

AGAINST ATLANTIS!

An Epic Trilogy of Heroic Adventures for **Mazes & Minotaurs**

Written by **Andrew Trent**

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THE WISDOM OF STONES

Against Atlantis ! (Part One)

An epic quest for a group of valiant low-level adventurers by **Andrew Trent**



Against Atlantis !

This adventure is the first in a series called *Against Atlantis !* Within this series, valiant heroes (yes, this means the player-characters) will partake in several adventures culminating in a direct standoff against the advance guard of an Atlantean invasion force. The adventures in this series will be presented serially in the pages of the *Minotaur*.

This first adventure is suitable for a party of beginning heroes (level 1 or 2) just setting out to make a name for themselves. It presumes that the player-characters are already united in their quest for adventure. Ideally, they already have one or two successful play sessions under their belts and are now looking to increase their legend by serving the gods themselves.

This scenario is also based on the assumption that the player-characters own (or have access to) a ship. If the player-characters are veterans of the scenario **The Lost Lair of Laodice**, from the first issue of *Minotaur Quarterly*, you might want to use the NPC Barros "One Eye" from that scenario for the various sailing portions associated with one or more of the adventures in the *Against Atlantis !* series. Barros could certainly be persuaded to embark on this adventure in exchange for a share of any treasure that might be found en route. Regardless of your individual approach to this matter, just be sure you do finally let the player-characters on a ship. Otherwise this adventure will wind up going nowhere. Literally.

The Legend Of Nemedé

Maze Master's Note : *The following information is for your eyes only. Players should not begin the game knowing anything of the history of Nemedé.*

Far away across the Middle Sea lies the island of Nemedé. Many years ago this once-idyllic isle was home to a thriving community of artisans, philosophers, poets and dreamers, who contented themselves with exploring the mysteries of life from the relative safety of this secluded island. Because the island was so remote - and perhaps because it is encircled by dangerous reefs - the people of Nemedé kept no standing army. The colony, then, was unprepared for the doom that would befall it. But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Among the residents of Nemedé was the great philosopher Thymoetes of Seriphos, whose insights and visions still resonate among the great thinkers of the Age of Heroes. In addition to his great wisdom, Thymoetes was also a seeker of history and knowledge of mythic items. It was said that during his time there was no place on the face of Mythika that held even the simplest of artifact but that Thymoetes knew of it, and moreover, what strange beasts or enchantments stood between the item and those who might seek it.

Seventy-five years ago life on this peaceful island was disrupted by the arrival of a Tragic Floating Head. No one knew how or why this monstrosity arrived on Nemedé. Little time passed before the



Watch out, this is the Hermes Express !

peaceful and defenseless folk of the island fell to the strange petrification powers of the foul being. With nothing left to destroy on the island, the Tragic Floating Head drifted out to sea and ceased to trouble this now barren earth.

Nemede as it was is now little more than a sculpture garden. So much knowledge, art and beauty was lost on Nemede that the gods themselves turned their backs upon the island in sadness. And where the gods do not look, evil springs forth. Dark things crawl about Nemede now, shrouded in the ever-present fog that envelops the island. And there, in the midst of it all, stands the silent stone that used to know where all great treasures lie.

Meeting Wind-Swift Hermes

Hermes, the messenger of the gods, appears to you one radiant afternoon, arriving on a zephyr blown by Eurus from the East.

He speaks clearly and directly to all of the heroes, with special attention paid to any hero whose patron deity is grey-eyed Athena. Hermes tells the heroes that a time of great troubles looms over Mythika and that they have been chosen by the gods themselves to take part in the defense of the land.

The task assigned to the characters is simple enough. Travel to the lost island of Nemede, speak with the great philosopher Thymoetes and discern the location of the Sextant of Eryximachos. With this artifact in their hands, they must return to the Temple of Athena in Argos where the priests will be able to use it to locate the source and nature of the impending danger. At this point, the heroes (since they are just that) will undoubtedly want to set forth to serve the glory of the gods and to defend Mythika

against those who would act against her. If they don't, though, feel free to hit them with this issue of the *Minotaur* and remind them that they're playing *Mazes & Minotaurs* and not some "What's in it for me? I'm an angst-ridden creature of darkness / kill-things-and-take-their-stuff mercenary dungeon raider" game. Or just have a Titanic Statue crush them underfoot and start over.

Before he departs, Hermes hands a simple phial to the hero with the highest Personal Charisma (or with the strongest link to Athena) and tells him :

"Use this water to soothe the sufferings of Thymoetes. He will only speak to you once he has drunk fully of this. You will know him from the others in Nemede by his resemblance to twice-lame Hephaestus."

Hermes then tells the heroes that the lord of winds, Aeolus himself will guide their course to Nemede so long as no blood is spilled on their journey to the island. The trip will take 7 days and the heroes should provision for such an expedition.

Maze Master's Note : No, Hermes doesn't tell the heroes that Thymoetes (and the rest of Nemede) has been turned to stone. Hermes himself does not know this. He is simply delivering the message as requested by Athena. As to why Athena doesn't impart this information, well, she considers this mission a test of the worthiness of the heroes. This complication cannot be overcome, even by the presence of a Lyrist in the party. Knowledge of the fate of Nemede is lost to all but the gods. Also see *What About Divine Vision ?* next page.

Act I : Voyage to Nemede

Now that the heroes have received their mission from the gods, they will need to embark for the lost island of Nemede. As mentioned in the introduction of this scenario, a ship to traverse the Middle Sea is of utmost importance. Feel free to take as much or as little time as you want in allowing your characters to secure passage, complicating or hand-waving this process as much as you see fit.

Setting Sail For Nemede

The journey to Nemede is foreboding, with many ill omens appearing along the way. The weather is foul throughout the trip and the mood among the sailors of the vessel is sour. Three days into the voyage a nasty fight suddenly breaks out between two of the seamen, each accusing the other of cheating at an otherwise friendly game of dice.

The heroes should recall the admonition against spilling of blood delivered by Hermes before the expedition set out and do their best to intervene and return this situation to normal. If they fail to do so, Aeolus is offended and the ship loses its favorable winds. The loss of these winds is enough to leave the ship adrift for three full days.



Aeolus in Action

After that time, Athena will have persuaded Aeolus to return his favor to the heroes and the journey may continue as planned.

Maze Master's Note : *If the adventurers failed to provision for more than a two-week journey, this loss of time will result in three days worth of Survival rolls (Players Manual, p. 46) on the trek to Argos that will follow the travel to Nemed.*

Arriving At Nemed

Nemed is shrouded in a dense fog and is ringed by reefs, making the approach to this blighted island a treacherous one indeed.

If one of the adventurers is a Mariner (see the first issue of *Minotaur Quarterly* for more on this specialist class), then he should be allowed to make Danger Evasion roll (modified by his Seamanship bonus) to navigate their craft safely to the shore.

If such a roll fails or if no Mariner is among the heroes, each hero and sailor must make a Danger Evasion roll or be tossed overboard as the ship suffers damage from the reefs and encounters unexpectedly rough waters. Heroes and sailors who meet this fate have a special surprise in store for them as noted below. Characters who succeed at this roll remain aboard the ship safely and may help their water-bound compatriots as noted below.

Trouble In The Water

Heroes and sailors who fail the Danger Evasion roll called for above find themselves in the waters between the coral reefs and Nemed's fog-shrouded shore. The sea here is rough, and characters must succeed at a Swimming roll (*Players Manual*, p. 44) or suffer the consequences of drowning and an additional die of damage due to being raked against the reefs.

To make matters worse, a flock of **Harpies** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p.54) roost nearby and know a tasty meal when they spy one. These foul monsters care little for any who have fallen

overboard, figuring that they will be dinner one way or another. Instead, the Harpies focus their attacks on those who remain on the ship or, perhaps more terrifyingly, on the ship itself. If the heroes defeat the Harpies, they will be able to pilot the ship safely the rest of the way to the forbidding shores of Nemed.

Act II : In Search of Thymoetes

After landing their ship on the beach of Nemed, the heroes will need to locate Thymoetes. This, of course, is easier said than done, since every last human on Nemed was long ago turned to stone by the Tragic Floating Head. Nevertheless, clever characters should be able to use the clue provided by Hermes to identify which of the statues found in the village used to be the great philosopher.

What About Divine Vision ?

If there is a Priest in the party, he might have the idea to use his Divine Vision prodigy (see the *Players Manual*, p 30) to learn more about the location of the Sextant.

Since the will and whims of the gods are entirely into the hands of the Maze Master, such a divination should lead to different results, depending on when or why it takes place. Here are a few suggestions on how to handle this situation so that it contributes to the fun and excitement of the adventure, as opposed to compromising the very *raison d'être* of the adventurers' quest.

If the character uses his Divine Vision power at the start of the scenario, in order to learn the location of the Sextant without having to sail to Nemed, then the Vision will only show hazy images of the shores of Nemed, with perhaps a few glimpses of the "garden of statues" than the island has become (but with no explicit clue about the fate of Thymoetes himself or about the fact that these stone statues are actually the petrified inhabitants of Nemed). In other words, the Vision will not show the location of the Sextant (that's what you get for thinking you smarter than the Gods) and the characters will still have to go to Nemed – but the Vision will not have been completely wasted, since it gave an extra clue (the stone statues).

Alternatively, the Maze Master may prefer to actually show the location of the Sextant (the Mines of Iana) but without any indication of where this site might be : the Vision will simply reveal that the Sextant is probably in "some dark cave, somewhere..." This will also be the case if the heroes resort to Divine Vision to learn the location of the Sextant after (and because) they failed to revive Thymoetes, in which case the Divine Vision will certainly be followed by an impromptu visit from an ironic Hermes or an ice-cold Athena (see *But What if the Heroes Get it Wrong ?* next page).

The Silence Of The Fog

Nemede is a fog-shrouded and barren place.

The beach that the heroes have landed on stretches far in each direction, vanishing into the dense fog well before any end or variation can be seen.

Much should be made of the sepulchral silence of the island. No sea birds' cries, no winds, no sounds of life are heard at all. Even the water lapping at the shore is strangely silent. Note, though, that nothing mystical prevents sound here. Characters may still converse, swords still ring against shield when combat occurs, and so forth. But the utter lack of day-to-day sounds should, again, be played up.

A Road, And Worse

Once the heroes have satisfied themselves that the beach is of no further use than a place to land a ship, they should head inland to look for Thymoetes.

Not long after leaving the shore they stumble upon a weathered cobblestone road, in ill-repair and overgrown in places with weeds and lichen.

Following this road will lead the heroes directly to the village that lies at the heart of Nemede.

The road rises slightly as it leads inland, its stones are occasionally slick from mosses and the dampness of the ever-present fog.

From time to time someone might stumble as the heroes walk along the path. No significant combat penalties should stem from this. Once again, it's the atmosphere that matters. Maze Masters should mention how the fog remains dense about the road, making it very hard to see more than a foot or so beyond its edge.

After fifteen minutes or so of gentle climbing, the road levels out and turns slightly to the east.

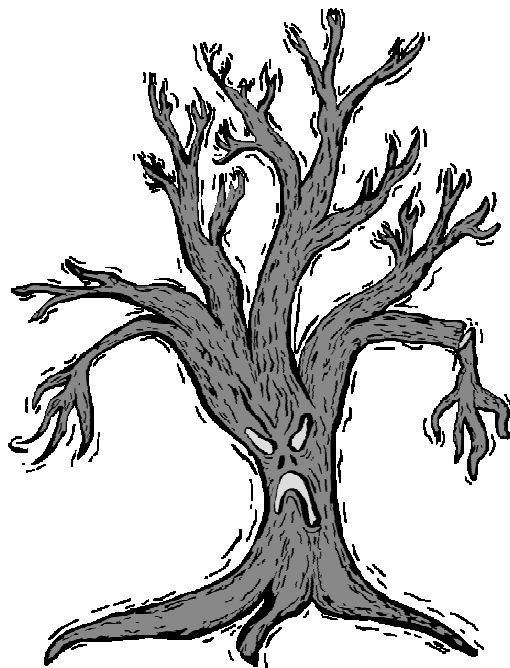
The fog here thins slightly, though visibility remains limited, at last the heroes can see some semblance of life about them. Low and twisted trees line the road, which continues on into the distance.

As the characters progress further they become aware of the sound of a light wind rustling the branches of the trees about them.

At times these sounds appear to resemble whispers of madness and despair. Consider passing a few notes to different players telling them specific phrases that they hear. Pump up the paranoia.

These strange sounds, it turns out, are the Vocal Entrancement ability of a trio of **Stichios** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p.109).

These possessed trees are clustered about the road at this point and will do their best to draw the heroes into their vampiric branches. Clearly, the heroes will strive to avoid this fate. Let there be combat !



A sinister Stichios

Arrival At The Village

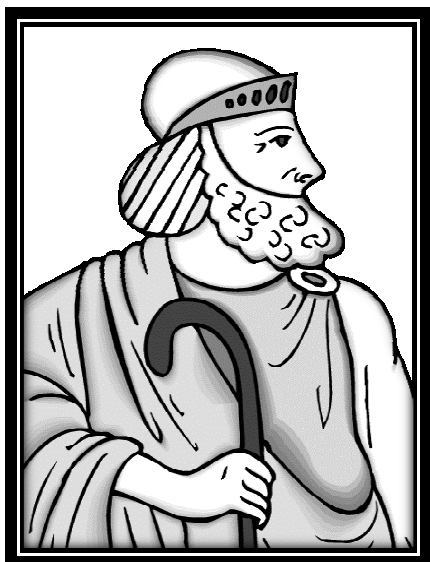
Assuming that the heroes have survived their encounter with the Stichios they are free to continue down the road to the village.

The trip requires at least another 30 minutes on foot, with the fog having closed back in to previous claustrophobic levels. From time to time there is a slight breeze that rustles the trees shrouded in the fog, which should be good for plucking at the heroes' nerves. However, no monsters are lurking. At least not here.

After the half-hour of walking the fog once again thins a bit, enough for the heroes to make out some low buildings, fences and other structures close at hand. If the characters investigate the buildings they quickly discover that all of the inhabitants have, in fact, been turned to stone. Women at their washing, children at play, a group of men standing around in discussion. All are statues!

These houses and other buildings hold little of value, long rotten foodstuffs and moldered textiles seem to be their primary contents. A few rusted weapons may be found in spots as well – but there is nothing for the looting-minded to loot here.

Traveling further down the road the heroes soon find themselves within the heart of the village. As before, the complete lack of normal sounds should be impressed upon the party. There is no hubbub of civilization, no barking of dogs, no cries of delight or sorrow, no sounds of a jealous wife hectoring her husband. Instead, there is simply the silence of the grave. And everywhere, people turned to stone. Unlike the peaceful scenes at the farm, though, these statues all show terror on their faces and appear to have been fleeing from something.



The great Thymoetes, with one of his two canes

The Stone Speaks

At this point, the heroes will likely realize the puzzle-like nature of the situation before them. They need to identify Thymoetes out of the fifty-odd possible adult male statues that occupy the village.

Now is a good time to point out that there is only the single village and that if the heroes decided to explore the island further they find no other signs of human settlement. They may, however, stumble upon the Scorpion Folk who now occupy the island. See *A Final Battle* below.

In the end, the process is simple as there is only one statue of a man who carries two canes, and thus is "twice-lame" like Hephaestus. He lies in the middle of the town square, starting in horror, mouth agape, his walking sticks held out in both hands as if to shield himself from something that approached from the south.

All of that aside, there are other candidates who the heroes might choose, including the blacksmith (who was named Nikandros) who stands astride the town's central well, in the midst of swinging his hammer at whatever horror laid waste to his home. Another possibility is the epically ugly gentleman (who was named Prytanis) found cowering behind the same well that the blacksmith was defending.

Once a choice has been made, let the heroes pour the draught given them by Hermes into the mouth of the chosen statue (they all have open mouths, due to various forms of screaming). Only the complete contents of the phial will do, so the choice must be made fully.

If the heroes correctly chose Thymoetes, he slowly transforms back into flesh and blood, for just a brief moment his body convulses with terror, as though awakening from a nightmare, but he quickly realizes that whatever fate befell him has long since passed.

If asked about the petrified condition of his village, Thymoetes relates the fate of Nemede as outlined in the introduction, as far as the point where the village was attacked by the Tragic Floating Head, which he should describe but not name.

When asked about the Sextant of Eryximachos, the revived sage drifts into a reverie, muttering softly to himself, his eyes glazed over and his words all but inaudible. In a moment his focus returns and he tells the heroes of the island of Iana, whose twisting mines are guarded by a cyclops whose flocks are made of gold. The legends, Thymoetes continues, say that Eryximachos followed his Sextant to these shores for unknown purposes, but that he was never heard from again. Therefore the Sextant must reside on the island of Iana, which lies thrice-nine days west of Argos... With that, Thymoetes stiffens, and begins to return to stone. He struggles briefly, but then relaxes, resigned to his fate.

In addition to gaining the information they sought, for correctly choosing Thymoetes, each hero should receive a *temporary* Divine Boon (see the *M&M Companion*, p.8) from Athena. It is up to the individual Maze Master to determine the form that each particular hero's boon takes, though it is advised that these be items of a defensive nature.

What If The Heroes Get It Wrong ?

Adventurers who misunderstood Hermes' clue may well choose the wrong statue to revive. Maze Masters who wish to avoid such a risk may rule that any character with a Wits score of 13+ is clever enough to interpret Hermes' clue correctly.

If such an unfortunate mistake does happen, the Maze Master has two choices. Either the elixir has no effect, for Athena's will was that this draught affect Thymoetes and no other, or the wrong person does come back to life; in this case, feel free to act out their terror and confusion at awakening. As with Thymoetes, the restored person will only remain animate for a short while and will return to stone despite the best efforts of anyone involved. The wrongly-animated individual might share the legend of Nemede with the heroes, giving them something for their troubles.

Obviously, using the elixir on the wrong statue eliminates the possibility of the characters determining the location of the Sextant of Eryximachos. In such a case, Maze Masters might decide to put things back on track with a little impromptu divine intervention. Hermes could arrive, taunt the heroes a bit about their stupid blunder and then tell them the location of Iana before sending them on their way. Or perhaps even Athena herself appears to the characters, in her cold, brisk anger to put her "ill-chosen champions" back on the right track.

In any case, the party should still learn where they are expect to venture next. Under no circumstances, however, should a party that selects the wrong statue receive the temporary Divine Boon mentioned above.

A Final Battle

As Thymoetes (or Nikandros or Prytanis) returns to stone, the heroes' attention is drawn to skittering creeping sounds coming from the fog.

Each hero should be allowed a Perception roll (see the *Players Manual*, p. 45) to be able to spot the **Scorpion Folk** who are approaching from the fog.

This group of Scorpion Folk are a scouting party sent out from the larger enclave of such beasts that now occupies the far shore of Nemedé.

There should be as many creatures as there are adventurers in the group.

The creatures are delighted to find fresh flesh here in the village, having visited only once before and being disappointed at its inedible stone residents.

The Scorpion Folk will fight a pitched battle, but will retreat if the tide turns against them.

If the heroes choose to pursue any retreating monsters, they will eventually find the Scorpion Folks' encampment, where another group of twice as many fell beasts will happily descend upon them in the hopes of a tasty meal.

Return To The Sea

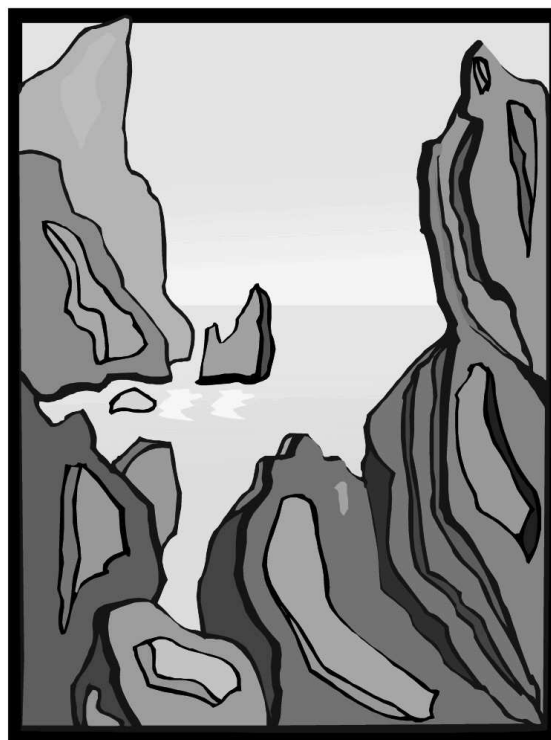
Armed now with the answer they were sent to secure, the heroes may return to their vessel and set sail for Iana to secure the Sextant of Eryximachos. A stop at Argos to resupply and visit with the priests at the Temple of Athena is certainly advisable. In addition to healing the party, the priests provide a lodestone compass to help the heroes find their way to Iana.

The Maze Master is free to handle this trip to Argos as he sees fit. The adventure can be drawn out as long as desired with one or more random Mysterious Islands, Temples, City-States and Adventures (*Maze Masters Guide*, p. 28-35) or the heroes may simply be hand-waved back to Argos.

Further details on Argos, some of which may inspire the Maze Master with ideas for side quests or additional adventures, can be found in this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*.

Deceit & Betrayal

While in Argos, the adventurers should prepare of a lengthy journey, laying in supplies and replacing any lost crewmen. Among the new sailors taken aboard is **Aeson**, an amoral fellow currently working as a spy for the forces of Atlantis. Aeson is exclusively tasked with reconnaissance, and will do nothing to harm or hinder the heroes at this stage. He will work hard, fight bravely, and do all that is required to earn the heroes' trust. Later, he will show his true colors. But for now, he is the heroes' best friend...



Approaching the Mysterious Island of Iana

Act III : The Mines of Iana

The heroes, provisioned, healed and ready to go, must now set sail for the lost island of Iana.

The voyage, though long, is largely uneventful... unless of course the Maze Master wishes to spice up things with a few chance encounters *en route*, such as some Mermaids or Tritons, a ferocious Sea Monster or two, a flock of Sirens or even a whole Mysterious Island to explore.

As far as the heroes' current quest is concerned, the only incident of note occurs on the fourteenth day, when black sails are spotted on the northern horizon, sailing westward, in the same general direction as the heroes. It is obvious to all involved, though, that these ships (three, it seems, though they are far too distant to count or identify) are not headed to the same destination as the heroes.

Arrival at Iana

After the nearly month-long journey into the furthest reaches of the Middle Sea, the adventurers at last lay eyes upon fabled Iana. Its high cliff walls loom forbiddingly, foreboding the danger that waits within.

It takes the ship and its crew the better part of a day to circumnavigate the coast of Iana in search of a reasonable place to land.

In time, though, a small pathway that winds from a ledge at sea-level up to the high cliffs is spotted. Once anchored, our brave heroes may begin their ascent in search of the Sextant of Eryximachos...

Climbing The Cliffs

Ancient inhabitants of Iana constructed the narrow path that leads from the sea to the inner reaches of the island, and they did so with an eye towards defending their island. With this goal in mind, they included several traps (see the *M&M Companion*, p 29-30) to weaken or defeat any who would attempt to gain access to Iana. There are three such traps along the route to the top of the cliffs, each of these is detailed below, in the order encountered.

Trap #1 (Falling & Entrapment)

The ledge at this point has been artificially weakened, and an unwary climber can easily fall through. The first character to encounter this trap will suffer 1d6 Hits of damage from falling 15 feet onto a precipice below. Without a rope or other help from the other heroes, the unfortunate victim of this trap will be stuck on the outcropping. The only way out is to jump into the rocky sea below. Doing so results in an additional 2d6 Hits of damage and leaves the victim subject to drowning (*Players Manual*, p 44) and other aquatic hazards at the Maze Master's discretion.

Trap #2 (Crushing)

A number of boulders are precariously balanced above the path at this point. A lever worked into the natural hand-hold for crossing this spot triggers the boulders to fall directly onto the second person in line. That unlucky soul suffers 2d6 Hits and must make a Danger Evasion roll (*Players Manual*, p. 44) to avoid being knocked from the ledge into the sea below. A hero who is knocked into the sea suffers an additional 2d6 Hits and, as with trap #1, is subject to drowning and other aquatic hazards.

Trap #3 (Direct Damage & Poison)

A poison-tipped javelin shoots from a crevasse in the cliff, doing 1d6 Hits to the lead climber. The victim of this trap must immediately make a Physical Vigor save against a target number of 12 (the venom has weakened over time). Success means that the target is able to shake off the effects of the venom. Failure results in complete paralysis for 1d6 minutes. A paralyzed victim must also make a Danger Evasion roll one per minute (unless secured by his or her compatriots) to avoid falling from the ledge. Falling from the ledge results in (you guessed it...) 2d6 Hits and a shot at aquatic hazards.

The Golden Flocks of Iana

Once the heroes have scaled the high cliff walls of Iana, they are able to see what makes this island so worth defending. Spread out before their eyes is a scene of bucolic wonderment of the likes normally only heard of in the poetry of the Age of Magic. Tall trees hanging under the weight of succulent fruit, green lawns of perfect whispering grasses, crystal clear streams babbling as they run their course to a

large pond nearer the center of the island. And everywhere the eye can see are beautiful golden sheep, at rest and at play. This tableau of harmony is guarded by the tireless mechanical eye of a Golden Ram (see the *Creature Compendium*, p 51). This strange creature was constructed to defend its territory against all interlopers, and as soon as it spots the heroes it will attack without mercy.

Upon defeating the Golden Ram, the heroes are free to explore the plateau. Before long they will find the entrance to the mines where, it would seem, the Sextant likely resides.

Into The Mines

The entrance to the mines is a cave opening in the landward side of one of the high cliff walls of Iana. This passage is rough, but spacious, allowing two men to travel abreast with plenty of elbow room. The long and winding trek eventually leads to a T-intersection. To the left can be heard the ringing of hammer on anvil, to the right gentle singing.

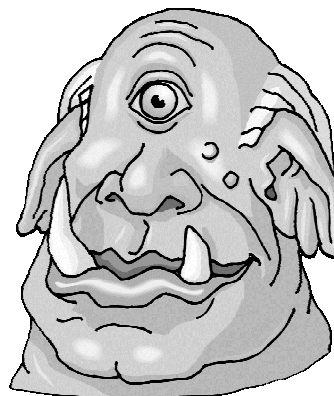
Maze Master's Note : *The layout of the Mines is so simple that no map is necessary...but nothing prevent you from using a typical "cavern adventure map" and "beefing up" this part of the quest into a fully-fledged scenario of its own, with more traps, more mythic treasure and, of course, an appropriate selection of Monsters and Animates.*

The Treasure Trove Of Gyras

This room is the quarters of Gyras, a **Lesser Cyclops** (see *Creature Compendium*, p 31) who is the last resident of Iana. Here Gyras eats, sleeps and lives, surrounded by extraordinary items.

The room is filled with various trinkets, automata and other items, including three **Singing Keledons** (*Creature Compendium*, p 104) who serve as guards when Gyras is at work. Gyras is busy in his forge at the time that the heroes visit this room.

The Singing Keledons do not attack the heroes so long as nothing in the room is disturbed. If the heroes enter combat with the Singing Keledons, Gyras will enter the room after the third round of combat, ready to make pulp out of any intruders.



The Cyclops Gyras, Crafter of Wondrous Items

Important note : The Sextant of Eryximachos is not among the items found in this room. It is in the possession of Gyras, who wears it as a pendant.

The Forge Of Gyras

In this room, the Cyclops Gyras works, crafting wondrous items for the amusement of his master, Hephaestus. Gyras is a curious sort, more interested in his toys than he is in just about anything. However, Gyras does not take kindly to anyone intruding upon his domain and he will happily use his very large hammer against any intruders. Doubly so if they have done any harm to his prized Singing Keledons.

When entering this room, all heroes should make Perception rolls (*Players Manual*, p 45) to notice the well-crafted silver sextant that hangs on a fine chain about Gyras' neck. This is, indeed, the Sextant of Eryximachos. A well-played oration might convince Gyras to part with the Sextant in exchange for the lodestone compass that the priests of Athena gave the party back in Argos. Otherwise, expect combat.

The Sextant In Hand

Whether by guile or by force, the heroes should now be in possession of the Sextant of Eryximachos. With this item in hand, a return to Argos is in order. As with the return from Nemede, the Maze Master is welcome to complicate this trip to taste.

Once the heroes return the Sextant, the priests of Athena will require more than a little time to use it to divine the nature of the threat to Mythika... The next part of *Against Atlantis!* will be published in our next issue and will begin with the priests summoning forth our heroes to send them into the fray once again. In the mean time, don't hesitate to send your heroes forth on additional adventures. Ideally, you should allow them to reach level 3 in the process, giving them a better chance to face the perils that await them... And consider throwing in some Atlantean presence - even if just off-screen - to further set the stage for the incoming storm...

The Sextant of Eryximachos

The Sextant of Eryximachos is a Unique Artifact and the proverbial "Mc Guffin" of this adventure. Maze Masters can remain as mysteriously vague as they wish about its wondrous powers or drop the players a few hints through Thymoetes or the Argosean Priestesses of Athena to whom the heroes are supposed to deliver the item in the end.

The Sextant is a relic from the Age of Magic. Its purpose is to assist in the act of divination by allowing the diviner to "navigate" the stars that affect the future, thereby more effectively charting the waters of time. In the hands of a Priestess of Athena, the Sextant improves the clarity and scope of a Divine Vision. The exact nature of this improvement is left to the Maze Master and should be treated on a case-by-case basis.

BLACK CHAINS OF THE EARTH

Against Atlantis ! (Part Two)

A perilous adventure for a group of valiant adventurers (level 2-3) by **Andrew Trent**



A truly M&M-esque depiction of Prometheus

Maze Master's Introduction

This adventure is the second in a series known as *Against Atlantis!* Within this series noble heroes will partake in several adventures culminating in a direct standoff against the advance guard of an Atlantean invasion force. The adventures in this series will be presented serially in the pages of *Minotaur*.

This adventure is suitable for a party of heroes of level 2-3 and presumes that your players are already united in their quest for adventure. Though not strictly necessary, it will be helpful if at least some of the heroes completed AA1, which was presented in *Minotaur n2*, released in April of 2008.

If your players are veterans of the adventure *The Lost Lair of Laodice* from *Minotaur Quarterly 1* you might want to use Barros "One Eye" (the ship's captain from that adventure) for the various sailing portions associated with one or more of the adventures in the *Against Atlantis!* series. Otherwise, any approach you wish to take to providing your players with a method of sea travel will work just fine.

The information given below is for your eyes only. Players do not necessarily know the following, though they may be aware of some of it if they completed AA1: *The Wisdom of Stones*. Maze Masters should feel free to have as much or as little time as desired pass between the events of AA1 and the beginning of this adventure. The priests of Athena, wise though they may be, are only as fast at divination as you need them to be.

In all cases Maze Masters should complicate or handwave situations as fits their group's needs and play times. Wherever you see an opportunity to extend or compress the action, take advantage of the flexibility of the adventure's design to maximize the fun for you and your players.

The Cult of Prometheus

Aeons ago, before even the Age of Magic, a heresy of unimaginable proportions blighted the face of Mythika. A small group of priests, most dedicated to Zeus himself, set sail for Arcadia in search of Prometheus, with the goal of freeing him from his bonds and benefitting from his wisdom. At first, Zeus and the other gods were mildly amused by the hubris exhibited by the errant humans. But the various priests slowly grew in power, gaining knowledge and artifacts that were not intended for mortals, and the gods began to become wary.

Though they failed to find Prometheus himself, these heretics still held the bringer of fire as their source of inspiration and eventually established the Cult of Prometheus. Atop a high peak in the range of mountains that separates Arcadia from Amazonia they constructed a grand temple, from which they exalted Prometheus above even Zeus.

What began as the ultimate attempt to exert the will of man over the will of the gods ended in divine wrath, as the father of the gods rained death and destruction upon the heretics. Their temple was wiped from the face of the earth and their bodies were warped and bound with chains like those of he

who they sought to venerate. Their women and children were driven from the mountain and perished, plummeting to their doom as the bridge that spanned a great chasm collapsed under the fury of the gods.

In time, all knowledge of the Cult of Prometheus was wiped from Mthika. Yet something remains there in the mountains. A faint flickering of wisdom that even the gods could not unmake.

A Consultation Before Dawn

The priests of Athena have gazed into the future and foreseen great danger to Mythika. Thanks to the efforts of brave heroes - perhaps some of them among your party's number - the lost Sextant of Eryximachos was delivered to the House of Athena in Argos. With this artifact in hand, the priests have seen more clearly the threat and have sent out the call for bold adventurers to take the next step in confronting the shadowy foe.

Trouble rises in the West

Ancient words must be unbound

Find the mountain dispossessed

With flames and chains will victory sound

With these words the high priestess of Athena informs the gathered heroes of their quest.

"You must seek the ruined Temple of Prometheus, and from within rescue the chains that punished the bringer and the infamous fire brought by him. Those unbreakable bonds will provide defense and that sacred light will burn within our breast as we defend our land. Ghosts and spirits await you in this dead place, noble heroes. But only you can perform this task. Athena will protect and guide you so long as your hearts are true to Mythika."

The priests of Athena are aware of the general nature of the various nemeses that the heroes will confront on this adventure, particularly the malevolent spirits that guard the chasm and the chains. To this end, the House of Athena provides the heroes with the Oil of Icelus. This mythic item, a viscous green oil, allows weapons coated with it to wound insubstantial creatures for up to 5 combat rounds. The priests provide 10 complete doses of the magical agent.

The heroes are given plenty of time to prepare for their trek to Arcadia. The priests even provide more than enough funds to provision their ship for the lengthy journey to (and return from) the East.

Heroes may also need to recruit additional sailors to replace any lost crew from AA1 - *The Wisdom of Stones*, or simply to fill out their crew if they are embarking on this adventure without having completed that quest.



The treacherous Aeson

Regardless of whether your heroes are continuing or are starting anew, the Maze Master should ensure that an able-bodied sailor named Aeson is part of the crew. In game terms, Aeson is a Fighter (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 25) who loyally serves with the heroes. Unfortunately, Aeson is actually a spy working for Atlantis and travels with the heroes in an information-gathering role. Until otherwise noted, Aeson will not attempt to hinder the heroes in any way. Instead, he fights nobly beside them and is quick to action when needed.

Act I: Mysterious Arcadia

Arcadia (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 8) is a valley located between the lands of the Amazons and the Thanatari Mountains. Few are the heroes who have ever set foot in Arcadia returned to Mythika. As such, understanding of this mystical place is limited to rumors and legends. This adventure will not attempt to solve the nature of Arcadia, as the author considers that mystery best left to each individual Maze Master. The time your heroes spend in Arcadia can be a source of more than one epic adventure in-and-of itself, if you should so desire.

For this adventure's purposes, only the immediate northern portion of Arcadia's coast is involved. This area is dominated by the foothills that lead north to the Amazonia mountains and should be considered devoid of any sign of civilization. A single encounter within Arcadia itself awaits, and it is with a group of Arimaspians who have wandered far from their normal range. Consider the remainder of Arcadia a blank page to do with as you see fit.

Landing At Arcadia

The voyage to the Arcadian shore can pass as perilously or uneventfully as the Maze Master desires. When at last the heroes do reach Arcadia the gods themselves make clear the landing site, as two **Sea Horses** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 100) linger at the shore, seeming to speak with a single pure white **Oracle Owls** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 87).

Upon being sighted, this conference of divinely favored beasts separate, the Sea Horses diving beneath the waves not to be seen again. The Oracle Owl takes flight northward into the hills, calling to the heroes as it flies.



A surly Arimasgian

Trouble On The Trail

After landing, the heroes must head north towards the mountains to reach the ruins of the Temple of Prometheus. Throughout their journey, the Oracle Owl leads them onward. The Owl never directly approaches the heroes and will actively flee if approached. Its mission is to lead the heroes through the hills and mountains of Arcadia to the site of the temple, nothing more.

A multiple day trek through the hills is required to get to the ruins. On the third day the heroes are beset by a band of bloodthirsty **Arimasprians** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 8). These ruthless foes descend upon the heroes from the east, riding horses and firing their fearsome bows with all of the ferocity they are known for.

The number of Arimasprians involved in this encounter should be equal to the number of heroes plus one. Once three quarters of the Arimasprians have fallen, the rest will begin to retreat to the east. Let your heroes follow them at their peril, for these creatures are unlikely the only dangers that await those who fail to follow the guidance of Athena.

After the skirmish, allow each hero in your party to make a detection roll (see *Players Manual*, p. 45) realize just how far afield these Arimasprians are from their normal range.

Act II: The Haunted Ruins

Two days after the battle with the Arimasprians - the fullness of which include many dangerous mountain passes and difficult climbs - the heroes reach the edge of the great, bottomless chasm that separates the ruins from the rest of the mountain.

A poorly-fashioned, rotting rope bridge spans the 80-foot gap, running alongside the unusable remains of what once must have been a glorious ivory bridge. "Oil your swords! Oil your swords!" cries the Oracle Owl as it races overhead, away from the ruins and back toward the hills whence came the heroes.

The Chasm & The Bridge

The chasm is haunted by the ghosts of the women and children who perished here when Zeus rained his wrath down upon the heretics of Prometheus.

Once a living soul has made it halfway across the bridge the ghosts will begin to rise from the depth of the chasm and swirl about the bridge, attacking any and all who disrupt their restless slumber.

In game terms, these "ghosts" are not classic Ghosts as described in the *Creature Compendium* (p. 44) but gestalt-like, collective Spirits known as **Egregors**. For all purposes, the seemingly endless number of ghosts is really only two entities - one Egregor combining all the ghosts of the women and another one combining all the ghosts of the children. Despite this, the Maze Master is encouraged to describe the situation as hundreds or even thousands of ghosts rising, swarming and lashing out at the heroes on the bridge.

Egregor

Taxonomy : Spirit

Size : Large

Ferocity : Aggressive

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 90'

Initiative : 14

Melee Attack : n/a

Damage : see below

Defense Class : 16

Hits Total : 18

Detection / Evasion : +2

Mystic Fortitude : +8

Special Abilities : Fearsome, Insubstantial, Life-Energy Drain (touch, 1d6, one attack per round), Magic Resistance, Stealthy (16).

Awards : Glory 140, Wisdom 70.

The Large Size of the Egregor reflects the collective nature of the entity and the impression that each Egregor is an entire cohort of distinct beings. This Size gives the Egregor a Hits Total of 18 but does not allow it to make more than one Life-Energy Drain attack per round, which is its only form of attack.

Like all Intangible creatures, Egregors cannot be harmed by mundane weapons, unless these have been coated with the Oil of Icelus.

Once the heroes have all crossed the bridge, the Egregors - if not already destroyed - will retreat into the chasm. If any portion of them remain, the ghostly entities will return to attack the adventurers when they attempt to cross the bridge on their way back after they have recovered the chains and fire of Prometheus from the ruins.

The Blasted Caves Of The Heretics

Just past the point where the rope bridge reaches the far side of the chasm, a wide ledge (Area 1 on the map) spreads to the north and south. All that remains of Prometheus' Temple are a series of caverns dug into the rubble and raw stone of the mountainside. A single opening yawns in the rock face, an unexpectedly warm breeze issues forth from it.

Area 1: The Chained Skeletons

Scattered about Area 1 are countless twisted and misshapen human skeletons, each draped in heavy chains. As the heroes approach the entrance to the caverns, these skeletons rise, and unnatural fire in their hollow eye sockets and their chains clanking and clattering. The skeletons immediately engage the heroes in combat.

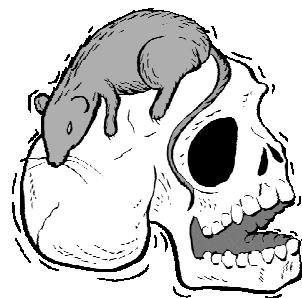
The number of skeletons involved in this battle can be varied as needed by the Maze Master, but should number no fewer than 2 per hero. There are more than enough bones and chains in this area to provide well over 10 actual skeletons per hero - so feel free to keep the dead rising if the heroes are too full of hubris.

The only weapons of these **Skeletons** are their heavy chains, which they use to ensnare, strangle and constrict their opponents : in game terms, they have the same characteristics as standard Skeletons (see the *Creature Compendium* p 105), plus the *Grapple* and *Crushing Damage* special abilities, which are their only form of attack. Their chains also prevent them from *Charging into Battle*. See below for their detailed characteristics.

Area 2: Lair of the Fallen

This cavern reeks of excrement and animal odor. It is occupied by a dozen or so descendants of the few Prometheans who survived the wrath of Zeus. These pathetic creatures have long since lost their humanity and are little more than feral cannibals. Use the statistics for **Degenerate Men** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 34). These creatures fight to the death, gleefully biting and ripping at the flesh of any fallen heroes with wild abandon and no concern for the others in their number.

The largest of these Fallen Prometheans wears a **Ring of Good Fortune** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 43) as a sign of his status as leader of this tribe of foul flesh-eaters.



The latest in Skeleton fashion

Chained Skeleton

Taxonomy : Animate

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Aggressive

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 13

Melee Attack : +2

Damage : 1d6 (crushing)

Defense Class : 15

Hits Total : 8

Detection / Evasion : 0

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Crushing Damage (chains, 1d6), Fearsome, Grapple (chains, Might 16), Mindless.

Awards : Glory 50, Wisdom 20.

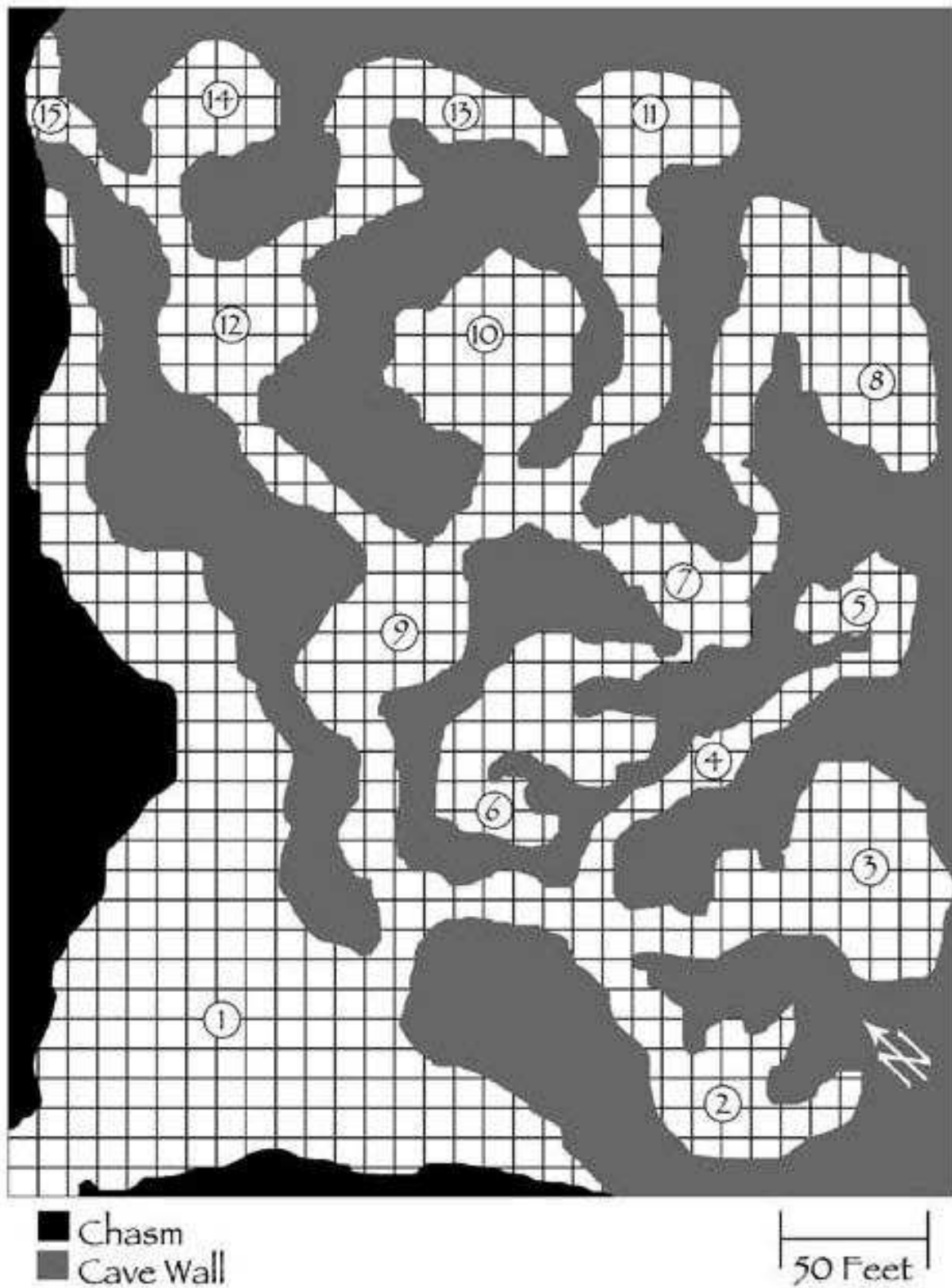
Area 3: Too Many Bones

This room is filled with numerous piles of bones and chains, which promptly animate into skeletons like those encountered in Area 1. There isn't much to be said for the victims of Zeus' wrath other than that they are largely consistent in their hatred of all who serve any other than Prometheus.

Area 4: A Pit!

This area contains a pit trap (see *M&M Companion*, p. 29), constructed to capture anyone or anything that approaches Area 5. This is a Falling / Entrapment trap (1d6 damage) to anyone unlucky enough to fall into it. This trap can be avoided, detected and disarmed as described in the Traps rules. Its Concealment Rating is 15 and its Danger Rating is 20. Nasty Maze Masters may consider adding stakes to the bottom of the pit, for a Direct Damage effect of +1d6 (total 2d6 damage).

BLACK CHAINS OF THE EARTH ADVENTURE MAP





Orlos the Mad Immortal

Area 5: Lair of the Eternal Priest

This area serves as the resting place of the high priest of the Prometheans, Orlos Tegyrus.

Like all great offenders of Zeus, Orlos received a special punishment. Rather than simply be destroyed Orlos was cursed to eternal life and bound to the ruins of his cult's temple, forced to live forever in the knowledge of his defeat. The "immortal" Orlos is completely, irremediably mad and will immediately attack any and all who enter his demesne, using his terrible *Soul Rending Shriek* (see below).

Orlos clearly used to be a man of noble bearing, but countless years and the torment of having his life's work utterly destroyed by the gods have left him twisted into something altogether different.

When Zeus decided to punish Orlos for his hubris, the king of the gods didn't hold back at all, damning Orlos with the curse of eternal life without the benefit of eternal youth. Orlos now appears as what a mummy without bandages might look - his dry, desiccated skin is stretched tightly across dry, enduring bones. His features are sunken and his eyes burn with a madness and rage that fills onlookers with a terror that chills their very souls. He wears the tattered and faded remnants of the opulent priestly robes that he affected in centuries past. He cackles madly in an ancient dialect and his words seldom make sense to the sane listener. Wherever he travels within the caverns the aroma of cloves and lamp oil lingers in the air.

Unlike other creatures found in these ruins, Orlos is intelligent and canny. He is unable to leave the caverns, but has free mobility within them, thanks to his unique special ability of *Phase Shifting* (see his description below).

Orlos

Taxonomy : Spirit

Description : See main text.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Clever

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 16

Melee Attack : +4

Damage : see below

Defense Class : 16

Hits Total : 16

Detection / Evasion : +8 / +6

Mystic Fortitude : +8

Special Abilities : Fearsome, Magic Resistance, Phase Shifting, Sixth Sense, Soul Rending Shriek, Stealthy (16), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards : Glory 120, Wisdom 200.

***Phase Shifting** is a limited form of Insubstantiality that allows Orlos to vanish at will into the walls of the caverns and travel to other areas of the ruins in this manner. It costs him 1 Hit to activate (with no extra cost for reverting back to his fully material form). This special ability adds +10 to his Glory and Wisdom awards.*

***Soul Rending Shriek** allows Orlos to inflict damage on others by emitting a terrible, supernatural piercing scream : this attack occurs during the Missile phase, according to Orlos' Initiative, but requires no attack roll and affects all beings within earshot. Targets must make a Mystic Fortitude saving roll (target number of 15) or suffer 1d6 Hits of damage and be unable to move, attack or use magic for the rest of the round.*

During the next round, characters with a higher Initiative than Orlos (16) will be able to attempt a missile attack against him (provided their weapon is prepared) before he utters a new shriek.

*Those who cover their ears after the first shriek will suffer no damage (no saving roll needed) from subsequent shrieks but will obviously be unable to attempt any action requiring the use of their hands – which includes all melee or missile attacks, but not magical ones like *Psychic Attack* or *Divine Wrath* (except for Lyrist, who must play their lyre to use their magic). This unique ability adds +20 to Orlos' Glory and Wisdom awards.*

Area 6: A Light Beneath The Rubble

This cavern has caved in and is completely impassible. A perception roll against a target number of 20 should be made for each hero entering this area. A successful roll allows the hero(es) to spot a glint of metal just poking out from beneath an area of the cave in . This metal is the blade of a Sword of the Underworld. This mythic weapon can be recovered if noticed and might well prove useful a little further into the caves.

Area 7: A Web Of Troubles

This area is thick with spider webs, and seems much cooler than any of the surrounding caves. Heroes may be allowed a detection roll (see *Players Manual*, p. 45) to notice the two deadly **Cave Spiders** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 49) who occupy this room. Maze Masters should be sure to take the spiders' Stealthy (14) into account when making this check. Their poison causes death in 1d6 rounds.

Should the heroes survive this encounter and want to push deeper into this cave, they will find that the passages to the East (towards Area 8) and West (towards Area 6) have been webbed-over by the spiders to such a degree that a Feat of Strength (see *Players Manual*, p. 44) is required to pass through to those areas.

Area 8: The Sleeping Flame

The floor of this cavern crunches underfoot, as loose gravel slips and pottery shards crack and crumble. As the heroes enter more deeply into this area they begin to see clay statues human bodies lining the edges of the cave. Each of these is incomplete, though, missing an arm here, a head there, and so on. The damage to the forms lessens the further onward the heroes press.

At the far end of the cave stands one perfect statue. Its form is exquisite and its features bring to mind even fairest Apollo. A small flame can be seen to flicker through a grated door into its chest, where its heart would beat were it alive.

This statue is the last remaining **Promethean Golem**. The fire within its chest is the last remnant of the fire that Prometheus stole from the gods and brought to man. If the heroes attempt to open the door into the statue's chest, it animates and will attack the party ferociously. It will not willingly allow the fire to be removed under any circumstances. If the heroes attempt to move the statue without tampering with the fire, it remains inanimate and can be hauled from this place back to Argos.

If the Promethean Golem is reduced to zero Hits, it is incapacitated but the Flame will continue to burn in its chest... unless it is extinguished by the characters, in which case the Flame will be lost to the world forever and the Promethean Golem will dissolve into dust.



The Last of the Promethean Golems

Promethean Golem

Taxonomy : Animate

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 12

Melee Attack : +4

Damage : 1d6 (fists)

Defense Class : 22

Hits Total : 16

Detection / Evasion : 0

Mystic Fortitude : +8

Special Abilities : Grapple (Might 16), Crushing Damage (after successful grapple), Mindless, Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Regeneration, Supernatural Vigor.

Awards : Glory 100, Wisdom 60.

The Flame burning in its chest is the source of the Golem's Regeneration powers.



- Wings in the Dark - that's us !

Area 9: Wings In The Dark

This large chamber has high ceilings that extend far beyond any light source the heroes might have. The floor here is covered in guano and is slick to the point of imposing a -2 to EDC for all grounded parties engaging in combat.

A swarm of **Giant Bats** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 47) makes its home in this area, hence the guano. The bats attack promptly, but flee to their perches if seriously wounded. There are up to two bats per hero in this encounter.

Area 10: Black Chains Of The Earth

This large cavern is all that remains of the once-great trove of artifacts that the Cult of Prometheus gathered. The walls of this cave are adorned with silver and gold chalices, great woven tapestries depicting the deeds of Prometheus, his punishment and the discovery by the Cult of the promethean chains high atop a storm-wracked peak.

The few remaining treasures found here include the following items:

- * **Chains of Prometheus**
- * **Beta Ray Wand**
- * 3-dose phial of **Cocytus Water**
- * Full flask of **Medea's Ointment**
- * **Wand of Fire**
- * **Ring of the Elements: Fire**

For details on these items, see the *Maze Masters Guide* (chapter IV).

This area is guarded over by **Charonts** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 27) - the spirits of the triumvirate of priests who found and retrieved the Chains of Prometheus. Their number should be equal to 50% of the party's size, rounded up (eg if there are five heroes, there will be three Charonts). These creatures will defend their hoard with all their might, wielding their Hammers of Hades like demons possessed.

If combat with the Charonts lasts for more than 5 rounds, Orlos Tegyrus (see Area 10) will, if he has not yet been defeated by the heroes, arrive to assist in the defense of the artifacts.

Area 11: Restless Shadows

A fire burns atop a rough stone altar that stands in the middle of this room, casting eerie shadows upon the walls. Amongst these shadows are **Shadows** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 103), 1 per hero inside this chamber. These malevolent things attack only after 75% of the heroes have entered the room. They fight to the death, but for each hero that falls so too does a shadow cease to exist.

If the heroes think to douse the fire that burns upon the altar, all of the shadows vanish immediately. The creatures will not return in the presence of a different light source.

Area 12: The Hidden Temple

This area is clearly more than a simple cavern. It seems more like a temple that was swallowed whole by the earth itself. Broken marble columns, benches and other structures form most of the walls of this space. A single shaft of sunlight filters down from a fissure in the distant ceiling.

As the heroes enter this area, one of the columns animates and becomes a **Living Caryatid** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 70). This monstrosity seeks to enact the vengeance of all the slain Prometheans upon any breathing creature within its sight. It will focus single-mindedly on any whose primary allegiance is to Zeus first, following on to other beings only after those who cleave to the destroyer have been eliminated.

Area 13: Familiar Foes

This area serves as home to a second tribe of Fallen Prometheans (see Area 2 p 13 for more information). Only 8 of these creatures remain, two recently having been lost to the bats in Area 9.

Like their counterparts in Area 2, these Fallen Prometheans attack instantly and with an insatiable bloodlust. The leader of this tribe wears a **Ring of Mystic Lore** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 43) as his emblem of authority.

Area 14: A Ring Of Stones

This barren hole in the earth is empty save for multiple shapes laid out in stones across its floor. This chamber has served as the Fallen Prometheans' gathering space, where they have attempted to recapture some faint glimmer of the knowledge their ancestors once held. To date the best they have accomplished are a few simple words poorly produced by laying out stones to form letters. The words Fire, Sin and Chain are recognizable, but nothing else can be discerned.

Hidden amongst these stone words the heroes may be unlucky enough to come across a **Rocky Python** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 95) masquerading as an Omicron. The Rocky Python, naturally, will attack the heroes and fight until destroyed.

Area 15: The Manticore's Ledge

This is a ledge that looks out to far mountains and down upon the endless chasm below. It serves as the sometimes home of a **Manticore** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 73) that dwells in these mountains.

If the heroes are already seriously wounded or weakened, the Maze Master should simply decide that the Manticore is not here at the moment. If, on the other hand, the characters have been exceptionally lucky so far (or, then the fell creature should definitely be around... Alternatively, the Maze Master may decide to treat the Manticore as a "wandering monster", present on a 1d6 roll equal to or lower than the highest level in the party (ie if the most powerful hero in the group is level 3, the Manticore shows up on a roll of 1-3).

If the Manticore is indeed present, it attacks without mercy but will flee if it takes more than 50% of its Hits in damage.

Further, the passageway that leads to this area is too small for the Manticore to pass through, so the heroes should be able to retreat back towards area 14 if they choose to flee in the face of battle with the terrible beast.

A battered **Breastplate of Ares** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 37) can be found on this ledge, along with the not-very-recent remains of its former owner and occupant.

Act III: The Enemy Revealed

After facing the perils of the Caverns, the heroes must make their way back down from the mountains, across Arcadia and back to their ship. But nothing is ever that easy. If you are feeling particularly cruel, the Manticore from Area 15 could easily be circling Area 1 - looking for a meal if it was not encountered or seeking to finish the fight if it was. Please note, though, that this is not *required* to happen. Only throw these challenges at the heroes if they are of sufficient strength to face them.

There's still one more major battle to go, and we wouldn't want Mythika to succumb to the enemy just because of a random Manticore, now would we?

A Battle On The Beach

Upon reaching the site where they landed, the heroes are greeted by the dismal sight of a battle on the shore - a battle survived by very few of the heroes' crew.

Anchored off the coast next to the heroes' ship stands a proud Atlantean War Galley. The galley is under the command of Pylos of Atlantis, an **Atlantean Noble** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 9). Like most Atlantean Nobles, Pylos is accompanied by a contingent of **Atlantean War Slaves** (see the *Creature Compendium*, p. 9); their number should be equal to 150% of the characters (round up): thus, if there are three characters in the party, there will be five Atlantean War Slaves.

Pylos and his War Slaves have been sent to take the Chains of Prometheus and any other artifacts recovered by the heroes in the name of Atlantis.

Pylos' arrogance prevents him from giving up the fight even if the tide of battle turns against him. He will taunt the heroes throughout the battle, describing how their precious Mythika will soon be despoiled by the might of Atlantis just as it was in ancient times.

Aeson the Traitor - whether he accompanied the heroes to the caverns or was left at the ship - shows his true allegiance in this battle. He fights alongside Pylos and the War Slaves, alternately cursing the heroes and imploring them to surrender and join with Atlantis.

Aeson is Enslaved by Pylos (see *Players Manual*, p. 40) and if Pylos is killed he will break free of the Enslavement and rejoin the heroes - if they accept him. At the end of the battle, a freed Aeson weeps and confesses that it was he who revealed the heroes' mission to the Atlantean.

Aftermath!

If the heroes defeat Pylos they will find themselves in possession of an **Atlantean War Galley** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p. 45). This is a good thing, since they are unlikely to have the crew necessary to sail home normally. This amazing creation may also serve the heroes well as they prepare to deal with the approaching forces of Atlantis.

The heroes should now make their way back to Argos to deliver the Promethean Chains and the Fire of Prometheus to the House of Athena. The priests were never very clear about just what purposes these artifacts would serve. But the heroes should know by now that priests have their own ways of approaching things.

The adventure can resolve quickly back to Argos or can be drawn out into a veritable odyssey across countless Mysterious Islands at the whim of the Maze Master.

The third (and final?) installment of *Against Atlantis!* will appear in the next issue of *Minotaur*. Until then, Maze Masters should feel free to send their heroes on other quests and expeditions to keep them busy and hopefully earn them enough experience to reach a suitable "Save Mythika From Atlantis" power level - likely at or around 5th level.

Against Atlantis ! (Part Three)

WRATH OF THE SEA WITCH

An epic adventure for a group of high-level heroes (level 5-6) by **Andrew Trent**

Maze Master's Introduction

This adventure is the third and final installment in a series known as *Against Atlantis!* Within this series noble heroes will partake in several adventures culminating in a direct standoff against the advance guard of an Atlantean invasion force. This adventure is suitable for a party of heroes of at least level 5 and presumes that your players are already united in their quest for adventure. Though not strictly necessary, it will be helpful if at least some of the heroes completed AA1 & AA2, which were presented in *Minotaur* n°2 and 3.

Maze Master's Note : If your players are veterans of the adventure *Laodice's Lair* from MQ 1 you might want to use Barros "One Eye" (the ship's captain from that adventure) for the various sailing portions associated with one or more of the adventures in the *Against Atlantis!* series. Otherwise, any approach you wish to take to providing your players with a method of sea travel will work just fine.

The Sea Witch and the Ragged King

Long centuries ago, at the dawn of the Age of Magic, a beautiful Elementalist named Psamathe travelled about Mythika in the company of Anaxis lasos, a young Minean noble third in line to be ruler of Thena. Over the course of their adventures Psamanthe fell deeply in love with Anaxis and she grew ever more jealous and possessive of the hero.

Sadly, Psamanthe's stormy affections were unrequited, and despite her charms and wiles Anaxis remained true to both his duty to Thena and to his heart, which belonged to the third daughter of the king of Heraklia, Callianessa the Fair.

Slowly, Psamanthe devised a plan by which she hoped to win the love of Anaxis forever. At first, Psamanthe sought to use her powers to drive a soft wedge between Anaxis and Callianessa.

But each plot failed and Psamanthe grew ever more wrathful and less gentle in her approach. In time she grew so aggressive that her efforts killed Callianessa outright. She was subtle even in this, though, and none - least of all Anaxis - suspected her of the crime.



The beautiful Psamanthe

Throughout the years various calamities befell the King of Thena and his two eldest sons, placing a still mourning Anaxis on the throne.

Psamanthe was ever at his side, seeking to comfort her love and, at the same time, hoping that he would at last return her affections. Instead, Anaxis went slowly mad, haunted by visions of dead Callianessa, convinced that her death had been orchestrated by war mongering factions within Heraklia who felt that their relationship would lead to a noble of Thenan lineage one day sitting on the Heraklian throne.

King Anaxis, who had come to be known throughout Mythika as "The Ragged King" because of his precarious mental state, eventually lost his mind completely and began a disastrous war against Heraklia. Psamanthe served her king throughout the war, doing her best to shield him from harm, all the while still endeavoring to win his love.

When Anaxis was mortally wounded in a great battle Psamanthe grew bold and openly declared her love for him. In one last moment of clarity Anaxis chided the elementalist, telling her plainly that he had never loved her, nor could he have. His duty to the noble house of lasos demanded that he never take a wielder of magic for a bride.



The fearsome Sea Witch !

Then, realizing the mistakes he had made and finally understanding the true cause of Callianessa's death, Anaxis died, cursing Psamanthe's name to all who could hear as he did.

Psamanthe, now revealed as the murderer of Callianessa and the cause of the brutal war between Thena and Heraklia, fled to the West. Her hatred of all things Minean festered even as her powers grew. In time, she ceased to be Psamanthe at all, her rage and hatred and dark powers turning her into something else entirely. She became simply the **Sea Witch** - a terrible force of destruction, casting a long shadow in the light of the setting sun.

Years passed, and the Sea Witch raged. Decades passed, and the Sea Witch plotted countless ways to destroy the land of the three cities for the indignities she suffered at the hands of their Ragged King.

Centuries passed and the Sea Witch sought allies to deliver her wrath.

And now, a small group of ambitious Atlantean Nobles, leading an army of The Sea Witch's making, stands ready to crush Minean civilization.

There is little that can prevent the war that is coming to Mythika. The Sea Witch's power is immense, some might say unstoppable. And yet, the Gods know of ways that even the most unstoppable juggernaut can be restrained...

Origin Of The Sea Witch

It is left to the individual Maze Master how much, if any, his players (as well as the population of Mythika at large) know of the story of the Sea Witch and the Ragged King. The key events of the story took place long ago and may well be lost to time. But the Sea Witch is a very real and present danger, so her unnaturally long life may have kept at least some of the story alive as well.

More likely, the story has turned and twisted over the centuries and countless conflicting legends surround her "birth." Some brief possibilities include:

- a) The Sea Witch came to Mythika from Atlantis, where she was a widowed queen.
- b) The Sea Witch, who is the daughter of Poseidon and a human woman, was driven mad by Nereids who grew jealous of the god's love for her and her mother.
- c) The Sea Witch is the spurned lover of a great Umbrian ruler.

And so on. Maze Masters should feel free to give as much or as little detail regarding her origin as they feel will help their players get the most enjoyment from the adventure. And yes, if one truly wished to engineer a *Redemption of Psamathe* variation on the adventure that follows one could easily do so.

Maze Mastering AA3

Maze Masters should feel free to have as much or as little time as desired pass between the events of AA2 (*Black Chains of the Earth*) and the beginning of this new adventure.

If your players did not take part in AA2 then treat this scenario as if someone else had successfully returned with the Promethean Chains, the Fire of Prometheus and the Atlantean War Galley that served as rewards in that adventure. If, on the other hand, your players took part in that adventure but somehow failed to return with the chains and the fire, be aware that there will be some additional challenges that they must overcome in this adventure.

In all cases Maze Masters should complicate or handwave situations as fits their group's needs and play times. Wherever you see an opportunity to extend or compress the action, take advantage of the flexibility of the adventure's design to maximize the fun for you and your players.



A Priestess of Athena using the fabled Sextant of Eryximachos (See ? We did use the illo in the end !)

Background Information

Warning : The information in this section is for the Maze Master's eyes only. Players do not necessarily know the following, though they may be aware of some of it if they completed AA1: *The Wisdom of Stones* (Minotaur n°2) and AA2: *Black Chains of the Earth* (Minotaur n°3).

The priestesses of Athena in Argos once again seek brave souls to help defend the whole of Mythika from a burgeoning cloud of disaster.

The call has gone out for heroes who are stout of heart and sturdy of spirit to sail to the west to confront an overly ambitious band of Atlantean Nobles who, together with various nefarious allies, seek to subjugate the free peoples of Mythika to the will of that distant, malevolent kingdom.

After the various surviving heroes returned from Arcadia, bearing the Promethean Chains and the Fire of Prometheus aboard a captured Atlantean War Galley, the soothsayers in the House of Athena set about using the fabled Sextant of Eryximachos to determine where best to strike against the Atlantean forces.

After a number of days the visions became clear and it was determined that the heroes should set sail for the island of Xandare, three weeks west of Argos, deep in the Umbrian Sea.

Via a different course, the amassed armies of Argos, Heraklia and Thena will sail for Xandare as well, where they will engage the Atlantean forces in a desperate battle for the fate of Mythika.

The heroes are entrusted once again with the Promethean Chains and the Fire of Prometheus that were rescued from Arcadia.

To ensure that the Atlantean forces do not succeed in their plot to conquer Mythika, the heroes will need to visit the island of Xandare and re-light the Great

Lighthouse in the ruined city of Nes with the Fire of Prometheus. Once so lit, the power of the lighthouse will ward off the dark forces that are in league with the Atlanteans and the Sea Witch, greatly reducing the antagonists' strength.

The heroes are also informed that the Chains of Prometheus are to be used to bind the Sea Witch herself. So bound her magic will be imprisoned as well, leaving her unable to enhance and support the Atlantean forces, making it much more likely that the armies of Mythika will be able to triumph.

No Galley, No Fire, No Chains ?

No Galley

If somehow the heroes who took part in AA2 did not recover (or have subsequently lost) the Atlantean War Galley, simply replace it with the **Titan's Grace**, a small but sturdy Argosean ship with a skeleton crew lead by Captain Syagros of Thena, for the galley.

The crew of the Titan's Grace is limited to the barest number of men needed to man the ship, and as such these sailors and their captain are unable to assist the heroes in any tasks that involve going ashore. Captain Syagros is fiercely defensive of his men and knows that should a single one of them be lost then the voyage is doomed to failure.

The ship has all the usual characteristics of a round ship (see *Players Manual*, p 42-43), except for its exceptional Fortune bonus of +3, which reflects the ship's own good luck (the Titan's Grace has already weathered quite a few perilous voyages) as well as the discreet attention of Athena herself.

No Fire

If the heroes who took part in AA2 failed to retrieve the Fire of Prometheus things are going to be difficult for them.

Without the fire to re-light the Great Lighthouse of Xandare, the final battle will feature a tremendous number of spirit opponents who would otherwise be held at bay by the power of the lighthouse. Heroes and armies alike will find themselves greatly outnumbered.

No Chains

If the heroes who took part in AA2 failed to return with the Promethean Chains, this adventure will prove all but impossible.

Without the chains to bind the Sea Witch and keep her foul magics in check, her enhancements to the Atlantean forces will make them almost unstoppable.

Act I : To Sail To War

After a reasonable time has been allotted for the heroes to procure any supplies they feel that they need, they should set sail westward towards their destiny. Throughout Argos the heroes are recognized and treated with respect and graciousness.

Note, though, that the heroes cannot recruit any additional sailors or warriors to accompany them since all able-bodied men and women are already committed to the forces that will directly engage the Atlanteans at Xandare.

Once underway, trouble begins. The Sea Witch is well-aware of the heroes and their mission, and she seeks to stop them before they can arrive at Xandare and attempt to turn the tide of the battle.

Her powers are divided among the strains of raising the strength of the Atlantean force, summoning and controlling the spirits who will supplement those forces and trying to interfere with the heroes' mission. It is this very division of power that prevents the Sea Witch from crushing the heroes outright.

Using her magical and elemental powers, the Sea Witch constantly attempts to whip up a severe storm to dispatch the heroes. To reflect this, the Maze Master should add 5 to any and all weather rolls (*Players Manual*, p. 42) made for the voyage.

In addition to her weather manipulation, the Sea Witch sends the following foes are set against the heroes during the voyage to Xandare.

Attack of the Roc

Some several days (1d6+4, if you like) out from Argos, the heroes' ship is beset by a **Roc** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 94).

The Roc seeks to destroy the heroes' ship with well-placed Crushing Missiles. If possible, the Roc will also try to steal the Promethean Chains by seizing any hero who is carrying them and flying off to its remote island lair a few short hours sailing distance away, just at the edge of the horizon.

If the chains are lost in this fashion, the heroes may adjust their course and attempt to rescue their comrade and the chains. The heroes will only have 2 full days to accomplish this side trek before they must return to their trip to Xandare.

Any further delay will result in the force of Atlantis engaging the forces of Mythika without having been weakened by the heroes.

The Roc, driven to this brazen attack by the magic of the Sea Witch, will cease its attacks after 7 full rounds or after it has sustained 25 points of damage. The Sea Witch does not have enough power to force the Roc to fight until death.



Deadly Horns of the Sea : the Quinotaur

Attack of the Quinotaurs

Several days' worth of smooth sailing are brought to an end when (1d6+3 days after the Attack of the Roc), the Sea Witch brings forth a trio of **Quinotaurs** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 91) to deal with the heroes. The Quinotaurs' sole aim is to destroy the heroes utterly. They will fight to the death and will not flee under any circumstances.

Attack of the Fomoroi

If the heroes have survived the first two encounters, the Sea Witch is prepared (after 1d6+2 days) to bring forth her most dangerous allies, a pair of Fomoroi (see Fomoros, *Creature Compendium*, p. 42).

The Fomoroi seek to sink the ship, extinguishing the Fire of Prometheus forever. These Fomoroi are, like the Roc and Quinotaurs before them, driven by the will of the Sea Witch. The Maze Master may choose to have these foul creatures fight as long as desired.

Act II : The Lighthouse Of Nes

On the western side of the island of Xandare lies the ruined city of Nes.

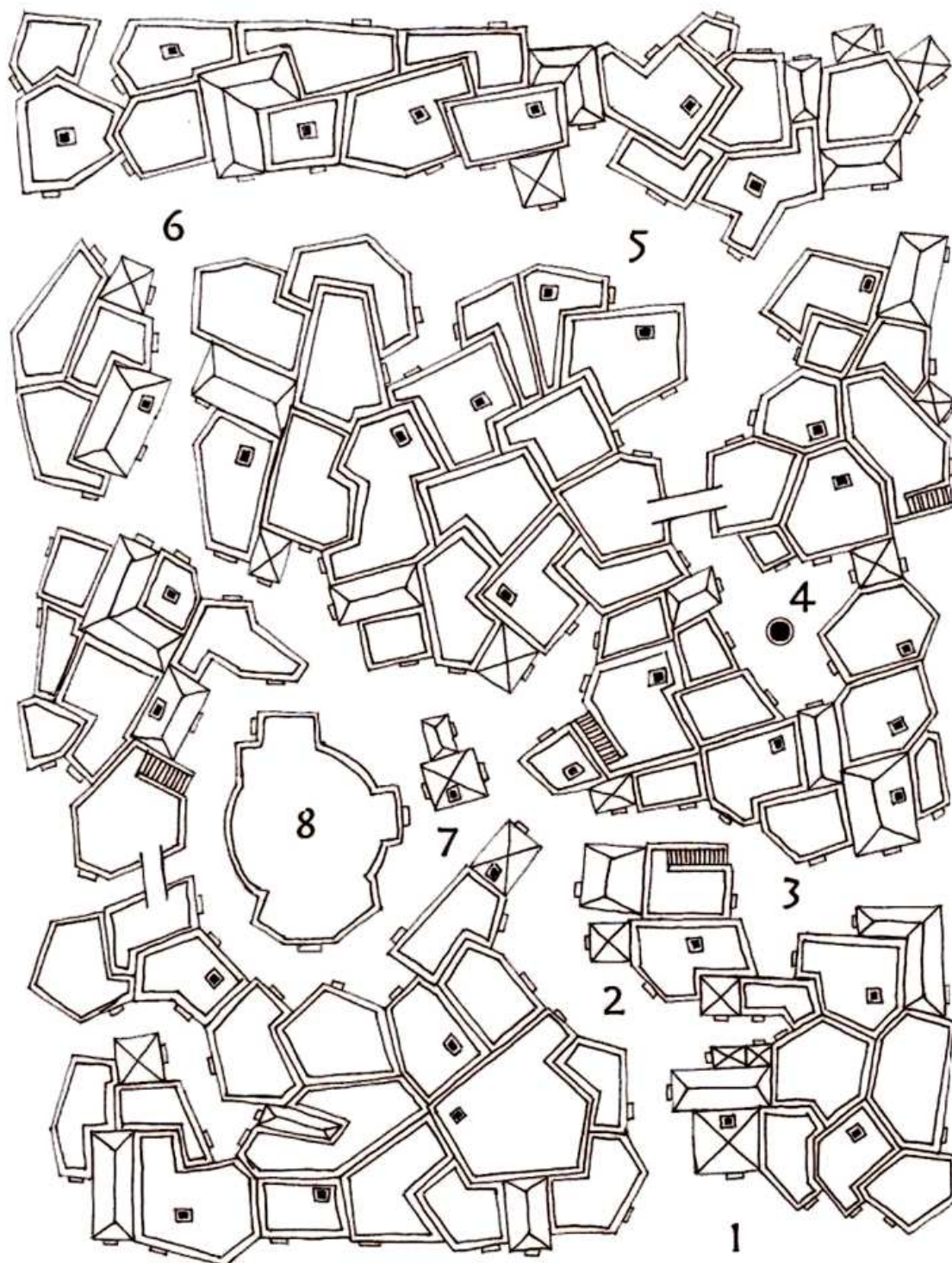
Once a great kingdom that stood as a bulwark against various invaders from the West, Nes is now little more than a shattered relic from a distant time.

The Great Lighthouse, which used to guide Minean ships home as well as serve as a bold warning to all those who sought to enter into the realm of the Land of the Three Cities with harm on their minds, stands unbroken against the sky, its light long extinguished.

Here, amidst these ruins, the heroes must make their way to the top of the Lighthouse and re-ignite the lamp with a flame more powerful than any in the world, the Fire of Prometheus.

Wrath of the Sea Witch – Adventure Map

The Ruins of Nes



THE RUINS OF NES

Check out <http://paratime.ca/cartography/> for more fantastic maps by Tim Hartin !

Landing at Nes

The waters of the bay above which Nes sits are dark and still. The heroes' ship glides silently towards the docks.

As the ship lands, though, the waters churn with hellish life, as a dozen or more **Sons of Dagon** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 106) spring from beneath the waves to engage the heroes before they can set foot on the firm ground of the city.

The Ruins of Nes

From the docks where the heroes make landfall it is a short climb up a gently sloping and unguarded road to the city of Nes itself. Getting from the periphery of the city to the Lighthouse is an altogether different, and more dangerous, journey.

The streets of Nes are mazelike and strewn with giant rocks and rubble, as well as numerous guards and dangers put in place by the Sea Witch and her Atlanean allies.

Refer to the map **Ruins Of Nes** (see previous page) for this portion of the adventure.

1. The Sleepless Guard

The primary entrance into Nes from the docks below is guarded by 5 tireless **Midas Men** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 75).

These Animates stand ready to attack any who enter the ruins of Nes.

2. The Sleeping Guard

As a backup to the Midas Men (*The Sleepless Guard*, above) the Atlanteans have stationed a force of 10 **Atlantean War Slaves** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 9) here.

Unless the battle in Area 1 grew particularly noisy, these guards are found lounging about lazily.

3. Plaza of the Temples

This area used to be home to multiple temples when Nes was a thriving city.

Scattered amongst the ruins are one or two **Living Caryatids** (one if there are four heroes or less, two if there are five or more – see *Creature Compendium*, p. 70) that will attack any who enter this area.

Note: If the heroes are accompanied by Kypris and Aglaia (see *Unlikely Allies*, below) then the Living Caryatids do not attack.



So, where is this blasted Plaza, anyway ?

4. Unlikely Allies

Kypris and Aglaia, a pair of **Alseids** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 5) make their home here, guarding the long-dry well of Nes. So long as the heroes remain respectful, both of the Alseids as well as their city, these two spirits will actively seek to aid the heroes on the remainder of the journey. Nothing would please the Alseids more than to see the Sea Witch bound and removed from their domain.

5. Giant Slug Attack !

Nes has been abandoned for so long that the stranger forms of life on Xandare have begun to encroach upon it. This area is home to a **Giant Slug** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 48), that attacks any who enter this portion of the city.

6. Plaza of the Sirens

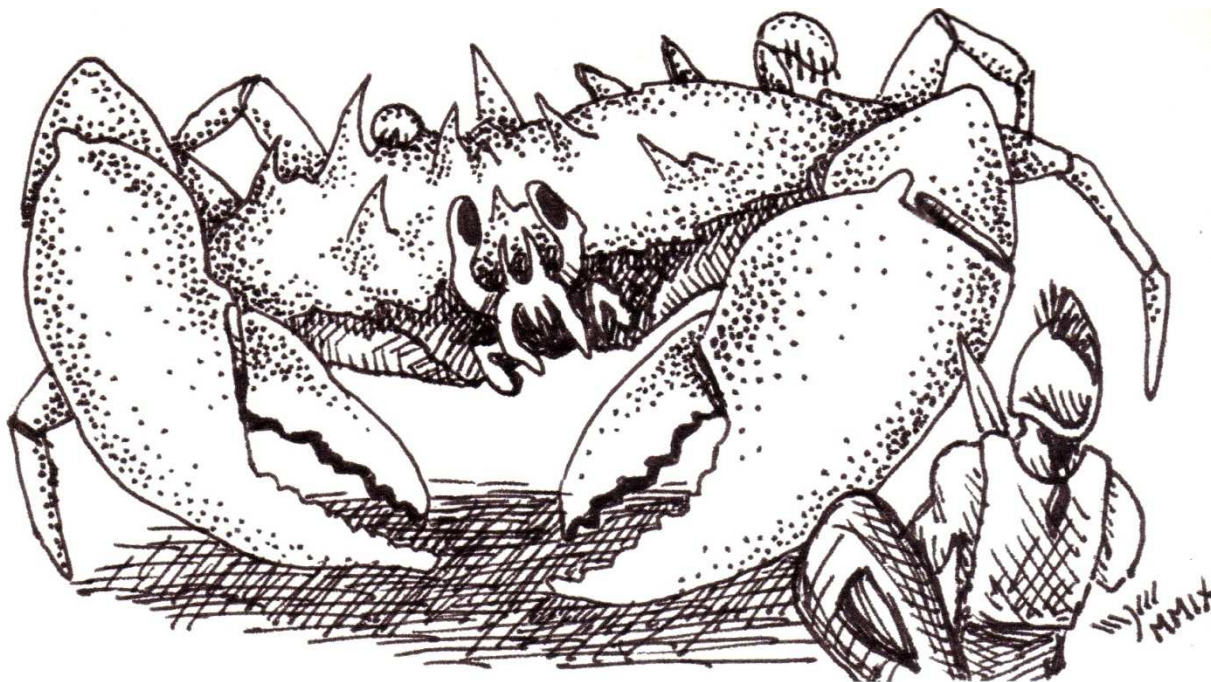
A small force (equal to the size of the party) of **Sirens** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 105) makes its home in this area, awaiting the coming battle against the Mythikan army. Most of the Sirens are away at any given time, aerially surveying the island in advance of the battle. Those that remain fiercely attack all who encroach upon their territory.

7. Plaza of the Crabs

Around the base of the lighthouse the Sea Witch has gathered three **Giant Crabs** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 47), summoned from the depths of the Umbrian Sea. These ravenous creatures attack relentlessly.

8. Inside The Lighthouse

The ground floor of the lighthouse, which contains the winding marble stairs that led to its pinnacle, is occupied by **K'aanzere**, an unspeakable Crab Demon from beyond the sea of space. This eldritch horror exists solely to devour the flesh and souls of men.



Facing K'aanzere the Crab Demon from Beyond
(illustration by M.J. Walton)

K'aanzere Crab Demon from Beyond

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : Absolutely unspeakable (see illo).

Size : Large

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 14

Melee Attack : +6

Damage : 2d6 (pincers)

Defense Class : 20

Hits Total : 30

Detection / Evasion : 0

Mystic Fortitude : +4

Special Abilities : Fearsome, Mindless, Grapple (Might = 20), Natural Armor, Regeneration (2 Hits per battle round), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards : Glory 320, Wisdom 40.

Once the heroes have successfully entered the Lighthouse and defeated K'aanzere, they must still ascend the winding marble stairs to the lamp, which must be lit with the fire of Prometheus. But things are seldom as simple as one would hope: there are a few more obstacles along the way.

A Difficult Climb

A winding marble stairway cut into the exterior of the monolith that is the Lighthouse of Nes leads to the top, where the heroes must ignite the flame with the Fire of Prometheus.

From platforms and landings at different levels, a number (150% of the party) of **Atlantean War Slaves** (*Creature Compendium*, p. 9) hurl javelins at the heroes as they climb.

These small groups will enter into melee combat as they are reached.

The Atlantean Guard

The long stairway reaches a new level at last, but peace is not to be found on this floor.

Here, directly beneath the Lighthouse's lamp stands Tereus and Taxiles, **Atlantean Nobles** and a group of **Atlantean War Slaves** (see *Creature Compendium*, p. 9, for both) equal to twice the size of the party.

This group will fight to the death in order to keep the heroes from reaching the top of the Lighthouse.

To Tame The Witch

High atop the Lighthouse, where the wind howls and a light rain has begun to fall (making the area dangerously slippery) the lamp of the Lighthouse sits dark as night. As the heroes approach to light it, though, the Sea Witch herself appears and engages the heroes in battle...

As a result of her eldritch powers of the forces of the sea and sky, the heroes will be unable to light the lamp until they have dealt with the Sea Witch, either by defeating her outright or by successfully binding her with the Promethean Chains. The heroes must defeat the Witch in order to light the lamp.

Binding the Sea Witch with the Promethean Chains without defeating her in combat will not be easy, but it is possible. To bind the Sea Witch one character must succeed in a Wrestling attack (*Players Manual*, p. 26) against her in the same round – which will be no mean feat given her prodigious Defense Class.

If the Sea Witch does not manage to break free from the grapple (as per the usual wrestling rules), her attacker will then be able to bind her with the Promethean Chains. Up to three characters may attempt to grapple the Sea Witch in the same battle round ; if several of them succeed, she will have to *break free* from each attack separately, thereby increasing the chances of the heroes.

Once bound, she will shriek and scream and curse the heroes with foul words and dark oaths (though no magic is actually wrought) as she writhes in pain under the weight of the chains.

Slowly, she begins to revert to her original (and beautiful) human form and begs for mercy; however, anyone freeing her from the chains will be viciously attacked by her as she immediately reverts to her monstrous form.

If she is left in the chains and not released, she will eventually fade into nothingness, at last defeated and at last at peace.

With the Lighthouse's lantern glowing brightly with the Fire of Prometheus and the Sea Witch defeated, the Atlanteans' chance for victory in the Great Battle of Xandare diminishes significantly.

Maze Masters whose players are unlikely to want to play out the battle may skip to the *Aftermath* section below to sum up the outcome of the battle. Groups who would like to play out the battle - or any group that has not successfully relit the Lighthouse and chained the Sea Witch - should continue to **Act III**.

The Sea Witch, who began her life as a beautiful human maiden, has grown so twisted and foul in her appearance that she is beyond terrifying to the sight of men. She retains her beautiful face, but her body is now a misshapen parody of her former grace, with a bloated belly, weed-encrusted squamous skin and grotesque tentacles where her hands used to be. She is a powerful user of elemental magic (she was once a great elemental mage focused on Water & Air) but through dark pacts with unspeakable forces she has developed other powers which have irremediably twisted her body as well as her soul.

The Sea Witch



Taxonomy : Monster

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Deadly

Cunning : Crafty

Mystique : Unearthly

Movement : 60' (240' cruising underwater)

Initiative : 18

Melee Attack : +6

Damage : special

Defense Class : 25

Hits Total : 20

Detection / Evasion : +10 / +8

Mystic Fortitude : +10

Special Abilities : Amphibious, Cruise (240'), Elemental Magic (see below), Fearsome, Grapple (tentacle-like arms, Might = 16), Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Poison (instant death, kiss – see below), Regeneration (1 Hit / round), Sixth Sense, Supernatural Vigor.

Awards : Glory 360 , Wisdom 270. See also the section on *Glory and Other Rewards* at the end of the scenario.

Elemental Magic : The Sea Witch has the powers of an Elementalist with a Mastery of +6, a Mystic Strength of 18 and a total of 24 Power points. Her elements of choice are Air and Water, with Water, of course, as her primary specialty. This ability adds 40 to her base Glory award and 200 to her Wisdom award.

Kiss of Death : In melee combat, the Sea Witch's only real weapon is her deadly poisonous kiss but she can only attempt to kiss an opponent whom she has successfully Grappled (don't forget that grappling attacks always occur after all other melee attacks). A Grappled victim who fails to break free will not be able to avoid the Witch's deadly kiss (since he is immobilized) and will be instantly killed unless he makes a Physical Vigor roll against a target number of 15. If the victim survives, the Witch will try to maintain her hold to kiss him again on the next round but this prevents her from using any other form of attack.

Defeating the Sea Witch

The goal, as you'll recall, is to bind the Sea Witch with the Promethean Chains, not to defeat her in head-to-head combat. Though fighting her to the death is certainly possible, it is likely to be a very tough task and one that will almost undoubtedly see the death of several heroes.

The Sea Witch is not only an extremely tough and deadly opponent, she is also a very crafty one, able to anticipate all the characters' moves and tactics and react accordingly. She knows full-well that the heroes possess the Chains of Prometheus (if they do) and understands the power the chains would have over her if she were to be bound by them. Therefore, she will avoid melee combat as much as possible, using her Elemental powers to their fullest. Only when (if) she runs out of Power Points - or if the heroes manage to close in on her despite her best efforts - will she engage them in combat, using her grappling tentacles and lethal kiss.

Keep in mind that It should be noted that the Sea Witch's incredibly high Defense Class of 25 makes her almost invulnerable in combat – and almost impossible to bind with the Chains of Prometheus... Clever use of special tactics such as Subterfuge or Bashing Attack might slightly improve the heroes' chances of success but magic is probably the most effective way to deal with the Sea Witch. The most useful powers here will not be the ones which directly harm the Sea Witch but those which lower her Defense Class (such as the Sorcery power of Confusion – but keep in mind her Mystic Fortitude of +10 !) or which increase her opponents' Melee mod (which also applies to wrestling attacks). And of course, there are always Divine Intervention...

A particularly devious Maze Master might have the Sea Witch flee to the water if she is close to being defeated, cruising away at 240' per round. Be aware, though, that the Sea Witch's primary objective is to keep the heroes from relighting the lamp of the Lighthouse with the Fire of Prometheus, so she will not flee readily.

Act III: The Battle of Xandare

For Maze Masters whose players are the sort to want to play out epic battles, the following section will allow you to focus on the details of the Battle of Xandare. For Maze Masters whose groups are **NOT** the sort who would enjoy such things, skip ahead to the Aftermath! section.

The climactic Battle of Xandare can be simulated using the Warfare Rules from the *M&M Companion* (p. 37-43). The following sections present the armies that will take part in this battle.

Resolving the Battle

The results of the battle, if it is being played out, depend entirely upon the actions of the heroes. Generous Maze Masters may choose to allow for divine intervention (including *Divine Intervention*, as detailed in the *Players Manual*, p. 31) if they feel that the tide of battle is turning against the heroes and the group is not the sort to be comfortable with dealing with the kind of aftermath that such a defeat will bring. Considering Athena's involvement in these events, any Divine Intervention called for by a Priestess of Athena will have twice the usual chances of success.

Mazes & Minotaurs is, of course, modeled on sources that frequently see the good guys win even when logic says they shouldn't. The Greek myth-inspired sources that are the foundation of M&M aren't shy about having the Gods step in when needed. Players and Maze Masters should be willing to embrace the same spirit... but see *What ? The Bad Guys Won ?* at the end of the scenario for possible ways of turning a defeat into an interesting option.

Once the Battle of Xandare is finished, proceed to the *Aftermath!* section.

The Mythikan Forces

The Mythikan Forces appear as follows. No bonuses or penalties for Omens or Oratory (*M&M Companion*, p 39) have been included. Maze Masters should free to determine the effects of those variables prior to beginning the actual battle.

Herealkian Soldiers

Combat Factor: 8 Regimental Size: 150
Regimental Strength: 1200

Thenan Soldiers

Combat Factor: 6 Regimental Size: 150
Regimental Strength: 900

Argosean Archers

Combat Factor: 6 Regimental Size: 150
Regimental Strength: 900

Centaur Archers

Combat Factor: 11 Regimental Size: 100
Regimental Strength: 1100

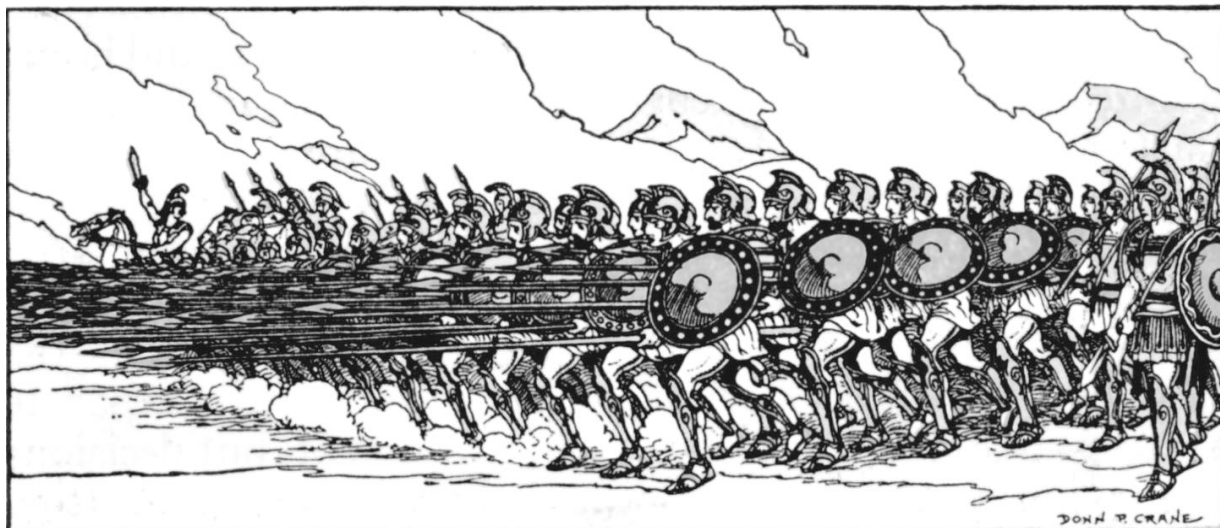
Amazon Warriors

Combat Factor: 8 Regimental Size: 100
Regimental Strength: 800

Barbarian Warriors

Combat Factor: 6 Regimental Size: 100
Regimental Strength: 600

Total Strength = 5500



For the sake of hope and civilization, chaaaarge !!!

The Atlantean Forces

If the heroes succeeded in binding the Sea Witch, the Atlantean Forces appear as follows:

Atlantean War Slaves

Combat Factor: 7 Regimental Size: 300
Regimental Strength: 2100

Atlantean Nobles

Combat Factor: 8 Regimental Size: 50
Regimental Strength: 400

Midas Men

Combat Factor: 11 Regimental Size: 30
Regimental Strength: 330

Sons Of Dagon

Combat Factor: 4 Regimental Size: 150
Regimental Strength: 600

Sirens

Combat Factor: 7 Regimental Size: 100
Regimental Strength: 700

If the heroes failed to light the Lighthouse at Nes, the following additional VERY POWERFUL forces should be included in the Atlantean Army:

Fomoroi

Combat Factor: 28 Regimental Size: 25
Regimental Strength: 700

Keres

Combat Factor: 16 Regimental Size: 50
Regimental Strength: 800

Total Strength (without Fomoroi & Keres) = 4130

Total Strength (with Fomoroi & Keres) = 5630

If the heroes failed to bind the Sea Witch, her unearthly powers will have a tremendous effect on the strength of the Atlantean forces, supernaturally boosting their Combat Factor by +5 each (and even +10 in the case of the Fomoroi) :

Atlantean War Slaves

Combat Factor: 12 Regimental Size: 300
Regimental Strength: 3600

Atlantean Nobles

Combat Factor: 13 Regimental Size: 50
Regimental Strength: 650

Midas Men

Combat Factor: 16 Regimental Size: 30
Regimental Strength: 480

Sons Of Dagon

Combat Factor: 9 Regimental Size: 150
Regimental Strength: 1350

Sirens

Combat Factor: 12 Regimental Size: 100
Regimental Strength: 1200

If the heroes failed to light the Lighthouse at Nes, the following additional VERY POWERFUL forces should be included in the Atlantean Army:

Fomoroi

Combat Factor: 38 Regimental Size: 25
Regimental Strength: 950

Keres

Combat Factor: 21 Regimental Size: 50
Regimental Strength: 1050

Total Strength (without Fomoroi & Keres) = 7280

Total Strength (with Fomoroi & Keres) = 9280

What? The Bad Guys Won?

Oh my. This is an entirely unexpected outcome. Are you certain the bad guys won? Really? Alas, then dark times indeed lie ahead. Though the battle was only between an advance force from Atlantis and a limited Mythikan army, news of the Mythikan defeat will spread quickly back to Atlantis. Emboldened by their success the Atlanteans will launch a full-scale invasion of Mythika, bringing to bear all their might and magic against the free world.

Perhaps from this terrible defeat a new, more unified-of-purpose Mythika can band together, lead by a new generation of heroes, and fight back against the Atlantean scourge. Let us just pray that the Sea Witch was defeated, for if she remains alive and allied with Atlantis, all hope is almost certainly lost...

Or is it? As much as its source material is about the heroes winning, the truth is that *Mazes & Minotaurs* is a game, not a work of fiction. The chances that the heroes will fail in this adventure – either in confronting the Sea Witch herself or in the Battle of Xandare – are not small. Maze Masters should only pull as many punches as they feel is right.

A loss in the Battle of Xandare doesn't have to spell the end of Mythika, though it might well herald the end of the current campaign. Still, when one walks out of one room one often walks into another. Consider the example campaign setting discussed in the *Movies & Minotaurs* article in issue 1 of *The Minotaur*, you know, the one with the evil empire and the valiant rebels... Hmm, that's kind of an interesting theme, now that I think about it. Someone should make a movie (or six) dealing with such things.

Glory & Other Rewards

The Sea Witch, with her various (and very powerful) allies, represents a menace of extreme magnitude, which could alter the very fate of Mythika. Thwarting such a menace should bring *each* warrior in the group an extra reward of 500 Glory points, in addition to any Glory gained during the adventure itself. Magicians in the group should also receive an equivalent amount of Wisdom, considering the highly mystical nature of the Sea Witch menace.

Such an epic victory should also bring other benefits to the valiant adventurers – such as the possibility of becoming Athena's Divine Agents (see the *M&M Companion*, p 8). Even if they don't meet these requirements or if Divine Agent status is not part of the Maze Master's plans for the group, Athena should reward these valorous heroes with one divine boon in the form of one appropriate item for each hero (see the *M&M Companion*, p 11 for a list of mythic items related to Athena).

The Umbrian Alternative

So your heroes have turned out to be zeroes and utterly failed to secure the Chains and Fire of Prometheus, eh? That makes proceeding in this adventure more than a little difficult. There is one alternative, though.

Rather than undertaking the adventure as it is outlined here, a clever (desperate?) Maze Master could improvise an expedition to Umbria in the hopes of gathering Umbrian forces to supplement the Mythikan armies. The Umbrians are no fans of Atlantis, so I hear, so they might just be able to be convinced to set aside their differences with the Land of the Three Cities long enough to put Atlantis in its place. For more information on Umbria and its people, see this issue's *Mythika Gazetteer*.

Aftermath

If You Did Not Play Out The Battle

With the Lighthouse relit and the Sea Witch destroyed, the Atlantean forces were easily defeated. Mythika is once again safe. The Three Cities and the major non-Minean peoples have bravely fought against a common foe.

For a brief time goodwill and camaraderie will reign. Of course, the petty squabbles and rivalries will return, they always do. But for now, peace and harmony rule in Mythika.

The happy few who made victory possible through their bravery and cunning are lauded. Those who gave their lives to defend Mythika are commemorated in song and poem.

The heroes themselves may well go on to become Divine Agents after a series of adventures as grand as these. Regardless, their names will be known across the world.

Those who would seek to do harm to Mythika will know of her powerful sons & daughters and will likely think twice before moving against such might.

If You Did Play Out The Battle

Thanks to, or perhaps in spite of, the efforts of the heroes, the Mythikan army has defeated the expeditionary force from Atlantis.

The heroes will be praised (or cursed) as appropriate to their actions. Maze Masters should not be shy about allowing successful heroes to achieve true legendary status, for playing such a vital role in this battle is surely an epic achievement.

Andrew Trent (2009)