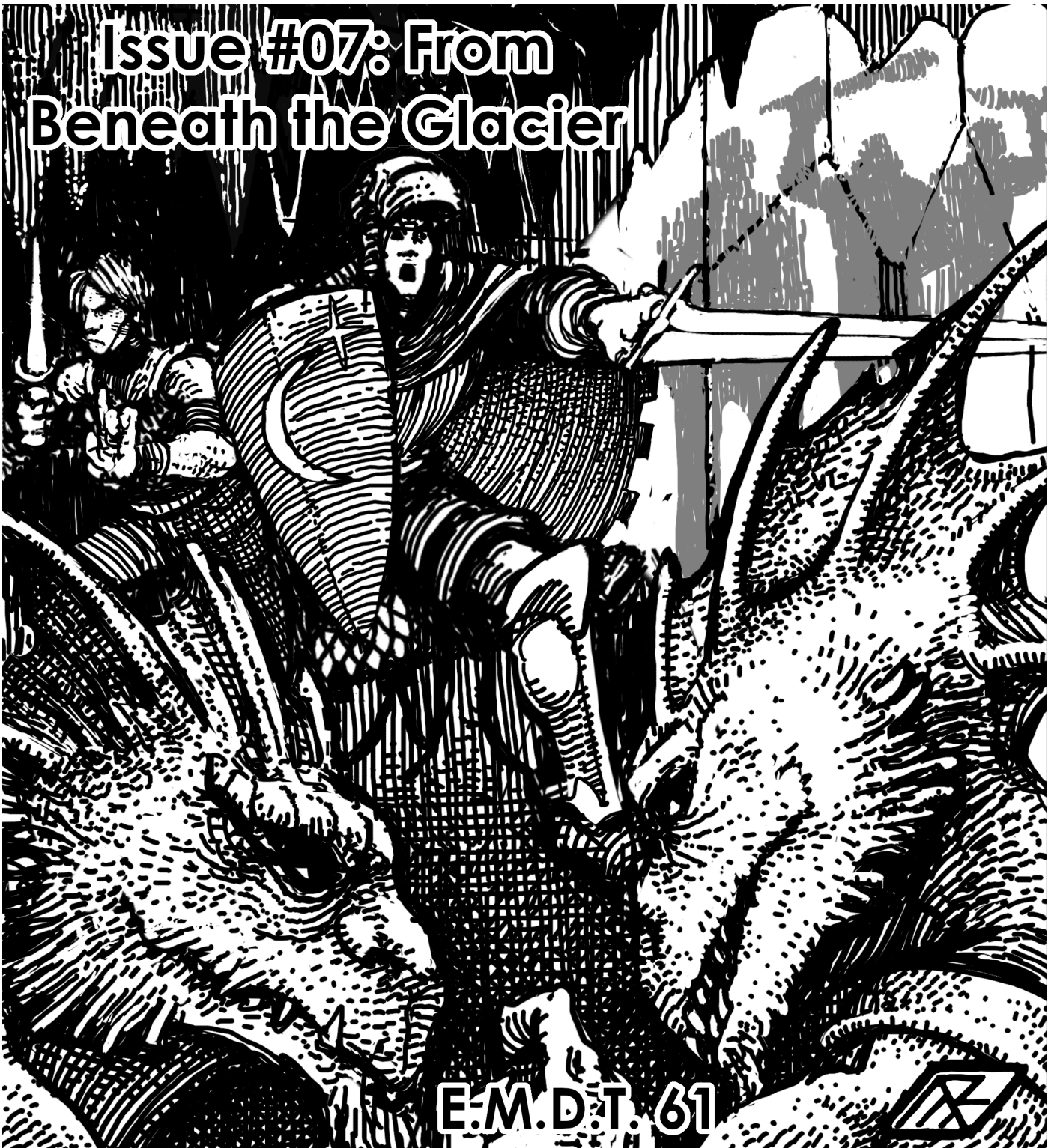


Echoes From FOMALHAUT



E. M. D. T.
First Hungarian
D20 Society

Issue #07: From Beneath the Glacier



E.M.D.T. 61



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Issue #07: "From Beneath the Glacier"

by Gabor Lux

**Illustrated by Matthew Ray (cover), Graphite Prime (pp. 23, 26, 36),
Stefan Poag (pp. 14, 20), Denis McCarthy (pp. 2, 32), Gabor Lux (p. 31),
and the Dead Victorians (pp. 9, 16, 22).**

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Like archaic horrors frozen in ice, this zine has now been thawed out after a brief slumber. While we can't know if the Bat-Gods still have a trick or two up their sleeve, we can at least do what the OD&D booklets' Afterward (sic) told us to. So we fight on, and this zine continues, too, as long as it remains one of life's small pleasures for myself and, I hope, you as well.

Speaking of ice realms, the current issue begins with a module set in the forbidding high mountains, where a melting glacier is set to unleash untold horrors on the human-inhabited valleys below. The disaster can be halted for a while... but can it be stopped? The precise answer has been conveniently left out, for this is something only you can decide for your campaign.

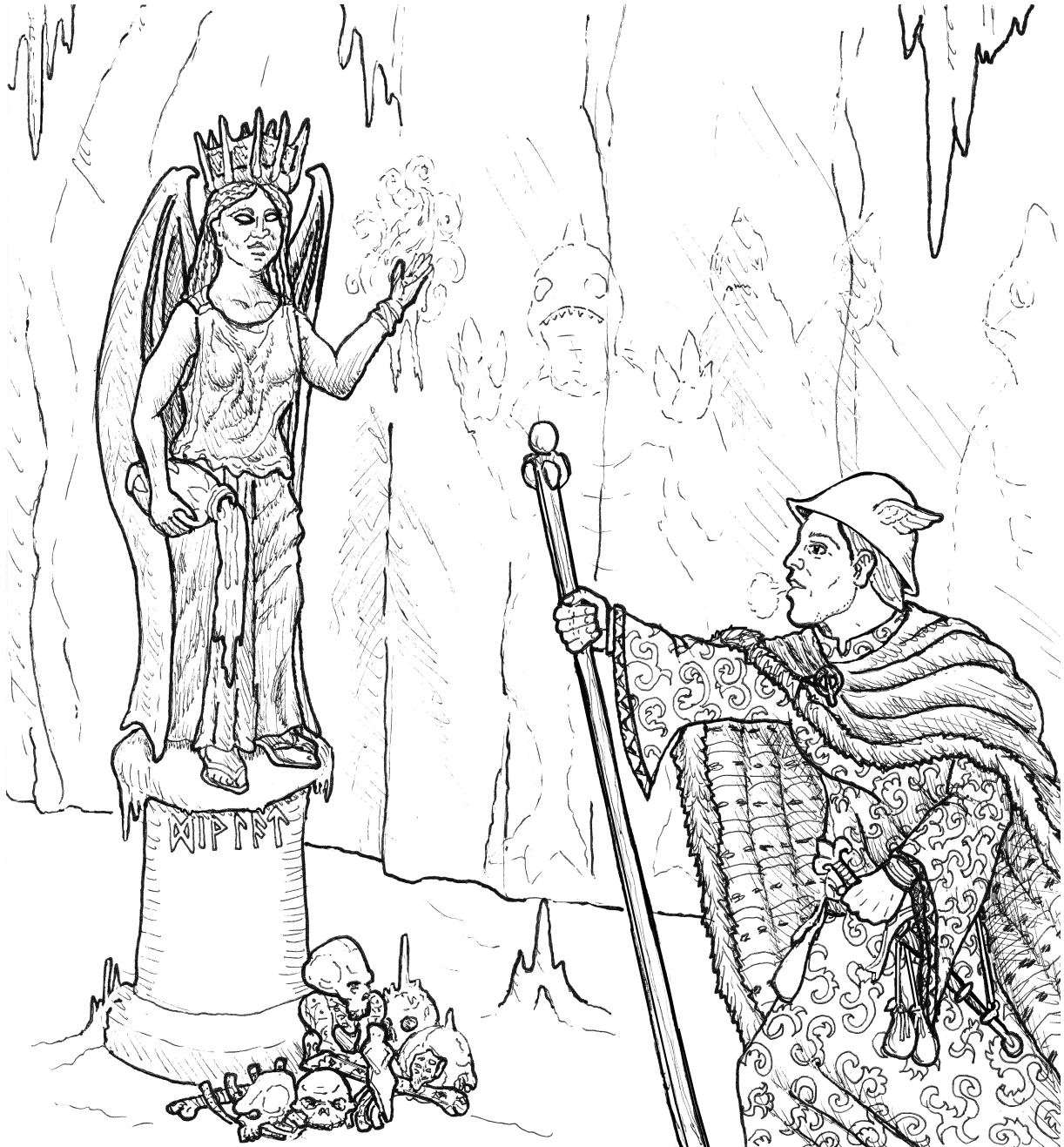
Further materials also lead deeper into the City of Vultures. The largest of these articles is a tomb-complex beneath the city, and the one to have seen the most play in our campaigns. It is close to the street surface, but goes deep – most who have been down there have never seen the true depths of it. Appearances can also be deceptive when it comes to secret societies: the White Hand, described in this issue, has become a mirror maze of deceit and conflicting agendas that would confuse even those who would consider themselves its leaders – if they knew the truth. There is more honesty to be found among the undead monsters prowling The Hecatomb of Morthevole, a mini-module unearthing a lost burial vault.

Last but not least, this issue's map supplement gives you a blank dungeon level, designed to be populated according to your wishes, and printed in a way to make it suitable for alteration and expansion. Or is it multiple levels on a single sheet? You decide.

Gabor Lux
Pécs, 4 may 2020

FROM BENEATH THE GLACIER

Adventure module for levels 5–7



Playtesters: Gabor Acs (Phil the Terror of Turkeys, halfling Archer/Thief 5/3); Istvan Boldog-Bernad (Armand the Scumbag, human Assassin 7); Kalman Farago (Drölhaf Häffnarskörung, northman Barbarian/Thief 5/4); Laszlo Feher (Lafadriel Hundertwasser, elf Fighter 7); Gabor Izapy (Zartan, human Illusionist 5).

Background

The narrow mountain valley has been of little interest to locals despite its indeterminate evil reputation. Save for the occasional hunter, few had reason to venture up the gorges and behold the great icy mass of the boreal realms: indeed, these visits were so rare that the mountain people didn't even realise the glacier was slowly melting. But as it did, the disappearing slabs of ice revealed more than dark stones and crushed gravel: first, cave mouths and rapid streams; then, tunnels concealing the remains of a primordial catastrophe.

Two great armies, one of inhuman troglodytes, and one of cavemen (themselves eager anthropophagi), had been trapped in the glacier by long-lost ice magics, neither alive nor fully dead. Now free, these forces clashed again in the narrow passages, and the troglodytes prevailed. After gorging themselves on the hapless man-apes, the survivors of the battle set out to free more of their comrades, and emerge into the great outdoors. In recent months, formless corpses have been washed down the gorges to the villages, and brutal nighttime raids on homesteads and isolated shepherds' cottages have revived legends of an ancient evil – somewhere up in the mountains.

The glacier caverns are a treacherous environment of melting ice, freezing water pools, and subterranean menaces. But the main threat is represented by the troglodytes, who have established themselves in the tunnel system. They have set guards, and pose a clear danger to a careless group. However, they are not terribly organised, and they may be quite easily outsmarted. Presently, the cavemen are either vanquished, or still slumbering: they play no active role in this scenario.

Should the troglodytes remain unvanquished, their numbers will soon be bolstered with further forces from the thawing ice. Unless driven away for good, they will bring death and untold horrors to the mountain villages. Likewise, if the troglodytes are gone, but the cavemen emerge from their icy sleep, the fate of the valleys will be none better. It is up to the characters to find a way to prevent this occurrence.

It is quite likely the characters will be left with a conundrum after their expedition to the glacier. They might be dealing with a destructive invasion by caveman primitives, or worse, the troglodytes who are the implacable enemies of man. Mounting followup raids to the glacier, or mustering a defensive force in the mountains to protect the villagers against nighttime raids might take an additional session or two, and there might be other discoveries to make concerning the events which have led to the icy cataclysm. Of course, they can just walk away and live with their conscience – the villages are poor, and it is not like the consequences will spread beyond a few isolated valleys. Will they?

Mountaineering Guidelines

Navigation: Unless running, under attack by enemies, or noted in text, thieves need not roll to climb cliff faces and the glacier surface, since adequate footholds are available. Other characters climb at their level at a -40% probability, and they must make regular checks unless aided by ropes and grapnels. One check is necessary for every tunnel section travelled. A failed roll means no progress has been made. A failure by over 20% means either a treacherous fall (1d6 Hp) or lost equipment (-20% to further checks). After a failure, the character must either spend a turn regaining footing, or face a new check immediately on the next attempt at movement.

Hypothermia: Submersion in icy cold water, or prolonged exposure to sub-zero temperatures can result in the loss of 1d6 Strength unless thick furs or waterproof clothes are worn. A character who cannot find warmth after wading or swimming will retain the penalty, and will be sneezing and coughing, spoiling chances of surprise.



The Glacier

1. Gorge: The mountain river rushes through a gap between tall cliffsides; great boulders and broken pines offer a way to climb upwards through the cascades. Caught among the rocks, the **putrefying body** of a troglodyte still holds an elk's jawbone and a flint-tipped javelin. The corpse is too badly decomposed to determine its identity, save for a humanoid build and the presence of fins and scales. A **secret trail** leads up to the cliffs. It is only found on a thorough search; outdoorsmen have a 1:6 to locate it outright, and rangers or druids have **1:3**.

2. River entrance: The receding ice of the glacier has freed a semi-circular area surrounded by jagged cliffs. The river emerges from beneath the thick ice sheet, and plunges into a **shallow pool** with a dull roar. Entering from here requires characters to wade into the pool (check for hypothermia) and swim against the current. Furthermore, **8 troglodytes** have been posted up among the cliffs. Six attack from an ambush with javelins and dislodged boulders (1d10 Hp), while the other two run to alert their companions. Characters approaching via the mountain trail gain surprise.

Climbing up on the glacier surface is possible with some effort (see navigation guidelines). The glacier is a great, dazzling ice plain, dotted with numerous **vertical shafts**. Due to the melting ice, approaching these shafts is hazardous; the chance of slipping is **1:6**, followed by an immediate climb check. **2:3** of the shafts are just fissures in the ice (depth 1d6*10'); the rest allow descent into the tunnels. All have a **1:6** probability of collapsing (6d6 Hp). Depending on the characters' location relative to the river entrance, they may end up at **6, 3** (above the river), **10** (above the waterfall), **17**, or **18**.

Troglodytes (8): HD 2; AC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d4+1 or stone handaxe 1d6 or javelin 2d4+3; Special surprise 1-4, stench (save vs. poison, 1d6 Str for 1 turn, cumulative); ML 7; AL CE; 2*javelins each.

Hp	6	16	3	12	7	15
	10	8				

3. River cavern: Spacious, low-ceilinged ice cavern bisected by the churning **river**. Silvery fish swim in the cold water. The only safe spots to cross are the shallows immediately below the cascade (knee-high water), and a natural stone bridge to the north (**11**). **Limestone formations** on the NE bank have been smeared with a greasy material, and crudely painted to resemble fantastic, lumpy monsters (may be mistaken for such). Behind, stones have been heaped up to block the **passage** to **4** and prevent the **giant slug-thing** from coming up here.

4. Cold cave: This cave is on the border of the ice mass and solid bedrock. Rainbow traces on the surfaces are frozen film left by the **giant slug-thing**, which has **1:6** to emerge from its lair at **7, 1:3** if the company makes much noise. **Steam** fills N passage, reducing visibility.

5. Glacial pits: Light is reflected and multiplied by the crystalline ice walls of this cave section. Small rivulets of water tumble down from deepening cracks. Five **ice pits** lie open in the ground. Dozens of dark shapes are trapped in the ice walls: the lost **cavemen** of the prehistoric age, frozen until thawed out. The melting ice renders surfaces slippery, and climbing down the pits, or up to **6** is a climbing hazard. The pits are all 30' deep, containing 1' of icy water intermixed with ice slurry, and:

- The furry flank of a dead mastodon, half exposed. The meat, if a bit rancid, is still edible!
- The brained body of a caveman hunter, holding four obsidian-tipped javelins (javelin +1). If the javelins are taken, the **wraith** of the hunter attacks.
- Sharp icicles: they break on impact, but deal 3d4 damage on a fall.
- The exposed skull of a woolly mammoth. The body is rotted, but the enormous eye is still alive, peering at the characters in helpless rage and panic. Pair of tusks worth 2200 gp if extracted.
- A squishy mass of corpses, some troglodyte, some man-ape. Scaled and furry **hands** reach for the hapless intruder, attacking once as a single 4 HD monster (2d6 Hp), before falling back lifeless.

Caveman wraith: HD 5+3; AC 4; Atk touch 1d6+drain; Spec drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold, charm, sleep, hold; ML 10; AL LE.

Hp 24

6. Freezer room: Several dozen squat, bow-legged bodies, **cavemen** all, are frozen into scintillating ice slabs. The tribe numbers 140, half of fighting age, the rest women and cubs. A lost shield of much more advanced make, with the device of a sword piercing a wheel is half lodged into the ice (*shield -1*). The caveman can be revived if the ice melts, although they will be feeble and disoriented at first. Their reactions will depend on a combination of the characters' negotiation skills and blind luck.

Cavemen: HD 2; AC 8[12]; Att spear 1d6+1 or stone handaxe 1d6+1; ML 8; AL N.

Hp	13	7	3	6	10	10
	9	6	5	11	11	8
	6	6	10	4	6	8

7. Hot spring: Warm, fizzy mineral water springs from the depths of the earth, leaving **mineral deposits** (2d6*80 gp), and generating billowing steam clouds in the cold environment. Here is the lair of the **giant slug-thing**, its formless bulk rendered fantastic by the glittering rainbow layer of mineral salts. The water of the springs collects in a shallow **natural basin** before draining away (*cure disease* equivalent, also cures mummy rot, etc. – no effect if it cools down).

Giant slug-thing: HD 12; AC 8; Atk spit acid 1d12 or crush 2d8; Spec first spit only 10% accurate, subsequent 100% minus 10%/10' distance, immune to normal bludgeoning weapons; ML 8; AL N.

Hp 55

8. Bone heaps: Petrified bones of many primordial beasts have been collected here in an unruly heap, fused into a single whole by limestone encrustation. Broken arrow tips, clay shards, and other primitive tools are also apparent.

9. Midden: A tall domed cavern; the walls are black rock, but the **ceiling is ice** – thin enough for faint illumination to shine through (or collapse if disturbed – **1:6**, 3d8 Hp if it comes crashing down to reveal a huge hole in the glacier). Further bone heaps and ancient refuse are collected underneath; broken spears are thrust into their sides. Vivid **cave paintings** depict a battle between the scaly, monstrous troglodytes, and a tight grouping of hunched cavemen. In another scene, a smaller number of cavemen are shown in a victory dance over their fallen enemies. The dancers still move and shift if nobody is looking directly. The *wondrous pigments* are magical, and can be scraped off and reused.

10. Waterfall: Abundant waters rushing through a crevasse. The **ledge** passing underneath is slippery from the water spray, and only allows passage in a single file. **6 troglodytes** wait in an ambush position. They try to attack from surprise with thrown javelins, concentrating on characters carrying light sources. Any character who is hit twice in succession must roll a climb check or get knocked off the ledge and be swept down to **3** by the current. Path to the east leads to the gallery above the central cavern.

Troglodytes (6): HD 2; AC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d4+1 or stone handaxe 1d6 or javelin 2d4+3; Special surprise 1-4, stench (save vs. poison, 1d6 Str for 1 turn, cumulative); ML 7; AL CE; 2*javelins each.

Hp	13	15	8	13	7	7
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11. Bridge: This entrance to the central cavern consists of a natural **stone bridge** over the rushing water, and a cavern filled with bulbous **limestone formations** carved and painted to resemble beasts. **4 troglodytes** lurk under the bridge, and wait for intruders to pass above to attack them from behind.

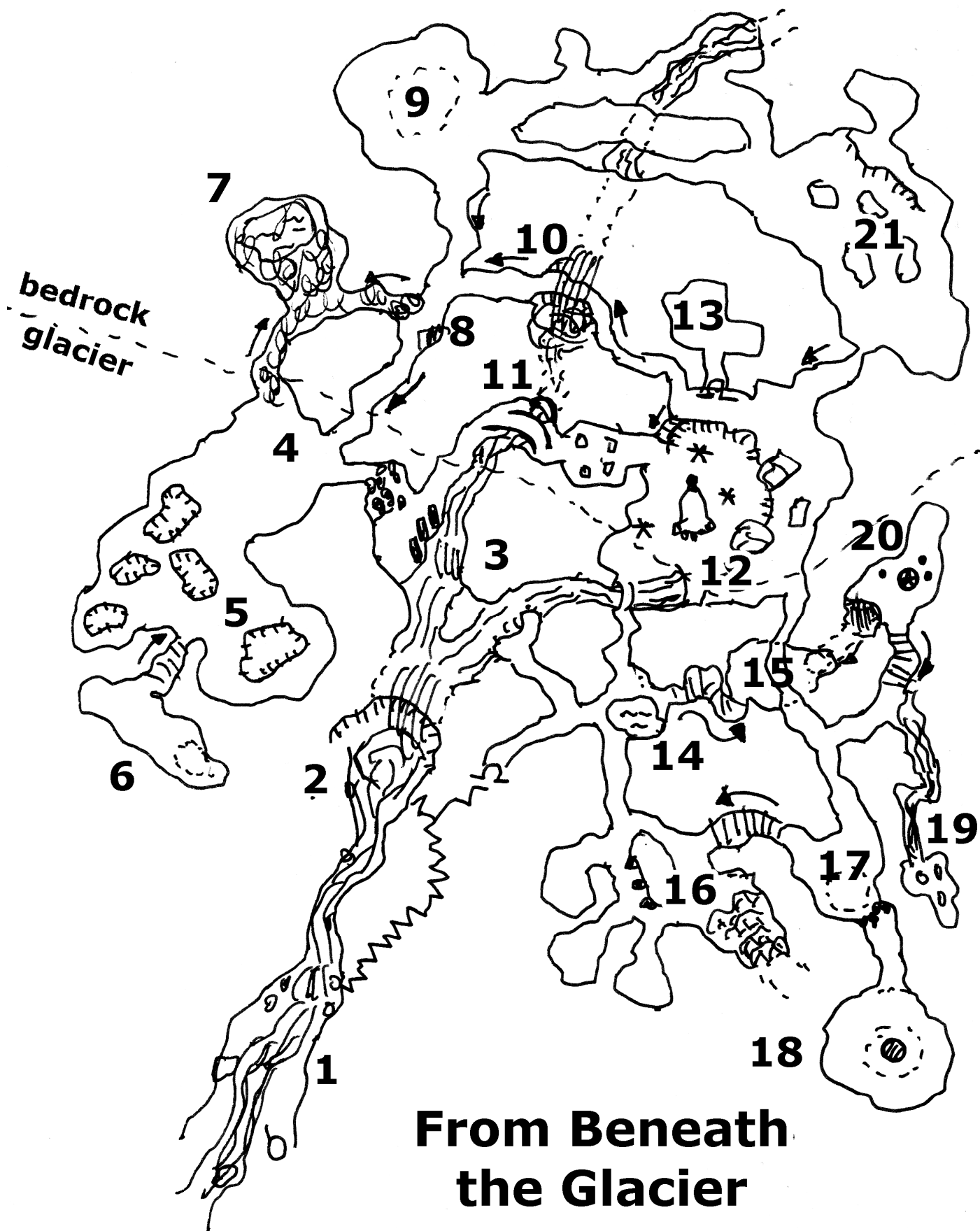
Troglodytes (4):

Hp	14	8	7	13	7	8
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12. Central cavern: Massive stone cavern surrounded by an elevated “gallery” separated from the fire-lit centre by thick limestone columns. The walls still glitter beneath layers of smoke and soot, and countless prehistoric animals have been crudely painted on the available surfaces. There are **24 troglodytes** hunched over their fire pits of moss and rotting branches, gnawing on half-raw, half-charred fish, lumpy cave eels, and hunks of mystery meat. Their **chief** is in area **13**.

In the centre of the cavern is a **15' idol**, a massive stalactite carved with monstrous, toothy mouths, painted with bizarre swirling patterns, and smeared with a greasy substance (climb check needed to get on the top). **Sacrificial gifts** of berries, fish, and human skulls have been heaped below it, along with several gold nuggets (800 gp).

Resting on top of the idol is a **charred skull** with gemstone eyes (2*1450 gp). This is **Mokron the Magician**, 6th-level Magic-User. Mokron is immobile, but he watches diligently (facing south), and he will cry out to alert the trogs if he detects approaching intruders. He joins the battle with spells. If his current allies are slain, he tries to bargain with his “new masters” – great secrets in exchange for sparing him, and giving him a suitably fancy place.



Troglodytes (24): HD 2; AC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d4+1 or stone handaxe 1d6 or javelins 2d4+3; Special surprise 1-4, stench (save vs. poison, 1d6 Str for 1 turn, cumulative); ML 7; AL CE; 2*javelins each.

Hp	11	11	9	9	12	15
	8	13	14	11	7	10
	8	8	7	12	8	10
	12	5	11	7	12	11

Mokron the Magician (skull): M-U 6; AC 5, Att -; Spec spells, immune to cold, charm, sleep, cold, immobile; ML 7; AL CE.

Spells: 4/3/2; 1: burning hands [breath]*2, magical aura, ventriloquism; 2: invisibility [used to make self inconspicuous], knock, ray of enfeeblement; 3: monster summoning I, suggestion.

Hp 12

13. Chieftain's lair: A much smaller cave, once decorated with sacral cave paintings depicting caveman fertility rites, but now fortunately badly defaced. This is the dwelling of the **troglodyte chieftain** and his four flabby **concubines** (non-combatants). Several gnawed-on, charred human skulls and fingerbones in a **fire pit**. The chieftain's **treasures** lie in an unruly heap without much care: 2500 sp, 1300 gp, 100 pt.

Troglodyte chief: HD 4; AC 5; Att 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d4+1 or stone handaxe 1d6 or javelins 2d4+3; Spec surprise 1-4, stench (save vs. poison, 1d6 Str for 1 turn); ML 9; AL CE.

Hp 24

14. Pool room: Icy water runs down the mineral-encrusted walls and collects in a cold, 3' **pool** almost glowing with mineral particles. The contents are worthless quartz and pyrite, but someone wading in will be very easy to see, spoiling stealth or surprise (not to mention the hypothermia). To NW, the passage is a hazardous **ice chute**; climb checks required.

15. Charnel cave: Cold water has collected in this ice cave, used to dump remains. Four troglodyte bodies in the ice slurry, along with animal and caveman bones. Spending more than a turn here, or disturbing the remains reanimates the **bone horror**, a collection of miscellaneous bones animated by a malign will, insane fire burning in its eye sockets (weight equivalent, but turned as spectre). Six flint tips can be fixed on shafts to make *javelins* +1.

Bone horror: HD 4+3; AC 5; Att claws 1d4+drain; Spec drain, silver or +1 to hit, immune to cold, charm, sleep, hold; ML 12; AL LE

Hp 24

16. Ice mass: Stalagmites carved into bizarre shapes guard empty rooms frozen in ice. One of them resembles a **demonic toad**, and its eyes have the effect of *hypnotism* while it freezes its victims with its icy breath (2d4 Hp/r). To the east, the cavern is blocked by an **ice mass**. Suspended therein are the dark shapes of 230 troglodytes, and what seem like sparkling stars hovering in mid-air. These are precious gems (3d4*250 gp), but freeing them also frees **16 troglodytes**, who attack after a round spent in a disoriented state. After the first batch, the ice will de-stabilise, and a new wave of 20 trogs will emerge every 3 turns.

Troglodytes (16): HD 2; AC 5; Atk 2*claws 1d3 and bite 1d4+1 or stone handaxe 1d6 or javelins 2d4+3; Special surprise 1-4, stench (save vs. poison, 1d6 Str for 1 turn, cumulative); ML 7; AL CE; 2*javelins each.

The Hecatomb of Morthevole

Adventure module for levels 2–4



Morthevole, of Skhonian origins and a greedy disposition, has tried many trades while in the City, to find that special one which would combine low effort with abundant profits. It was his lucky day when he found a hidden trapdoor in his tiny rented store, and beneath, a long-lost burial vault stocked generously with calcified remains. Not foolish enough to venture into the depths of the new-found oubliette, Morthevole had instead deemed sufficient to sell the bits and bones he could grab close to the entrance. Trade in the remains has been more lucrative than he had expected, as his finds would prove popular good luck charms among the larcenous short. Alas, this enterprise was put to an end when undead monsters, stirred up by his forays into “their” domain, emerged to wreak havoc in Morthevole’s store, and chase off the terrified peddler. Morthevole, knowing well that disturbing subterranean complexes was a deed punishable by death, and that he was in a mighty pickle, decided to turn to adventures to help with his “basement problem” – his peace of mind in exchange for whatever they can find down there, and the whole sordid affair kept secret. (Should further enticements be required, Morthevole can offer his stash in advance, hidden at **2**, and currently inaccessible due to the prowling undead.)

Aftermath: 30% that Morthevole will send 1d6 thieves after PCs to recover any outstanding loot, and 30% he will fall into the hands of the Followers of Dókh, pinning the blame on company.



1. Dusty old storeroom, crack in wall leads to rough-hewn limestone vaults. Waft of cool air.
2. Calcified human remains in tangle of skeletal bodies. Unnatural cold. Morthevole's hidden stash: 35 sp, 30 el, 50 gp, 90 gp headband w opal, crumbling prayer scroll.
3. Bones in unruly heaps, glinting crystalline deposits. Two sealed amphoras of camphor oil (2*180 gp).
4. **14 beggars of Shakkur** trapped here after collapse of NW adit, wretched & unclean pariahs with phosphorescent eyes & vampire teeth.

Beggars of Shakkur (14): HD 1-1; AC 10; Atk claws 2d4; Spec blood drain 2d4/r; ML 8; AL CE.

Hp 3 4 1 1 3 7 3 4 1 5 3 4
5 7

- 5.** Lime-encrusted skeletons surround stone seat, woman's shrivelled grey corpse has 160 gp comb, mouldy **dead man's hair**, **2d3 uses** (Throwing these horrid locks on embers produces an acrid, varicoloured smoke, and 1d6 apparitions [3 HD, 2d4 Hp on hit, dispelled on single hit, but reforms in next round]).
- 6.** Rows of brass urns with soot and old grease flank passage to cavern of calcified skeletal piles. Thick-legged, busty female idol of polished yet dirty brass holds brass knives in six hands (trap, 4d4+4 Hp), plaque reads "SHRIWAR THE SLICER". Disk behind idol is inscribed with moon phases outlining auspicious conjunctions (q.v. **The Garden of Sang-hé**). Heart-shaped latch on idol's breast hides 1000 gp gemstone.

7. Pit leads to cold oubliette, two squatting, leathery corpses in mouldy, ragged priests' vestments & ceremonial headdress are **knife-ghouls** (hands replaced with knives). #1 has 140 gp in breast, #2 has **Yag Amnun's dreadful dust** (1:3 to rupture on killing blow, save vs. poison or 3d6/4d6 Hp, lingers 2d6 r).

Knife-ghouls (2): HD 2+2; AC 4; Atk 2*knives 1d4+2 and bite 1d6 + paralysis; ML 10; AL CE.
Hp 18 11

8. Side passage with scratches on the wall, surfeit of skeletons in horrid contortions suggesting excruciating pain. Bones crunch underfoot. Final skeletons have deformed, ovoid head shapes, teeth pried out with tongs.

9. Cluster of seated skeletons with strangling chords around neck in side chamber, hanging brass lamp (scented oil 65 gp).

10. Humid cavern, damp smell of mould. Hecatomb of tangled skeletons blocks locked iron door. Sooty stone skulls in side niches must be filled with oil and lit to avoid triggering slicing trap in frame (4d4+4 Hp).

11. Collection of dull brass knives hanging from the walls, dulled by age.

12. Sanctum is pulsing with faint light. **Breathstealer**, phosphorescent skeletal apparition with 700 gp crystallised bones (1d6*10% loss if destroyed physically), has had claws replaced with knives. **12 knife skeletons** from side room, also w. knives. Pedestal under dome holds 400 gp, gold-hammered shield +1.

Breathstealer: HD 4; AC 5; Atk 2*claws 2d4; Spec breathstealing (save vs. magic, breath is only returned once monster is killed), immune to cold and mind-affecting; ML 8; AL CE.

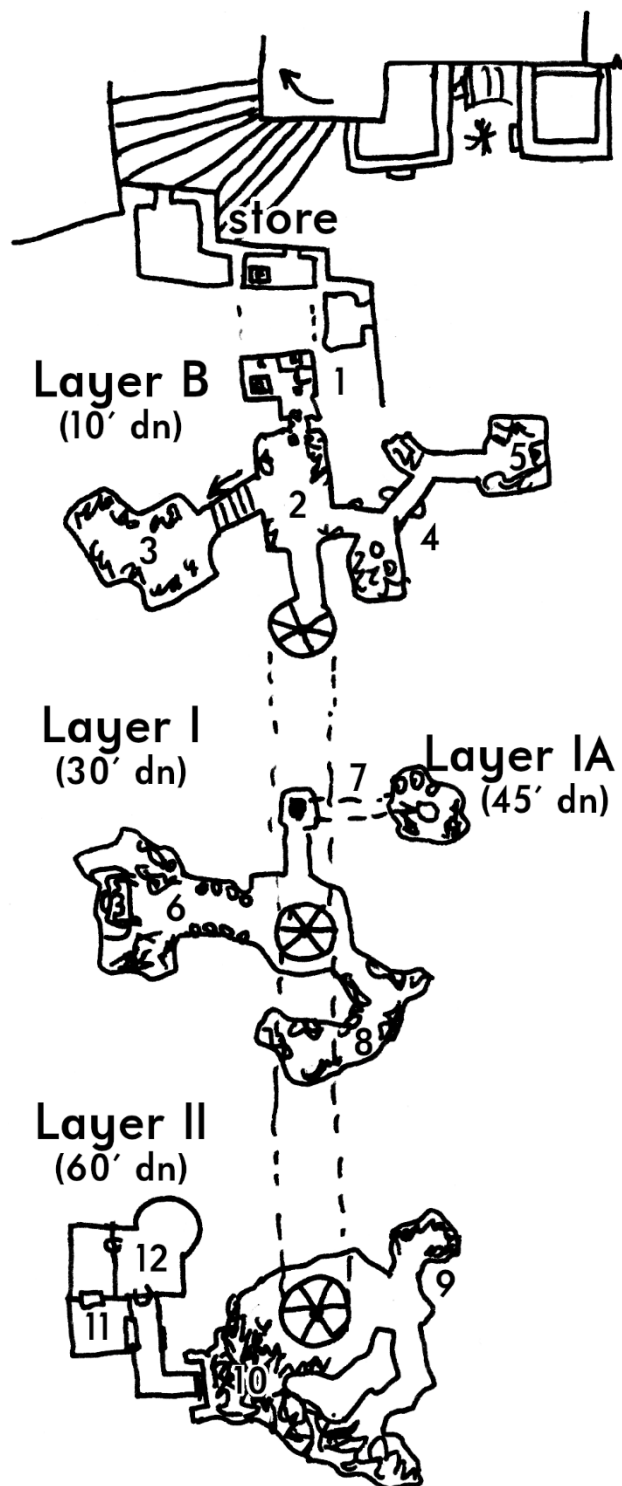
Hp 19

Knife skeletons (12): HD 1; AC 7; Atk 2*knives 1d4; ML 8; AL CE.

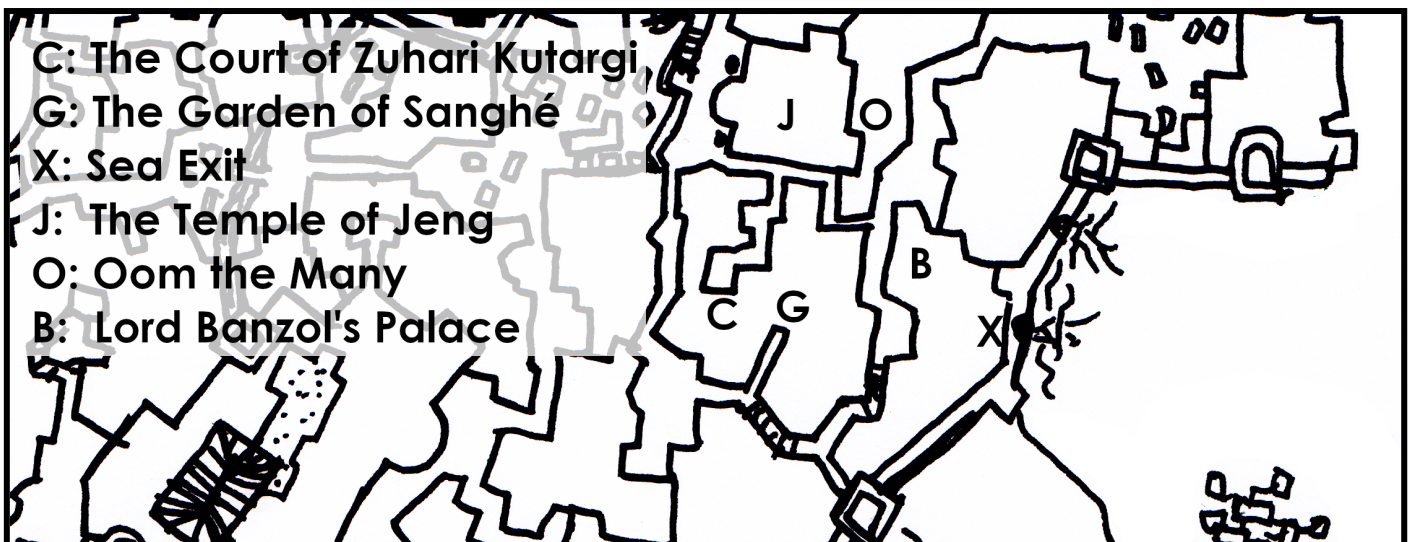
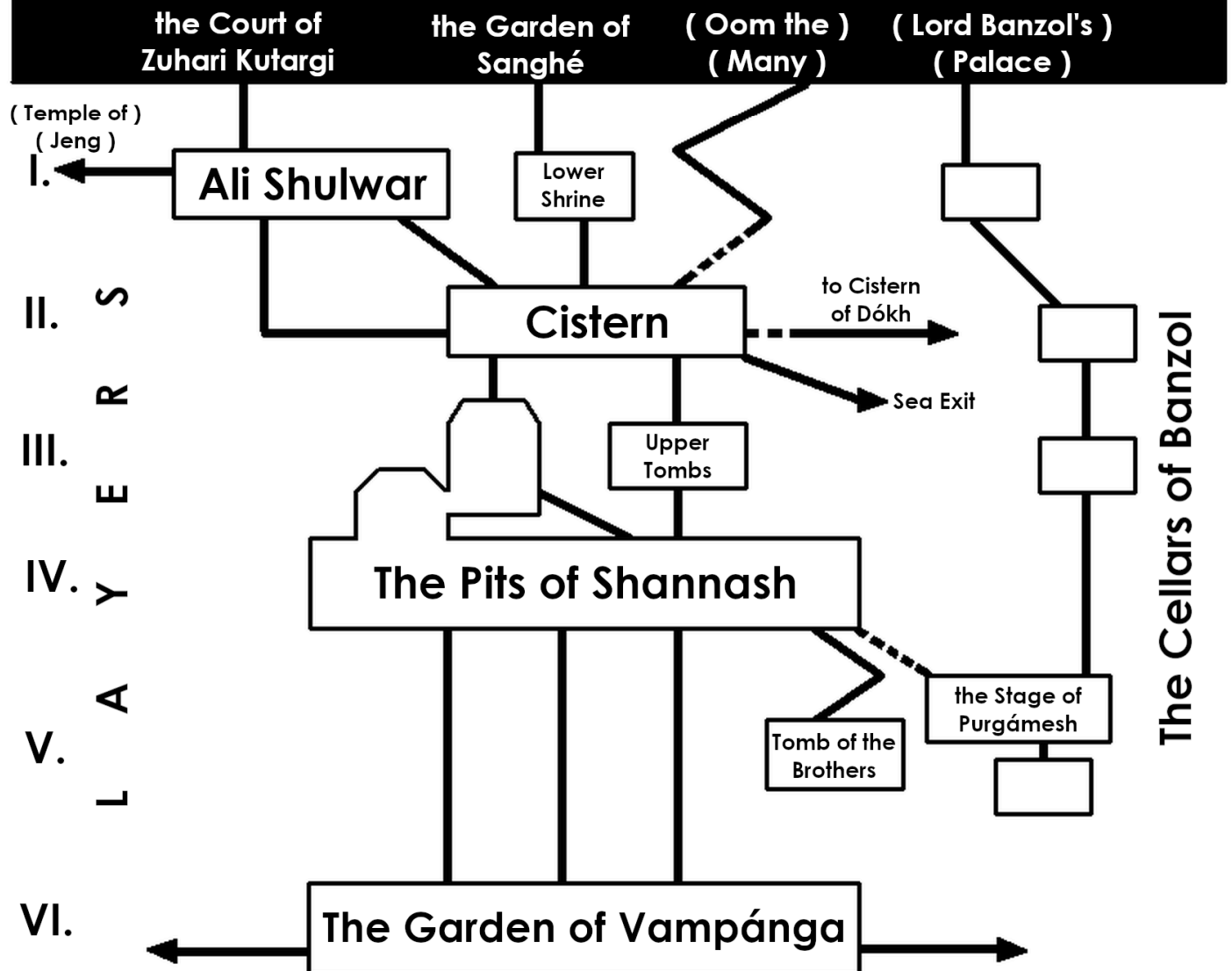
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OLD CITY





The Tomb of Ali Shulwar

adventure module for levels 4 to 6

Playtesters #01: Akos Barta (Jamsheer Abu-Nari, Thief 3), Aron Andras Salamon (Nadir Arzu Parvanda, Magic-User 3), David Sojtori (Olaf, Northman Fighter 3)

Playtesters #02: Gabor Acs (Santiago del'Avellos, Fighter 5), Kalman Farago (Burzasp Serfiroz, Fighter 5), Laszlo Feher (Vifranavaz, Illusionist 4), Adam Tarnoczy (Ambrosius, Fighter 5)

Playtesters #03: Istvan Belanszky, Szilveszter Erdos, Gabor Havasi, Zoltan Magyar, Levente Molnar (the session records for this convention game were lost; 4th level characters were used).



Background

The Tomb of Ali Shulwar is the best-known Underworld complex beneath the City of Vultures. Where other subterranean sites are hidden and mostly forgotten, the tomb's existence and general location (if not its precise entrance) are fairly well known among disreputable types. Many scoundrels also "know" that the tomb is mostly looted, and that its tunnels serve as a hidden smuggling route leading into the city. Some are at least aware it goes deeper, or that it connects to other, smaller complexes... but very few indeed know how deep that means, or just how dangerous some of the adjoining places can get. Sometimes, people are better off not knowing. The Tomb is a layered structure, with the following access points:

- **The Tomb of Ali Shulwar** itself, situated below the Court of Zuhari Kutargi, a small square south of the Temple of Jeng. The way in is found in a small, abandoned-looking storage space stocked with dusty religious paraphernalia. By day, the court is occupied by dyers, who maintain multiple small stores in the street, and are by and large observant members of the cult of Jeng. Trespassers will not be accosted, but their movements will be observed and reported at the temple. By night, the court is deserted. Smuggling through the court is tolerated by Jeng's cultists, as it poses no threat to their power.
- **The Garden of Sanghé**, a bit to the east, is an overgrown garden with a haunted reputation. It is abandoned and out of the way, but regular goings-on will draw unwanted interest. The sub-level below the garden is little known, and very few are aware of its connection to the greater complex (17).
- **The Sea Exit** is one of the easiest ways in, at one of the outflows in the city wall (14). This is the main route for smugglers, and is basically risk-free at night.
- **The Temple of Jeng** (described next issue) has a lower exit to the tomb (4). It is a massive and formidable structure, swarming with heavily armed fanatics. Sneaking in from below is easier than entering from above. A secret one-way exit also exists (21a), used by high priest Tormesk and his closest confidants.
- **Oom the Many**, a secretive sect of illusionists (also described next issue), enter their hidden sanctuary through an underground entrance at 23.
- **The Cistern of Dókh** (described in a later issue), underneath the eastern market and the Tower of Riamos, is connected to the tomb by a barely known secret passage (20a).
- **Lord Banzol's Palace** (unmapped) has an undercellar (39, 24–27) which connects to the Pits of Shannash. The Lord is a known recluse, who does not receive visitors in his dark palace. Nobody but him and his most trusted guards know of the undercellar.



The Tomb of Ali Shulwar

The Tomb of Ali Shulwar, mighty warrior, encompasses areas **1–12**. Along with the Cistern (**13–23**) on Layer II, this is a relatively high-traffic zone. When the characters enter one of these levels, check for the presence of each of the following groups (**1:6**). For every three hours spent down here, recheck.

Smugglers (3d8): HD 1; AC 6 (leather, shield); Atk sword 1d6; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	8	6	2	2	8	8	8	7	2	7	8	7
	5	1	6	7	4	7	3	8	3	8	2	4
	2	4	4	6	4	3	5	7	5	4	6	6

*These are sea-faring scum transporting contraband through the tunnels, or setting up a temporary storage space. 1:2 to be loaded with 2d6*100 gp worth of goods.*

Fanatics of Jeng (2d8+2): Fighter 2; AC 6 (leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8; ML 11; AL LE.

Hp	8	3	2	12	15	8
	10	14	11	7	13	13
	5	11	9	11	8	10

These cowled nomads are much worse news, quick to anger and merciless in a fight. They have been sent from the undertemple to investigate suspicious activity.

Skeletons (3d8): HD 1; AC 7; Atk sword 1d6; ML 12; AL N.

Hp	2	8	2	4	3	2	4	6	7	1	7	1
	4	2	7	2	3	3	6	8	8	1	5	7

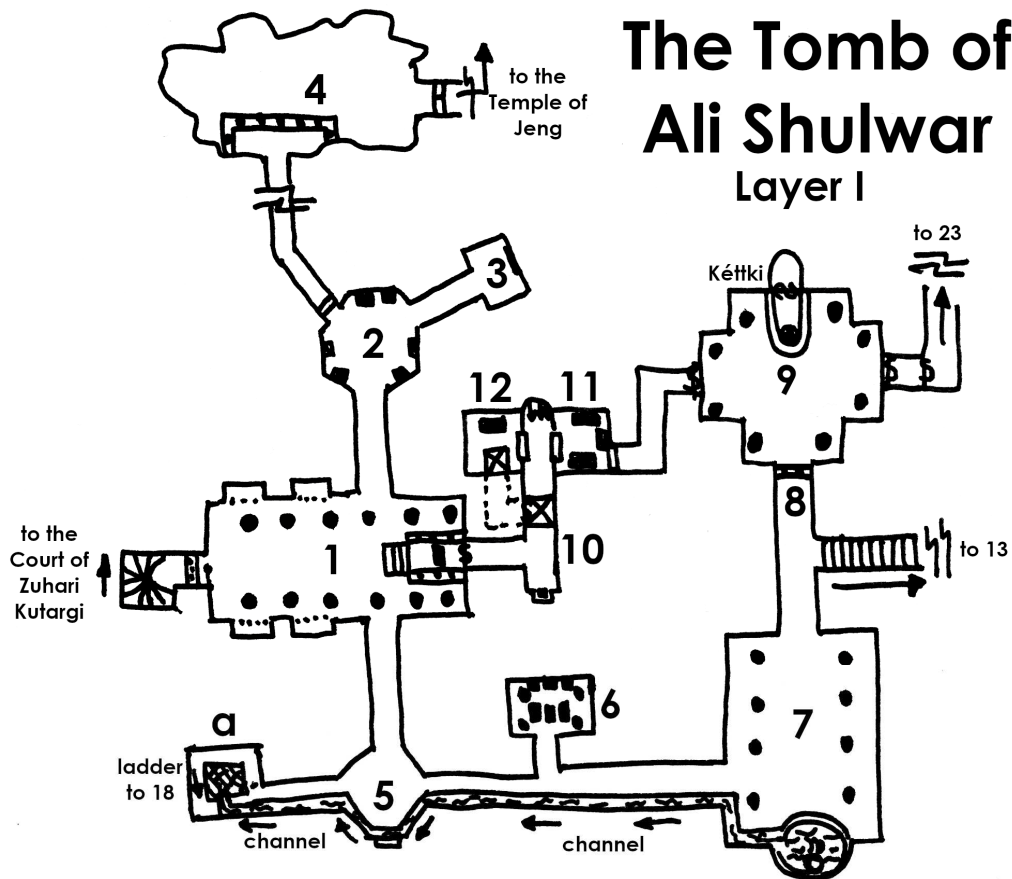
Restless warriors of old, prowling their master's tomb-complex to drive out intruders.

1. False tomb: Ochre tile floor, slender blue columns with spiral carvings. **Niches** in the wall contain dusty, broken old jugs and jars. To the E, a **canopy** rises over a **sarcophagus** bearing the carved image of a turbaned warrior. Two more carvings in the E wall watch over the tomb. The sarcophagus is a decoy, containing a skeletal corpse in tattered purple, gilded sword (120 gp) in hand. If it is disturbed, the tomb's guardians from **2**, **3** and **6** converge on this location (2, 4 and 6 rounds to arrive). A secret latch embedded in one of the canopy's columns opens the secret door to the real tomb.

2. Sarcophagi: Upright sarcophagi with the images of turbaned warriors. The **6 skeletons** inside animate 1 round after their rest is disturbed.

Skeletons (6): HD 1; AC 7; Atk sword 1d6; ML 12; AL N.

Hp	6	1	8	8	8	2
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3. Room of swords: Walls laden with old but sharp **scimitars**, **inscription** reads “EVEN IN REST, HIS SERVANTS WATCH OVER ALI SHULWAR”. These weapons also animate.

Flying scimitars (12): HD 1+2; AC 5; Atk scimitar 1d8; ML 12; AL N.

Hp	10	4	10	10	5	9	9	4	5	5	7	9
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4. Temple entrance: 20’ natural grotto connecting two Underworld complexes. To south, a **tympanum** bears the inscription “THE TOMB OF ALI SHULWAR”. To east, **double iron gates** are marked with the all-seeing eye of Jeng, next to a warped brass sheet suspended from a hook next to a chained iron hammer. This portal is locked, unless a search party is set to enter or depart. It leads to the Undertemple of Jeng (described next issue). Striking the sheet has **1:3** to bring out a party of **3d8 fanatics** and **1d6 priests** (Clr 3, but forbidden to cast spells), who will open the portals from inside – but the intruders’d better have a good reason to disturb them.

Fanatics of Jeng (3d8): Fighter 2; AC 6 (leather, shield); Atk scimitar 1d8; ML 11; AL LE.

Hp	7	10	16	6	13	10
	9	13	15	15	16	6
	8	11	11	9	4	12
	9	5	4	10	9	16

Priests of Jeng (1d6): Cleric 3; AC 10; Atk scimitar 1d8; Spec no spells at this rank; ML 12; CE.

Hp	16	19	19	20	17	13
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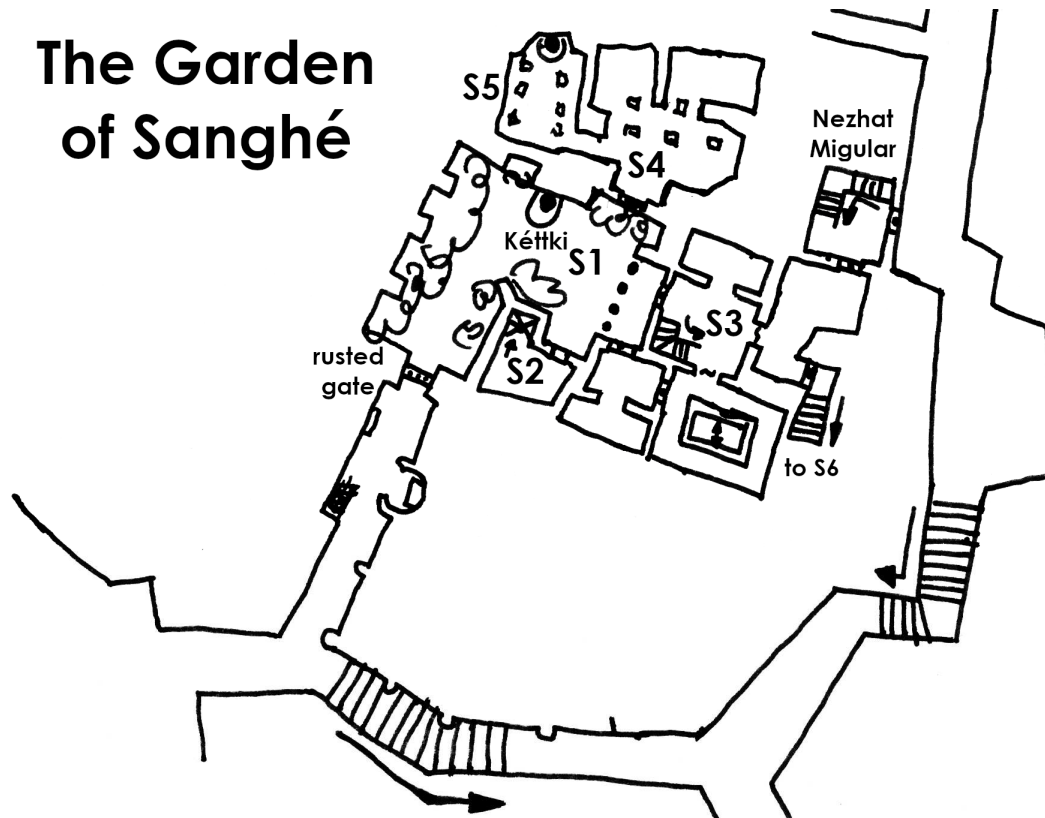
5. Channel: Wet and clammy tiles, water rushing westward in carved **channel** along S wall. Turbaned head on a **bas-relief**.

a) The western chamber, once ornamented with fine tilework, is slick with slime and mud. Water falls down 30’ **shaft** through a bent brass grille, brass ladder leads downwards (**18**). A copper jug sits near the grille. This is the prowling ground of a **grey ooze**, dropping down from the ceiling.

Grey ooze: HD 3+3; AC 8; Atk ooze 2d8; Spec corrosion; ML 12; AL N.

Hp	27
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The Garden of Sanghé



The Garden of Sanghé

The Garden of Sanghé is an abandoned garden conquered by rank weeds and thorny bushes. The rusted gate has been closed for generations, and the elegant house of the Migular trading family is a derelict ruin. Rumours of an old haunting are more hearsay than established fact, but the garden is nevertheless shunned and overlooked (notably, none of the surrounding tenements have windows towards the garden). In truth, the garden's reputation is entirely warranted. At certain moon phases, the garden comes alive, and its plant life animates as **thorny guardians** (bundles of knotted tendrils in the vague shape of human warriors). Then, and only then, the sanctum at **S4** opens for worship and human sacrifice. **Sanghé Shriwar the Slicer** (as she is honoured) has no living clergy, and the descendants of her last priests live in squalor and dishonour (**S3**). She now craves the satisfaction of blood and murderous vengeance for her neglect.

Characters **sleeping in the garden** see a dream with a beautiful, naked dancing girl striding through a moonlit garden. The girl, who calls herself Sanghé, pleads to be freed from the walls that have imprisoned her, and points towards the clues that might achieve this (this might be the sequence of moon phases inscribed in **The Hecatomb of Morthevole, 6**, this issue). The dream is very pleasant, healing an extra 2 Hp per character.

S1. Garden: Once splendid garden gone to rot. Fallen debris from the neighbouring tenements lies among the weeds and thorny bushes. The northern wall is marked with two **bas-reliefs**. The first bas-relief stands next to the short **statue of Kéttki, a dancing, spined pangolin**. This figure is identical to the one found at **9** in both appearance and functions. The secret chamber next to the statue contains a **chest** with three golden plates (3*150 gp), and a 130 gp gold ring; it also has a **fresco and inscription** (c.f. **9**).

The second bas-relief is that of a **dancing girl** with vandalised facial features. This secret door is **wizard locked** (9th level) until the sanctum opens. In this case, **four thorny guardians** watch the entrance to prevent entry. The way only stays open for a single night in a lifetime.

Thorny guardians (4): HD 4; AC 4; Atk tendrils 2d6; Spec susceptible to fire, climb walls 100%, ML 10; AL LE.

Hp	22	22	19	13
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S2. Lookout: This three-story brick tower is abandoned, and close to collapse.

S3. Abandoned residence: Marked “MIGULAR” on the painted façade, this two-story building is intact but cleared of all interior furnishings. Mildew covers the peeling frescoes, and foul dirt and fungus have blackened the vivid floor tiles. There are two ways down to the Lower Shrine: an open, **30’ shaft**, and a **locked iron door** leading to a zig-zagging stairway, and **S6**.

The **NE iron door** is locked and barricaded from the other side. It leads to the former servant’s quarters, now the meagre lodgings of **Nezhat Migular the Metrician** (3 Hp), last successor of the now impoverished lineage. This humble fellow lives here among a collection of precise, authorised weights and measures with a slatternly **wife**, and five ragamuffin **daughters**, all alike (they possess some features of the dancing girl). He is scared stiff of his family’s murky past, and wants nothing but to be left in peace.

S4. Sanctum: Those who step through the opened portal enter a tall columned hall containing a lush garden. Leafy plants dripping with dew, thick vines on solid columns, chirping insects and fresh blossoms populate this green realm. Careful observation notes **human bones** scattered in the undergrowth. **Six thorny guardians** defend the place.

Thorny guardians (6): HD 4; AC 4; Atk tendrils 2d6; Spec susceptible to fire, climb walls 100%, ML 10; AL LE.

Hp	16	16	13	20	21	19
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S5. Hidden shrine: Beautiful flowers surround the brass statue of the dancing girl, now standing triumphant at 15’. An **inscription** on the pedestal reads “SANGHÉ SHRIWAR THE SLICER”. She has a stone **sacrificial bowl** before her, now filled with black soot, and holds two enormous daggers in her hands.

Sacrifice before Sanghé (human or bountiful treasure) will win her approval, and she will accept a character as her champion, granting him (or her) a fiery kiss. The champion will have one clerical spell of each level they would access as an equivalent-level cleric. Sanghé also gifts the champion her *heart*, a splendid gemstone she stores in her bosom under a heart-shaped latch, with orders to assist her in monstrous acts of vengeance. (All of these affairs are old history, whose perpetrators are dead, and their descendants entirely unaware of Sanghé’s wrongs.)

If Sanghé is denied her due, she will animate to take it! The metal form pursues mercilessly, but cannot go beyond the garden gates, and must return to her lair by dawnbreak or fall into corroded pieces. Her daggers are a pair of *scimitars* +1, and her golden jewellery is worth a total of 1800 gp.

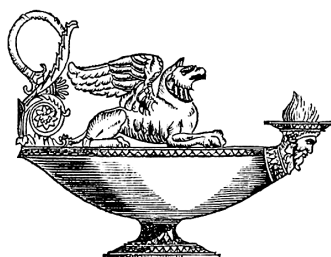
Sanghé Shriwar the Slicer: HD 8 MAX; AC 0; Atk 4**scimitar* +1 1d8+1; Spec ½ damage from fire and cold, healed by electricity; ML 11; AL CE.

Hp 64

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The Heart of Sanghé: This 2200 gp gemstone is shifting shades of red beneath the surface: ruddy, rosy, crimson, purple or bloody, changing as the light strikes it. This is a heart of wrath: it grants +2 to attack rolls and damage done in a state of hatred, but -2 to saving throws; and it places a compulsion on its owners to do heinous deeds in the act of revenge.

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The Cistern

13. Room of faces: Sooty remains of **bonfire** in the middle of the chamber, smoke-darkened walls. Four bas-reliefs of **enigmatic faces** from an older age. Signs of frequent traffic.

14. Sea exit: The cistern's overflow water rushes down into the sea through a **round grille**. Closer scrutiny reveals the bars which can be moved aside to allow entry – a smugglers' route.

15. Simurgh passage: On pedestals, **four statues of simurgh** hold ornamented plaques. The symbols, clockwise from NW, are moon, sun, star, and a black disk (night).

16. Cistern: Ancient cistern with massive stone columns bearing the images of stern, bearded and turbaned men, waist-high water swarming with **12 giant leeches** (later 1:2 of 2d6). NW portcullis is marked "SIMURGH" with ornate wrought brass letters. To SW, arch is marked "THE CRYPT OF BEHZAD MIGULAR THE METRICIAN".

Giant leeches (12): HD 2; AC 9; Atk bite 1d6 and attach; Spec blood drain 1d6/round, vulnerable to salt; ML 6; AL N.

Hp	13	8	10	4	6	9
	2	8	9	7	8	14
	7	9	2	12	13	9

17. The crypt of Behzad Migular: Flooded vertical crypt, shaft ascends 30' to **S13**. In the middle, there is a murky deep section descending 20' underwater, with **4 giant leeches**.

Giant leeches (4):

Hp	13	8	9	6
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18. Shaft: Dripping water, brass ladder ascends to a bent grille, then **5a. Grey ooze** on ceiling above waits in surprise (q.v.).

19. Room of the simurgh: **Statue of a simurgh** can be rotated on its pedestal. Inscription reads "THE SIMURGH WATCHES THE DAYS". Black stone tiles inscribed with moustached faces (round face, moon face, sun face, star face) can be pushed around in surrounding 0.25' **channels**. The simurgh's gaze always rests on the sun tile. If the tiles are pushed into the recesses in an identical configuration to **15**, the simurgh slides aside on its pedestal, revealing a 10' dark shaft with rungs to the starry dome of the Gallery overlook (**37**). If the tile combination is wrong, the simurgh rotates around on its pedestal, spewing fire (12 Hp, save ½).

The Cistern

Layer II

to Oom

to Temple of Jeng Shurin

obelisk

to A.S. 9

23

21

20

to the Cistern of Dókh

24

to 39

26

25

to Banzol's Palace

27

13

to 8

19

to 37

15

14

round grille to sea

17

to 13

18

to 5a

The Cistern

Layer II

21. Pits entrance: Pedestal in S niche opens and closes massive **stone door** to N via hidden winch mechanism. Faded old **fresco inscription** reads “THE DISMAL PITS OF SHANNASH. MARK YE PARNÁTI’S BROTHERS, FOR THEIR COUNTENANCE OPENS THIS PORTAL”. Descending into the Pits lowers the door, and only holding aloft a bull’s horned skull (one of the slain brothers) will open it from the inside.

22. Octagonal shaft: Faint wind resounds in this enormous, cold **stone pit** constructed of cyclopean stones. 30' below is Layer III (**28, 29**, the tombs of Adarbad and Taronish), 60' below is Layer IV, and 120' below, in the greatest depths, is Layer VI. There is a faint mouldy smell in the cold air, and sometimes, phosphorescent glows can be seen moving – the **weavers in the vault** (1:6 per turn, see Layer IV).

21

23. The hall of Oom the Many: This an improbably tall chamber, with slender columns rising 60' to Layer I, and strange acoustics multiplying voices into a chorus of echoing whispers. A **stone obelisk** on a raised 20' terrace can be turned 45°, unlocking the otherwise immovable and indestructible **portcullises**, and allowing access to the Sanctuary of Oom (described next issue).

Below the terrace is the grave of Oom, the sect's founder. A honeycomb of wall niches hold **43 oil lamps**, most extinguished but 6 still burning, and relit in a turn even if doused – one for every dead and living disciple. Oom rests under a **stone slab** with a brass ring in it. Around are **frescoes** of grey men in grey robes, with identical grey beards and grey faces. A *dispel illusion* (or a higher-level M-U spell) removes the uniformity, revealing the variety and colour of faces and garments underneath. This makes the slab possible to open, but **an elderly voice** speaks: "WHY HAVE YOU OPENED THE TEACHER'S RESTING PLACE?" Unless someone mentions a very good reason, all in the sanctuary above are alerted to the sacrilege, and they will soon be arriving through the portcullises. Inside the grave pit, Oom's shrivelled grey body is surrounded by 3000 electrum and 1600 gp. He wears a 1500 gp gemstone amulet (vs. *detection and location*), a *cloak +3*, and a *staff of the illusionist*.

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Staff of deception: This staff, fashioned from aged ivory and a dry grey wood, may only be used by illusionists, generating *audible glamour* (1 charge), *wall of fog* (1 charge), *invisibility* (2 charges) and *mirror image* (2 charge) by mere gesture, requiring no command word.

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The Cellars of Banzol

These are deep chambers stretching from the foundations of the palace of Lord Banzol (not described) to an underground lair where he does evil deeds. Unless the lord has cause to suspect infiltrators, they will be entirely devoid of traffic.

24. Storeroom: Dusty old cloth bales, theatre masques, and props.

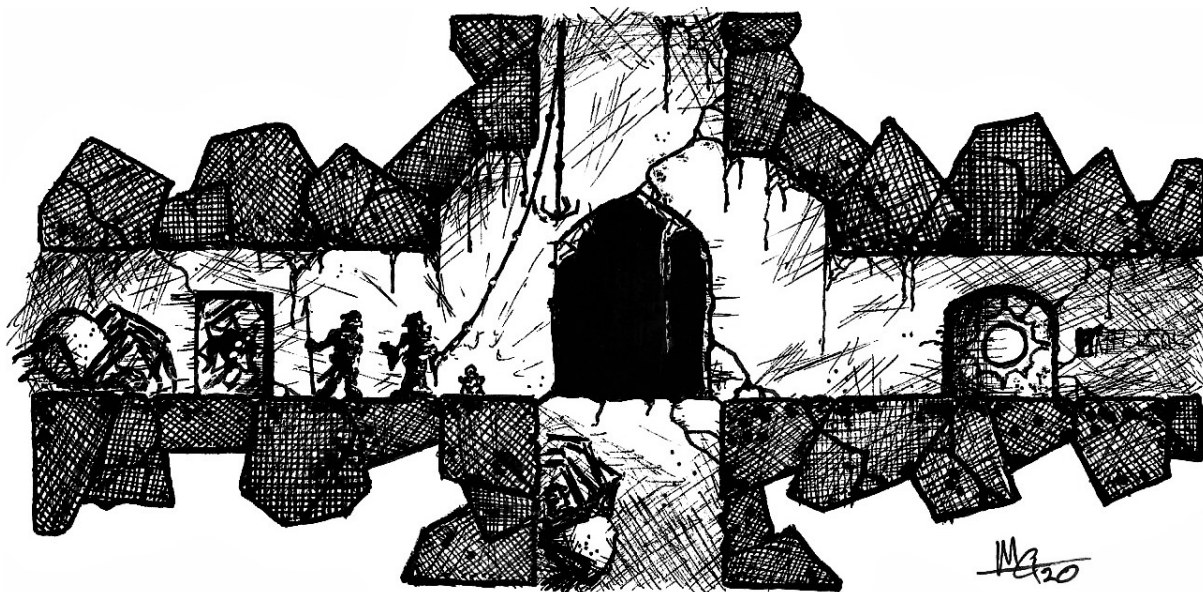
25. Storeroom: Abandoned crates with abundance of spoiled food, **swarming with spiders**.

Spider swarm: HD 5-1; AC 5; Atk swarm 2d4-1; Spec poison (death), ½ from piercing and slashing; ML 6; AL N.
Hp 24

26. Wine storage: Creaking, half-broken stairway. Large, cobwebbed glass demijohns are filled with ancient wines gone to vinegar. One bottle contains a particularly potent concentrate causing 1d3 Hp/r.

27. Armoured guardians: Two suits of rusty, slightly beetle-like plate mail stand in wall niches. One is barely standing, and will come down **5:6** unless bypassed very cautiously. The resulting clamour may draw an encounter from below, if the way to the pits lies open (**1:3, weaver in the vault**).





The Dismal Pits of Shannash

This sub-level (27–38) is constructed of great cyclopean stones. The passages are shrouded with the remains of silvery webs, and **random encounters** (1:6 per turn, equal probability of coming from the front or back) are with **weavers in the vault**. Skeletal remains through the level are afflicted by some kind of internal decay, with wormlike holes and calcium deposits on the nearby stones.

Weavers in the vault (9): HD 4; AC 6; Atk bite 1d6 + poison (save or die within 2d6 turns); Spec immune to mind-affecting, surprise 4:6 (rear only); ML 8; AL N.

Hp	18	19	15	21	18	21
	10	8	22			

Enormous green arachnids with a faint phosphorescent glow, stalking in almost total silence.

28. The tomb of Adarbad: 30' fissure leads up to the tomb of Shurin. Shurin's sarcophagus has fallen down here and smashed the lower one. Spilled **treasures** are 230 gp, 200 gp jewelry, and a flat wooden box containing broken glass and green crystalline encrustations, as well as two intact *acid bombs* (releases a grey-green cloud of acidic vapours, 2d4 Hp/r, 1 turn).

29. The brothers of Parnáti: These are tombs with **iron doors** bearing the mark of a bull's head in an octagon, and the name of the respective brother. Only tombs with locked doors still have their contents intact; the rest have been looted.

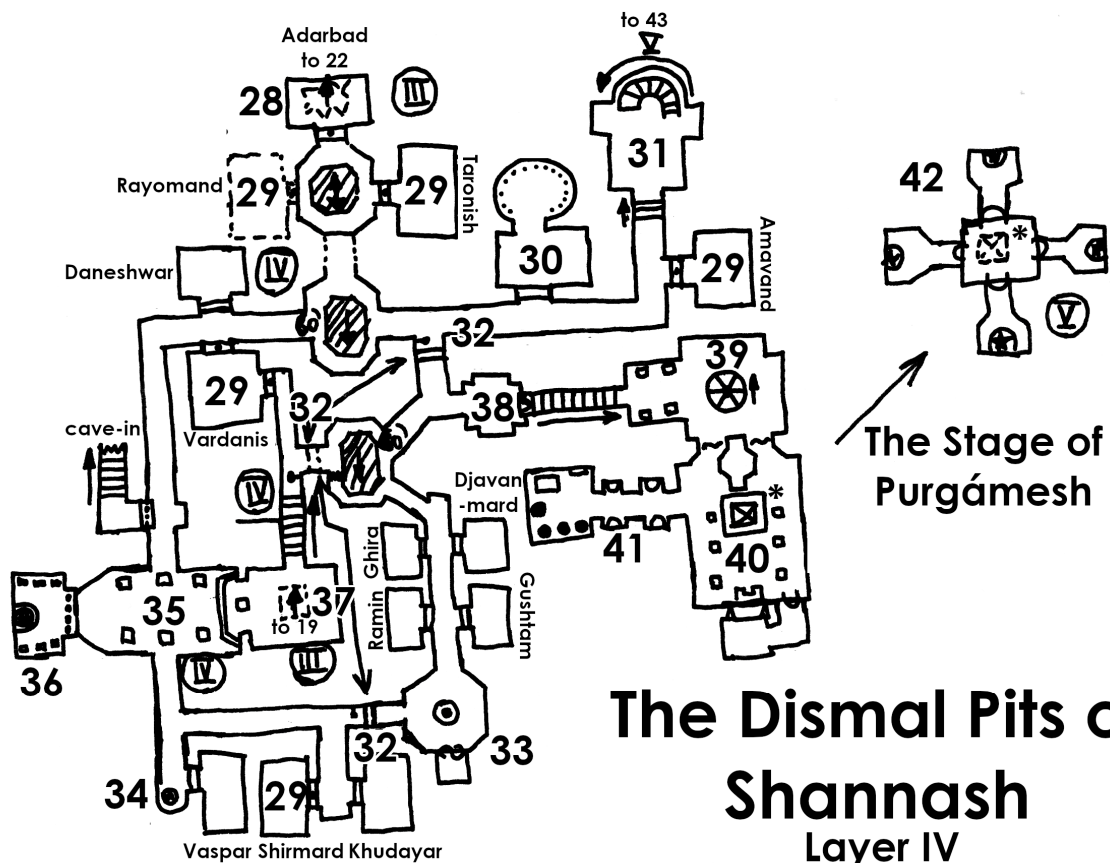
The **brothers** are bull-headed skeletons (turned as wraiths), their bones as deformed as the others on this level. They attack in a bellowing fury, which has 1:6 to draw a **weaver in the vault** due to the noise. Every tomb has a locked **treasure chest** close to the sarcophagus, and inscribed "CONTAINS TYE VI TREASURE." This means 50% of 1d12*50gp, 25% of 1d6*10 platinum, 20% of 1d6 gems, 25% of an art object, and 25% of 1d4 random magic items.

The Brothers of Parnáti: HD 4; AC 5; Atk 2*horns 1d6 or rush (save vs. paralysis or 3d6 Hp); ML 12; AL LE.

Hp	17	28	15	14	19
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30. Display room: Ruined and dirty room, **18 clay statuettes** of the brothers have been knocked off a ledge on room perimeter and smashed.

31. Room of mosaics: Mosaic floor depicting a bounty of fruits and grain. **Inscription** before downwards stairs reads „THE HUSBAND-BROTHERS". **Altars** to the left and right hold a pile of deformed bones and a bovine skull, and a brass cauldron filled with old ashes. **Rainbow traces** on downward stairs are the dried secretions of the giant snail (43).



The Dismal Pits of Shannash Layer IV

32. Doors of the radiant sun: These are heavy stone doors with faded frescoes of the sun, lowered or raised with brass levers. The levers are found on the outside only, and opening one door closes the other two. Those who find themselves backed into a corner have **1:3** to have been followed by a **weaver in the vault**, who will appear presently.

33. The well of Manizeh: On E wall, **frescoes** depict Manizeh, a young woman bearing a lantern to keep away the darkness; on S wall, she is shown throwing coins to a beggar. Glyphs on the rim of a **round well** of black porphyry read „MANIZEH, THE DAUGHTER OF AFRASIAH: HER WELL IS THE WORD THAT BEQUEATES WISDOM“. The first character to drink of the **waters** shall speak as the prophets, revealing a secret of the campaign. For the others, roll 1d6:

1. „DREAMING IN HIS TWOFOLD PRISON, THE ENCHANTER RIAMOS CRAVES RELEASE.“
2. „GREAT SORROW AND A BURNING HEART REPOSE BENEATH THE STAGE OF PURGAMESH!“
3. „SHAME AND BETRAYAL NOW RULE THE TIGER-FORTRESS, REVIVED IN AN ANCIENT MIND.“
4. „THE BENEVOLENCE OF THOSE WHO HAVE COME FROM THE STARS IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED.“
5. „SHE WHO RULES THE NEXUS OF TRANSACTIONS SERVES MANY MASTERS.“
6. „HE WHO LOOKS BENEATH THE MAUSOLEUM SHALL FIND EVERLASTING LIFE AND MERCILESS DESTRUCTION.“

Drinking twice makes the character's tongue burn like heated iron. Every time he speaks over the expedition, he takes 2 Hp damage. Drinking thrice, save vs. dragon breath or burn into ashes.

Casting light or a similar spell on the figure of Manizeh the lantern-holder opens the **secret door**, revealing a niche with a mahogany treasure chest with inlaid gold and silver: 400 gp, a *clerical scroll* (divination), and a *clerical scroll* (cure serious wounds) sealed with a lead seal marked „FOR TIMES OF TRIAL.“ The chest itself is worth 500 gp, or up to 1000 gp as an antique if its connection to Manizeh is mentioned.

Giant leeches (14): HD 2; AC 9; Atk bite 1d6 and attach; Spec blood drain 1d6/round, vulnerable to salt; ML 6; AL N.

Hp	4	12	13	14	11	5
	7	9	6	9	6	10
	7	10				

36. The treasury of Parnáti: Thick, impenetrable **brass grilles** seal off this side-chamber. The **10' brass idol of Parnáti**, beautifully polished and oiled despite its great age and apparent abandonment, holds two scimitars in her hand, and is surrounded by **six treasure chests** (only four of which are **mimics**). Parnáti shall kill anyone trying to take the treasures; kissing her on the lips is rewarded with a dagger the idol has in lieu of a tongue (4d4 Hp).

The Idol of Parnáti: HD 10 MAX; AC 0; Atk 4*scimitar 1d8+3; Spec Str 18/50, fire breath 1/3 rounds (20/10 Hp) 3/day, +1 or better to hit, ½ damage from fire and cold, healed by electricity; ML 12; AL N.

Hp 80

Hp	24	19	21	19
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38. False crypt: An **eternal oil lamp** casts a faint light on several deformed, calcified skeletons, and a **stone slab** sunk into the floor inscribed “BANZOL”. Faint smell of perfumed vapours. The upright **sarcophagus** of Banzol proves to be looted, but this is a ruse – it can be pushed out of its place to reveal a secret passage to The Stage of Purgámesh.

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None but Lord Banzol and his closest guards are privy to this hideout beneath his family residence. If the secret entrance to **38** is left open, random encounters may venture inside; otherwise, it is undisturbed.

39. Den: Cold and musty cellar made slightly more bearable by braziers, tapestries and copper plates, lingering smell of perfumes and cold water. To the south, red curtains over doorways; **inscription** in the middle reads “THE STAGE OF PURGÁMESH”.

25

After entering the room, intruders soon experience **ghostly manifestations** in the room: a **dancing girl** on the stage, begging for mercy (*"Oh, high lord, I know not what you ask! I know not why you have had me brought here below the earth! Let me go on my way!"*), and a harsh voice from an imperious **spirit** the throne pronouncing a statement of doom (*"Dance, dance for me the dance of Purgámesh! Shall you do it, you shall live, and be generously rewarded... shall you fail, to the Four Shames shalt thou be thrown!"*) before the forms fade once more.

41. Family archives: Niches in the entrance corridor contain **four faces** – corroded, antique grotesques with bug-like features. Their crystal eyes allow periscopic visions through the eyes of the Four Shames, down in **42**.

The chamber is an antique bedroom, with a **canopied bed** of noble woods and expensive velvets. A **rosewood footlocker** (300 gp) contains sky-blue robes (600 gp), old silk banners, the wooden carving of a lion, a harp marked "BANZOL" (300 gp, heavy), and a splendid golden brooch with gemstones (260 gp). A **locked wardrobe** proves to hold four **blackened corpses** in rotting finery, held upright with cleverly crafted braces and supports. They have **gemstone teeth** worth 400 gp, 500 gp and 600 gp, respectively (but see previous issue for the terrible curse such treasures carry!)

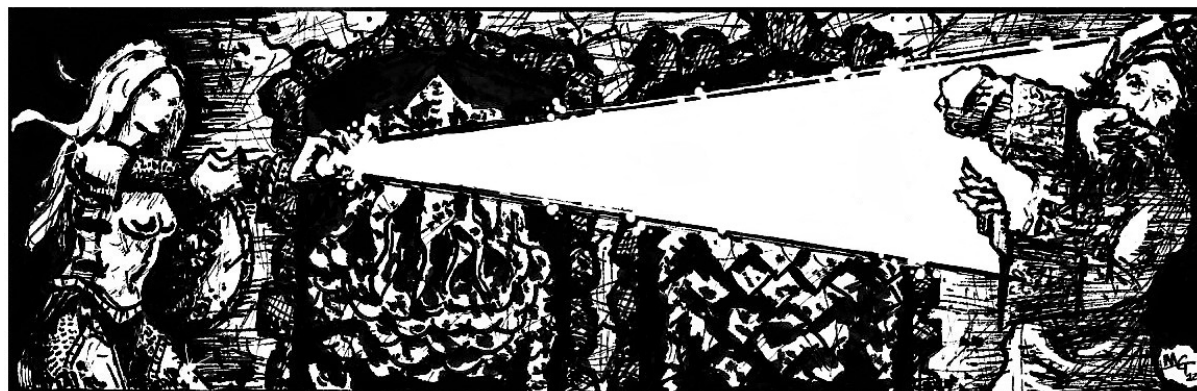
42. The pit of the Four Shames: This pit lies 20' beneath the Stage of Purgámesh. Cold, brackish **water** rises to the ankle, and **several decaying corpses** of dancing women lie propped against the walls. Once decoratively-dressed, they are now browned and mildewed; the charnel smell is revolting (save vs. poison after first turn or retch uncontrollably). In the side rooms stand **the Four Shames**, grotesque brass idols with their segmented, bug-like bodies, slicing mandibles, drills and flesh-saws. Messing with any of them activates the horrid mechanisms (4d4 Hp), and awakens the corpses as **20 zombies**. One (*) wears a *heart-shaped gemstone*, now burning with a vengeful fire – The Heart of Purgámesh!

Zombies (20): HD 2; AC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec cannot be turned, fearless, immune to cold and charm; ML 12; AL N.

Hp	6	7	11	8	6	7
	10	15	5	9	9	14
	16*	9	5	7	12	11
	10	16				



The Heart of Purgámesh: This heart-shaped, 2700 gp gemstone is a fiery orange, burning with a malevolent inner light. This is a heart of vengeance with 23 charges: once per day, it can project a heat-ray for 3d8 Hp (1 charge, save vs. wands for ½), or summon a *fire storm* (as druid spell). It is particularly efficacious against those who have done dark deeds – in their case, the heart fires automatically, and the damage is 24/12 Hp. For every monstrous tormentor it kills, its value increases by 200 gp. Once its charges are exhausted, it becomes a regular gemstone.



The Tomb of the Brothers

43. The vault of Parnáti: Corroded iron doors, yellow and teal ceramic tiles. Rainbow traces on all surfaces are the tracks of a wondrous **giant snail**, bearing a lustrous shell with opal hues (800 gp intact, 300 gp damaged). This beast, initially located in room **43+1d4**, can open and pass through the vault's iron doors. The four side-tombs house **four brothers of Parnáti**, who shall protect the snail with their unlife. Each tomb is labelled, as described in the subsequent room entries.

Giant snail: HD 8; AC 2; Atk bite 1d12 or spit acid as 4 HD creature 4d4; Spec immune to bludgeoning, MR 50%; ML 8; AL N.

Hp 37

The Brothers of Parnáti (4): HD 4; AC 5; Atk 2***horns** 1d6 or rush (save vs. paralysis or 3d6 Hp); ML 12; AL LE.

Hp 25 15 20 20

44. The tomb of Smardis: **Inscription** reads "SMARDIS THE EXALTED, LORD OF MANGRATZ". **Frescoes** depict sea battles with pirates featuring a triumphant moustached man. Wooden couch and painted wooden ornaments, golden mosaic floor. A tapestry on the wall is made of golden thread (ragged, but still 250 gp), and there are four large electrum cups with ship motifs (5*100 gp).

45. The tomb of Pakhtan: **Inscription** reads "PAKHTAN OF THE PURE BODY: NEITHER DISEASE NOR POISON COULD TRIUMPH AGAINST HIM." Inside, there is a simple, worm-eaten wooden frame. **Pakhtan** is wrapped in filthy bandages, and the teeth in his skull are all sickly and rotten. Two green globes in the eye sockets are crystals (2*80 gp). The true treasures are in a **secret chamber**: *potion of paralysis*, *potion of neutralise poison**5.

46. The tomb of Nariman: **Inscription** reads "NARIMAN THE MAN-MINDED, DESTROYER OF ZU." This chamber is stocked with old animal pelts, and an old brass headband rests on a ragged pile. The walls are hung with include several drums, horns, and shield-spear combinations. A **copper chest** contains 100 sp, 590 gp, and a glass vial with 6*300 gp pearls. A scrap of parchment reads: "*Parnati sheds her tears for Nariman, the brave.*"

47. The tomb of Quamran: **Inscription** reads "QUAMRAN, HE WHO IS ALL-SUCCESSFUL". His resting place is under a **blue ceramic dome** decorated with brass ornaments. 450 gp worth of etched **metal sheets** hanging on the wall are astrological devices. On a small stand, Quamran's treasures include a *fire bomb* (bottled 6d6 Hp *fireball*), a *ring of weakness*, and a *periapt of proof vs. poison*.



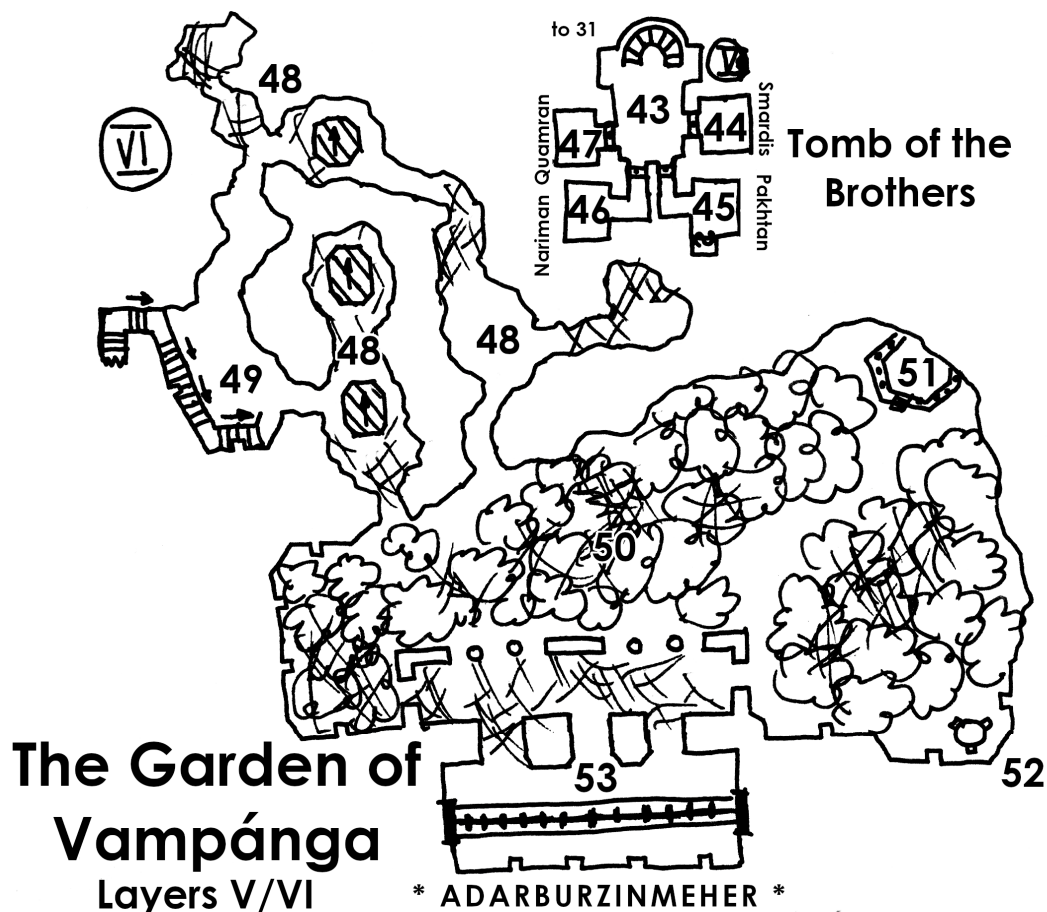
The Garden of Vampánga

This cave system and enchanted forest-garden lies deep beneath the Pits of Shannash, located on the deepest layer of the Underworld. This locale is littered with skeletons, usually wrapped in old webs, and afflicted by both an advanced wormlike rot and terrible deformations. There are two kinds of **random encounters** (1:6 per turn):

Weavers in the vault (1/9): HD 4; AC 6; Atk bite 1d6 + poison (save or die within 2d6 turns); Spec immune to mind-affecting, surprise 4:6 (rear only); ML 8; AL N.

Hp 14 17 23 11 12 15
18 23 13

Enormous green arachnids with a faint phosphorescent glow, stalking in almost total silence.



The dead of Shannash (3d8/48): HD 2; AC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec slow, immune to cold and charm, -2 vs. fire; ML 10; AL N.

Hp	12	6	7	9	11	11
	11	8	10	14	3	8
	5	9	4	12	13	9
	5	8	5	4	9	9
	9	11	10	8	11	7
	11	11	8	5	11	11
	7	13	10	8	3	11
	15	9	12	7	8	13

These webbed corpses have strange, sickly growths, and are crawling with greenish spider eggs. They wheeze and moan horribly as they approach, ruining surprise.

48. Cobwebbed caverns: A nightmarish tangle of woolly cobwebs and suspended **skeletons**. Glowing golden dots resembling fireflies sparkle in the empty skulls and eye sockets. **Miniature spiders** swarm on the bodies, devouring each other and their even lesser kin (1:2 to attack as a swarm if the bodies are disturbed).

Spider swarms (6): HD 5-1; AC 5; Atk swarm 2d4-1; Spec poison (death), ½ from piercing and slashing; ML 6; AL N.

Hp	10	28	15	21	31	16
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49. Stairs: Massive buttresses support enormous **concerte wall** to W. A **plaque** next to the lower end of long stairs reads: "LAYER IV ↔ LAYER VI". The stairs end in a collapse.

50. Subterranean garden: Moonlight from an artificially projected starry sky provides faint illumination to a splendeid garden. **1d3 weavers in the vault** and **3d8 dead of Shannash** lair in the cobwebbed parts.

Weavers in the vault (1d3): HD 4; AC 6; Atk bite 1d6 + poison (save or die within 2d6 turns); Spec immune to mind-affecting, surprise 4:6 (rear only); ML 8; AL N.

Hp 24 26 24

The dead of Shannash (3d8): HD 2; AC 8; Atk hit 1d8; Spec slow, immune to cold and charm, -2 vs. fire; ML 10; AL N.

Hp	13	6	7	7	6	2
	14	11	10	15	13	5
	7	6	4	3	7	14
	10	11	10	16	12	3

51. Pavilion: Music and song drifts from a pavilion built from white marbles and noble wood. A **young woman** dressed in expensive silks, and wearing the ritual scars of the Brotherhood of the Tiger on her face, plays a sitar made of mahogany and ivory (500 gp). On her belt hangs an expensive scimitar (600 gp), and another is left carelessly on a bench, along with a battle-axe. Behind her is a rectangle of shimmering blue light, a **moon-gate** leading to a suite in the Fortress of the Tiger.

The woman, who seems oddly familiar to all who encounter her, introduces herself as **Vampánga**, a noble lady who visits here to enjoy the beauty and solitude of this underground realm. She is courteous and a bit reserved with a hint of mischief, but she proves wise beyond her years if carefully questioned, and can offer a few vague but insightful answers about the deeper mysteries of the Underworld and the City of Vultures. In truth, Vampánga is...:

- A known socialite in aristocratic circles, with many acquaintances but few friends, (correctly) reputed to be Mirwander Khan's consort. Among the noble ranks, Vampánga is considered a modernist and a supporter of the Palace.
- A name and image occasionally seen on antique artwork, invariably awakening an obsession in those who own these pieces.
- A **type V demon**, serving as the Khan's protector and advisor, now fallen in love with the troubled monarch, and increasingly afraid of the dark dreams he finds himself enmeshed in.
- A top-ranking **Deston operative**, belonging to the inner circle of the conspiracy that rules the city! As such, Vampánga is loyal to both Khan and the city's ideals (inasmuch as they exist), and is dedicated to working towards stability. However, she is distrustful of other inner circle members, who are more and more following their own agendas.

If attacked, Vampánga defends herself in human shape, trusting her formidable combat abilities and invulnerability to normal weapons. If pressed, she tries to gate in **1d3 serpent demons**. If defeated, she disappears in a shower of perfumed mists and rose petals – it is not her fate to die anywhere but in defence of her monarch. Vampánga bears no grudges, and is prone to serving mercy to those she does not find a threat to her agenda.

**** Vampánga **:** HD 7+7; AC -4; Atk 4*scimitars 1d8 and 2*battleaxe 1d8; Spec +2 or better to hit, *darkness* 5' at will, cast *charm person*, *levitate*, *read languages*, *detect invisible*, *pyrotechnics*, *polymorph self*, *project image*, *gate* in 1d3 serpent demons, ½ damage from cold, electricity, fire, gas; MR 80%; ML 12; AL N.

Deston abilities, Level II (ΨΨΨΨ): 1) deflect detection and charm spells of all types; 2) bypass any force limiting mobility; 3) bypass locked doors and portals; 4) travel by *gate* to any location within, and under the City.

Hp 55

Serpent demons (1d3): HD 8; AC -2; Atk bite 3d4 + poison (save at -2 or die); Spec *charm* on gaze, spells, +1 or better to hit, ½ damage from cold, electricity, fire, gas; MR 40%; AL CE. Spells (as 6th level Illusionist): 4/3/1; 1: change self, dancing lights, hypnotism, ph. force; 2: blindness, blur, impr. ph. force; 3: suggestion.

Hp 47 45 38

52. Geosphere: Lost in the undergrowth is a 15' metal sphere on three short legs. There is a band running along its circumference, stamped with the letters "ΓΕΟΣΦΕΡΑ" (GEOSPHERA). This device of the archaic cycles is one of the devices regulating the flow of energy through the Underworld and the City of Vultures. It is immovable and essentially impervious to harm, but it can be unlocked by those who possess the knowledge of the Masters of DESTON. Thus opened, the GEOSPHERA can be modified to function as a 15 megaton chromatic charge, activated when all similar devices in the Underworld are reset.

53. Monorail station: Hall built of a smooth grey stone no longer known in the present era, antechamber patrolled by **3 weavers in the vault**. Massive iron gates seal exits to magnetic monorail tracks. Between carved demonic faces on the wall, a grand, baroque **marble plaque** reads

* A D A R B U R Z I N M E H E R *

THE FIRE OF EXALTED LOVE AND AFFECTION

THE THIRD SACRAMENT

The **monorail** can be summoned with one of the sacred names. When exclaimed, the carriage, a tube-shaped old brass vehicle with bizarre and demonic ornaments, arrives within 2d6 turns and departs one turn afterwards to its destination. The following sacred names have effect:

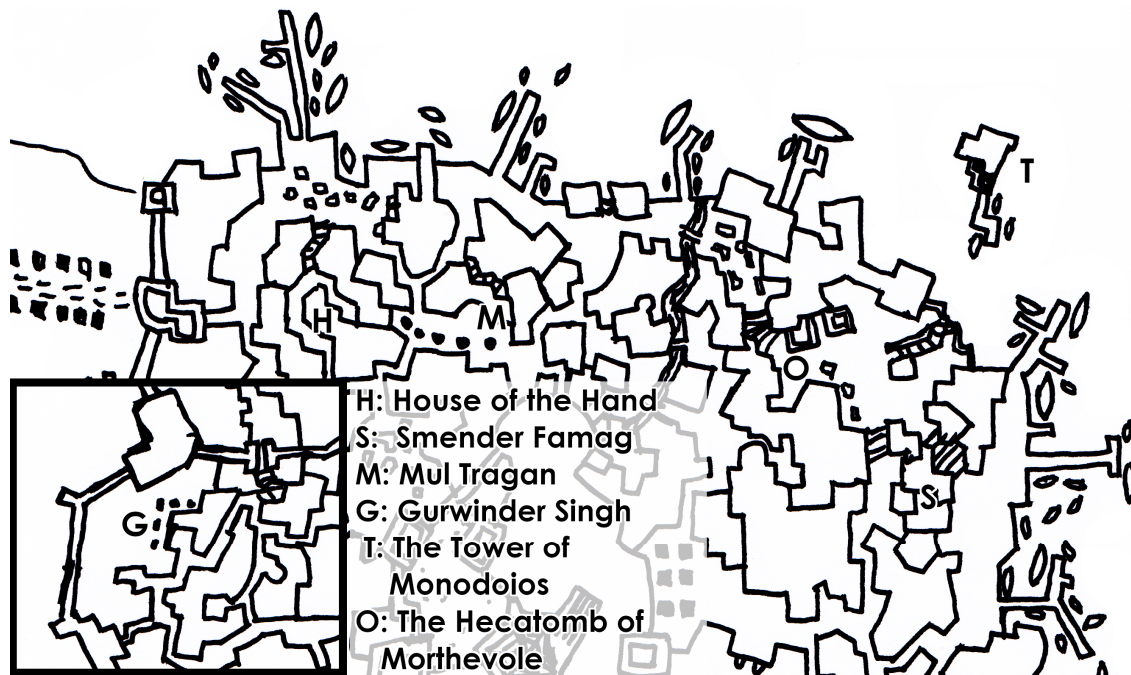
- * A D A R B U R Z I N M E H E R * : No effect (company is here).
- * A D A R H O R M A Z D * : The Court of Vannaglakka, **67** (beneath The Temple of Sürü Miklári)
- * A D A R B A H R A M * : The Pits of Fiery Lances (The Temple of Mezeng)
- * A D A R G U S H N A S P * : The Fortress of the Tiger (station only)
- * A D A R K U R S H I D * : The Villa of Hyél Singh (outside the City, Tridentos **2406**)
- * A D A R M A R D * : The Great Stairway (The Mausoleum of Satrap Zeirus)
- * A D A R H Ó S H A N G * : The Grand Terminal (The Palace)

Weavers in the vault (3): HD 4; AC 6; Atk bite 1d6 + poison (save or die within 2d6 turns); Spec immune to mind-affecting, surprise 4:6 (rear only); ML 8; AL N.

Hp 22 17 16



THE WHITE HAND & OTHER SITES OF INTEREST





THE WHITE HAND

As crime and treachery flourished in the City of Vultures, attempts to eradicate or drive it back had also gained momentum. The merchants and the thieves fought many battles in the streets and back alleys, and for all their ruthlessness, they seemed to have achieved very little: the city still has an abundance of both types who flourish like rank weeds. As the thieves formed hereditary families and outlander societies for mutual protection, the merchants and tradesmen sought common ground likewise.

At first, they congregated around a new faith from the middling wasteland towns of Thasan, noted for its strict and uncompromising message. Ishab-Lambar, formerly the high priest, then the successor of the decrepit Red God, preached death against the common thief and armed bandit, and mutual assistance among the faithful. The faith spread among the lower ranks like wildfire, and the war against the thieves was in full swing once more. The aristocracy – following older, more obscure passions – found the upstart religion tolerable, if a bit amusing. However, the great Mirvander Khan saw it differently. After a formless dream which filled him with unspeakable dread, he spoke a few commands to his closest advisors, and they, in turn, spoke to the Warriors of the Tiger, the military brotherhood sworn to his protection. For two nights and one day, the streets ran red; tigers were loosed on Ishab-Lambar's followers, and the Khan's men committed terrible deeds in their houses until the work was done. Ever since, a curious amnesia has shrouded these events, easier to forget than contemplate in their reality.

In the place of the faith, a new organisation arose. Built around self-help, micro-credit, community improvement and the promotion of trade and craft, the White Hand soon came to represent the same goals in the port districts of the lesser craftsmen (but not the Market of Uugen, whose merchants were from older dynasties, and held onto ancient privileges they were loath to share – their circles will be discussed elsewhere). Known for the sewn-on symbol of the white hand worn on clothing, the society became more numerous than Ishab-Lambar's more inflexible cult could ever have been. Sobriety, mild asceticism, thrift and honesty are the ideas which adherents are expected to follow – and the society meetings, held in an old house in the craftsmens' district, are an excellent place to make new deals and meet business associates. The White Hand still possesses a particular dislike of thieves. Openly, they advocate them to be driven out, but it is a badly kept secret that if they catch them, they kill them before the matter gets to a city official – not that the latter care. Rumours of their nighttime hunts for worse sinners are often discussed in a supportive manner... after all, thieves are universally held in low regard.





That is the widely known story. But in the City of Vultures, nothing is so straightforward. Even at its moment of establishment, the White Hand had a hidden purpose – the secret continuation and eventual revival of Ishab-Lambar’s worship among the commons – but it soon drifted even further as it immediately became infiltrated by the Khan’s secret police, and shortly afterward by all manner of secret groups and conspiracies at their encouragement. Likewise, opportunistic thieves and assassins have found it easy to enter the society’s ranks as upright citizens concerned about street crime, and use it as a staging ground for their own purposes. However, the society is also a gateway to the City’s deeper secrets – if one follows the loose threads, and lives to tell the tale.

Currently, the White Hand’s activities are layered accordingly:

- On the front, it functions as a self-help organisation. Most members join to benefit from mutual assistance, loans to members in good standing, networking opportunities, and strength in numbers against the criminal element.
- The society is actively engaged in covert vigilantism; society “patrols” embark on nighttime missions to dispense justice to those they consider criminals. In theory, the focus is on powerful crime lords; in practice, small fish are easier to catch. Assassinations are decided by the society’s three leaders, and carried out by teams consisting of both common craftsmen, and experienced killers (toughs/thieves).
- The society’s closest adherents are working for the revival of Ishab-Lambar’s worship. This remainder cult has no clerics, and is so well hidden that they have no active link to the faith as it exists outside the City of Vultures.
- A society of assassins, who make up much of the society’s vigilante operatives, under command of Tamur Haquim. They offer a lucrative side business to friendly thieves, who are allowed to operate and thrive under their protection, while their rivals – especially the bandits of the Fisherman Lord, based in the Tower of Mono-doiros (next issue) – are “somehow” targeted for killing. The original conspiracy starts to suspect this side of the White Hand, and is increasingly wary of it.

- A honey-pot for the curious – due to external infiltration, the White Hand has become an unwitting instrument by other conspiracies to draw the interested into a network of deceit, and expose them to multiple forms of observation and control. Societies with a major interest in the White Hand include Oom the Many (through Smender Famag), Deston (through Ultron Zard), and the Palace (through Kendall Haut).

The leadership now consists of a triumvirate, after Mul Tragan, the maker of mirrors, grew increasingly distant. They are:

Smender Famag, alchemist: Fighter 2; AC 7 (ring mail); Atk shortsword 1d6 or 2*dagger 1d4 + poison; ML 7; AL LN; vial of deadly poison, super-acid, 200 gp signet ring.

Hp 14

Respected supplier of alchemical mixtures, whose modesty and skill have made inroads in high society. He is the informal leader of the White Hand, as the other two defer to his judgement. He knows of the thievish infiltration, but maintains a pragmatic attitude. Smender Famag has strong ties to Oom the Many, a society of illusionists, who supply him with subtle guidance, and purchase much of his special wares.

Ultron Zard, blacksmith: Fighter 2; AC 8 (leather); Atk hammer 1d6+2; ML 9; AL LN.

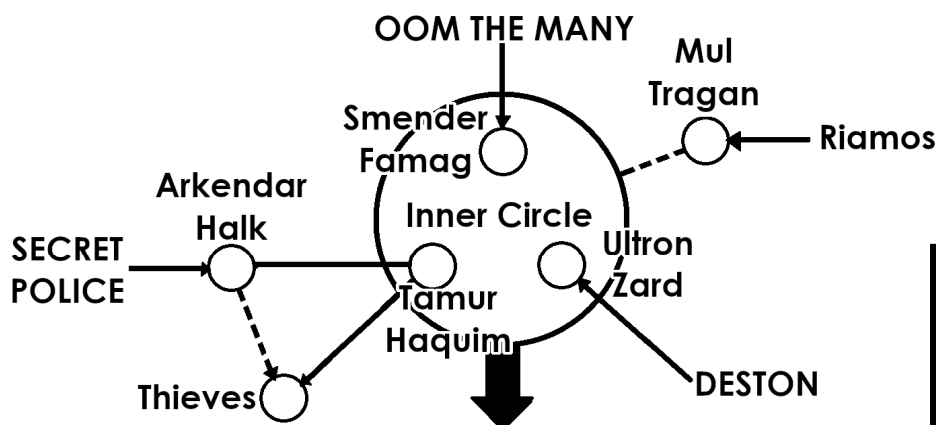
Hp 12

A true believer who has gotten perhaps a bit too enthusiastic about killing suspected thieves – the only one in leadership who personally participates in the manhunt. Tormented by dark doubts, Ultron Zard has found solace in the weird music of Deston, and is driven by the harmonies permeating his mind. As an obedient instrument, he is allowed to participate in the séances of his cell... where he receives the names of new “targets” to track down and kill.

Tamur Haquim, barber: Assassin 2; AC 5 (leather, Dex); Atk 2*razor 1d4+1 or scimitar 1d8+1; Spec surprise, backstab*2, assassination 0-1 55%, 2-3 50%, 4-5 40%, 6-7 30%, 8-9 15%; Str 16, Dex 17; ML 8; AL NE; soap, leather strip, alum, perfumes, etc.

Hp 8

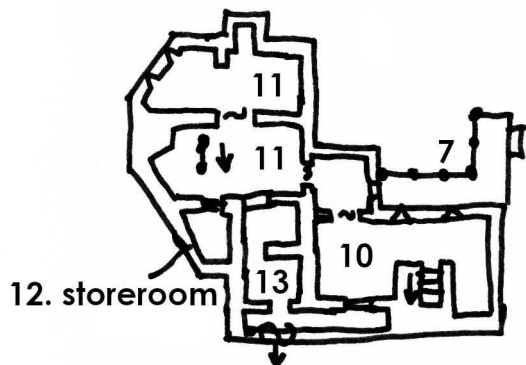
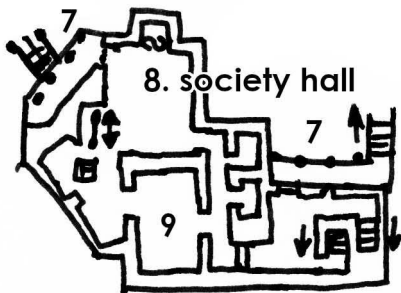
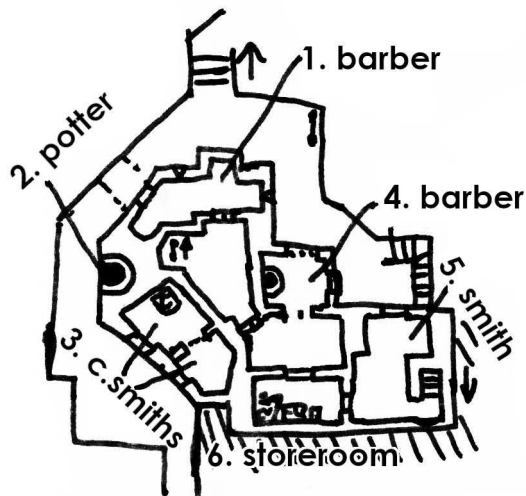
He supplies most of the skilled “fighters” for the White Hand, all trusted acquaintances from his thieving days. He targets the competition (particularly the followers of the Fisherman Lord) and leads the trail away from his pals, or at least gives them ample warning to get out of town. Has plans to take over the whole organisation. Unknown to him, his second-in-command, Arkendar Halk, is a Secret Police informer.



WHITE HAND MEMBERSHIP



HOUSE OF THE HAND



The White Hand's headquarters are located in an old flophouse in the port district. Multiple small stores provide access to the guarded upper floors where meetings, usually of 20-50 men at a time, take place.

1. Smedullah Alct, barber: Wily old fox offering stream of gossip. "Special clients" are admitted through locked iron door. Signals with bell to indicate if friend or foe.

2. Zosperan, potter: Operates a street kiln; secret glaze has lustrous green sheen. Believes a spirit haunts his chimney, and wants someone to drive it out. 70 gp stash under kiln.

3. Ullan Uthman & Sons: Large family of coppersmiths; store has "emergency exit" to cover members' departure in case of raid.

4. Tamur Haquim, barber: Tamur and 4 burly men attend to needs; hot water tub for baths.

5. Ultron Zard, blacksmith: Barred window allows observation of the forge. Business is flagging as Ultron Zard is otherwise occupied.

6. Storeroom: Shared by two businesses, hidden "society chest" with arm slicer trap contains 450 el, 320 gp, *potion of healing*.

7. Galleries: These three old, sagging things connecting to neighbouring buildings have 2 lookouts each with bows at night.

8. Society hall: Standing only; secret niche behind painted fresco of the White Hand contains 850 gp golden cobra idol with pearl eyes and poisoned teeth. This is a secret symbol of Ishab-Lambar. Unknown even to the White Hand's inner circle who have commissioned it, the figure's makers have gifted them an *amulet of inescapable location*, a device which allows constant observation of the room.

9. Council room: Tapestries with the White Hand, hookah, pillows around low table bearing city maps marked with planned raids and suspected concentrations of crime (some real, some imagined). 1d6 places of special interest are clearly identified.

10. Training room: Mannequins, mats and targets to practice for night incursions.

11. Sleeping rooms: Common quarters with reed mats and minimal comforts, often used by journeymen looking for an affordable place, or Tamur Haquim's thieves when they need to lay low. Locked door to storage is always under observation.

12. Storeroom: Windowless cell used to store kidnappees or "hot" items. Nurlum Bey, confused peddler who has seen forbidden city secret, awaiting interrogation & death.

13. Storeroom: Food and supplies, secret door in S passage leads to next house.

White Hand militias (50): HD 1; AC 10; Atk club 1d6 or 2*dagger 1d4; ML 7; AL LN.

Hp	4	3	2	7	2	5	4	4	8	6
	2	5	7	8	3	4	5	1	4	7

White Hand toughs (11): HD 2; AC 10; Atk club 1d6+1 or 2*dagger 1d4+1; ML 8; AL N.

Hp	3	11	12	10	10	12
	4	12	10	9	6	

White Hand thieves (5): Thief 2; AC 8 (leather); Atk club 1d6 or 2*dagger 1d4; Spec backstab*2, PP 35%, OL 29%, FT 25%, MS 21%, HS 15%, HN 10%, CW 86%; ML 6; AL CE.

Hp	4	7	11	7	7
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SMENDER FAMAG

Decrepit old house on a more expensive street in NE port area. Smender Famag lends the crowded lower tenements to various low-class types while inhabiting third floor accessible via rickety wooden balconies and stairs. A ladder leads up to an attic, where live a crippled tailor and 6 compatriots working for room&board, virtual slaves. 4 guards watch premises from upper balcony, lamenting lack of bows.

Guards (4): Fighter 1; AC 6 (ring mail, shield); Atk spear 1d6; ML 7; AL N.

Hp	10	2	3	4
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1. Waiting room: Pillows, wall hangings. Secret observation hole in E wall.

2. Living room: Modestly but nicely decorated with small comforts, pieces of special craftsmanship worth 220 gp total.

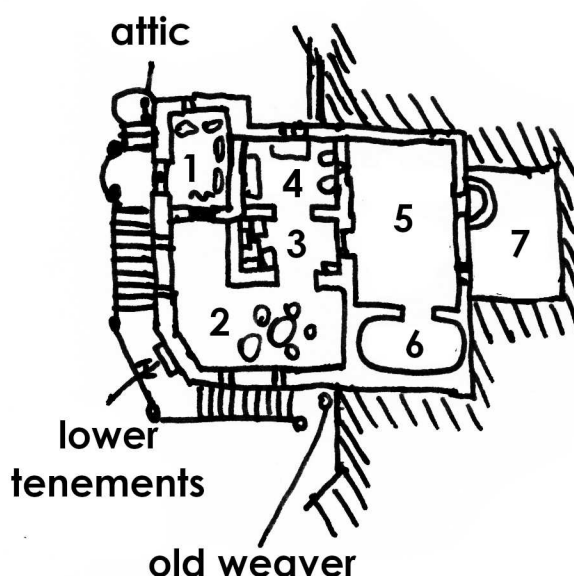
3. Storeroom: Stacked crates of alchemical supplies, total 1100 gp value.

4. Workshop: Window grate. Powdered dyes in wax-paper packages; 2 alembics of green poison, *dust of sneezing & choking* in sealed jar with trick release. A thick glass tube holds a golden oil, and the limp corpse of a dissected, sulphur-yellow pterodactyl. A secret, locked niche holds 300 sp, 290 electrum, 450 gp, a 300 gp cobra idol with pearl eyes and poisoned teeth (a symbol of Ishab-Lambar). An elegantly penned scroll on the lab table has the following message: *"I am Oom, master and disciple! I hereby order you to prepare seventeen metal sheets, of a treated zarmium alloy and the following markings etched with tin. Neither variation, nor difference shall be allowed. You shall receive your reward in the Court of Zuhari Kutargi. I am Oom, beginning and end. Abide by my demand!"*

5. Harem: Sahzan and Tabendeh, Smender Famag's wives, both bored and miserable in middle age, and struggling with weight problems. 300 gp golden mirror (covered).

6. Bath: Tiles, marble basin, walls decorated with nymphs. Bathing salts 90 gp.

7. Courtyard: Interior court surrounded by several houses looming over Smender Famag's more modest building. Sundial held by rearing lion-mermaid.





THE MAKER OF MIRRORS

Mul Tragan, formerly of the White Hand leadership, but never deeply involved beyond funding and symbolic support, has gradually withdrawn from the organisation, and increasingly public life. His growing obsession with a magic mirror he had stolen from the Tower of Riamos (before its condemnation) has made him dependent on admiring his possession, and satiating its hunger for bodies. Mul Tragan is haunted by the sense of clear inferiority compared to the craftsmanship of the mirror in his possession, which has made him more and more hysterical and unhinged.

Mul Tragan: Thief 3; AC 8 (Dexterity); Atk 2*dagger 1d4; Spec backstab*2, PP 35%, OL 28%, FT 30%, MS 22%, HS 15%, HN 15%, CW 87%; Dex 16; ML 8; AL LE; 3*acid, 35 gp, green glass medallion with the imprint of the White Hand.

Hp 11

Mul Tragan lives at the end of a dark alleyway in the port district, surprisingly desolate for its proximity to the seafront. The place gives visitors an involuntary shudder.

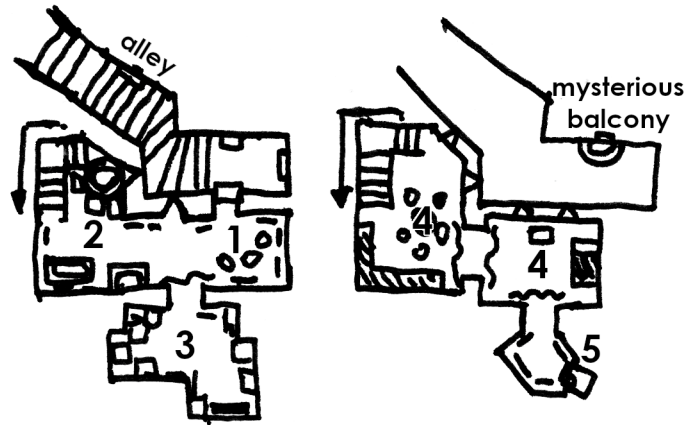
1. Showroom: A collection of fancy mirrors, from the fine to the exquisite (total 2d4*100 gp value). Mul Tragan meets clients here, and visibly tries to block the view to the back rooms, protesting if they enter.

2. Workroom: Stale acidic and chemical smells. Vats and workdesks; generous supplies of glass sand, acids and grindstones; several more mirrors, but they are all flawed or just blind.

3. Back room: Curtained archway leads to room of dusty old crates, several blind mirrors, and the Mirror of Riamos. While cobwebbed and dusty, this full-length mirror is clearly a masterpiece, with lead-hued depths and subtle tints. Looking into the mirror reveals a reflection superior to reality... but also faint scratching, knocking sounds and disembodied forms, the desiccated, dusty corpses of Mul Tragan's victims, begging for freedom. The mirror can speak with a faint, raspy whisper; a crimson-hued misty form, the spirit of Riamos drains 1d6 Hp with his gaze, and invites characters to visit him in his tower to talk. *"You are far away..."* he murmurs as he fades away. Mul Tragan will attack laughing and crying hysterically if he thinks someone is trying to harm or take possession of his mirror. On a successful hit, he shoves his victim through the surface, resulting in instantaneous death (save vs. death avoids). Breaking the mirror (16 Hp) unleashes a torrent of dust-dry bones, and parchment-dry remains along with a tortured sigh – but no living beings.

4. Quarters: Dusty and abandoned; rats have taken possession of a baldachined northern-style bed, a wardrobe of modest but decently made clothes (one pocket has a jade medallion, 70 gp), and shredded a small collection of rare books. Around an upturned reading stand, scattered sheets all bear several copies of the same poem: *"He who gazes deeply / Into the Mirror of Riamos / Shall find what he looks for / And what he himself hides most."*

5. Mirror room: Five experimental mirrors on the walls. Four display the viewer, while the fifth displays Mul Tragan, casting a suspicious glance at the intruders. If Mul Tragan is brought here (living or dead), he appears in four mirrors, while the fifth assumes the reflection of a locked door. Someone who devises a suitable trick to pick a mirror lock shall unlock the mirror-maker's small treasury: a collection of green glass lozenges, burnt by tremendous heat and displaying a rainbow sheen; a pale rosy alabaster pitcher (350 gp) containing ambrosia (combined *potion of extra-healing & super-heroism*), 1800 electrum pieces (all of a specific era, meticulously polished), and a bronze owl idol (mechanical but no longer functioning).



THE DESTON CELL

To the uninitiated, Deston is an oddity; a collection of musical enthusiasts crossing boundaries of class and status from lowly pariahs to high-ranking aristocrats (itself a bizarre phenomenon), with interest in tones too weird to be pleasing, too outré to be respectable, and banned by the city authorities. But the uninitiated couldn't care less about Deston, or its supposed persecution. Its harmonies and characteristic triangular tuning forks made of an unknown alloy are simple oddities in a city already rich in bizarre customs.

Those who know more recognise Deston as a kind of drug, leading to addiction and acute withdrawal symptoms. If they seek these peculiar sensations, they shall often find what they crave, and be granted this much, although not a bit more. Those who know yet more recognise Deston as an instrument of power: a distributed terrorist network framed by dubious philosophies, but managed with ruthless efficiency for purposes that seem to be vague, circular, and hopelessly esoteric. These half-knowing often seek, but rarely find: Deston does not want most of them. And then there are others... but this much shall suffice, for now.

The Deston cell linked to the White Hand numbers 15-20, with three main members, and a bit more than a dozen more drawn mainly from plebeians and the lower classes. Ultron Zard is one of the low-ranking adherents, and is allowed to listen to the tones, which seem to communicate to him a terrible purpose – and the blacksmith obeys, obediently killing those he sees with his mind's eyes.

Gurvinder Singh: Fighter 4; AC 4; Atk wrestling 2d6; Spec *hypnotism* gaze 1/day; ML 9; AL LN; pipe, zither, holy water, prayer mill, lump of clay, *turban* (2*hold person). Deston abilities, Level IV (ΨΨ): 1) deflect detection and charm spells of all types; 2) bypass any force limiting mobility.

Hp 20

The leader is the yogi and guru, Gurvinder Singh, who teaches street urchins near the Beggar's district to read, write and count. He spends most of his days in meditation, or reading his old prayer scrolls. He himself receives instructions from the mouth of a bizarre, monstrous statue in an unspecified courtyard. Gurvinder Singh is lean, brown-skinned, and wears a turban written with spells, useable as a scroll. His piercing gaze sees to the bottom of the soul.

Buruk Ulan, nomad: Fighter 2; AC 10; Atk 2*shortbow 1d6 or club 1d6; ML 7; AL CN; 1d6*5 electrum, double-sided clothes, red-weed & tobacco.

Deston abilities, Level V (Ψ): 1) deflect detection and charm spells of all types.

Hp 13

Dock worker and drifter of declining fortunes, waiting for his luck. Constantly chews tobacco, and red-weed, a mild intoxicant. He often visits the Temple of Mezeng.

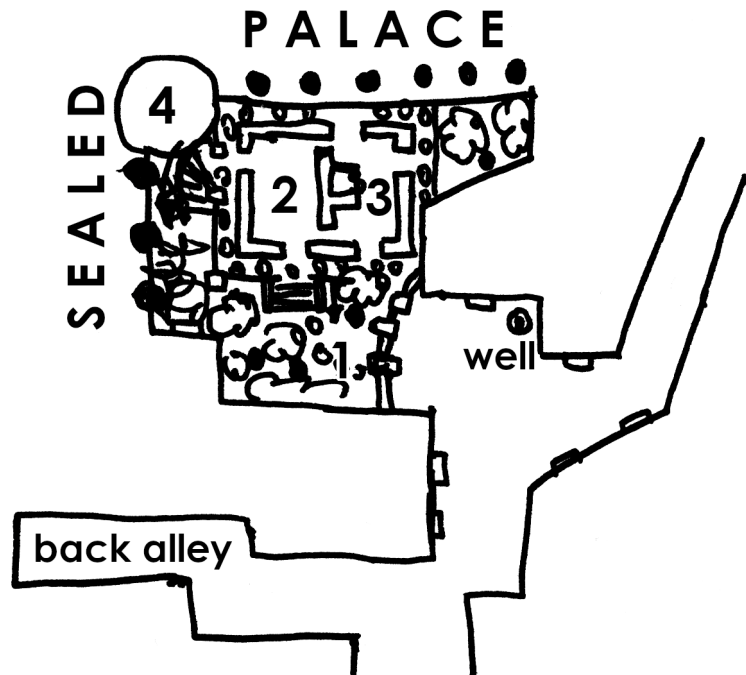
Vortel Atap Mani: Fighter 7; AC 10/4 (breast plate & shield); Atk 3/2*battle axe 1d8 or 3/2*javelin 1d6; ML 10; AL N; 2d6*50 gp, gold medallion (300 gp).

Deston abilities, Level V (Ψ): 1) deflect detection and charm spells of all types.

Hp 46

Former soldier, greying and grown fat on his commission in retirement. Embroidered vest and skullcap. He is a low-ranking Palace insider of the reformist faction – impressed by Mirvander Khan's apparent determination.

The cell's gathering place is an abandoned garden found in the Old Quarter, close to Uugen's Market and the Beggars' District. Overlooked by a great, crumbling palace now meticulously sealed, the garden is occupied by the ruins of an ancient shrine. By day, Gurvinder Singh spends his hours here in meditation and prayer to unknown principles, or teaches street urchins in the ways of wisdom (1:3). By night, there is 1:3 of a cell meeting taking place. No guards are posted, but Gurvinder Singh's keen senses ensure there can be no more than a 2:6 probability of surprise.



1. Overgrown garden: Choked with gnarled trees and bushes gone wild. Broken statuary and rubble litter the ground, and only pedestals remain of a number of statues. By day, 1:3 of 2d12 street kids listening intently to their lessons. A path of stones, and a flight of cracked stairs climb up to a flat-topped columned hall, dwarfed by the giant palace behind it. The back stairs (W) are completely overgrown.

2. Hall: Bare chamber, dilapidated and close to collapse. Frescoes on the wall are mere swirls of faded colour. This is where meetings take place at night.

3. Side room: Gurvinder Singh's spartan quarters consist of a bed of rags, the simplest supplies, a begging bowl, a water jug, and a shelf of crumbling prayer scrolls and writing materials. A secret niche contains a three-pronged tuning fork made of an unknown alloy, and carefully wrapped in a bundle of cloth. The Ψ sign is inscribed with chalk on the back wall.

4. Tiger palace: The massive walls of this once mighty palace cradle the garden and the shrine. The carved faces of snarling tigers can be seen on the walls and battlements. All ways in have been carefully and thoroughly sealed with large stones – much more thoroughly than simple condemnation would necessitate. Nobody, not even the most knowledgeable, remember the origins of this palace, or why it came to be sealed. Most, in fact, barely realise it is there at all.



Zine Conventions

While much of old-school gaming originates from the same lineage, and its products remain largely cross-compatible, there is much devil in those details. Every table and every party has its own ideas and house rules, and it is a good idea to lay these assumptions out into the open. Therefore, the conventions governing this fanzine are thus:

- Unless otherwise noted, the materials published here were designed for **Advanced** rules.
- A thousand gold pieces is **worth a small fortune**. Monetary treasure is relatively scarce.
- Conversely, **XP for treasure** is gained through squandering it in hedonistic excess (or any kind of lavish spending which has no discernible benefit), with a ***5 multiplier**. If you adjust the treasure values, adjust the multiplier as well.
- **Level demographics** form a very flat pyramid: low-level NPCs (1st to 4th level) are commonplace, while mid-level ones (5th to 8th level) tend to be outliers – present in most communities, but never numerous. Few NPCs reach more than 9th level, and over 12th is almost unheard of.
- Magic is limited to **5th level spells** or lower. Magic items are limited to **+3**.
- Fighters can do **carryover damage**: when fighting grouped opponents, the damage remaining after a killing blow is transferred to the next opponent.
- **Roll-under morale** is in effect (see **Morale & Men in Echoes #01**).
- The **gods are limited in their powers**, but actively involved in the fate of the world.

Legal Appendix

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Prestigious Plunder

2003
EMDT 1 – The Garden of al-Astorian +
2008
EMDT 2 – SWORD & MAGIC
EMDT 3 – MONSTERS & TREASURES
EMDT 4 – GAMEMASTER'S GUIDELINES
EMDT 5 – The Temple of Pazuzu (+)
EMDT 6 – Black Blood +
EMDT 7 – Sacrificial Lamb #
EMDT 8 – Broken Wastes +
EMDT 9 – The Unholy Secrets of Protoros #
EMDT 10 – Strabonus +
2009
EMDT 11 – The Menestratos School #
EMDT 12 – Sea Lords +
2010
EMDT 13 – Molonei +
EMDT 14 – Isle of the Water Sprites +
EMDT 15 – City Encounters # +
2011
EMDT 16 – Towards Fomalhaut +
EMDT 17 – The Temple of Torments #
EMDT 18 – The Barbarian King +
EMDT 19 – The Main Cities of Fomalhaut I. (+)
EMDT 20 – Sea Demon +
EMDT 21 – City Encounters II: The Nocturnal Table +
EMDT 22 – In the Name of the Principle! +
EMDT 23 – Below the City +
EMDT 24 – Oolar's Time #
2012
EMDT 25 – The Blood Drinkers of Yukum #
EMDT 26 – Khosura: City State of the Four Myst. +
2013
EMDT 27 – Trials on Tridentfish Island +
EMDT 28 – Feathers of Fire #
EMDT 29 – The Ghost City of Arun-Kha #
EMDT 30 – The Tower of Manistrid #
EMDT 31 – Tempest Dreams #

EMDT 32 – The Burial Chamber of Carnaic Arnoc #
EMDT 33 – Ratcatcher #
EMDT 34 – HELVÉCZIA
EMDT 35 – GAMEMASTERS ALMANAC
EMDT 36 – Ammertal and the Oberammsbund
EMDT 37 – The Accursed Cellar
EMDT 38 – Slaughter in the Salt Pits +
2014
EMDT 39 – Curious Marriage #
EMDT 40 – Until Dawn
EMDT 41 – Ill-Gotten Merchandise
2015
EMDT 42 – The Cloister's Secret #
EMDT 43 – The Serpent Girl and Other Stories #
EMDT 44 – The Fools' Feast at Furochen #
EMDT 45 – The True Weapon Cache etc. #
2018
EMDT 46 – Echoes #01: Beware the Beekeeper! +
EMDT 47 – The Barbarian King (REVISED) +
EMDT 48 – Echoes #02: Gont, Nest of Spies +
EMDT 49 – Echoes #03: Blood, Death, and Tourism +
EMDT 50 – Cloister of the Frog-God (HU) (+)
2019
EMDT 51 – The Enchantment of Vashundara (HU) #
EMDT 52 – Echoes #04: Revenge of the Frogs +
EMDT 53 – The Lost Valley of Kishar (HU) # +
EMDT 54 – Murderous Devices (HU) #
EMDT 55 – The Lost Valley of Kishar (EN) # +
EMDT 56 – Echoes #05: The Ench. of Vashundara +
EMDT 57 – The Nocturnal Table +
EMDT 58 – Echoes #06: The Gallery of R. Tombs +
EMDT 59 – In the Shadow of the City-God (HU) # +
EMDT 60 – Castle Xyntillan +
2020
EMDT 61 – Echoes #07: From Beneath the Glacier +
EMDT 62 – In the Shadow of the City-God (EN) # +
EMDT 63 – Trail of the Sea Demon +

Indicates title written by guest author
+ Indicates title available in English



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