakers, phials, retorts, mortars and pestles, bellows, and a sheaf of papyrus wrapped in twine. Most of the containers are empty, but two of the phials contain **dust of sleepiness**.

16. *ibid.*



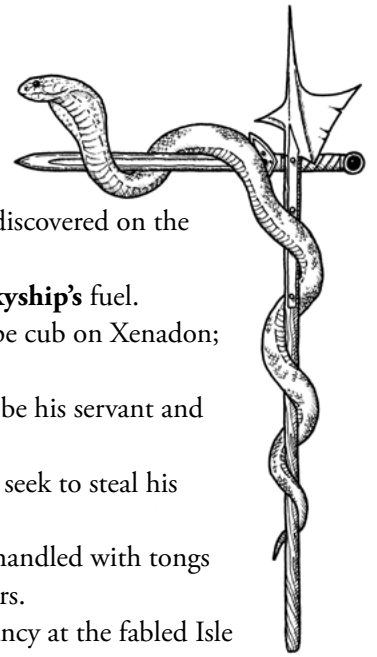
*Papyrus Sheets:* These bear formulæ and notes written in Thracian (Ixian) hieroglyphs. The most legible transcriptions detail dozens of dissections on Esquimaux, Pictish, and half-blood Pictish slaves who had succumbed to “Green Diamond Fever”. These are Xarthanos’ notes, which conclude there to be no mundane cure to the affliction, save the *cure disease* spell. His notes intimate that the rebuilding of the **Amazon skyship** has been less tedious than dealing with its only known fuel source: the poisonous **green diamonds**. As a further precaution, he also mentions keeping his metallurgists and engineers away from the mine at the **skyship** hangar, because he cannot afford for those men to take ill.

**9-E. Study:** The iron door to this room is **stuck** and requires a *test of strength* to force open. The room is carpeted by a shaggy, mammoth-fur rug now encrusted with mould. A redwood desk stands at the north end of the room. Behind it rests a rotted chair carved of pine (which will break if sat upon).

A pair of divans cushioned in scarlet silk stand along the west wall; above these is mounted a painting framed in bronze. It depicts a tall, thin Ixian with narrow shoulders, stringy black hair, bushy eyebrows, and intense, piercing eyes. He wears a black gown with a gold-brooched scarlet sash slung over one shoulder. (The brooch, should one take the time to inspect the details, portrays a coiled cobra.) A brass plate on the frame reads, “KARSAS XARTHANOS, MASTER SORCERER,” in Thracian (Ixian) hieroglyphs.

The desk is piled with dusty sheaves of papyrus, empty ink bottles, and a variety of quills. In the single drawer are more empty ink bottles, a few broken quills, eight sheets of blank papyrus, a **brass-coated key** (to #14), and an **iron key** (to #16). Amongst the sheaves of papyrus can be found **3 necromancer scrolls** (*cure disease*) and a phial that contains a ball of sap (**dust of nightmares and visions** ×2 doses).

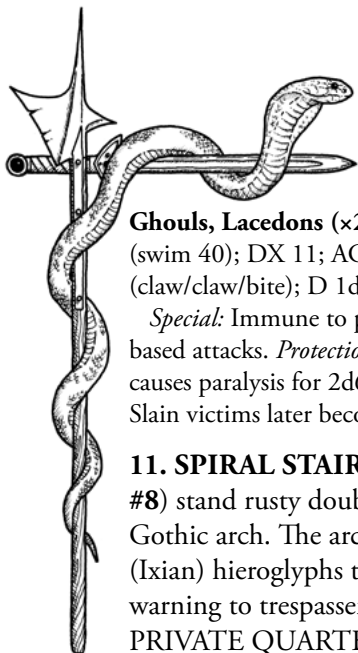
The remainder of the papyrus sheets on the desk are the scattered notes of Karsas Xarthanos. A single person learned in Thracian (Ixian) hieroglyphs would need two hours to peruse them. His paraphrased notes are as follow, in no certain order:



- ★ The **Amazon skyship** was discovered on the desert island of Xenadon.
- ★ **Green diamonds** are the **skyship’s** fuel.
- ★ His men found a winged ape cub on Xenadon; he named it “Thakos”.
- ★ Thakos has been trained to be his servant and bodyguard.
- ★ Xarthanos believes enemies seek to steal his **skyship**.
- ★ **Green diamonds** must be handled with tongs and placed in lead containers.
- ★ Xarthanos learned necromancy at the fabled Isle of IX.
- ★ A purple worm tunnel leads to the **Amazon skyship** hangar.
- ★ The River Æolus is rapidly dwindling; it has thrice gone dry and then restored after storms.
- ★ Thakos is becoming unpredictable; Xarthanos considers killing the beast.
- ★ From his “Chamber of Mirrors” he can now monitor all operations.
- ★ A white dome out in the desert once housed something otherworldly, but it escaped.

**10. LOWER CAVERN WEST:** As in #8, this enormous, lake-filled cavern is quite warm, its perimeter rife with massive gypsum shards. An old, decayed elevator platform lies at the east end of the cavern, where #8 is met. The platform is mostly submerged, and its windlass has rusted to rot and ruin. Some 30 feet above the floor of the north ledge, hidden amidst the gypsum-sharded ceiling, a nearly imperceptible five-foot-diameter hole leads to #15.

Long ago **green diamonds** were exploited here. Because the water table was breached, a water drainage wheel was constructed, and the water was conveyed elsewhere. Now a steamy, 18-foot-deep subterranean lake prevails, the bed of which is littered with the bones of those slaves who once toiled here—as well as their taskmasters. Pale, blind cavefish, seemingly a subspecies of trout, now occupy the lake. A pair of **aquatic ghouls** (*lacedons*) also inhabits this lake. They feed on the cavefish, leaving the bones scattered about the north and south ledges.

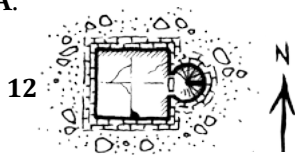


**Ghouls, Lacedons (×2):** AL CE; SZ M; MV 40 (swim 40); DX 11; AC 6; HD 2 (hp 9); #A 3 (claw/claw/bite); D 1d3/1d3/1d6; SV 16; ML 10; XP 68.

*Special:* Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks. *Protection from evil* holds them at bay. Hit causes paralysis for 2d6 turns unless *death* save made. Slain victims later become lacedons.

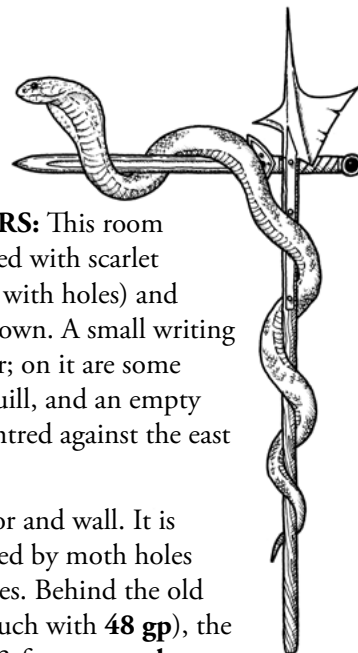
**11. SPIRAL STAIRS:** Here (if approaching from #8) stand rusty double doors of iron set within a Gothic arch. The archway is etched with Thracian (Ixian) hieroglyphs that convey a forbidding warning to trespassers: “HE WHO ENTERS THE PRIVATE QUARTERS OF LORD KARSAS XARTHANOS WILL BE MADE TO SUFFER AN UNSPEAKABLE CURSE.” The doors are **trapped**, releasing **dust of death** in a three-foot-radius puff (make *death* [poison] save or die in 1d4 rounds). The double doors open noisily, creaking and groaning at the hinges.

Spiral stairs carved into the stone wind upwards 40 feet to the door of #12 and another 20 feet to the doors of #13 and #14. In the 10-foot arched ceiling of the stairwell's summit lies an iron grate. The grate covers a one-foot-square shaft that ascends to a similar grate, which in turn opens to the cobwebbed floor of #4-A.



**12. THAKOS' PEN:** This 20 × 20-foot room is where Thakos was raised from cub to maturity. The beast typically sleeps here, but since he visits the Chamber of Mirrors (#14) so often, encountering him here is virtually impossible. He will be there, where his advantage is greatest.

The chamber holds a massive bed of straw and a one-drawer wooden nightstand. The nightstand contains five scarlet sashes and some crudely carved stones, intended to portray a winged ape, but comically childlike in execution. The perimeter of the room is piled with human skulls belonging to various taskmasters, engineers, metallurgists, and adventurers (such as the legendary Viking, Sigtrygg Forkbeard). The ape takes great pleasure in ripping off the heads of his enemies and will do the same to the PCs, if he has the opportunity.



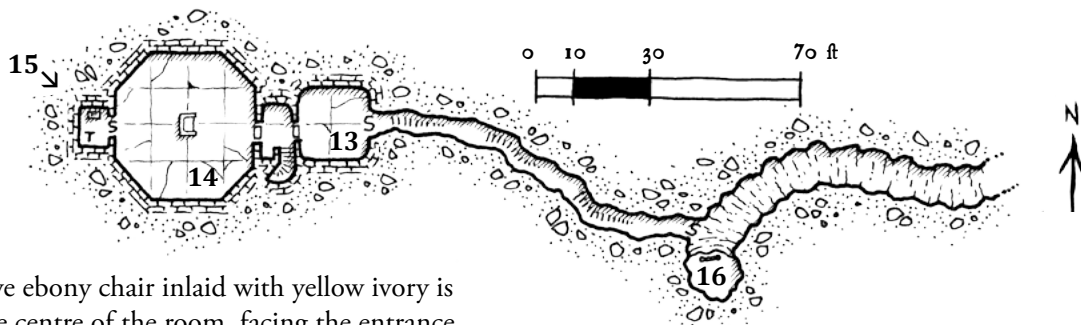
**13. XARTHANOS' QUARTERS:** This room is dominated by a four-poster bed with scarlet silk sheets (decayed and riddled with holes) and matching pillows stuffed with down. A small writing desk sits in the northwest corner; on it are some globs of melted candle wax, a quill, and an empty ink bottle. An old armoire is centred against the east wall.

The armoire is bolted to the floor and wall. It is hung with black cloaks perforated by moth holes and with several scarlet silk sashes. Behind the old cloaks (one of which holds a pouch with **48 gp**), the back of the armoire hides a 3 × 3-foot **secret door**, which slides up and open. This portal provides entry to a secret passage that accesses the purple worm tunnel (#16). The bottom drawers of the armoire contain spare linens and a **golden statuette** of an erect cobra (*75-gp value*), a representation of Yig, “The Great Serpent”.

**14. CHAMBER OF MIRRORS:** The ornate, brazen door that opens to this chamber is **locked**. If Vul Kovtu remains with the party, presently he becomes raving mad, hungry to attain the **green diamonds** nearby; he can sense their propinquity. **Thakos**, the **winged carnivorous ape**, dwells here. He awaits the party, having observed them since they first entered the mine. He hides behind the ebony chair (q.v.).

The brightly illumed, octagonal chamber features 10-foot walls and a 20-foot domed ceiling. From floor to ceiling this chamber is highly reflective. It is embellished in moonstone, mother-of-pearl, crystal, brass, and silver. The light's source is a brass chandelier depending from the top of the dome. It holds 24 white tapers that never burn down and never drip, unless removed from this chandelier.

Excepting the east wall with its ornate, brazen door, each wall is centred by a slightly recessed, 5 × 2½-foot mirror. Each of these seven mirrors is flanked by scarlet velvet curtains knotted to 10-foot-high brass rings. Above each mirror juts a narrow copper pipe. Each pipe protrudes six inches and then angles back in, pointing at its respective mirror. Like **crystal balls**, these mirrors do not shew reflexions; rather, they each shew another place, some perhaps familiar (see *mirrors*, hereafter).



A massive ebony chair inlaid with yellow ivory is set in the centre of the room, facing the entrance door. The chair's arms are stylized to represent coiled pythons, and the back portrays the hooded head of a gigantic, rearing cobra. A desiccated cadaver rests on this "serpent chair"; its detached, grinning skull, wispy with black hair, rests in its lap. The skeleton is garbed in a black, tattered gown with a scarlet silk sash slung over one bony shoulder. It speaks! It is a deep, barking voice that sounds more beast than man, as though something inhuman is attempting to mimic a man's speech. In the Common tongue it barks the following:

*Stand back, fools! Me big magic-man—most powerful in all da world! If you no obey me, me blast you with me very, very powerful magic! You can no have me green diamonds. They is mine—all mine! Now go away. Fast!*

This speaker is Thakos, huddled (though not completely concealed) behind the chair. He is a massive, seven-foot-tall, 500-pound, winged carnivorous ape with eyes that glow green. He wears a soiled scarlet sash around his shoulder and golden vambraces on his forearms.

The beast will spread his wings and rise to attack should anyone step foot in this room. He will also bark the word "mirror" in the Ixian dialect, which will invoke seven *mirror images* (as the spell) to appear. These images, however, will not disappear unless the beast is slain, or if the mirrors are destroyed; in the latter case, destroying a mirror "kills" one image, shattering it into fragments that then disappear. The beast will attempt to retreat through the **secret door** of *mirror #4 (W)* if the battle goes poorly for him, especially if all the mirrors have been destroyed.

**Thakos, winged carnivorous ape:** AL CE; SZ M; MV 40 (fly 50); DX 11; AC 4; HD 5 (hp 40); #A 2 (claw/claw); D 1d6+1/1d6+1; SV 14; ML 11; XP 350.

**Special:** Surprized only on 1-in-6 chance. If both claw attacks hit one opponent, rends for 1d8+1 hp additional damage.

**Gear:** **defensive bracers** (AC 4)

**Mirrors:** Each mirror is composed of quarter-inch-thick silvered glass and bears an image—but not that of the person or thing facing it; rather, it shows a nearby location. The copper pipes each contain a series of smaller mirrors that reflect and project light; indeed, this contrivance is as much science as it is sorcery. The image projected on each mirror is described in its respective entry; however, in each case, the location must be reasonably lit or the image is projected in the infrared spectrum (as the *infrared vision* spell). If the copper tube pointing at a mirror is blocked or ruined, the mirror functions only mundanely. If a mirror is destroyed, it is of course rendered useless.

*Mirror #1 (SE):* View of spiral stairs (#11)

*Mirror #2 (S):* View of Thakos' pen (#12)

*Mirror #3 (SW):* View of Xarthanos' quarters (#13)

*Mirror #4 (W):* View of lower cavern west (#10)

*Mirror #5 (NW):* View of Reintegration Facility (#9)

*Mirror #6 (N):* View of upper gallery (#2)

*Mirror #7 (NE):* View of iron door (#16)

**N.B.:** A **secret door** is behind *mirror #4 (W)*. It is opened by tugging the scarlet curtain immediately to the right of the mirror, causing the mirror to slide up into a pocket and revealing #15, to where Thakos may attempt to retreat. Of course, room #15 is also revealed if *mirror #4 (W)* is destroyed.

**Serpent Chair:** The ebony chair is mounted to the floor and built to swivel, allowing the seated to use his feet to rotate 360 degrees. Here reposes the skeleton of the necromancer, Karsas Xarthanos, placed here by his pet—and murderer—Thakos. He was killed by brute force, a snapped neck. A golden brooch stylized to represent a coiled cobra is pinned to his sash; this ornament is a **peript of proof against poison**.





**15. TREASURY:** This small, green-glowing chamber holds a large, leaden trunk brimming with thousands (3,475) of **green diamond** shards—so many that the lid cannot be shut. The room also holds a pile of treasure, including **512 gp**, **718 ep**, **902 sp**, a **+1 scimitar**, and a **+2 boomerang**. A makeshift **trapdoor** is in the floor of this room; Thakos dug a five-foot-diameter hole in the floor and covered it with a few large pieces of scrap metal from **#17**. The hole opens to the roof of **#10**.

**N.B.:** If Vul is present, he will go mad at the sight of this treasure trove of **green diamonds**, babbling incoherently and running his fingers through the radioactive crystals, his own eyes glowing green. He may become accusatory of any and every PC who so much as glances at him, convinced that they are out to steal “his” gems. The referee is at liberty to handle this development as desired: Vul might gather his wits, close up the lead trunk, and demand it be conveyed back to the ship; or he might go completely mad and attack the party; or he might become a drooling, babbling idiot, inarticulate and inconsolable. Of course, unless the man composes himself, he will be incapable of dispensing the party’s reward back in the City-State of Khromarium.

**16. PURPLE WORM TUNNEL:** Framed and

partially obscured by massive crystal shards, a **locked** iron door coated with rust opens to a dug-out passage, which in turn breaches a purple worm tunnel of ancient origins. This round, 10-foot-diameter tunnel is ribbed, corkscrewing through sand and stone. Where this tunnel is met (coming from **#8**), it presents as a vertical shaft whence cold air ebbs from bottomless depths. A ladder ascends 30 feet to a horizontal leg of the tunnel that continues for a mile north-northeast, all the way to the **Amazon skyship** hangar (**#17**). Falling down the hole indicates no uncertain death.

The tunnel is populated by hundreds of **giant black centipedes** that have burrowed into various nooks and crannies along the way. There is a 1-in-6 chance of encountering 3d4 of these creatures every 3 or 4 turns; assuming the party move at the standard dungeon rate of 120 feet per turn, the referee should make about 12 such checks along the way. Many other creepy-crawling creatures may be seen in the tunnel, but those are of a harmless (albeit bothersome) sort.

**Centipede, Giant Black:** AL N; SZ S; MV 20; DX 13; AC 9; HD ½ (hp 3); #A 1 (bite); D 1d2; SV 17; ML 7; XP 25.

*Special:* Bite delivers poison; make *death* (poison) save or suffer 2d6 hp additional damage.



## 17. AMAZON SKYSHIP HANGAR:

Massive double doors of steel-banded iron stand partly ajar but **stuck**; the northern door is cracked open about three inches, but all the hinges are frozen with rust and corrosion. A **giant black widow** dwells here; creaking open the double doors will no doubt alert her to the presence of the PCs. The double doors open to a large cavern that was worked into a hangar on the east-facing side of a cliff.

Dust and sand fill the hangar, forming a half- to one-inch film over everything within—most notably dozens of headless skeletons, slain by the massive simian long ago. Crates form long rows at the west side centre. They are stacked with metal panels and pipes long ago utilized and/or discarded by the Ixian engineers and metallurgists who once worked here. The metals include iron, copper, and their alloys.

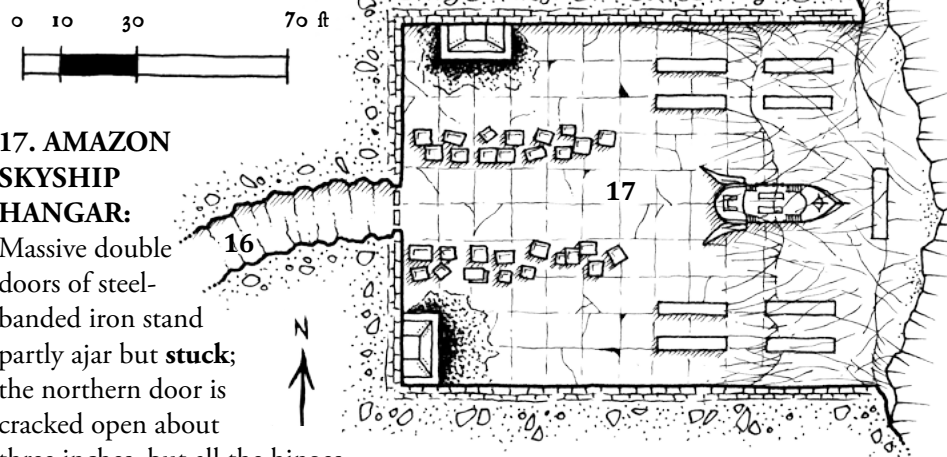
Two large forges are here, one in the northwest corner, the other in the southwest. Each contains smelting equipment lying about in disarray— anvils, axes, bellows, blocks, hammers (large and small), nails, swages, tongs, wedges, and so forth. They are all layered in dust and soot.

Desert air is admitted from the east end of the hangar. In fact, in daytime, a 20-foot-wide sliver of light filters in, though obscure, because the eastern portion of the hangar is laced with a massive network of cobwebs from floor to ceiling. These webs anchor on the old stone workbenches where Xarthanos' engineers and metallurgists performed much of their work.

Most prominent, however, is the **Amazon skyship**<sup>[17]</sup>, a 32-foot-long, 9-foot-wide skiff built of bronze plates and steel rivets. It too is enmeshed in cobwebs. The **skyship** is in remarkable condition. It had just been completed when Thakos launched his murderous coup d'état.

Within the webs dwells a six-foot-long **giant black widow**. Touching the webs both ensnares victims

17. See APPENDIX B.



and alerts the spider to take action. If entrapped in a web, a man can break free in (19–strength) rounds; e.g., 10 rounds with 9 strength, 3 rounds with 16 strength. Ensnared victims are effectively *prone* (attacker at +4 “to

hit”, defender loses shield and dexterity bonuses to AC). These webs can be melted by fire, but they are not flammable.

**Spider, Giant Black Widow:** AL N; SZ M; MV 30; DX 12; AC 6; HD 3 (hp 16); #A 1 (bite); D 2d6; SV 15; ML 7; XP 161.

*Special:* Bite victim must make *death* (poison) save or be paralyzed, dying in 1 turn. Wound becomes necrotic in any event, with 3-in-6 chance of infection unless *cure disease* is cast. After 30 days victim must make another save or die; otherwise, infection subsides.



## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The party yet have a 28-mile return trek to the *Desert Nomad*. If less than a week has elapsed, Captain Finnean and the crew of the *Nomad* will still be waiting at the mouth of the river to transport them back to Khromarium, with or without Vul. If more than a week has passed, the party will be marooned in Diamond Desert.

This adventure presents many challenges to overcome, as well as some significant rewards for a relatively low-level party. Depending upon how things play out, Vul may or may not be able to provide the promised reward of **1,000 gp** per adventurer. Another possibility is that the party want the **green diamonds** for themselves as **Amazon skyship** fuel. If Vul is able to secure the **green diamond** hoard and control his emotions, he will indeed make good on his promise once safely back in Khromarium. (He may later, in his paranoia, hire assassins to attempt to kill the party...)

## APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

### ANT, GIANT RADIOACTIVE

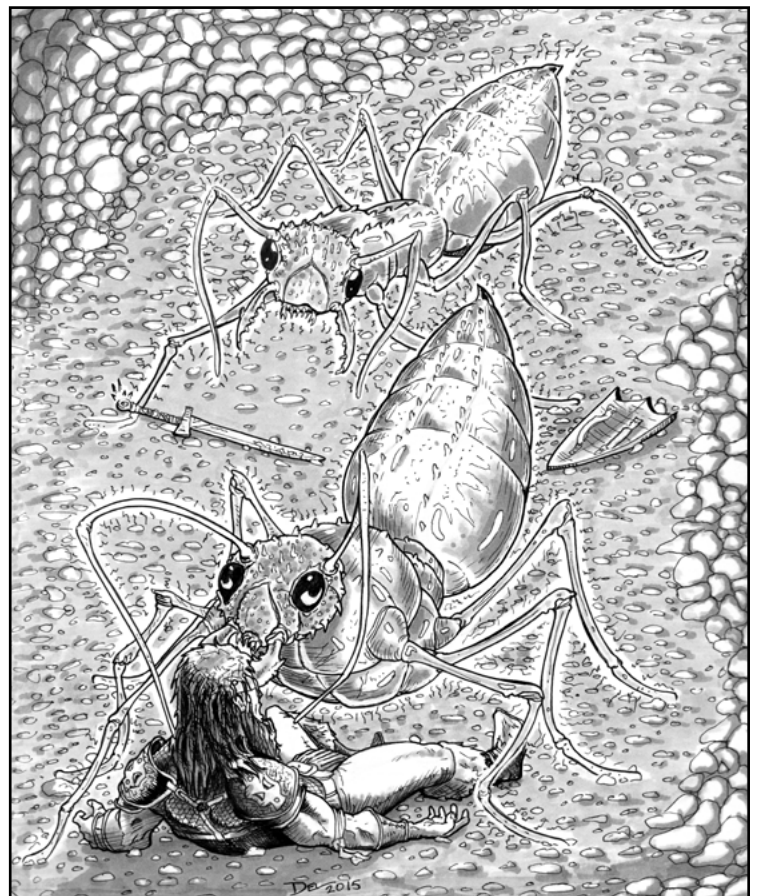
<i>No. Encountered:</i>	1d4 (3d6)
<i>Alignment:</i>	Neutral
<i>Size:</i>	M
<i>Movement:</i>	60
<i>Dexterity:</i>	13
<i>Armour Class:</i>	3
<i>Hit Dice:</i>	4
<i>No. of Attacks:</i>	1 (bite)
<i>Damage:</i>	1d8
<i>Saving Throw:</i>	15
<i>Morale:</i>	8
<i>Experience Points:</i>	180
<i>Treasure Class:</i>	Q (x4)

These ants of five- to eight-foot length have been irradiated by **green diamonds**. They present with pale grey, semi-transparent exoskeletons, under which their internal organs glow iridescent green, most notably the *metasoma* (posterior). Giant radioactive ants are carnivorous and insatiably hungry. Unlike other **giant ants**, these creatures

display limited intelligence, communicating over vast distances via a warbling whistle emitted by their vibrating antennæ. This sound can also produce a mesmerizing effect (see below). Giant radioactive ants will oft congregate in threes, head-to-head, antennæ taking to a brighter, pulsating green glow. The significance of this activity is not yet understood.

#### *Special:*

- ★ Warbling whistle can be used to communicate with other giant radioactive ants within two miles, or it can be modified to mesmerize a single mammal within 240 feet. The target must make a *spell* save or enter a trance, dropping anything held and blindly walking toward the whistler; he effectively presents a defenceless target to be devoured.
- ★ Upon successful mandible bite, 1-in-6 chance the creature will arch its metasoma to sting the target at +2 "to hit". If this attack hits, it causes 1d3 hp damage and delivers a lethal dose of radiation; make *death* (radiation) save or die in 1d6 turns. Even if death is averted, the victim suffers a complete loss of hair within 24 hours; recurrent nausea results as well.



**PEGOMASTAX**

<i>No. Encountered:</i>	1 (1d6)
<i>Alignment:</i>	Neutral
<i>Size:</i>	S
<i>Movement:</i>	50
<i>Dexterity:</i>	12
<i>Armour Class:</i>	6
<i>Hit Dice:</i>	½
<i>No. of Attacks:</i>	3 (claw / claw / bite)
<i>Damage:</i>	1 / 1 / 1d3
<i>Saving Throw:</i>	17
<i>Morale:</i>	5
<i>Experience Points:</i>	7
<i>Treasure Class:</i>	—

A bipedal reptilian of ancient origins, the cat-sized pegomastax has a long neck and tail, a hooked beak beweaponed with large upper and lower tusks, a pair of grasping forelimbs, and two strong, claw-tipped legs. Long, soft bristles cover the rear of its mottled brown head and back. The pegomastax inhabits arid regions such as Diamond Desert, where it feeds on tough leaves and other vegetation. Like **archæopteryges**, a few have been trained as familiars by magicians, witches, and (rarely) necromancers of 7<sup>th</sup> level or higher, and these also evince a degree of empathy with their masters.

*Special:*

- ★ If both claw attacks hit one opponent, it uses its rear claws to rend, each causing 1d2 hp additional damage.

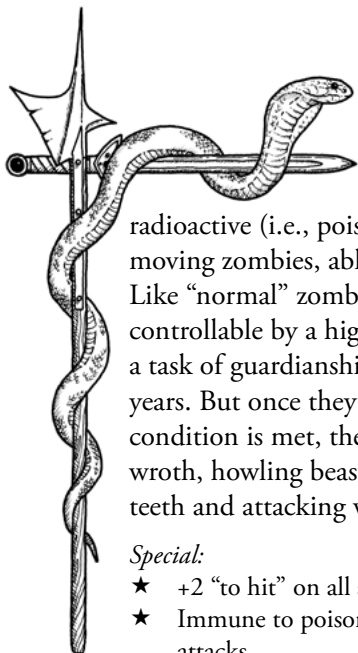
**ZOMBIE, RADIOACTIVE BERSERKER**  
*(Undead Type 3)*

<i>No. Encountered:</i>	1d6 (4d6)
<i>Alignment:</i>	Chaotic Evil
<i>Size:</i>	M
<i>Movement:</i>	40
<i>Dexterity:</i>	8
<i>Armour Class:</i>	7
<i>Hit Dice:</i>	3+6
<i>No. of Attacks:</i>	2 (pummel or weapon) or 1 (bite)
<i>Damage:</i>	1d4+2 or 1d3+2 (or per weapon +2)
<i>Saving Throw:</i>	13
<i>Morale:</i>	12
<i>Experience Points:</i>	180
<i>Treasure Class:</i>	J, K, L, M

These undead wild men died of **green diamond** radiation poisoning. Radioactive berserker zombies are noted for eyes that glow bright green. They present with pale, jaundiced, or even tenebrous skin, typically riddled with oozing ulcers, and oft they are hairless or shew patchy hair loss.

These frightening undead do not carry the transmissible disease of zombiism, but they are





radioactive (i.e., poisonous). Also, they are fast-moving zombies, able to ambulate with impunity. Like “normal” zombies, these undead humanoids are controllable by a higher power and oft are assigned a task of guardianship, able to lie dormant for years. But once they are disturbed, or if a prescribed condition is met, they react as **wild berserkers**: wroth, howling beasts, gnashing their splintered teeth and attacking with reckless abandon.

*Special:*

- ★ +2 “to hit” on all attack rolls.
- ★ Immune to poison, paralysis, fear, and cold-based attacks.
- ★ *Delay poison* puts a radioactive zombie to sleep for the spell’s duration; *neutralize poison* destroys one.
- ★ 1-in-4 chance per round of bite attempt; otherwise, pummel or weapon attacks apply until the radioactive zombie drops its foe, which it will then attempt to eat.
- ★ Bite inflicts radiation poisoning. Victim must make *death* (radiation) save or die in 3d12 hours. During these hours, the victim spikes a fever, suffers nausea, and (in the last hour) experiences delirium. Even if the save is made, bite victims suffer temporary hair loss and general fatigue for two weeks.

## APPENDIX B: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

**Amazon Skyship:** This vessel is the creation of ancient Amazonian scientists, whose work was inspired by Atlantean coevals. The craft is of 32-foot length and 9-foot hull width, built of bronze plates and steel rivets. It resembles a skiff with no sail. It is open topped and railed all around, with benches at port and starboard; these latter double as storage chests.

At the helm are a chair, two steel navigation rods, and two pedals. The left rod controls ascent (down position) and descent (up position), and the right rod controls turning port (up position) and starboard (down position). The pedals are for forwards acceleration (right pedal) and reverse acceleration (left pedal). A red pushbutton starts the engine, which purrs like a kitten so long as it has fuel: **green diamonds**. A blue pushbutton activates a *protection from normal missiles* field around the helmsman; this effect persists for 1 turn and

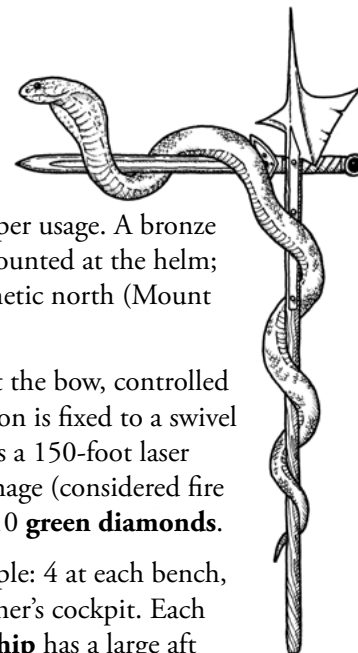
consumes 10 **green diamonds** per usage. A bronze sextant and compass are also mounted at the helm; the latter always points to magnetic north (Mount Vhuurmithadon).

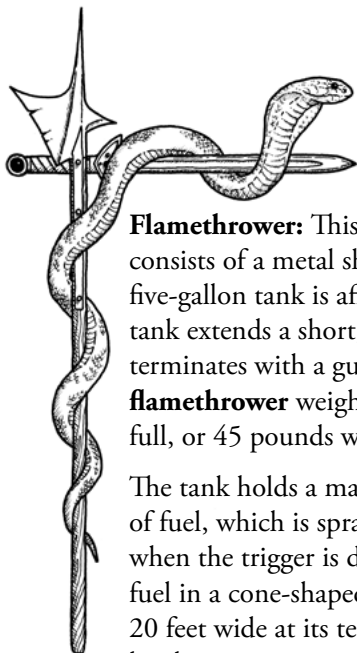
A **laser crossbow** is mounted at the bow, controlled from a small cockpit. The weapon is fixed to a swivel that turns 270 degrees. It shoots a 150-foot laser blast that inflicts 1d6+6 hp damage (considered fire damage). Each shot consumes 10 **green diamonds**.

The **skyship** seats up to 10 people: 4 at each bench, 1 at the helm, and 1 at the gunner’s cockpit. Each seat has a safety strap. The **skyship** has a large aft chamber that houses its engine of crystal, copper, and steel; also, here lies its **green diamond** fuel tank, along with appurtenant lead compartments for **green diamond** storage (1,000 **green diamonds** capacity each). A single **green diamond** provides fuel for one mile of flight. When the final crystal is absorbed, the **skyship** enters an automatic safety descent.

The **Amazon skyship** can hover to a height of 100 feet over any surface, be it land or water. This elevation does not include trees, buildings, or other obstacles, just ground or water. If the craft approaches a vertical surface (such as a cliff) that is greater than 100 feet in elevation, the **skyship** must slow to a crawl; otherwise it will crash. Next, it can gradually ascend, the nose of the craft remaining 10 feet from the vertical surface. Lastly, a skilled navigator can accelerate to full speed over the Rapids at the End of the World, ride into the winds of the *boreas*, and achieve the Floating Island of Paradoxon. (Of course, there is always a chance of hurtling into the Black Gulf...) *MV = 150 feet/round, 90 miles/day; AC = 6\**; *Hull Points = 5d6; XP value = 8,000; GP value = 80,000.*

\* Vessel gains +1 AC bonus if captain is 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> level, +2 AC if 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> level, +3 AC if 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> level.





**Flamethrower:** This ancient, otherworldly device consists of a metal shoulder harness to which a five-gallon tank is affixed. From the bottom of the tank extends a short, corrugated metal hose that terminates with a gun-like, triggered nozzle. A **flamethrower** weighs 65 pounds when the tank is full, or 45 pounds when empty.

The tank holds a maximum of 60 seconds (6 rounds) of fuel, which is sprayed and simultaneously ignited when the trigger is depressed, releasing the burning fuel in a cone-shaped jet of fire 60 feet long and 20 feet wide at its terminus. The flames inflict 6d8 hp damage to any creature within range, followed by 3d8 hp residual damage the following round; an *avoidance* save halves all damage. Fuel can be replaced with 700 gp (i.e., 20 flasks) of incendiary oil (*Greek fire*), but refuelling must be conducted by a master alchemist, or consequences can be deadly. *XP value* = 4,500; *GP value* = 45,000.

**Knots String:** This item appears to be a simple string that holds a maximum of seven knots. Untying a knot on the deck of a sailing vessel bellies its sail(s) and increases its speed (i.e., its “knots”) to a rate equal to a *strong breeze* (+33% MV, 5% chance of torn sail and/or fouled rigging) for 24 turns (4 hours). Dropping the sail(s) cancels the effect, however. *XP Value* = 700; *GP Value* = 3,500.

**Rod of Iron Detection:** This heavy (8-lb.) rod of dull black iron has a knobby, mace-like head and a narrow, cross-hatched haft of 18 inches. It is usable by any character class. The rod functions as a **+1 footman’s mace**.

At the top of the handle is a single button. If the button is pressed, the rod can detect the presence of iron and/or steel to a depth of 50 feet. The head of the rod will begin to shake and then point in the direction of the metal for 1 turn. The rod will not detect a single small object, but it will detect a mass of such. When the rod’s final charge is expended, it disintegrates to rust particles. *XP Value* = 1,500; *GP Value* = 7,500.

## APPENDIX C: GREEN DIAMONDS

**Green diamonds** are radioactive crystals that grow underground, typically in desert or scrubland regions. In immemorial times, Amazons and Atlanteans used the crystals to power their flying vessels. These crystals are, however, poisonous.

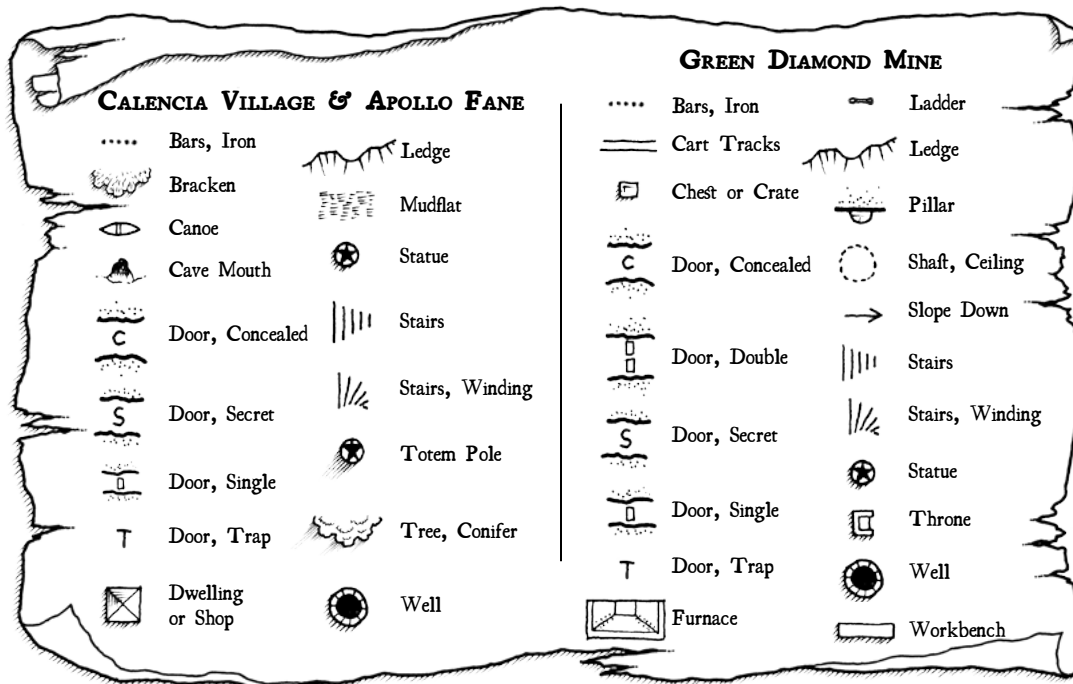
If handled by a human for 24 hours or more without the proper protection (leaden gloves, apron, and tongs; proper storage compartment composed of lead; etc.), a *death* (poison) saving throw must be rolled. Failure results in a growing madness and greed, eventually leading to homicidal mania; too, the pupils of the afflicted transform to a bright glowing green. Such a victim eventually becomes stark raving mad. He also experiences a keen perspicacity to the presence of other **green diamonds**.

If the initial *death* (poison) save is successful, the deleterious effects are resisted for but one day before another saving throw must be made, at a cumulative –1 penalty per day. *Cure disease* can end the radiation sickness, but even a cured person retains a craving to acquire more **green diamonds**, unless *cure madness* is also cast. Lastly, **green diamonds** can have different effects on other (nonhuman) creatures, typically mammals.



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## MASTER MAP KEY



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## PLAYER HANDOUT #1



**Entry #1:** *I was there when our Divine Deity, Thakos the Great and Powerful, broke our bonds and freed us from the yoke of the Ixian sorcerer, Xarthanos. From the pit we cried for the sorcerer's blood. Our lord answered! He brought forth the foul sorcerer, who snivelled and begged for his despicable life. The Divine One held our oppressor high above his terrible, snarling head. We chanted for blood! Then the Divine One snapped the sorcerer's neck like a twig. Our jubilations resounded! But we thirsted for more blood—and vengeance! We slew every taskmaster, and then we ravaged the surface village. Now it is ours. I even picked my own hut.*

**Entry #2:** *Now we live like kings in the village above the mine, and the Divine One has given us each our own green diamond. We are free and rich.*

**Entry #3:** *No one runs the waterwheel deep below, and the main mine has flooded.*

**Entry #4:** *Madness grips many of my fellow former slaves. Not me. Blood and death have followed thievery and accusations—all over the diamonds. Now our Divine Deity wants our green diamonds back, but not all obey him. He slays those who disobey. But some of us can't bear to part with our gems. I hid mine.*

**Entry #5:** *Many have now returned to the mine, sick and fevered. Not me. Not going back, because that cursed ape will take my stone. It is mine! Mine!*

**Entry #6:** *More die. My cousin wanted my green diamond, but I would not give it up. He said he would give it to the Divine One, but why should I surrender my stone to a hairy ape? It is too precious to me. It makes me see clearly. I was forced to slit my cousin's throat.*

**Entry #7:** *The ape has returned from another one of his desert flights. He has ordered the last of us to abandon the settlement and retreat to the mines. He says a massive sandstorm rages across the desert, and a Viking ship is coming upriver to raid our home. I am taking my green diamond and fleeing. There is a cave nearby. I will make that my home.*

**Entry #8:** *The Vikings entered the mine and fought against those ape-worshipping fools. From my vantage I saw the ape fight their leader, a massive Viking berserker with a bull neck. I know now that the ape is not a true god, for truly the Viking had bested it, but just as the Viking lifted his great axe to deliver the final death blow, a blast of sand blinded him, and the ape sprang up and tore out the Viking's neck.*

**Entry #9:** *The cave is good, but it is lonely here. I am alive! I am stronger than a river. The river was eaten by the storm, but I live! None of the other slaves ever leave the mine now. In fact, the sand has buried the entrance shaft. Sometimes I hear them howling down there.*

**Entry #10:** *So cold. Burning, too. My hair has fallen out.*

**Entry #11:** *A wasp sings inside my ear. I ate a laughing bat. It mocked me.*

**Entry #12:** *The Green Sun watches me. Never blinking, always boiling.*

(The last few entries are illegible scribbles.)

✂ ..... ✂

## PLAYER HANDOUT #2

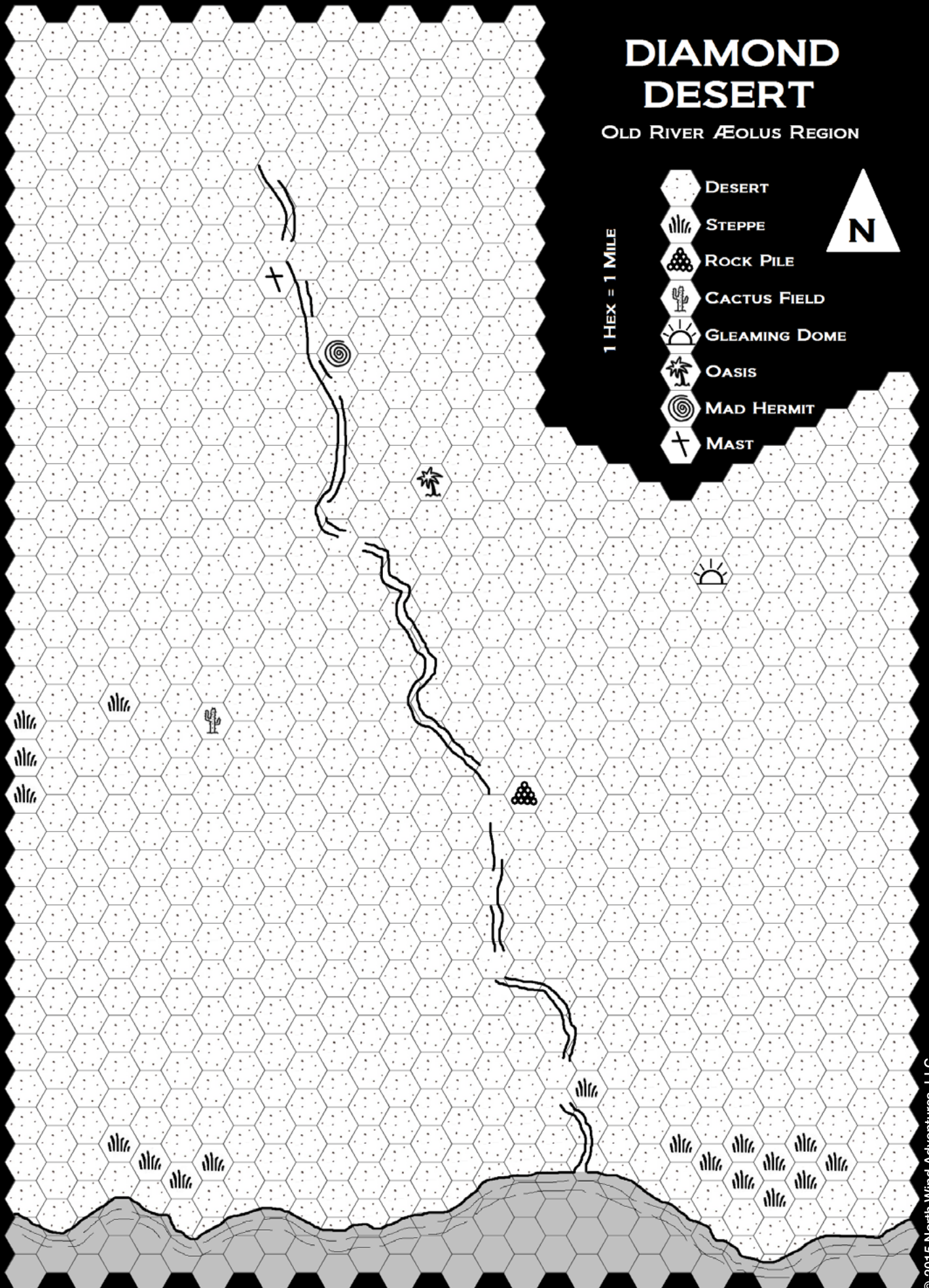
*My most puissant master, contained in this small bundle you will find the three magical devices you require. Know that Xarthanos is a distracted man; I believe he is unaware of you, his so-called "engineer". However, the winged simian has a nose for those who would betray his master, so beware the brute. Once you have commandeered the skyship, I beg of you, please take me with you to Scythium, where I will ever serve you as loyal apprentice. Praise be the Lord of Serpents!*

# DIAMOND DESERT

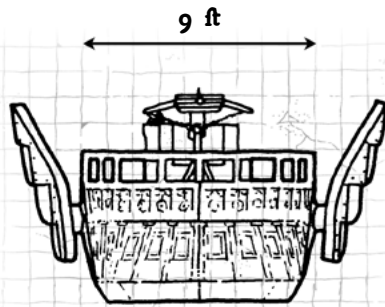
OLD RIVER ÆOLUS REGION

1 HEX = 1 MILE

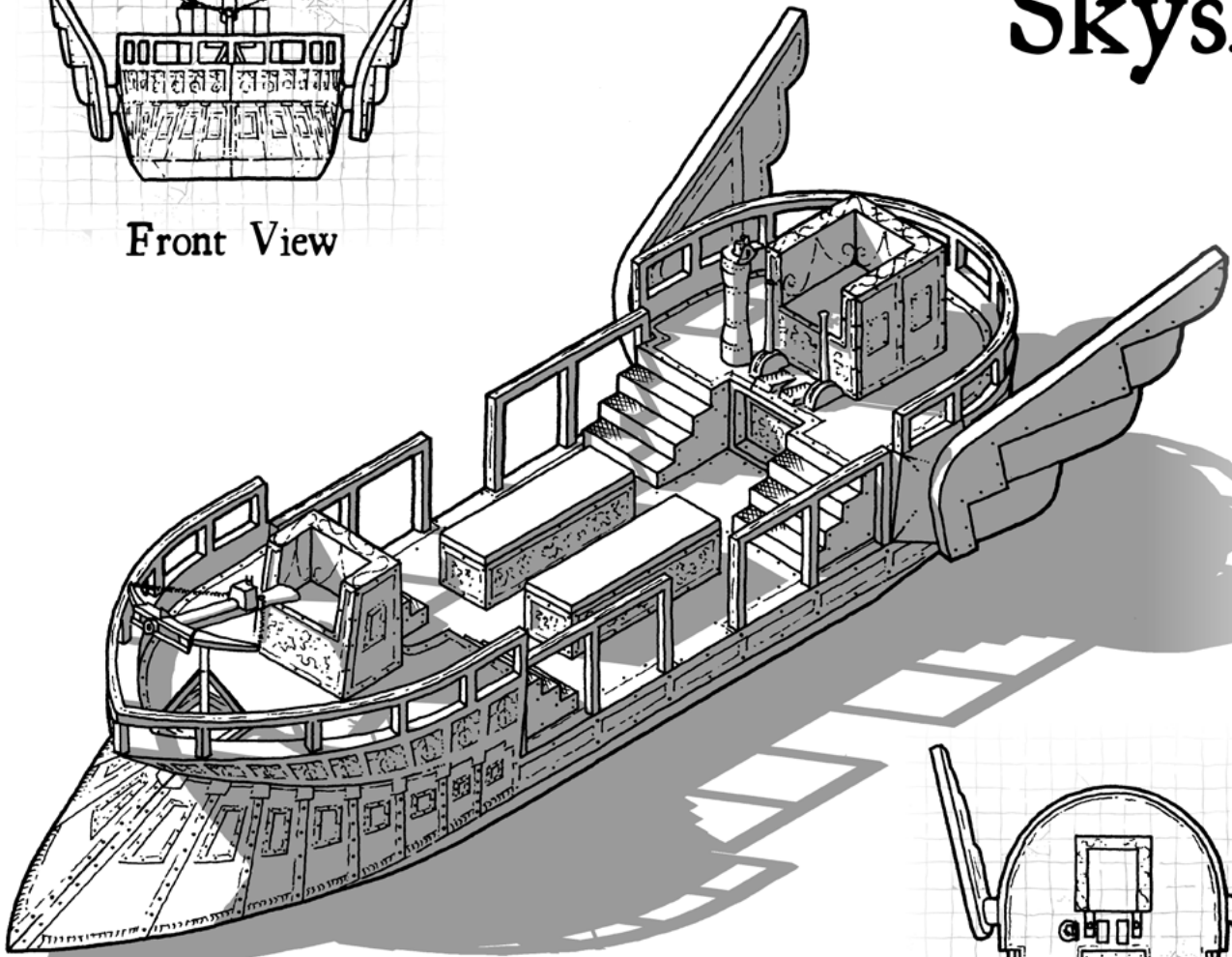
-  DESERT
-  STEPPE
-  ROCK PILE
-  CACTUS FIELD
-  GLEAMING DOME
-  OASIS
-  MAD HERMIT
-  MAST



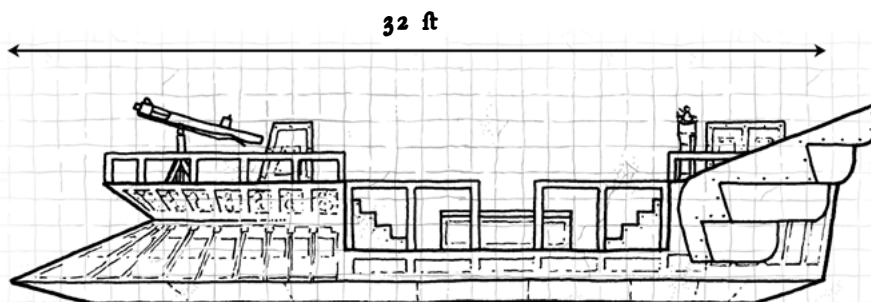
# Amazon Skyship



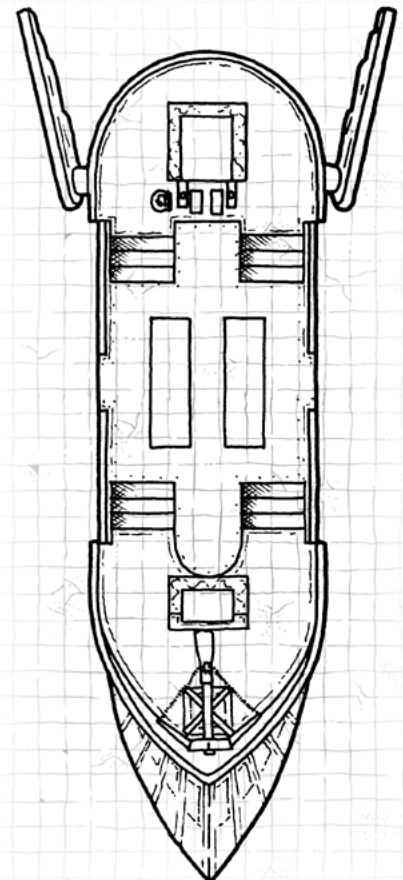
Front View



**Length:** 32 ft; **Width:** 9 ft; **Ceiling:** 100 ft  
**Material:** Bronze-plated  
**Passengers:** 8; **Crew:** 2 (1 pilot, 1 gunner)  
**Engine:** Crystal, Copper, and Steel; **Fuel:** Green Diamonds  
**Armament:** Laser Crossbow



Side View



Plan

# GHOST SHIP OF THE DESERT DUNES™

*An adventure in Hyperborea designed for from four to six characters of 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> level*



Somewhere in the depths of Diamond Desert lie the skeletal remains of *Ymir's Serpent*, a legendary Viking longship. In days of yore, Sigtrygg Forkbeard led his company upriver, piercing the desert's hostile heart. There the Vikings unearthed a lost mine brimming with green diamonds, but the River Æolus desiccated as the *Serpent* prepared for launch, and the ship was swallowed by the dunes. Forkbeard and his company were never seen again, but tales of a shimmering Viking ghost ship gliding over the dunes persist to this day.

## ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN AND SORCERERS OF HYPERBOREA™



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