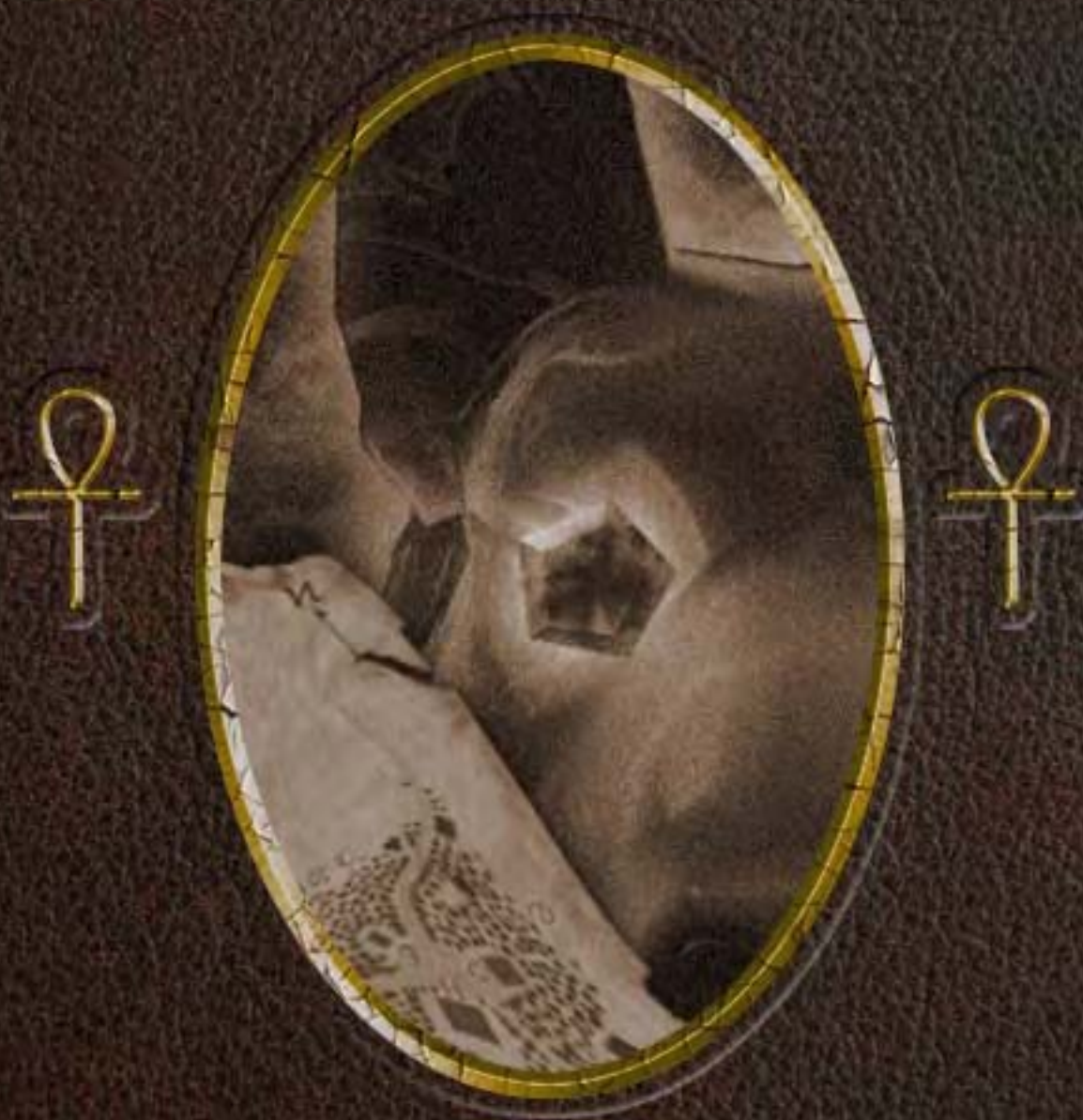
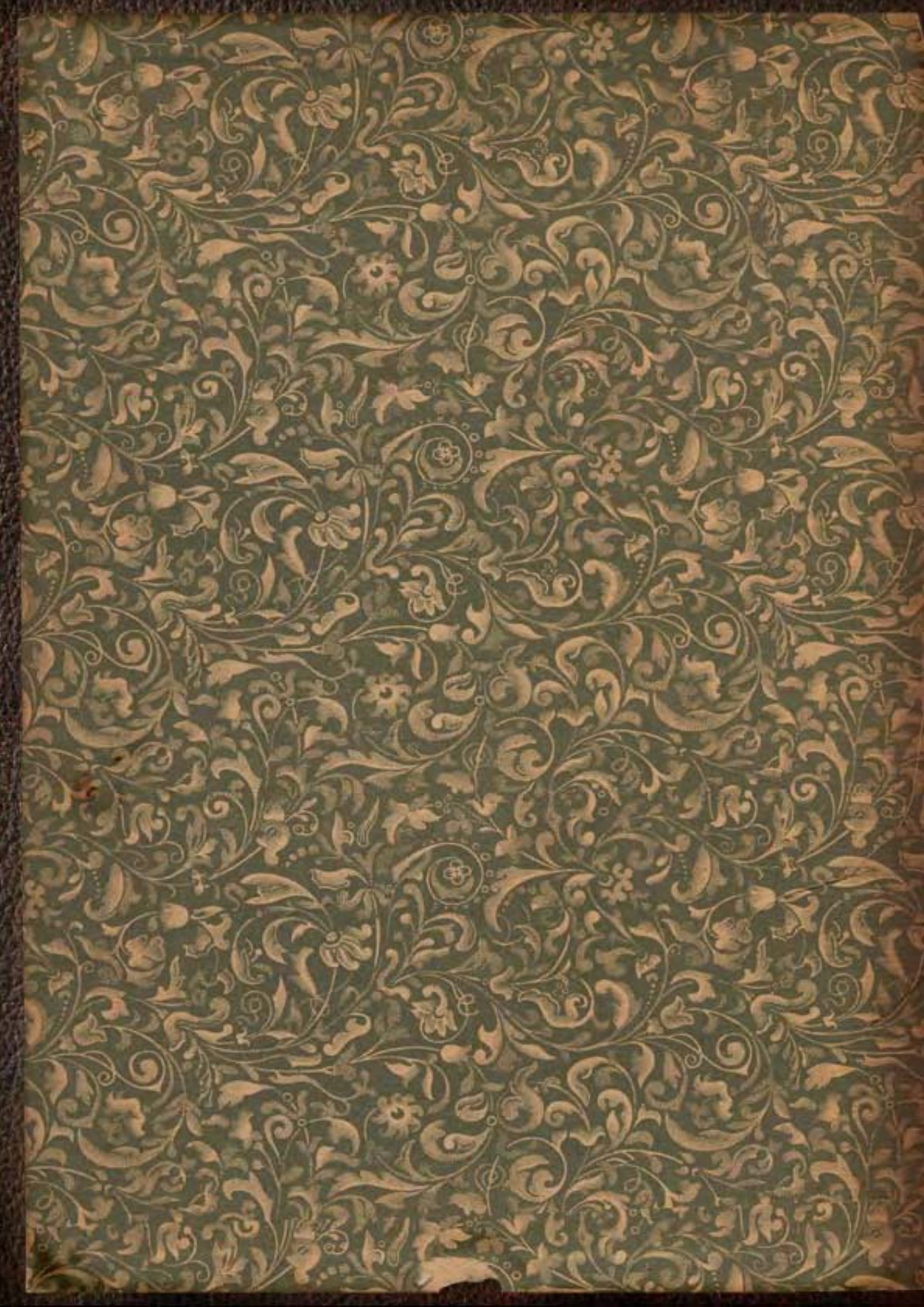


THE EYE OF ANUBIS
MAPS



A RAVENLOFT NETBOOK



THE EYE OF ANUBIS MAPS

A RAVENLOFT NETBOOK

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Transcript of a letter addressed to Professor Ludwig Hoff, PhD, of the Architectural History Department of the University of Dementlieu. Translated from the original Lamordian.

5/11/764

Dear Professor Hoff,

What a pleasure to hear from you after these long years! Please forgive the lateness of my reply. As may perhaps be gathered from the script in which this missive is postmarked, Schultheiss International has recently begun something of a foray into the Verdurous Lands, as a result of which your humble correspondent finds himself in Pakat ironing out a rather tricky spot of negotiation. Nonetheless, I should imagine both of us would agree that travel broadens the mind regardless of whatever trying circumstances may result en route—and to receive such pleasant word from a valued friend and teacher while so far from home should be counted doubly fortunate.

How happy I am to receive news of your department's expansion, moreover! While such pursuits lie outside my area of expertise (yes, even after the Expedition—perhaps more so!), I have always counted cultural anthropology among the noblest arts. As a perpetual student of engineering, I busy myself solely with the inner workings of base mechanisms; to understand the inner workings of civilization itself, and the varied historical forces and levers with which it is driven, must be a heady task indeed. I have often expressed to you my thanks for the impeccable quality of your Introductory Akirology curriculum, which proved invaluable many times during my travels in the Wastes. I am sure that the University's new Architectural History Department will provide just as valuable service to students still to come.

As to your specific request, you will no doubt be pleased to know that I kept reasonably detailed records and sketches of the various sites visited by our party over the course of the Expedition—and had in fact been carrying them about as of late, awaiting adequate excuse to edit them into presentable form. As my present circumstances have allowed for little mobility but ample resources for composition, your missive truly could not have come at a more fortuitous moment.

Enclosed herewith, then, please find the Compiled and Revised Cartographic Materials pertinent to the Menetnashte Expedition of 761, the bulk of which are pertinent to the Amber Wastes in particular, but the scope of which also encompasses noticeable locations in Dementlieu and the South-eastern Core. I may take only minimal organizational credit for the intricate workmanship displayed herein. You may credit the robust inking to M. Benoit Jhandapur, late of Port-a-Lucine, the precise line work to my beloved wife Hilde, and the boldness of colour to the extensive stores of the Mohapatra Dye Manufactory, the which has proven to be an unexpectedly valuable business partner with eminently defensible warehouse facilities.

It is my sincere hope that this letter reaches you in excellent health, and that the materials enclosed serve your new curriculum in good stead. While I may in good conscience ask nothing in return (knowledge, after all, being its own reward!), I should be most grateful if you were to perform a small consideration on my behalf: at your convenience, to alert the Lamordian Embassy in Pakat via Writ of Communication, instructing them to airlift comestibles and ammunition to the barricaded building at the end of Jeeva Nagar St., perhaps by means of enchanted courier or hot air balloon. My deepest thanks! I dearly hope to correspond with you again in the near future; until then, I remain—

Yours Truly,
Otto Schultheiss
Schultheiss International Personal Security Co.

Introduction

What is the eye of Anubis?

The Eye of Anubis is a play by post role playing game created by Mikhail "NeoTiamat" Rekun. The game was played in an online forum at the Fraternity of Shadows website using Dungeons & Dragons 3.5ed rules and is set within the gothic demiplane of dread known as Ravenloft. The campaign was split into twelve chapters or books and ran for over eighteen months.

The story covers the exploits of an expedition sent by the University of Dementlieu to locate and recover the fabled Eye of Anubis from the recently discovered tomb of Menatnashte, in the far off Amber Wastes. Of course nothing is as simple as it sounds, and the expedition had to contend with mad wizards, demons, creatures of pure nightmare, capricious fey and backstabbing treachery along the way, not to mention the attentions of their nemesis, the necromancer John Lancaster Cavendish and his undead minions.

The game was created and run by NeoTiamat and Isabella with assistance from Cronax.

Atmospheric artwork was supplied by Isabella, Kaitou Kage and Rock.

Maps were drawn by Lostboy and Isabella.

The Players in this epic were:

Lia Mourneswaithe – Rock
Tomas Eisenwald – Docbeard
Otto Schultheiss – The Whistler
Charles Martel – Nathan of the FoS
Kuzan – Kaitou Kage
Professor Andre Theroux – Yalenus Veler
Allikhain Gellantra / Ulsaon Lowbane / Ishaq
Rafiq – Tarlyn
Khalil al-Atim / Sascha Dziemianovitch – Lostboy

About this netbook

So why make this book? From my perspective the maps formed a big part of the campaign and I wanted to create some kind of lasting legacy for them. I wanted others to be able to utilise them in their own games and also to pick up some new

skills and ideas in creating their own maps. It's also a great opportunity to impart some of the DM's collected wisdom on the design of a campaign and its encounters, including their thoughts on what worked and what didn't through this epic adventure.

So if you are a budding map maker, someone who always wanted to make cool maps but didn't know how to get started, or even just someone who wants some maps to poach for their game, this book is for you.

This book is also for you if you have no interest in drawing maps but are designing, planning and running a campaign of your own. There are plenty of ideas and inspiration within these pages that could be translated into just about any game you plan to play.

Bottom line, we had a blast with this, and if people can take even a part of that away for their own games then all to the good.

Format

This netbook resource is actually in two parts; firstly this pdf, which lays out the maps as used in the EoA campaign, along with useful notes, secondly you should be able to find alongside this document a series of .jpeg and .skp files of all the maps from the campaign. These companion maps have had all labels and references removed to allow you to use them for your own games in any way you want.

Within this book are the thoughts from Neo and Isabella on the creation and usage of each map as well as notes from me (Lostboy) on the techniques used for physically making them. I principally used Adobe Photoshop so many of the instructions and techniques I'll discuss are for that application, however some may be usable in others.

Right enough preamble let's get talking maps!

About Maps

First a disclaimer; I am not an artist, nor a professional map maker, not even a Photoshop genius, everything you see here are based on skills I've learned and picked up over the course of this campaign. This means anyone can create this kind of maps, if you know the techniques it isn't that difficult, you just need time, practice and enthusiasm.

Speaking of which, I LOVE maps, always have, ever since I was little, something about them just fascinates me. I first got really hooked on fantasy maps when I saw the little sketch map in the front of "The Hobbit", but it was when I happened upon a book entitled "The Atlas of the Dragonlance World" that sparks really flew, and I still often look over that book. Now I occasionally get to draw maps for a living (although it's very much a side line of what I do), but modern maps aren't as exciting, so the Eye of Anubis and the other games at the FoS have really been fun to work on and I've learnt so much.

Mapping Philosophy

I thought I'd put down a few of the key philosophies that sit behind my mapmaking, although that sounds pretty grand for some basic rules that aren't exactly rocket science.

Why reinvent the wheel?

If I'm preparing to create a map, I'll always research first, looking at similar maps others have created or real-life locations with a similar feel. Often getting spatial elements right is the hardest task in making a map, ask yourself how often you have created a village that doesn't look quite right, or had a layout for a castle that didn't seem like anyone would really build it that way. This is where looking at reference points can give you clues to make sure your maps are as good as they can be. But there's not only that to it, by utilising another source you save a heck of a lot of time on creation and ideas. Not that I'm advocating stealing or breaching copyright, but the point of all these maps is to enhance the game, so don't be

afraid to borrow what you need and if someone else has a great idea, why not use that in your own game?

Save time but get great results.

Applications like Photoshop offer a myriad of ways to do things, so experiment and think about the simplest and fastest way to get the effect you are looking for. However don't skimp on quality, using a technique just because its quick may not give you the end result you want, so try and strike a balance. Often you may only need to create something once, then can use it over and over again as a pattern, brush or saved as a jpeg.

Don't make permanent changes

Remember the time you created something amazing and wished you could have changed a small detail, but doing so would mean changing everything? Yeah try and avoid that. More and more applications these days offer non-permanent ways of doing things, so utilise techniques like layer blending options, layer masks, using vectors, in fact anything which allows you to tinker with it later. I love to tinker, and being able to go back and adjust the opacity and shadow depth of an element is useful as you add more and more elements to a map.

Share the knowledge

Just as you can borrow ideas or get inspiration from others, why not share your ideas and methods with others. Mapmaking is a very personal thing and no two people have the same style, so share what you do, put your ideas out there and contribute to others learning the skills and techniques you have mastered. One of the best places to do this is at the Cartographers Guild. The site has a tonne of resources, tutorials and real friendly people who'll help you out of any mapping conundrum you can get yourself in, and who are always glad of those wanting to share.

www.cartographersguild.com

Have fun

Maps can take a long time, they can be pretty demanding, but make sure you enjoy it. If you hate drawing cities then avoid urban campaigns or customise existing city maps others have produced, don't force yourself to produce something your heart isn't in. I rarely find myself not having fun with maps but that's me, you should work to your own level of enthusiasm and don't feel pressured to create an uber-perfect work of art, if it's good enough to game with, its served its purpose (that means quick pencil sketches are fine if they work for you and your players).

Tools of the trade

I always used to create maps the old fashioned way with pen and ink, and I still could and scan them for use in a PbP. It's a great medium, very therapeutic, but also very time consuming, and nowadays there are so many digital options, to make things easier, and which can also replicate a hand drawn effect if that's what you're after.

Adobe Photoshop

As I mentioned in the introduction I use Photoshop (hereafter known affectionately as PS) for all my maps, it's got the power and flexibility to do pretty much anything. However it isn't cheap and there's a bit of a learning curve on it, but if you're keen then a

good place to start is Butch Curry's "Fantasy Cartography with Adobe Photoshop" podcasts on Youtube (search for fantasy cartography) or visit the Zombie Nirvana games website and blogspot:

www.zombienirvana.com

<http://zombiesketch.blogspot.com/>

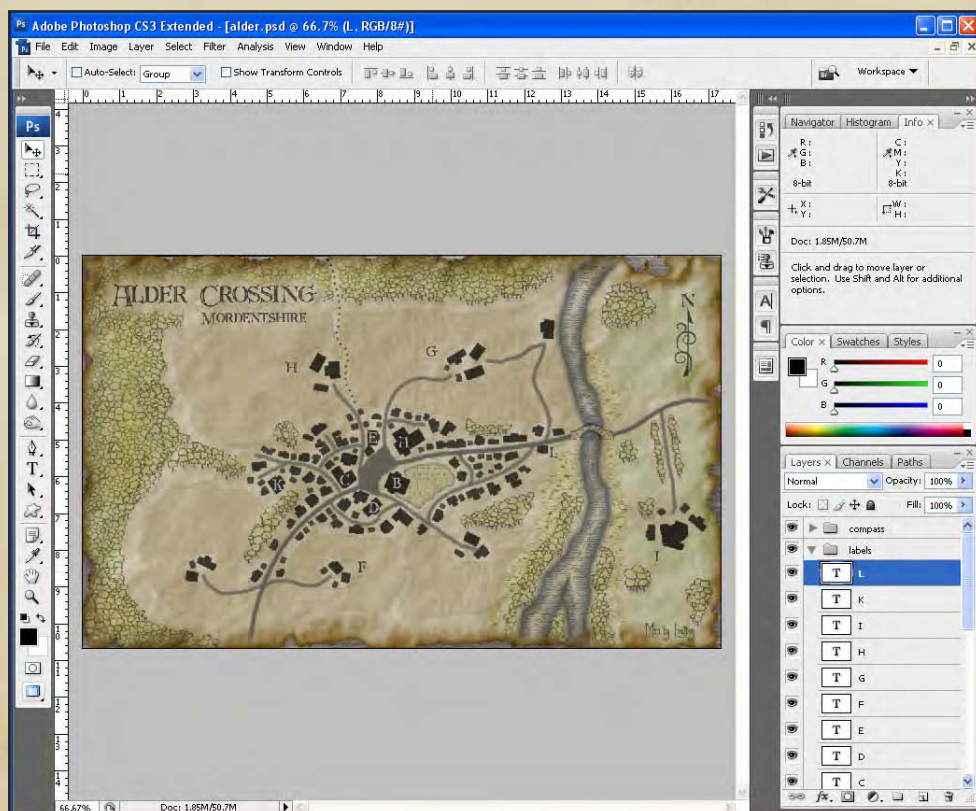
It is worth noting that almost all the techniques used can be replicated in any of the older versions of PS, so you don't need to mortgage your house for the latest version. There is however a bit of a watershed between PS6 and PS7 which saw the introduction of the brush engine, so if you can, go for a copy of PS7 or later.

There is also Photoshop Elements which is a cut-down version for home photographers to touch up images. I haven't used it so I don't know quite what features are available there. Personally I'd use the equivalent money and find an old copy of PS7 second hand.

www.adobe.com/products/photoshop/compare/

As an alternative to Photoshop there is a freeware program that mostly replicates what can be done in Photoshop with the unfortunate name of "Gimp", you can download it from:

www.gimp.org/



The Adobe Photoshop Interface

Google Sketchup

For those who don't know Sketchup is a free 3D modelling program designed for architects, civil engineers, filmmakers, game developers, and related professions. I used Sketchup a few times for creating single buildings but it isn't that useful for whole maps. However it is great for creating certain elements for your mapping, I particularly like to use it to create statues.

One huge bonus with Sketchup is the 3d warehouse, essentially all those Sketchup addicts out there have created a huge amount of stuff and uploaded it to be shared with other users. I've found some excellent stuff in there, in particular the 3d models of Egyptian sites (image wrapped as well!) produced by the Egyptian Tourist Authority.

<http://sketchup.google.com/>
<http://sketchup.google.com/3dwarehouse/>

Other Options

For real world mapping (i.e. in my real life job) I use Adobe Illustrator, which is a vector program and creates clean looking maps. I haven't found it as useful in maps for RPG's, but if you want to take a look then go for it. Again there is a freeware program that approximates it, this time called Inkscape:

www.adobe.com/products/illustrator/
www.inkscape.org/

I personally don't like Campaign Cartographer that much as I'm not keen on the look of the maps, but it does make maps quick and easy and there are a lot of people out there who love it.

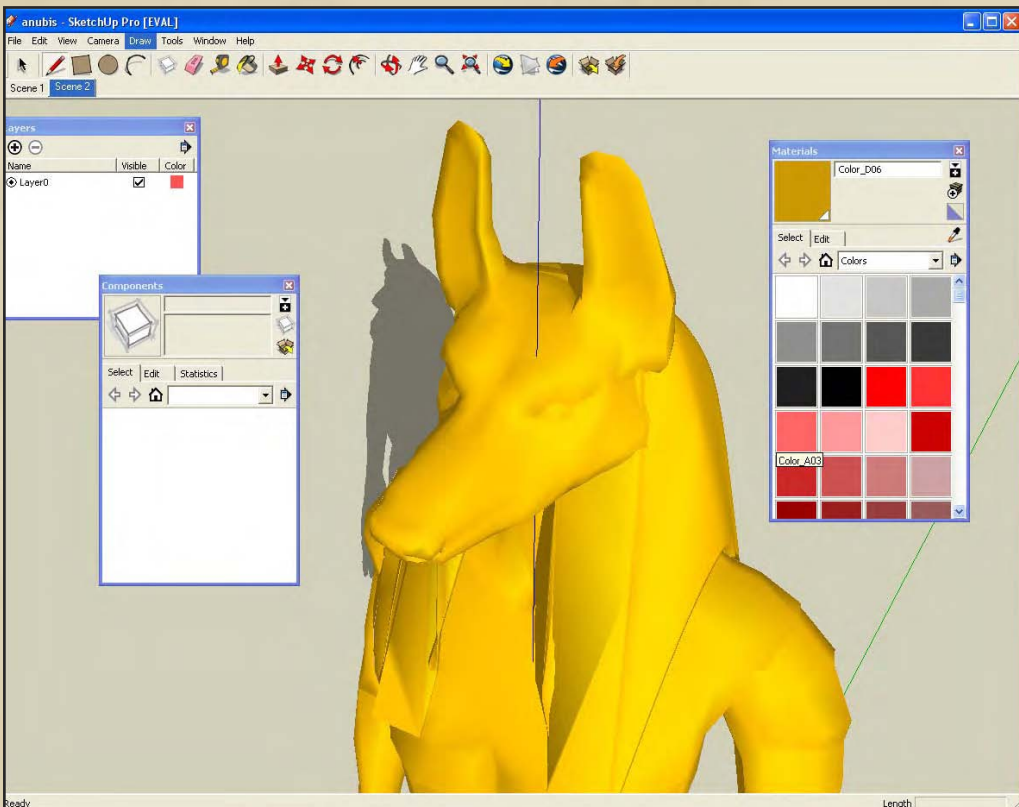
www.profantasy.com

Another option along these lines is Dundjinni, which is also a map creation program, but produces much better looking maps (IMO). I haven't used it myself but I raid their forums for mapping elements every now and then:

www.dundjinni.com

There are plenty of other options out there as well, with 3d renderers and any number of packaged map programs, there's a big list over at the Cartographers Guild website:

<http://forum.cartographersguild.com/showthread.php?t=1407>



The Google Sketchup Interface

Useful Techniques & Tips

There are loads of different ways to make maps but here are a few of the techniques and tips I use a lot. Most are PS relevant only but are probably replicable in many programs.

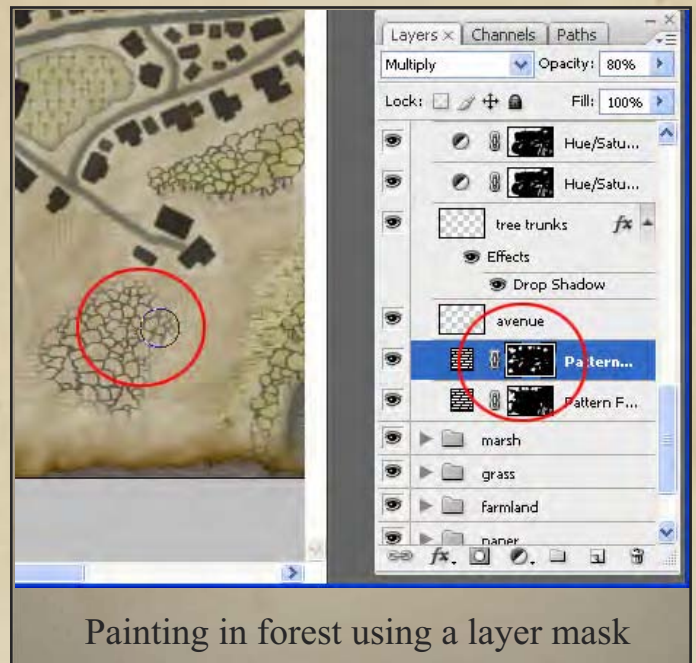
Layers

The most useful thing in Photoshop by a mile is the ability to use layers. If you haven't a clue what I'm talking about; consider your finished artwork on a flat piece of paper, now say you want to move one element of it 2 inches to the right. Impossible without erasing lots of stuff and starting again, you may say? Well not if you use layers, here you would have distributed each individual element of your artwork onto a series of stacked see-thru sheets, from head on it looks the same, but moving and editing elements independently is now dead easy.

This is exactly what PS replicates with its layers and its really good practice to place every new element on its own layer, true this bloats the file size but it can save you time and burst blood vessels if you need to make changes.

masks, and if you are going to make maps then spending time learning to use these is a real time and brain saver.

A layer mask works much like a mask on a drawing only it's totally freeform and can be used to either exclude area or draw in areas. For example if you want to create a forest, rather than drawing out the shape and then realising you need to amend it later, you would cover the whole page with a forest pattern, then create a layer mask, invert it so the forest is not visible, then draw in the forest with the paint brush set to white. Later if you want to cut it back you set the brush to black and paint out the areas you don't want to use, but unlike the eraser if you make a mistake you switch back to white and add it back in. Brilliant!



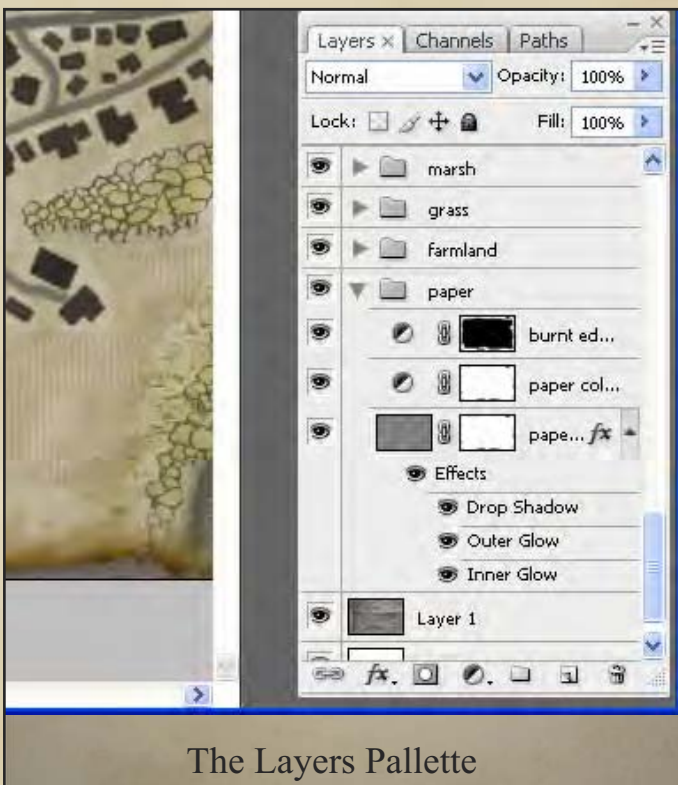
Painting in forest using a layer mask

Layer Styles

Although Photoshop has lots of filters and options under the edit menu to change the appearance of an element, I always prefer where possible to make non-permanent changes (I'm great at tinkering endlessly with stuff on maps). The Layer styles options contain some really powerful tools that can be turned on and off with the click of a mouse, or amended later, this keeps everything editable, and makes your life easier if you suddenly need to revise everything.

You can place colour overlays, strokes, drop shadows, glows, pattern fills, you name it.

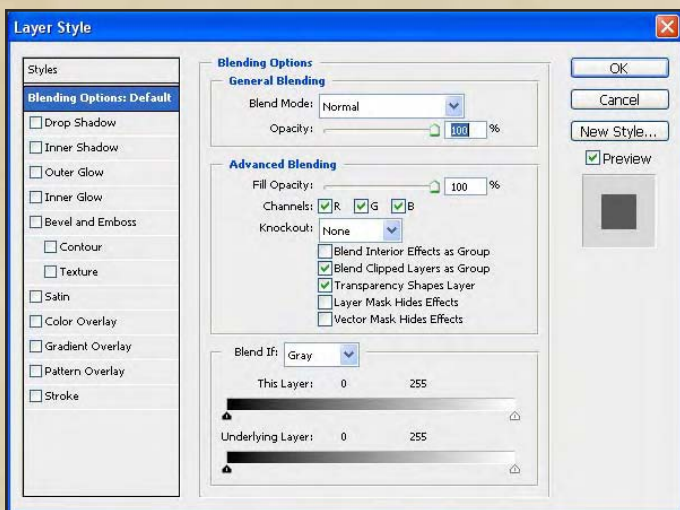
Bottom-line use layer styles as much as you can!



The Layers Palette

Layer Masks

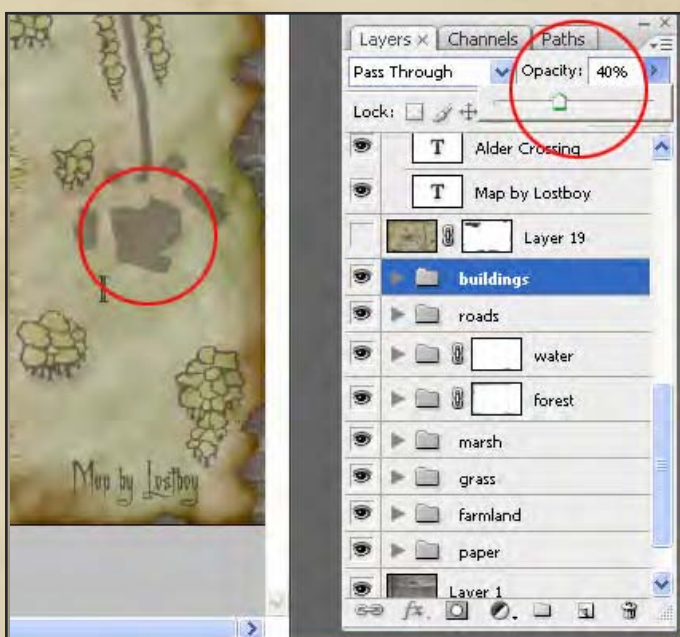
I can't count the number of times I've used layer



Layer Styles Pop-up

Layer Opacity

Layer Opacity is a convenient way of dulling down or fading stuff, but it's a non-permanent effect and you can always readjust later. I rarely use any element at full opacity, around 85% mutes everything so its isn't too garish.

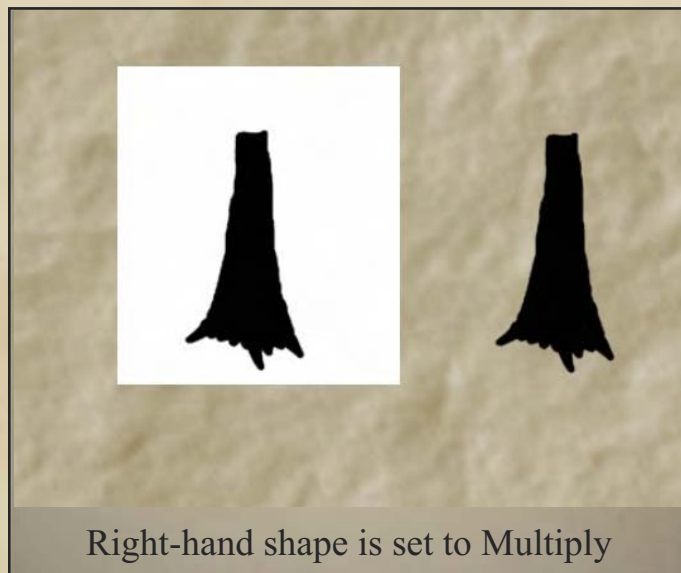


Lowering the opacity of a building

Multiply

Photoshop offers several layer blending modes but I mostly use normal and multiply. If the blending mode is set to Multiply all white is rendered as transparent and in general other colours appear darker. That might not sound too stellar but it's an incredibly useful tool for layout purposes and also if you want to show the underlying background. For example the Opera House map in Book 12 is

at base really nothing more than a series of white shapes set to Multiply with blending options applied. Once I had them all to right size and position I added strokes, pattern fills, colour fills, inner glows and drop shadows. For the second use if you look at all the trees on the Ravnika or Elazig maps, they are set to Multiply so you can see the antique paper showing through which gives the effect of a line drawing.

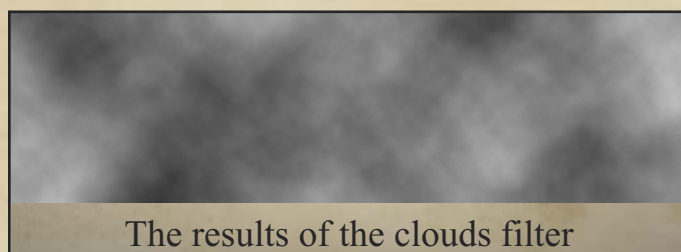


Right-hand shape is set to Multiply

Filter > Render > Clouds

There are loads of filters and effects in Photoshop, but for map making this is probably the one I use most. It's a really easy way of getting a random pattern of tone graduation which can be the base of so many effects. Its best to set background colour as black and foreground as white (that way you can use multiply and screen modes to set either to transparent if you need to).

Butch Curry uses this to make the aged paper background of his map in the 1st Fantasy Cartography Pod cast, I use it as the first step to make rocks, but there are tonnes more uses. If the cloud effect isn't contrasty enough for you, then once you have your clouds try filter > render > difference clouds (you can do this multiple times for more and more contrast).



The results of the clouds filter

Tutorials

I'm no Photoshop genius and probably most of you aren't either, however there are people out there who are, and some have been nice enough to leave detailed instructions on how they created specific effects. These can provide a quick and easy way to getting a really cool effect without all the trial and error frustration of doing it yourself.

Some of these are really straightforward like the rocks and canyon tutorial I used as the base for the Statute of Beyrath map in Kerthanevar, others can be far more complex. I like to try and deconstruct them and understand how they work, tweak them and make them individual, but there's nothing wrong with just using them as they come.

The best thing to do is just use your favourite search engine to look for the effect you want, adding the words "Photoshop tutorial", you'll be amazed how many there are...

Textures & backgrounds

Using the techniques above I created many of the simple backgrounds from scratch, things like sand, rocks, grass and even trees (if they don't have much detail). But some things are tricky to approximate and just don't look right, particularly man made stuff and building interiors, and that's when you need to search the web for other textures and backgrounds to use.

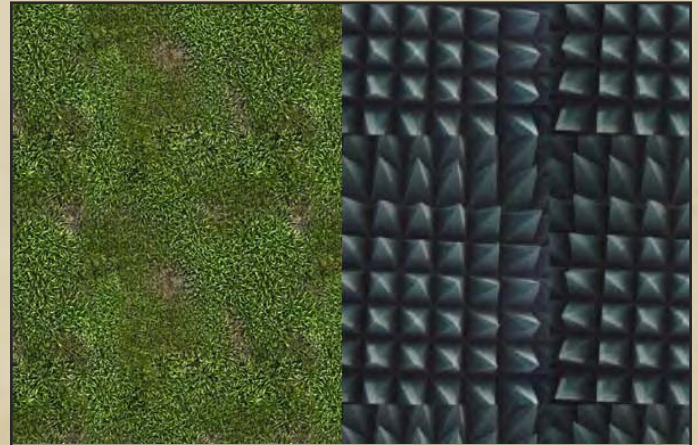
There are plenty of sites out there; I mostly used CG Textures and searches on Google images to find what I needed. You can find CG textures at:

www.cgtextures.com

Once you have the background or texture you need to decide if you want to use it as a tile or not.

Tiling textures is useful for filling large areas of background, however you have to be careful to ensure they tile seamlessly and you don't see the edges. Some textures come as seamless tiles; if they don't then you need to do it yourself. Fortunately the offset-filter technique Butch Curry discusses in the 3rd Fantasy Cartography podcast is an easy way of creating a custom seamless tile. Also because Photoshop lets you create a pattern from anything (under edit > define pattern) you

can tile whatever you want by using the pattern overlay in the layer blending options. I used this technique to create the marble effect of Karman-Quse and the parquet floor in the ballroom from Book 11.



Seam less and Non Seam less Textures

You don't always want backgrounds to tile, so in this case you can either just paste them in as a layer and apply masks and other manipulation or define them as a pattern and do a pattern overlay. I used this particularly for the internal walls of buildings, like the tomb walls of Book 11. Here I found a suitable image of hieroglyphics, cropped it to double the height I needed, compressed it vertically using the scale transform, then pasted into the map, I then used the perspective transform and pulled the upper corners outwards. The wonder of Photoshop also lets you bend images around any shape you fancy by using the warp transform, this is a bit trickier to do, but it lets you get effects like the hieroglyphs on the curved wall behind the sarcophagus in Menatnashte's tomb.

I've found it's always best to add a dark inner glow on any backgrounds you add, this conceals the edges and blends them nicely into the other pieces of the map.

Mapping Elements

Sometimes there is always that element that is either too time consuming or beyond your skill to create, fortunately the web provides plenty of suitable solutions. However saying that, the main challenge for cartographers is that few images and elements available on the web are in plan-view

(from above), so you either have to hunt out specialist mapping elements or manipulate 3d objects to get the right perspective.

If manipulating 3-d objects is your thing, Google's Sketchup application is the easiest way forward, its free, simple, and has a massive online library of stuff people have already created. Either draw your own Sketchup model or download one from the warehouse, simply orbit over it for a top-down view, hit screen print, then bring it into Photoshop and manipulate to your heart's content (I used this technique to create the statues in the giant scorpion room of Menatnashte's tomb).

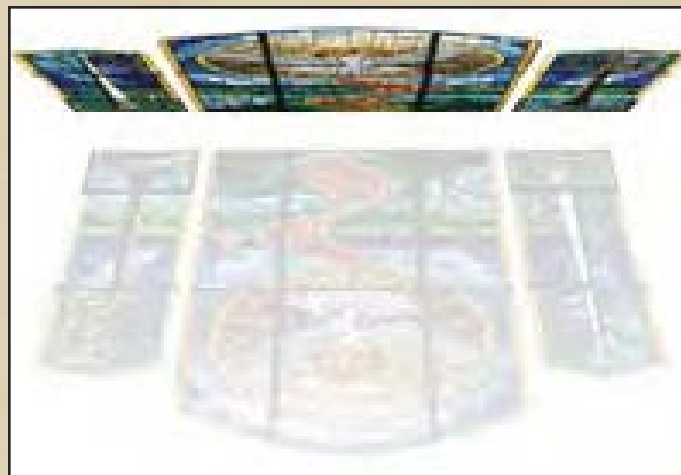
However sometimes 3d objects just don't look right, particularly for things like vegetation. You could of course take digital images of things and then manipulate them, but that's even more time consuming and getting aerial views of trees isn't the easiest. Fortunately there are at least two sites that can help you out; the Cartographers Guild and the Dundjinni Forums.

The CG offers plenty of advice, tutorials and inspiration, but also has a section where people post elements they have put together, whether that be trees, buildings, dogs, you name it, of course there are varying styles and looks but it's a great resource.

Dundjinni is similar although by and large everything is in the same photorealistic style, but searching the forums there can net you just about anything you could want, and wonderfully everyone posts them as .png files which have a transparent background, find the one you want, right click, copy, open in Photoshop (although download them in Firefox rather than IE, which for some reason renders the background on everything as black once you open in Photoshop). I used several Dundjinni elements for the auditorium map in Book 12, most notably the trees, statues, lights, and stained glass.

Supplying the Files

As most of you probably know, you can only post image files in a forum for a PBP game, however Neo wanted the flexibility to move elements and characters as battles played out. Of course I didn't want to be doing a new version of the map every



Stained Glass from the Dundjinni Forums

turn of the battle; fortunately he had access to PS as well so we came up with a solution. I created the map then saved it as jpeg using that as the background of a fresh .psd file. Above this I created icons for all the PC's, NPC's, and bad guys on separate layers so they could be moved independently of each other., thereby allowing Neo to depict the ebb and flow of a battle without overhauling the map every time.

Later we also used this method to add spell effects, (where I set a layer to have a certain colour overlay and opacity, and he could then paint in the spell radius in any brush he wanted but its appearance remains as it was set in the overlay), and crowds (where I defined the colour and stroke on an icon, then specified the size brush to use, so every click would simply create another crowd member. For maps like the Beyrath statue in the Kermanevar I also added layer masks meaning that crowds couldn't be inadvertently placed over the chasms.

Once each round had been updated Neo saved the map as a jpeg (being careful to keep the original PSD) and posted the jpeg in the forum.



THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book One



Part a Lucine

Vertical column of Egyptian hieroglyphs on the right side of the page.

Book One

In which the sending off party for the expedition is rudely interrupted by the corpse of a dead sailor, strange goings on in the garden, and the entrance of a masked adversary.

Guignol Reception Hall, University of Dementlieu, Port-a- Lucine, Dementlieu

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Guignol Auditorium was my very first map and the very first time I realised that I had an absolutely magnificent mapmaker at my disposal, a resource I would use constantly.

The actual fight here was fairly interesting, with an arch-antagonist (not exactly villain, but not a friend) who decided to crash the going-away party

of the Expedition by throwing a corpse through the window. When the Anubite crashes a party, she crashes a party. Admittedly, I wasn't actually expecting one of the players to go dashing up onto the roof (he had to borrow a pistol from a NPC), and then for the rest of the PCs to follow. It was an odd fight, but the Anubis cultist roughed the PCs up a little and departed. Not a proper battle, as such, but a teaser of things to come.

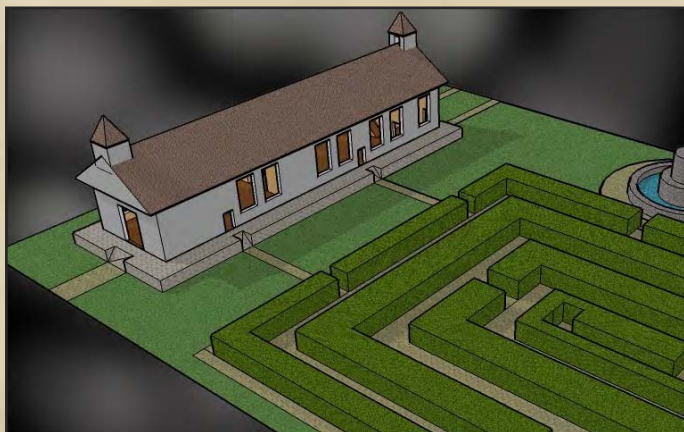
Mechanically, this was a sterling example that sometimes my vision gets ahead of what I can actually do. Here I played around with some nice environmental effects, in particular the driving rain and wind, as well as the severe slope of the roof. Ranged weapons were in trouble, and more than one PC ended up slipping and sliding down the roof to tumble ignominiously to the ground below.

Looking back on it with the benefit of hindsight, I can see many ways to tighten the design, but back then we were all still fresh and enthusiastic, so it worked out.

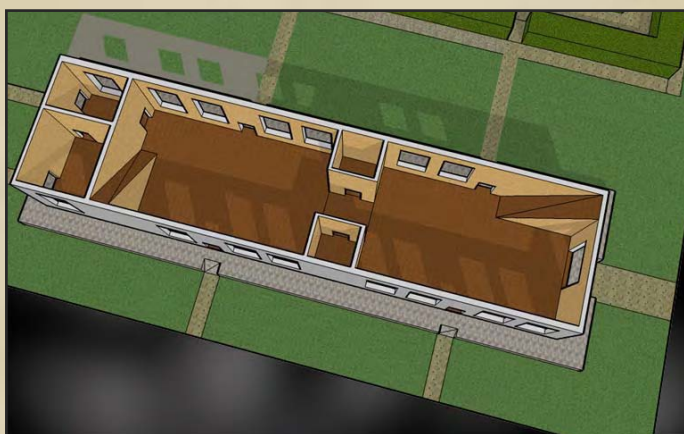


Map Notes (Lostboy)

The first map of the campaign was one building (and a bit of gardens), Neo provide the dimensions and rough layout and I decided this was a good opportunity to try out Sketchup as a tool for map making.



Sketchup is a very useful tool if your map consists of a single building, and with practice you can create quite complex shapes easily. Its even more useful if you plan to utilise more than just the floor of the building as the camera can go anywhere on the model, in this case I was able to move the camera, take a screen grab and show the PC's POV in places like the roof. I imported the screen grabs into PS cut the background off and added a dark misty b/g (using the clouds filter and the brush tool) for atmosphere.



However a word of caution with Sketchup, the angle of view does present a problem in overlaying battle grids, in that you can't get a complete flat plan view of anything, instead you get a fish-eye distortion. However in this case it worked fine for what we needed.

Its also worth noting that I was still experimenting with fonts and markers for the PC's at this point, and in hindsight they look rather clumsy, but hey it was all a learning curve!



Associated Files

Guignol Hall.skp
Sketchup Application

book1_1.jpg
image of the hall

book1_2.jpg
Close-up of the roof

book1_3.jpg
Interior of the hall

book1_4.jpg
Spine of the roof



THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Two



Ravnika

→ ୧୪୫ ୧୪୬ ୧୪୭ ୧୪୮ ୧୪୯ ୧୫୦ ୧୫୧ ୧୫୨ ୧୫୩ ୧୫୪ ୧୫୫ ୧୫୬ ୧୫୭ ୧୫୮ ୧୫୯ ୧୬୦ ୧୬୧ ୧୬୨ ୧୬୩ ୧୬୪ ୧୬୫ ୧୬୬ ୧୬୭ ୧୬୮ ୧୬୯ ୧୭୦ ୧୭୧ ୧୭୨ ୧୭୩ ୧୭୪ ୧୭୫ ୧୭୬ ୧୭୭ ୧୭୮ ୧୭୯ ୧୮୦ ୧୮୧ ୧୮୨ ୧୮୩ ୧୮୪ ୧୮୫ ୧୮୬ ୧୮୭ ୧୮୮ ୧୮୯ ୧୯୦ ୧୯୧ ୧୯୨ ୧୯୩ ୧୯୪ ୧୯୫ ୧୯୬ ୧୯୭ ୧୯୮ ୧୯୯ ୨୦୦

Book Two

In which a sleepy Barovian village plays host to the expedition as well as grave robbers, pacts with elder gods, and the machinations of a necromancer and his hordes of undead.

Ravnika, Barovia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Ravnika, Barovia was the first real adventure location my players arrived at. They'd started the campaign in Port-a-Lucine, but it was here that they would explore and meet up with the main villain of the campaign. Ravnika was a sleepy little Barovian village, but with all the xenophobia and dark secrets that are the hallmark of sleepy little villages everywhere.

My usual area-map design philosophy is to clutter it up. I draft far more locations than I'll need, usually with very minimal design work going into each. Later on, I would be able to use the map as an actual source of inspiration, particularly with regards to adventure locales. Abandoned mills, standing stones out in the woods, graveyards of all sorts, even isolated cottages can be transformed into terrifying adventuring locations with only a little effort.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This map was my first attempt at wholesale mapping in Photoshop, I'd played around with a few ideas before but after watching the FCAP podcasts, I figured I could replicate the style. In fact if you follow the FCAP tutorials 1-12, you could remake 99% of the Ravnika map. I added a few small additional details like shading farmland, and the icons for the Erl stones & the bridge (which unusually I did draw from scratch in this case as black on white and then set to multiply).

Looking back I'm not that happy with it, it looks a little garish on the colours and several elements are too bold and appear a bit clumsy, but this map taught me so much about PS and I still use the base techniques over and over. Interestingly I had a chance to do a Ravnika Mark II for Whistler's Fogbound Game, and although it's virtually the same map I'm much happier with the newer version.

Associated Files

Ravnika_over.jpg

Overview Map of the village



Ravnika Square/ Stefan's Farm / Old Marilena's Cottage & the Abandoned Mill, Ravnika, Barovia

Dm Notes (NeoTiamat)

Stefan's Farm was another miniature adventure area, a zoomed in version of a farm and an old church. Early on, the PCs just investigated the farmer's murder here, along with the discovery that he was secretly a grave robber. Ultimately, they were supposed to meet the farmer's ghost here, but that ended up being shifted to Marilena's Cottage instead.

As far as the actual design goes, not a lot to say. Once again, you take a map and litter it with random locations. Most cemeteries are full of odd graves, mysterious mounds, trees, old statues, so on and so forth, any of which might have a story attached to them. I'm usually pretty good at coming up with a story from scratch, so for me, all of these locations are basically creativity aids, a little something to jog the imagination should the PCs investigate.

Old Marilena's Cottage is one of the first battle maps, and also a sterling example of why I need grids. The PCs had convinced the old witch to summon up a terrifying ghost, and in a bout of paranoia, a few of my PCs had secretly avoided eating the magic food that would protect them. Me being a sadistic DM, I made them regret that.

This was, honestly, a very primitive map compared to the huge extravaganzas of later Books, but I was still learning. The main thing I learned is that grids are vitally important. Otherwise, it was a fairly bland map, although the presence of the witch's skeletal gardeners made for a very odd ammunition choice for the telekinetic ghost.

The Abandoned Mill was the final location, and again, a relatively bland one, created mostly to help the PCs visualise what was going on. No fights were planned here, but it was still a classically creepy location, with the sense of decay

and corruption that is the hallmark of good locales. And of course, the reason I love mills is that all that grain dust turns it into a huge bomb should there be even a spark of fire. Mills are good places.

Later on, as maps became more elaborate, there was more lead-in time required for Lostboy to draw them out, so the 'impulse' maps of early books grew fewer and fewer.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

A series of simple close-ups showing the key locations. I took pieces of the larger map and redrew them on a bigger scale essentially employing much the same techniques. They were done rather in a hurry which shows.

One point of note is that I started looking at textures with these maps, to make it more than a flat piece of art. The paths are done with the texturiser filter set to sandstone and the square with the craquelure effect. The landscape behind the trees on the mill map was created by using the same process as the paper b/g but with a stronger emboss filter and a displacement map added for extra crinkliness.

I also created two Sketch-up models for this book although neither got used much, in fact the mill didn't even make an appearance.

The Fane was a useful learning exercise in understanding what isn't very successful in Sketchup, and the less aid about it the better really.

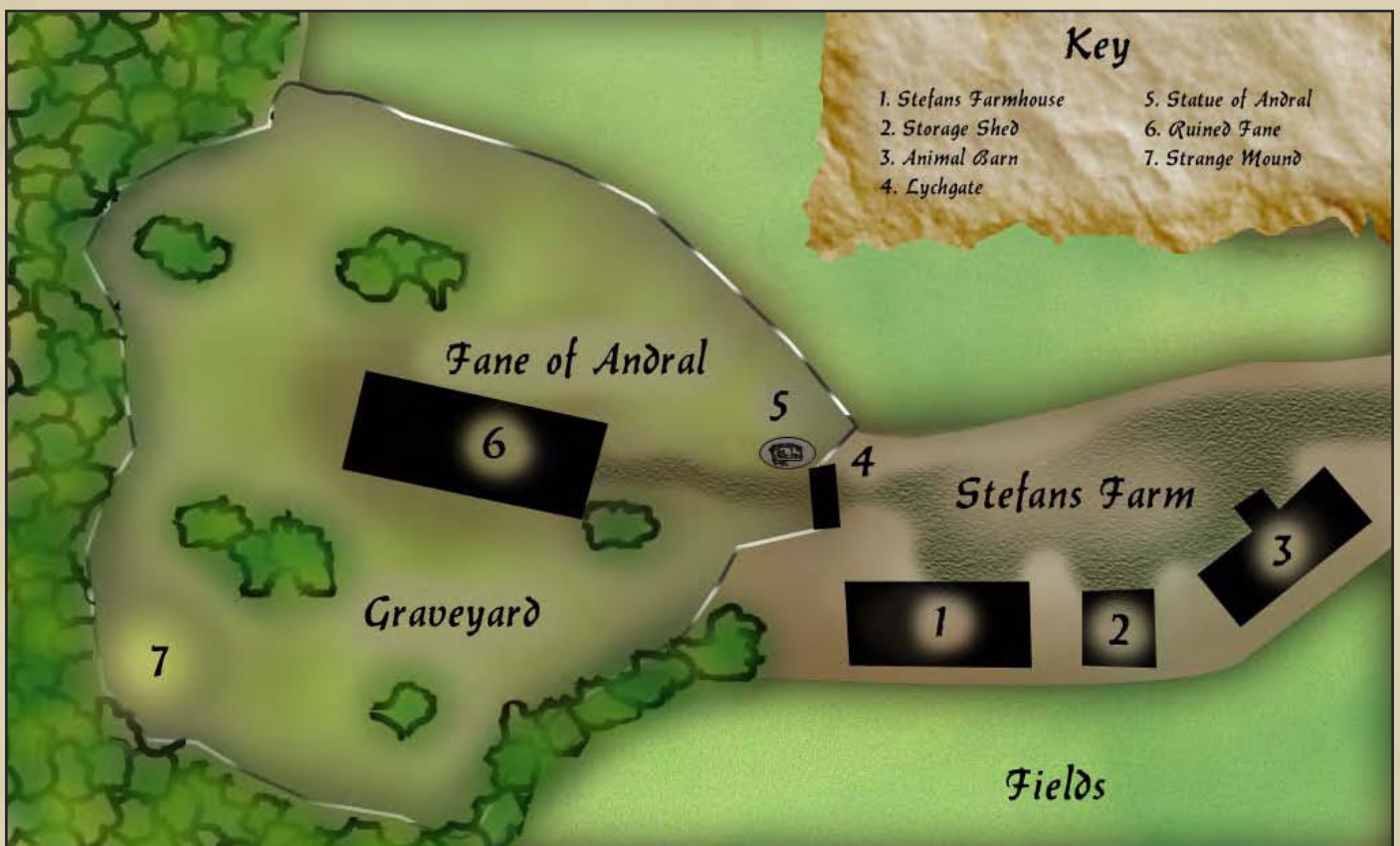
I was quite pleased with the Mill on the other hand, particularly the wheel and gears inside (tip I did this in layers so to see inside go to window>layers and toggle the visibility of different layers). However I did really start to feel that Sketchup wasn't the right application for where the campaign was going so this was the last time I used it until Book 11.

Associated Files

File notes attached to each map on following pages.



Ravnika_square.jpg
Closeup Map of the village square



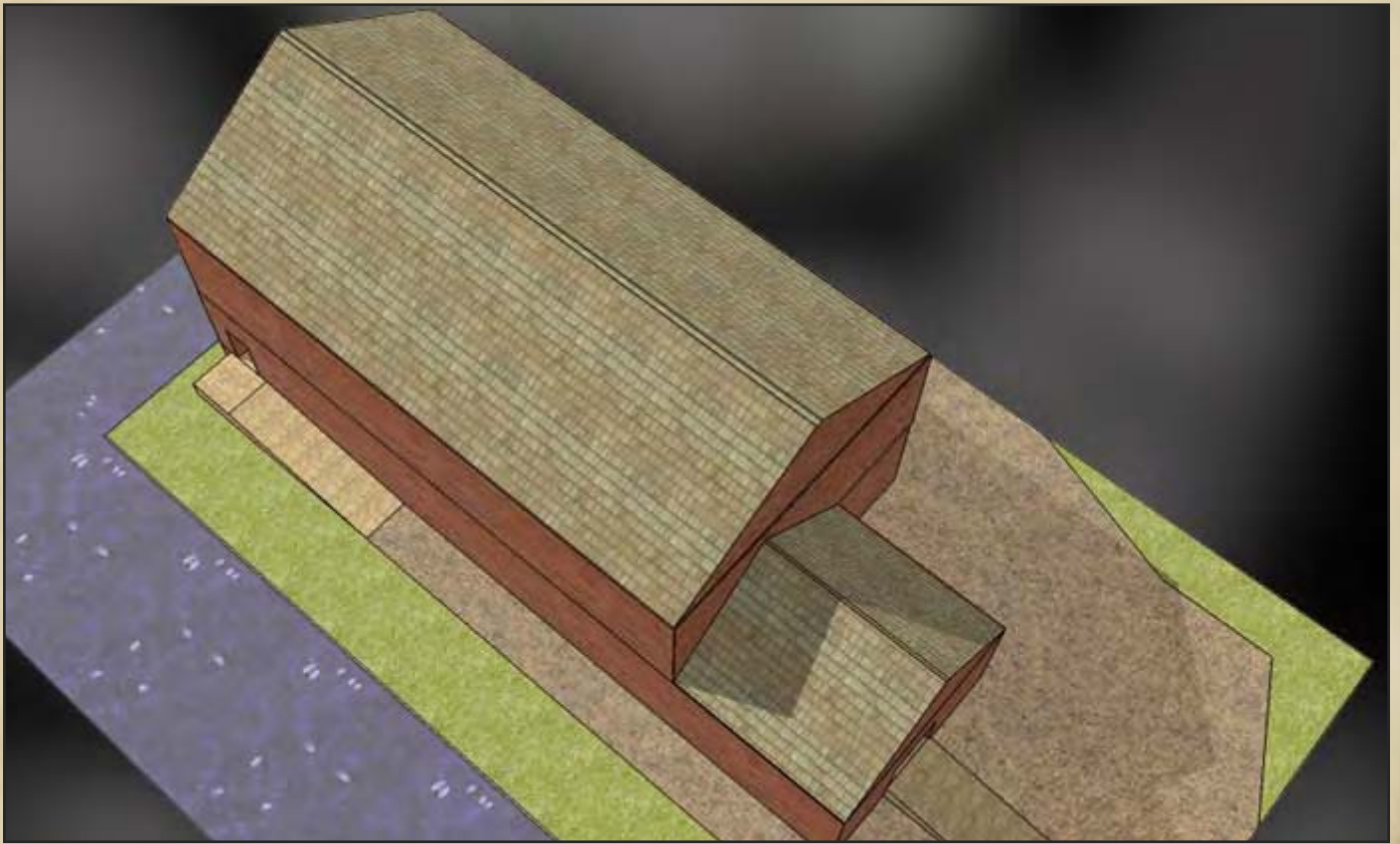
Ravnika_stefan.jpg
Close up Map of the Fane



Ravnika_marilenas.jpg
 Close up Map of Marilena's Cottage



Ravnika_mill.jpg
 Close up Map of the Mill



Mill.skp
Sketchup Application





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Three



Vertical column of Egyptian hieroglyphs on the right side of the page.

Eliazig

Book Three

In which a mystery of missing children in Hazlan leads the expedition on a merry chase involving red wizards, inter-dimensional portals, giant magical spiders and retribution for past wrongs.

Elazig District, Hazlan

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Elazig District of Hazlan was my second area map, where the PCs had to investigate a series of child-kidnappings, which were ultimately discovered to be caused by a particularly unscrupulous Red Wizard of Hazlan.

Once again, I littered the map with basic ideas. A village and some estates for the main adventure locales. Looking up Hazlan in the Gazetteer, I learned about the odd, honeycomb windmills and the Vossath Nor ruins, both of which I included. Vistani are always interesting, as was the prospect of an Ezrite missionary, so they too were added. Mines, meanwhile, are one of the more versatile adventure locations, since just about anything can and does lair in them. In this case, they turned out to be my wizard's hideout, but another one of the abandoned mines was the den for a pack of wolves.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

Again this is an FCAP based map, although with this one I started to try new techniques. A case in point is the rocks in the background; I achieved this effect by using the Clouds filter, adding some angled strokes, then the chalk and charcoal filter, messing with a little Gaussian blur and then overlaying a brown colour and finally lowering the opacity. The point here is you rarely get great effects from one Photoshop filter, so play around

with stacking a few, there's always undo if it doesn't work out.



Difference
Clouds



Angled Strokes



Chalk & Char-
coal



Gaussian Blur &
Multiply



Adjust Hue &
Saturation



Lower Opacity
& Layer Mask

One Way to Make Rocks

Associated Files

Elazig_over.jpg

Overview Map of the region



Elazig Windmill, Hazlan

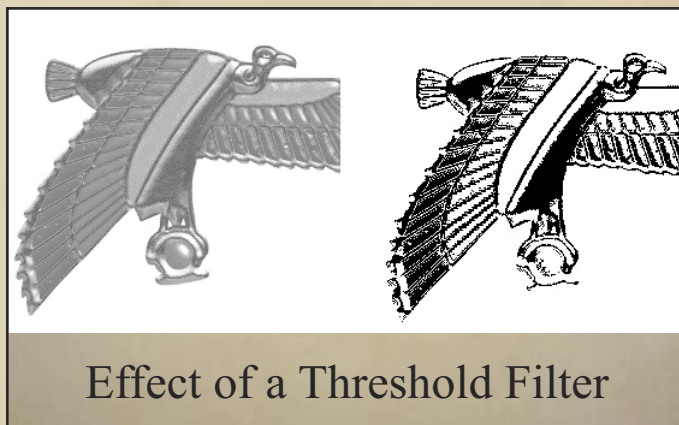
DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Elazig Windmill was another of the impulse maps, of the sort that would slowly disappear. One of the huge windmills of Hazlan, there was a captive NPC within and a particularly scary and ominous trap keeping him there.

Had the PCs messed up the trap, I probably would've locked them in and then unleashed some earth elementals or such, but as the PCs managed to do extremely well on the disabling, it never came up.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This might look like a simple map but there is a useful technique at work here. I am no artist, so the thought of drawing the gears didn't thrill me, so I found one on the net and manipulated it. I took the original image, desaturated it to remove the colour, then applied a Threshold adjustment level (which renders all tones as either black or white, cutting out the greys) then set to multiply. It can look a little jagged but it's an easy way of converting an image to almost line art.



Associated Files

Elazig_windmill.jpg
Plan of the Windmill



The Sanctum of Cevdet Tarik, Elazig, Hazlan

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Sanctum of Cevdet Tarik was my next major combat map, and it still showed that I wasn't very good with them. Here, the players had finally found and confronted the illusionist, his apprentice, and his Krenshar familiar.

In retrospect, the main problem with the map was that it was far too large. While it made for a good cavern, only the bottom-left corner of the map was really used, so all the gorges and such turned out to be largely a moot point. Likewise, I should've added far more combatants, and made Cevdet rather more powerful than he was. Live and learn.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

Height is one of the hardest things to visually depict on a map, so when Neo asked for a cavern with crevasses and stalagmites I spent a while scratching my head. I achieved the final look through judicious use of the bevel & emboss blending option and some pattern fills with layer

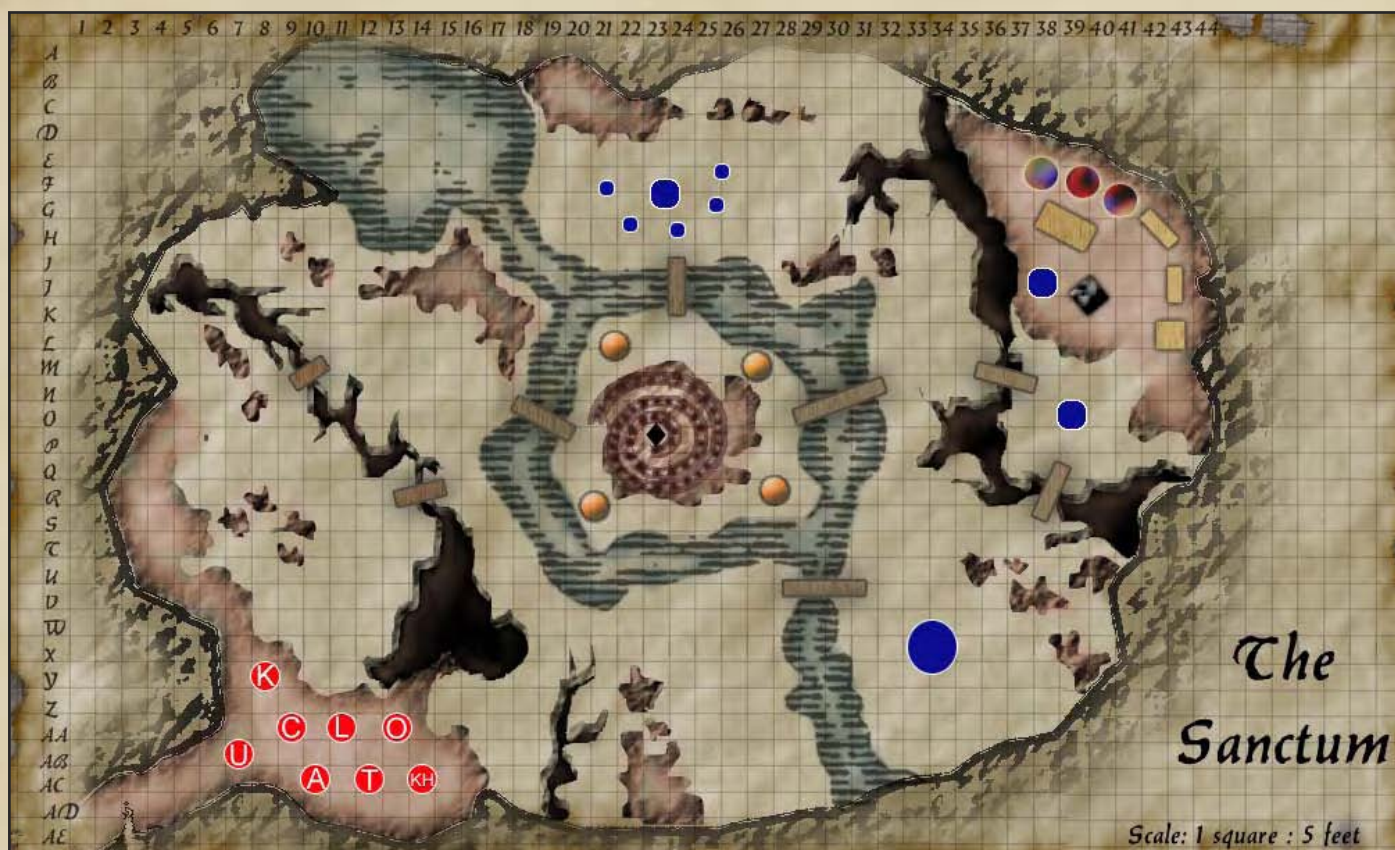
mask applied for the edges, it's not ideal but it conveys the idea.

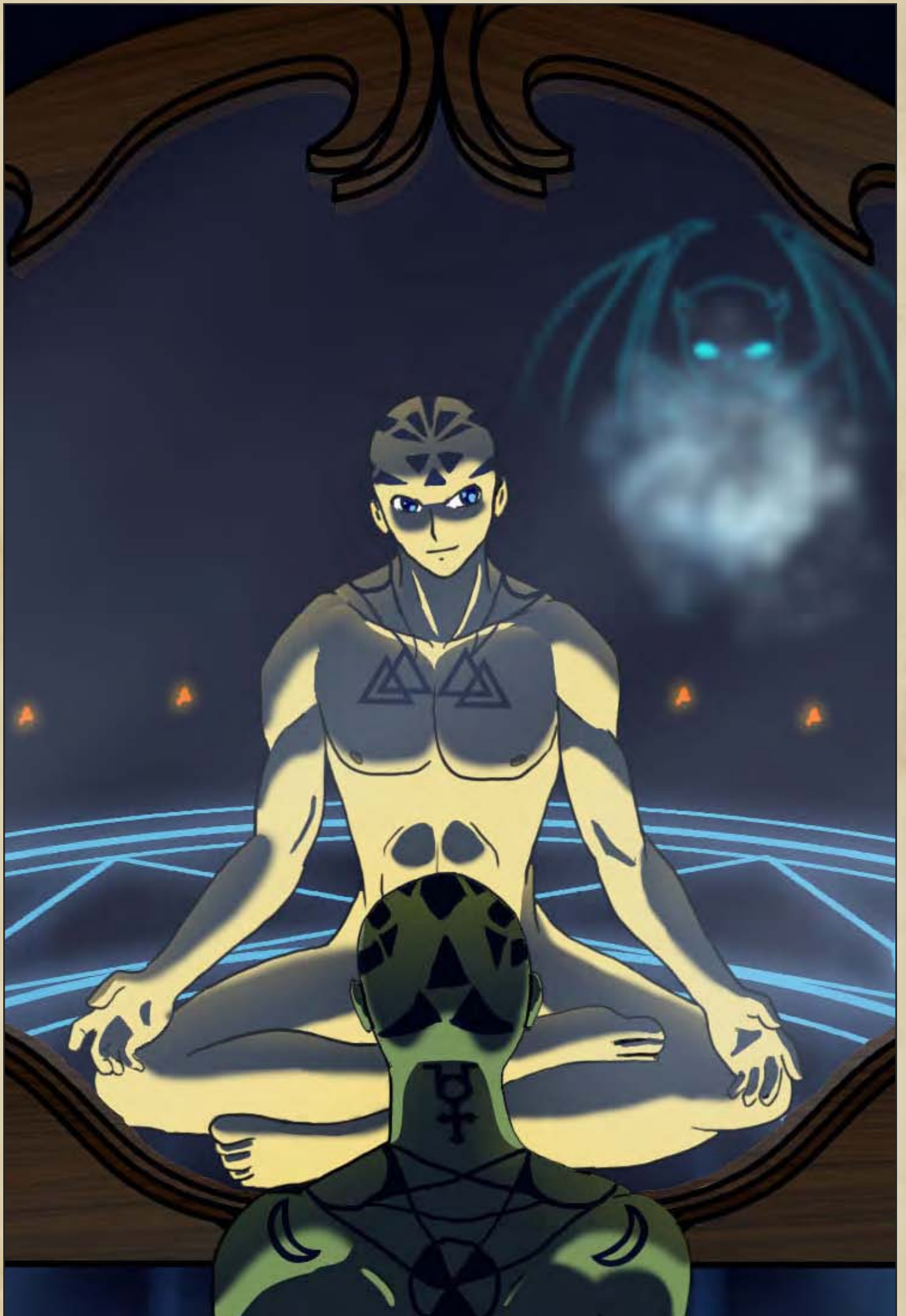
I also, you may note, completely wussed out of realistic fire effects on the braziers around the central spire. Sometimes you have to judge whether details are important or not, especially when the DM wanted the map like an hour ago...

Associated Files

Elazig_cavern.jpg

Map of the Cavern





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Four



Vertical column of Egyptian hieroglyphs on the right margin.

Phiraz

Book Four

In which the expedition arrives in Phiraz amidst a reign of terror. As the body count raises so do the stakes, as they have to contend with an over-zealous ruler and the return of a certain necromancer.

Phiraz, Pharazia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Now, for the fourth chapter, my players had come to Phiraz, Capital of the Amber Wastes. I will say right now that I despise Ravenloft geography, particularly with regards to scale, but also with regards to some of the geographic choices. How, exactly, is Phiraz supposed to get its water supply in canon? Or food? So in my campaign I made it a decidedly more verdant place, and also played up the engineering prowess with a river and a vast reservoir.

The various quarters were fun, and the list of locations followed my usual scatter-shot stylings. That said, I'm particularly proud of the Palace of Purity, Diamabel's artificial island home, and the dams around the necropolis, which a part of me really wanted to collapse for the chapter's climax. Alas, no such opportunity arose.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

City maps take time, don't let anyone persuade you otherwise although there is a freeware program called RPG city map generator that... well randomly generates city maps based on the parameters you input.

www.stargazersworld.com/2009/02/27/roleplaying-city-map-generator/

However if you are going to draw from scratch there are two ways to approach the city map; either

draw in every building, or block colour and erase every road. I opted for the latter with the Phiraz map, I created a block colour with a slight bevel then using a layer mask and the pen tool created a mask of the roads.

With cities I find its often best to take inspiration from real life, that way it looks right and you don't struggle making the street layout look plausible. Here the road network was mostly traced from a rotated, chopped up and resized modern day map of Damascus, which had the right kind of variation in street size and density(not that it made the process any quicker...).

Key to the Phiraz Map

- A Gravekeepers Home
- B University of Phiraz
- C Library of Phiraz
- D Street of Sullen Whsipers
- E Street of Sparrows
- F Home of Vizier Al-Mustafa
- G One-eyed Faruqs Pawnshop
- H Park of Eleven Fountains
- I Home of Rahul the Stonemason
- J Home of Makram the Butcher
- K The slaughter district
- L Palace of Judgement
- M Nest of many serpents
- N Dementlieuse Embassy
- O Temple of the Prophet
- P Temple of the Sparrows
- Q Baths of Al-Karim
- R Bridge of the Hippopotami
- S Warehouse of Akil the Merchant

Associated Files

- Phiraz_over.jpg
- Overview map of the city



The Muzevah, Phiraz

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Muzevah of Phiraz has the distinction of being the only regular combat in the campaign which led to the loss of a PC. The players were called in the middle of the night to investigate the doings of their archenemy, the Necromancer Cavendish, who had set up an artistic display in Phiraz's natural history museum. Shortly after they arrived, they found that not all of the exhibits were quite as firmly dead as would've been preferable.

The map was actually a rapid conversion from a canon WotC book, and rather cramped due to all the exhibits. It was the cramped location and some unfortunate combat-reflexes and Attacks of Opportunities that were the cause for the demise of a certain wizard-rogue.

understand how hard it can be to modify existing flat artwork and importantly make it look like you haven't modified it. In most cases I'd probably give up and redraw it from scratch as it's often quicker.

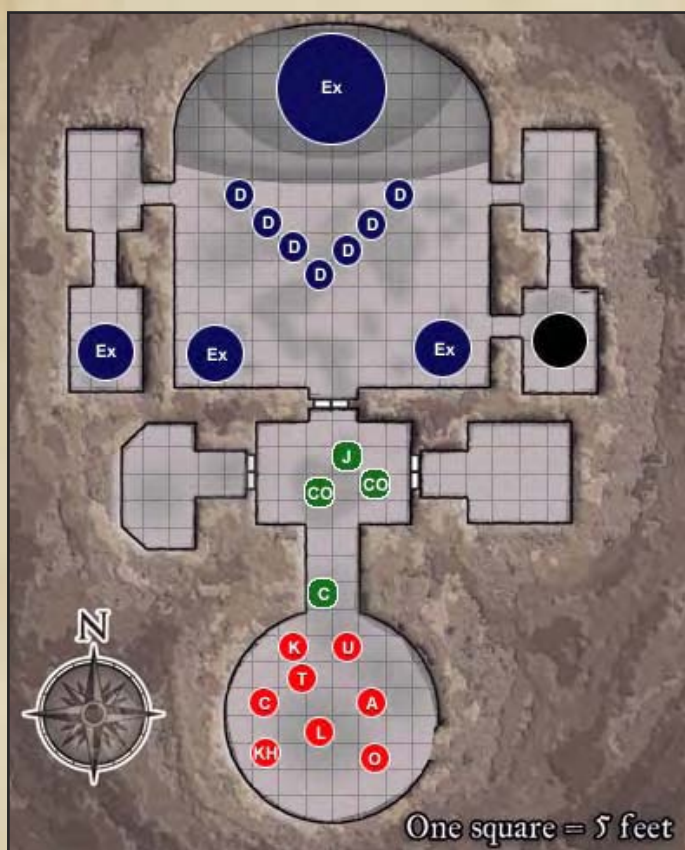
Fortunately this one wasn't too hard, and actually leant itself to being adapted quite well (and totally disproving my point).

I added white shapes over all the rooms and corridors to cover the room contents up, then repainted a new floor over the white shapes and added a grid on top, using a layer mask of the white shapes to fit it to the rooms. Simple.

Associated Files

Phiraz_museum.jpg
Map of the museum

Note: This map is based on an original map owned and distributed by Wizards of the Coast and this adaption is not in any way a challenge to their copyright. Hopefully they won't sic the legal department on me for it.



Map Notes (Lostboy)

Not much to say about this one really, Neo sent me the original WotC map and said "remove everything in the rooms". No offense to Neo but often people who don't use Photoshop don't

The Underground Tomb of Ibn Sayyid, Phiraz, Pharazia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Tomb of Ibn Sayyid was the climactic battle for the fourth chapter. The players confronted their arch nemesis, who released several terrifying undead at them, all the while chattering along in the back with the support of a group of skeletal musicians. It was that kind of a campaign.

The Tomb of Ibn Sayyid is also a classic idea of the DM outsmarting himself. The map was meant to be small and cramped, and would be slowly flooded by ever increasing waves of reinforcements. The main monster, a face-stealing brute, then a pair of henchmen, then masses of Wights would appear to hedge in the PCs.

Unfortunately, the players charged the face-stealer immediately, and managed to tear him and the henchman to shreds before the Wights even arrived. Lesson of the day? Staggering the arrival of enemies to the battle never works, not that it stopped me from trying it again and again...

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This map has many of the same elements as the Windmill in Hazlan, what you might find useful is a couple of little techniques to add the grid lines.

Photoshop has its own guide grid available (view >show>grid), you can edit its size and density of grid lines (edit>preferences>guides, grid, slices & count). However this grid doesn't show up when you export as a jpeg, so you can either draw it in or use a pattern fill.

For the first take the single row marquee tool then simply click on each horizontal line and shift+f5 to fill with black, repeat with the single column marquee tool for the uprights. If that seems like too much work you can draw a small section (say 6 x 6 squares) using the line tool then define that as a pattern, and place a pattern fill layer on top of your image. But either way its best to drop the opacity to stop the grid overshadowing the map.

Associated Files

Phiraz_tomb.jpg
Map of the museum





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Five



Dezhar Keep

⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠ ⊠

Book Five

In which fleeing from Phiraz the expedition finds sanctuary in a ruined border keep, however the long abandoned structure hides its own secrets and its inhabitants do not rest easy.

Dezbar Keep, Pharazia / Sebuia Border

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Dezbar Keep was an abandoned border-keep where the PCs took shelter after being forcibly evicted from Phiraz. Of course, while inside they happened to meet a certain sense-stealing undead, his keep-possessing lover, and his bound diabolic foe, as well as a demonic cistern-serpent largely for kicks. Basically it was a twist on the traditional 'Haunted Castle', in that the ghost was the good guy and the enemy was actually the demon stuck in the torture chamber.

Looking back, I think Dezbar would've been an absolutely magnificent dungeon crawl, but dungeon crawls tend to not work so well in Play-by-Posts, and so we ended up using relatively little of the huge map. It was probably decidedly more magnificent than we actually needed, but it's still one of the more impressive maps we've used. Maybe in tabletop it could've been something much more than it was.

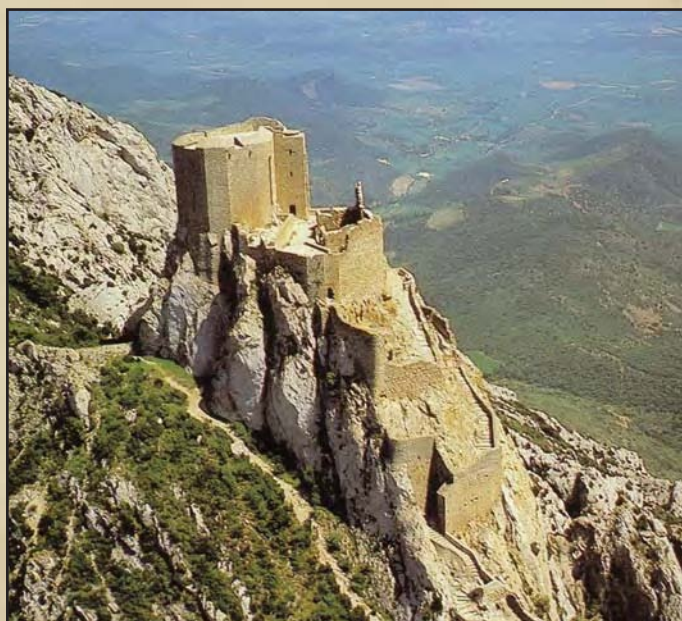
Map Notes (Lostboy)

And there was me thinking the Phiraz map was a big job... this one was a 7 floor fortress!

For this map Neo gave me a list of locations and free rein to design it anyway I wanted, so rather than your average straight up and down castle I got inventive and made life difficult for myself.

Using real life again, this map was based loosely on the Cathar castle of Queribus in Languedoc, it's an incredible place, perching atop a pinnacle of rock

with a real air of brooding. The real place is only a fraction of the size of Dezbar though, and certainly didn't have any demons lurking in the cellar, not when I was there anyway...

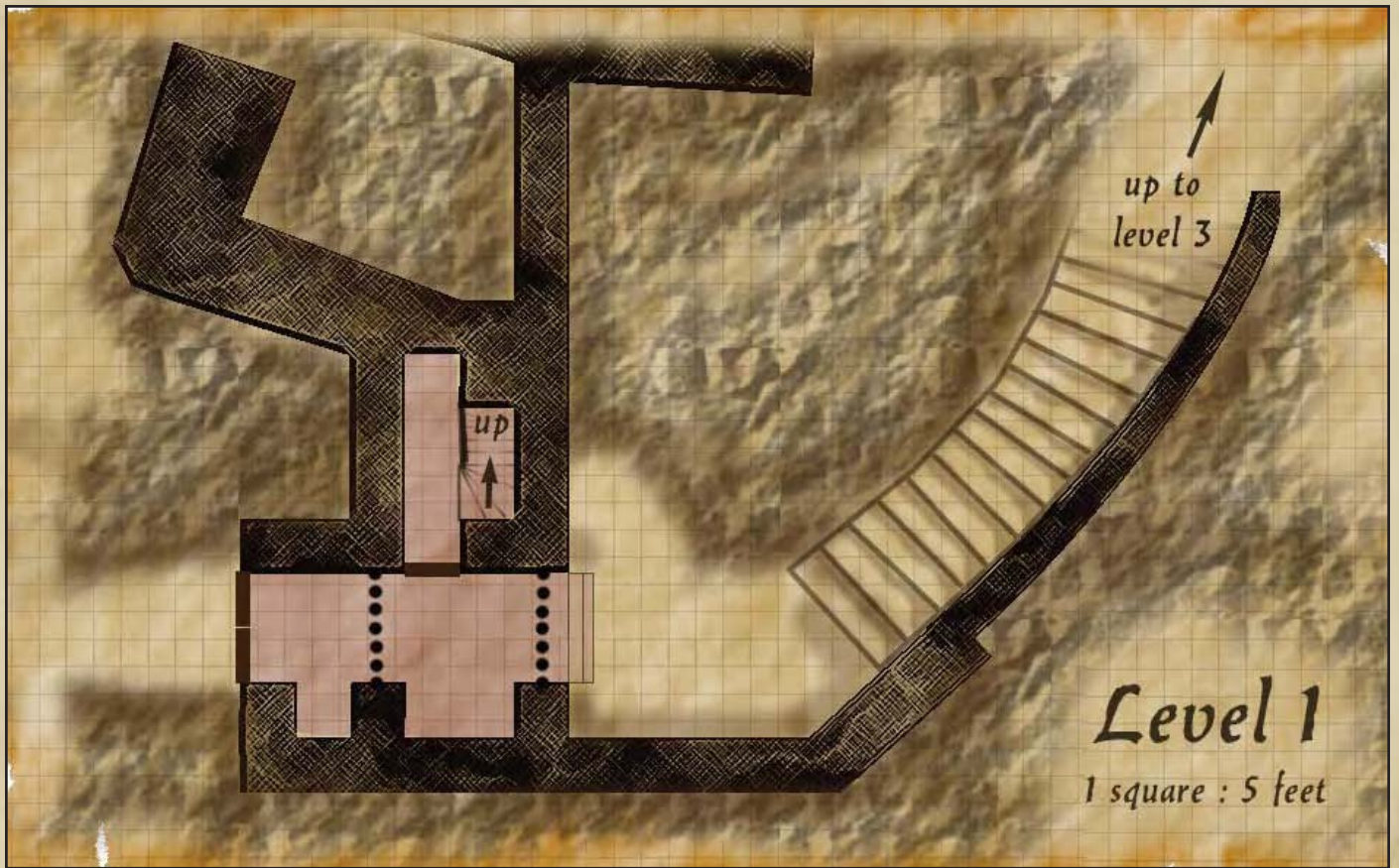


I wanted to take the base of Queribus and make a sprawling fortress from it, but to still keep the impression its form was dictated by the rock pinnacle on which it sat. To that end it is based around several courtyards, and I tried as much as possible to make entrances to the next level not be in the most obvious place, and to create odd angular rooms.

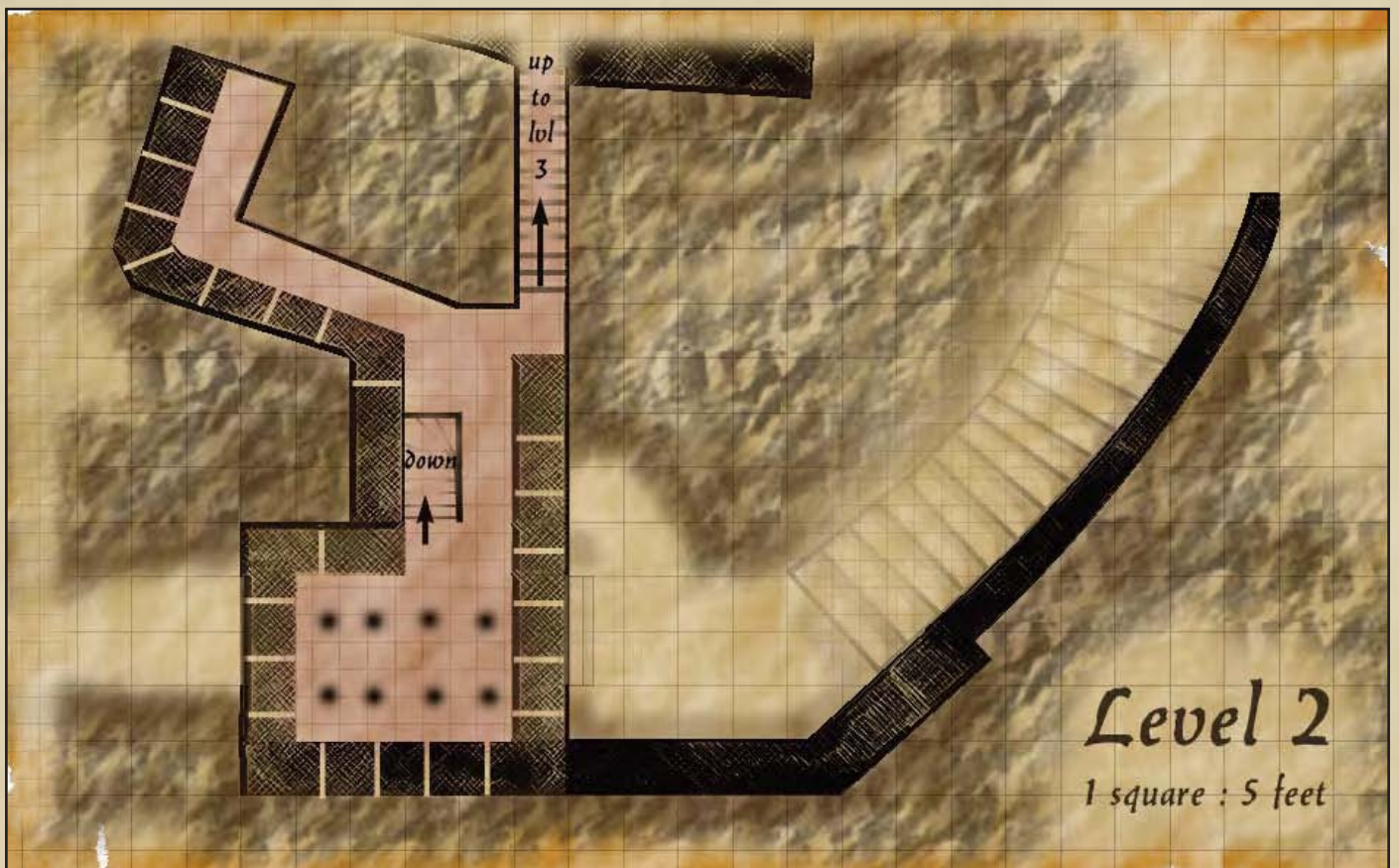
The map itself doesn't feature any real new techniques, (although I think the Craquelure texture works quite well for roofing here, but perhaps needed to be grunged up a bit though) to be honest the design was enough of a headache on its own!

Associated Files

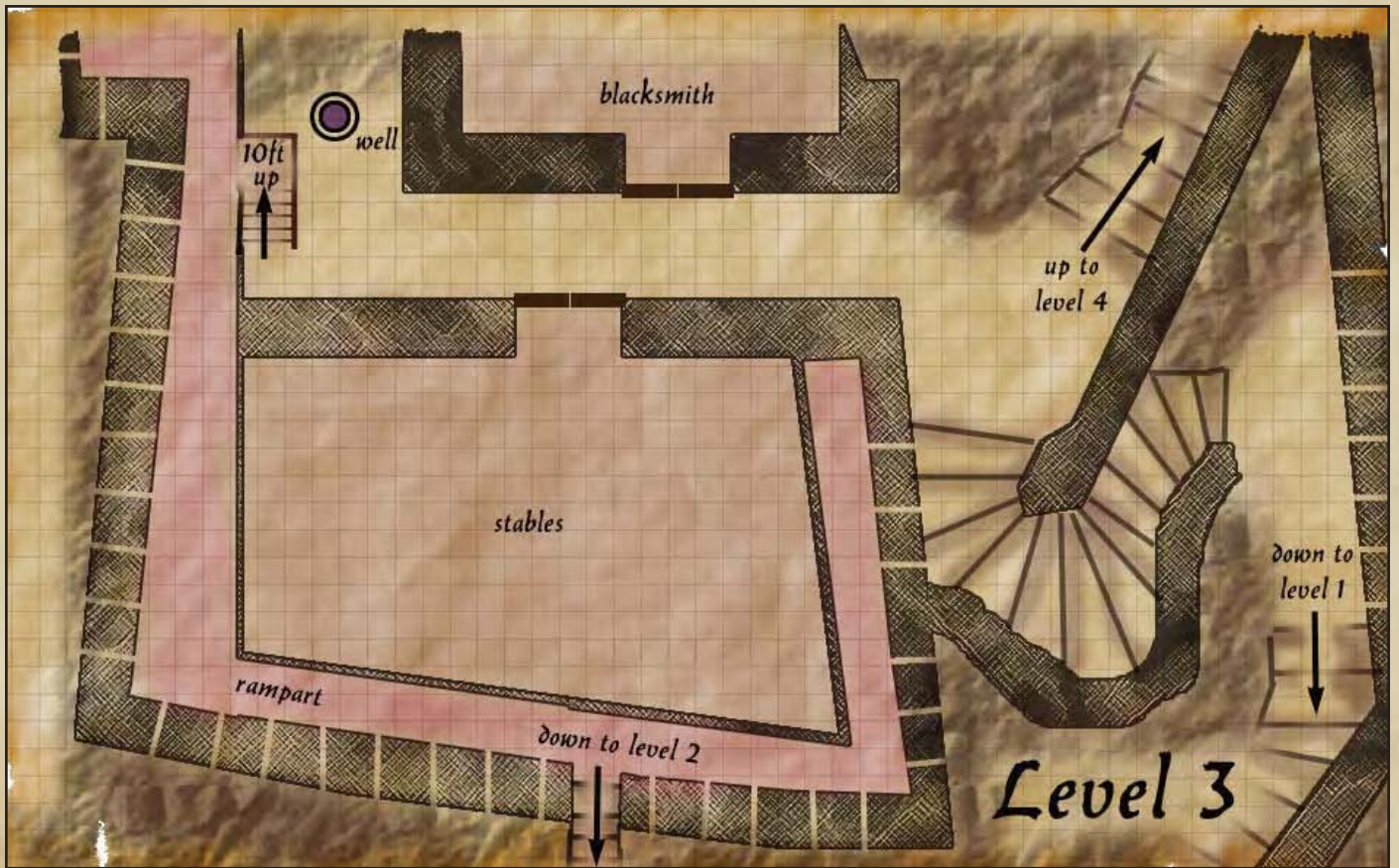
File notes attached to each map on following pages.



Dezbar_1.jpg
Map of the Ground Level



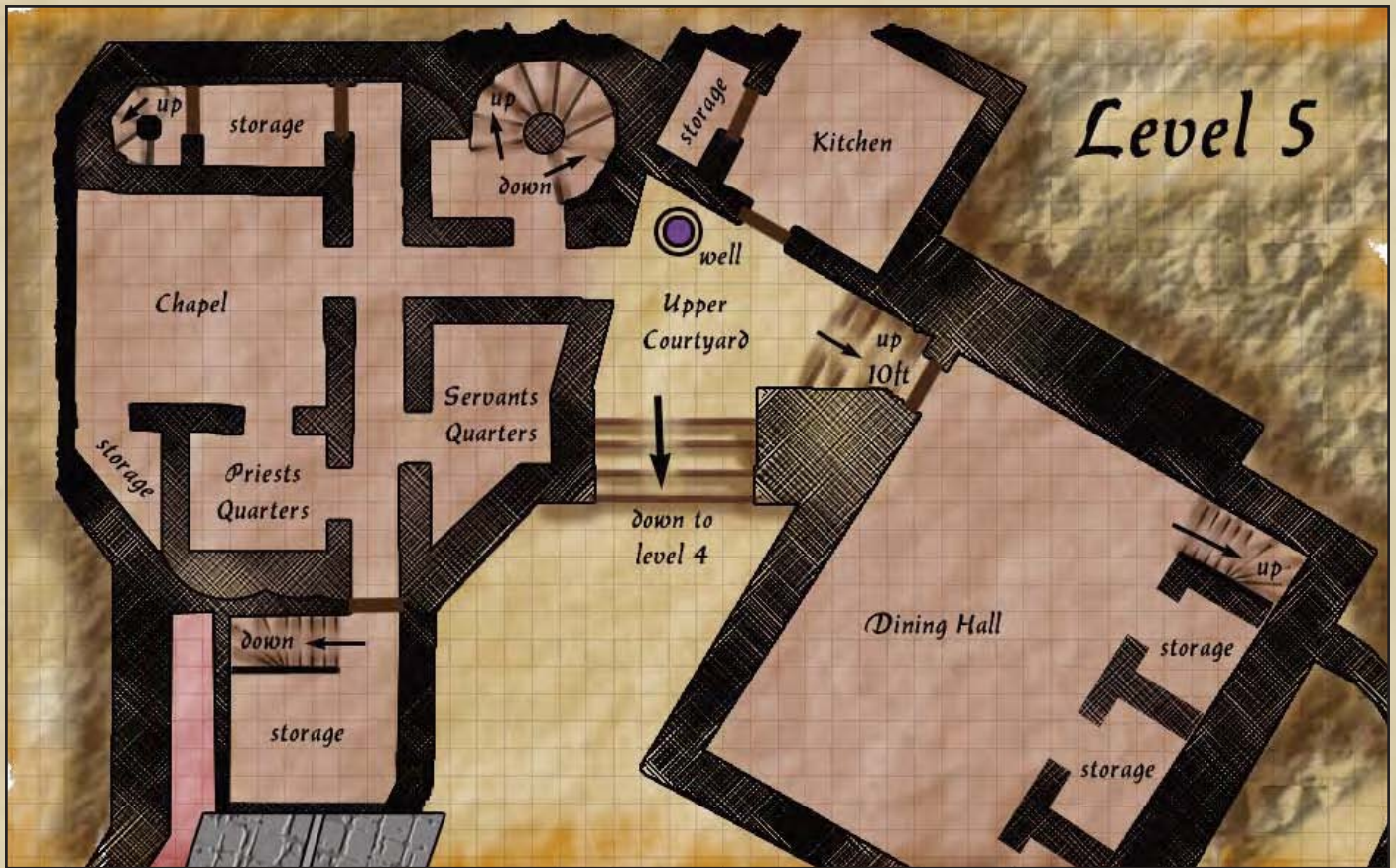
Dezbar_2.jpg
Map of the Second Level



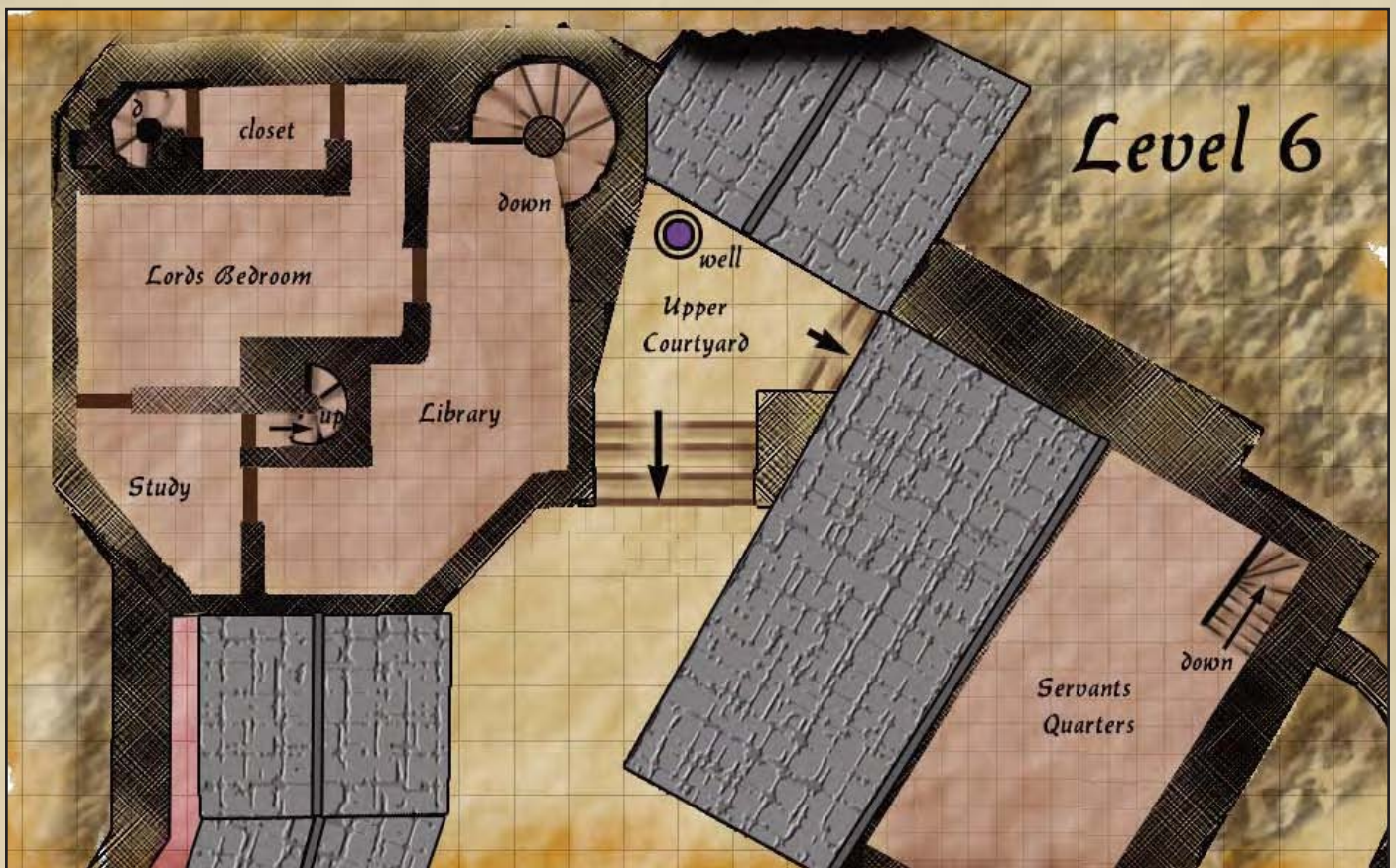
Dezbar_3.jpg
Map of the Third Level



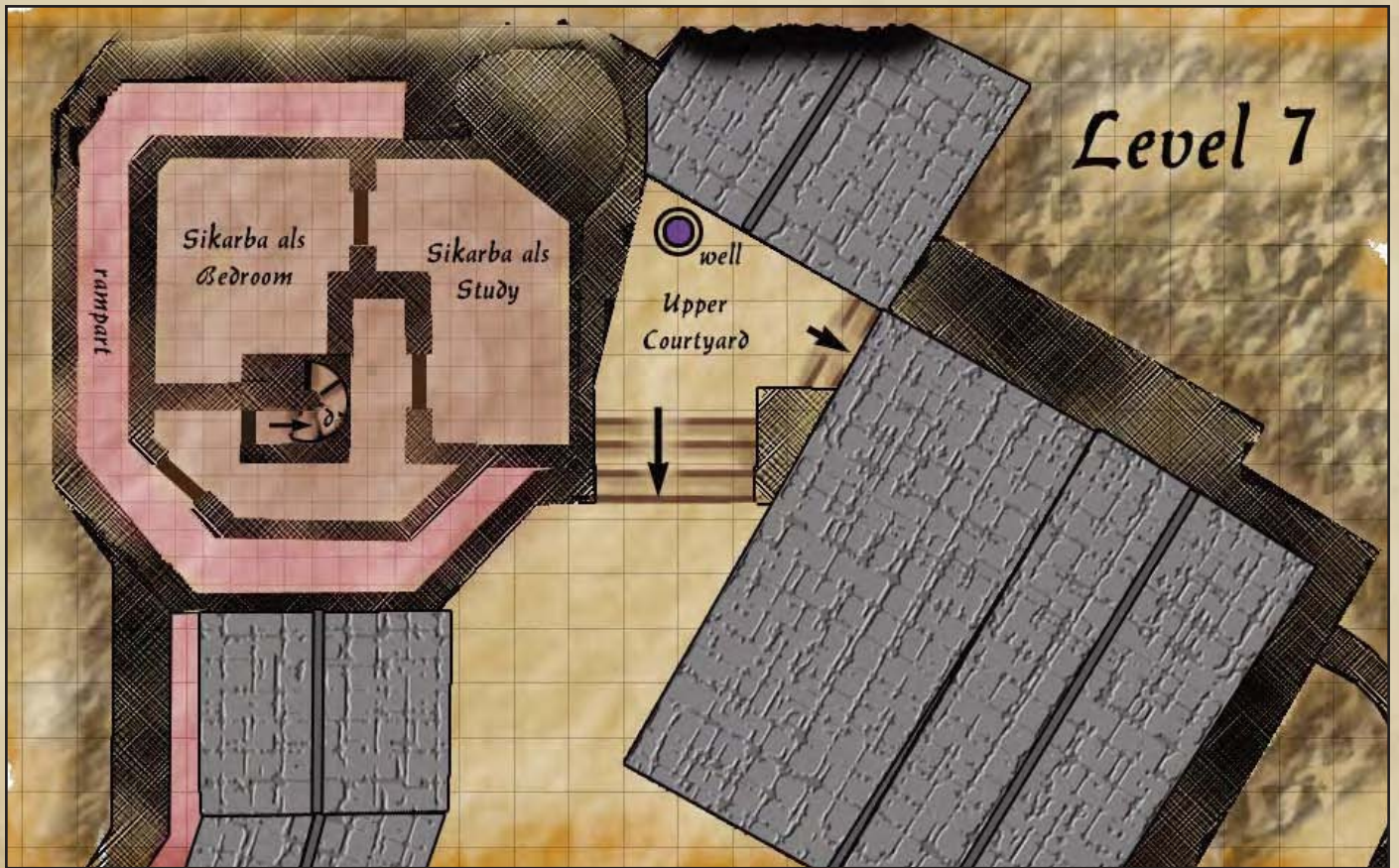
Dezbar_4.jpg
Map of the Fourth Level



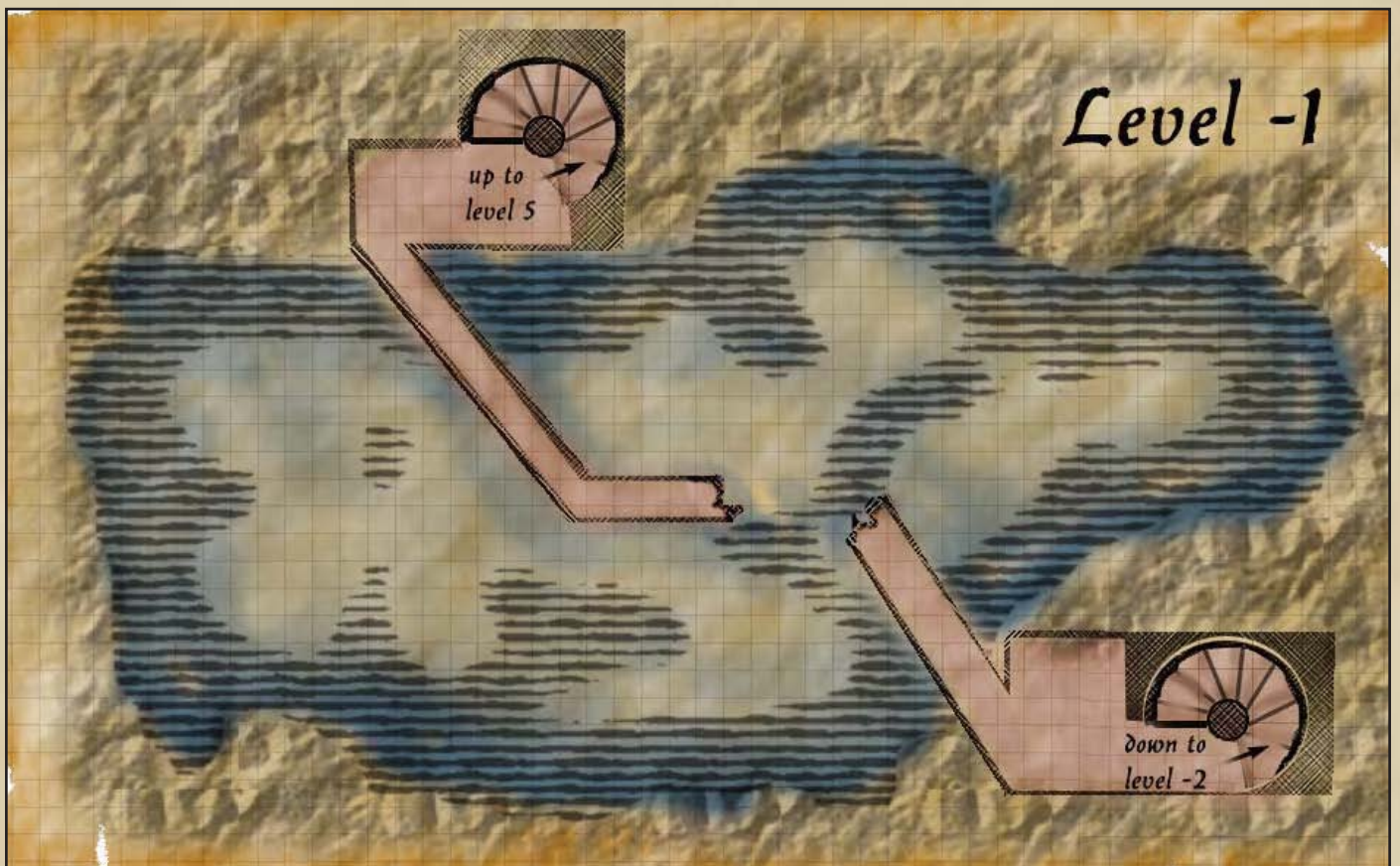
Dezbar_5.jpg
Map of the Fifth Level



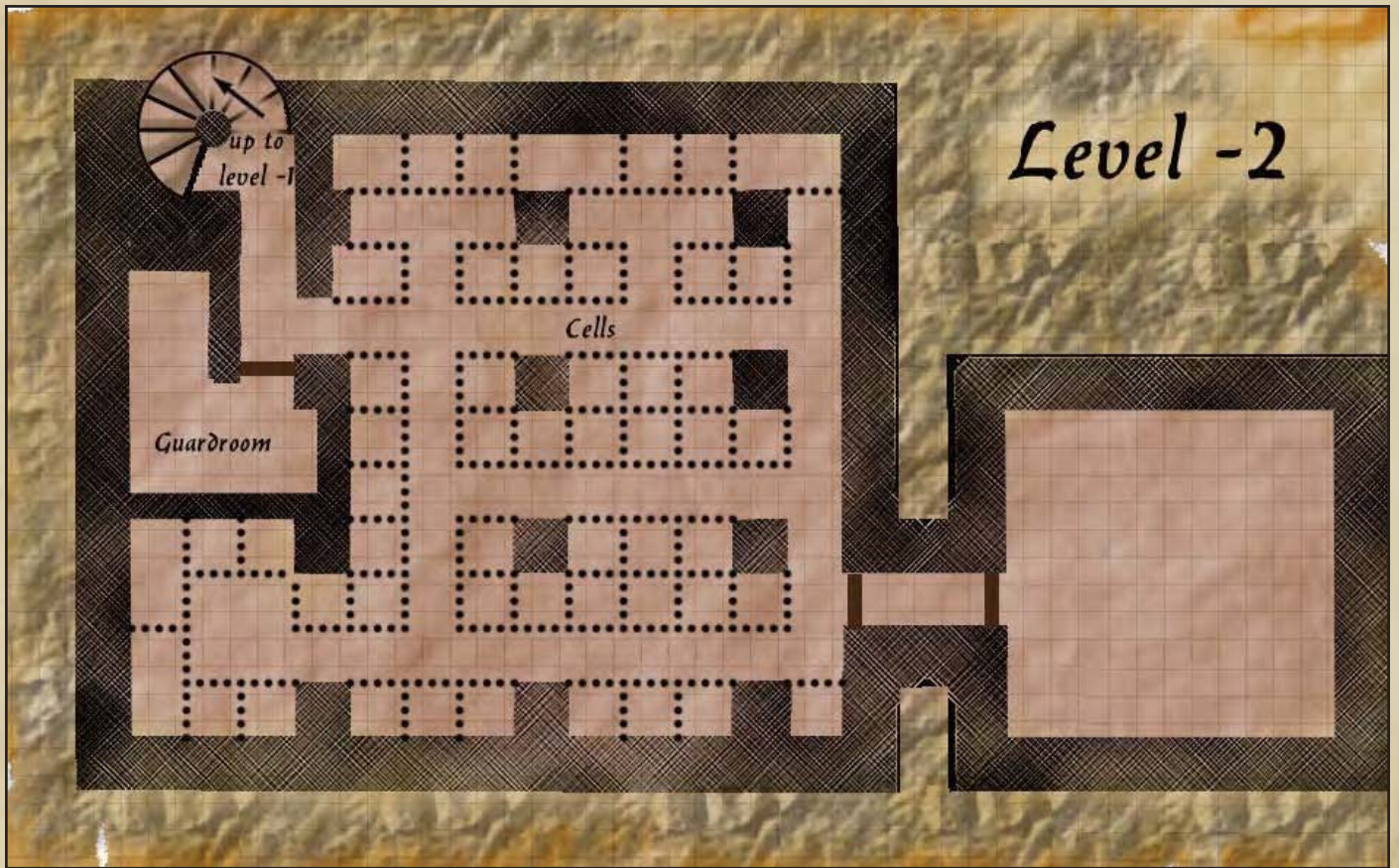
Dezbar_6.jpg
Map of the Sixth Level



Dezbar_7.jpg
Map of the Seventh Level



Dezbar_-1.jpg
Map of the First Underground Level



Dezbar_-2.jpg
Map of the Second Underground Level



THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Six



Vertical column of stylized symbols or characters, possibly representing a sequence of events or a list of items.

The Kermamevar

Book Six

In which the expedition's stop at a much needed oasis, leads them deep into a nightmare of intrigue, trials and tests, all for the amusement of the resident Fey.

The Kermanevar, Sebua

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Kermanevar was the name of this cliff complex, complete with tiny trading hub, odd local landmarks, and entirely more faerie than was healthy. This was another one of the 'one-off' adventures, and likely the most successful one of them all, with the PCs eventually meeting up with an entire faerie court to get their master, the enigmatic Featherflute, to return the souls of the people of Kermanshah.

One of the things I had tried to do over the course of the campaign was to keep the various locations the PCs had ventured to interesting. So instead of just a desert outpost, here's a desert outpost in the side of a deep and confusing canyon complex. Other locations the players visited included monasteries in the middle of the desert, abandoned castles, and so forth. Something to break up the monotony of 'sand sand sand'.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This was another map where showing height was important, Neo's spec called for a deep canyon wide at the top and narrowing into many badlands type tributaries at the bottom. Again I'm not sure I quite nailed the impression of height, but it certainly is getting there with this one.

The rocks were made using the same technique as the Elazig map, but then I created several duplicate layers and brushed in the highlights and

shadows with a layer mask at varying opacities, then hit the whole thing with a contoured bevel for a rugged look.

Once I had the rocks finished I simply used the stamp visible command (Alt + Ctrl + Shift + E) on a new layer, this creates a single layer of all the visible layers, but retains all the original ones. Having done that I simply added a layer mask and painted out the canyons at random

The font I use for these maps is called Balthazar. I wanted a font that looked handwritten but was still legible (a problem with many script fonts) and this one fit the bill perfectly, having a slightly old world feel to it. Again like the grids I don't like to use black text at full opacity, setting it to around 85-90% takes the edge off but still leaves it a solid colour

Associated Files

Kermanevar_over.jpg

Overview Map of the Canyon

The Kermanevar

Sebua

Kerman
Oasis

Singing Spire

Temple of
Osiris

The Ramp

Kermans
Gate

Kermanshah

Little Valley
of the dead

Dead Camels
Drop

The Kermanevar

The Mazes

Statue of the
Faceless

Kermans
Tomb



The Shadow Attack, Kermanevar, Sebuia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Shadow Attack was a fairly simple combat. Basically, I needed to give the PCs something to do, so I had a background NPC who had been twitchy and paranoid secretly summon up some monsters to beat up the PCs, specifically a trio of big brawler types, and a zippy assassin. A pretty straightforward combat, on the whole, it was mostly to let the players relieve some stress after a lengthy investigation by beating stuff up.

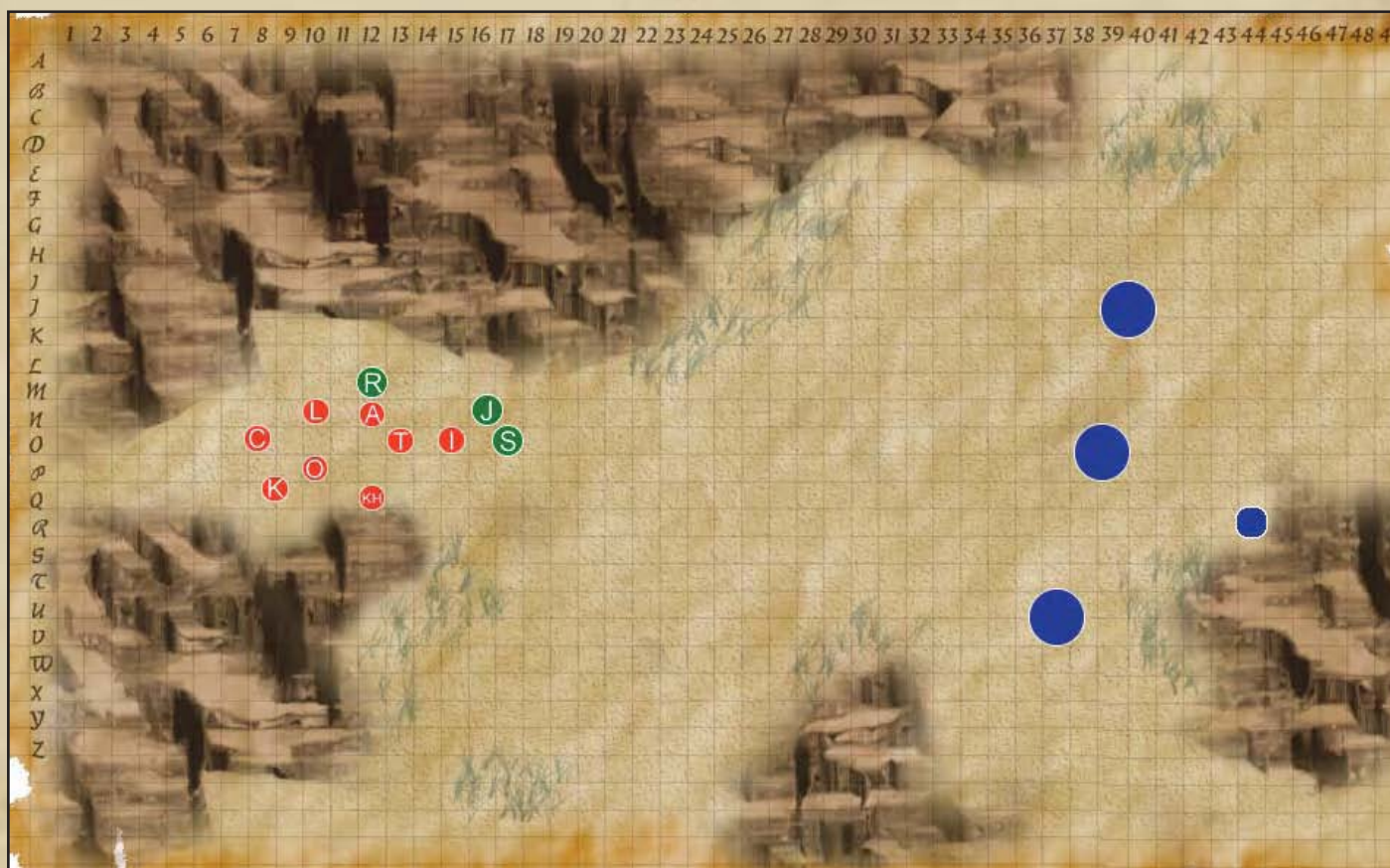
Pretty straightforward map, not much to say. The players were bottled into the little valley by the brawlers, and then the assassin came up behind them and started stabbing. Thankfully, once enough force was concentrated on the assassin, he went down quickly, and the brutes were fairly weak offensively. Also the PCs had the help of a particularly dangerous NPC ally who accounted for one of the brawlers all by his lonesome.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

I stumbled upon this rock effect totally by accident (in fact by clicking the wrong option, but I thought it worked so decided to use it!). To create the effect I followed the same steps for the paper background; I added a clouds filter, then difference clouds, and then emboss. At this point I applied a fresco filter and then hit it with some angled strokes, and finally a little Gaussian blur to take the edges off. It's a different effect but doesn't look too bad for a cliff face; you just need to tinker with the settings until you get the look you want.

Associated Files

Kermanevar_desert.jpg
Map of the Battle



The Statue of Beyrath, Kermanevar, Sebuia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Statue of Beyrath is where the combats started getting much more elaborate. The players were being treated to a set of three Trials by the Fair Folk, the prize being the souls of the townsfolk. The first trial was a contest of riddles, but the second trial was to light a candle with their minds... while a pair of psychopathic psionic sylphs named Spite and Malice did their level best shred them to tiny pieces with the help of a summoned Giant of Clouds. Essentially, it was an elaborate version of 'King of the Hill', with the PCs forced to take a piece of territory and hold it long enough to light the candle without the candle-lighter being thrown off the cliffs or the timer running out.

The fight here demonstrated the power of control effects. The two Faerie immediately started a windstorm brewing, and then used thick mist to make the little island all but impassable. The cloud giant meanwhile started throwing people off the island. The terrain and the monsters worked together, since the idea here was not so much to kill the PCs as to delay them long enough for the timer to run out. On land, players were blocked from the direct approach by the giant, while going around opened them up to the tender mercies of the Fey. Flying wasn't an issue due to gale-force winds, which along with a bit of help from an Awesome-Blow using giant resulted in PCs falling off the island repeatedly and taking the long way down.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

By now I'm getting quite a collection of Rock effects! Really the previous options were becoming too time consuming to keep replicating so I looked for a simpler method. I happened on an excellent tutorial which solved all my problems:

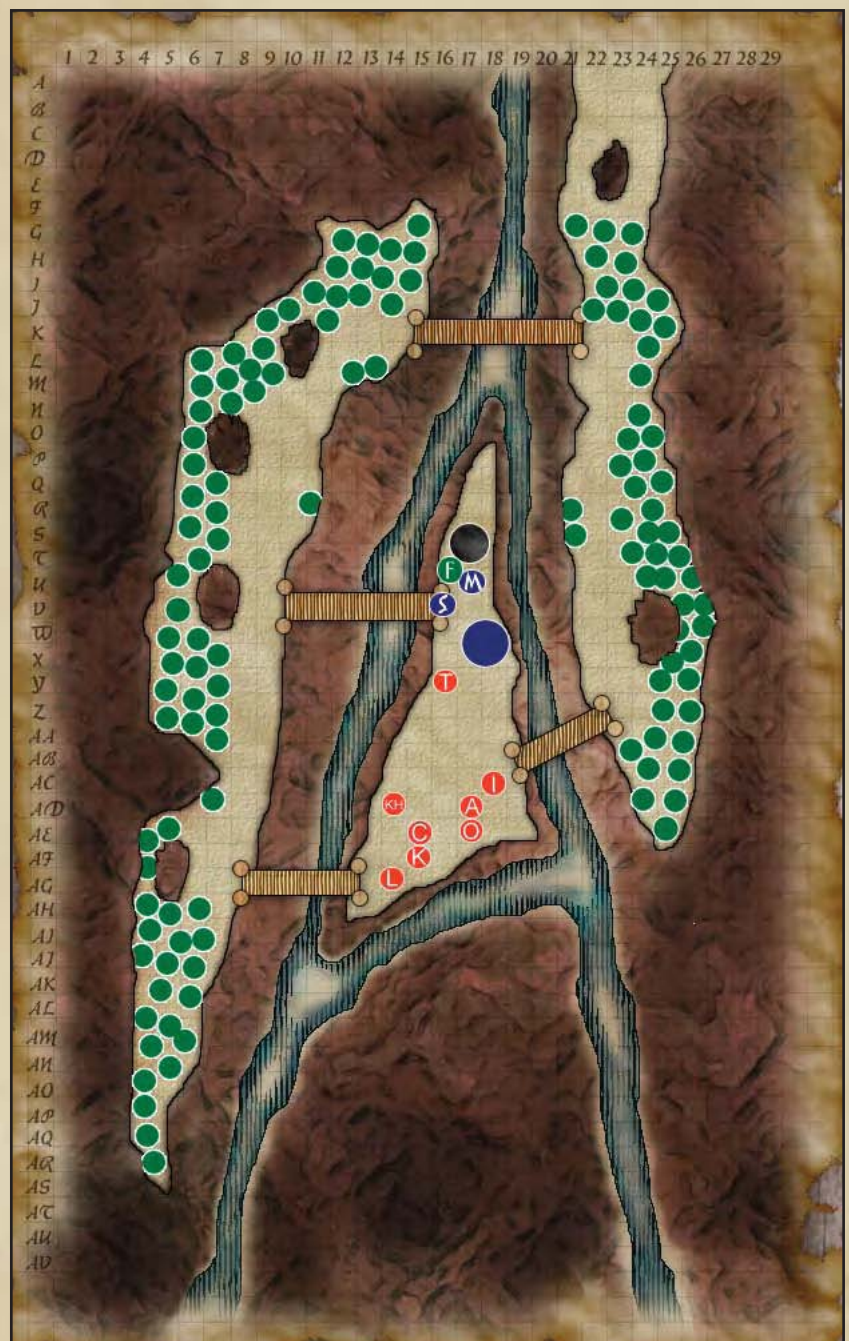
www.webdesign.org/web/photoshop/textures-&-patterns/canyon-texture-effect.3265.html

I also toned down and reduced the size of the water effect in this one, which I think is a whole lot better.

Incidentally the rope bridges are a white fill with; a vertical line pattern overlay, a brown to cream gradient overlay, a beige colour overlay and a 1px black stroke, then the opacity tinkered with to get the rope effect, again it just shows how you can stack things to get the right result.

Associated Files

Kermanevar_beyrath.jpg
Map of the Battle





Book Seven

In which the expedition reaches a maritime graveyard, and must contend with its resident undead in all their shapes and forms, before once again facing their nemesis in order to reach their goal.

Ambush at the Jackals Ruse, Sebua

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Ambush was the first of the two battles in the Jackal's Ruse, and I still have some fond memories of it. Narratively, I tend towards single, lone monsters, but the players had been suggesting I use more minions in the feedback forms since forever. So, this time, I gave them about eighty or ninety low level zombies stiffened with some higher level ghouls. This prompted many complaints that I'm not actually supposed to listen to players. Good times. All that said this Ambush was probably the closest thing to an actual random encounter in the campaign. Just a bunch of ghouls and cannibal zombies led by a Ghoul Lord who had set up shop in the Ruse. They were indicative of the greater problem in the Ruse, the rampant undeadification going on caused by my necromancer-arch villain's experiments, but they had no greater story purpose than that.

Mechanically though, this was one of the most interesting fights I'd done up until that point. I have a confession to make. I'm an avid video gamer. I don't game as much as I used to, but in my time I played most every RPG and Real-Time Strategy game on the market. Now, a lot of tabletop gamers have a certain level of contempt for videogames, but in many ways its a more polished art form than tabletop gaming, particularly with regards to battles. Most any shooter game around will have numerous map modes with variant victory conditions, odd terrain, special quirks, and so forth. I think a good bit of the D&D mindset, however, is still lodged in the "bunch of monsters, open room, last man standing wins" mindset. Here, I was going for something different.

The zombies and ghouls were limitless, the map was excruciatingly large, and the only ways to win were to kill the Ghoul Lord or turn around the caravan and escape, with the PCs trying both options. This map also shows off another one of my loves, which is to have absolutely huge battles, a product of my RTS roots.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

On the surface this appears to be a very straightforward map, but at the time I struggled a lot to depict sand dunes (which I didn't get right until the next map) and especially the boat. An incredibly detailed element, like a ship, presents some problems, do you either take the time to add in all the detail, or keep it really simple and run the risk of making it unrecognisable as a ship? I decided to go with the first option, but not being that much of an artist I found a deck plan of a boat on the net.

Taking the deck plan I imported it to PS, desaturated the image, and ran a threshold layer to remove the greys, then ran a poster edges filter and a watercolour filter. This gave a hand drawn effect to it and let it mesh with the rest of the map. Afterwards I set it to Multiply, then duplicated the layer, and turned that to an angle against the original. Then it was simply a case of adding layer masks, and painting out bits of the ship to imply wreckage (tip: use different brushes to get different edge effects on a layer mask, here I used a rough edged one).

I also had issues with the design of this map, in fact I freely admit I always want to overcomplicate maps by adding features that would look cool, but ultimately would probably ruin a D&D combat. My original plan was to have a huge dune curving across the middle of the map, effectively blocking line of sight, and having the ship resting on the ridge, there were going to be other ships behind the dune providing lots of cover. But in the end I'm glad I kept it simple, we as PC's had enough to worry about with all the dead things.

Associated Files

jackals_ruse_encounter.jpg
Map of the Battle

The Jackals Ruse, Sebua

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Jackal's Ruse was not originally supposed to have a map. The players were meant to blunder around on their own in this graveyard of ships locked within land, as fantastic a piece of landscaping as any setting can boast. Anyone who thinks that Ravenloft is all gloomy little villages and haunted castles hasn't seen some of the weirder stuff in the old setting books. Also, Vechor. But I digress.

I'm not actually too fond of the Jackal's Ruse map because it's a rush job I had to put up when it turns out that the PCs really wanted a map and had to do make some decisions based on where to go. Myself, I think that Books Four and Seven were a bit of a stylistic mismatch with the PbP experience. They were my attempts at crafting combat-heavy dungeon crawls. They both had a few good moments, but dungeon crawls simply don't work on a PbP level.

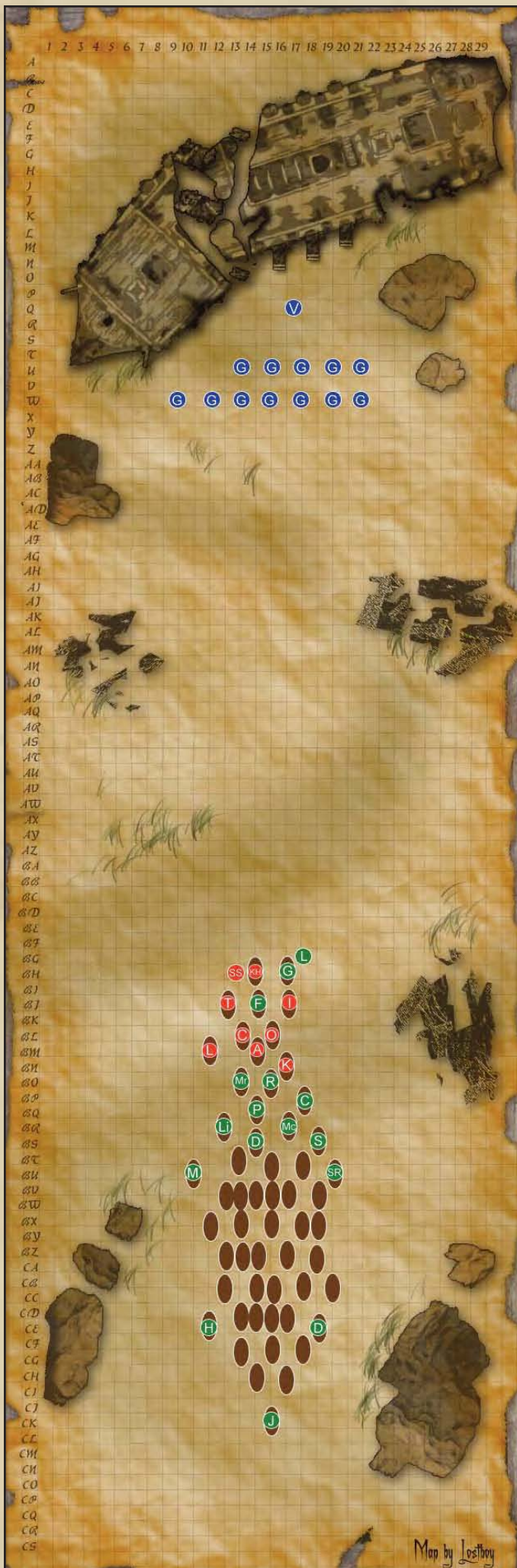
Map Notes (Lostboy)

This map was a bit of an afterthought so needed doing in a hurry. The map had to show lots of ships, rocks and sand, now rocks were easy but the other two were still tricky. For the ships I used the wonder of PS to create a custom brush from the ship image in the previous map (edit > define brush), I then added this in varying sizes and rotations (the brush engine from PS 7 and later makes this a doddle). Happy with the layout I added a layer mask and used a rough chalk brush to break up some of the ships.

I created the sand dunes by drawing the dune ridge line using the pen tool (this draws a vector giving you a nice straight edge, and lets you amend it if you aren't happy) and then extending the shape to one side of the map. I then filled this with a dark brown colour, set the opacity way down, and erased all of the shape except the few inches or so directly under the dune ridge line with a layer mask.

Associated Files

jackals_ruse_over.jpg
Overview map of the Ruse





The Eye of the Ruse, Sebua

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Eye of the Ruse is a fight that we basically spent half the chapter preparing for. My arch villain, the Necromancer John Lancaster Cavendish, had set up shop around a magical pit in front of the monastery and was conducting experiments. At his disposal, there were the Smilers, huge undead cats with a temper, also vampiric knights, and a number of variant undead held prisoner by Stone Shape spells. He also had hostages, so the PCs goals were, in order of importance, get to the Monastery without dying, mess up Cavendish's ritual circle, save the monks, chase off Cavendish. The PCs scouted the map out beforehand, acquired a couple of cannons with ammunition and explosives, and recruited a Devourer and his zombies to attack Cavendish's troops.

Here again my RTS roots show clearly, as this was a very tactical battle, with the PCs and Cavendish both having numerous primary, secondary, and tertiary goals and several resources at their disposal. Admittedly, it didn't work out too hot for the PCs, but that's because as they say, no plan

survives contact with the enemy. In this case the main issue was that the Black Knights could shape shift into the various vampiric forms, so the wizards who had been counting on flight to protect them ended up being pounded on by energy-draining dire bats. Still, they survived, mostly due to the cleric teleporting in at a key moment to throw off some area heals and the paladin charging Cavendish and keeping him busy for a while.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

The majority of this map utilised techniques I've already described; however there are two small elements worthy of note.

Having given up on finding an image of a fire from overhead (which probably don't exist for obvious reasons), I bit the bullet and settled on a side-on depiction, however cutting a fire out of an image is very difficult so I resolved to make fire myself using an excellent tutorial I found:

www.photoshoptechniques.com/texp/fireptk.php

Once I had the fire I wanted to make it fit with the rest of the map so I added a coloured pencil filter, and brushed in some highlights with a charcoal brush.

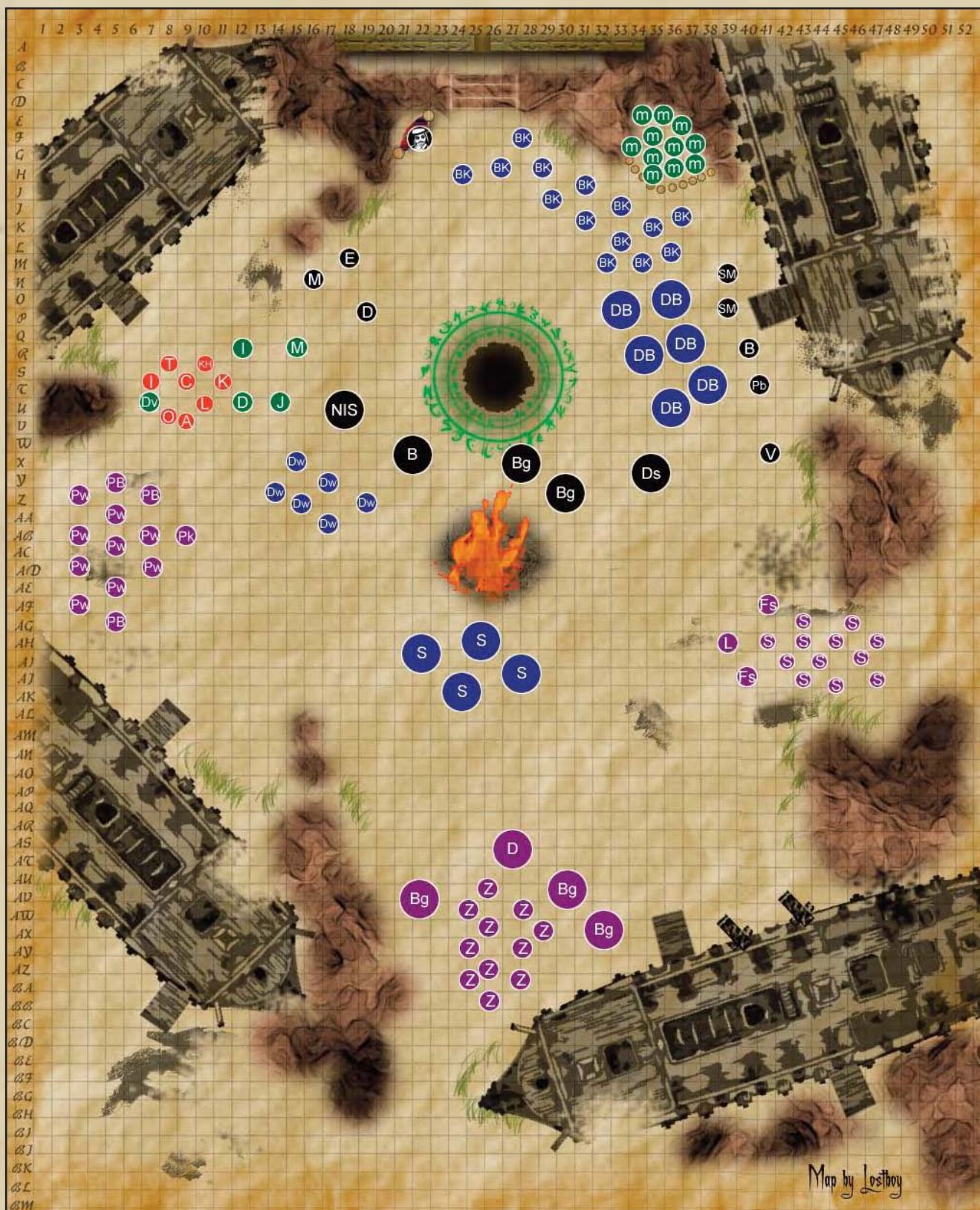
The Magic circle looks great, and fortunately was really simple. The brush engine in Photoshop not only lets you make anything into a brush, you can also download sets others have created, and in this case I found the magic circles brushes by Obsidian Dawn:

www.obsidiandawn.com/arcane-circles-photoshop-gimp-brushes

Pick one, click where you want it, and then recolor using blending options.

Associated Files

jackals_ruse_eye.jpg
Map of the Battle





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Eight



Monastery of Nightmares



Book Eight

In which the expedition investigate a monastery of nightmares and its mysterious Abbot, before confronting the true, demonic evil lying at its heart.

The Monastery of Stilled Nightmares, Jackals Ruse, Sebu

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Monastery of Stilled Nightmares was a continuation of the Jackal's Ruse, this time with moderately creepy monastery filled with mildly creepy monks and led by a highly creepy abbot. Who happened to be an Illithid. But actually a nice guy despite that. The main problem in this Book was the original monstrosity that Cavendish had been manipulating, a slumbering demon whose mere psychic resonance was enough to create a place where the barrier between the world of dreams and waking was thin. And some folks, such as a renegade Ennui, wished to take advantage of this.

The design of the map was inspired by two main criteria. First, it's a maze. Repeatedly I described it as a poorly lit labyrinth or similar, and tried to create a more oppressive atmosphere. I tend to believe that about 75% of horror is setting. If you lasso the players into a haunted house, or an abandoned hospital, or into a graveyard at night, then the scares more or less write themselves. I'm not sure I managed it too well with the Monastery, but that was the idea. Secondly, of course, is the actual materials. This monastery was built out of scavenged wreckage from hapless ships that entered the Jackal's Ruse, and that shows in the design.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

The brief for this map was for a huge dilapidated monastery made from cannibalised bits of ships that had run aground, it needed to be vast yet claustrophobic. A fairly tall order so I started casting

around for inspiration, which I eventually found in the floor plans of two mosques in Cairo (which I found in the CoC Cairo Guidebook). The larger mosque had the courtyard and surrounding areas and the smaller had an odd shape, which was oddly reminiscent of a ship. As I've mentioned before I always prefer to work from real examples, it helps keep a sense that it's a realistic building (it's all too easy to get room layouts wrong so they just don't look right).

I scanned the maps, imported them to PS then redrew them, adding extra detail or replacing parts as needed. To do this I used a black colour fill adjustment layer, added a mask, inverted it so the colour fill was hidden, then painted in the bits I needed, and had the freedom to erase the bits I didn't.

The finished map did indeed look like two galleons had been bolted together and built onto, and had plenty of claustrophobicness to keep our DM happy.

Associated Files

monastery_over.jpg
Overview map of the Monastery



Map by Lesthoy

The Monastery
Jackals Ruse, Sebua

The Courtyard, Monastery of Stilled Nightmares, Sebuia

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Courtyard was a quick little map for a quick little battle. Nothing too grand was meant to happen here, merely Lord Night-Terror, the local Ennui, expressing his displeasure with the various fey- and god-touched PCs showing up. Therefore, a few scary sounds outside the door, as though an ally is being brutally murdered, and then when the paladin opens the door, he gets grappled by four long, lizardy arms and dragged up onto the roof. Of course, the fight ended rather oddly when another fey-touched PC decided to chat up Lord Night-Terror, and managed to talk/bluff his way out of it on a point of faerie etiquette.

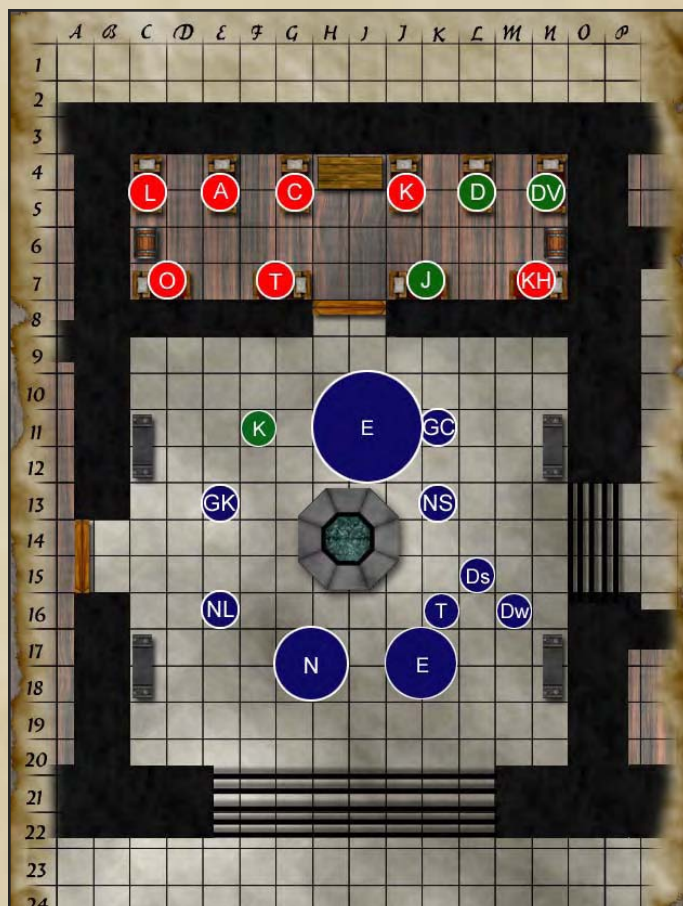
Tactically, the map was pretty simple, but most notable for the fact that there was a natural chokepoint in the form of the door, which the various Dream spawn tried to block off with spells as best they could while Lord Night-Terror shredded our paladin into little bits. It didn't quite work out, largely due to the Dream spawn not having enough power to actually blockade the PCs inside, but that was the idea.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This was the first part of two maps I did at once, and was really the first time I had to depict furniture and interiors or rooms. Neo wanted these quickly so I resolved to find already made depictions of the necessary bits and bobs. I found some free pdf dungeon tiles of furniture and cut out the bits I needed in PS. Then to make them gel with the rest of the design I added a dark colour overlay and a drop shadow to tone down the colours a bit.

The Wooden Floor pattern was created from scratch using a tutorial (I can't remember which one exactly but there are tonnes out there), again with the opacity lowered so the overlay grid would show.

The second of the two maps (and one that never

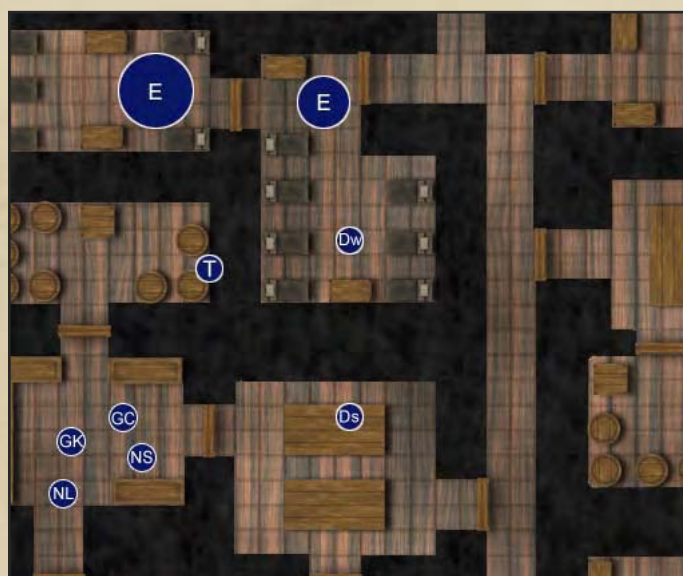


got used in the end) used much of the furniture from the first one. Except here the rooms were to have been long abandoned, so I desaturated the beds and lowered the opacity on all to give a dustier look.

Associated Files

monastery_courtyard.jpg
Map of the Battle

monastery_abbot.jpg
Map of the battle



Ronove's Sanctum, Monastery of Stilled Nightmares, Sebu

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Ronove's Sanctum was not a simple little map. In here, the players have used a former demon-cultist-turned-monk's narcotics collection to enter the dream world, wherein they were forced to climb a mountain-sized version of Ronove in order to reach his heart and find the miniature version of the demon there, then stab the demon through the heart with a special dagger. It's a long story, but it can best be described as a bad acid trip, with magic involved. There was a slight problem however, in that the Ennui, Lord Night-Terror, didn't much want to lose his psychically-resonating generator.

The idea here was to have something that looks really diabolic, hence the ominous scorpion statue and the rivers of acid forming a pentagram, braziers of hellfire, etc. In this, Lostboy succeeded beyond compare. It is a scary looking map. It also had lots of nasty little elements, such as the aforementioned rivers of acid and braziers of hellfire, also sentient (and annoyed) vines, clouds of chlorine gas floating about... basically, everything in this place was trying to kill you, not just the irked Dream spawn. On the other hand, I've also learned a valuable lesson from this map. Map effects past a certain point are generally pointless, since most everything usually falls into "avoid this", which PCs do. Past the point where you've established the no-go area of the map, additional oddness is just for your own personal amusement.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This battle occurred in a drug-induced nightmare realm so everything had to have a bad acid trip quality to it. Once I had drawn the map I added a colour overlay and exposure layer to make colours more vivid and tweaked up the contrast to give that slightly unreal look.

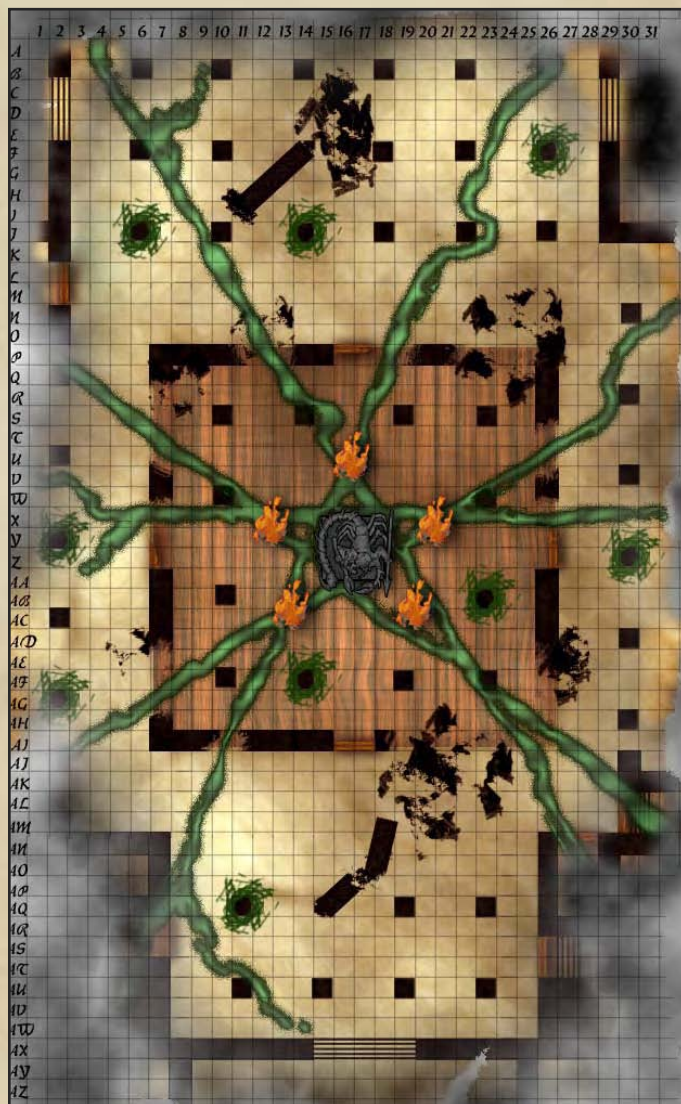
The statue of Ronove (the part scorpion, part beetle fiend) was made from various Black &

White logos and images I found; a scorpion (this one was actually a tattoo design) and a roman soldier from above. I had to turn them both into black block images, then when I was happy I reversed them to white and added some layer adjustments; drop shadow, bevel, colour, pattern and stroke to get the statue look I was after.

The acid streams were done in the same way as the rivers in the FCAP podcast, just with a vicious green colour overlay, and an outer glow set with a little noise to imply scarred edges where the acid had burnt its way through the ground.

Associated Files

monastery_prayerhall.jpg
Map of the Battle





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Nine



— Hieroglyphic text running vertically down the right margin.

Dread Kamryn Quise

Book Nine

In which the betrayed remnants of the expedition seek the dread city of Menatnashte, yet they quickly learn that the only demons are those that they bring with them.

Dread Kamarn-Quse, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Dread City of Kamarn-Quse is probably my favourite chapter of them all. There have been better individual moments, but this city was magnificent. Essentially, the players were searching for an alternative means of entering the Tomb of Menetnashte, everyone's favourite demon-summoning empress, and to do that they needed 'the black key', which could only be found in Menatnashte's old capitol, Kamarn-Quse. This for those of you interested, was a name created as a mixing together of Amarna and Carcosa. So yes, this is part Egyptian, part Lovecraftian. The entire campaign can probably be summarized as Indiana Jones meets H.P. Lovecraft.

Now, as became my habit around this time, I did a preliminary sketch in Microsoft Paint of what I wanted the map to look like. Just draw out some lines and thus say "the temple goes here" and "this is a cliff". I did a few things differently for Kamarn-Quse compared to, say, Elazig or Kermanevar. For starters, the entire map is made to look extremely organic and circular, with only a central boulevard possessing right angles in any quantity. Nothing is labelled, and the entire colouring is off (in-game, I described the city as being made of a peculiar speckled greenish-grey granite and copious quantities of iron). It was an alien city, and it preyed on the minds of the Expedition. Literally, as a matter of fact.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

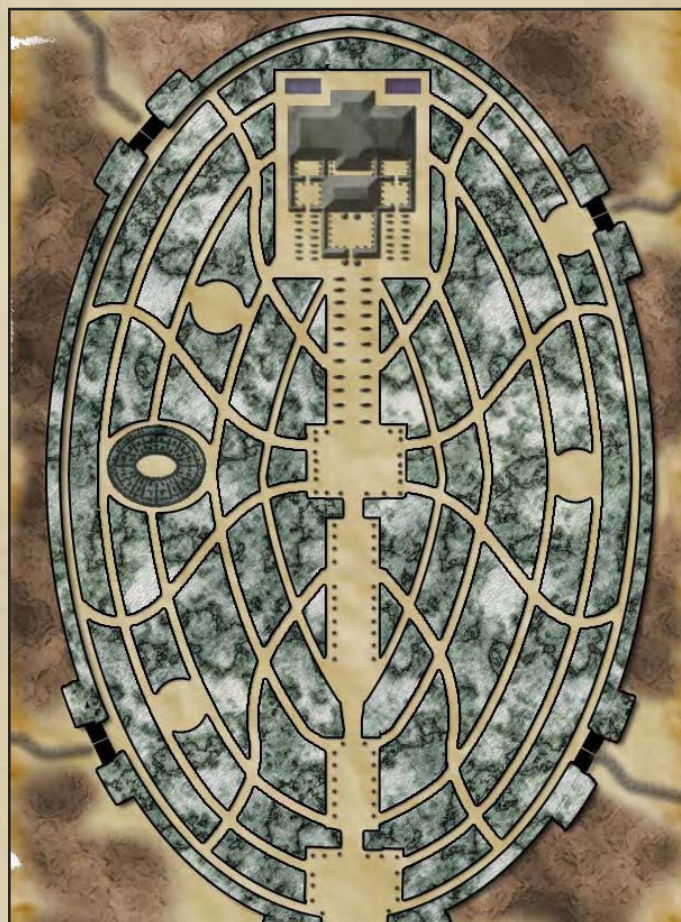
This was a rather strange map, not just in concept

but in how it came to be. Neo asked for an alien - Egyptian city, sort of Carcosa meets Amarna, and I started work on something akin to the Phiraz map, however at draft form it quickly became apparent it wasn't what he wanted. Therefore I asked him to do a rough sketch of his idea, which when supplied I simply traced and recreated (sometimes it's best to just go with what you are asked...).

The Marble effect on the buildings was created with yet another filter>render>clouds, add a few difference clouds, and then add some tweaks to get the right look. I first added image>adjustments>equalise then played with the settings in image>adjustments>shadow/highlight to get the right balance between light and dark, and then finally add a hue/saturation layer on top for the sickly green look. The temple needed to be this well of darkness, so it's had a black colour overlay added and opacity dropped so you could make out the marble effect through it. I also added some avenues of Sphinxes for the Egyptian feel.

Associated Files

Kamarn_over.jpg
Overview map of the city



Streets of Kamarn-Quse, Har' Akir

was pretty epic so it all evened out.

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Streets of Kamarn-Quse was a map wherein the Dread City's unpleasant effects on mortal psyche got dangerous. One of the Expedition guards, the elven archer Sarari, finally snapped, suffering severe PTSD flashbacks and thinking she was back in Sithicus fighting Azrael's forces. So she grabbed her bow and ran off, and the players followed. As planned, this was meant to be a fairly easy fight, the goal being more to drain player resources going into the final Obelisk fight, as the elven sniper pin cushioned the PCs at a range and forced them to use up spells and healing.

That was the idea. Instead, Sarari's beau, Charles, ran off after her on his own, and through a mixture of invisibility spells and a lot of luck, managed to talk her down after taking only a few arrows to the chest. Though he went a little crazy in the process as well, resulting in a short, one-on-one fight that was... disturbing. The map ended up getting barely used, but it was worth it. Oh so worth it.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

I don't often sketch out a map prior to drawing it in Photoshop, in fact I usually use Photoshop as my sketching medium, but in this case as Neo was fairly specific about his needs (and I had some time to kill on a train journey with a dead laptop battery) I did sketch it out. Once I had the sketch and was happy with the layout I scanned it and imported to PS then laid out white shapes on top and applied the marble effect from the previous map.

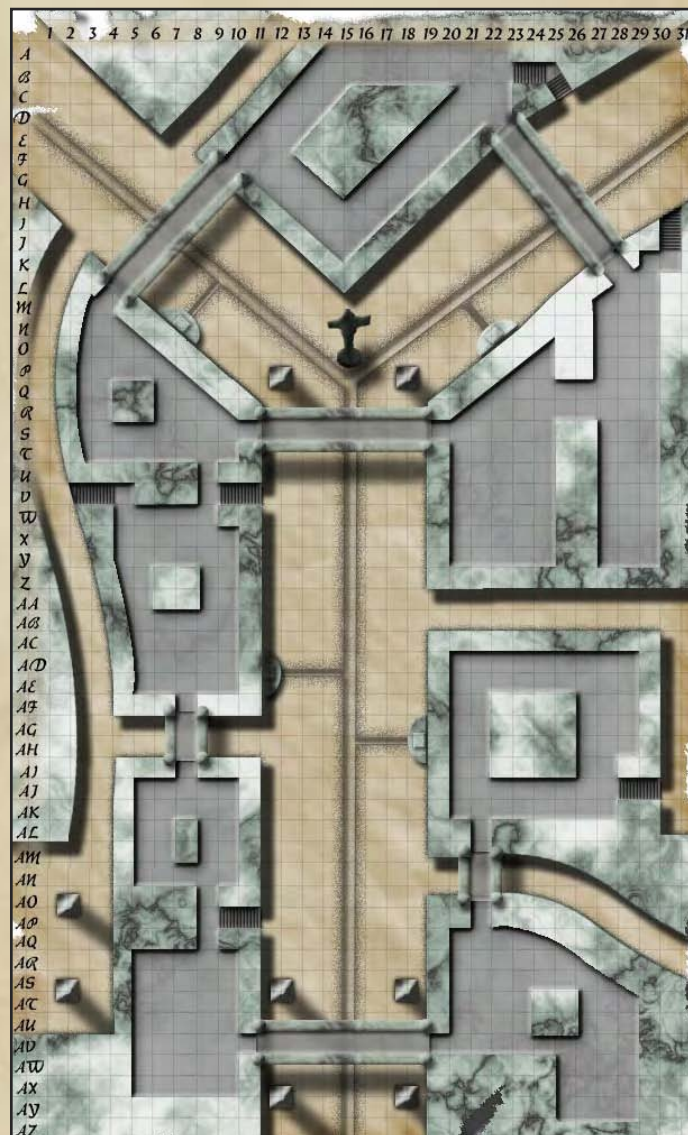
What was rather interesting about this map, and never really got utilised, was the ability to have PC's on differing levels. Essentially the bridges were a separate PS layer and were dropped to about 85% opacity. This meant when I delivered the PSD to Neo he could have PC's on ground level by having the pc layer between the ground and bridge layer (and they would show up beneath the bridge). But also by moving the pc layer above the bridge layer could show them on the bridges as well.

I was actually kind of bummed this one didn't get used too much, but Charles' narrative with Sarari

Associated Files

Kamarn_streets.jpg

Close-up map of the city streets



Trap Room, Kamarn-Quse, Har' Akir

DM Notes (Isabella)

The Dungeon Water Trap was one of the few traps we had in the entire campaign. The trap was one of the (literally) fiendish devices in the underground torture chamber of the manor the players were exploring. Built of stone and reinforced with steel, it remained dormant until one of the levers was pulled. Unfortunately, one of the city-crazed NPCs obliged. The basic principle of the trap was to create a slow and panicked death through the room flooding with water, at least, up until the point where the water hit the electrified shockers on the wall. Once that occurred, anyone left within the tank would suffer a rather unpleasant fate indeed. Other problems, such as a mortally wounded NPC drowning in the rising waters and the wizard being outside of the trap when it activated, only served to complicate things.

There were several ways of dealing with the trap - there was a grate in the ceiling the PCs could have blown through to get out, save that the wizard couldn't see anyone to cast fly on them. The electrified shockers could be disabled by the party rogues, although the water around their knees made getting over to them very difficult. The door could also be unlocked, unbarred and lifted so that people could get out. The players, never satisfied with the options handed to them, used Stone Shape to blow a hole in the side of the tank and Control Water to keep the water away from the wall shockers. The iron latticework kept the PCs from getting out without having to squeeze, so they went for the door as well. We actually had to ad hoc rule for walking along the ground when we realised that the paladin and archivist literally could not swim - and really, how hard could it be to walk along the bottom when the water was trying to push you out in the first place? The last PC was dragged out of the tank moments before the water finally reached the electricity, frying anything that might have remained in the room.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

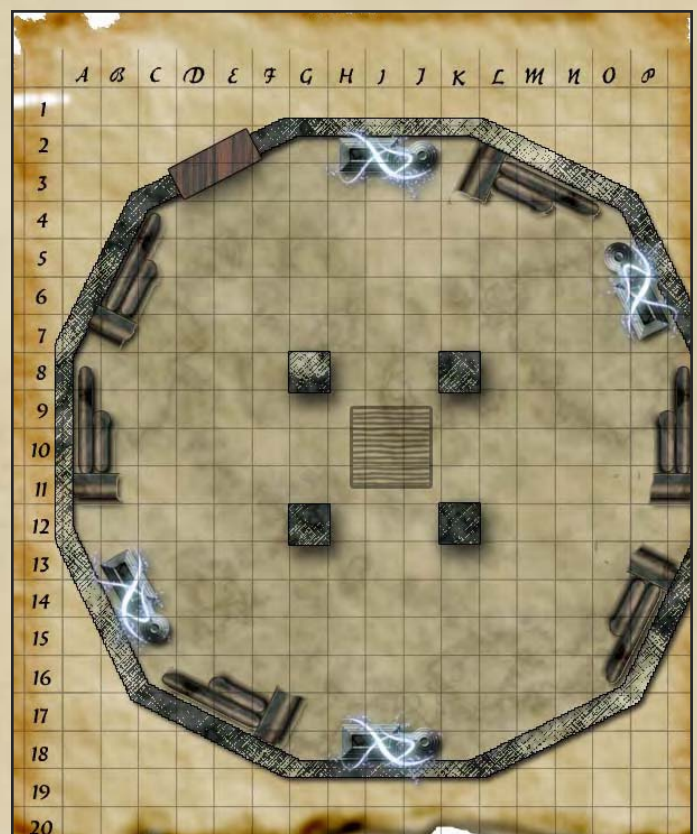
This was a pretty straightforward map, and Neo supplied a comprehensive sketch so there wasn't much leeway on the design here. The room itself

used the clouds>crosshatch>graphic pen technique I used way back in the Elazig windmill map, but I did do something special for the trap elements. The electricity generators were some vaguely steam punk machinery I found on the web which I then added some lightning to. The lightning is created from a glow technique in a tutorial I found:

<http://psd.tutsplus.com/tutorials-effects/advanced-glow-effects/> (skip to step 5).

Associated Files

Kamarn_trap.jpg
Close-up map of the trap room



Temple of Kamarn-Quse, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

Our final renegade, Charles Devereux, made a beeline for the Temple of Anuberith, the diabolical heart of the Dread City. It would be wrong to say that Devereux went crazy like Sarari or Marchand-Renier. He was always crazy, schizophrenic, in fact, and also communicating with Lovecraftian Elder Horrors, though it was usually hard to tell when the gibbering horror he was talking to was actually there, and when it was only in Devereux's head. But in Kamarn-Quse, he went sane, and decided that since Reality hadn't been very good to him, he'd make a new Reality. This involved opening a portal in the Temple of Anuberith, and having four rather ominous obelisks help him out.

This was a timer-map, and also a bit of a non-standard one. The PCs could end the fight quickly by just killing Devereux, but they were goody-two-shoes, so that wasn't an option. Likewise, knocking him out or breaking his magical energy connection just means a magical backlash kills him anyway. Therefore, the players had to destroy the Obelisks, at the same time the Obelisks were trying to destroy them. The Obelisks were traps, technically, which cast one of two spells each round and could be destroyed, dispelled, or disabled by rogues. Lots of control effects, it was a fairly epic fight, and suitably impressive.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

The interior of the temple was created much like the other Kamarn Quse maps, with a marble texture and a bevel, although in this case I added a dark overlay as this was really a temple of darkness. The design is *very* loosely based on the format of temples like Karnak in Luxor, with a large hypostyle hall leading to the main temple area.

I had real trouble finding a suitable model for the sphinxes, so being the resourceful type I took a picture of handy (and oh-so-slightly) tacky souvenir from a previous trip to Egypt and manipulated it in PS. Basically I imported it, desaturated, ran a threshold then a poster edges filter and finally gave it

the black marble overlay and a little bevel, unfortunately they ended up so small you can't even tell...

Still if you are ever stuck don't forget that any image you can take yourself can form the basis of a mapping element.

Associated Files

Kamarn_temple.jpg
Close-up map of the temple





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Ten



Muhar

Book Ten

In which battered and bruised the expedition finally reaches Muhar, only to learn the Falkovnians have got there first. With unrest simmering they must prove the presence of their foe before too many die.

Muhar, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

When the PCs finally arrived at Muhar, they found a rather unwelcome surprise. Specifically, that Ambassador Marcos Vedarrak of Falkovnia and about sixty odd Falkovnian soldiers had gotten there first. So yes, this chapter was a direct homage to Indiana Jones, with Nazis running around. Of course, this ended up being not quite the case as everyone's favourite shape shifting necromancer, John Lancaster Cavendish, was also in town, which led to some rather significant issues for the Falkovnians and players alike, as well as an alliance of convenience between the two forces.

The map for Muhar was intentionally designed to hearken back to the old maps like Kermanevar and Ravnika. Again, we have tons of locations, of which the players visited maybe half, but some of which proved to be quite important. Of course, unlike in prior books, the PCs were hampered by the fact that Marcos Vedarrak was not one to let them out of his sight for long, so half the time the PCs were forced to figure out how to dodge their Falkovnian escorts, or else just live with them.

Observant geographers will also note that I added a river to Muhar instead of an oasis, and also some farms. If memory serves, Muhar is traditionally said to gain all of its sustenance from a magical oasis that obviates the need for food or drink. I found that to be a more complicated explanation than was really necessary, therefore, river. After all, even though we associate Egypt with the

desert, most of their civilization was built within two miles of the River Nile.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

After all the interior and slightly weird maps it was nice to go back to a FCAP style again for Neo's take on Muhar, which sets it more like the Thebes of antiquity. I refined a lot of the techniques and I hope you can see my progress since something like the Elazig map.

I did try something new for the rocky hills on this one, as we needed flat cliff faces to show the caves and tombs. Simply I created a rock layer, then duplicated it (set both to multiply) and moved the duplicate up and to the left, then added a layer mask and removed all but the shadows giving the cliff top line and some others to suggest ruggedness on top.

The fields are actually the same pattern fill as the river (a set of horizontal lines), which I put down as a pattern at the right scale, converted to a custom brush then added at differing orientations.

The highlighted buildings were not done by painting over them, rather to get the correct edge shape, the buildings layer was duplicated, a red colour overlay added (which only made the buildings red) and a layer mask used to get rid of the colour on the other buildings.

Associated Files

`muhar_over.jpg`
Overview map of the village



N

Muhar

Har Akir

Zaku's Ferry

New Tombs

Farms

House of Khaldun

Abandoned Temple

Old Tombs

Sandulf Digsite

Map by Joselyn

Underground Temple of Set, Muhar, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

In this map, the players had discovered the secret Temple of Set beneath the Osiran temple in Muhar, which had been taken over by everyone's favourite necromancer, Cavendish, and used for Lebentod creation. They also managed to discover a little present from Cavendish, a music box which they turned on and thus woke up a small army of Lebentod and the ghost of the fallen priestess, Snefru herself. On the bright side, they know knew what was going on in Muhar, with Cavendish replacing people with Lebentod. On the not so bright side, they were now surrounded by lethal Lebentod and a highly irate ghost. Snefru was a fairly straight-up ghost, using a mixture of Phantasmal Killer spells and telekinetic assaults in addition to a gruesome aura, while the Lebentod were sneak-attacking rogues with a touch of barbarian added for speed. The falling-to-pieces mechanic was present, but rarely used due to being painful complex and not particularly useful.

Strategically, this battle began with the players in the bad position of being surrounded. Normally, mages can hide behind fighters and thus not get hit very often, but not in this battle. Moreover, the Lebentod were somewhat unusual in that they had damage dealing ability out of all proportion to their durability. A Lebentod who got a critical hit or was able to flank could drop even a powerful PC in two rounds of attack, but at the same time could be destroyed even more quickly. Because of the very high damage dealing and the fact that the PCs were surrounded, it was a very short, very tense fight. Any round the PCs might be killed due to a few good sneak attacks, but on the other hand they could clear the Lebentod out rapidly. Basically it was a Sudden Death round in gaming parlance, and in my view worked fairly well, though my players were understandably less thrilled about it.

Map Notes

I didn't have a hand in this one, so I'll leave the

comments to the lovely Isabella (co DM and artist) who put this one together:

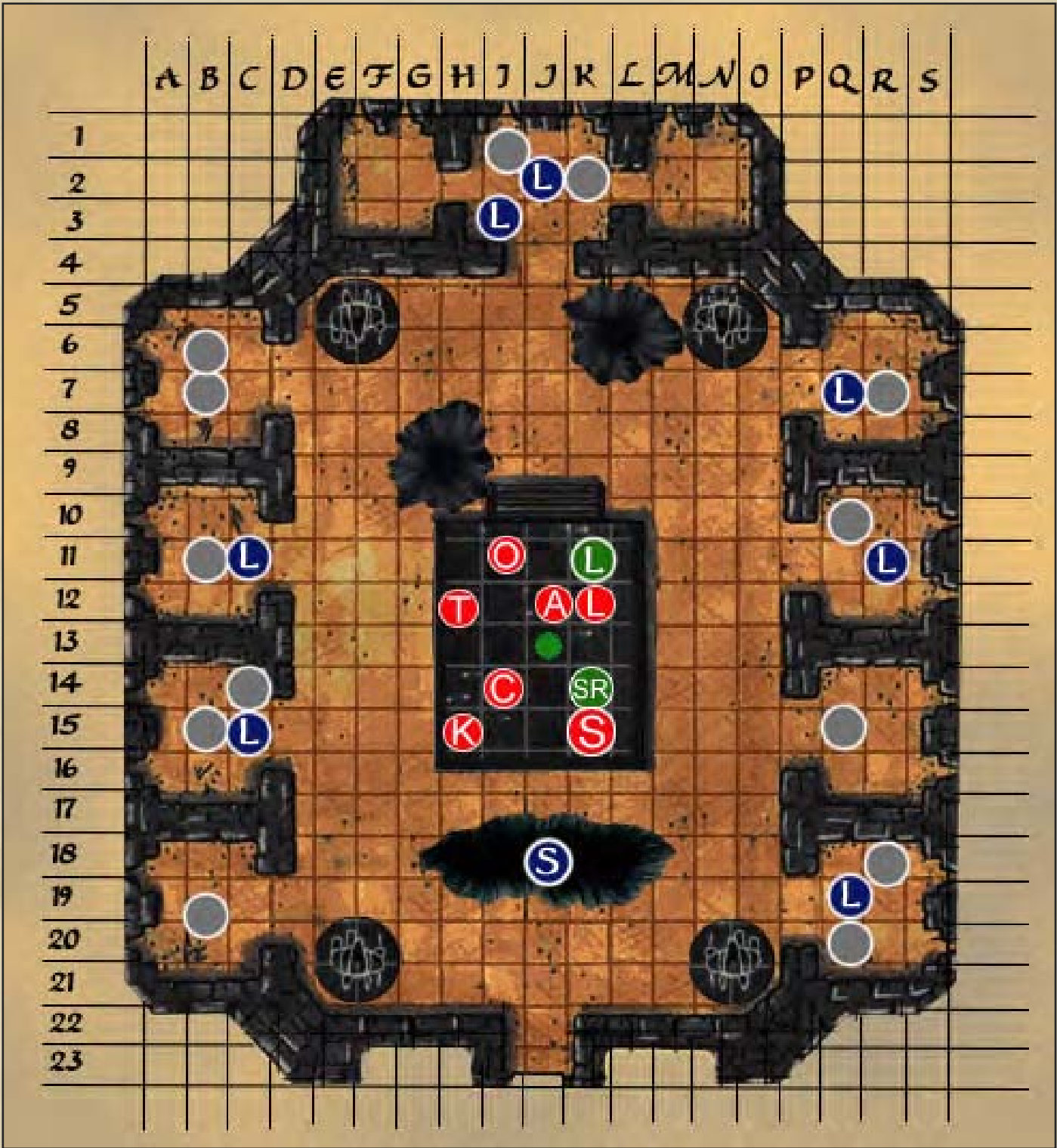
“Chapter 11 was a good deal more freeform on the part of the GMs, in that we hadn't planned a "set" adventure path for the PCs when we started. The downside of this meant we didn't always have what we needed when things happened. We realised we needed the underground Temple of Set about a day before it became absolutely imperative that we had it, so we didn't have time to ask for one. “

“Unfortunately, I'm not a professional mapmaker, so I cheated a bit. The first thing I did was a Google image search for ancient Egyptian temple maps. A quick skim told me that temple designs were not especially elaborate - the inner sanctum of the place looked like a big square chamber with a bunch of little side rooms. I probably could have worked that up just in Photoshop, but I decided to look around on Google to see if there were any pre-made D&D temple maps I could use to save time. One of the first things I found was a WotC map of a Ruined Temple to Corellon - the Wizards of the Coast site has a huge gallery of maps as a resource for GMs. The floor plan was exactly what I wanted, so I grabbed it and used Photoshop to edit out what I didn't want, which was the benches and the moon on the centre platform. I tossed in a few statues of Set and a giant pit and called it a day.”

Associated Files

Muhar_RuinedTemple.jpg
Close up map of the battle

Note: This map is based on an original map owned and distributed by Wizards of the Coast and this adaption is not in any way a challenge to their copyright. Hopefully they won't sic the legal department on me for it.



The Village Square, Muhar, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Muhar Square Battle was another time when my RTS-roots got the better of me. Here, we have Cavendish as the shape shifter taking over the Falkovnians, and using them to execute some hostage NPCs, knowing full well that this would draw the players out of the woodwork. At the same time, he also had his undead cats hiding nearby, had replaced several soldiers and Akiri peasants replaced with Lebedtod, had the ghost of Snefru bound and hiding below as well, and was directing his zombified Akiri to draw a huge mob into combat with the Falkovnians. Essentially, when the PCs arrived, they'd be crushed by either the Falkovnians or the mob, which'd then exterminate each other and leave Cavendish as the last man standing, where he and his undead could pick up the pieces with ease. The players, meanwhile, were coming from two directions (a part had split off to rescue Marcos Vedarrak, which would help them now and haunt them in the future), and had to figure out what to do before Cavendish got bored and started lighting fires using their allies. One of whom Cavendish had Dominated into obedience.

The battle itself did not disappoint. There were so many different forces involved and so much that could go wrong that the PCs spent most of the fight running around like crazy trying to keep things from bubbling over. Some good magic was used to scare off the mob, and the return of Vedarrak meant that Cavendish high-tailed it out of there quickly. Which left everyone all together to fight far too many undead, but it worked out. In retrospect, it would've been better if some more of the horrific possibilities had actually come to fruition, with either the Falkovnians led by Cavendish or the zombie-controlled mob causing chaos, but the players managed to do well enough that none of it happened. Still, a deeply tactical map and probably one of my all time favourites of the campaign.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This was another relatively straightforward map, in as much as it needed a lot of space for a large pitched battle, and only needed a few obstacles as window dressing. The buildings were simply created using PS's inherent layer blending options. Now I normally wouldn't do this alone as it often looks very artificial, however for mud brick buildings it looks fine and is a real quick way of sketching out an urban area.

The buildings were sketched out as black squares, and then I applied a textured bevel, a beige colour overlay and added a faint stroke and drop shadow. I then Ctrl-click the layer to select all the buildings and then hit Select>Modify>Contract to ensure the roofs were completely aligned. The roofs themselves are the same as the buildings only with a darker overlay, an inner shadow instead of a drop shadow and the bevel set to up rather than down.

A final point, although they weren't included in the final version I did create some impaled corpses for this map (Falkovnian's are such lovely people). I actually found a life size silhouette cut-out of an impaled corpse that was used in the background of "Bram Stoker's Dracula" on ebay. I didn't buy it but the image of it was exactly what I needed. The final touches were adding a white square on top with a sharp bevel for the stake, and a drop shadow underneath.

Associated Files

muhar_square.jpg

Close up map of the battle





THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Eleven



Vertical column of Egyptian hieroglyphs on the right side of the page.

Tomb of Menatnashte

Book Eleven

In which the tomb itself is reached, yet all is not as expected in this heart of darkness and each is forced to once again confront their personal demons, both figuratively and literally.

The Ballroom, Tomb of Menatnashte, Har' Akir

DM Notes (Isabella)

The Ballroom Map, affectionately referred to by the GMs as The Ballroom Blitz, was one of the bizarre rooms the PCs encountered as they descended into Menatnashte's tomb. The tomb had originally been a normal Akiri building, but the malevolent force of the fiend that was trapped inside had seeped into the walls over a millennium. As the players entered the rooms, one by one, they twisted to represent each of the PCs in turn, trying to destroy them with their own internal issues. The ballroom was the room of Charles Martel, high society Dementlieuse nobleman, agent of the DMI and cats paw of Dominic D'honaire. Upon waking, Charles found himself and his companions strung up to the ceiling by silver razor wire as elegant marionettes whirled around them.

The catch here was that the marionette of a man Charles had murdered in a duel, Leopold Boritsi, was also here, and intended to pay Charles back. The dancing marionettes of the room were also strung up with razor wire, meaning anyone moving through them would be sliced by the silver string, and they didn't stay still. On more than one occasion a marionette dancer ran over one of the PCs, much to their regret. Of course, some of them had other nasty issues, like shooting lightning or exploding when provoked. In truth, the party rogue, Otto, got hurt by the room a lot more than its intended target, who proved too fast for

Leopold to catch up to. You always hurt the ones you love.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

I'm really proud of this map, I think its certainly one of the better ones i created for the campaign.

The main technique used in this room was a development of the Lia map (next in order, but I actually drew it first), where I had decided I wanted to show the walls more than just cross hatched blocks, this was a tomb after all I wanted to depict the wall paintings! Ok well this map was a ballroom (an acid-fuelled marionette nightmare as it transpired), but the same principle applied. Essentially you leave yourself 2 squares each side for the wall giving a mild fish-eye projection. You then find an image to use on the wall, crop it to double the height needed (4 squares in this case) , then compress it by 50% vertically to give the illusion of height, then using the edit>transform>perspective tool you pull the upper corners outward.

This technique works well anywhere so long as you can find a head-on image of a wall to use as the background, and the walls are straight. If they are curved you can still use the same technique but it's a bit trickier. Technically in PS you can bend an image anyway you want, so in this case you use edit>transform>warp and pull the mesh and points until you get the right shape, this isn't that easy but persevere and remember where the undo button is.

One last point, think carefully about how you use this technique, as the shape of the room can throw up some unexpected things and like the side room you can end up with some weird perspective issues.

Finally, the chairs and piano are both Sketchup objects with a subtle lighting and colour overlay added to them to make them blend in.

Associated Files

tomb_ballroom.jpg
Close up map of the battle



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Map by Lostboy

Lia's Test, Tomb of Menatnashte, Har' Akir

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The next room with actual combat, Lia Mournswathe's Room was decidedly less subtle in execution than that of M. Martel. Basically, they were treated to a simmering incarnation of Lia's rage in the shape of a really really big scorpion, as well as assorted other oversized arachnids. Let's just say that Lia was repressing a lot of anger. The map was pretty simple, long and low with a door at the end, and the PCs just had to get out the door (which happened to be heartily locked, but I didn't tell them that at first). There were columns along the side, originally meant to be alternative routes (so you didn't have to go along the bottom of the map with the humongous scorpion) but which ended up being lairs for our Inferno Spiders. For added fun, the entire room as a Wild Magic area to symbolise Lia's magecraft, although the Wild Magic was largely a non-issue aside from one unfortunate minute when Lia ended up dropping a maximum-strength fireball on herself which came within a hair's breadth of killing the PC.

The design of this map also highlights one of my personal pet peeves against D&D in general and 3.5E in particular, which is that players have access to far too many utility spells and abilities that let them bypass entire map design elements. Originally, I'd tried to design the map to focus on jumping from column to column, but by this point (around level 10), the players already had access to spells that would let the entire group fly across the chasm with ease, or for that matter most any kind of terrain I try to use. Invisibility and certain divinations have similar power to excise entire chunks of encounters. It's ultimately a minor point, but one of those things that annoy me. In retrospect it might've been interesting to take the flying into account and build some kind of similar encounter using wind effects and a lot of ghosts, but too late at this point.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

Neo had planned this one for a while; in essence

he wanted me to create a big impressive tomb room, something with plenty of levels and space (I only found out later this was for the monster scorpion that tried to open up my PC like a tin of beans...). Anyway the inspiration for the room was shamelessly lifted from a recent session on Tomb Raider: Anniversary where a vaguely similar puzzle room exists with platforms on the lap of huge seated statues.

The statues themselves in this room are all sketchup models orbited to above and a screen grab taken, and then imported into PS for recolouring and touching up. The main body of each statue was taken from a very handy sketchup model of Abu Simbel; once I had that I searched the online warehouse for relevant Egyptian animals, then once in PS removed their heads and seated them atop the body. Using 3-d models worked really well in this case for giant statues, although I did need to extensively re-colour and touch-up several of them.

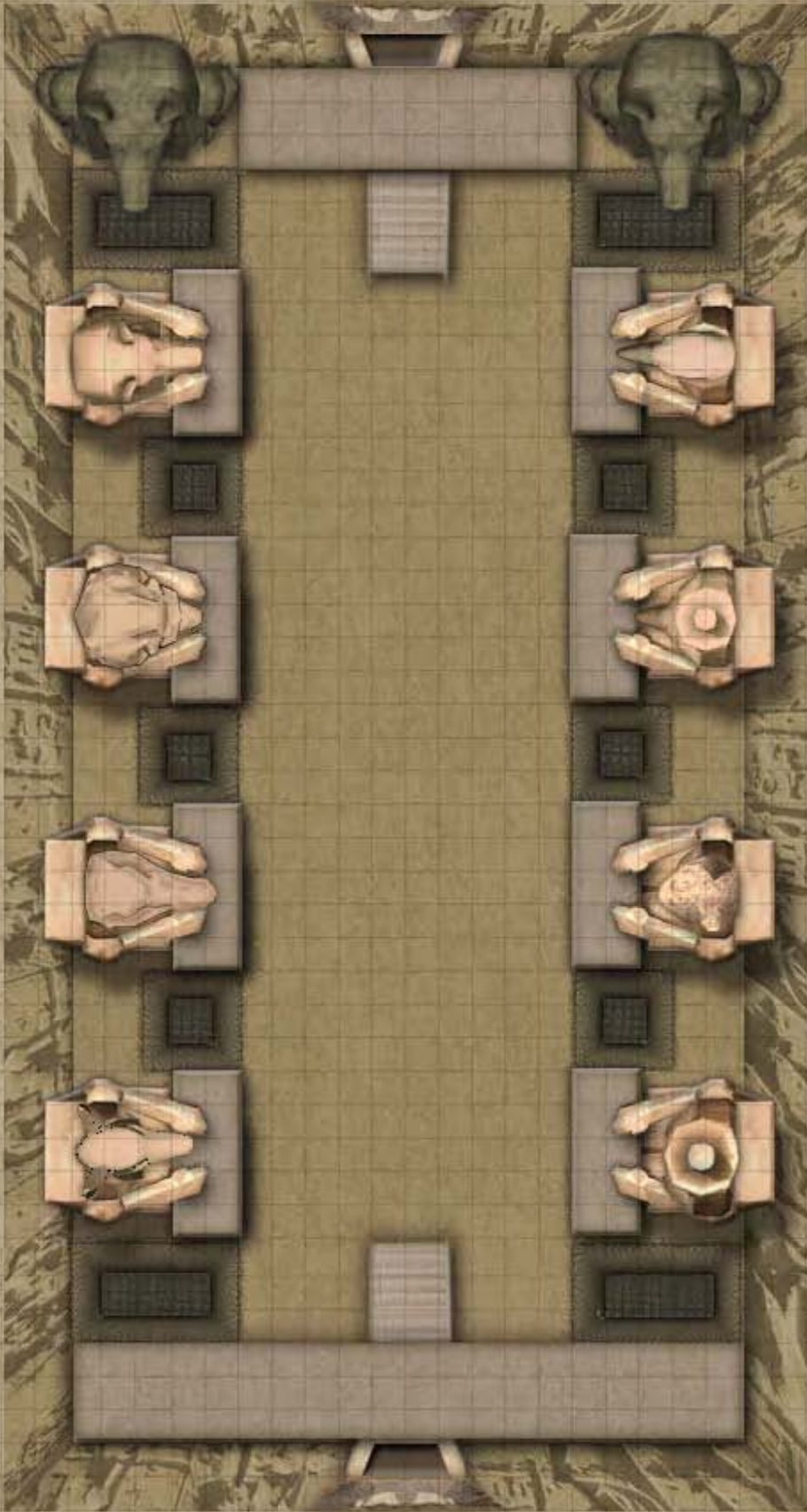
The technique for the walls is the same as the ballroom, only simpler as I only had straight walls to contend with here. The background image for the walls was taken from a photo I took of the temple of Horus at Edfu (I think) on a trip to Egypt a few years ago (who says holiday snaps aren't worthwhile!).

Associated Files

tomb_statue_room.jpg
Close up map of the battle

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Map by Lesthey

The Burial Chamber, Tomb of Menatnashte, Har' Akir

www.eyesontutorials.com/articles/4065/1/Making-a-GEM-tutorial/Page1.html

DM Notes (Isabella)

The Treasure Chamber of Menetnashte was the final room of the tomb, the resting place of the Eye of Anubis, which the PCs had spent the entire campaign tracking down. It also contained a splinter group of the Expedition, a group of conspirators that had abandoned the PCs in the Jackal's Ruse.

Although it didn't warp to suit any of the PCs as they other rooms had before, this room was actually the room for two characters, both of whom had lost everything because of the fiend's influence. The room was much smaller than most of the other maps we had done up to this point. It was meant to feel that way - small, incestuous, and crowded, to make the impending fight with their former friends all the more unpleasant.

Of course, the conspiracy didn't really want to fight, they were mostly after the money. So when the PCs and the Conspiracy came to a grudging agreement, the demon took matters into its own hands. The end result was a 16 vs. 15 fight against shadow clones of themselves, not even including the various pets that the PCs owned. It made a small map even smaller, and the resulting battle was chaotic and insane, but in the end the PCs got through it without losing anyone. The shadows were chaotic, uncreative, and refused to work together, leaving the PCs and the conspiracy a crucial edge that let them win the day.

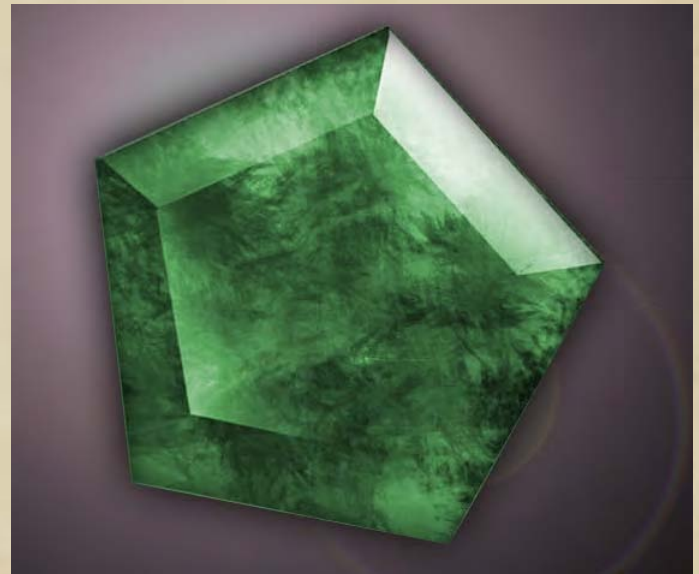
Map Notes (Lostboy)

The finale of the tomb was a claustrophobic little piece, but had to be packed with plenty of treasure which raised some challenges in its own right.

The walls used the same techniques as the preceding maps, and I used the sarcophagus to cover up an unsightly join in the curved wall where I just couldn't get the warp tool to play ball.

The sarcophagus itself is an amalgamation of three sketchup models in PS, one of which had had an image of Tutankhamen's death mask wrapped to it.

The eye was created from scratch using this tutorial:



The Eye of Anubis

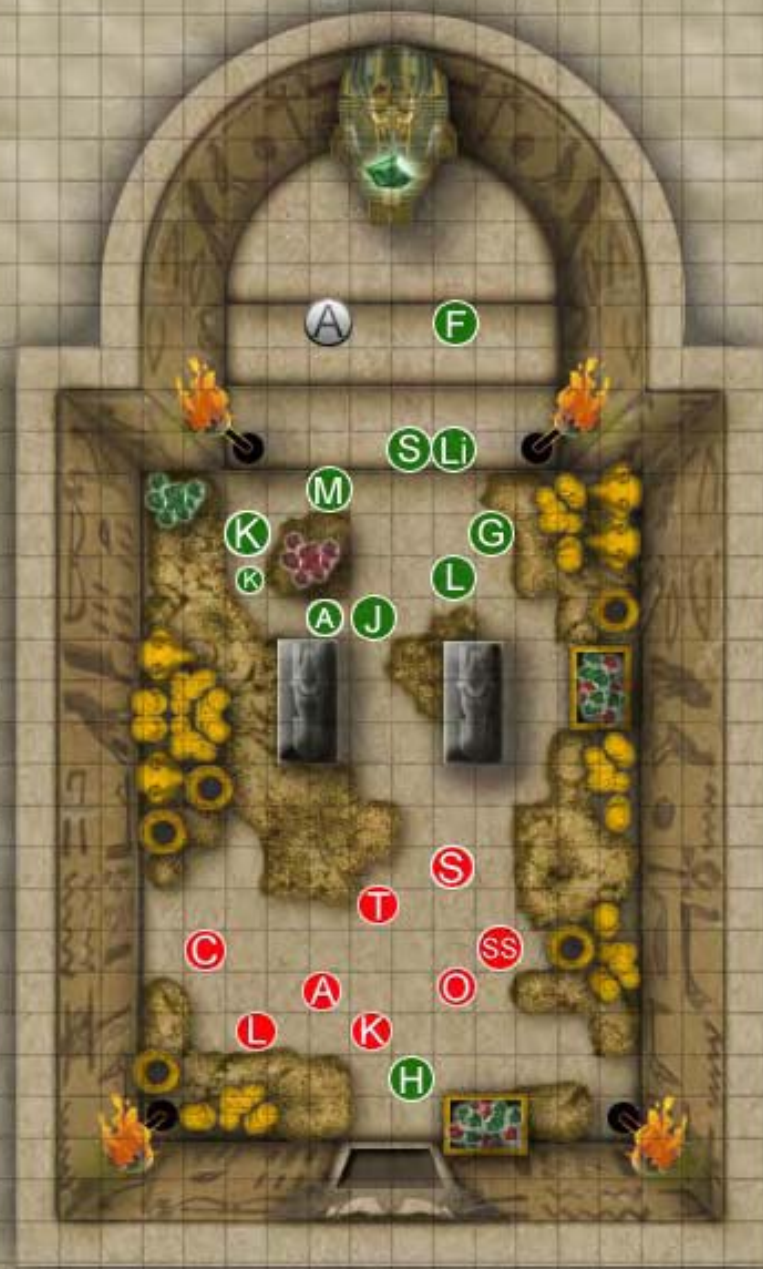
The treasure scattered about is a mixture of smaller versions of the eye, smaller versions of the Anubis statue from the first tomb map, some pots I found on sketchup and some piles of coins I made from scratch. The "difficult terrain" of gold coins on the floor was created from an image of a giant treasure pile I found on the net and then tweaked the colours and contrast on, to make it different from the larger treasure.

Associated Files

tomb_burial_chamber.jpg
Close up map of the battle

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The Tomb of Menatnashte

Map by Lostboy



THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Book Twelve



Part a Lucine II

Book Twelve

In which, back in Dementlieu amidst chaos the eye is stolen, and the expedition must now race against time to put a final stop to a madman's plans and banish the demon he intends to release.

The Guignol Auditorium, University of Dementlieu, Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Second Battle of Guignol Auditorium wasn't really a battle the players participated, per se. Essentially, in my campaigning style there are usually a great many powerful forces participating, of which the players are only one. Ultimately, you need to actually clear the groups out of the way so that the players can go and fight their Arch-Nemesis. In this case, two of these factions were taking themselves out of the running in a suitable spectacular fashion, the Fraternity of Shadows (as represented by Lord de Casteelle and half a dozen ranking Fraternity mages) were attacked by Menetnashte, the Demon Pharaoh in a rather epic showdown with many Meteor Swarms and Polar Rays and a few epic spells tossed about.

The basic goal here was to take both of these factions out of commission so that Cavendish could get away with the McGuffin and the PCs could track him down and knock his block off. At the same time, after the PCs had been walking on tippy-toes around both these groups all game, I felt I should give both the FoS and Menetnashte a chance to show off what they can really do and justify all the caution. Map-wise, I added a big crowd of people to give the PCs something to do by leading them to safety, and asked our marvellous map-maker for some destructible terrain, which I could then turn on to create swathes of destruction whenever one of our near-

Epic or Epic characters threw a spell off. It made for a rather pretty effect, I think.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

This map was a pretty tall order, firstly it was huge with several locations, all of which are in detail, and Neo wanted the ability to destroy bits of the scenery as well. My life was made a hell of a lot easier by discovering the Dundjinni forums, and the awesome mapping elements the folks over there create. I snaffled several of them for this map, chiefly the statues, the lamps, the vegetation and the stained glass windows, although in each case I tweaked them to change colour, shading etc so they fitted into the map.

The destroyable scenery wasn't so hard, it simply meant duplicating several layers and using layer mask to remove bits of them, however they also needed blast debris. The auditorium one was essentially some twisted and warped windows, and a scatter brush set to low opacity dropped here and there to give bits of debris. The chapel however needed the pews scattering, scorch and blast marks adding (with some judicious use of the burn tool), and some small flames created using the fire tutorial from earlier. I then created three jpegs; one of everything intact, one of the auditorium destroyed and one of the chapel destroyed, and then supplied them to Neo as three spate layers in a psd he could hide or reveal as the action played out.

Associated Files

auditorium_whole copy.jpg
Close up map of the battle

auditorium_destroyed_top.jpg
Close up map of the battle

auditorium_destroyed_btm.jpg
Close up map of the battle





The Grand Opera Nationale, Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu

DM Notes (NeoTiamat)

The Grand Finale at the Port-a-Lucine Grand Opera Nationale was likely the most heavily play tested fight I ran, as well as the most massively designed. Cavendish had set up a little ritual area, gotten his top minions (Schrodinger the Skele-Cat, James the Jackalwere Sniper, and Shadow Andre) in position, and waited for the PCs and a few NPCs to arrive with a sacrifice. They did so, albeit not exactly where Cavendish expected, and the climactic battle of the campaign began. There were quite a few spectacular moments here, no doubt. James proved to be unexpectedly badass, holding off three PCs for most of the fight despite them throwing everything they had at him, culminating in a series of exchanges with his nemesis, Otto. Professor Carter, one of the NPCs, ultimately wrestled Shadow-Andre to the ground and held him there until the end of the fight. Cavendish lashed out with hideous spells, including one which set the entire Opera House on fire, and another which summoned up a massive Blood Elemental to bring him Tomas as a living sacrifice for the Eye of Anubis. Of course, then the PCs turned around and managed to drop an entire chandelier on the Blood Elemental, and then to top it all off, Sascha sacrificed himself to destroy the Eye of Anubis, catching Cavendish in the backlash and dragging all three of them to the afterlife. Shadow-Andre promptly disappeared, and James the Jackalwere made a rapid getaway, only to eventually run into some irritated Fraternity of Shadows members in Falkovnia. Let us just say that it was a suitably epic battle to close off the campaign.

Mechanically, there was a lot of stuff going on here, largely revolving around the idea of how to keep Cavendish alive long enough to deliver all the exceedingly nasty spells he had. Previous encounters had shown that Cavendish was powerful only so long as he kept the PCs from focus-firing on him, and to that end, in addition to a suite of something like twenty buffing spells, I utilized darkness and fog effects extensively. It helped that Cavendish was a Darkness-Domain

Cleric who could cast mist spells very quickly. I also put some extremely big melee buffers in front of Cavendish in the form of the skeletal cat and later the elemental. The two long-range characters were meant to be sniping from the balconies, but then the PCs decided to split up and take some people along the corridors up at the top. This resulted in Andre, Lia, and Otto coming face to face with James, who managed to hold them off for much of the fight. Shadow-Andre showed more focus and kept Dispelling the PCs, right up until Carter started punching him.

As for the ending? A player sacrificed himself to destroy an ancient evil and drag a sadistic monster into death. A fitting conclusion.

Map Notes (Lostboy)

The final showdown for the campaign was set inside a opera house, which to all intents and purposes looked pretty normally map wise (in the end it was lighting and darkness that were the main obstacles). You can probably see by now some of the techniques I've used elsewhere coming to the fore in this map, in particular the walls. Remember I said before that you need a head-on shot of a wall for it to work properly, well here I couldn't find one (probably because most opera houses are fairly curvy), in the end I did it the hard way and took an image of the curved boxes in opera house in Manaus, straightened it out then applied it as the wall fill, a little long winded but it looks ok in the end. The curtains around the stage where swiped from an upholstery website and turned black using desaturate and brightness/contrast adjustments.

The magic circle was created form a vector file drawn by Kaitou Kage (playing Kuzan and also a resident artist for the game), I simply imported it and added the glow. A useful technique here is to use both an outer glow and a drop shadow with 0 distance, they do mostly the same thing and allows you to put a white hot glow and a coloured aura at the same time.

Associated Files

opera.jpg

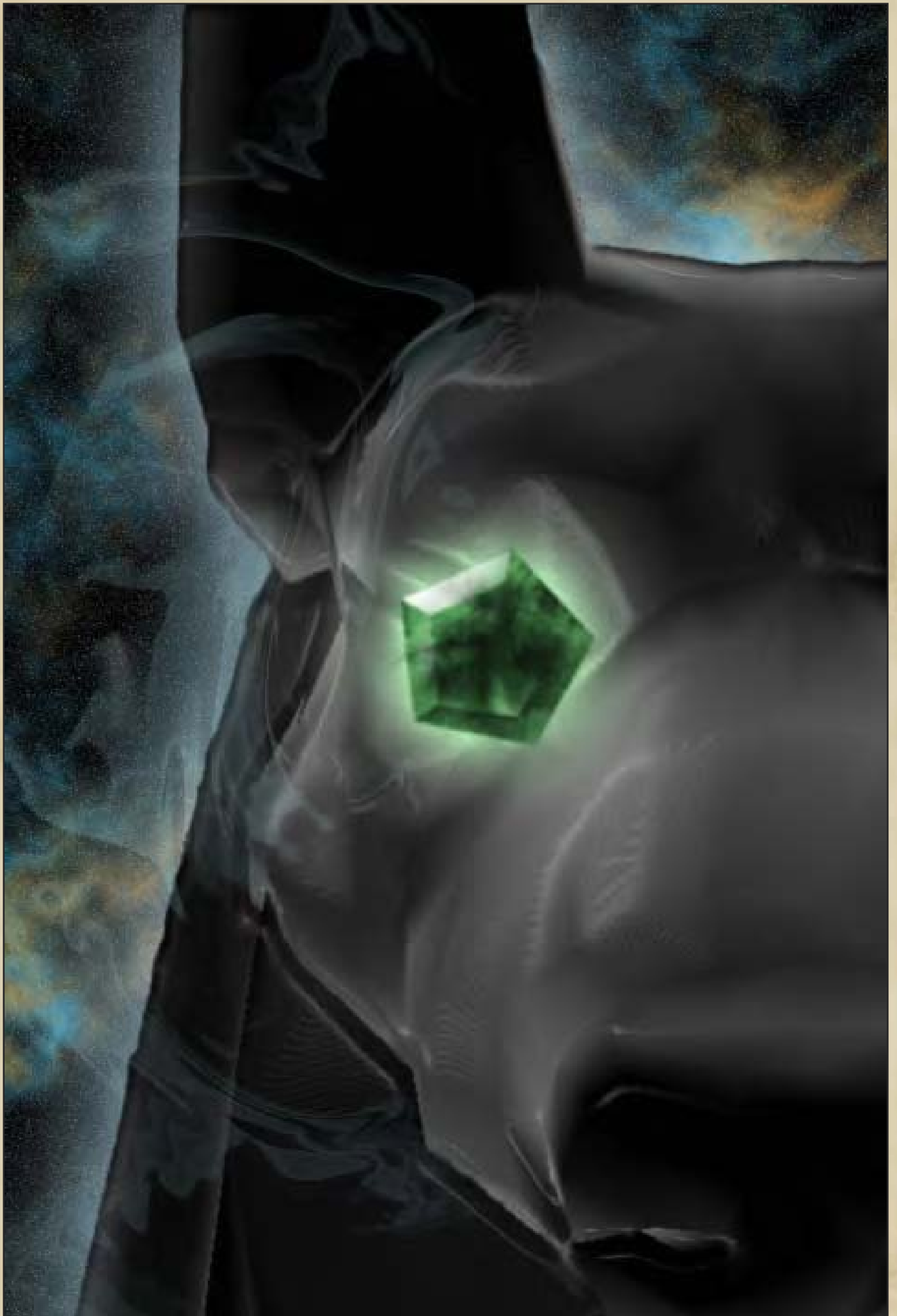
Close up map of the battle

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Map by Lostboy



THE EYE OF ANUBIS



Appendix



Main Protagonists



Lia Mournswaith



As played by Rock

A graduate student of the faculty of Archaeology at the University of Dementlieu, Lia is perhaps known best by her nickname, 'the Veiled Sorceress'. Most of the students and teachers only know that Lia comes from a wealthy Mordentish family, is majoring in archaeology and history, while pursuing a bachelor's degree in herbalism and the arcane sciences - and that no one has yet seen her face.

When Lia appears in public, she always wears lacy gloves, a mask and a veil, under a hooded cloak. She is generally distant, quiet, and soft-spoken and seems easily intimidated. There are rumours she is disfigured due to a childhood exposure to the pox or a similarly virulent disease. It came as something of a surprise to those who know her that she was so very eager to join the expedition, but she has pursued a position as an aide to professor Carter with unusual aggression.

Andre Theroux



As played by Yalenus Veler

Standing 5'10" and weighing in at around 180 pounds, Dr. Theroux, at 27, is one of the youngest members of the faculty of the University of Dementlieu.

A professor in the department of theology despite being a professed agnostic, Dr. Theroux is considered both a curse and a blessing. Undeniably intelligent, he unfortunately hasn't quite gotten the grasp of little things like politeness or pleasantries, thus making classes with him an exercise in condescension and insight. Those who've made an attempt to get to know him however, say that he wasn't always this way, and that his grey eyes used to be brighter, but that tragedy brought him low.

Andre is with the expedition due to being competent in Ancient Akiri—as well as its modern derivative—and in Pharazian. His knowledge of the faiths of Har'Akir is also expected to come in quite handy.

Charles Martel



As played by Nathan of the Fraternity of Shadows

Charles Martel is a cheerful, good-natured man in his middle twenties; a mathematician by training, he is studying cryptography at the Ecole de Etudes Superiores, an advanced institute associated with the University of Dementlieu. He is accompanying the expedition to expand his knowledge of Har'Akiri encryption techniques in their hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts--at least, as he says,

"That's what I told my research advisors. Mostly I just wanted a bit of adventure...comes of reading too many Dead Travel Fast novels, I suppose...Behind the Black Veil, In the Devil's Seraglio, Enslaved As a Harem Girl...y'know, books like that."

Otto Schultheiss



As played by The Whistler

Otto Schultheiss is taller than average and a bit pudgy, with shortish, straight blond hair and mut-tonchops; his eyes are ice blue, and he wears pince-nez glasses to correct for near-sightedness. In dress, he tends toward monochromes, simple, well-made clothes, and boots; while in the field, he wears his favourite pistol, Donnenschlag, in an old leather shoulder holster.

Perpetually amiable, jovially enthusiastic when faced with a challenge, and a bit sheepish about his abilities as a marksman, Otto tends to remind people of an overgrown teddy bear. If he weren't an undergrad at age 33, obviously middle-class and provincial (with a self-admitted background as a gunsmith in a tiny hamlet west of the Sleeping Beasts) and the only Lamordian at the university majoring in arcane science, you probably wouldn't give him a second thought.

...He is, though, and though he's taken a bit of flak for it, he seems generally all right with his unconventional situation. He's only been enrolled for six months--so even though he's technically been invited onto the expedition as an interested student, it's pretty obvious that the administration just wants him along for his marksmanship.

Tomas Eisenwald



As played by DocBeard

Tomas Eisenwald is another one of those endless Lamordian students, stealing the jobs of good, hardworking Dementlieuse and seducing the women with his mysterious foreign charms...or at least, if all the social graces of a young man raised by dwarves and enough naiveté to still blush regularly after four years at the University count as 'charms'. His strange, pale-blue eyes and short, frizzy brown-blond hair are the source of a rumour that Tomas survived a bolt of lightning as a child, owing his cheerful, distracted demeanour to the scars of that incident; Tomas has never bothered to confirm or deny the rumour, perhaps preferring to pretend it doesn't exist. Originally an engineering student, Tomas works for Professor Devereux as an assistant, graduate student, and general dogsbody, cheerfully endures the Professor's eccentricity with the optimistic outlook of the perpetually dim.

Kuzan



As played by Kaitou Kage

A young priest of a small temple in Sri Raji, Kuzan is bright-eyed and outgoing. His hair is a shade or two lighter brown than the average Sri Rajian, his eyes are a peculiar gold, and his skin is deep olive, all signs that mark him as something other than a full-blood from Sri Raji. He carries himself with a steady gait and an easygoing attitude. Though he is on the caravan as a scholar, he has the sturdy figure of a sailor and the easy demeanour and simple clothing of a commoner. He's eager and willing to lend a helping hand where it's needed, even offering to aid the labour and guard forces of the caravan.

Kuzan is a priest of Ajad, a lesser deity of wind, sailing, and exploration. Part of his business on the caravan is as an associate scholar; the other is a holy pilgrimage of his faith that requires him to travel across the world and see distant sights. Having never been much further than Sri Raji in his life, he's excited at the prospect of seeing new, foreign sights.

Khalil al-Atim



As played by Lostboy

An enigmatic and exotic figure, the Dragoman is known across the southern core for his expertise in travel. Rumours say he was born in the burning wastes of Har' Akir and that he fled as a child and settled in Hazlan. Further rumour says that no caravan or expedition under his guidance has ever gone astray or come to harm. Perhaps it is useful,

then, that this man has been engaged as a guide and "fixer" for the expedition.

A thin man of medium height, Khalil is the epitome of the exotic nomad. Swathed in dark blue robes with loose trousers and the finest black studded leather, his hands are never far from the twin scimitars he carries at his waist. His dark features and lustrous black hair are unmistakable, although his stoic face is marred by scars on both cheeks. He gives little away, although he is often seen praying silently to himself whilst softly stroking an obsidian amulet at his throat.

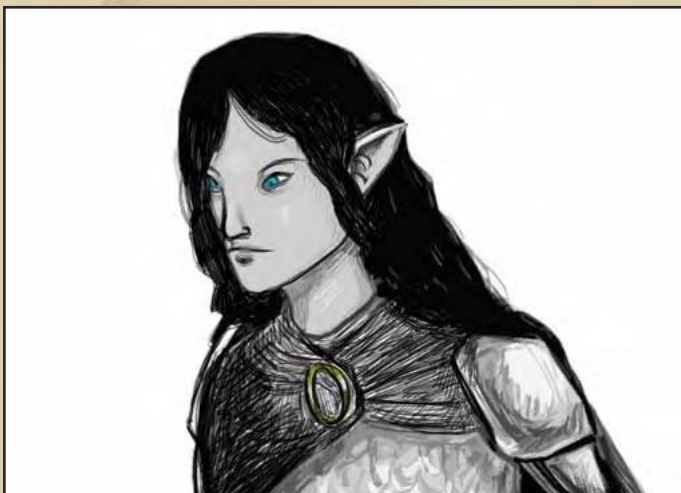
Allikhain Gellantra

As played by Tarlyn

Allikhain is originally from the obscure island of Isla De Muerta. She has only been in the core for a little over a year, along with her cohort Ulsaon. Allikhain is a very quiet person, rarely speaking—except on those occasions when she's terrorized the thieves guild that she's encountered in her travels with Ulsaon.

She wears a black cloak, pants, tunic and gloves; at one hip is a pair of Nunchaku and at the other is a scabbard. She is never without her quarterstaff. She stands at a little over five feet eight and appears very muscular and athletic. Her hair is long and black and she keeps it free so as to hide her face. She appears to be in her early twenties.

Ulsaon Lowbane

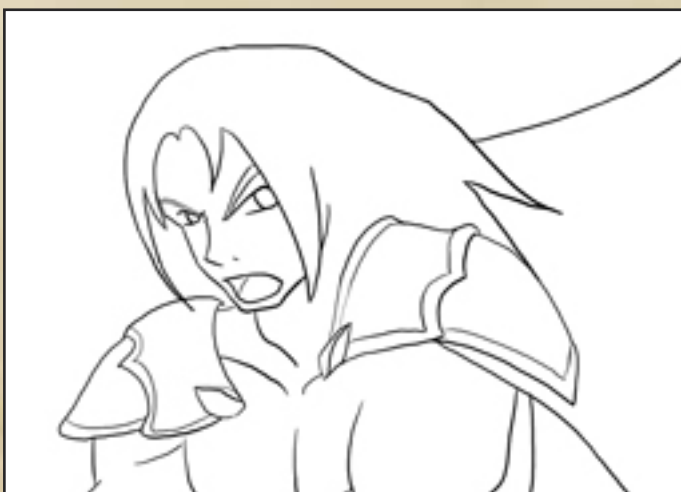


As played by Tarlyn

Ulsaon is a half-elf, also from Isla De Muerta. As soon as she was old enough, she travelled to the Core; there, she became skilled at fencing items for the local merchants' and thieves guilds. She met Allikhain and warned her that the Thieves Guild wanted Allikhain's head. They left the city together and ended up travelling the core extensively until arriving in Dementlieu and being hired for the expedition.

Ulsaon wears a well-worn travelling cloak; under it is a strange suit of armour. She sports a scabbard at her hip and not much else. She stands a little over five feet five and appears to be in shape. She has long brown hair and blue eyes, which seem to be filled with mischief. She is very outgoing, and it is usually she who does the talking for both herself and her compatriot. She seems to be in her mid fifties.

Ishaq Rafiq



As played by Tarlyn

A mountain of a man from the wastes of Pharazia, Ishaq is all that remains of a proud nomad tribe. After the massacre of his kith and kin he has taken up the sword as a bodyguard for hire, yet someday he hopes to find those responsible and avenge the deaths of those closest to him.

Ishaq is simply clad in the loose trousers and shirt as worn by many a nomad tribesman, he eschews the merits of armour for the freedom to deliver havoc in battle, havoc he most certainly delivers with the huge sword strapped at his back. He carries little else allowing his presence and the strength of his blade to cover most eventualities.

Sascha Dziemianovitch "The Ashen Knight"



As played by Lostboy

Sascha is tall and solid, a gift of his northern roots, yet the years have not been kind to him, still strong but his shoulders are a little stooped. His face is heavily lined and care-worn, beneath his long straggling beard, which like his long hair is shot through with grey. His eyes still shine, blue as ice within his face, only his mouth with its slightly cruel lines mar his visage. In his late forties now, he appears far older than his years, a palpable weight of the world hangs on his shoulders, yet his eyes shine with the fire of the faithful.

He dresses in dented, but polished chainmail, covered by the tabard and cloak of his order, murky white with a dull grey cross. He carries a wicked black metal sword with a ruby hilt that seems out of place with his pious nature, and a small battered leather pack that carries the few possessions he needs.

Professor Jean-Jacques Pelletier, Ph.D.ArcSci, Ph.D.Hist



Is the assistant chair of the University of Dementlieu's Department of History and the leading specialist in Akiri culture and lore at the University, best known for his epochal work, *The History of Ancient Har' Akir*. A charming, white-haired gentleman in his late fifties with a grandfatherly smile, Prof. Pelletier is the expedition leader for the Menetnashte Expedition.

Professor Sebastian Marchand- Renier, Ph.D.Ling



Is the Guignol Chair for Linguistics and one of the more skilled academics at the University. A Richumelese transplant and a distant cousin of the Reniers, Prof. Marchand is polyglot, perfectly fluent in eleven languages, including Akiri, Pharazian, and can read Ancient Akiri with ease. Prof. Marchand is pale, wiry man with straight brown hair in his mid-forties. Possessed of a brusque and arrogant manner, he is the chief linguist and translator of the expedition.

Professor Thomas Carter, Ph.D.Arch,



Is an associate member of the University of Dementlieu, though Prof. Carter is more often found in Sri Raji or Pharazia than in Dementlieu. A tanned, athletic Mordentishman in his late thirties, famous for uncovering the ruins of Illarik in southern Hazlan, Prof. Carter is providing his professional expertise in applied archaeology to the expedition.

Professor Charles Devereux, Ph.D.Hist,



Is one of the more popular professors in the University of Dementlieu. Prof. Devereux is known for his idiosyncratic approach to cultural history, as his most famous books, *The Many Legends of Barovia* and *The Haunted History of Mordentshire* demonstrate. Prof. Devereux is accompanying the expedition as research for his new book, *The Terrible Tombs of Har' Akir*. Prof. Devereux is a slightly nervous looking Dementlieuse man in his early thirties, with brown hair and a perpetual nervous tic in his left brow.

Lily D'Envers



Is a novelist and sometime writer for *L'Interrogateur*, a gossip rag based in Port-a-Lucine. Miss D'Envers will be acting as the official recorder of the expedition. Miss D'Envers is a lovely woman born in Port D'Elhour, a small

slip of a thing with luscious golden hair to the waist, milky pale skin, and curious green eyes, with a very forward and inquisitive manner. For the last three years, Miss D'Envers has been reporting in Nova Vaasa, she has only returned to Dementlieu three weeks ago.

Remy Lessard

Is a linguistics graduate student at the University



of Dementlieu, and the assistant of Prof. Marchand. A general go-fer on the expedition, Lessard is a pleasant looking young man with a fresh-scrubbed look and a harried manner about him. Despite his perpetually harassed demeanour, Lessard is Marchand's star pupil, speaking six languages fluently.

Fassahd al Muharin



Is a native of Har' Akir (his name means literally, 'of Muhar'), and the man who brought the first

news of the Tomb of Menetnashte to Dementlieu. A wiry, dusky-skinned man with only meagre languages skills outside of Akiri and Pharazian, Fassahd is the guide for the expedition, the only man with a precise knowledge of the tomb's location.

Samael Maleagant



Is a 'facilitator', an expert hired by the university to handle the day-to-day operations of the Menetnashte expedition. A keen organizer and an alumnus of the University of the Dementlieu (Baccalaureate in history), Maleagant is raven-haired, sharp-featured Borcan in his mid thirties with an acid and sarcastic wit. He may not be the most pleasant person, but Maleagant has an undeniable talent for keeping things going according to plan.

Edmund Harris



Is the guard captain, an older Mordentishman who

has served as a mercenary in several conflicts. Hired by the University for his professional expertise, the heavily-built Harris is to ensure that anyone who attacks the Menetnashte Expedition has all the trouble they can dream of. A somewhat bulky man from Mordentshire in his late forties, Harris has a bluff, hearty manner and the perpetual look that he'd be more comfortable with an ale mug in his hand. He fights with a musket and greatsword.

Michel de Angelis



Is one of the guards, a charming, lithe man from Chateaufaux. In his early thirties, the well-mannered de Angelis is the son of a Dementlieuse diplomat to Pharazia, and is fluent in the language of that land and knows its customs well. He is also a musician of no mean skill, and can often be found fiddling away on his violin among the guards. Despite his pleasant exterior, de Angelis is a skilled duellist with rapier and pistol, and wields an insidious weapon, a Parthian Rapier, a rapier with a simple pistol built into the hilt.

'Jervis'



Is another of the guards, a taciturn, ill-tempered mercenary who keeps quiet about his origins. Surly and sneering, the short, swarthy-featured man seems to be a Borcan or an Invidian, with a professional bearing for all his personal unpleasantness. Maleagant vouches for his loyalty, and Jervis is a daub hand with a number of weapons, including crossbow, daggers, and rapier, making him a useful addition to the Menetnashte Expedition.

Dieter Haulfstead



Is a young Lamordian mercenary, a former farm land off to see adventure. A nice, if somewhat innocent young man in his early twenties, Dieter is nevertheless quite good with a longsword and musket, sufficiently that Harris allowed him to be taken on the expedition. Somewhat shy, he ends up associating with Jervis most often, the pairs' mutual love of quiet seeming to agree with them despite the obvious difference in experience and

worldview.

Sarari



Is the lone non-human guard on the expedition, a young elven woman from Sithicus. Marginally more pleasant and talkative than Jervis, but only marginally, Sarari is a mercenary of long experience, utilizing a rapier and the national Sithican weapon of the longbow. Quite attractive, in an elven way, with delicate features and waist-length brown hair, Sarari exudes a quiet wariness that keeps most people at arms reach.

Guy Benoit



Is the other native son in the Expedition's guard crew. A tall, rugged man in his early forties, Benoit is a former militia sergeant and a veteran of several fights with Falkovnian troops. In addition to skills with battleaxe, shield and musket, Benoit is also a good hunter and in charge of the expedition's animals. He's usually seen with his wolfhound 'Loup'.



