

Back to BasiX



A quarterly Fanzine dedicated to the simpler time of RPGs—
covering the Basic and Expert editions of Dungeons & Dragons.

Future Issues — A Note from the Fanzine Creator

It's hard to believe that I'm working on the sixth issue of this fanzine, encompassing a year and a half of quarterly releases. The reviews and feedback from nearly all of you has been overwhelmingly positive, driving me to create each new issue to be better than the last. Throughout the 15-month run, particularly in the last two issues, a few repeated questions have popped up that I can answer here.

Why are you moving print to a third party? Well, I've always intended to release the fanzine in two formats – PDF and print. I've hand printed, bound, and mailed the previous four issues (five, including the first issue that was handed out at NTRPGCon in 2017) and would rather let someone else handle the time-consuming task of printing and mailing going forward. Additionally, I sell more PDFs than print so moving the digital version to the primary release method makes more sense for my business. As a

lover of print myself, I understand the need for physical copies – continuing to print physical copies satisfies that need for those that wish to have the fanzine in their hands.

Why don't I offer subscriptions? This question was asked very early on and I understand why. It's easier for consumers to pay for several issues in advance and have them arrive when they are released. I can appreciate the question and need for such a service. However, knowing that my release model was going to shift to print by a third party, this made it difficult to find a service that offered print via subscription, especially in a niche market. The big players in the PDF market offer a subscription service but only for digital product. Finding a company who would handle a print mailing without taking a large chunk out of the returns of each issue is and continues to be difficult. I don't make a profit on most issues until I sell more than a few

— Issue #6 Details —

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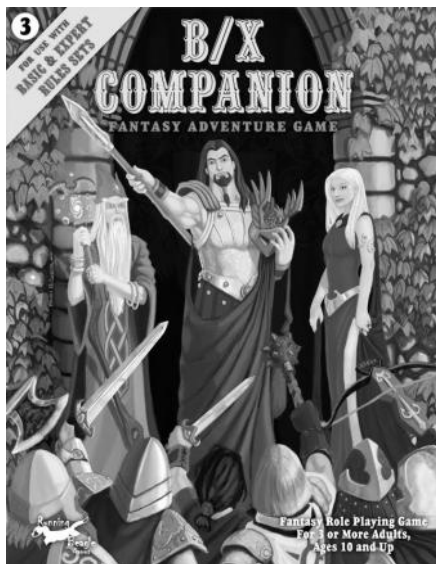
dozen PDFs. Having a subscription company or crate service added to the mix negates any profit I'll make.

I apologize to those who have come to love the handcrafted issues I've made. I hope that you'll continue to buy it in print from the third party company or PDF as I switch release methods with this and future issues. I also hope you understand that these changes only help future issues—I will have more time to create and release RPG materials for you without being burdened with printing, binding, and mailing.

Thom Wilson

Publishing News

Although I mentioned the Running Beagle Games book, **B/X Companion**, in the very first issue of this fanzine, I felt like it was time to do a proper review of it. Jonathan Becker has given us a wonderful book that perfectly follows the Basic and Expert rulebooks. Imagine if TSR had decided to produce a third book in the spirit of the Moldvay, Cook, and Marsh design – my guess is that it would look much like this. Similar to TSR's first two rulebooks, it fills 64 pages with two-column, justified text, laid out in an instructional, simple-to-use format. Topics are in the same order of the original books – my fingers naturally found the section I needed as if I was thumbing through the early TSR rulebooks. Unlike most modern-day books however, Running Beagle Games stays true to the originals by using the interior covers for additional space. I just wish they had used



B/X Companion—cover

a blue color font to match exactly.

B/X Companion covers levels 15 to 36 for the four main classes and provides a few options for demi-human races after they reach their maximum level in the Expert book. I like that the book encourages players to keep their demi-human characters active after they reach maximum level, by using experience points to advance their attack and saving throw ratings and number of attacks per round.

Dozens of high-level and powerful monsters are listed, challenging most experienced characters with their special abilities, massive hit dice, and low armor classes. A few low-level foes are thrown in to add some depth to B/X adventures but the real focus is on the many formidable threats that would frighten a seasoned player. Nearly every monster has one or more asterisks marked after their hit dice, indicating special abilities

that warrant additional experience points for their defeat.

The magic item tables are completely filled with new and wondrous treasures for experienced characters to acquire. Seeing a Sword +5 in any D&D® product is thrilling unto itself, but the sheer number and breadth of choices in the tables offer many new possibilities to characters. The Book table is worth a read all by itself.

Variable combat damage, grappling, and special mass combat rules add considerable depth to the book, providing high-level characters and campaigns with additional advanced options.

Artwork is somewhat sparse (averaging 1 piece per 2-3 pages) but is solid, good work. The cover art is spectacular, reminding us that cover pieces need not show action and combat to tell the story of the interior. It clearly speaks to the leadership that higher-level characters bring to new campaigns.

The font choice is clean and—besides a few strange oddities (e.g. the rear index) — is consistent throughout the book. The interior front cover Table of Contents replicates the original work but the Charisma table and hiring price charts also found there seem strangely out of place, as if used to fill space. No matter, both tables are useful and make it easier to find that information when needed. I think the only issue I have with the book is with the table design. They are flat, plain, and even a little ugly in a few places.

Occasionally, a table will have a gray-highlighted row or column, but most are simplistic, white grids. If there was an area to improve, it would be in the table design and layout. However, this is about all I can find that I'd change. The rest of the book is quite good and—besides a few typos and a couple places with missing punctuation—this is stellar work.

If you haven't picked up this book for your B/X campaign, you should. When you use it at the table, it almost feels like you're using one of the original TSR books.

B/X Companion, Running Beagle Games, \$28.99 print available at bxblackrazor.blogspot.com, \$12.99 PDF at RPGNow.com.

Interview with a Legendary Author—Mike Carr

One of the first adventure books packaged with early boxed sets (Holmes 4th and 5th printings) and later in a different color cover for Basic D&D®, *In Search of the Unknown* is one of the most played and remembered modules from early TSR. I got a chance to interview the author, Mike Carr, to ask him about his days at TSR and his work on this legendary book.

[Thom] *How did you find yourself moving to Lake Geneva to work for TSR in March, 1976?*

[Mike] I graduated from Macalester College in Saint Paul in 1973 with a degree in History, hoping to become a high school social studies teacher — but there were virtually no openings at the time in Minnesota, so my op-

tions in the field of education were limited. For some months I continued working at my college job, which was as the night cook at The Ground Round restaurant in Roseville, Minnesota. That store was one of the busiest in the entire chain, so it was a training ground for aspiring managers – and with few other options, I asked the regional manager if I might be considered as a management trainee. My expectation was that, if accepted, I would be training there in Roseville, but when the offer was made to me, it was for a position in Cedar Rapids, Iowa – take it or leave it. I had no desire to leave the Twin Cities, but this was a genuine opportunity and the only one I had, so I took it.

I enjoyed the restaurant business, but working six days a week and having only Tuesdays off took most of the fun out of it. I really disliked living in Cedar Rapids, so after spending 1974 and 1975 there as a trainee and assistant manager, I was more than delighted when Gary Gygax offered me a position with TSR in early 1976. He felt that with my gaming background and now my management experience, I would be of value to the growing enterprise as an editor and potential manager.

At The Ground Round I had worked my way up from \$150 a week to \$205 a week, but Gary's offer was for just \$110 a week, with the promise of some corporate stock in lieu of salary and the opportunity to buy more shares at a discount. Since I had developed an interest in the stock market as a teen, I was

well aware of what that could mean for the founders and early investors if the business became a solid success – and that's exactly what transpired over the next seven years. Besides, I was single and loved gaming, so taking a pay cut of that magnitude – although significant – was something I was more than willing to do. So in mid-March of 1976, I happily pulled up stakes in Iowa and moved to Lake Geneva. I've been a Wisconsinite ever since. Today I live outside of Oconomowoc, which is about 40 miles north and 45 minutes away from Lake Geneva. So I'm able to visit there any time I like.

[T] So initially at least, your job duties at TSR were informal and more managerial, before becoming the games and rules editor?

[M] Yes. As with any small company, we all performed a variety of tasks, creative and otherwise, including unloading boxes of newly printed products being delivered. Among other duties, I did some editing and proofreading on several projects along with Brian Blume—which led to more editorial work and a change in my title from general manager to games and rules editor.

[T] How did you get tapped to write an introductory adventure for the Basic Set? Were you given the direction to write a module that intentionally taught fledgling dungeon masters how to populate a dungeon (i.e. had fill-in-the-blank monster entries for rooms, along with monster population lists)—or was that primarily your invention?

[M] When the decision was made to include an introductory module with the Basic Set, I raised my hand and said I'd like to write it, which I ended up doing largely on my own time. After outlining my plan and getting the approval of Gary Gygax and Brian Blume, I set to work with very little input from anyone – I was really given carte blanche to bring my own vision to life, which I did. I was well aware that this was going to be an important product that would serve as a model for countless players to use and enjoy, so I really gave it a lot of thought and tried to make it not only illustrative of good design, but also interesting and challenging.

In creating this module, I had several goals. First and foremost was to present it as a true introductory work suitable for first-time dungeon masters and players. That meant explaining to the dungeon master what was being presented, as well as the rationale behind it. For the players, it was giving them a background sheet that outlined the reason and motivation for their adventure, to get them thinking like role players.

Second, I wanted to show what a good dungeon design looks like, starting with architectural aspects (like including all the necessary rooms for housing dozens of people in a functional way, considering aspects such as basic drainage, the location of cooking, eating, and sleeping areas, etc.). I also included aspects that might confuse the adventurers or make the place difficult to map, including some

Third, I wanted to give an example of a solid “backstory” that would provide a reason for the adventure and inspire the players’ imaginations. To give the dungeon master an example of how to tailor certain details to individual players, I included a random roll for rumors or legends that each player’s character might have heard, which could be true or false.

Fourth, I wracked my brain to come up with as many interesting and mysterious features as I could think of for what could be discovered within the place, particularly the garden of giant fungi and the room of pools. That had to be done considering that the adventurers were going to be low-level characters. So nothing could be too deadly or too challenging to overcome – and that meant that there were limited options on the design side.

Fifth, I wanted each dungeon master to be able to provide some of their own input through the placement of various monsters and treasures in different locations – with the suggestion that some rooms have one, or the other, or none. That was my idea, but it reflected what is done in Dave Megarry’s *Dungeon!* Board game, where level-appropriate monsters and treasures are placed in each room, albeit randomly.

Lastly, I included advice for both the dungeon master and the players, hopefully to keep them on track while emphasizing that flexibility and the ability to adapt on the fly are key elements to achieve success in any role playing endeavor.

Product Spotlight

[T] Is there any particular reason that B1 was added to the Basic Set, and similarly, why was it replaced in relatively short order with B2? Apart from the fact that it'd be nice to have a module in the Basic Set to help people figure out how to play, was there any business reason?

[M] The Basic Set was created specifically for the mainstream audience in hopes that D&D would become much more than a niche product. Prior to the release of the Basic Set, D&D was becoming increasingly popular, but mostly within the gaming community. The Basic Set was aimed at the mass market so that it could be sold far more widely – and it really did take off. However, it soon was obvious that most buyers – who had grown up on traditional board games and to whom role playing and dungeon creation were alien concepts – wanted and needed something to allow them to more easily get started. TSR management was aware of that and I believe that they wanted to enhance the product for solid business reasons – to make it easier to grasp and play, thus increasing sales and removing an obstacle to getting started.



Both the monochrome and brown covered versions of **In Search of the Unknown** by Mike Carr. The artist Darlene updated the cover artwork in the revised edition (although the monochrome cover art was kept on the title page of the newer book). Additionally, the art on the back cover (not pictured) was also updated by Darlene, depicting a combat scene between a few adventurers and lizardmen.

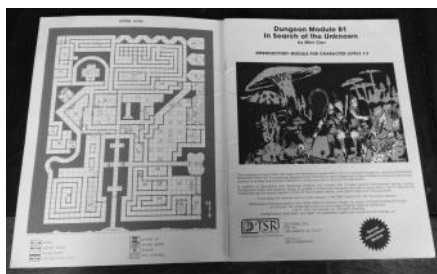
It only makes sense to take a deeper look at the adventure module, *In Search of the Unknown*, after our interview with Mike Carr.

The classic adventure, *In Search of the Unknown*, was one of the truly unique and interesting modules produced for TSR's Basic product line. Written as an instructional book for both dungeon masters and players, this title was available in boxed sets and sold alone. Dungeon module B1 (as it's best known as for most enthusiasts) was found in two formats – the monochrome edition from 1979 and the updated copy with the brown cover in 1981. Although Goodman Games has recently reprinted the adventure in their large hardcover book, [Into the Borderlands](#) (including a few versions of [Keep on the Borderlands](#) as well), our review will focus solely on the two original printings of yesteryear.

The first thing that I found interesting when I read this adventure in the early 80s was that there were references in the monochrome (earlier version) book that didn't make sense to me, specifically to different classes and a different version of the game called *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*—I had only played B/X up to that point so when I found “Fighting Men” in the back of the book and “Krago of the Mountains”, a dwarf with 18/54 Strength, I was a bit confused. I hopelessly searched the Moldvay rulebook for days, hoping to find answers to the strange differences.

It was only some years later that I found out about the Holmes version of Basic D&D and exceptional Strength scores in AD&D. Although it made sense after I found these things out, I thought it was still strange to find them in a Basic D&D adventure book. Oddly, the later printing of the book that stripped much of the AD&D references still included Krago's exceptional Strength score.

Although several sections and encounter numbering changed in the later printing, the book retained most of its original design and encounter information. A new illustration filled the spot that referenced using this adventure with AD&D, but otherwise, most of the interior illustrations and content remained unchanged. The newer version was updated to better reflect Moldvay rules, using the classes of B/X more accurately and precisely. With the exception of a few edits and changes, the 1981 book remains pretty much the same as the earlier, monochrome version.



In this picture (of the left, inside cover and the detached adventure booklet), we see the iconic upper level map of **In Search of the Unknown**, with its non-standard layout and rooms of varying sizes. Notice the large room with all the pools on the right side of the map.

This picture was taken of the book with the brown cover (1981 version)—the interior maps were a much brighter blue color than the those found in the monochrome book and were better suited for photography.

With the differences of the printings aside, the adventure itself is one-of-a-kind in design. To my knowledge, this book is the only TSR book designed to help fledgling dungeon masters populate a dungeon with monsters and treasure of their own choosing (or randomly, if desired). Several encounter areas have seeded treasures, traps, and magical effects listed but each room still has open space at the end of each description to hand-write monsters and treasures. This unique design allowed dungeon masters to populate each encounter any way they wished, making the adventure their own. This design undoubtedly inspired many dungeon masters to create their very own adventures once getting the general idea from this exercise – obviously, one of the intentions of TSR staff.

So, what about the adventure itself? Designed for three to eight adventurers of first to third level, this 32-page, 56-room dungeon crawler can be added to any campaign. The former secret stronghold of a pair of heroes, the lair and caverns of Quasqueton is generic enough to fit into any main storyline or as a side quest in an existing adventure series. There is a good balance of traps, secret doors, illusions, and trickery to test seasoned players, but is simple enough to be enjoyed by those new to the game. There is a lot of material in this book, one of the early trademarks of the TSR line. Smaller fonts, less illustrations, and lots of content!

One of the biggest standouts in the adventure is the Room of Pools (area 31 in the upper level). The encounter material

spans nearly two pages, and provides adventurers with fourteen mysterious pools to investigate. Each unique pool has an interesting feature that may be beneficial or deadly to curious characters. A quick scan of the pools immediately hints to the fun a dungeon master can have in this large room.

The lower level of adventure locale is not as interesting as the upper portion, but a single area of the unfinished caverns is worth the trip. Area 45, the Cavern of the Mystical Stone, plays like a Deck of Many Things – consuming chips of the magical stone randomly bestows either a positive or negative affect on a character, some of which are permanent! Whereas the aforementioned Room of Pools may be avoided by savvy players, many of the same players will tempt fate hoping for a powerful boon. The effects the author has provided in the d20 roll chart are both interesting and unique, and sometimes quite comical.

This is a sure-fire winner if you are running B/X. It can be plugged in anywhere at anytime and can be customized in advance or played with random monster and treasure seeding. This is one of those adventure books you keep in the bag every time you gather – it could be pulled out and used with ease!

9023—In Search of the Unknown, B1 – monochrome 1979 edition, 1st – 3rd printings, brown cover 1981 edition, 4th – 6th printings. ISBN on 1981 edition: 0-935696-04-0, list price \$5.50

The Magic Shop

A few items of interest found in our double-sized adventure are further detailed here.

Robes of the Alchemist

When these magical robes are worn, they halve the time to create potions and magic items. The robes provide an AC of 5.
Value: 2,500 GP.

Staff of Transmutation

Each charge of the staff allows the user to attempt to transmute a substance to another, different material of equal size. The weight of the transformed material may drastically change when the substance is altered. If the target material makes a saving throw, it fails to change.

Unfortunately, the staff cannot be recharged.
Value: 10,000 GP.

Wand of Spell-storing

This ten-charge wand may be used to store magic-user spells, where charges equal their spell level. For example, a 2nd level spell “uses” 2 charges. Once the spell is cast from the wand, the charge(s) and spell are used.
Value: 2,500 GP.



Scroll of Rock-to-Slime

The instructions and steps to convert rock to slime have been magically transcribed on this one-time use scroll. When used, a five-foot portion of rock slowly transforms into a mindless green slime creature of full size. The slime has no allegiance to the caster, possibly considering him or her its next victim.
Value: 5,000 GP.

Mythology

The double-sized adventure found in the following pages have several new creatures, each described in this issue's Mythology section.

Mud Slime

This creature is created from a failed transmute rock to mud spell where a small portion of a slime was intentionally or accidentally introduced. The flesh of the slime forces the spell to integrate the mud with the creature turning it into a large muddy slime. It acts and behaves as a regular Green Slime however, it takes only half damage from fire due to the earthy elements in its transformed make up.



Art by Je Shields

Armor Class: Always hit
Hit Dice: 2*
Move: 3' (1")
Attacks: 1
Damage: As slime (B36).
Special: Immune to all attacks except fire and cold.

No. Appearing: 1
Save As: Fighter: 1
Morale: 12
Treasure Type: Nil
Alignment: Neutral

Gemstone Slime (rare)

Much like the Mud Slime, this creature has been formed through a failed magic spell, where a slime was somehow introduced into the fabled Rock to Gem incantation. The creature appears more sandy than mud and is covered and filled with hundreds of gemstones. Only when the creature dies can the gems be freed from its form. Gems of all sizes and types can be found within the creature. There are a total of $5d20+25$ unrefined gems of different varieties, shapes and sizes.

The Gemstone slime is similar to the mud slime in all statistics except its hit dice.

Hit Dice: 4** (max hp)



Art by Mustafa Bekir

Quarterly Dungeon Crawl

Gebbellurd's Mistake

by Thom Wilson. An adventure for 4-6 characters of 2nd to 3rd level.

Background: A nobleman frets over a missing friend, the old alchemist, Gebbellurd. A note from the aging wizard indicated that he had finally discovered the secret to turning stone into gems! However, after indicating he'd travel to the nobleman's keep to demonstrate his secretive work, he's fallen strangely quiet. Gebbellurd is a shy fellow, often holed up in his underground laboratory for months at a time, but with a discovery of this proportion, the nobleman would have expected his friend to have arrived already.

The characters are hired to investigate the home of Gebbellurd, checking on his well-being, and to safeguard his travel back to the keep. The nobleman, Ornatal the Just, worries about his old friend but also eagerly awaits the proof of the alchemist's claims. A spell that turns rock into gems is incredible!

However, the characters will find that when they arrive, the laboratory has been destroyed by misfortune and accidents. After successfully creating the spell to turn common rock into gems, Gebbellurd accidentally set fire to his research, losing a lifetime of work. In a panic to recreate the spell, he inadvertently incorporated an extra element in his revised spell that instead turns rock into slime! Several failed attempts led to a destroyed home filled with lurking slimes.

Gebbellurd has been locked inside his bedchambers without food and water for days, and will likely be near death or dead by the time the characters arrive. Little to none of his research has survived the mishap.

The old alchemist inherited the underground labyrinth from family decades ago and has adapted it into a home and laboratory. Being a wizard, he has created many magical effects to protect his home and to simplify his daily life.

Ornatal can provide directions to the alchemist's home. The journey from his keep is over 8 hours by horse.

1. Entrance to the Home

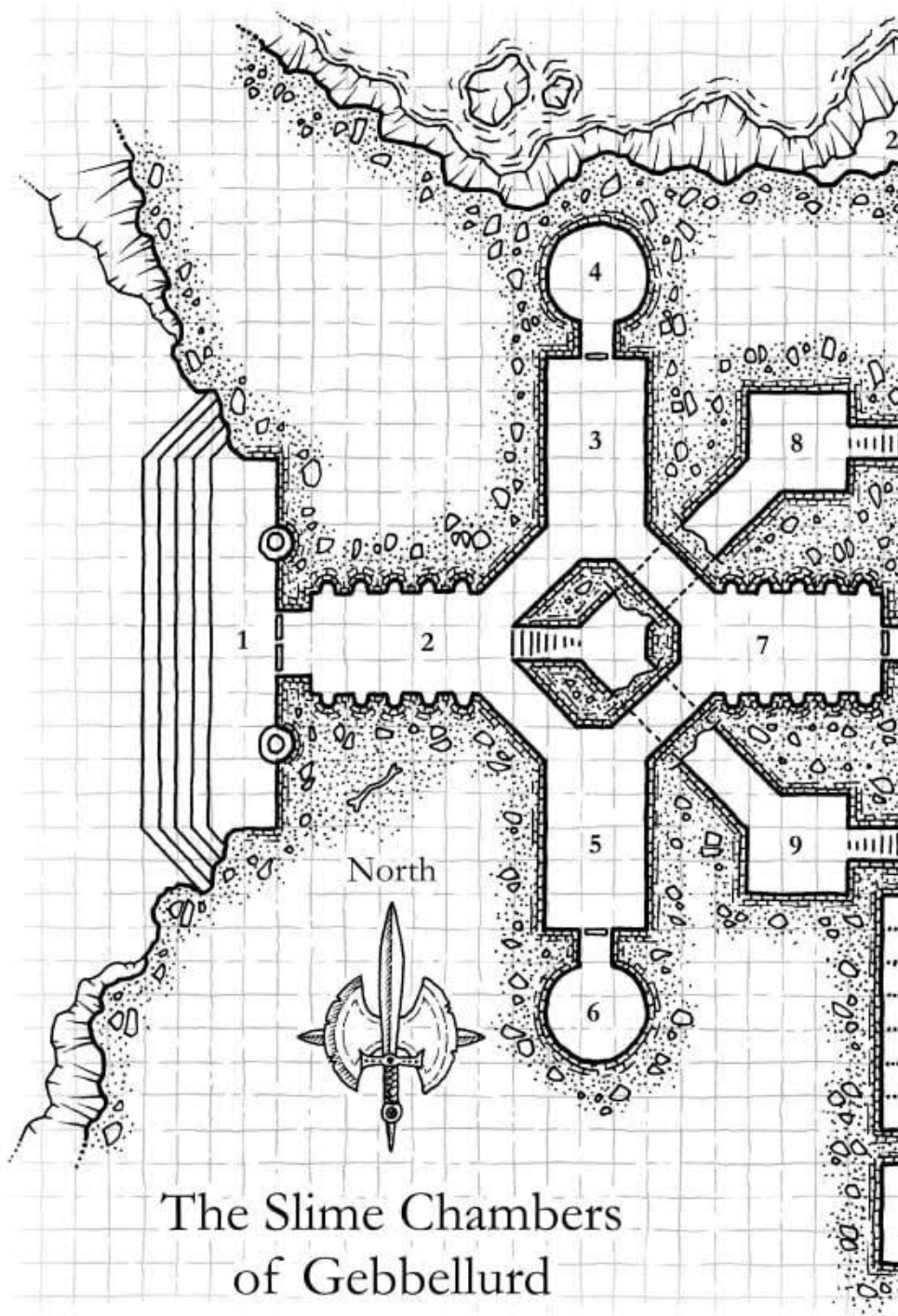
Double doors at the top of a wide staircase built into the side of a mountain provide access to Gebbellurd's home. Most often locked, they are currently found in the opposite state. Glittering pillars on either side of the doors provide light after the sun sets.

A pair of strange (magical) mouths on the doors loudly announce any visitors and bid guests farewell when they depart.

2. Alcove Hall

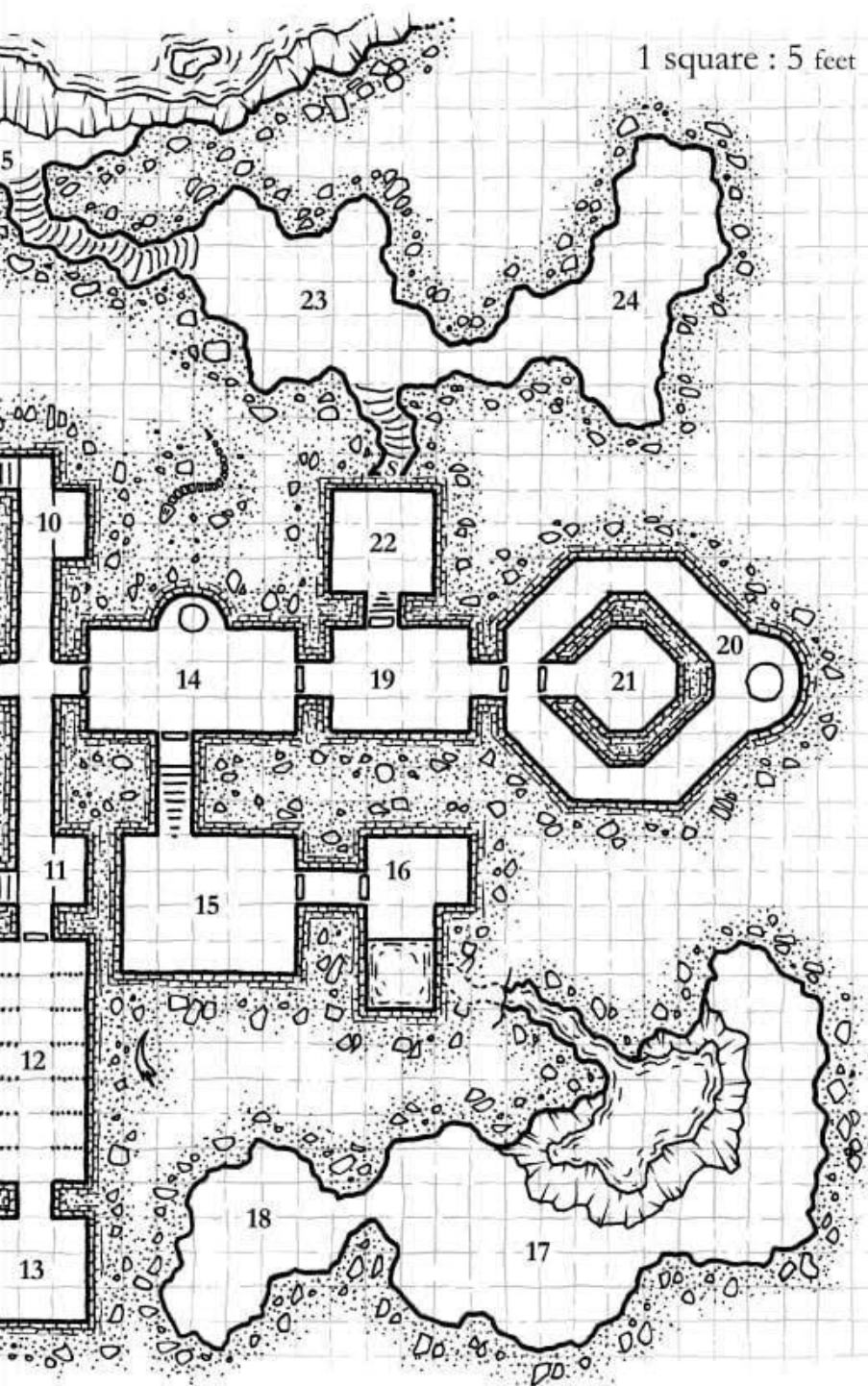
Busts of famous wizards fill the alcoves along the hall. Oddly, one alcove at the eastern end is empty (saved for himself, to be created after his death).

A backpack filled with common travel gear lies spilled on the floor midway down the hall. A walking staff is found under the loose items.



The Slime Chambers
of Gebbellurd

1 square : 5 feet



3. Sitting Room

Six chairs and a large couch are positioned around this long room to maximize conversation. A small fireplace in the west wall appears to have not been used for many weeks. A small **green slime** has hidden itself under the couch but will slide out when movement or noise in the room is detected.

Green Slime: (AC automatic, HD 2*, HP: 8, #AT 1 touch, D turn flesh to slime in 1d4 rounds, Save F1, ML 12, Special: harmed only by fire or cold, XP 25)

4. North Guest Room

Gebbellurd infrequently entertained guests but had a place reserved for visitors as needed. The room is furnished with all the needs of an overnight guest.

5. Library

A battle between tiny **imps** and a **green slime** may be heard from this room long before it is entered.

Imps (6): (AC 7, HD 1/2, HP: 3 ea, #AT 1 flame dart, D 1-2, Save F1, ML 8, XP 5 ea)

Green Slime: as area 3.

Regardless of which side the adventurers assist, the helped side turns on the group as soon as they are able.

The room is filled with hundreds of non-magical books on nature, geography, and other mundane topics. Gebbellurd's alchemy and magic tomes can be found in area 19. However, there is a 25% chance that a magical scroll may be found tucked into one of the books.

6. South Guest Room

Similar in design and contents as the northern room (area 4).

7. Dining Area

A well-dressed goblin stands upon a long table in the center of this room, staring at the door to the east. He startles easily but is well-spoken and fairly intelligent. Gebbellurd's assistant has barely escaped a pursuing slime that was slithering in the hallway beyond the east door. He hopes arriving characters may help him find his missing master.

Gibby, Goblin assistant: (AC 6, HD 1-1, HP: 3, #AT 1 Wand of Cold, 2 charges left, D 6-36, Save NM, ML 6, XP 6)

Gibby has taken his master's **Wand of Cold** from the laboratory to try to help free his master who is pinned down somewhere in the eastern part of the underground facility. He is not very brave and likely to flee at the first sign of danger.

The poor goblin has a small bit of slime on his pant leg. If unnoticed, it will climb under his clothing and attach to his skin in 1d6 turns.

8. Kitchen

Evidence of a hasty retreat is quite apparent—cabinets are open, boxes are overturned and emptied, and chairs are scattered about. The corpse of an old dwarven woman leans against a nearby cabinet, her eyes wide with fright.

A container in a well-hidden niche behind a dry sink holds a ruby necklace (500 gp value).

9. Store Room

Boxes, crates, barrels, and bags are neatly stacked along the walls of the room. Most are marked with familiar village names and are filled with various local produce, salted meats, and beer.

Six dog harnesses hang from a rack on the south wall. They look to fit rather large beasts.

A small slime lurks behind one of the crates on the west wall, oozing out to meet inquisitive characters.

Green Slime: (AC automatic, HD 1*, HP: 4, #AT 1 touch, D turn flesh to slime in 1d4 rounds, Save F1, ML 12, Special: harmed only by fire or cold, XP 15)

Sitting on the top shelf (out of sight unless checked), a wooden box holds **100 gp**—the money used for the next supply shipment from traveling merchants.

10 & 11. Hallway Guardians

Guests that wander in halls beyond their quarters are stopped by one of **two iron living statues** (one in each small alcove) who obstruct the uninvited from venturing further in the alchemist's home. Although they merely prevent access to the hallway beyond their station, they will not attack unless provoked or ignored. They will verbally warn guests before attacking. They do not pursue any who flee back to the western portion of the alchemist's home.

Living Statues, Iron (2): (AC 2, HD 4, HP: 16 ea, #AT 2, D 1-8/1-8 + special, Save F4, ML 11, Special: non-magical weapons may stick to the statue, XP 75 ea)

12. Kennels (Dungeon)

Before Gebbellurd inherited his home, this part of the underground facility was used as a dungeon to hold prisoners. Now, the alchemist prefers to use this area for his hunting dogs. Unfortunately, most of the dogs have escaped with the kennelmaster. Two older dogs remain in their cells, scared and hungry.

Hunting Dogs, Oka and Brog: (AC 7, HD 2, HP: 9, 7, #AT 1 bite, D 1-6, Save F1, ML 8, Special: will not attack Gebbellurd or Kennelmaster, XP 20 ea)

Each dog may have a different reaction to the characters if freed from their kennels.

Hunting Dog Reactions	
1d6 Roll	Reaction
1-2	Dog attack!
3-5	Dog flees the area.
6+	Dog becomes friendly.
<i>Charisma bonus added to roll.</i>	

13. Kennelmaster Quarters

Fleeing the alchemist's home at the first sign of trouble, the Kennelmaster left most of his common belongings behind in his room. Aside from the typical trappings of a modest bedroom, the area has only one interesting trinket. A necklace hanging from a full length mirror is actually a **Medallion of Control Animal**. This magical item acts like the potion of the same name except that it may be used once per day.



14. Laboratory

Hundreds of strange tubes, beakers and pots cover six long tables in this area. Intelligent characters will immediately recognize this room to be a laboratory. Several pieces of parchment and a dozen books are scattered about the lab, each inscribed with various alchemy recipes and tests. Pieces of burnt paper look to have been put together as if trying to reassemble a puzzle. Each of the alchemy scrolls and books are valuable but not a single one is extraordinary. A search should reveal a newly started recipe that has many ingredients and steps added and crossed out. Additionally, the characters will find dried, burnt slime in several places in the room.

15. Storeroom

Gebbellurd kept spare laboratory equipment and ingredients in this area south of laboratory. The remnants of broken glass bottles and tubes are found on the floor as if someone or something rushed through the area quickly, heading east.

16. Well Room

Buckets and barrels filled with clean water are found here, stacked along the walls near the opening to a 15' deep well. The well's water is nearly at the level of the floor.

17. Underground Cavern

A 30-second swim from area 16 ends in a pool in this cavern. The pool is cold and clear, fed from an underground spring. Muddy footprints are seen along the edge, leading west.

The area is quite dark but once there is illumination, the form of a humanoid can be seen in the northernmost part of the cavern. This is the corpse of Nabby, one of two goblin assistants to Gebbellurd. His form is covered in muddy slime, killed by the foul creature that now lurks in area 18. A silver key in his pocket opens the large chest in area 21.

18. Small Cavern

After killing the poor goblin in area 17, the newly created **Mud Slime** now lurks in the drier cave away from the pool.

Mud Slime: (AC automatic, HD 2*, HP: 8, #AT 1 touch, D turn flesh to muddy-slime in 1d4 rounds, Save F1, ML 12, Special: harmed only by fire (1/2 damage) or cold, XP 25) - *details found on page 9.*

19. Gebbellurd's Library

The old alchemist keeps his most treasured works in his private library. There are at least 2d6+3 valuable tomes on alchemy on the shelves in this room. Additionally, a spellbook lying open on a table holds 1d4 1st-level and 1d4 2nd-level magic-user spells.

20. Ancient Temple

When Gebbellurd inherited the underground facility, he was told about the mysterious temple at its far end. Since then, the old alchemist has avoided the area. A shrine to an ancient evil god is here, unleashing its wrath on any lawful beings that enter its sphere of influence. When any lawful creature moves within 20' of the shrine, a **small demon** is summoned to slay offending trespassers. The hearts of those

who are slain are sacrificed to the evil god, putting a mysterious curse on any of the friends and family of the dead.

Small Demon: (AC 3, HD 5**, HP: 20, #AT 3 bite, claws, D 1-6/1-4/1-4, Save F5, ML 12, Special: immune to fire, non-magic items deal half damage, XP 425)

Although risky to take, the idol in the shrine is made solid gold and has two large ruby eyes (total worth, 5,000 gp).

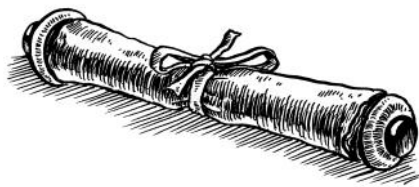
21. Locked Treasure Room

A locked door keeps guests and servants from accessing Gebbellurd's treasure room. A large chest and two glass cases hold the alchemist's most prized possessions. Only Gebbellurd has the keys to the door and chest. However, one of his goblin assistants (Nabby, area 17) has a spare key to the chest.

The chest holds **Robes of the Alchemist**, a **Staff of Transmutation** and a **Wand of Spell-Storing** are secured behind the glass cases. Descriptions for all three magical items can be found on page 8.

22. Gebbellurd's Bedroom

The poor alchemist has been unable to escape his home, infected by one of the many slimes loose in the facility. He is near death (or dead, GM choice), slumped against the north wall so close to the secret exit out. A nearby poorly scrawled note, addressed to Ornatal, apologizes for his failures. A **Scroll of Rock-to-Slime** can be found on his desk and a bag of **100 sp**, **50 gp** and **10 pp** can be found within a drawer.



23. Gem-filled Cavern

A large cavern glitters when a light source is brought into the wide-open space. Dozens of large gems are seen embedded in the rock walls of the cavern. One rock wall moves when characters enter—it's a **Gemstone Slime!**

Gemstone Slime: (AC automatic, HD 4**, HP: 32, #AT 1 touch, D turn flesh to muddy-slime in 1d4 rounds, Save F1, ML 12, Special: harmed only by fire (1/2 damage) or cold, XP 175) - *details found on page 9.*

Once slain, the gemstone slime leaves behind 5d20+25 unrefined gems of various types.

Another 3d6+3 raw gems may be pried from the walls of the cavern.

24. Gem Mine

A newly-started mine has recently begun to provide Gebbellurd with dozens of large, raw gems. At least 1d6 unrefined gems of various types (each) may be found with a few hours of careful digging. However, the number of gems found slowly diminishes within another thirty to forty feet of excavation.

25. Lake Exit

The underground tunnel exits to a ledge above a small lake. A rope ladder descends down into the water where a two-man sailboat is moored.

Spellbound

Up to this issue, the Spellbound section has focused on existing spells in the B/X rulebooks, highlighting those that are powerful or underappreciated. In this issue, we contemplate other options to support spellcasters, especially at the lower levels.

Later editions of D&D brought about the idea of *cantrips*, lesser incantations of little power that could be used limitlessly. Cantrips could be considered zero-level spells, so easy to learn that even thieves or Halflings could learn one or two. This is a considerable departure from the rules as written in the Moldvay books, so—for the purpose of exploration of possible options, let's consider two possibilities.

What if Elves, Dwarves, and Halflings had access to simple cantrips—to be used in their daily lives? What about higher intelligence magic-users and thieves? Could they benefit from their great intellect and learn additional incantations? Consider the following example cantrips.

Breeze

The caster causes a slight wind to affect a 10' area for a brief moment. The wind is strong enough to snuff out a candle or turn a page in a book.

Fetch

An item within 10' of the caster of one pound or less is magically pulled along a surface to the caster. Note that the item does not move in the air (gravity applies).

Mend

A normal needle and thread are magically instructed to sew materials for 10 minutes. The caster may leave the area while the instruments continue to work.

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The caster may verbally instruct a quill or other writing instrument to write. The caster must be able to speak aloud for the cantrip to work.

Spark

Snapping his or her fingers, the caster creates a brief spark or small flame for a brief second.

There are a multitude of options for simple cantrips that won't upset the balance of the game but instead provide in-game usefulness. For example, grabbing the sleeping guards keys? The cantrip 'fetch' works great for that!

The number of cantrips available to the character would equal their Intelligence bonus.

Another option for adding a little extra help to low-level spellcasters is allow them to cast first level spells more often—this makes first level spells behave like cantrips in a slight way. This option allows the caster to pick one spell to cast more than once per day as the table below details.

One Spell	INT 13-15	INT 16-17	INT 18
Bonus:	+1	+2	+3

For example, a magic-user with an Intelligence of 17 could pick one spell per day to be cast a total of 3 times.

Crimson Abbey of the Broken God — Part 6

After their encounter with the undead rats and the old knight, Sir Cralnat, the group decided to leave the storage chamber (area A6) and continued north.

A network of tunnels under the abbey can lead to adventurers becoming lost.

Hallway from Area A6

The hallway extends over 100 feet before splitting into two separate tunnels. Each tunnel continues north but slants west (the upper tunnel) or east (the lower tunnel). Both tunnels appear equally unused. A hidden room between the tunnels is accessible by a secret door on either side of its southern point (see map on page 20).

Secret Door Check: add +1 to the chance due to older doors.

A7. Secret Room

Triangular in shape, this secret room has been sealed for many years. Dust covers everything within the dark area, suggesting decades of forgotten existence. Either secret entrance reveals the contents of the room: two skeletal figures lie on the floor, limbs entwined and bony fingers clutching missing throats as if the two had died locked in battle. Although one figure appears human in structure, the other is much larger with large horns protruding from its misshapen skull. Near the northern wall, a crate sits upon a large wooden chest. Nearby, a pair of rotting stools is tucked under a simple, wooden table.

Closer inspection reveals that the larger skeleton is that of a minotaur. How it came to this

place and how the two died remains a mystery. Note that the remains of more minotaurs will be found in future issues of this fanzine.

The crate lid has been partially pried off, revealing a dozen glass bottles within. Removing the bottles from their compartments within the crate will expose their faded labels and the remnants of liquid that once filled them. Hints of pink, red and yellow liquids are each found within four bottles respectively. If tasted, all three liquid types taste pleasant yet old and stale. The old potions were once full portions of **healing** (pink), **herosim** (red) and **control human** (yellow). Although old and diminished, if all four potion bottles are consumed of the same color, it will effect the imbiber as one complete potion of that type. Thus, there are three usable potions in the crate. Note that the **heroism** and **control human** potion descriptions are found in the Expert Rules.

The heavy, wooden chest is locked and no key for it will be found in this area. Once unlocked, a hidden mechanism will fire a poison dart at anyone found in front of the chest (south side, unless moved). If the poison dart strikes its target, the affected character must make a saving throw versus Death Ray or Poison to avoid falling into a deep sleep for twelve hours. A suit of well-crafted and shiny plate mail armor is found within the chest, its chest piece engraved with the Broken God's emblem, a wide-shouldered,

faceless man split into two halves from shoulder to opposite waist.

Armor of the Broken God: **plate mail +1**, adds +1 to all saving throws except Death Ray or Poison which is instead made at +2. The armor can never become dirty and will magically shrink or enlarge to fit most humanoid creatures (humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings).

A8. Study Chamber

The unlocked door allows entry into the lower level study chamber. Hundreds of deteriorating scrolls and rotting tomes, exposed to excessive moisture and years of decay, lie in crumbling piles on tables, shelves, and chairs. Monks new to the abbey were once tasked with studying the lessons and doctrines carefully written upon the old parchments. Unfortunately, nearly every scroll and book is completely useless. An hour or two of searching will reveal one well-preserved scroll that has survived the ruinous environment. Characters will discover this to be a specially constructed **scroll of protection from minotaurs**. This scroll acts as other, similar protection scrolls do.

A9. Supply Closet

Although area A6 was a much larger storage room, it was primarily used to store food and wine. This smaller area once stored general supplies for the abbey, including rope, wooden cups and plates, empty barrels, extra monk attire, sandals, brooms, buckets and linens. Most of these items are now gone, however, remnants of broken pieces of the former supplies

should help unravel the mystery of the room's former purpose. Left behind under an old shelf is a small bag of silver coins, stashed here for some unknown desire. There are **66 sp** in the bag.

A10. Initiate Training Area

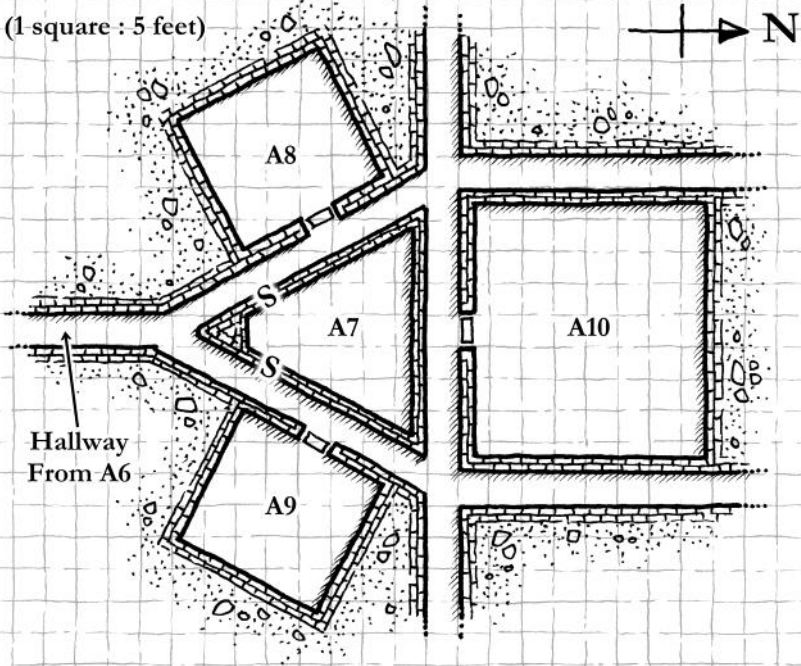
Newly arrived initiates were to receive daily training and combat instructions from senior-level monks in this large room. The floor was once well-padded, covered in cotton-filled burlap mats. Blunt weapons and training dummies once lined the long walls. Most of the floor mats and dummies have rotted, becoming a mushy mess of disintegrated materials. Characters walking upon the old floor mats will disturb the family of **centipedes** now living in this unused room.

Centipedes (1d4+1): (AC 9, HD ½, HP 2 ea, #AT 1 bite, D Poison, Save Normal Man, ML 7, XP 6 ea)

Characters bit by the centipedes must make a saving throw versus Death Ray or Poison or die. Over the years, the family of centipedes have accumulated dozens of silver and gold trinkets that can be discovered in their nest within the rotting mats. Characters should find 3d6 simple items, each worth 1d4 gp, after a few hours of careful searching.



(1 square : 5 feet)



Crimson Abbey of the Broken God - Map 3

What Comes Next?

In the next few issues, Bindor, Whystal, and Ensa will avoid the northern part of the underground maze, instead taking the western hallway past area A8. This northern passage will lead them back up to the ground floor of the abbey where they will begin to unravel further parts of the mystery. There are many areas that can be explored in the rest of the underground labyrinth that will not be covered in this fanzine (except a few parts that may be explored many issues from now). The majority of the story will take the characters to the upper portions of the mysterious Crimson Abbey where they may finally encounter the Broken God. Keep an eye out for future issues!

Homebrew Rule #3:

Magic-users and Clerics gain spell bonuses corresponding to their respective primary ability bonus. E.g. A magic-user with a 13 Intelligence gains 1 first level bonus spell to cast each day (giving them a total of 2). If your system allows for first level clerics to have spells, it works in the same way for them too (or when they reach 2nd level, they get their first spell and the bonus spell). Note that they cannot gain bonus spells for levels they haven't reached yet. A 1st level magic-user with an 18 Intelligence cannot yet gain the bonus 2nd and 3rd level spells.

Int /Wis Score	1st level Spell	2nd level Spell	3rd level Spell
13-15	+1	n/a	n/a
16-17	+1	+1	n/a
18	+1	+1	+1

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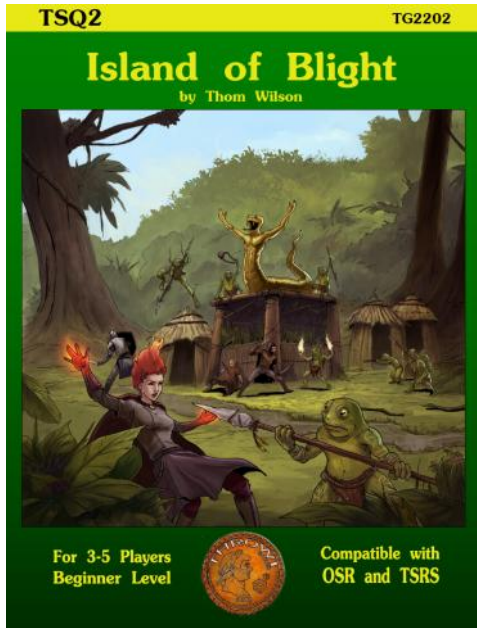
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