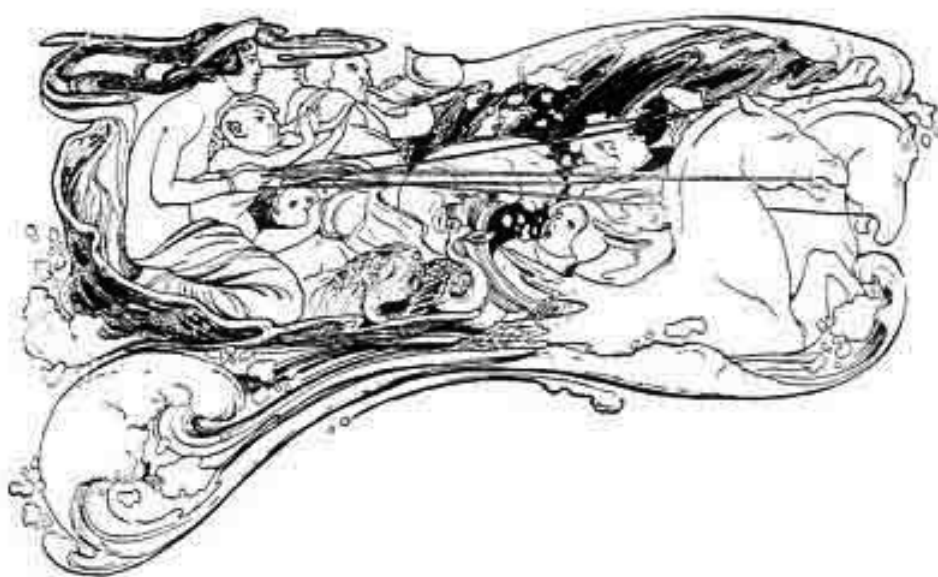


MORE TALES OF THE MIDDLE SEA

Three Adventures for the **Mazes & Minotaurs** RPG

From the pages of the **Minotaur** webzine



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Written by **Andrew Pearce, Carlos de la Cruz Morales & Olivier Legrand.**

Maps by Tim Hartin – Some illustrations © Clipart.com – 2012

Includes some original illustrations by Emmanuel "Croquefer" Roudier

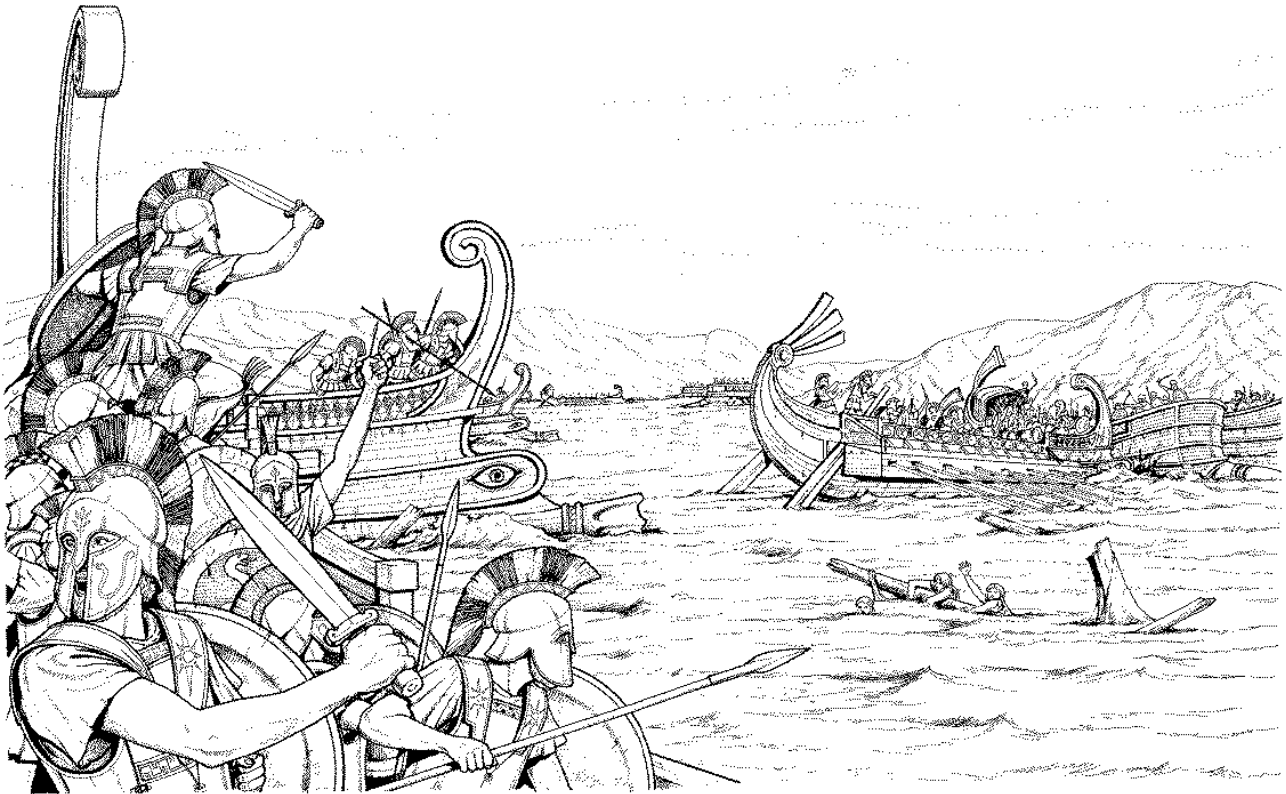
SEVEN DAYS TO WAR!

An epic **Mazes & Minotaurs** adventure set in a hitherto-unknown corner of Mythika

Written by **Andrew Pearce**

There are many, known inhabited islands... there are also hundreds of unknown islands, mysterious locations that may hold treasures, clues, monsters, allies or enemies. There may be secrets, plots, traps, witches and tyrannical kings...

Maze Masters Guide, p 27



The Archipelago

The Archipelago of the Seven Islands (often known by its inhabitants simply as *The Archipelago*) is a new geographical setting for *Mazes & Minotaurs*.

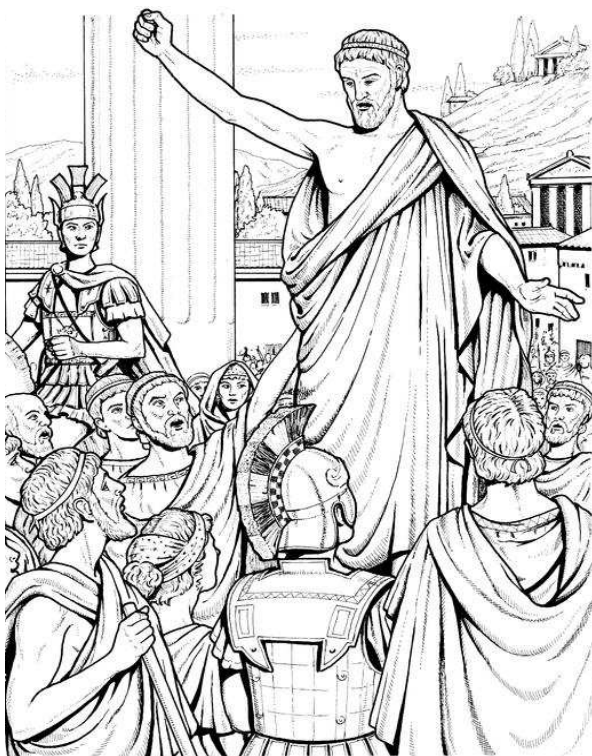
The Archipelago is located somewhere in the Middle Sea. It is fairly remote, situated at some distance from the main shipping routes (if the Maze Master wishes to be more specific, he may of course place it near Umbria, Tritonis, the Three Cities or any other well-established location within the Middle Sea).

As the name would suggest, the Archipelago is made up of seven islands. The two largest and most fertile islands are **Atreon** and **Zankros**. These were first settled towards the very end of the Second Age by a group of Mineans desperately fleeing from the deprivations of the Autarch sorcerers. Over the three centuries that followed, the descendants of these initial settlers grew in number and prospered.

They colonized the other islands of the Archipelago (with the notable exception of the wild and savage island of Belixa). And they began to trade with more distant islands and settlements upon the shores of the Middle Sea.

But then, forty years ago, a terrible war broke out between Atreon and Zankros, and has been fought with varying intensity ever since. Many attempts have been made to broker peace, but without success: even the Thenans long ago gave up hope of helping the two warring sides settle their differences.

Then, a year ago, the unthinkable happened: a truce was finally declared between the two sides! A new, bold king named **Pyribus** had come to the throne of Zankros, and had finally managed to reach out the hand of friendship to the Atreonids, who (privately) were just as exhausted by four decades of warfare as the Zankrosians.



Is the Archipelago on the brink of war – again?

The current monarch of Atreion, king **Leomides**, has agreed to the truce, and has even accepted Pyribus' bold proposition: that he give the hand of his daughter, the beautiful **Callidice**, in marriage to the king of Zankros, in exchange for one of the smaller islands of the Archipelago (currently governed by Zankros). In addition, he has agreed that any son produced by the marriage will one day become king of both Atreion and Zankros – and (by extension) the entire Archipelago.

Unfortunately, there's been a rather major complication. On route from Atreion to Zankros, the ship of the princess Callidice was ambushed, and most of her entourage slaughtered. The princess herself has disappeared – whether captured or dead is unknown. Atreion is blaming Zankros for this outrage, whilst many on Zankros suspect some fiendish Atreionid plot.

The grief-stricken king of Atreion (who, regardless of his many faults, truly loves his daughter) has demanded that Zankros find and return his daughter – unharmed – within just seven days, or the truce will be cancelled, and the Archipelago will be plunged once more into bloody full-scale conflict.

The adventurers (whoever they are) are recruited by king Pyribus (who needs most of his men to prepare for a possible invasion) to join the search for the princess. He feels sure that she's alive, and hidden somewhere in the Archipelago. Can they find the missing princess, deal with her abductors, and prevent a return to full-scale war – and all within the space of seven days?

The search for the missing princess Callidice is a suitable adventure for 3-6 heroes of level 2 or above.

The Seven Islands

Atreion, Isle of the Mighty

The most highly populated (20,000) of the Seven Islands, Atreion has always regarded itself as the foremost island of the Archipelago. Atreion currently has the largest navy, as well as the most highly-trained army, in the Seven Islands. However, whilst blessed with fertile soil, the island has virtually nothing in the way of mineral resources. This has resulted in a generally poorer and less cultured society than its chief rival, Zankros.

In addition to the chief city and port, **Atreopylae**, there are a number of other settlements on Atreion – the most important being the towns of Gatica and Idrecuse. The patron god of Atreion is Zeus, and an impressive temple to Zeus is located near the most northerly point of the island, **Cape Wrath** (so-called because of the unpredictable and changeable nature of the waters around this promontory).

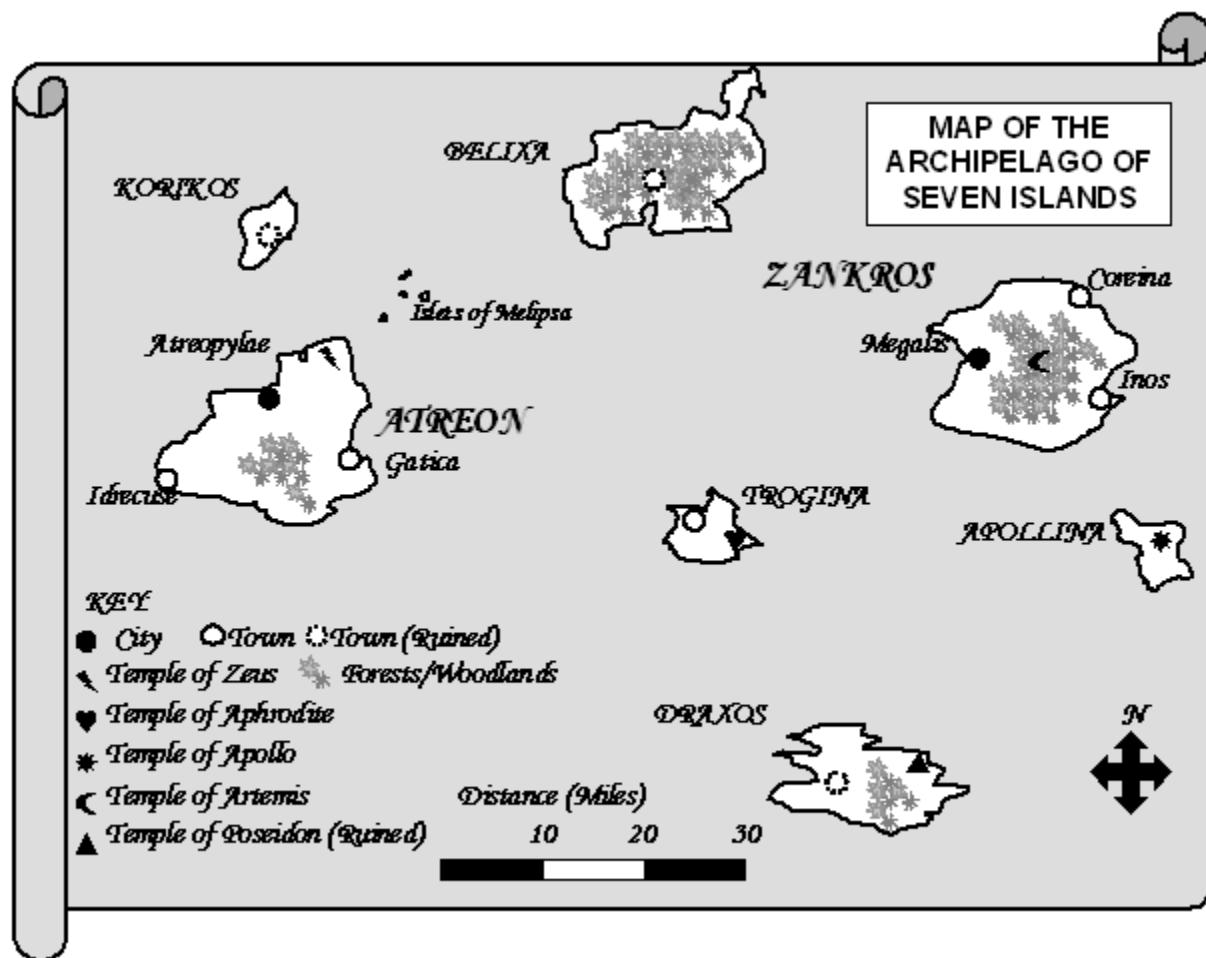
The islets of Melipsa are a group of five small islands off the north coast of Atreion. They are uninhabited by humans (though it is rumored Sirens live on one of the islets) and surrounded by treacherous waters.

The current king of Atreion, **Leomides II**, has reigned for nine years. He is deeply attached to his daughter Callidice (having lost his only son prince Atreos in the last major sea-battle in the Archipelago some four years ago). He has grown weary of the war that started during the reign of his grandfather, and though a proud man, he is also pragmatic. He realizes that Pyribus' visionary diplomatic overture is perhaps the best hope for a lasting peace.

However, not all the nobles of Atreion agree. Prince **Caldamos**, the nephew of Leomides and his nearest male relative, is known to have opposed Pyribus' olive-branch. The proposed peace treaty, if enacted, would deprive Caldamos of what he believes to be his rightful claim as successor to the throne of Atreion – in favor of the future offspring of the union between the princess of Atreion and king of Zankros.

Zankros, Island of Oppulence

Zankros is about the same size as Atreion, but with a somewhat smaller population (about 18,000). Its navy, nevertheless, is only a little less numerically weaker than that of Atreion, and is perhaps more skilled. Its army, however, is definitely inferior, and only because of its slight naval edge over Atreion has Zankros been able to hold its own for so long against its great enemy. Zankros' farming land is as rich as Atreion's – if less extensive. However, the discovery of a silver mine near the town of Coreina fifty years ago has resulted in a richer lifestyle for most Zankrosian citizens than for their Atreionid counterparts. The arts and sciences have also flourished in Zankros over the past half a century and several Zankrosian scholars have even studied at the famed Akademia of distant Thena.



Along with the capital, **Megalis**, the main settlements on Zankros are the towns of Coreina and Inos. The patron goddess of Zankros is Artemis, and her main temple is located deep in the forest of Zankros.

The current king of Zankros is **Pyribus**. Pyribus only became king four years ago, soon after the last great sea-battle off the islets of Melipsa. In his first twelve months, Pyribus had to contend with several assassination attempts, including one orchestrated by his jealous younger brother **Tryphon** and his scheming ally the sorcerer **Xendor**. Tryphon and Xendor fled as soon as their plot was uncovered. They left the Archipelago for parts unknown, allowing Pyribus to finally consolidate his throne. Then, a year ago, Pyribus made his audacious diplomatic overture to Leomides of Atreion. Although his marriage offer was originally a purely diplomatic proposal, Pyribus has since fallen in love with Callidice. He is every bit as enraged as Leomides that she has been abducted – and angry at the prospect of his peace initiative being torn to shreds.

Trogina, Island of the Downtrodden

The small island of Trogina (population 3,000) is almost equidistant between Atreion and Zankros, and was first settled about two hundred and fifty years ago. The Troginans (sometimes contemptuously known as “Trog”) have been ruled by Zankros for more than a century. In recent years an independence movement has sprung up on the island, and has become

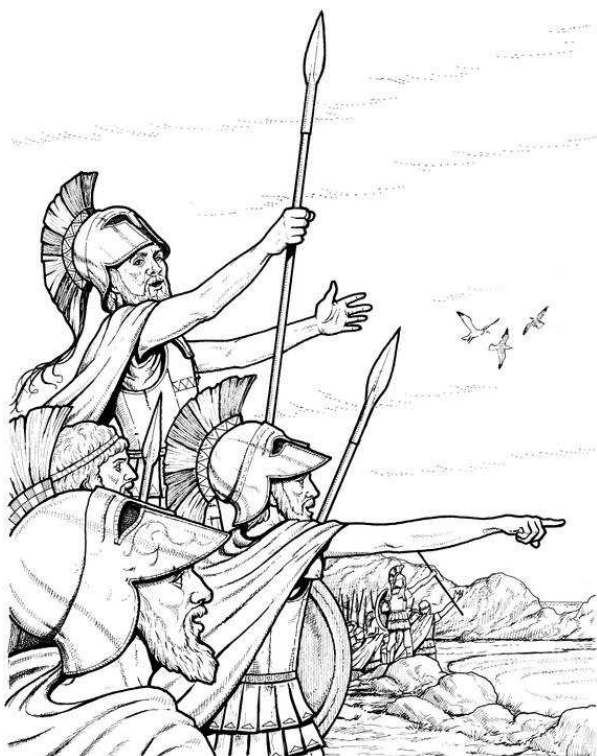
increasingly troublesome. King Pyribus of Zankros proposes to cede Trogina to Atreion as part of the peace settlement (in exchange for princess Callidice’s hand): in truth, he’d be quite happy to see the back of the troublesome Trog.

The leader of the Troginan independence movement is named **Corintos**. Rather mysteriously, no-one seems to know what he looks like: rumors abound of a masked vigilante, whose consummate sword-skill is matched only by his fanatical dedication to his cause.

The only important settlement on the island is also known as Trogina. The island’s patron goddess is Aphrodite: her main temple is found overlooking Yellow Cliffs Bay on the eastern side of the island.

Apollina, the Blessed Island

Apollina is the smallest island of the Archipelago, and home to a temple of Apollo. This temple is the largest in the whole Archipelago, and its fame has spread even beyond the Seven Islands. No women are allowed to step onto the island (a dire prophecy speaks of disaster for the Archipelago should this ever happen). The island (population 200 – all male) is held in a special reverence by all the inhabitants of the Archipelago, and although under the formal protection of Zankros, the priests of Apollina do not fear attack from the Atreionid fleet. Pirates, of course, are another matter...



*Damocles the Valiant and his companions
Founders of the kingdoms of Atreon and Zankros*

Draxos, the Pirate Island

This middle-sized island was inhabited for more than two centuries by humans, but was ravaged and left deserted early on in the Archipelago War. However, seven years ago it was settled by an unknown number of pirates, who have since used it as base of operations for their raids throughout the Archipelago. Neither Atreon nor Zankros have had sufficient time, energy or ships to spare against this brood of vipers: but both kings have vowed to take action against the pirates once the peace treaty is sealed. Draxos is very much an island of two halves: densely-forested woodland to the east, and craggy rocks and cliffs to the west. A ruined Temple of Poseidon is located on Draxos.

Korikos, the Silent Island

Korikos is a small island, off the coast of Atreon. Once a colony of Atreon, settled nearly three hundred years ago, Korikos came to be noted for certain excesses. However, the island was abandoned as a result of a mysterious and terrifying plague outbreak (known as the **Curse of Drafa**) some one hundred and fifty years ago. No-one has dared visit the place – known now as the Silent Island – since...or so it is commonly believed.

Belixa, the Dark Island

Belixa is the third largest island of the Archipelago, but is little-explored. This island is thickly-forested, and known to be the abode of many foul creatures. Several attempts have been made by humans to settle upon the so-called Dark Island, but without lasting success.

Timeline of the Archipelago

AM = Age of Magic; AH = Age of Heroes

285 AM: Minean refugees, led by Damocles the Valiant, settle in the Archipelago on the principal islands later known as Atreon and Zankros.

27 AH: Death of Damocles: his sons quarrel over the succession. Atreos I, the elder, becomes king of Atreon, whilst Zankrax I, the younger, becomes king of Zankros.

63 AH: Korikos is settled by colonists from Atreon.

69 AH: The sanctuary of Apollo is established on Apollina. The ban on women 'polluting the sacred isle' is instigated.

90 AH: Trogina is settled by colonists from Zankros.

103 AH: Draxos is settled by colonists from Atreon.

136 AH: Aided by Atreon, the Troginans rebel against Zankros, and appoint their own ruling council. The First Archipelago War begins.

141 AH: After five years of fighting the Zankrosians accept Troginan independence.

188 AH: The Curse of Drafa descends upon the island of Korikos. Within three months, all the inhabitants of the island are dead.

190 AH: Zankrax II (also known as Zankrax the Great) becomes ruler of Zankros.

197 AH: The Zankrosians invade Draxos, beginning the Second Archipelago War.

204 AH: Atreon surrenders Draxos to Zankros, ending the Second Archipelago War.

229 AH: Rivalry amongst the oligarchs of Trogina leads to civil war. The Zankrosians accept an invitation to intervene from some of the oligarchs, and subjugate the entire island.

235 AH: Zankrax the Great dies just before the great Armada with which he intends to conquer Atreon, and thereby unite the Archipelago, is due to set sail. His son and heir, Myles II, abandons his father's planned invasion.

285 AH: The last serious attempt to settle Belixa, made by Leomides I of Atreon, ends in disaster.

289 AH: A rich silver mine is discovered near Coreina.

299 AH: The Third Archipelago War begins.

304 AH: Atreon invades Draxos, which becomes the major battleground of the war for the next three years. By the end of this period, the island is left utterly desolate, its settlements in ruins and its inhabitants dead or enslaved.

325 AH: About this time the Troginans, led by the mysterious Corintos, begin a guerrilla campaign against the Zankrosians.

331 AH: Leomides II becomes king of Atreon.

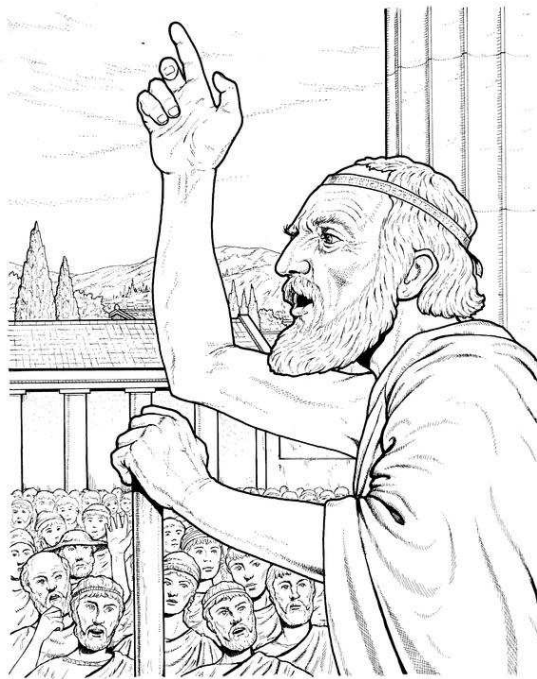
333 AH: Pirates based on Draxos begin operating within the Archipelago.

336 AH: The battle of Melipsa leads to the death of prince Atreos of Atreon. A few months later, Pyribus becomes king of Zankros.

337 AH: Tryphon and Xendor flee Zankros following the failure of their plot against Pyribus.

339 AH: Pyribus' peace initiative leads to a truce.

340 AH: Princess Callidice is abducted...



Citizens of Zankros! People of Megalis! Attend to my words!

The Adventure Begins...

An Ultimatum is Delivered

The adventurers arrive in Megalis, the main port and capital of Zankros, on a day of growing anxiety and tension. Crowds of people throng the streets, and all the whispered talk and wild rumors speak of princess Callidice, the Atreonid bride-to-be of king Pyribus whose arrival in Zankros is now two days overdue.

The adventurers find themselves in the Great Square, before the Royal Palace, near mid-day, just as heralds announce the arrival of prince Caldamos, nephew of the king of Atreon. From their vantage point, the player characters have a clear view as the Atreonid delegation enters the square, and crosses towards the palace steps. Awaiting them is an anxious-looking Pyribus, attended by his chief counselors and household guard.

There are murmurs of disapproval as the grim-faced Caldamos approaches Pyribus and, without the customary diplomatic courtesies, flings at his feet a scroll. Several of the household guards begin to draw swords, but at a sharp word of command from Pyribus, they desist. For a moment, Caldamos stands at the foot of the palace steps, looking up contemptuously at Pyribus: then, abruptly, without a word, he turns on his heel and marches back the way he came, accompanied by his attendants. The crowd draws back and lets them pass in stunned silence. As soon as they have left the square, a babble of noise breaks out, as the disturbed citizens of Zankros ask themselves what this portentous display foretells...

Pyribus picks up the scroll and silently reads it, ashen-faced. He exchanges a few whispered words with his chief counselor, Lord Dauros, and hands the scroll to him: then he ascends the steps and disappears back into the palace.

Lord Dauros raises his arms, and cries out to the crowd: *'Citizens of Zankros! People of Megalis! Attend to my words!'* An uneasy hush falls once more across the square. Dauros pauses for a moment, then continues: *'Pyribus your king commands that I share with you the news contained within this scroll so ominously delivered by the messengers from Atreon. It is a grave communication, but I beg that you listen to it with courage and restraint.'* Dauros carefully unrolls the scroll, and reads its dire message.

To the ruler of Zankros,

Two days ago – as you doubtless know already – the Atreonid ship bearing our beloved princess Callidice, daughter of our most esteemed king Leomides, was attacked without provocation whilst en route to your kingdom. A few hours after the attack, the ships of the noble navy of Atreon reached the burning wreck. There were only two survivors, both gravely injured, who soon thereafter died of their wounds. Both swore with the honest breath of dying men soon to go to Hades that the attack was made by two ships bearing the colours and marks of Zankros. Of our beloved princess there was no sign.

This heinous act of treachery is without equal in the long history of our Archipelago, and your kingdom should deservedly perish in blood in recompense for this wickedness. Yet such is the mercy of the compassionate Leomides for your people – ignorant as they undoubtedly are of your base treachery – that our king offers you one chance for redemption.

If the princess Callidice is returned to us at Atreopylae, unharmed, not later than noon on the seventh day following the delivery of this message – together with the written deed, signed by yourself and your counselors, surrendering the island of Trogina for all time to the jurisdiction of Atreon – then you shall have peace. If not, our war of vengeance will know no end until every town and village of Zankros is reduced to ash, every field is sown with salt, every man of Zankros lies dead, and every woman and child is enslaved. This we swear, before Zeus and all the Great Ones.

The Council of Atreon commands this message be delivered to you in person by Caldamos, prince and heir of Leomides.

The Council salutes our king.

Lord Dauros carefully rolls shut the scroll, and looks out across the assembly. Then, in his slow, deliberate voice, he says: *'King Pyribus grieves the abduction of princess Callidice, his bride-to-be. He pledges that he will search for her until she is found. But he denies all charge of complicity in the attack on her ship. Doubtless there are those who greatly desire that our search for peace should fail, that the war between our people and Atreon should continue, and intensify. It is to such as these – wherever they may be in our Archipelago – that we must look for the perpetrators of this crime.'*

But in the meantime, our king must make all speedy preparation for the defence of this island. We continue to hold out one hand in peace and friendship, but with the other we must make ready for war and bloodshed. Return to your homes. Pray to the gods. Trust in your king. Zankros will prevail.'

An Audience with the King

Despite Dauros' appeal for calm, there is much unrest on the streets of Megalis for the rest of the day (**Day 1**).

The city guard is hard pressed to maintain order on the streets of the city. There is a rush to the docks, as many citizens decide that their best hope of safety lies in getting away from Zankros. Several shops and businesses are looted, drunks cause a nuisance of themselves, and some of the city guard overreact, exacerbating an already tense situation. Roll 1d6 – on a 1, 2 or 3, the adventurers find themselves inadvertently caught up in street disorder of one kind or another.

The adventurers, naturally, will want to offer their services to the king. Unfortunately, getting an audience with the king, or even one of his advisers, is difficult in the current emergency. However, after spending much of the first day dealing with guards and lesser officials, the adventurers are finally able to secure an audience with the king.

Pyribus is in his Council Chamber, surrounded by his closest advisers. Security is tight, and the guards seem more than usually on edge.

The adventurers, naturally, may only enter the royal presence having first laid aside their arms. Pyribus will say nothing at first to the adventurers, leaving Dauros to do the questioning. Only when Dauros is satisfied that the adventurers are genuine and capable in their offer of assistance will the king finally speak.

'So, you would help Zankros in this desperate hour? Your offer seems genuine, and the skills you claim are impressive. In truth, I find that I am in need of assistance. Most of my men are needed here on Zankros, preparing for the threat of invasion, and despite my public pronouncements, I have few to spare for a search that may well prove futile. We have no way of knowing whether or not the princess is alive or dead; or even, of course, whether the Atreionid tale of her abduction is true in the first place. For all we know, her father, or even her duplicitous cousin Caldamos, may have hidden away Callidice themselves, and are using her supposed-abduction as a pretence for war. If that is so, then our hopes for peace are already doomed.'

Pyribus smiles grimly then says: *'But I think not. Leomides is too honorable a man to engage in such duplicity. Caldamos, I judge, is more than capable of it: but I doubt he would dare such a thing himself, without the knowledge of his uncle. Nevertheless, Callidice's abduction has been to his clear advantage. The ultimatum from the Council of Atreion names him now as heir to Leomides. Despite his outward show of anger and contempt today, Caldamos will in truth be quite pleased at this turn of events, I'm sure.'*

'So, if not Atreion itself, where else should we look for the princess?' Pyribus looks down at the map of the Archipelago on the council-table before him. 'Trogina is a strong possibility. The Troginan rebels have fought against us for fifteen years now, and neither side has gained the advantage. They cannot break our hold over the port and coastal villages, but we in turn cannot dislodge them from their mountain hideouts, and from the sway they have over the common people. As long as the war with Atreion continues, we cannot deal effectively with the Trogos. But should peace come... then that masked avenger Corintos might really have something to worry about. There's plenty of reason, therefore, for Troginans to have abducted the princess.'

'Then there's Draxos. That nest of vipers has done well for itself over the last few years. The pirates of Draxos – just like the Trogos – would have little cause to celebrate peace. We'd be free at last to deal with them. In fact, an operation with ships of Atreion and Zankros joining force against the pirates is something I'd already discussed with Leomides. Perhaps the pirates found out about our plans. Perhaps THEY kidnapped the princess.'

'I think we can rule out the priests of Apollina,' continues Pyribus. 'They haven't allowed a woman onto their island for hundreds of years. Even female livestock are banned, lest they "pollute" the sacred isle. And as for the Silent Island' – he shudders and points at Korikos – 'Only a madman would venture there. The Curse of Drafa lingers on after all these years.'

'The possibility of treachery at home cannot be ruled out, my king,' says Dauros, interrupting. 'As I have already advised you, our own island must be searched thoroughly, lest we find we have a conspiracy in our very midst. Remember your brother Tryphon!'

The king winces, and replies, somewhat sharply, *'As if I could ever forget, Dauros. My greatest fear has always been treachery from within, and that is why the greatest effort must go into searching this island.'*

The king looks at the adventurers. *'I have already this day dispatched men to Trogina and Draxos. But you will have doubtless noted that there is one island of our Archipelago I have not yet mentioned?' He looks down again at the map: 'Belixa.'* There is a murmur of disquiet from the assembled counselors.

'Belixa,' repeats Pyribus, 'the Dark Island. An island of hidden terrors, unexplored forests, and lost expeditions. Every attempt to settle the island has ended in dismal failure. The last to try it died half a century ago. No-one goes there now...or so we've been led to believe. But about eighteen months ago, I did receive a report of a ship sighted entering the Cove of Crows – HERE.' He points to a location on the map. *'Curious. It might be nothing. But then again...perhaps we should include Belixa in our search.'*

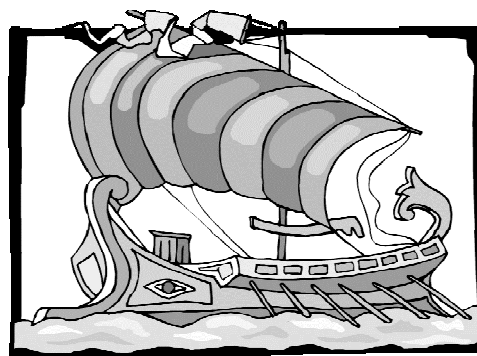
'Unfortunately, I have few men now to spare, and fewer still that have the courage to travel to such an ill-omened island.' He looks at the adventurers and smiles sardonically. *'But perhaps you are the exceptions I need. Will you do this for the sake of my people – and the rewards that a grateful king can bestow?'*

Religion in the Archipelago

Should any of the adventurers choose to visit a local temple before setting out on this adventure, they may be surprised to find that even in a reasonably large settlement like Megalis, there are a limited number of deities who are worshipped. Indeed of the twelve Olympian gods and goddesses, only six are venerated widely in the Archipelago: Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Hera, Aphrodite and Artemis. According to legend, it was these six deities who guided the ancestors of the Archipelago's inhabitants to safety three and a half centuries ago. The other six Olympian deities are referred to, somewhat disparagingly, as the 'Outsider Gods'.

Each of the six human-inhabited islands of the Archipelago (i.e. excluding Belixa) adopted one of the six accepted gods ('the Great Ones') as a particular patron. However on Korikos the inhabitants in their decadence and immorality turned away from the worship of their patron Hera, and for this impiety – it is widely believed – suffered the Curse of Drafa. Elsewhere in the Archipelago, Hera is customarily described as the 'Goddess of Vengeance', and her priestesses, whilst respected, are also widely feared.

Adventurers from outside the Archipelago who worship of the six 'Great Ones' will be more readily accepted in the Archipelago than those who worship one of the 'Outsider Gods'. This is especially true for priests. Most other adventuring classes are reasonably regarded, with the exception of thieves, sorcerers and elementalists, who are generally viewed with great suspicion.



The *Scarlet Endeavor* is treated as a Merchant Roundship (but one carrying little in the way of cargo). In addition to the captain, it has a crew of fourteen sailors (treat as minor NPC Fighters, p 25 of the *Maze Masters Guide*). They are all loyal Zankrosians, and are clearly devoted to their captain.

The *Scarlet Endeavor* is due to leave within the hour. The adventurers will have time for any minor tasks (e.g. collecting equipment, visiting a local temple etc), but they will be 'accompanied' by royal guards wherever they go – a discrete, but unmistakable presence.

Challenges on the Voyage

The journey to Belixa **should** take a single day (arriving at sunset of **Day 2**). Roll 1d6 on the **Sea Journey Event Table** below to judge what befalls the ship:

Roll	Result
1	Nothing of note happens.
2	Becalmed. The journey to Belixa takes an extra day (arrival on evening of Day 3).
3	Attacked by a Sea Horror (see p 99 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i> for a description). As well as any injury or death to the crew and passengers, the Sea Horror will do 1d6 points of Structure damage to the ship.
4	Attacked by Pirates. The ship is engaged by a pirate vessel from Draxos. The ship is crewed by fifteen pirates (use the profile for Bandits on p 59 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
5	Storm. The ship takes 1d6 points of Structure damage, including serious damage to the rigging, and makes landfall on the isle of Trogina. Repairing the ship's rigging takes a whole day (Day 3), reducing the Structure damage by one point. After setting sail once more, the ship will arrive at Belixa on the evening of Day 4 .
6	Attacked by Atreonids. The ship is engaged by a war galley captained by an impetuous and belligerent Atreonid commander. The ship is crewed by thirty men (use the profile for Soldiers on p 60 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

The Voyage to Belixa

Aboard the 'Scarlet Endeavor'

The adventurers spend the night in comfort in (carefully guarded) rooms near the palace. Early the next morning (**Day 2**), they are brought before Dauros. He introduces them to a taciturn, brawny man in his mid-forties named Idemon. Idemon, explains Dauros, is the captain of a ship named the *Scarlet Endeavor*, which will take the characters to Belixa.

Idemon's Orders

The adventurers may, of course, have their own transport. Even if this is the case, Dauros will insist that Idemon will take them on *his* ship to Belixa. His orders are that he and his crewmen are not to step ashore, but to remain onboard awaiting the return of the adventurers, and, should they find the princess on the island, to immediate transport them and her to the port of Atreopylae. The clear impression that the adventurers will get is that Idemon and his men are to act as 'minders' to ensure that the adventurers go exactly where they are meant to go, and have no contact with anyone else in the meantime.

Belixa – the Dark Island

The Cove of Crows

Arriving at the Cove of Crows, the adventurers find three war galleys moored. The pendants flying from the ships are of unfamiliar color – neither the blood-red of Atreon nor the fresh-green of Zankros, but instead a deep purple. They belong, of course, to prince Tryphon, and form the nucleus of his fleet (alongside several Zankrosian merchant roundships that await only the right signal to hoist the colors of their true paymasters).

One of the war galleys (*Tryphon's Revenge*) is slightly damaged, and is clearly undergoing repairs (it was involved in the operation to capture princess Callidice, and suffered some damage in that engagement), with perhaps half a dozen men on board.

The second war galley (*Tryphon's Glory*) also has a skeleton crew of three or four men.

Only the third (*Tryphon's Majesty*) is fully-manned, with about thirty men on board. It is this third vessel that immediately starts moving towards the *Scarlet Endeavor* to challenge her as soon as she enters the Cove. *Tryphon's Majesty* will not accept any attempted explanation offered by the adventurers as to their presence, and will prepare to board the *Scarlet Endeavor*. Combat cannot be avoided (use the profile for Soldiers on p 60 of the *Creature Compendium* for the thirty sailors on board *Tryphon's Majesty*).

Assuming the *Scarlet Endeavor*, her crew and passengers, defeat the *Tryphon's Majesty*, the *Endeavor* will come alongside the remaining ships. Depending how swiftly the *Endeavor* has overcome her opponent, the ten or so men on board the other ships will stand and fight, or cut and run (perhaps trying to make their back to the City of Belixa to warn Tryphon and Xendor of the unwelcome visitors). If the latter is the case, then the adventurers will need to act quickly if they want to prevent Tryphon from being forewarned. Should the adventurers take any of Tryphon's men captive, they will learn of the route to the ruined City of Belixa; the location of the main entrance to the Under-Deeps of the City; and the identity of some of the creatures that inhabit Belixa.

Captain Idemon and his (remaining) men will not come ashore, but, as per their orders, will remain in the Cove for the return of the adventurers. Idemon will warn the adventurers that unless they return by midday on Day 6, there is no hope of reaching Atreopylae in time.

'If you're not back by then,' says Idemon grimly, 'We won't wait for you. We'll be needed back home to defend our country.'

Journeying through the Jungle

The forests of Belixa are extremely dense, and so truly to warrant the title jungle. Clearly, travelling through such unknown terrain at night-time is inadvisable, and so it is assumed that the adventurers will make camp on the evening of their arrival at the Cove of Crows.



Many perils await in the jungle of Belixa...

The next morning, the adventurers may have difficulty initially finding the trail inland to the ruined city (unless they have at least one amenable prisoner, or they have a Hunter in the party – in which case a single **tracking roll** against a target number of 15 should be made). A successful Hunter tracking roll (or the aid of a prisoner) will reduce the journey time through the jungle from one full day to half a day.

Roll 1d6 on the **Jungle Journey Event Table** below every half-day (i.e. morning and afternoon) to judge what befalls the adventurers:

Roll	Result
1	Nothing of note happens.
2	Malacorn. The adventurers encounter a single Malacorn (use the profile on p 124 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
3	Patrol of Soldiers. The adventurers encounter a patrol of 3+1d3 soldiers loyal to Prince Tryphon (use the profile for Soldiers on p 60 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
4	Tragos. The adventurers encounter 6+1d6 Tragos (use the profile on p 59 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
5	Magical Boar. The adventurers encounter a single Magical Boar (use the profile on p 16 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).
6	Giant Bats. The adventurers encounter 3+1d3 Giant Bats (use the profile on p 47 of the <i>Creature Compendium</i>).

The Ruined City

After journeying for several miles through thick jungle, the adventurers eventually emerge into a large clearing which contains the ruins of the ancient City of Belixa. Many of the buildings of the Over-City (as the 'above ground' settlements were known) are now in a perilous state: every time the adventurers enter one of the buildings, there is a 1 in 10 chance of it collapsing (requiring a Danger Evasion roll with a target number of 15 to avoid the falling debris).

Most of the buildings are empty and devoid of interest, the once colourful wall paintings having long-since faded so that the scenes they depict are virtually unrecognizable. Here and there fragments of writing can be detected on some of the walls, but the script is not one that any will recognize (even adventurers with the Scholar talent).

The most noteworthy locations within the Over-City are as follows (numbers refer to map references):

1. Room of Murals

This is the only building where the wall paints are sufficiently vivid for some, at least, of the figures to be recognizable. They depict large, humanoid figures fighting with reptilian beastmen (that any character with the Scholar talent will recognize as Titanians battling against a mix of Lizardians and Troglodytes).

2. Spiders' Lair

This courtyard is covered in cobwebs, and is home to a family of three unpleasant Cave Spiders (use the profile on p 49 of the *Creature Compendium*). Their poisonous sting causes paralysis within 1d6 rounds if the victim fails his Physical Vigor roll.

3. Temple

This building contains the shattered remains of what was once an altar, as well as several shards of broken clay votive vessels. It is unclear what god or goddess was once worshipped here, but there remains a faint air of menace and foreboding about the place that will make most unwilling to linger.

4. Storage Room

Rope, timber, craft tools and laboring implements, and various other assorted supplies, are stored within this building by Tryphon's men.

5. Guard-House

This building contains three of Prince Tryphon's men. In one corner, a stone stairwell leads down to a rough stone-lined corridor, which marks the main entrance to the Under-Deeps of the City of Belixa.

6. Balcony

A wooden walk-way connects the two buildings that stand on either side of the eastern entrance to the City. The sides of this walk-way are covered with long fibrous tendrils that hang down like a thick, dank green curtain. Anyone walking beneath the balcony (or along it) is likely to discover – to their great dismay – that brushing up against these tendrils will instantly awaken them. They are, of course, the tendrils of a Vine of Tantalus (use the profile on p 124 of the *Creature Compendium*).

7. Southern Courtyard

Two Empusae, named Diaphoebe and Asphixea haunt the rooms around this courtyard. They continually wail how much they loathe 'the accursed sorcerer, the one who doomed our sister' – if questioned, they may reveal to the adventurers that Xendor was the one who outwitted their now-lost sister Polymante when he first came to Belixa. Clearly, they both fear and hate Xendor – but he finds them useful, sending them lone soldiers from time to time as 'sustenance' when he suspects them of disloyalty or inefficiency.

8. Northern Courtyard

There is a 50% chance of encountering 3+1d3 Tragos scavenging around this Courtyard – otherwise, they will be in their Lair (see next entry).

9. Tragos Lair

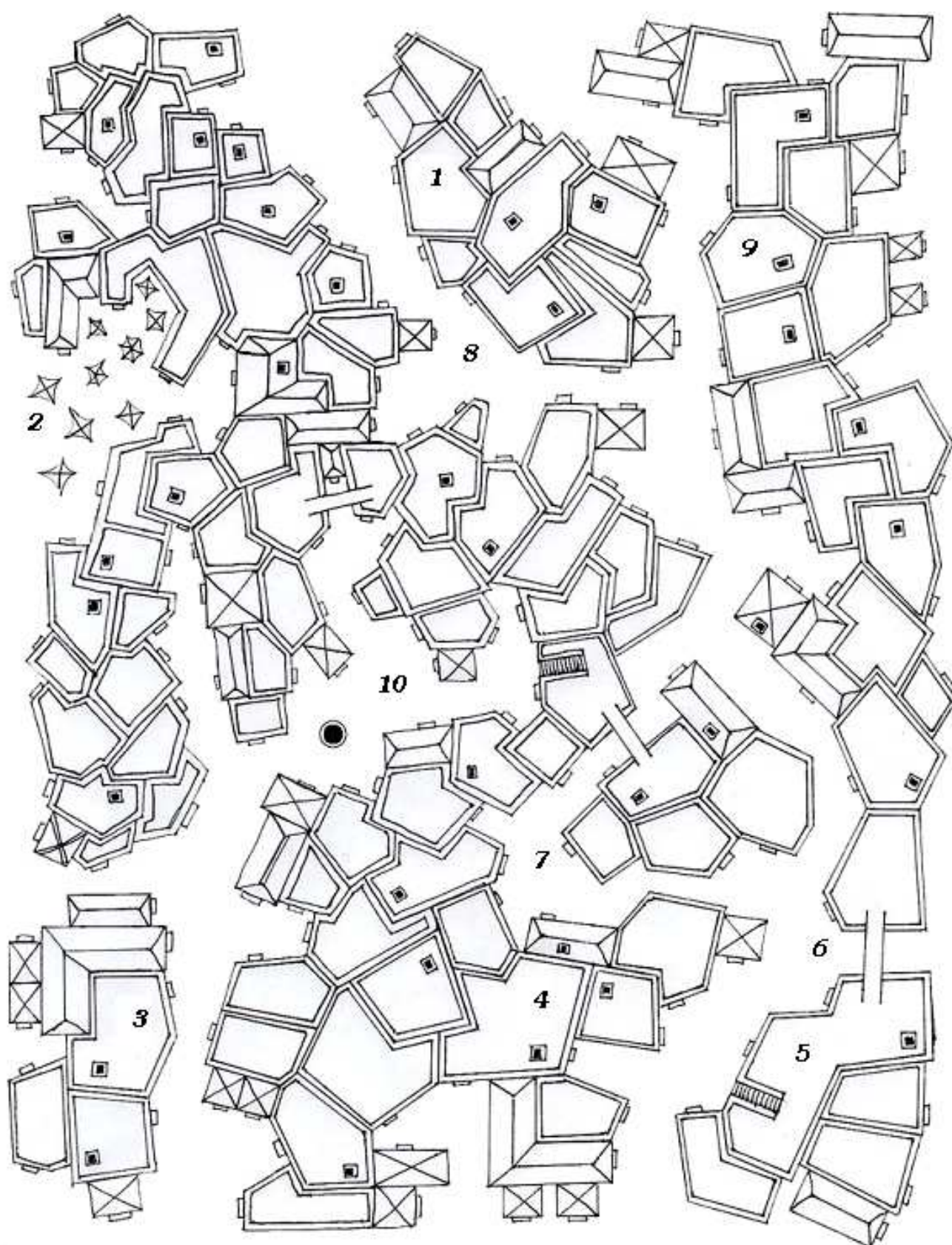
This building is home to 3+1d3 Tragos. There is a 50% chance of encountering them here – otherwise, they will be scavenging around the Northern Courtyard (see previous entry).

10. Central Courtyard

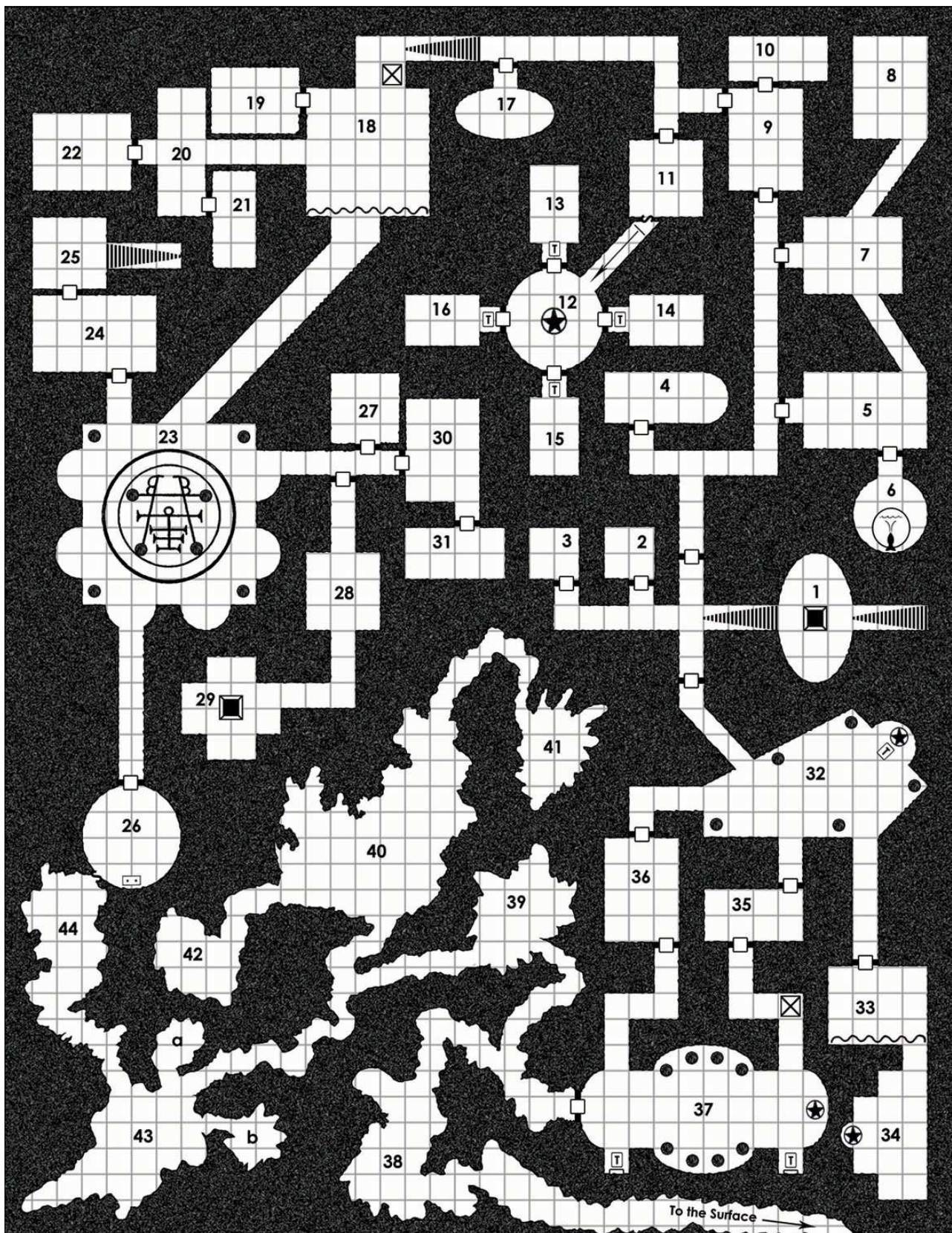
In the middle of this courtyard is what appears to be a covered well. However, in reality, it is the top end of a wide shaft that descends some 100 feet down to the Under-Deeps (to room 29).

The shaft is big enough for any Small, Medium or Large man-shaped being to climb up or down, using the rusting iron brackets that are imbedded in the shaft's stonework (the brackets are too widely spaced out to be used by a Tiny creature, and a Gigantic creature would not fit in the shaft).

There is a 1 in 10 chance that any Medium-sized being (1 in 20 if Small, 1 in 5 if Large) who climbs up or down the shaft – make separate rolls for each individual – will find that one of the brackets will give way when he places his weight upon it (necessitating an Athletic Prowess roll to avoid falling, using the character's Encumbrance total as the target number).



Map of the Over-City of Belixa



Map of the Under-Deeps of the City of Belixa

1 square = 10 ft x 10 ft

Perils of the Under-Deeps

The Main Entrance to the Under-Deeps of Belixa is from the Guard-House (location 5) of the Over-City. The rough stone-lined corridor that leads underground from this location twists and turns several times as it makes its way deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth. Eventually, after a journey about 300 feet in length, it ends in a flight of carved steps which enter the first chamber of the Under-Deeps.

The various locations within the Under-Deeps are as follows (numbers refer to map references):

1. Guard Chamber

This oval-shaped chamber contains two vigilant guards. In the centre of the chamber is a vertical shaft, surrounded by a rope barrier, which goes down to the **Hidden Depths** - the little-explored level of caves and tunnels beneath the Under-Deeps that were once the domain of the Lizardians and Troglodytes of Belixa.

The upper-most rungs of this shaft (to a depth of at least 50 feet) have been deliberately removed by Prince Tryphon's men to prevent them being used by any remaining Troglodytes from below. No-one knows how big the drop to the next level is - at least 200 feet, it is presumed, and perhaps more. The evil Sorcerer Xendor occasionally punishes unsatisfactory servants by ordering them to be thrown down the shaft.

2. Champion's Chamber

This bed-chamber is the private room of Grun the Barbarian. As well as his sparse private possessions (clothing, furs, a money pouch containing 5 gold coins and 20 silver pieces), the room contains several weapons (three spears, a bow and a quiver with 12 arrows), and a half-full barrel of Hyperborean Beer. Grun himself is not presently in the room.

3. Guest Chamber

This bed-room is modestly but comfortably appointed, and serves as a guest chamber for visitors: usually spies and associates of Tryphon or Xendor, and, on occasion, their chief ally, Prince Caldamos. Currently the room is empty.

4. Armory

The door to this room is kept locked, requiring either a key (possessed only by Tryphon, Grun or Commander Anterinos) or a Feat of Strength to open. Inside, an impressive armory is to be found - swords, spears, javelins, shields, and other weapons and armor besides.

5. Barracks #1

This room contains beds and personal effects (e.g. clothes-chests, stools and gaming-tables) for twelve men. Currently, the room is empty (the men who normally sleep here are 'on duty').

6. Fountain

This room contains a small fish-shaped fountain that provides perpetual clean water: the hidden plumbing that provide this supply is clearly well-designed, and the actual source of the water is unknown. All of the Under-Deep's fresh water is supplied from this fountain.

7. Barracks #2

Identical in most respects to room 5, the twelve occupants of this room are currently present. They are 'off-duty' and are sitting or lying around, idling their time telling stories, playing dice-games, and the like. If the adventurers fight these guards for more than 2 battle rounds, there is a 50% chance each round thereafter that the sleeping guards in room 8 will awaken and reinforce their fellows.

8. Barracks #3

Identical in most respects to rooms 5 and 7, the twelve occupants of this room are present and sleeping.

9. Dining Room

This room contains two long trestle-tables capable of seating up to twenty-four people in total at a time.

10. Kitchen

A brick oven is built into the back wall of this room, and a hearth stands nearby with cooking implements. There is a preparation table to one side, and an alcove containing bedding for the two kitchen-boys on the other. The room is currently occupied by the cook and his two assistants (treat as non-combatant minor NPCs).

11. Pantry

This room contains various food-stuffs: barrels of grain, amphorae of cheap wine, jars of herbs and spices, and the like. It also contains bedding for the cook. Directly behind the cook's bed is a secret door. A successful Detection roll with a target number of 18 is required to discover this well-hidden door. Behind this door, a sloping passage leads down to room 12.

12. Vestibule

This circular chamber is dominated by a statue of an Argusoid (adventurers with the Scholar talent may recognize it as a depiction of Argus himself, the progenitor of his race). Beneath the statue is a text, written in the same unknown language as found in the ruins of the Over-City above (If it could be translated – which alas it can't be – the inscription warns the wary traveler to 'keep all his eyes open' as he passes through the surrounding doors).

These four doors, which are spaced at 90 degrees to one another, are all floor-trapped – (Type: indoor; Effect: direct damage – swinging blade; 1d6 Hits; Concealment Rating 16; Danger Rating 16). However, the Concealment Rating and Danger Rating are both reduced by 2 each time as the adventurers become more familiar with each trap which, while not identical, are very similar to each other in design and layout.

13. Treasure Chamber #1

This room contains several chests filled with rich clothes (now rotten), coins (200 gold coins and 2,000 silver pieces) and semi-precious gems (to the value of 100 gold coins).

14. Treasure Chamber #2

This room is empty.

15. Treasure Chamber #3

This room contains a chest containing 40 gold coins, as well as the following mythic items: Boar Helmet (made of titanite), Tunic of Nessos, Phial of Styx Water, and a Staff of Power.

The Treasury of the City

This Vestibule, and the four associated treasure chambers, form the ancient and long-lost Treasury of the City of Belixa. Neither Tryphon nor Xendor know of its existence, and even the last few Titanians of Belixa have lost the knowledge of its location.

However, many of the mythic items found within are made of an ancient metal, Titanite, which has a distinctive reddish tinge. This will be instantly recognizable to the Titanians should they see them – and will instantly arouse their interest and, probably, their anger, should they question the adventurers as to how they came by them. The script found upon the statue of Argus is written in Titanian, the ancient, virtually forgotten language of the Titans and their Titanian descendants.

16. Treasure Chamber #4

This room contains the following mythic items: Spear of the Dragon, Sword of the Underworld (made of titanite), Staff of Water, Ring of Missile Deflection (made of titanite), Blade of Treachery (made of titanite).

Note: all the mythic items noted in this room and room 15 are detailed in the *Maze Masters Guide*, with the exception of the *Ring of Missile Deflection* (see *Minotaur N° 6: Pandora's Box*) and the *Blade of Treachery* (see *Minotaur N° 4: Pandora's Box*).

17. Empty Chamber

This oval-shaped chamber contains nothing of interest. Just past the entrance to this room descending steps lead down to room 18.

18. Guard Chamber

At the entrance to this room there is a cunningly-hidden pit trap (Type: indoor; Effect: falling + direct damage from stakes; 2d6 Hits; Concealment Rating 16; Danger Rating 16). Inside the room itself are three not particularly attentive guards, sat around a table playing a board game.

If the adventurers fight these guards for more than one battle round, there is a 2 in 3 chance each round thereafter that the guards in room 20 will reinforce their fellows.

At the far end of the room is a rich tapestry which, though faded, can still be recognized as a depiction of the world-shaking struggle between Gods and Titans that inaugurated the Age of Myth. Unusually, the Titans are depicted as graceful, majestic beings whilst the Gods are depicted as brutish, ugly and malevolent.

19. Torture Chamber

This grim room reeks of blood and foulness, and is filled with all manner of instruments of torture: saws, thumb-screws, eye-gouges, a torture-rack, various sinister instruments with long wicked blades, chains hanging from the roof, and the like.

20. Guard Chamber

This chamber contains two vigilant guards.

21. Cell #1

This door to this chamber contains a barred window, allowing the guards outside to view the interior. The door itself is locked (the attendant guards having the only key). Inside the room are two badly injured men, captured alongside princess Callidice.

Both men bear the marks of severe torture. One of them is so badly injured that he will expire within moments of being rescued. The other, however, will revive a little if given water, and will be capable of moving and, if necessary, fighting, if the adventurers put a sword or spear into his hands (treat him as a Fighter Minor NPC, p 25 of the *Maze Masters Guide*, with just 4 Hits left).

22. Cell #2

Similar to room 21, though with certain rough furnishings that give a modicum of comfort. As with the other cell, the only key is held by the attendant guards. The only occupant is princess Callidice.

23. Summoning Chamber

This large, impressive room contains four pillars, each of which is carved so as to resemble one of the four types of Infernal Archfiends: the Balotaur, the Dracodemon, the Thanator and the Hellazon.

Standing at the far end of the room is the Sorcerer Xendor: he is just coming to the end of the summoning incantation, spoken in the ominous-sounding dark tongue of Stygia, whilst finishing the inscribing of the magical Circle of Summoning – a series of glowing lines of eldritch power – upon the floor of the chamber. Hovering in the air above the Circle, a dark hazy shape is rapidly taking more solid form – the Archfiend that Xendor has successfully summoned. It is a Balotaur!

See *Minotaur* N° 3 p 34 for the Balotaur's detailed stats. Xendor's profile can be found in the Appendix to this adventure – including the description of his magical *Amulet of Acheron*, which allowed him to summon the Archfiend.



Behold the might of the dreadful Balotaur!

Fighting Xendor and the Balotaur

The Balotaur will operate independently of Xendor, but in accordance with his summoner's general wishes (e.g. to attack the adventurers). The Archfiend will remain for 2d6+4 rounds (or until it is destroyed, or Xendor is killed).

Xendor will fight until his Hits are reduced to 6 or less, and/or the Balotaur is destroyed – at which point he will use his Armlet of Janus to retreat either to his Temple (and from there to the caverns beyond, in search of help from the Ogres that live there), or to the Titanians' quarters (where he will seek their aid). Although power-crazed, Xendor has a strong survival streak, and if possible will turn to flight rather than fight to the death.

24. Xendor's Chamber

This room is Xendor's private room. It is simply furnished, and contains little of interest, other than a small chest underneath Xendor's bed. This chest is locked (only Xendor has a key), though it could be opened easily with a successful Feat of Strength.

However, the chest is trapped (Type: indoor; Effect: poison – needle trap: death in 1d6 rounds if the victim fails a Physical Vigor roll; Concealment Rating 17; Danger Rating 15). The chest contains 25 gold coins, gems to the value of 20 gold coins, and several of the Scrolls of Thessalia (Scrolls I-III).

25. Empty Chamber

Behind a locked and heavily-barred door (which can, however, be opened by a Feat of Strength) lies this empty, draughty room. A flight of steps leads down to a rough-hewn tunnel – for this marks one of the entrances to the Hidden Depths – the little-explored maze of tunnels, fissures and caverns beneath the City of Belixa. Long ago the Hidden Depths were home to the Lizardian and Troglodyte foes of the Titanians of Belixa. It may well be that remnants of these reptilian races remain, but reported sightings have been few and fleeting. Xendor prefers to keep the door to this entry-hall firmly barred. The door itself is carved on both sides with images of Titanians battling their reptilian foes.

26. Temple

This small shrine contains that incredibly rare thing – an altar to Hades. That Xendor should have decided to embrace the worship of Hades is extraordinary, even given the obviously unbalanced state of his mind. There is a strong atmosphere of gloom and foreboding within this room. Located just to the right of the altar is a secret door (a successful Detection roll with a target number of 15 is required to locate it). This door leads to the caverns (rooms 38-44) beyond.

27. Titanian Chamber #1

This room (currently empty) is the private chamber of Molicon, younger brother of Adastrix, and one of the five remaining Titanians of Belixa.

28. Titanian Chamber #2

This room (currently empty) is the private chamber of Gymnauris, son of Adastrix, and one of the five remaining Titanians of Belixa.

29. Titanian Chamber #3

This is the private chamber of Adastrix, the Lord of the Titanians, and his wife, Solepsa. In the centre of the ceiling is a shaft that leads up to the Over-City (emerging at location 10 on the Over-City map). Currently only Solepsa is in the room, sleeping.

30. Titanian Chamber #4

This room contains the few remaining treasures possessed by the Titanians of Belixa: beautiful couches and tables; faded manuscripts depicting the Titanian's forgotten history, written in a language that even the remaining members of this race now find hard to read; tattered tapestries and rusted armor from their days of glory. There are no mythic items of note to be found here.

Currently Adastrix, his son and his brothers are all in this room. All have the usual stats of Titanians, as found on page 116 of the *Creature Compendium* – but see also *The Titanians of Belixa*, next page.

31. Titanian Chamber #5

This room (currently empty) is the private chamber of Pardicos, youngest brother of Adastrix, and one of the five remaining Titanians of Belixa.

32. Outer Audience Chamber

This large room is attended by five guards – each standing before one of the five tall, richly-adorned pillars found in this room. If the adventurers fight these guards for more than 2 battle rounds, there is a one in three chance each round thereafter that Anterinos and Tryphon (currently both in room 36) and/or Grun (in room 33) will reinforce their fellows (make two separate rolls).

In an alcove at one end of the room is a large, 20 foot statue of Kronos, Lord of the Titans. Kronos is depicted as an austere cloaked figure, holding a great scythe – the Scythe of Time.

The floor immediately before the statue is trapped – any-one standing there will activate a cunning mechanism which causes the statue's sharp scythe to swing down upon the hapless victim (Type: indoor; Effect: direct damage – swinging blade; 1d6 Hits; Concealment Rating 17; Danger Rating 15).



A proud, undefeated Titanian warrior

33. Tryphon's Reception Room

Here prince Tryphon spends much of his time, amusing himself with the finely-tuned harp that stands in the middle of the room, or sometimes playing chess with Anterinos, the commander of his guards. The room is decorated with rich fixtures and furnishings, including a particularly stunning tapestry that hangs across the entire rear wall of the room. This depicts the arrival of Damocles and the Minean refugees in the Archipelago more than three centuries ago. It is clearly a work of great craftsmanship, and was brought to Belixa by Tryphon when he fled Zankros three years ago.

Currently standing on duty before the tapestry is Tryphon's personal champion, Grun the Barbarian. See the Appendix for Grun's profile.

34. Tryphon's Chamber

Tryphon's bed-chamber (the entrance to which is hidden behind the great tapestry of Damocles) is just as lavish as his reception room. To one side there is a small household shrine to Aphrodite – Tryphon's personal patron. Adventurers who take the opportunity to explore this room will find that there is a small desk bureau in the far corner: amongst the more interesting items to be found there are several letters from Caldamos which implicate him in the kidnapping plot, and a small pouch of gems (with a value of 60 gold coins).

The Titanians of Belixa

The Titanians of Belixa were once a proud and noble civilization, responsible for great feats of architectural engineering, and for building both the Over-City and the Under-Deeps of Belixa sometime in the Age of Myth.

Unfortunately, the Titanians were not the only inhabitants of the island, and for hundreds of years, during the Age of Magic, they fought a bitter war against their reptilian rivals, the Lizardians and Troglodytes.

The long conflict led to the ruination of the Over-City. The dwindling remnants of the Titanian race eventually overcame their reptilian foes (though it was rumored that some of the Lizardians and Troglodytes survived in the Hidden Depths below the Under-Deeps).

The Titanian race never regained their vigor, and now just five members of this most ancient civilization of the Archipelago remain. However, they have agreed to ally with Xendor and Tryphon – and to share their empty halls with them and their servants – in return for two pledges: firstly, that Xendor and Tryphon, once they have returned to power in Zankros, will help the Titanians finally cleanse Belixa of all remnants of the foul Lizardian and Troglodyte races; and secondly, that they will procure wives for the three younger Titanians, so that something of their race – however diminished or half-bred – will survive into the future.

The profile for the Titanians of Belixa is identical to that found on page 116 of the *Creature Compendium*. The Titanians will fight the adventurers without hesitation – if even one of them is killed, the others will become *enraged* (add +1 to their Melee but -1 to their Defense Class). All the Titanians fight with shields (even Solepsa). They will fight to the death.

35. Anterinos' Chamber

This bed-chamber is the private room of Anterinos, the commander of Tryphon's guard. It is simply but tastefully-furnished, with everything neatly and precisely ordered.

36. Dining Room

This well-appointed chamber is where Tryphon, Grun Anterinos and, occasionally, Xendor, take their meals. Anterinos and Tryphon are both currently in this room (see the Appendix for their profiles).

Tryphon and Anterinos will both fight to the death, as they know that no mercy will be shown to them for their involvement in the abduction of Callidice.

37. Inner Audience Chamber

This large room serves as the main planning and conference room between Tryphon, Xendor, Anterinos and visiting allies such as Caldamos. The floor is dominated by a large map of the Archipelago, with various models representing ships, troops, settlements and agents. On either side of the room are a series of imposing pillars, each carved so as to resemble one of the Titans.

At the eastern end of the chamber is a large statue of Atlas, one of the foremost of the Titans, who is depicted in such a way as to suggest that he is holding up the roof of this chamber (in reality, this statue, running from floor to ceiling, **is** playing a significant load-bearing roll – should it be seriously damaged, requiring a Feat of Strength, then over 1d3 rounds the ceiling of not just this room but also rooms 33 and 34 would come crashing down).

At the western end of the chamber is a locked door (only Tryphon, Xendor and Anterinos hold the key to it), beyond which there is a series of caverns (rooms 38-44). This door can be broken open by a Feat of Strength. On the southern wall there appears to be two doors which are actually false, and which are trapped (Type: indoor; Effect: direct damage – falling boulders; 2d6 Hits; Concealment Rating 15; Danger Rating 15). Additionally, there is a pit trap in the connecting corridor between this chamber and room 35 (Type: indoor; Effect: falling; 1d6 Hits; Concealment Rating 16; Danger Rating 16).

38. Cavern #1

This cave is home to 6+1d6 Tragos. A tunnel leads from this cavern to the surface, emerging after a long, winding journey into a cave about a quarter of a mile to the south of the City of Belixa.

39. Cavern #2

This cave is home to 3+1d3 Tragos.

40. Cavern #3

This cave, the Cavern of Crystals, is filled with hundreds of crystalline structures of different sizes and in various bluish hues: indigo, violet, cerulean and the like. Crossing the floor of the cave is difficult (requiring Athletic Prowess rolls, which, if failed, result in 1d6 of damage from slipping onto particularly sharp crystalline rocks).

41. Cavern #4

This cave is home to a pair of ravenous Cave Spiders (use the profile on page 49 of the *Creature Compendium*). Their poisonous sting causes paralysis within 1d6 rounds if the victim fails his Physical Vigor roll.

42. Cavern #5

This cave is home to a malevolent Shadow (use the profile on p 103 of the *Creature Compendium*).

43. Cavern #6

This cave is home to 6+1d3 Ogres.

43a. This cave is inhabited by a Giant Blood-Bug (see the profile below).

43b. This cave is home to a small shrine dedicated to Gorgora, the Ogre goddess. It is filled with bones of humans, Tragos, and other creatures that have been sacrificed or eaten by the Ogres.

Giant Blood-Bug



Taxonomy: Monster

Description: The Giant Blood-Bug appears to be distantly related to the leech, and has similar foul blood-sucking habits. However, it is surprisingly agile and alert - and very skilled at ambush, lurking in darker corner, ledges or on ceilings, and dropping onto its victims as they pass by. It drains blood from its victims via the multiple-toothed suckers that cover the underside of its body, and the pseudopodia-like tentacles it is able to extrude. Although usually dark red or purple in hue, it is capable of altering its appearance so as to blend into the background better. They are usually found in dark and dank places beneath the earth.

Size: Large

Ferocity: Dangerous

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Weird

Movement: 90'

Initiative: 15

Melee Attack: +7

Damage: 2d6

Defense Class: 15

Hits Total: 24

Detection/Evasion: +2/+4

Mystic Fortitude: +2

Special Abilities: Camouflage (18), Entangle (20', Might 20), Regeneration (2 Hits / round), Stealthy (14), Uncanny Agility, Wallcrawling.

Awards: Glory 280, Wisdom 10

44. Cavern #7

This cave is home to 3+1d3 Ogres.

Back to the Ship

If the adventurers succeed in rescuing the princess (and, in all probability, killing Tryphon and perhaps Xendor, as well as acquiring proof of Caldamos' involvement in the plot), then they must journey as speedily as possible back to the Cove of Crows.

However, should they emerge above ground at night-time, then they are unlikely to want to travel until it is light (unless time really is short, in which case the Maze Master should be prepared for additional, nocturnal encounters with the dangerous creatures of Belixa).

The adventurers may have just as much difficulty as before finding the trail from the City to the Cove (unless they have at least one amenable prisoner, or they have a Hunter in the party - in which case a single tracking roll against a target number of 15 should be made). A successful Hunter tracking roll (or the aid of a prisoner) will reduce the journey time through the jungle from one full day to half a day.

Roll 1d6 on the **Jungle Journey Event Table** (see p 9) every half-day (i.e. morning and afternoon) to judge what befalls (if anything) the adventurers.

If the adventurers get back before mid-day on **Day 6**, they will find the *Scarlet Endeavor* awaiting them. However, should they be late, then Idemon will have been true to his word, and will have departed. In this case, the characters could, of course, commandeer one of prince Tryphon's own ships: but - unless there is a Mariner in the party - *at least* two of them must have the Sailor talent. Otherwise, short of a Divine Intervention, they must admit defeat...

The Final Gambit

Countdown to the Seventh Day

Assuming they have some time left, the adventurers (on board the *Scarlet Endeavor* or one of Tryphon's ships) will now sail as fast as they can towards Atreion. The journey from Belixa to Atreopylae should take a single day.

Should the Maze Master wish to raise the stakes (and make for a more nail-biting conclusion), it is suggested that he lengthen the journey by any means he deems appropriate (e.g. becalmed waters; storms blowing the ship off course; rough seas making necessary the longer passage outside rather inside the islet of Melipsa; an encounter with sirens, sea serpents or other creatures that befuddle, delay or damage the ship and/or the adventurers; etc.). However, the Maze Master should refrain from adding additional complications or delays if these cause the characters to be late....

Beyond Cape Wrath

As the adventurers round Cape Wrath (preferably on the morning of **Day 7**), just a couple of hours away from their final destination, they find a single Atreonid war galley awaiting them. It is the *Chimera's Heart*. On board is prince Caldamos and forty Atreonid soldiers (use the profile for Soldiers on p 60 of the *Creature Compendium*). Caldamos does not believe in taking chances. Just in case the Zankroseans somehow find and liberate Callidice, he stands ready to intercept any ship that may be bringing her Atreopylae. As soon as he spies the characters' ship, he gives orders to intercept it.

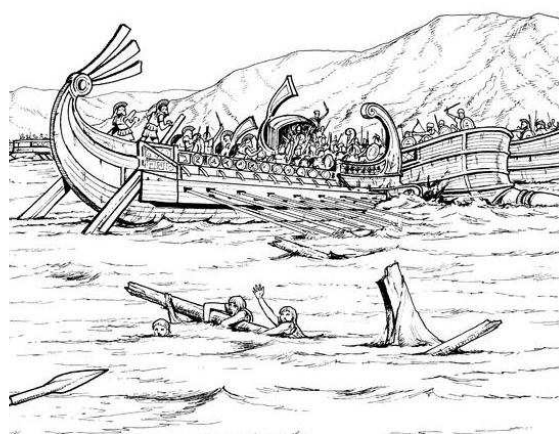
If the adventurers overcome Caldamos and his men, they will have an incident-free journey for the rest of their voyage, arriving at Atreopylae in the very nick of time. The harbour is filled with war galleys, and preparations for war are almost finalised: but the adventurers' ship will be admitted, and allowed to berth, where amazed and awe-struck guards will immediately form an impromptu escort around the princess and the adventurers. Together, they will make their way to the city plaza, where a disbelieving king Leomides awaits...

The quest is achieved: on the seventh day, war is averted. The Archipelago will know a new age of peace and prosperity...

Final Rewards

The exact rewards (apart from all the Glory!) that will be received by the adventurers are left to the Maze Master's discretion. However, if they succeeded in getting Callidice to Atreopylae in time, it is likely that these will be substantial. Possible honors may include noble titles (or at least honorary 'freedoms' of the cities of Atreopylae and Megalis); grants of land, or treasures of gold, silver or precious gems; and, of course, invitations to a royal wedding! Mythic items are not likely to be awarded (although the adventurers will be allowed to keep any they acquired on Belixa, with the exception of Tryphon's Sword of Ruse – an heirloom of the Zankrosean royal house that Pyribus will want returned). Both Pyribus and Leomides are likely to want to reward the adventurers. Finally, Lord Dauros will want to make a personal gift of the first three of his Scrolls of Homeros to any Lyryst in the adventuring party – 'a personal thank-you from one retired adventurer to one still creating new legends,' he will explain.

If, however, the adventure ended less successfully (i.e. after a sea-battle) because the characters failed to meet the deadline, then the rewards are likely to be less generous. Granted, they rescued the princess: but many have died in a terrible battle that could have been avoided. The royal wedding will take place, but in more muted circumstances: and the characters will *not* be invited. And what if they failed to rescue the princess? Well, let's just say that the word 'reward' may acquire a new and unpleasant meaning for our hapless adventurers.



Beware Caldamos' last treachery!

Alternative Scenario The Last Sea-Battle?

What if the adventurers succeed in rescuing the princess, but fail to get her to Atreopylae in time? What will await them? The adventurers are likely to encounter the Atreonid fleet, already amassed and sailing towards Zankros, with the *Chimera's Heart* serving as flagship. Although this is an unpromising scenario, it is suggested that there should still be hope.

The adventurers are fortunate in being able to rendezvous with a Zankrosean force that the wise Pyribus has sent on ahead.

Although outnumbered (12 Zankrosean ships, including the adventurers' vessel, to 20 Atreonid ones), there is hope that the Zankroseans will at least be able to buy the adventurers time to intercept the *Chimera's Heart* and to present princess Callidice to king Leomides, who has taken command of the Atreonid fleet on board the flagship.

Of course, prince Caldamos, who is also on board the *Chimera's Heart*, will do everything in his power to prevent the reunion of father and daughter, or the revelation of his treachery.

If the adventure does culminate in this final sea-battle, Maze Masters are advised to use the Naval Combat rules found in *Minotaur* N° 1, pp 30-31. Although individual Zankrosean ships have better combat capabilities to their Atreonid counterparts, it is suggested that the combined strength of the Atreonids be somewhat greater (in view of their superior numbers).

Other things being equal, the Zankroseans will lose this battle, unless the adventurers can get to king Leomides with the princess...

Appendix: Major NPCs

King Pyribus



Level 3 Noble, age 31, ruler of Zankros.

Personality & History: Imaginative, scholarly, and determined, Pyribus has vowed to end the long war between Zankros and Atreion. Originally, his proposal of marriage to princess Callidice was motivated purely by expediency – but now he realises that he loves her. Her abduction leaves him angry but also uncharacteristically uncertain – fearful that his personal feelings for Callidice may cloud his judgement, as he ponders the best cause of action for the sake of his people...

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 10, Wits 18, Luck 17, Will 13, Grace 13.

Combat: Initiative 16, Melee +6**, Missile +6, EDC 17* (Helmet, Shield & Breastplate), Hits Total 21.

Weapon of Choice: Spear. Also carries a sword and a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +4, Danger Evasion +7*, Mystic Fortitude +9*, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +5 (+8 to fellow Zankroseans).

Background Talents: Equestrian & Scholar.

Mythic Items: Breastplate of Apollo, Spear of Conquest.

* These scores take into account the +1 bonus to EDC, Mystic Fortitude & Danger Evasion granted by the Breastplate of Apollo.

** This score takes into account the +2 bonus to Melee granted by the Spear of Conquest.

Lord Dauros

Level 5 Lyryst, age 67, chief counselor of Zankros.

Personality & History: Wise and authoritative, Dauros left his native Argos in search of adventure half a century ago. In his younger days, he was a well-renowned venturing Lyryst. For the past twenty years, however, he has lived in 'retirement' in Zankros, having previously saved the life of Pyribus' father, king Xanippus. Despite his 'foreign' origins, Dauros has become Pyribus' most valued counsellor. Dauros married late, to a Zankrosean noble-woman of great charm and beauty, who sadly died in childbirth eleven years ago. Dauros is determined to help Pyribus secure his legacy of peace – not least for the future of his beloved young son, Galimos.

Attributes: Might 8, Skill 12, Wits 17, Luck 20, Will 17, Grace 15.

Combat: Initiative 13, Melee +3, Missile +7, EDC 16 (no armor), Hits Total 15.

Magic: Orphic Voice +6, Mystic Strength 18, Power points 22.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +3, Danger Evasion +7, Mystic Fortitude +10, Physical Vigor +6.

Personal Charisma: +9 (+14 to other Lyrists, Nymphs and followers/priests of Apollo & Athena).

Background Talents: Musician & Orator.

Mythic Items: Six Scrolls of Homeros (I-VI).

Captain Idemon

Level 2 Mariner, age 45, captain of the *Scarlet Endeavor*.

Personality & History: A man of few words, Idemon is an experienced sailor who knows the waters of the Archipelago well. He is unswerving in his loyalty to Zankros. He is well-regarded by his crew.

Attributes: Might 12, Skill 16, Wits 10, Luck 16, Will 15, Grace 10.

Combat: Initiative 12, Melee +4, Missile +4, EDC 14 (no armor), Hits Total 12.

Weapon of Choice: Sword. Also carries a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +6, Danger Evasion +4 (+8 on ship), Mystic Fortitude +4, Physic. Vigor +4.

Personal Charisma: +4 (+6 to other Mariners – not Pirates – and followers/priests of Poseidon).

Background Talents: Sailor & Wrestler.

Mythic Items: None.

Grun the Barbarian

Level 2 Hyperborean Barbarian, age 29, personal champion of Prince Tryphon.

Personality & History: Brutal, but not particularly bright. Exiled from Hyperborea for unknown reasons.

Attributes: Might 18, Skill 16, Wits 10, Luck 14, Will 14, Grace 10.

Combat: Initiative 12, Melee +6, Missile +3, EDC 13, no armor (14 versus melee attacks unless surprised), Hits Total 19.

Weapon of Choice: Sword (Barbarian weapon), does 1d6+3 damage. Also carries sling, stones and dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +6, Danger Evasion +3, Mystic Fortitude +2, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +2, +4 to fellow Hyperboreans

Background Talents: Woodsman & Wrestler.

Mythic Items: None.

Commander Anterinos

Level 2 Spearman, age 34, commander of Prince Tryphon's forces.

Personality & History: Capable fighter, who fancies himself (without much justification) as something of a 'ladies' man', Anterinos hopes that when Tryphon ascends to the throne of Zankros, he will be made commander of the Zankrosean guard.

Attributes: Might 17, Skill 17, Wits 15, Luck 16, Will 15, Grace 13.

Combat: Initiative 15 (17 when fighting with spear), Melee +8, Missile +7, EDC 22*, includes Helmet, Shield & Breastplate (25* versus melee attacks when fighting with spear & shield), Hits Total 19.

Weapon of Choice: Spear. Also carries a sword and a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +8, Danger Evasion +7, Mystic Fortitude +6, Physical Vigor +7.

Personal Charisma: +5 (+7 soldiers loyal to Prince Tryphon only).

Background Talents: Sailor & Tactician.

Mythic Item: Spear of Defence.

** These scores take into account the +2 bonus to EDC granted by the Spear of Defence.*



Prince Tryphon

Level 2 Noble, age 28, exiled younger brother of King Pyribus.

Personality & History: Brooding, cunning and paranoid, Tryphon is convinced that his destiny is to return to Zankros in triumph, where he will be welcomed back by a desperate people once Pyribus' peace initiative has been comprehensively wrecked. He has lived on Belixa for the past three years, slowly building up his forces, and recruiting as allies the last of the Titanians of Belixa. However, he does not fully trust the Titanians, nor his Acteonid ally Caldamos. Indeed, his only true friend is the sorcerer Xendor, who exercises a powerful influence over this bitter Zankrosean nobleman.

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 14, Wits 19, Luck 19, Will 12, Grace 11.

Combat: Initiative 19, Melee +10*, Missile +9, EDC 22 (includes Helmet, Shield & Breastplate), Hits Total 17.

Weapon of Choice: Sword. Also carries a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +6, Danger Evasion +9, Mystic Fortitude +8, Physical Vigor +5.

Personal Charisma: +4 (+6 to Zankroseans loyal to Tryphon only).

Background Talents: Musician & Sailor.

Mythic Item: Sword of Ruse.

** This score takes into account the +4 bonus to Melee attack rolls granted by the Sword of Ruse.*



Xendor the Sorcerer

Level 4 Sorcerer, age 55, the power behind Prince Tryphon's plot.

Personality & History: Gaunt, austere and fanatical, Xendor dreams of never-ending conquest: first Zankros, then the Archipelago, then...who knows? Xendor first came to Zankros nine years ago from Seriphos and soon insinuated his way into the affections of the young Prince Tryphon. It was Xendor who cunningly prepared the false trail that suggested he and Tryphon had fled the Archipelago when their first bid for power failed. In truth, Xendor had discovered the Belixan Under-City some years earlier, and had already begun to prepare it as a 'bolt-hole' should the assassination attempt on Pyribus prove unsuccessful. Xendor has dabbled in various dark arts for many years. The resulting corruption of his soul has left him as a man who is utterly devoid of conscience.

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 16, Wits 20, Luck 16, Will 19, Grace 12.

Combat: Initiative 16, Melee +5, Missile +8, EDC 14 (no armor), Hits Total 15. Carries a dagger (which he rarely uses)

Magic: Psychic Gift +8 (+10 using Psychic Attack*), Mystic Strength 20 (22 using Psychic Attack*), Power Points 20.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +5, Danger Evasion +8, Mystic Fortitude +10, Physical Vigor +7.

Personal Charisma: +6 (+10 to minor NPCs).

Background Talents: Scholar & Orator.

Mythic Items: Ruby Ring of Sorcery, Silver Lotus Dust, Armlet of Janus, Amulet of Acheron.

Silver Lotus Dust. Xendor has only recently started using this dangerous substance. At present, his SLD usage score is 13 – some way below the dangerous addiction level for some-one with a Will of 19. Xendor keeps the SLD in a small pouch on his person that currently holds 6+1d10 doses.

** This score takes into account the +2 bonus granted by the Ruby Ring of Sorcery.*

Amulet of Acheron

This very rare item of Stygian provenance allows a Sorcerer to summon an Infernal Archfiend of his choice (see pp 33-35 of *Minotaur* N° 3 for details).

The Archfiend must appear within a 25' radius Circle of Summoning (which takes 3 rounds to magically inscribe, during which time the Sorcerer can take no other actions). Once summoned, the Archfiend may move outside this Circle. It will operate independently of the Sorcerer, but in accordance with the Sorcerer's general wishes (e.g. to attack the Sorcerer's enemies). The Archfiend will remain for (2d6+Sorcerer's level) rounds (or until it is destroyed, or the summoning Sorcerer is killed).



Princess Callidice

Age 19, bride-to-be of King Pyribus.

Personality & History: Raised in a royal court where she was indulged by a doting father, Callidice is more than a little spoilt. Beautiful, charming, but easily scared, Princess Callidice is likely to be as much a hindrance as a help to any would-be rescuers – liable to scream at the slightest hint of danger, and liable to make unreasonable and irrational demands. Adventurers need to be patient with her – and to remember that the lives of many in the Archipelago depend upon her safety.

Profile: As far as stats are concerned, Callidice should be treated as a Minor non-combatant NPC (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 25) – but with a Grace of 18 and a Personal Charisma of +6.

Since Callidice is a Minor non-combatant NPC, she automatically fails all saving rolls – which means her fate is entirely in the hands of her abductors (the bad guys) or liberators (the adventurers!).



King Leomides II

Level 4 Noble, age 46, ruler of Atreon.

Personality & History: A formidable warrior who is well-loved by his people, Leomides is a man who still grieves the loss of his only son. This has made him highly-protective towards his daughter, and it is with great reluctance that he has finally agreed to marry her to King Pyribus. His wrath, therefore, at her disappearance is enormous. However, at the urging of several of his counsellors – and hoping against hope that she is still alive – Leomides has given Pyribus seven days in which to return her. Leomides does not particularly like his nephew Caldamos – whose ambitions to succeed him as king have been a little too obvious for his liking – but neither does he suspect him of treachery. Instead, Leomides has ordered Caldamos to ready the Atreonid fleet for a full-scale assault upon Zankros.

Attributes: Might 17, Skill 20, Wits 11, Luck 19, Will 14, Grace 18.

Combat: Initiative 18, Melee +12** (+16 once per day**), Missile +8, EDC 23* (includes Helmet, Shield & Breastplate), Hits Total 27.

Weapon of Choice: Spear. Also carries a sword and a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +11, Danger Evasion +9*, Mystic Fortitude +7*, Physic. Vigor +8.

Personal Charisma: +8 (+12 to fellow Atreonids).

Background Talents: Sailor & Orator.

Mythic Items: Amulet of Protection, Spear of Striking.

** These scores take into account the +1 bonus to EDC, Mystic Fortitude and Danger Evasion granted by the Amulet of Protection.*

*** This score takes into account the +1 bonus to Melee (and +4 once per day) granted by the Spear of Striking.*



Prince Caldamos

Level 3 Noble, age 26, prince of Atreon.

Personality & History: Haughty and overbearing, Caldamos cannot face the prospect of peace with the sworn enemy of his people. The 'peace plan' also proposes to deprive him of the kingship that he believes, one day, should rightfully be his. For several months, as his uncle has negotiated with Pyribus, Caldamos has been plotting with Tryphon and Xendor to wreck the peace initiative. He has insisted, however, that Callidice not be harmed by his allies – for unknown to virtually anyone, Caldamos secretly lusts after his cousin. This, of course, only increases his hatred towards the Zankrosians and their king. Only Callidice herself suspects Caldamos' true feelings for her – feelings that she most certainly does not reciprocate.

Attributes: Might 13, Skill 20, Wits 14, Luck 18, Will 12, Grace 8.

Combat: Initiative 18, Melee +8, Missile +8, EDC 23* (includes Helmet, Shield & Breastplate), Hits Total 21.

Weapon of Choice: Sword. Also carries a dagger.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +8, Danger Evasion +10*, Mystic Fortitude +6*, Physical Vigor +4.

Personal Charisma: +2 (+5 to fellow Atreonids).

Background Talents: Sailor & Tactician.

Mythic Item: Aegis.

** These scores take into account the +2 bonus to EDC, Mystic Fortitude and Danger Evasion granted by the Aegis.*

Adventure maps designed by **Tim Hartin**.

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<http://paratime.ca/cartography/>

THE SERPENT OF PROTEUS

A short but very perilous scenario for heroic adventurers, by **Carlos de la Cruz Morales**

Translated from the Spanish by Maria Lourdes Batres with the help of Carlos de la Cruz Morales

This scenario takes place approximately five years before the events of the Tomb of the Bull King mega-module. Bellerophon, depicted as a wounded king in his early forties in Tomb of the Bull King, appears here as a heroic, adventurous prince of Heraklia in his late thirties. Ideally, the player-characters should start as companions and counselors of the prince – either Heraklian compatriots or friends met on a previous trip or adventure. They should be level 2-3; 1st level characters will probably have a very hard time here...

Introduction

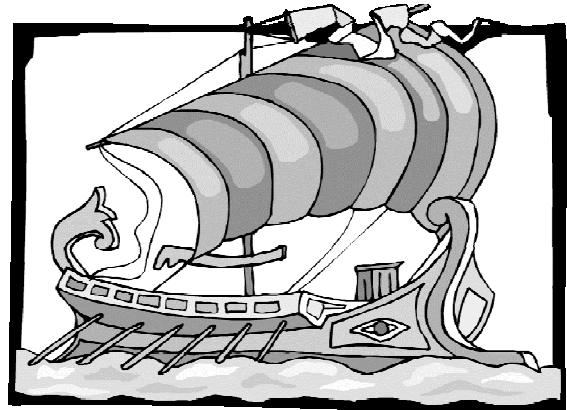
Long ago, before the Age of Heroes, a curse fell upon the island of Proteus. The ancient human civilization that had flourished there collapsed from the folly of their last king. The kingdom was invaded by Beastmen and Chaos monsters and only a few coastal villages survived, thanks to the sacrifice of the king's daughter.

The Olympian gods decided to isolate Proteus, for the pollution of Chaos not stain the rest of the world. Almighty Zeus ordered the Nymphs of the Sea to create fog around the island, for the sailors to become disoriented, and the Great Cyclops to throw large rocks at the coast, so that the few ships that arrived there sank before they reached the shore.

Finally, he ordered Poseidon to look for a great keeper, and the Lord of the Seas brought from the Western Ocean a large sea snake, which he called Coristos. Zeus ruled that until a Hero killed the monster, the ban that had fallen on Proteus would not be lifted.

Centuries passed, and the few human inhabitants of the island dwindled in numbers and in culture. When the Age of Heroes came, there were only small isolated villages inhabited by simple farmers and hunters, who only remembered old legends about their past glory. Proteus' residents were now afraid to travel within the island, inhabited by monsters, and they knew that if they ventured into the sea, the curse of the gods would fall upon them.

Coristos, the sea serpent grew into a fearsome monster. She lived in a cave that opened into a cliff, near a long sandy beach. From there she swam around the island, following Poseidon's orders. But every few years, she moved away in search of prey and reached the Land of the Three Cities and the island of Seriphos, devastating coastal towns and sinking ships. The sages and priests of the kingdoms that were attacked figured out the name of the Sea Serpent and the name of Proteus' Monster became famous, and a number of heroes found their demise attempting to end the beast's life.



The Aphrodite's Foam, proud ship of a proud prince

The Prince's Ship

Bellerophon is one of the Magnificent Seven of Heraklia, the sons of King Thalos of Heraklia (see *Minotaur Quarterly* n°2, p 10). At the beginning of the adventure, the Prince is returning to its city in a vessel, the **Aphrodite's Foam** after having visited Argos. The **Aphrodite's Foam** is a War Galley with 12 Structure Points, 30 Warriors/Oarsmen as crew and a normal Fortune of 0 points.

One beautiful morning, a crewman of penetrating sight, warns the crew: in front of them there is a ship having difficulties. Bellerophon orders them to come close, and as they do, they discover that it is the *Eye of Nereos*, another Heraklian War Galley.

It is evident that the *Eye of Nereos* has suffered an attack: the mast is broken and a leak is sinking it slowly. But the most disturbing fact is that no survivor can be found, dead or alive, either on board or floating in the water.

Bellerophon orders someone to swim to the *Eye of Nereos* to investigate. The distance between the two ships is 40 feet, so it will be necessary to make two Athletic Prowess rolls to cross from one vessel to the other (see the Swimming rules on p 44 of the *Players Manual*).

If none of the player characters offer themselves as volunteers, one of the crewman will swim there. In any case, they will only find signs of struggle and destruction that could only have been caused by a giant monster or a god. There are no survivors.

After this unpleasant discovery, Bellerophon orders to continue the voyage to Heraklia.

The Devastated Village

After a few hours' voyage, the Aphrodite's Foam reaches the vicinity of Colpa, a fisherman's hamlet loyal to Heraklia. The bay in which the hamlet is located has only one narrow exit to the sea, surrounded by rocks and shoals and is very dangerous to any vessel bigger than the small boats of fishermen.

As the Aphrodite's Foam approaches the hamlet, the crewmen discover that something isn't going well. A boat lays in pieces near the bay's entry and those with better eyesight can see that there is a great excitement in the hamlet.

And then, when they are all looking towards Colpa, they can clearly see something huge moving among the huts. It is a serpent-like body of enormous size. At a given moment, the monster suddenly lifts up its triangular head over a house and launches itself towards the ground, trapping a man between its jaws. As the monster devours the unfortunate man, an old crewman from the Aphrodite's Foam screams: "*It's Coristos!, the Serpent of Proteus!*"

An Attack Plan

Bellerophon orders his men to advance towards the coast. His plan is to attack on land, as he expects the Serpent to be less agile out of water, its natural element. He wants to save the fishermen, if possible, but most of all, he wants to end the monster's life and obtain immortal glory. The players can propose alternative plans, but they will have to convince Bellerophon that these have a significant advantage. Some options are:

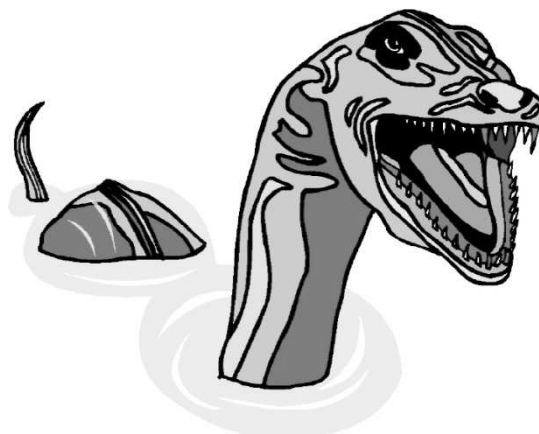
Enter the bay aboard the Aphrodite's Foam and attack the monster on land. This is very dangerous, as the narrow entry to the bay can cause the ship to sink even before facing the monster. But if they manage to reach the hamlet, the heroes could attack Coristos on land, where it will presumably be easier to slay. See *Crossing the Bay*.

Wait until the monster attempts to abandon the bay and attack in the open sea. This option is more prudent, but prince Bellerophon wants to attack immediately, so the characters have to make a Persuasion roll (see p 32 of the *M&M Companion*) with a target number of 18, due to the high Will of Bellephoron. See *Fighting from the Ship*.

Escape. Not an option, since bold Bellerophon will not retreat without battling the monster.

Other plans: Perhaps the players might want to lay an ambush by swimming towards the rocks near the bay's entrance or use a raft to reach the shore while the ship waits at sea. It is up to the Maze Master to decide if such plans are feasible.

The crewmen of the Aphrodite's Foam should be treated as standard Human Soldiers (see *Creature Compendium*, p 60) but without armor or shield (giving them a Defense Class of 12).



The Serpent of Proteus rears its monstrous head

Crossing the Bay

To be able to cross the narrow strait that leads to the village, Bellephoron or one of the characters must make a Danger Evasion roll against a target number of 15. Bellephoron's modifier is +7.

If this saving roll fails, the ship will suffer 2d6 damage points to its Structure as it crashes against a rock. If the ship loses all its structure points, it will start sinking and Coristos the Serpent will start advancing to devour the shipwreck victims. See the *Sunk!* section (p 50).

If the ship manages to get passed the rocks, even if it has sustained damage, Bellerophon orders the oarsmen to advance with all their might. The monster isn't yet aware of their presence and will continue to devour villagers.

By the time the sea serpent becomes aware of the ship, Bellephoron has had time to reach the coast and disembark alongside the adventurers and some valiant warriors. See *Fighting on Land*.

Fighting on Land

If the characters manage to reach land, the Serpent will launch itself against them, with the intent of destroying them. Here are a few things to keep in mind when running this battle in play:

- Due to the *Fearsome* ability of Coristos, most of the warriors would rather run than face the beast, but the high Leadership of Bellerophon makes it possible for all to follow him into the fight. However, if the prince dies or becomes unconscious at any moment, one of the heroes must assume control of the warriors and will have to make a Morale check immediately (See p 47 of the *Players Manual*)

- Being a Gigantic monster, the Serpent can attack up to four human-sized opponents each round. However, it becomes much slower on land, where it can only attack three different targets per round.

- The Gigantic Size of Coristos also means that all missile attacks against him receive a bonus of +4. This modifier applies only to Missile rolls made by player-characters; for simplicity's sake, the use of bows and other missile weapons by crewmen is already taken into account in the rules given below.

- Recreating a battle between a large number of NPCs and a giant monster such as Coristos can become an arduous and tedious task for the Maze Master, and boring for the players that watch as the Maze Master makes multiple rolls against himself. Instead, it is recommended that the warrior NPCs that fight alongside Bellerophon and the adventurers be handled according to the following rules. There are 30 warriors aboard Aphrodite's Foam and all of them will fight Coristos. As long as there are at least 20 warriors fighting against the Serpent, the monster will receive 2d6 points of damage. If there are between 20 and 10, it will automatically suffer 1d6 points of damage per round. If there are less than 10 warriors, they will only serve as monster-fodder and will have no impact on the fight.

- Each round, the Serpent will try to Grapple one of the warriors, unless it has already Grappled a victim in its coils, in which case it will crush him during two battle rounds (using its *Crushing Damage* ability). The targets of the other two attacks of the Serpent will be determined randomly by rolling 1d6: 1 = The Serpent attacks Bellerophon, who is fighting one to one against it; 2-3 = The Serpent attacks one of the adventurers; 4-6 = The Serpent attacks one of the ship's warriors and will leave it out of combat.

When the Serpent reaches a Hits Total of 10 or less, refer to the *Poseidon's Intervention* section.

Fighting from the Ship

The sea fight will follow the same advice as in the *Fighting on Land* section, but with a few differences.

- In water, Coristos gets its four melee attacks.

- Every three rounds, Coristos stops attacking the warriors and attempt to damage the ship, as is explained in the description of the creature. If the Serpent manages to reduce the ship's Structure points to 0, refer to the *Sunk!* section below. If Bellerophon is fighting against the monster, he won't be able to captain the ship, so another player character will have to make a Danger Evasion roll or else, leave command to one of the warriors, who has a Danger Evasion modifier of 0.

- The warriors aren't as effective against the Sea Serpent when fighting from the ship, and as some are very busy simply attempting to keep the vessel afloat they can only deal 1d6 damage each round, provided that there are between 30 and 15. They will not cause any damage when their number is reduced to less than 15 men.

As soon as the monstrous Sea Serpent gets its Hits Total reduced to 10 or less, move to the *Poseidon's Intervention* section below.



Behold the fury of Coristos!

Coristos

Taxonomy: Monster

Description: Coristos is certainly the most fierce and powerful Sea Serpent of the Inland Sea (as shown by its Deadly Ferocity and Eldritch Mystique). Poseidon himself has ordered the monster to guard the island of Proteus, but every so often it roams the neighboring regions in search of food.

Size: Gigantic

Ferocity: Deadly

Cunning: Alert

Mystique: Eldritch

Movement: 120'

Initiative: 16

Melee Attack: +10

Damage: 3d6

Defense Class: 18

Hits Total: 60

Detection / Evasion: +2

Mystic Fortitude: +8

Special Abilities: Aquatic, Crushing Damage (constriction), Fearsome, Grapple (M = 24), Magic Resistance, Regeneration (3 / round), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards: Glory 1200, Wisdom 50.

Unique Ability: Like all Sea Serpents, Coristos can damage a ship by ramming and crushing its hull. Each round, the creature may select to forfeit all its other attacks to inflict 1D6 Structure points damage on a ship. This attack takes place at the Serpent's usual Initiative score and requires no attack roll. It can only be avoided if the captain of the ship makes a Danger Evasion roll (counting the ship's Fortune bonus, if any) against a target number of 15.

Sunk!

If at any point the Sea Serpent manages to sink the Aphrodite's Foam, the situation will become even more desperate. The monster will then begin to devour the helpless NPCs one by one. After 1d10 battle rounds, it will start attacking the adventurers and Bellephoron. In these 1d10 rounds, players will be able to attempt to make two Swimming rolls to reach a large piece of wreckage, but from that moment on, they will have to fight alone against the monster, without the help of the rest of the warriors.

Poseidon's Intervention

When Coristos the Serpent gets its Hit Total reduced to 10 or less, the monster will attempt to flee. At that moment, the god Poseidon will appear from the sea as a gigantic human figure brandishing an equally gigantic trident.

Poseidon will strike the Serpent with his trident. Coristos will try to retaliate against the god, but he's invulnerable to the monster's attacks. The deity will address Bellephoron or the surviving characters and say "You have vanquished Coristos the Serpent, the guardian of Proteus' Island, by the will of the gods. By the will of Zeus Almighty, the ban on visiting the island is therefore lifted".

After that, he will start advancing towards the South, the Serpent coiled around one of his arms. Bellephoron will order the oarsmen to advance, following Poseidon. But then, a northerly wind will swell the sails and will propel them supernaturally towards Proteus. The wind has been sent by Zeus from Olympus, something that will be noticed by any of Zeus' Priests or Noble descendant of the deity.

After one hour's time, the characters will see land. Poseidon will swim towards a beach and he will destroy all the rocks that kept ships from landing with his mighty trident, and after that, he will toss the Serpent onto the shore. Then, the King of the Sea will vanish, turning into a column of water.

Bellerophon and the Aphrodite's Foam will reach land moments later and the prince will disembark to end what he started. Coristos will be there, with a Hits Total of 15, and is willing to fight to the death against its enemies. Poseidon has obeyed Zeus' orders and has allowed the beach to be reached by ships, but before leaving, he has revived the monster, and he doesn't care if Bellerophon and his followers are vanquished.

Due to the power of Poseidon, however, the Serpent has lost its Regeneration ability, and can 'only' make three attacks per round, being on land.

If Coristos has sunk the Aphrodite's Foam before Poseidon's intervention, the Maze Master should allow the adventurers to grab onto a large piece of wreckage to stay afloat. Such an improvised lifeboat will be carried towards the south on a giant wave.



The King of the Sea to the rescue!

Epilogue

If Bellerophon and his followers finally manage to defeat Coristos, the monster will recoil in great agony, destroying rocks and uprooting trees, until its death in a promontory near the beach.

Bellerophon will decide to build a city in the spot of the Serpent's death and he will name it Coristea, as a reminder of the guardian of the island. The bold prince will then bring a group of valiant colonists from Heraklia and will start exploring the island of Proteus – but that's another story...

Bellerophon

Prince Bellerophon is one of the Magnificent Seven (the seven sons of the King of Heraklia). A seasoned warrior, he inspires great loyalty in his followers – but his lust for personal Glory sometimes leads him to act impulsively.

Level 3 Noble

Attributes: Might 15, Skill 17, Luck 20, Wits 12, Will 17, Grace 15.

Combat: Initiative 17, Melee +9, Missile +7, Basic Defense Class 16 (22 with helmet, shield and breastplate), Hits Total 22.

Saving Rolls: Athletic Prowess +9, Danger Evasion +7, Mystic Fort. +7, Phys. Vigor +9.

Personal Charisma: +9 (Leadership +12)

Equipment: Bow, sword (weapon of choice), dagger, breastplate, shield, helmet. His sword is a Sword of Ares (+3 to damage) and his bow is a Bow of Herakles (+2 to attack and damage).

Background talents: Tactician, Wrestler.

THE QUEST FOR PRINCE ARGAN

A Complete Campaign Plot for a Heroic M&M Odyssey



Prince Argan, the missing heir to the throne of Argos

This campaign framework was created to give a long-term goal to the characters – as well as a perfect excuse to go island-hopping in the Middle Sea, exploring mysterious sites, facing all sorts of perils and having exciting adventures in the grand, good old *Mazes & Minotaurs* style.

As often in M&M, this long-term goal takes the form of a quest to fulfill – in this specific case, finding Prince Argan, the missing heir to the throne of Argos, before his scheming brother usurps the crown. Prince Argan went sailing in search of adventure across the Middle Sea a few years ago and has not been heard of ever since.

This uncertain and perilous quest will probably take our heroic adventurers to many mysterious islands – and depending on the whims of the Maze Master, may also lead them to the shores of Charybdis, Midia, Tritonis, the Desert Kingdom or even the Land of the Sun¹.

¹ Lands which, incidentally, have all been described in detail in their own *Mythika Gazetteers*

A Modular Odyssey

In this daring and secret venture, the adventurers act as “deniable agents” for Princess Niobe in her secret struggle against her brother-in-law Prince Kyros, with the future of the Argosean monarchy in the balance – see *Background* next page for more details. While she cannot herself join the expedition (since, as Kyros was only too eager to remind her, her duty as Admiral of the Fleet forces her to stay in Argos), Niobe will cover all necessary expenses for the quest – including (if the player-characters do not already have one) a ship of the best quality, complete with crew and captain².

The length of the campaign depends entirely on the Maze Master’s wishes – or, to put it another way, on how hard he wants to make things for the adventurers: depending on the plans of the Maze Master, the quest for the missing Prince of Argos could be concluded in three adventures or span a dozen scenarios or even more.

The structure of the campaign also depends on what happens once the adventurers have located the elusive Prince Argan: does the story end here, with Prince Argan returning to Argos to “sort things out” with his brother and the adventurers leaving Argos before the internecine struggles begin? Or is this just the end of the first act?

In its more ambitious version, the quest for Prince Argan can be played as a three-tiered campaign, as detailed below. Each tier of this epic odyssey would include several adventures (or “chapters”). This three-tier structure could also correspond to the player-characters’ advancement: they could start the first tier at low level (1-2), reach level 3 or 4 over the course of the second tier and reap their last levels and rewards at the end of the final tier.

² And of course, this captain could be none other than the famous Barros One-eyed, already featured in *The Lost Lair of Laodice* and the epic *Against Atlantis!* trilogy published in previous issues of the *Minotaur*.



- Where the heck is Prince Argan?

Background Information

The main goal of this campaign is based on the current political situation in Argos³.

After many years of seemingly endless senescence, Argon the Proud, king of Argos, has (finally) died, leaving two sons (as well as more than twenty daughters, but that's another story): the romantic and adventurous Prince Argan and his younger brother Prince Kyros, a far more practically-minded and ambitious young man. Despite being heir apparent to the Argosean throne, Prince Argan has never shown any interest in politics, leaving such "petty concerns" to Kyros and his father's counselors. Argan had far more interesting things to do in life than learning to rule a kingdom: he wanted to become a heroic adventurer and accomplish legendary deeds. Two years ago, after several years of adventuring, Argan embarked with his men on yet another heroic expedition, which was supposed to take them to the shores of Charybdis... which he apparently never reached.

Since then (and because of his father's growing senility), Kyros has become the *de facto* ruler of Argos, acting as regent and gaining support from many powerful Argosean aristocrats. Far from being a despotic tyrant, Kyros has shown a true political acumen – as well as a genuine taste for power.

And now that King Argon is dead, Prince Kyros finds he cannot accept the idea of seeing the romantic and carefree Argan inherit the crown; simply put, he has become tired of being the proverbial power behind the throne and has decided to become the next king of Argos. But he also knows that Argan has always been far more popular than him – and that his prodigal brother would be perfectly capable of returning to Argos upon hearing of his father's demise. ... All Kyros needs is to make sure that his brother never comes home to claim his crown.

³ This situation was detailed in the *Mythika Gazeteer* of our second issue. This situation is summarized below, but Maze Masters should definitely check the background material on Argos in *Minotaur* N°2, pp 12-14.

Still officially acting as interim regent of Argos, Prince Kyros has decided to send an expedition led by some of his most loyal supporters in search of his brother; the official mission of these men is to locate the lost prince and bring him back to Argos. Their real mission, which is known only to their leaders and to Prince Kyros is to make sure that Prince Argan is already dead – and if it's not the case, to eliminate him, along with any potential witnesses, and come back to Argos with the tragic tale of Argan's last quest and heroic death (as well as his body, if possible). After all, everybody knows that adventuring is a dangerous business.

Argan's wife however, the valorous Princess Niobe (who is also the Admiral of Argos, see *Minotaur* N°2, p 14) has begun to suspect her brother-in-law of foul play: an adventurer herself, she volunteered to take command of an expedition to find her missing husband right after King Argon's death; Prince Kyros denied her this request, on the grounds that, in this dark hour of royal mourning, her foremost duty as head of the Argosean Fleet was to stay in Argos to protect the city from any potential maritime attack. Although Niobe knew full well that such an attack was highly unlikely, she had no choice but to comply. Her gut feeling is telling her that Kyros is about to seize the throne but she has no proof of this, and has not voiced her suspicions to anybody – a wise move in a royal court full of intrigue, hidden agendas and power struggles. Faced with this very tricky situation, Niobe has decided to secretly hire a group of foreign adventurers to locate Prince Argan and bring him back to Argos before his brother seizes power (or before Kyros' agents find Argan and kill him). Enter the player-characters...

Part One: Sea Voyage

The player-characters look for Prince Argan on various islands and shores of the Middle Sea, having quite a few perilous adventures en route - and eventually gathering some reliable clues on the current whereabouts of the missing Prince. This first tier ends up when the adventurers finally find and meet the missing heir apparent of Argos.

This part of the campaign should of course involve many mysterious islands⁴, storms and other natural perils, encounters with sea creatures and all the traditional elements of classic M&M adventuring; it should also allow the characters to gain one or two levels and a few useful mythic items before facing the greater challenges that lie ahead.

If you are playing with novice players, this first part would also be an excellent opportunity to show them how the game mechanics works and what “old school adventuring” is all about.

With more experienced players, Maze Masters should probably put a greater emphasis on the “race against time” aspect of the quest – and on the actions of the other search party, the one sent by Prince Kyros to find his missing brother (and dispose of him discreetly). Ideally, the adventurers should cross the path of their rivals at least once before getting to the second tier.

Part Two: Exotic Adventures

More Trouble Ahead

Whether he has found a lost city in the Charybdis Jungle or become embroiled in some dangerous situation in Sybaris, Tritonis or Kandaria, Prince Argan must deal with some serious trouble of his own before he can get back to Argos – and, of course, the adventurers will have to help him solve these problems, especially if they too have become embroiled in this local situation – a “twist of fate” which any reasonably devious Maze Master should be able to ensure. Either because of his own heroic code of honor or of circumstances that are beyond his control, the heir to the throne of Argos will be unwilling (or unable) to leave his current location before these problems are solved.

And don't forget the rival search party - who may also have tracked down Prince Argan and whose orders are to eliminate the missing heir and all potential witnesses before bringing home the sad news of Prince Argan's unfortunate demise at the hands of some terrible monster or unknown peril. It would be especially fitting to have Prince Kyros' agents appear right after Argan and the adventurers depart for Argos, having sorted out (or so they think) all their intermediate problems...

The Plot Thickens

Ideally, this part of the campaign should allow the player-characters to deal with more complex situations (involving, for instance, the lost mysteries of Charybdis or some nasty power struggles in Sybaris) and face more dangerous menaces – including one or two major monsters.

⁴ These island-hopping expeditions would be an excellent reason to visit the various Argosean colonies of the Middle Sea, which are detailed in this issue's *Bonus Gazetteer*.

Argan could also have become obsessed with some unique mythic artifact which he absolutely needs to find before returning to Argos – especially if this particular quest has been placed upon his princely shoulders by one of the Olympians.

Cherchez la Femme

In addition to these various dramatic elements, Prince Argan's romantic streak and devil-may-care behavior could allow the Maze Master to introduce the following subplot.

While adventuring, Prince Argan has fallen in love with a Nymph or exotic princess, whom he had to rescue from some dire peril. And now he must leave her to return to his kingdom... unless he decides to bring her back to Argos with him – a choice which would have some interesting consequences, given the part played by his faithful wife Niobe in this epic campaign (including her fate in the third and final tier – see below for more details).

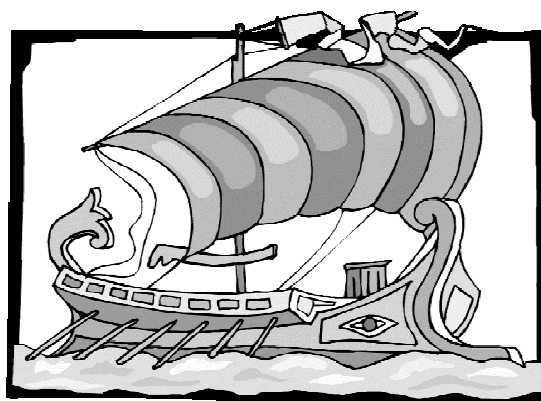
Part Three: Return to Argos

Argan's Homecoming

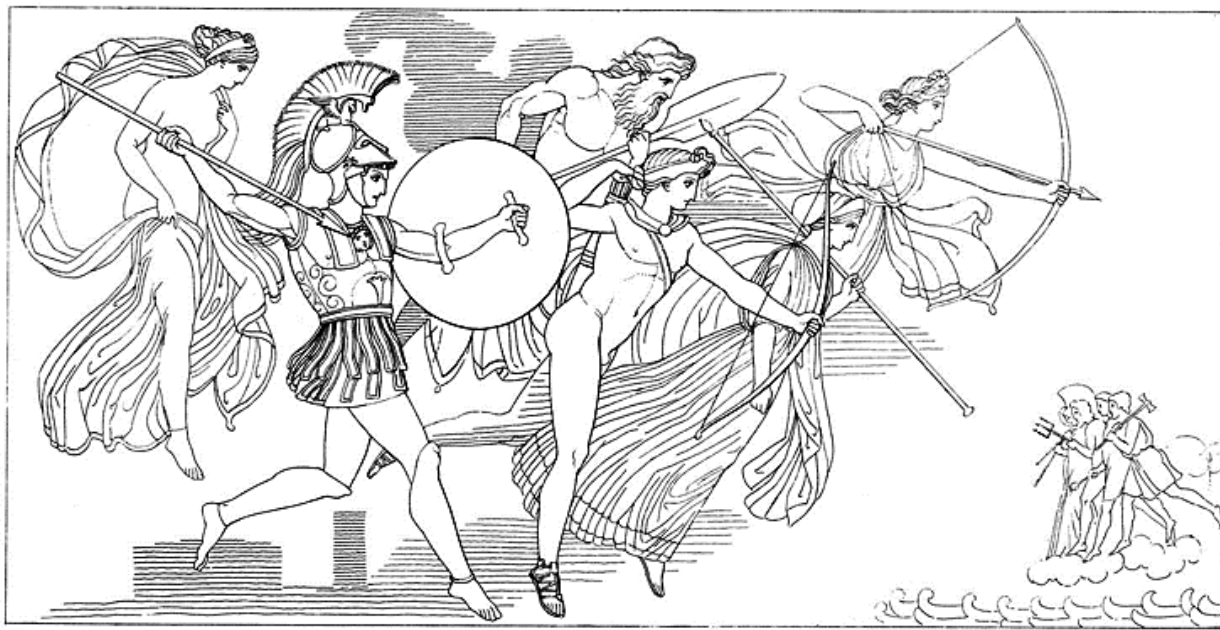
It is now time for Prince Argan and his new friends (the adventurers) to finally reach Argos... where the return of the royal heir ignites a fully-fledged civil war. While the adventurers were busy adventuring with Argan, Prince Kyros has finally lost patience and seized the throne for himself, after making an official proclamation of his brother's death.

Upon hearing the sad news, Princess Niobe finally decided to lead an open rebellion but was betrayed by some of her supporters and is now a political prisoner awaiting her judgment. That's where things stand when the gallant (and very much alive) Argan arrives in Argos with the adventurers...

The most obvious goals for this third and final tier are to free Niobe, muster some loyal forces around Argan, overthrow Kyros the usurper and instate Argan as the only legitimate monarch of Argos.



Wait a minute – haven't we already seen this ship?



Will the Argosean Strife escalate into a full-blown War of the Gods?

Civil War

In its simplest version, this final part of the campaign will involve mass warfare and military action (a chance to use the mass combat rules from the *M&M Companion* – or even the mass naval warfare rules found in the first issue of the *Minotaur*)... but Maze Masters may also decide to run things differently, by diverting the player-characters' tasks and missions from the central military or political battleground and lead them to yet another heroic quest: perhaps Kyros' forces are so overwhelming that Argan and his allies need a unique magical artifact to shift the situation in their favor - or perhaps they must placate one of the city's divine patrons (Poseidon and Hermes) by going on a particularly perilous and epic mission on behalf of this deity.

And since we are speaking of the Gods...

Enter the Olympians

While the city-states of Heraklia and Thena are unlikely to intervene in an Argosean civil war (since such a decision would shatter the already-fragile status quo of the Minean league and could lead the Land of the Three Cities into a fully-fledged war), the two patron deities of Argos could well come into conflict over King Argon's succession.

Each side could be supported by its own Olympian, with Poseidon supporting Prince Argan as the legitimate heir of his old devotee King Argon and Hermes choosing to help the more practically-minded and politically adept Kyros.

Maze Masters wishing to complicate this situation a bit further could have Hermes call for Zeus' arbitration or even convince the king of the Gods to support his own choice - and before you know what is happening, the whole Argosean situation could escalate into a nascent "war of the gods", with the irritable Poseidon refusing to acknowledge his brother Zeus' authority in the matter, leading other Olympians to take sides – all except Athena, who would probably try to reconcile the two brothers before things get too apocalyptic⁵. And of course, high-level adventurers would be ideal candidates for playing a crucial role in this divine conflict.

Rewards for the Heroes

Provided they have succeeded in instating Prince Argan on the throne (and perhaps contributed to avert a full-scale "civil war of the gods"), our heroic player-characters should be rewarded with immense wealth and privileged positions as the new king's closest advisers and counselors.

Or perhaps some of the Olympians involved in the Argos crisis could decide to recruit them as their full-time Divine Agents... But that's another story!

Olivier Legrand (2011)

⁵ This would work especially well in this setting, since Athena's Argosean priestesses have often played an important role in the history of their city, as noted in the *Mythika Gazetteer of Argos* (Minotaur n°2, pp 12-14) and in the *Against Atlantis!* Trilogy (remember the quest for the Sextant of Eryximachos?).