

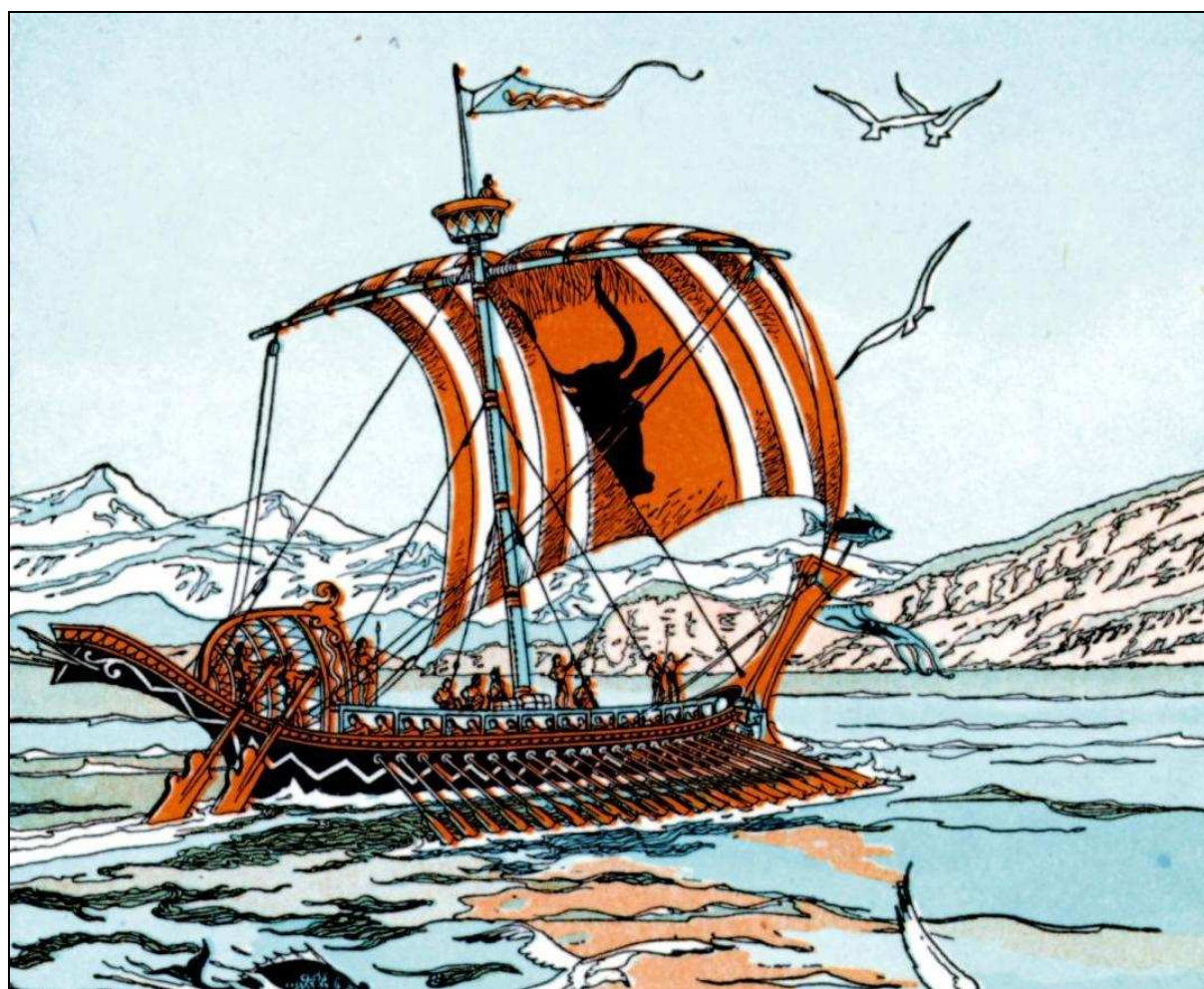


Legendary Games Publishing proudly presents



MINOTAUR Quarterly

The Official Webzine of the MAZES & MINOTAURS Revival – n° 1 - Fall 2007



WONDERS & PERILS OF THE SEA

SPECIAL DOUBLE-SIZED FIRST ISSUE !

New Creatures & Mythic Items, Official Background Material, Optional Rules, Inspiration for Maze Masters, Griffin Archives and Two Complete Adventures !



MINOTAUR QUARTERLY

Issue 1 – Fall 2007

A Word from the Editor

Greetings, fellow Minotaurians and welcome to the very first issue of the official and 100% free webzine of the **Revised Mazes & Minotaurs** Revival !

Each issue of the **Minotaur Quarterly** webzine will contain a complete **adventure** and at least one **feature article** focusing on a specific theme, such as this issue's **Wonders & Perils of the Sea** !

The theme of each issue will also be explored in the zine's regular columns :

Pandora's Box : New mythic items for M&M !

Maze Master's Lore : This column explores a specific aspect of Greek mythology... reconstructed and revisited for the *Mazes & Minotaurs* universe.

Mythika Gazetteer : Background information on the world of Mythika. We start this issue with the island of Tritonis and its decadent Sea Princes...

A Twist in the Maze : Back in the old days, Luke G. Reynard's *A Twist in the Maze* was one of the most regular columns of Griffin magazine. Well, guess what ? We've tracked Luke G. Reynard down (yes, he is still alive !) and persuaded him to resurrect his column for *Minotaur Quarterly*, bringing the old school wisdom of his critical eye to a new generation of M&M gamers !

Mythic Bestiary : New creatures for *Mazes & Minotaurs* – starting with new *Denizens of the Deep*.

Griffin Archives : Each issue of *Minotaur Quarterly* will also feature a *reprise* of an old Griffin magazine article for all you nostalgic veterans... and for those among you who weren't even born when this stuff was written. We start this issue with Igor A. Rivendell's classic 1982 article, *Movies & Minotaurs*.

Muse's Corner : This column will discuss books, movies, comics and other inspirational material for Maze Masters and players. We start this issue with some Recommended Reading.

Play Nymph : Each issue of *Minotaur Quarterly* will also bring you the finest in mythological pin-ups... See this issue's last page for the Big Picture...

To celebrate the birth of *Minotaur Quarterly*, LGS is happy to offer you a double-sized super issue, with **TWO complete adventures** (based on different interpretations of the same map), ***The Lost Lair of Laodice*** and ***A Dark Alliance***... plus an extra adventure synopsis, ***The Isle of Tempests*** !

Long live the Minotaur !

Olivier Legrand (2007)



Ship's Manifesto

Grizzled Captain : Olivier Legrand.

Hearty Sailors : Luigi Castellani, Darren Peech, Andrew Trent.

Blind Cartographer : Matthew Rodgers.

Drunk Cabin Boy : Luke G. Reynard.

Dead Stowaway : Igor A. Rivendell.

Nameless Rowers : Various Artists.

Flying Dutchman : Emmanuel Roudier.

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All game material included in **Minotaur Quarterly** uses the **Revised M&M** rules (1987 edition).

This Issue's Poetic Quote

*And I'll be there - where the sky touches the sea
At the edge of the ocean
Where the beautiful world fades into the grey
I dream of the ocean, rising, rising
I dream of the ocean, rising, rising*

Justin Sullivan, Ocean Rising

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UNDERSEA ADVENTURING 101

a.k.a Subaquatic Scenarios for Dummies by Olivier Legrand

Most M&M adventures take place in underground caverns or in the wilds – but in a fantasy game which features Nereids as a character class as well as a variety of mythic items that allow other characters to freely operate in the depths of the ocean, the Undersea can also become a full adventuring environment in its own right, with its own perils, wonders and denizens.

This article summarizes a few important things that Maze Masters should keep in mind when planning or running an underwater adventure.

1) Everyone Is Invited

This is, of course, the most basic and obvious requirement : undersea adventures will only work if all the characters in the party can freely breathe and operate underwater.

The easiest way to ensure this is to have a Nereid on the team : for 4 Power points, a Nereid can use her Nature's Favor power to enable a number of other characters to breathe and speak underwater for several hours. Both the number of characters and the duration are based on the Nereid's Odylic Charm bonus, as detailed in the rules.

This wonderful ability will be perfect for small groups and relatively short underwater expeditions, but large parties and/or prolonged adventures will require renewed Power expenses, which may prove quite taxing for a low-level Nymph.

Such problems can be alleviated by the possession of various mythic items allowing characters to freely operate underwater on a permanent basis, such as Amulets of the Merfolk (*Maze Masters Guide* p 43).

2) As Above, So Below

The M&M Undersea should appear as a fantasy, aquatic reflection of the surface world to which the characters are accustomed – like the Surface, the Undersea also has its own perilous caverns, hidden treasures, dangerous monsters, civilized folks, beautiful cities and even whole kingdoms.

This idea is perfectly embodied by the existence of creatures like Sea Horses (*Creature Compendium* p 100), which are to surface horses what Tritons are to humans (or rather to Centaurs, but hey, you get the idea). And as we shall see in the next sections of this article, this « As Above, So Below » approach to the undersea setting can also be applied to game mechanics and (yes) physical laws.



Check it out, guys ! This is good Maze Mastering advice !

3) Forget About Science

The world of M&M is a mythical, magical world – so don't bother about the real-life effects of underwater pressure, subaquatic acoustics, color absorption, marine biology, metal corrosion and other realistic, scientific facts about the underwater environment.

Remember that your job as a Maze Master is to give your players a memorable, exciting, magical fantasy adventure, not a Scuba diving course.

If you begin to worry about such things, then you might as well forget about Tritons, Mermaids and Sea Monsters as well. Your duty as a Maze Master is not to make the Undersea environment realistic, but to make it memorable and magical. This is not to say that this environment should not have any effect on a character's abilities – but these effects should pertain to things that are important in a fantasy adventure, as detailed below.

4) Keep Things Fluid

As stated above, **movement** should be handled as simply as possible : characters can swim, walk on the bottom of the sea, but cannot run.

During combat and other action scenes, the usual movement rate for swimming should be used (see *Players Manual* p 44) and characters may have to make swimming rolls (Athletic Prowess rolls against a target number equal to their Encumbrance total) to perform tricky « acrobatic » subaquatic maneuvers.

In Too Deep

Optional Rules for the Undersea

The Undersea environment can be divided into five different Depth Levels. The list below gives the maximum Depth Level which various underwater creatures can reach. Most creatures will usually dwell one or two Depth Levels above this maximum limit, unless otherwise stated. The actual maximum Depth Level of a specific location will simply be determined by the Maze Master.

1 = Below the Surface

2 = Low Depth

3 = Median Depth

This is the maximum depth level for Attack Kelps, Dolphins and Telchines.

4 = Deep Down

Maximum depth level for Mermaids, Tritons and most other Sea Folks, for hybrid creatures such as Quinotaurs and Ichtyocentaurs as well as for Sea Horses, Sea Lions and similar animals.

5 = The Deepest Abysses

This is the usual (*not* maximum) level for Fomoros, Sea Horrors, Sea Hydras, Sea Serpents and most other Gigantic sea monsters.

Nereids can reach Depth Level 5 without problems. while **Naiads** are normally limited to Depth Level 3.

Humans (and other Nymphs) cannot normally go below Depth Level 2, unless they are aided by magical powers or mythic items allowing them to operate freely undersea, in which case they can reach Depth Level 3.

Characters who are able to operate freely underwater may decide to ignore this limit by one (and only one) Depth Level but will have to make a Physical Vigor roll after each minute of activity. The target number of the first saving roll is 10 and will be increased by 5 at each new roll.

Thus, Humans who are aided by magic may venture at the Deep Down level but will have to make a Physical Vigor roll of increasing difficulty after each minute there. These rules also mean that Humans cannot reach The Deepest Abysses – except, perhaps, through the Divine Intervention of the King of the Deep, Poseidon himself.

Failure on the saving roll means the character must immediately go back to the previous Depth Level, which requires a last chance Athletic Prowess roll against the usual target number (Encumbrance). If this last chance roll fails, the character will pass out and succumb to the effects of pressure (same game effects as drowning), even if he has an Amulet of the Merfolk or other similar mythic item.

There is, however, one type of movement that may really play a vital part in an underwater adventure, especially if characters can only operate underwater for a limited amount of time : getting back to the surface. See *In Too Deep* on the next column for a simple way of handling different depth levels in an underwater adventure.

As far as **vision** is concerned, simply treat some waters as giving *poor visibility* or even *very poor visibility* (see *Players Manual*, p 26), depending on their depth or murkiness. If you really want to reflect the sound-dampening effects of the underwater environment, simply decide which sounds can or cannot be heard – but keep in mind that in M&M, the ability to breathe and act underwater can only be conferred to characters by magic – and since magic is a fabulous, unrealistic thing, we can « logically » assume this fabulous magic also allows waterbreathing characters to use their abilities at their fullest, including their senses.

The same reasoning can be applied to **combat** : simply assume that characters who have been given the ability to operate underwater can fight in this environment without suffering penalties – sure, their movements will be much slower, but so will their opponents', so there is no real need to reflect this in game terms. Also remember that many Undersea Folks (such as Dolphins and Tritons) have been given special abilities like Lighting Fast or Uncanny Agility, which will give them an edge in combat situations, reflecting their better adaptation to the undersea milieu.

Missile weapons are the big exception here : they will be made significantly slower and thus will have a significantly shorter range. For simplicity's sake, simply divide all ranges by 5. This should also apply to missile attacks made by undersea creatures (including Crushing Missiles).

And what about **magic** ? Well, it should operate normally in the underwater environment – except for Air and Fire Elementalism, which will not work at all.

5) Have Fun !

So what are you waiting for ? Get your Amulet of the Merfolk and dive into the ocean ! There is a whole world of adventure waiting for you beneath the waves of the Wine Dark Sea...



And I am waiting for you, too !

THE LOST LAIR OF LAODICE

A daring underwater expedition for a party of bold adventurers

by Andrew Trent (with some additional material by Olivier Legrand)

The Tale of Laodice

Somewhere far to the west of Thena, on a cliff that rises above the Middle Sea, there stands a single withered olive tree surrounded by a ring of stones whose aspect brings to mind horses. This tree marks the entrance to a series of caverns that once served as a hideout for the greatest thief of the Age of Magic, Laodice of Minea, who stole countless treasures and artifacts from all across Mythika.

Laodice's legend spread far and wide in those golden days. Sailors from every corner of the world came to sail with her, and upon seeing unparalleled beauty swore allegiance to her. She and her crew knew no fear (or wisdom) and ransacked bazaar and temple with equal zeal.

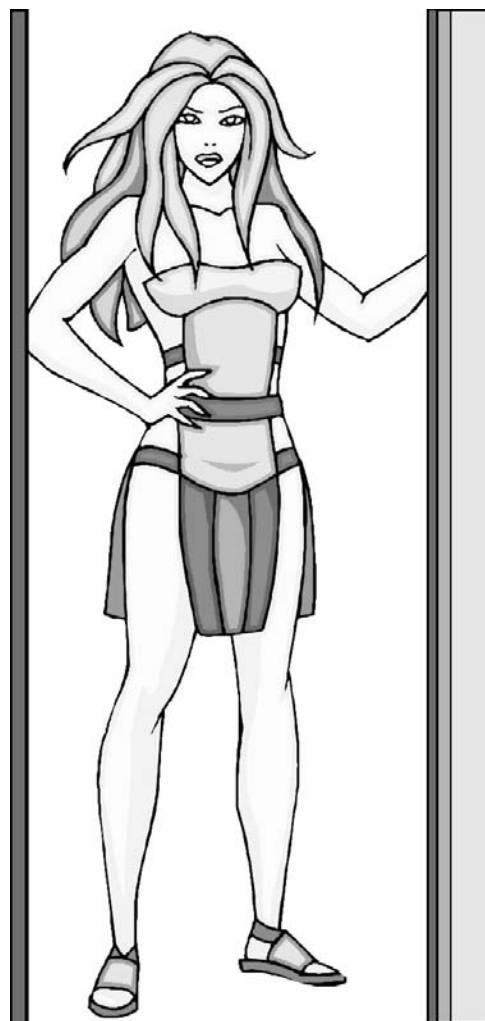
Laodice's career came to a devastating end when she dared to boast she was a better thief than even wind-swift Hermes. The god of thieves, ever clever, sought to punish Laodice for her hubris. Rather than simply visit divine wrath upon her, though, he challenged her to prove her skill by daring her to steal both the trident of Poseidon and the spear of Athena. Such was her skill that Laodice actually succeeded in this fool's errand.

Still, Hermes held the upper hand. He simply informed the two mighty gods of the identity of the thief and left them to mete out punishment.

The affront so angered Poseidon and Athena that they brought forth the full weight of their powers against the thief and her men.

Poseidon sent forth earthquakes and tidal waves to destroy her ships and hideouts, while Athena called upon her best and bravest followers to seek out and destroy all that remained of Laodice's legacy.

Together the two deities decided to curse the beautiful thief further by transforming her into a monstrous, grotesque creature. As a further punishment, they imprisoned her within her flooded and ruined lair, filled with some of her most beloved prizes. However, some of these they cursed, others they damaged and still others they placed just out of Laodice's grasp. Now all that remains of Laodice is this last lair, sunken beneath the waves except for the few caverns that hold her greatest treasures tantalizingly close and yet impossibly far.



Laodice as she once was...

This tale represents the story of Laodice's doom as known to Lyrists, Thieves, storytellers and scholars. It purposefully omits one very important piece of information: the specific type of monster Laodice was turned into. The answer is: a **Sea Gorgon**, a punishment that the two angry gods found fitting to Laodice's vanity: where once to look upon her rendered men loyal and full of fire, to meet her gaze would now leave only cold stone. Of course, the only way to discover this vital piece of information is to meet Laodice herself...



Gallos the Audacious, Thief and Raconteur

Gallos' Plan

While hanging out at a local port, the characters are approached by a friendly young man posing as a storyteller. After introducing himself as Gallos, he will tell them the tragic tale of Laodice the Thief (see previous page). Soon after he will reveal his true occupation and purpose : although he is a skilled raconteur, Gallos the Audacious is not a storyteller but a talented and (very) ambitious Thief (see below for his complete stats).

Gallos has recently come into possession of some very precious piece of information which has allowed him to locate Laodice's underwater lair, just a few miles off the coast. Armed with this knowledge, Gallos has decided to raid the undersea caves, hoping to recover a part of the fabulous Thief's lost treasure - and also because such a daring venture would make him a living legend among the Thieves of Mythika.

Gallos wisely assumes Laodice's lair to be filled with all sorts of deadly creatures (including Laodice herself), so he is looking for a group of « fellow adventurers » to accompany him in this perilous but extremely profitable expedition – especially mighty warriors and / or powerful magicians who could deal with the more dangerous denizens of Laodice's lair.

Gallos quickly adds that he already has two indispensable associates : a « trustworthy Mariner » (read : small-time smuggler) named **Barros** who can transport the party in his ship (and wait for their return) and a Nereid named **Ava**, who has agreed to kiss all the members of the raiding party to allow them to breathe and act freely underwater – see below for more details about these two NPCs.

If the adventurers decide to join Gallos in his daring venture, he will insist on the necessity of agreeing upon the « shares of the spoils » before any activity takes place. Here are Gallos' conditions :

* All money and gems will be split in half, with one half going to the adventurers and the other half to Gallos, Barros and Ava.

* Mythic items and other « unique objects » will be handled on a « finders-keepers » basis.

Gallos the Audacious

Level 3 Thief

Might	10	Skill	15	Luck	18
Wits	17	Will	13	Grace	14

Initiative 15, EDC 16* (melee 19*), Hits Total 14

Melee +6*, Missile +9*

Danger Evasion +8*, Mystic Fortitude +6*

Physical Vigor +5*, Athletic Prowess +6*

Personal Charisma +6*

Thievery +7* (stealth & detection +15*)

Background Talents : Actor, Orator.

Weapon of Choice : Sling

Other Weapons : Sword, dagger.

Mythic Items : Glowgem necklace, Ring of Good Fortune.

* *These figures take into account the +1 bonus granted by Gallos' Ring of Good Fortune.*

Gallos is a young but already quite experienced thief gifted with a pretty face, a glib tongue and a good measure of roguish charm ; he is ambitious, adventurous and overconfident - much like Laodice was in her days...

The characters are free to discuss these conditions if they so wish, but Gallos will be extremely reluctant to lower his (and his two associates') share – in fact, he intends to keep most of it for himself but that's another story. Provided the characters agree to join Gallos' expedition, the adventure can now begin !

As stated earlier, Gallos' two other "business partners" are **Barros "One Eye"**, a tactiturn, tattooed Mariner (level 2) with a scaly patch over his left eye and **Ava the Sea Nymph**, a wayward Nereid (level 2) with a willowy silhouette and a rather immature attitude. Ava has "given her heart" to Gallos (who has a good measure of roguish charm) and would do anything for him. Much like a naive teenage girl in love with the proverbial "bad guy", Ava has not yet realizez that her "eternal lover" mainly sees her as a very useful commodity (and an enjoyable one too).

Barros ship will bring the characters above Laodice's underwater lair but the Mariner himself will not accompany Gallos and the adventurers below the surface. Ava the Nereid will keep away from the cavern but will kiss Gallos and each adventurer before they "go under", enabling them to breathe and act freely underwater for a number of hours equal to her Odylic Charm (which is equal to 5).

Thanks to Ava, Gallos and Barros have also come into possession of a big supply of glowgems (see this issue's *Pandora's Box*) with which they have crafted special necklaces that will act as light sources during the expedition: each adventurer will be generously provided with a necklace with three gems (giving the light an illumination radius of 30').

Laodice's Lair

Use the **Undersea Caverns** map included in this issue (see p 11).

A. Cavern Entrance

A full fathom below the waves, the entrance to the cavern complex is obscured by a dense stand of seaweed. Finding the entrance isn't really difficult for those who know that it is here, but the plant life has served to shield Laodice's Lair from unexpected visitors : without Gallos' knowledge, finding it would require a careful search and a detection roll against a target number of 15.

B. Sitting Room

This chamber was clearly once a sitting room, and is still largely appointed as such.

A stone table and benches dominate the center of the room. Gilded serving vessels still sit upon the table. Broken pottery covers the floor and two barnacle- and coral-encrusted skeletons sit slumped near the western exit.

A pair of **Killer Fishes** (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary*, p 34) make their home in this submerged cavern. Their natural speed and stealthiness all but guarantees they will take the adventurers by surprise. The fish are ravenous and fight until killed, pausing briefly to relish the meat and blood they rip from the bones of any unlucky adventurer.

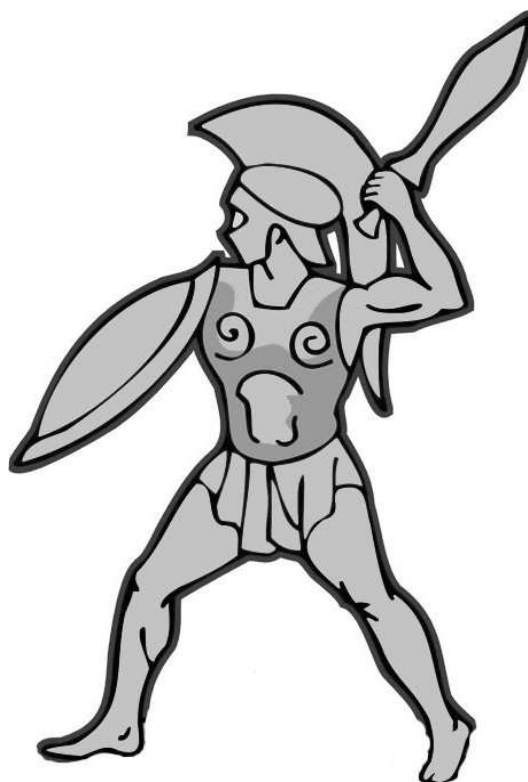
C. Statue of Poseidon

This man-sized marble statue of Poseidon depicts the Lord of the Sea in a typical display of anger. His head is reared back, howling and a dozen Nereids swarm about him. Characters who have Poseidon as their patron deity should pause to pay appropriate homage before this statue. This will grant them the effects of a triple Divine Blessing, raising their Mystic Fortitude, Danger Evasion and Physical Vigor by +2 for the rest of the expedition.

D. Statue of Athena

This alabaster statue of Pallas Athena depicts the virgin goddess in repose beneath an olive tree upon which is perched a watchful owl. Characters who have Athena as their patron deity should pause to pay appropriate homage before this statue. This will grant them the effects of a triple Divine Blessing, raising their Mystic Fortitude, Defense Class and Melee attack by +2 for the rest of the expedition.

Note to Maze Masters : *The bonuses granted by the statues of Athena and Poseidon to their followers reflect the fact that Laodice's lair is still placed under these deities' watch. The bonus to Mystic Fortitude will prove especially welcome when the characters will confront Laodice and her petrifying gaze. These bonuses will take effect as soon as the character enters the next area and will last until he passes the statue again on his way out.*



Attack of the Green Bronze Automaton !

E. Green Bronze Automaton

This chamber holds one of Laodice's greatest acquisitions : a working **Automaton** (see *Creature Compendium*, p10) made of a strange, green metal which is completely impervious to the effects of rust.

This wonder comes from the workshop of Daedalos himself. Crafted by the master to resemble Agenor of Argos, a noted noble and warrior of the Age of Magic. The Automaton readily attacks all who attempt to pass from this chamber into room F.

If the characters manage to defeat the Automaton, the scrap metal from its body could be taken and used to craft a single, non-rusting green breastplate.

F. Sarcophagus

This room holds a sarcophagus which contains a mummy – which, like the Automaton above, seems to be completely impervious to the effects of water.

This may lead the characters to believe that this is a supernatural Animate, but this mummy is, in fact, a normal, completely dead, mummified corpse.

The mummy's obviously supernatural state of physical preservation is actually a side-effect of the **Amulet of Protection** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 43) placed around its neck. If this amulet is taken, the mummy will offer no resistance (it's dead, remember ?) but will immediately crumble into dust, which may make nervous adventurers a bit more nervous still (was that thing cursed ? etc).



The Cat Goddess of the Desert Kingdom

G. Statue of The Cat Goddess

One of Laodice's acquisitions from her series of daring raids on the Desert Kingdom, this statue of a cat-headed human female has fallen over and broken into several large pieces. Seaweed grows rampant in this alcove, while numerous albino crabs skitter to and fro and large snails crawl across the walls and ceiling.

Characters who take a closer look at the weeds should be allowed a detection roll (target number 15) to notice a heavily verdigrised copper shield hanging from the wall, the Gorgon head design on its face nearly faded. This shield is an **Aegis** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 37).

H. Graffiti Covered Walls

The walls of this long hallway are covered graffiti - carved, painted, written in chalk... Most of them are now undecipherable but careful readers will be able to recognize half-erased names, fragments of dirty jokes and bits of poetry.

Three key pieces stand out, though. Halfway down the length of the hall, in a delicate woman's writing one finds the following two phrases: "*Poseidon is impotent*" and "*Athena is a whore*". Followers of Athena and Poseidon will obviously feel extremely insulted by these distasteful scrawls. The third piece of graffiti of note is found near the far end of the hall. Written in a rushed, panicked script it reads: "*At last she sleeps. Wake her not!*"

There is nothing of monetary or magical value to be found in this area.

I. Barracks

This room is home to a scouting party of **Sons of Dagon** (see *Creature Compendium*, p 106). There were seven initially, though three have fallen victim to Laodice (their stony remains are found deeper within). The four that have holed up here will attack on sight with a mad terror driving their assault.

This room served as barracks for a number of Laodice's men. Stone beds, tables and chests are scattered about the room. Anything of value has long since been looted from here.

J. Attack of the Kelp !

Attack Kelps (see *Creature Compendium*, p 10) grow from a deep depression in the cavern floor here. Their location provides an additional +2 to the target number required to detect them) making it a 14. Their number should be roughly equal to that of the characters in the party.

At the bottom of the depression lies a pile of bones, mostly fish but some human, representing the victims of the kelps' aggression. Amongst the scattered bones lies a long lost **Ring of Good Fortune** (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 43). This ring is very hard to find and should require a Perception save with a target number of 20.

K. Lair of the Octopus

A **Large Octopus** (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary*) makes its home here. It is not aggressive and only attacks in self-defense.

Three **small vessels** are found in this room: one of earthenware from the Stygian Empire, one of carved wood from Charybdis and one of Atlantean design, crafted from the ivory of some huge sea-creature.

To the right buyer these ancient relics would be worth a small fortune. However, these items are quite fragile and moving them (or an extended combat with the octopus) risks damaging them beyond repair or salvage. Any stressful motion in their immediate vicinity will result in a 60% chance (1-12 on a d20) of breakage.

Alternatively, Maze Masters may decide to replace these mundane (but priceless) *objets d'art* with some mythic items or to give one of them some unique magical properties.

L. Skylight Alcove

A hole in the ceiling of this alcove extends all the way to the surface, allowing sunlight to stream into the area. The water is slightly warmer here, and the room is dense with kelp and seaweed.

Moving through this room takes great effort and any fighting engaged in here results in a -2 to Initiative (except for marine creatures).

M. Statue of Dagon

A man-sized statue of the horrible sea god Dagon stands in this alcove. This statue is the reason why some Sons of Dagon ventured into the lair (see next area) : they wanted to recover the stolen idol.

Anyone inspecting this statue must make a Danger Evasion roll to avoid triggering the needle-spraying trap that has been built into the base of the statue.

Thieves may, of course, detect this trap per their normal abilities.

A failed Danger Evasion roll will result in 1d6 damage for the unlucky inspector.



The head of Laodice the Sea Gorgon

N. Planning Room

Three statues of Sons of Dagon are found in this room. They are spread apart, two appear to be in fighting postures while one appears to be cowering, as if begging for mercy. These are, of course, not statues but victims of Laodice's dark powers.

The walls of this room are covered in intricate maps, drawings and diagrams. Many of Laodice's greatest exploits were planned here, and these markings are all that remain of her criminal genius. Thieves who take the time to decipher these various writings will gain 100 extra Experience points.

O. Statue of the Elementalist

A statue of a human Elementalist stands in the middle of this hallway. She stands as though casting a spell of great power. This is, naturally, not a statue but another of Laodice's victims.

The Elementalist had a **Staff of Earth** (or Water) in her possession ; because of its magical nature, this mythic item was not turned to stone and can still be found in the hand of the petrified magician. If there is no Elementalist in the group, the Maze Master may prefer to replace this item with a Staff of Light.

P. Undersea Graveyard

The floor of this cavern is littered with the lifeless, coral- and barnacle-encrusted skeletons of Laodice's long-dead minions. A number of these **Skeletons** (see *Creature Compendium*, p 105), however, are animated by their burning passion and

loyalty for Laodice. Mindless things that they are, they exist only to protect Laodice's domain and attack all who enter this chamber. The Maze Master should feel free to use as many or as few of these skeletons as suits his needs, just be sure not to overwhelm the party.

Scattered amongst the bones and detritus of this room may be found (3d6 x 100) sp worth of coins, jewels and objects.

Q. The Lair of Laodice

This small room serves as the abode of Laodice. In it may be found a mat of seaweed upon which she sleeps and the statue of Hyperenor, Laodice's bravest man, last lover and first victim. When the gods were enacting their punishment Hyperenor rushed to be at his lady's side and became the first to be turned to stone by her wretched gaze. It was this tragedy, even more than the wrath of the gods themselves, that proved to be Laodice's greatest torment. When the adventurers reach this room, they find Laodice kneeling at the feet of this statue, weeping and muttering to herself and to it.

Laodice attacks all who enter her abode, but will focus her efforts on any who approach or attempt to damage the statue of Hyperenor. She has the usual characteristics of a **Sea Gorgon** (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary*, p 37).

Upon her death, Laodice will transform back into her human, original form.

Though it will be hard to tell given the underwater nature of the area, the statue of Hyperenor may be noticed to be weeping at her death...

Aftermath

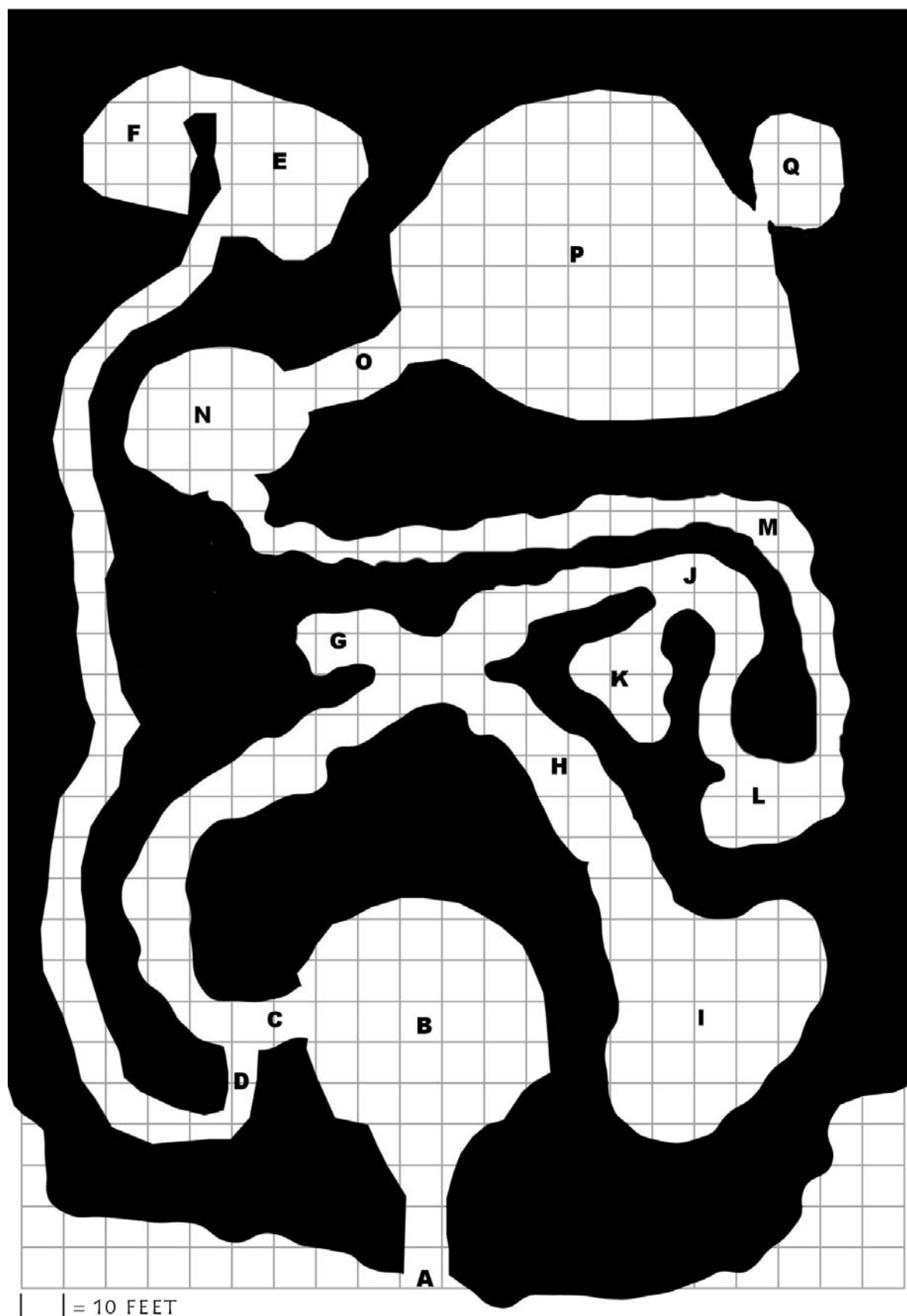
Characters who complete this adventure will collect the usual Glory and Wisdom awards ; as a Sea Gorgon, Laodice herself is worth a total of 300 Glory points and 90 Wisdom points.

Maze Masters may want to use Gallos as a recurring NPC (provided he did not die a tragic death in the Lost Lair of Laodice) : he could become their ally, try to rob them of their shares once the job is done (no honor among thieves, remember ?) or even turn into the party's nemesis...

Barros the dodgy Mariner could also become an interesting contact for the adventurers, especially if they have no ship of their own. Maze Masters may even decide that Barros is badly in debt with the local smugglers and is willing to accept any job offer which will take him abroad (and, possibly, out of trouble) as fast as possible...

In a completely different style, Ava the wayward, immature Sea Nymph could become an interesting dramatic element in her own right, especially if her beloved Gallos met his untimely end during the adventure... or finally decided to dump her. She could then attach herself to the party (or, better, fall in love with one of its members), acting as a cute nuisance and trouble magnet...

ADVENTURE MAP : UNDERSEA CAVERNS



Map by Matthew Rodgers

HEROES OF THE SEA

Three Optional Character Classes for Marine Adventuring

This article offers you a trio of optional character classes for campaigns with a strong marine focus, in the three usual niches of M&M : warrior (Tritons), magician (Delphins) and specialist (Mariners).

TRITONS

Tritons are the famous mermen of legend, well-known for their stormy temper. For obvious reasons, Triton characters can only participate in undersea adventures. In game terms, they may be seen as the marine equivalents of Centaurs.

Primary Attributes : Might and Skill.

Gender : Player character Tritons can only be male. Mermaids would never leave the undersea domains of the Triton folk to go on quests or adventures.

Basic Hits = 12

Toughness : Tritons add +2 to their basic Defense Class (but cannot wear breasplates).

Aquatic Agility : In addition to their Toughness bonus, Tritons add their Skill bonus to their EDC against melee and missile attacks unless they are surprised. They also add the sum of their Might and Skill mods to their melee Initiative. While swimming, they can *cruise* at four times their basic movement allowance and never need to make swimming rolls.

Weapon of Choice : Trident.

Level Benefits : Each level beyond the first gives a Triton +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Skill, Wits or Will (player's choice).

Possessions : Tritons start with a trident and a net. They do not possess any monetary wealth.

Patron Deities : All Tritons are followers of Poseidon, king of the deep.

Reputation Effect : The Triton's Reputation Effect of Undersea Renown affects all undersea Folks.

Languages : All Tritons speak Merian as well as the unique tongue of Dolphins. They rarely bother to learn other languages. Most of them are illiterate, since the written form of Merian is only taught to Triton Scholars (who are quite rare).

Background Talents : Triton characters must choose two talents among the following : Armorer, Beastmaster, Healer, Musician (conch concerto, anyone ?), Scholar and Sea Scout (see below).



Additional Abilities

Tritons have a natural affinity with the fauna and flora of the subaquatic milieu. If the optional rules on *Taming Creatures* from the *M&M Companion* are used, Tritons may attempt to Tame by Craft underwater Beasts (such as Sea Horses etc). This does not apply to Monsters (which cannot be Tamed by Craft) or to Dolphins (who are Folks and thus do not need to be Tamed). Note that Tritons cannot ride Sea Horses (for obvious anatomical reasons) but often use them as draft or pack animals, pets or even guardians.

Triton characters (and only them) have access to a special **Sea Scout** talent, which is the undersea equivalent of the Woodsman talent, advantaging the character on stealth and detection rolls. Most of the other Background Talents available to Triton player-characters are also specifically adapted to the undersea environment : their version of the *Armorer* talent, for instance, allows them to manufacture weapons and armor using the bones and scales of marine creatures and other natural elements of their environment (yup, no forges underwater...), while *Beastmaster* only applies to underwater animals.

If the optional rules on Depth Levels given in this issue are used (see p 5), Triton player-characters have a maximum Depth Level of 4 but may be allowed to venture to Depth Level 5 with successful Physical Vigor rolls, as detailed in the text.

DELPHINS

Delphins are members of the Dolphin Folk with unique magical abilities. They are extremely rare and are treated by other Dolphins with great respect. Aside from some Mariners and a few other friends of the sea, most humans are unaware of their existence. Like all Dolphins, Delphins tend to be pacific beings; they try to protect the sea from mortals as well as to protect mortals from evil sea beings such as the Fomoros or the Sons of Dagon.

Like those of Shapeshifters, the true origins of the Delphins' magical powers remain a mystery but appear to be partly genetic; they are obviously the legacy of an ancient, forgotten time when Dolphins and some members of the human race shared a special magical bond.

Primary Attribute : Wits and Grace.

Gender : All Delphins are male. They can breed with human women or female Dolphins (depending on their current form) as well as with Nereids. Their male children are always Delphins.

Basic Hits = 8

Gifts of the Sea : The magical powers of Delphins (which, among other things, allow them to take a human form) are described below. Their magical talent, called **Marine Empathy**, is equal to the sum of their Grace and Wits modifiers. Their Mystic Strength is calculated as per the usual rules.

Power : Delphins start with (4 + Grace mod) Power points at first level. They recover their lost Power points by sleeping, at the same rate as Sorcerers and Elementalists.

Level Benefits : Each level beyond the first gives a Delphin +2 Hits, +4 Power points, +1 to Luck and +2 to another attribute (player's choice).

Possessions : None.

Patron Deities : All Delphins worship Poseidon.

Reputation Effect : Delphins' Undersea Renown (affects all undersea Folks).

Languages : All Delphins know the language of Dolphins as well as Merian and Minean.

Background Talents : All Delphins start with the Sea Scout talent (which they can only use in Dolphin form) and the Sailor talent (which they can only use in human form).

Restrictions : Like Shapeshifters, Delphins avoid wearing armor, since it interferes with their magical shapechanging powers.

Additional Abilities : If the optional rules on taming creatures from the *M&M Companion* are used, Delphins should be given the ability to Tame marine creatures by Charm (just like Nymphs).



Gifts of the Sea

Magnitude 1 : True Form

This power allows the Delphin to revert to his true Dolphin form. While in this form, Delphins retain their full intelligence and their magical powers ; they also benefit from all the physical special abilities of Dolphins (see *Creature Compendium*), as per the usual Shapeshifting rules (see *M&M Companion*).

Magnitude 2 : Human Form

This power allows the Delphin to take his human form (which is always the same and has none of the marine advantages of his true Dolphin form).

Magnitude 3 : Song of the Sea

This power works exactly like the Song of Soothing power (Poetic Magic, Magnitude 3), except that it only affects marine beings and the Delphin's Marine Empathy is used in lieu of the Lyrist's Orphic Voice.

Magnitude 4 : Gift of the Sea

This power works exactly like Nature's Favor power of Nereids (see *Players Manual*), except that the Delphin's Marine Empathy replaces Odylic Charm.

Magnitude 5 : Curse of the Sea

This power works exactly like the the Curse of the Drowned power of Nereids (see *Players Manual*), except that the Delphin's Marine Empathy replaces the Nymph's Odylic Charm bonus.

Magnitude 6 : Weather Control

This power is exactly the same as the Magnitude 6 power of Nereids (see *Players Manual*). except that the Delphin's Marine Empathy bonus replaces the Nymph's Odylic Charm bonus.

MARINERS

Mariners are the best seamen of Mythika. Most of them are members of the Brotherhood of Mariners, a loose organization that tries to enforce the "Code of the Sea", a collection of traditional laws that all honorable sailors are assumed to follow – which includes fair and just captainship, women and children first, always rescue a ship in peril, equal shares of treasure for crewmen (doubled for captains), no girls in the crew and other tenets of honor and common sense. Those who do not follow this Code call themselves "Freebooters" but are often little more than greedy, dishonorable pirates.

Primary Attributes : Will and Luck

Gender : All Mariners are male.

Basic Hits = 10

Athletics : Mariners excel at climbing, swimming and other athletic activities. In game terms, they add their Will bonus to all their Athletic Prowess rolls.

Seamanship : Mariners have a special Seamanship bonus equal to the sum of their Luck mod and Will mod. This bonus is added to all the character's Danger Evasion rolls made while on board of a ship. This ability also allows them to predict weather when at sea, as detailed below.

Weapon of Choice : Sword, axe, sling or bow.

Level Benefits : Each level beyond the first gives a Mariner +2 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Might, Skill, Wits or Will (player's choice).

Possessions : Mariners start with a dagger, their weapon of choice and a starting wealth of 3D6 x 5 silver pieces.

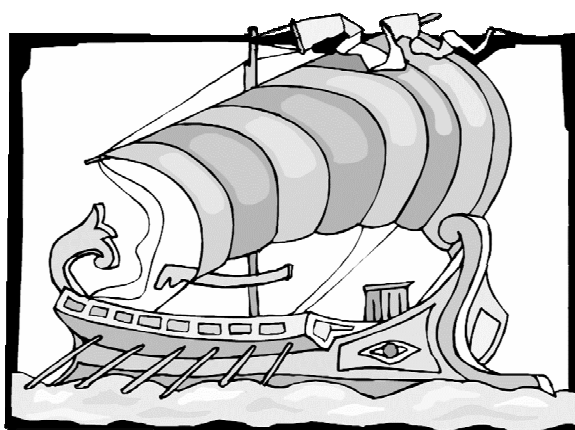
Restrictions : Mariners may wear any type of armor but usually choose not to do so, since a high Encumbrance may be dangerous on a ship.

Patron Deity : All Mariners are worshippers of Poseidon.

Background Talents : All Mariners have the Sailor talent, plus a second talent chosen among Acrobat, Musician, Orator, Scholar and Wrestler.

Reputation Effect : Unlike other Specialist classes, Mariners do benefit from a Reputation bonus – but only if they respect the Code of the Sea. This Reputation bonus works on all other Mariners and sailors (except Freebooters), as well as with all followers and Priests of Poseidon.

Advancement : Like all Specialists, Mariners rise in levels by accumulating Experience points. They gain 50 points everytime they use their Seamanship special ability in an important adventuring situation or even 100 points if this contributes to save their ship. Mariners may also gain 100, 200 or even 500 Experience points for exploring mysterious islands and other weird marine sites.



Return of the Ancient Mariner

Ever since it was mentioned in the old *Men & Monsters* supplement, the Mariner class became something of an obsession among some *Mazes & Minotaurs* gamers. From the late seventies to the early eighties, no more than six (six !) different incarnations of this « lost class » were published in various gaming magazines.

The official version of the Mariner class was regularly announced as part of the « forever forthcoming » *Tritons & Triremes* supplement (or was it *Triremes & Tritons* ?). Like the rest of the T&T material, it was never published - apparently because of some contractual technicalities which remain an enigma to this day.

In 2006, as part of the great M&M online revival project, several files of previously unpublished M&M material from LGS were made available on the M&M newsgroup, including the long-lost official write-up of the Mariner class, putting an end to 30 long years of patience, speculation, questing and (sometimes very bad) unofficial variants. Written for the Original M&M rules, this new specialist class was never included in the Revised version of the M&M rules.

We felt like this first issue of the *Minotaur Quarterly* would be the perfect occasion to bring you the Revised Mariner !

Now the Mariner has come home at last !

The Minotaur Needs You !

The *Minotaur Quarterly* is always looking for quality contributions – articles, scenarios, new creatures and mythic items, original artwork...

We can't pay you anything, though, since this zine (like anything M&M-related) is a completely free, non-profit venture – but think about the Glory points ! If you are interested, contact the editor at the following address : olivier.legrand6@free.fr .

PANDORA'S BOX

This regular column presents new mythic items in relation with the main theme of each issue.



The only sea-related mythic items described in the Maze Masters Guide are the Mead of Poseidon, the Amulet of the Merfolk and the Amulet of the Nereids. This first installment of **Pandora's Box** offers you fifteen new mythic items to spice up your marine odysseys and underwater adventures.

Treasures of the Tritons

Most of the following mythic items may be found in the equipment or treasure hoards of Tritons and other Sea Folks. All have been crafted in the Undersea kingdoms and are almost never found in non-aquatic settings.

Aquatic Breastplate

When worn underwater, this magical breastplate made of a mysterious green metal becomes effectively weightless (Encumbrance 0) and gives an EDC bonus of +4 (instead of the regular +2).

Outside of water, it has the same characteristics and encumbrance as a normal breastplate.

These breastplates are even rarer than Seamail (see below) and were crafted a very long time ago from the metal of a meteorite that had fallen into the sea.

Chariot of the Tritons

This magical, wheelless chariot has the same properties as a normal, wheeled chariot but can be used underwater – simply replace the Horses by Sea Horses (see Creature Compendium).

The standard sea chariot has room for two medium-sized beings; larger models exist (for four or six persons) but require the same number of Sea Horses as their passenger capacity.

Diadem of Marine Majesty

This silver, emerald-incrusted headband grants a +4 bonus to Personal Charisma and Mystic Fortitude, but only if worn underwater.

Horn of the Tritons

This conch-shaped horn can be blown underwater and will actually sound like a real, powerful horn. Its magical sound can be heard (and identified) by all undersea Folks (including Tritons, Dolphins and Mermaids, as well as Ichtyocentaurs and a variety of other creatures) within a radius of 1 mile.

These creatures will almost always respond to the call of the Horn, out of curiosity - the Horn, however, does not give any degree of control over these creatures. When used above the surface, the horn will remain silent, no matter how hard it is blown.

Manta Cloak

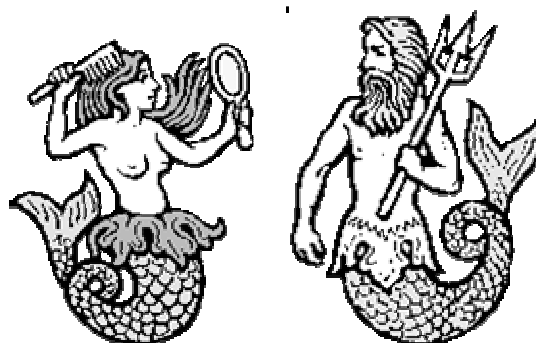
When worn underwater, this magical cloak (Enc = 0) unfolds like the "wings" of a manta ray and gives its wearer a +2 bonus to all his Mystic Fortitude and Danger Evasion rolls. These magical properties do not operate on land.

Net of Nodens

When used underwater, this magical combat net gives a +2 bonus to attack (both in Melee and Missile modes) and ensnares its victims with a Might of 24. Its enchanted nature also makes it effectively weightless (Enc 0).

The Net of Nodens loses its magical properties when used out of water.

See the *Mazes & Minotaurs Companion* (p 15) for the rules on net-fighting.



Quinotaur Sword

This magical "sword" actually looks like a crude, ivory-white oversized dagger and is actually made from the horns of a Quinotaur. It has the same properties as a normal sword except that it gives a +1 bonus to damage against all underwater Beasts, Folks and Monsters.

Note that killing a Quinotaur and taking its horns will not give you two Quinotaur Swords: like many other mythic items, these were made in the Age of Magic, using enchantments that have now been lost (or rendered powerless by the Gods).

Seamail

This tight shirt of silvery chainmail is actually made from the scales of a now-extinct species of giant fish. With the exception of Aquatic Breastplates, it is the only form of armor that Tritons may wear. Seamail shirts are very rare and usually only found in the panoply of Triton kings or princes.

In game terms, a Seamail shirt gives the same protection as a breastplate (EDC +2) but has an Encumbrance of only 1 (instead of the usual 3). It is so light and tight-fitting that it can actually be worn beneath a breastplate, for a cumulative effect.

Spear of Sea Monster Slaying

This powerful enchanted spear gives a +2 Melee bonus and an extra die of damage when used against underwater Monsters (which does not include Folks, Beasts or other types of creatures).

Trident of Fury

As mentioned in the *M&M Companion* (p 12), this magical weapon has the same properties as a Spear of Striking (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 39).

Wonders of the Waves

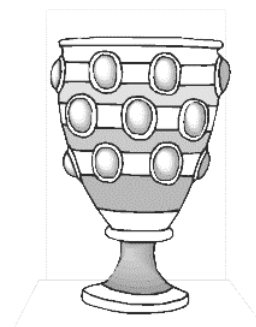
Unlike the previous ones, these magical items do not originate from the Undersea kingdoms but may nonetheless prove very useful during sea (and, in some cases, underwater) adventures.

Aquatic Arrows

These magical arrows can be used underwater without the usual range reduction (see *Undersea Adventuring 101*, p 4-5 of this issue). They are usually found in quivers containing 2d6 arrows.

Belt of Buoyancy

This magical belt gives its wearer automatic success on all his swimming rolls, as long as his Encumbrance total does not exceed 15.



Thirsty ? Try me !

Cup of Perpetual Sustenance

This magical drinking cup transforms the salted water of the sea into a perfectly drinkable water. This property may not seem very spectacular at first but it may save the lives of whole ship crews, since there is no limit to the number of times the cup may be used in a day (and the sea has plenty of water).

Glowgems

These nut-sized underwater yellow-green stones (Enc = 0) glow in the darkest abysses, which makes them excellent light sources when adventuring underwater. Each gem will provide illumination in a 10' radius, up to a maximum of 30' for three gems.

Helmet of Scaphandrios

This magical helmet has normal protective properties (EDC +2) and Encumbrance (1) but allows its wearer to breathe indefinitely underwater. It does not confer the ability to speak underwater.

Statue of Sea Fortune

When attached to the prow of a ship, this wooden life-sized sculpture of a buxom Mermaid will give him a Fortune bonus of +4 (See *Players Manual* p 43 for more details).

Submersible Ship

This half-mechanical, half-magical wonder was invented centuries ago by some forgotten disciple of Daedalus or perhaps by the great inventor himself.

It looks like a giant metal fish with transparent eyes and is essentially a Bronze Age submarine, which can be manned as a standard surface ship and has unlimited air and power supply (thanks to its half-magical nature). It has room for six medium-sized passengers, including the pilot, and has 10 Structure points (see *Players Manual* p 43).

A Submersible Ship can only be damaged by storms or by any other force that may damage ships (such as the Fist of the Sea power of Elementalism or monsters such as Sea Serpents or Fomoros).

Tunic of Dycitis

This tunic, which is made of a strange blue-grey leather, allows a character to change into a Dolphin (and back into his original form).

All the usual Metamorphosis rules and restrictions regarding abilities apply (see *M&M Companion*, p 20-22). While he is in Dolphin form, the user can freely communicate with other Dolphins.

The Dolphin form may be maintained for an unlimited period – but each time the user wants to revert to his original form, he has a 10% chance of being permanently turned into a Dolphin.

Unique Artifacts

Shell of Vanity

This big magical sea-shell is actually the one depicted on Botticelli's famous painting of Venus emerging from the sea. It belongs to the goddess Aphrodite who may use it as a way of judging the vanity of mortal women (and Nymphs).

Once the shell is opened (which requires a Feat of Strength), any mortal woman or Nymph who stands or sits inside it will be Judged by Aphrodite : she must make a Mystic Fortitude roll against a target number of 20. If the roll succeeds, she will immediately and permanently gain 1d6 extra points of Grace, up to a maximum score of 21. If the roll fails however, she will lose the same amount of Grace points. These effects are permanent and can only be reverted by Divine Intervention a goddess other than Aphrodite.

Followers, Priestesses and Agents of Aphrodite are always judged favorably and automatically gain 1d6 Grace points. The Shell of Vanity can only work once on the same individual and has no effect on beings who do not have a Grace score (like Minor NPCs), since they are actually too insignificant to trigger its magical properties.



Testing (or being tested by ?) the Shell of Vanity

Tablets of the Sea Titans

There are three such items in existence, one for each of the three surviving Sea Titans : Dagon, Kraken and Ktolos. During the War of the Titans, these three gigantic beings of immense power were defeated by Poseidon, who imprisoned them in secret magical caverns located in the deepest sea abysses below the island of Tritonis in the Middle Sea. See this issue's *Mythic Bestiary* and *Mythic Gazetteer* for more details on the Sea Titans and the ancient civilization of Tritonis.

Each Tablet of the Sea Titans looks like a very old 10" x 6" stone tablet engraved with arcane symbols and strange inscriptions – these are actually written in the ancient alphabet of Tritonis and can thus only be read by someone literate in Tritonian : they give the name of each Sea Titan as well as the relevant astronomical information for using each Tablet as it was intended (see below).

The Tablets were crafted during the Age of Magic by Sorcerers of the Autarch empire of Acheiros (see this issue's *Mythic Gazetteer* for more details) who sought to unleash the three imprisoned Sea Titans to wage war on Poseidon himself...

After years of research into forbidden lore and dark experiments, these Autarch Sorcerers managed to craft these three Tablets, which would have the power to free the Sea Titans, but only at a certain time of the year for each Titan (« *when the stars are right* ») and at the cost of the bloody sacrifice of at least ten Mermaids, Dolphins or Tritons (for each Titan) below the surface of the sea. The final stage of the ceremony required the officiant to smash the Tablet to release the magical force that would free the Titan from its undersea prison...

But the insane Autarchs never had the chance to perform this unspeakable ritual, for their empire was destroyed by Poseidon's protégés, the Tritonians, who founded the kingdom of Tritonis on the ashes of Acheiros (see this issue's *Mythic Gazetteer* for more details on this page of Mythikan history).

Before the surviving, scattered Autarchs of Acheiros could gather their forces, the Age of Magic came to a brutal end (see *Maze Masters Guide*, p 13).

The Tablets were confiscated by Poseidon himself who chose not to destroy them, for this would allow the Titans to free themselves from his divine power. Sure, the King of the Sea would have the power to defeat and imprison them again (or even destroy them, if he really wanted), but even a few minutes of freedom would be more than enough for a single Titan to wreak havoc in the Undersea and on the island of Tritonis, both of which are under the protection of Poseidon.

Poseidon keeps the three Tablets, away from all mortal's eyes, in one his secret sea caves only known to his trusty Oceanids (see next page for more about Oceanids...).

The Unseen Oceanids

In Greek mythology, Oceanids (the « daughters of Ocean ») are a specific type of sea nymphs, almost identical to Nereids ; in fact, some sources present them as a particular group within the Nereid kin, descending from Thetis who, again depending on sources, is either a Nereid or a lesser goddess. Unlike « standard » Nereids, Oceanids live in the lowest, inaccessible depths of the Ocean and rarely if ever interact with mortals. The following article is not a mythological study but an interpretation of Oceanids in the imaginary world of Mythika. As such, it distances itself from classic mythological sources, in the usual M&M *peplumesque* tradition.

In the world of Mythika, Oceanids are powerful Nereids who have chosen to retire to the deepest abysses of the Ocean to act as Poseidon's agents and representatives in the Undersea realms. They are not a separate Kin, but form a sort of « elite corps » among Nereids, with special duties and some extra powers granted by Poseidon himself.

In game terms, Oceanids are special Divine Agents of Poseidon : as such, they conform to the general Agent of Poseidon profile given in the *Mazes & Minotaurs Companion* (p 12) except otherwise noted. To qualify for Oceanid status, a Nereid must meet the usual Luck requirement of 20 and must also have a score of 16+ in either Will or Wits (which makes Oceanids quite different from the usual « naive and frivolous Nereid » stereotype).

The divine boons granted to Oceanids by Poseidon rarely (if ever) include Mythic Items but may include one or several of the special *Oceanid Gifts* detailed below. In fact, one of the Nymph's first three divine boons *must* include one of these special Gifts. Oceanids are subject to all the usual duties and restrictions of divine agents. In addition, they are forbidden to reveal their special status to surface dwellers (except for followers of Poseidon) - they are, in a way, Poseidon's *covert* divine agents.

The missions and tasks that Oceanids carry out for Poseidon include, among other things, keeping an eye on the Fomoros, acting as sacred arbiters between various Sea Folks or serving terms of « guard duty » at the god's various secret sea caverns (including the secret prisons of the Sea Titans – see this issue's installments of *Mythic Bestiary* and *Pandora's Box* for more details). While their true role remains unknown to surface dwellers, it grants Oceanids a great amount of respect and prestige among the various Sea Folks loyal to Poseidon. In game terms, this doubles the Nymph's usual Reputation bonus when dealing with Tritons, Mermaids, Dolphins and other Nereids.



As mentioned above, the divine boons granted to an Oceanid may include one or several of the following three special Gifts :

Guise of the Sea

This boon gives the Oceanid the ability to shapeshift into a Dolphin (with all the usual advantages and restrictions, as detailed in the *M&M Companion*). This transformation costs her 2 Power points, as if she was using their Alter Appearance ability, which will also allow them to revert back to their true form. Remember that Poseidon is often associated with metamorphosis in mythic tales.

Poseidon's Blessing

This boon gives the Oceanid the ability to bestow the same Divine Blessings as Priests of Poseidon (see *Players Manual*, p 30), at the same Power cost and with the same effects.

Ocean's Favor

This boon grants the Oceanid a +2 bonus to **Danger Evasion**, **Defense Class** and **Mystic Fortitude** as long as she remains in the sea (underwater or swimming at the surface) ; this will no longer apply if the Oceanid sets foot on land (or aboard a ship).

*One of this issue's two adventure scenarios, **A Dark Alliance**, features an Oceanid as a major NPC : see p 29 for her detailed stats and personality profile.*

MYTHIKA GAZETTEER

TRITONIS

HOME OF THE SEA PRINCES



« ...the eastern isle of Tritonis, last remnant of the once mighty sea empire of the same name, home to the decadent and dangerous Sea Princes of Acharnia. »

Maze Masters Guide (p 8)

In the world of Mythika, the isle of Tritonis fills the archetypal niche of the ancient, wicked kingdom, ruled by cruel and decadent overlords. Once the center of a mighty sea empire, Tritonis is now but a shadow of its former glory, lost in dreams of past conquests and future doom...

But what caused the downfall of this mighty sea empire ? When did it happen ? And what about the inhabitants of Tritonis ? Are they all utterly evil and decadent ? How do they really differ from the people of Seriphos and the Three Cities ? Which gods do they worship ? All these questions will be answered in the following article, which presents a brief overview of Tritonian culture and history.

The Tritonians

The people of Tritonis do not come from the same ethnic stock as the Minean inhabitants of Seriphos and the Land of the Three Cities : they speak a different language (Tritonian, which has its own alphabet) and have different traditions and customs.

Physically, the common people of Tritonis do not really differ from Minean humans and present the same variety of height, hair color, facial features and other physical characteristics.

Members of the Tritonian nobility, on the other hand, have a distinctive appearance that makes them immediately identifiable. They tend to be slightly taller than Mineans, with jet black hair and what the Mineans often refer to as « a Tritonian face » : high cheekbones, almond-shaped green or grey eyes, lips that seem at the same time sensual and cruel and an undefinable air of scornful haughtiness.

Depending on their degree of dramatic importance, Tritonian Nobles may be treated either as Major as Minor NPCs. See the end of this article for a typical Tritonian Noble NPC profile as well as an optional Sea Prince class for Major NPCs.

According to their own legends, the Tritonian Nobles carry Triton blood in their veins ; as is often the case in Mythika, these legends are actually true (see *A Race is Born* below) but this Triton blood is usually far too diluted to give them special abilities in game terms – except for Major NPCs, who represent the proverbial exceptions to this general rule.

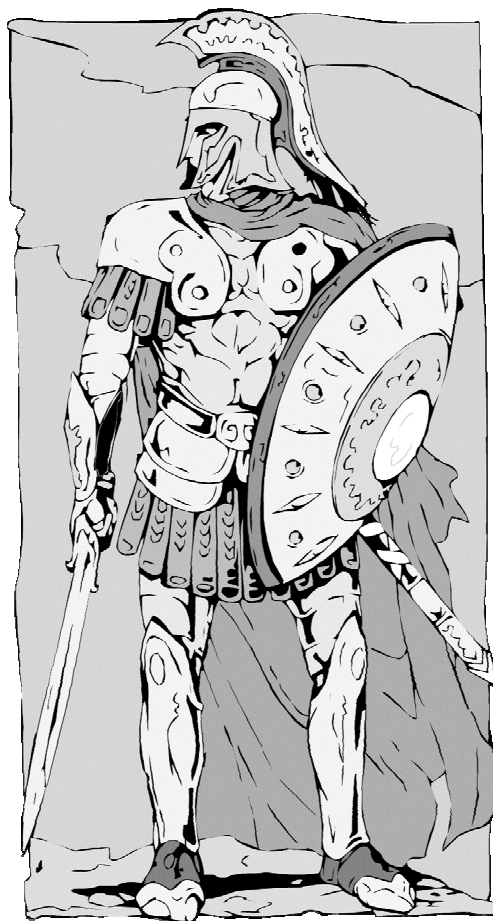
At the Maze Master's discretion, the Sea Prince class could be considered as a possible, « exotic » choice for player-characters, but such characters would probably have a hard time dealing with warriors from other nations or cultures (and vice versa). Sea Princes tend to behave in an incredibly aggressive and scornful manner (especially when dealing with foreigners) ; indeed, their arrogance is such that it makes the haughtiest Minean Nobles pass for amiable, open-minded fellows.

For reasons that will become more obvious in a few paragraphs, the Tritonian nationality could also be a very interesting choice for a Priest of Poseidon.

Tritonian Society

Even though is it often referred as a « kingdom », Tritonis has no king. Its political system is not a monarchy but a particular form of oligarchy called the **Heptarchy**. The Tritonian nobility is organized into seven clans (extended families) known as the Seven Houses of Tritonis.

The term « Sea Prince » usually refers to the most notable and powerful male members of these Houses but each House also has a supreme ruler (whose power is strictly hereditary) who is known as its Heptarch.



A Tritonian Sea Prince in arms

The seven Heptarchs are the supreme rulers of Tritonis : each one rules over his own princely House (which has its own domains, army, fleet and subjects) and they collectively rule Tritonis as a whole. As one might guess, this peculiar mode of government favors all sorts of rivalries, inner struggles and power plays. Open, armed conflicts between Houses (which could easily erupt into civil war) are absolutely forbidden by Tritonian law. This prohibition is strictly enforced by the supreme Temple of Poseidon in Acharnia, which acts as the primary consolidating force in local politics.

The various privileges granted to the seven Head Princes include polygamy or, as the Tritonians call it themselves, heptogamy : each Heptarch is allowed to take up to seven wives, a custom which guarantees a « healthy descendance » to the rulers of Tritonis. These noble spouses are either selected in another House or in the Heptarch's family – even among his own sisters. Under Tritonian law, the children of these heptogamic marriages are considered to be true siblings, since « only the Prince's blood matters ». Needless to say, such customs are not looked upon favorably by the strictly monogamous Minean Nobles.

Because of its seven « heads » (the Heptarchs), the empire of Tritonis was often referred to as « the Hydra » by its neighbors and enemies.



Acharnos, First of the Tritonian Kings

Tritonian History

The history of Tritonis is inextricably tied to the god Poseidon, with whom the Tritonians have a very complex relationship.

A Race is Born

The origins of Tritonis must be traced back to the last decades of the Age of Magic (see the *Maze Masters Guide* p 12).

In this distant and legendary era, the isle we now know as Tritonis was called Typhon and was ruled by a « magiocracy » of Autarch Sorcerers and Elementalists led by the half-immortal Sorcerer King Taltos, a tyrant of immense power and cruelty.

The only beings who actively fought against the Autarchs of Typhon, refusing to acknowledge their supremacy, were the local Tritons, who waged a great war against Taltos and his minions... but could not fight them on land.

Poseidon, who kept a vigilant eye on this conflict, decided to aid the Tritons in an unusual manner : he sent them some of his Nereids who, on his orders, offered themselves to the Tritons so that they could sire mighty children who would, unlike their fathers, be able to walk land and fight the Autarchs of Typhon on their own ground.

These human-looking sons (they were all male) were called Tritonians and numbered exactly 100. The Nereids brought them on a « lost shore » (perhaps the eastern coast of Proteus ?) where they were raised to become mighty warriors.

The Deeds of the Tritonians

Years passed and the war between the Acheirans and the Tritons still raged. The magical might of Taltos and his vassals had nearly destroyed the brave fighters of the deep (as well as a considerable number of Mermaids)... but exactly 20 years after their birth, the 100 Tritonians finally came to the rescue in a single ship with a silvery Triton on its black sail (which would later become the national standard of Tritonis)

The battle was as epic as it was terrible ; many Tritonians fell, slain by the magic of the Autarchs... but an especially heroic Tritonian, who was named **Acharnos**, managed to capture and kill Taltos with a magical net and trident that had been given to him by the Nereids. Even though the 20 surviving Tritonians were forced to retreat in their ship, the power of the Autarchs of Typhon had suffered a terrible blow – one that saved the local Tritons and Mermaids from total extinction.

According to most accounts, the surviving Tritonians then embarked on an odyssey-like sea voyage that led them to the great western ocean and during which they lived many colorful adventures which would later form the basis of « The Tritoniad », the oldest and most famous work of Tritonian literature. These adventures also caused the death of thirteen Tritonians, reducing their number to only seven, including Acharnos himself.

The Rise of Tritonis

Then came the Days of Wrath (see *Maze Masters Guide* p 12), which put an abrupt and spectacular end to the reign of the Autarchs and the Age of Magic. This also marked the birth of Tritonis as a kingdom : as a reward for their heroic struggle against Taltos and his minions, Poseidon gave the island of Typhon to the Tritonians.

Thus was the kingdom of Tritonis founded. Each of the seven surviving Tritonians took several wives and sired many children : these seven clans eventually evolved into the Seven Princely Houses of Tritonis. The new kingdom's capital was called Acharnia, after the name of Acharnos, slayer of Taltos and greatest of the Tritonian princes.

Glory & Hubris

The newly founded kingdom quickly evolved into a thriving sea empire, establishing colonies on the coastlines of Midia and the Land of the Sun and conquering most of the islands of the Middle Sea.

But as is often the case with conquerors, the Sea Princes became arrogant and complacent ; blinded by their own triumphs, they forgot how much they owed to Poseidon and began to relegate the god of their ancestors in the background, treating him more like a token deity of bygone times rather than the one and only King of the Sea. Worse, the Priests of

Poseidon began to neglect their sacred duties to their god in favor of sordid political power plays...

In his fury, Poseidon was tempted to unleash the full wrath of the sea on Tritonis and its colonies – but he also realized that most of the common folk in Tritonis still worshipped him with all the respect, piety and fear that was due to him. He decided to wait until the time would come for the Sea Princes to be taught a lesson...

Meanwhile, the empire of Tritonis continued to prosper. This era of glory lasted for two centuries... until the Tritonians tried to expand their empire beyond the Bronze Gates (see the map of Mythika in the *Maze Masters Guide*), into the great western ocean, thereby encroaching on the marine dominion of the other great sea empire of Mythika, Atlantis.

Poseidon's Judgment

Atlanteans being what they are, the crisis quickly escalated into an all-out war. It was not long before a mighty Atlantean war fleet entered the Middle Sea, destroying the westernmost Tritonian colonies.

Meanwhile, the Tritonians had massed their ships in the Umbrian Sea, ready for a grand-scale sea battle. They knew that the Atlanteans were military more powerful than them and also had all sorts of sorcerous powers and weapons at their command... Still, the Sea Princes were confident in their final victory, for they had the mightiest ally a sea empire could dream of : Poseidon himself. Their plan was to call for his divine intervention and watch him unleash the wrath of the sea on the Atlantean fleet, swallowing their ships beneath gigantic waves...

The Sea Princes had no doubt that, in this crucial hour, the god of their ancestors would come to their help and save the day for them. But did not answer their call. He watched the Atlantean fleet crush the Tritonian forces and even ensured that the surviving ships were swallowed by the sea. In a few hours, the Tritonian armada was almost entirely destroyed.

Poseidon allowed a few ships to get back to Tritonis, so that the survivors could learn from this terrible lesson ; in his magnanimity, he even raised furious storms that forced the Atlanteans to back off and retreat beyond the Gates of Bronze. Tritonis was spared but its empire was broken.

Decadence & Decay

For the last 100 years, Tritonis has tried to rebuild its shattered society. The Sea Princes remained in charge but the Priests of Poseidon took more power, putting back the cult of their patron god at the forefront and talking about the « Great Lesson ».

The reactions and attitudes of the Tritonian Nobles varied tremendously from an individual to another ; some of them wanted to redeem themselves and became fanatical in their religious zeal, while others gladly sank into decadence, immersing themselves



in unbridled orgies and cruel games, passing time before the ineluctable end of the Final Flood.

During the last decades, the more warlike Sea Princes, obsessed with the glory and conquests of their ancestors, began to plot the rebirth of their lost sea empire, as detailed under *Tritonis Rising* (p 14 of the *Maze Masters Guide*).

The Fate of Tritonis

But there was a third, secret faction among the Tritonian Nobles – those who thought that Poseidon had betrayed them and who contemplated mad dreams of vengeance against the King of the Sea. These renegade Nobles stayed silent and organized themselves into a secret society called the Sons of the Abyss. Although they continue to display the appropriate amount of public piety toward Poseidon, the Sons of the Abyss secretly acknowledge the three Sea Titans (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary* and *Pandora's Box*) as the « only true sea gods ».

Their main goal is to find a way of freeing the Sea Titans from the undersea caverns in which they have been imprisoned by « the betrayer » (yes, that's Poseidon) – an event which would (or so they believe) bring the downfall of « the usurpers » (yes, the Olympians) and herald the rise of a new sea empire, under the eternal reign of Dagon, Kraken and Ktolos. These demented conspirators (who may well include two or three Sea Princes) are at least as dangerous for the other civilized people of the Middle Sea as they are for the other people of Tritonis : this would make them excellent recurring enemies in a sea-based campaign, especially for a group with a Tritonian Priest of Poseidon. A whole campaign could be built upon the schemes of the Sea Princes and their perilous consequences, with heroes trying to save Tritonis from the dark designs of the Sons of the Abyss, all this while protecting the free peoples of the Middle Sea from the expansionist dreams of the more warlike Sea Princes. Both themes could motivate all sorts of adventures, eventually leading to the demise of the Sea Princes and the ascent of a new royal bloodline on the throne of Tritonis, under the ever watchful eye of Poseidon - or to the final destruction of the isle that once ruled an empire...

Tritonian Noble (Minor NPC)

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Normal

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 13 (15 charging)

Melee Attack : +4 (+6 charging)

Damage : 1d6 (weapons)

Defense Class : 12 (18 w. shield & armor)

Hits Total : 12

Detection / Evasion : +2

Mystic Fortitude : 0

Special Abilities : Charge into Battle.

Awards : Glory 30 (45 with shield and armor).



SEA PRINCES

As noted earlier, this optional class should be used for Major NPCs (those Sea Princes who have been blessed with a particularly strong "blood" – which should include all Heptarchs and the most notable Princes of each House). In game terms, this class is a variant of the regular Noble class, with a greater emphasis on strength and a lesser amount of divine favor (since Luck is not one of its primary attributes).

Category : Warriors.

Primary Attributes : Will and Might.

Gender : Male only.

Basic Hits = 12

Strength of the Sea : Sea Princes add +2 to their Might and Will scores (within the usual limits).

Conquering Spirit : Sea Princes add their Will bonus to their Initiative score.

Weapon of Choice : Sword.

Level Benefits : Each level beyond the first gives a Sea Prince +4 Hits, +1 to Luck and +2 to Will, Might, Wits or Skill (Maze Master's choice).

Possessions : As Nobles.

Background Talents : All Sea Princes have the Sailor talent and either Orator or Tactician.

Patron Deities : Poseidon.

Reputation Effect : The Sea Princes' Reputation bonus applies to all their dealings with Tritonians.

A Sample Sea Prince

Tranikos the Mighty

Level 5 Noble, age 45, Heptarch of the House of Ekiron, leader of the "warmongers" party.

Personality : Arrogant and tyrannical; views himself as the most powerful of the Heptarchs; dreams of conquering the Three Cities and Seriphos; talks a lot about the "glory of Tritonis" and the "will of Poseidon".

Attributes : Might 19, Skill 15, Luck 17, Wits 13, Will 20, Grace 11.

Combat : Initiative 17, Melee +9, Missile +6, Basic Defense Class 15, Hits Total 32.

Weapon of Choice : Sword.

Saving Rolls : Athletic Prow. +9, Danger Evasion +8, Mystic Fort. +7, Phys. Vigor +11.

Misc. : Personal Charisma +7, Leadership 12.

Standard Equipment : Sword, javelin, golden helmet, shield and breastplate.

Mythic Items : Amulet of Health, Amulet of the Nereids, Javelin of Destiny, Seamail shirt.

Notes : While his Amulets and Javelin are part of Tranikos' personal legend, his Seamail shirt (which was given to one of his ancestors by a Triton king) is one of his best kept secrets. Tranikos is said to be invulnerable in battle : indeed, when wearing his full battle gear (helmet, breastplate & shield) and his Seamail shirt, he has an EDC of 23.

A DARK ALLIANCE

A perilous underwater adventure for a party of fearless adventurers

by Darren Peech (with some additional material by Olivier Legrand)

Introduction

Note : The location of this scenario has been deliberately kept vague – it takes place “somewhere near Tritonis” (see this issue’s *Mythika Gazetteer*, p 19-23, for more details about Tritonian culture).

Mythic Background

During the Great Titanomachy, Poseidon defeated three great watery Titans. These creatures Dagon, Kraken, and Ktolos are now held prisoner by the King of the Sea (see this issue’s *Mythic Bestiary*, p 38, and *Pandora’s Box* p 17, for more details).

The creatures known as the Sons of Dagon are seeking to free their “Father” from his prison. To accomplish this, they have enlisted the aid of some Telchines (who think the Sea Titan will be able to give them back their former human form) and an evil human Sorcerer named Xalton, allied to secret faction of fanatic Nobles from Tritonis (who see Dagon’s awakening as a sign of a new age of might and glory for their decadent sea empire).

A Sinister Plan

The Sons of Dagon have long wanted to free their Father from its undersea prison but have always been unable to do so, lacking the occult knowledge which could have given them some clues about how to proceed. Recently, one of their leaders had the brilliant idea to contact Telchines - creatures who, being former magicians, would perhaps have some useful information about this eldritch matter.

And indeed the Telchines knew about the Tablets of the Sea Titans and how they had been confiscated by Poseidon himself a long time ago... but the transformed beings knew nothing about the actual location of the Tablets. Yet, they decided to help the Sons of Dagon in their dark endeavor, hoping that the rise of Dagon would shatter the power of Poseidon and give them back their long-lost human forms. They also decided to enlist the help of an occasional ally of theirs, an evil Sorcerer from Tritonis named Xalton, who saw this situation as an unprecedented opportunity to forge a strong and secret alliance between his own Tritonian allies and various evil sea creatures – an alliance which could, in time, help to shatter the power of Poseidon and restore the grandeur of the Tritonian sea empire...



Xalton the Sorcerer

Xalton devised a fiendish plan, which was carried out by his undersea allies : with the help of the Telchines, the Sons of Dagon abducted a Nereid named Belis, whom the Telchines knew to be one of the Oceanids and whom they supposed to be privy to such secrets as the location of Dagon’s Tablet.

The unfortunate Belis was then brought to Xalton, who used his Sorcery to Enslave her : this enabled the Sorcerer to learn where the Tablet was kept (in a secret undersea cave at the bottom of the sea) and to psychically compel the Enslaved Oceanid to steal it and bring it back to her new master...

When the adventure begins, Belis has already delivered the stolen Tablet to Xalton – who intends to sacrifice her, along with ten captured Mermaids of royal blood, in a secret underwater cavern that was once a temple dedicated to Dagon...

But the sister of Belis, the Oceanid Tanis has just discovered the theft and managed to track down the culprits. She now has very little time left to find a group of brave adventurers to help her recover the stolen Tablet (and, if possible, rescue her sister) before it is too late.

Character Hooks

One of the following could be used to get the player characters in this adventure : their divine patron could send them to the area to investigate a vague disturbance the deity sensed, they could have been sent by Minean lords on a diplomatic mission to Tritonis or their ship could simply be blown off its intended course by a great sea storm

The Scenario

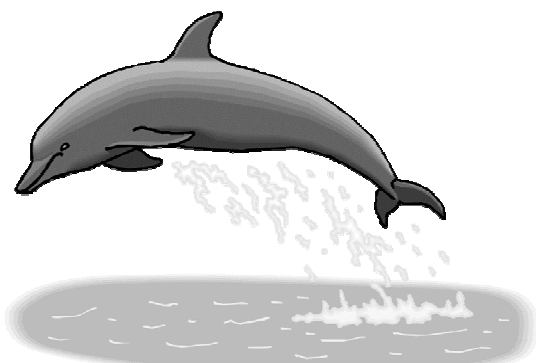
Part One : Battle at Sea

While sailing at sea, the party sees a group of Dolphins which seems to be heading their way. Suddenly, a group veers off in the opposite direction. As the group of dolphins that is still heading for the ship approaches, it can be seen that a beautiful Nereid is riding on the back of the lead dolphin. This Nereid is actually Tanis the Oceanid (see p 29). The other group of dolphins that veered away seem to be battling something just below the surface.

The group with Tanis speeds up, dives beneath the waves, then suddenly leaps into the air over the ship, and then disappears over the other side. However, now standing on the deck of the ship is Tanis herself, a Nereid of unearthly beauty. She gazes at the party for a moment then with a anguished cry of, "No!" She sees that the second group of dolphins are dead, dying, or wounded. She then whirls around points behind the characters and shouts "*Beware !*"

Three Hexapods (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary* p 32) have boarded the ship after battling the Dolphins and immediately attack the adventurers, whom they suppose to be allies of Tanis.

After the combat, Tanis will tell the party that she is a Sea Nymph (but without revealing her special status as an Oceanid) who has learned that Sons of Dagon are planning a ritual sacrifice that will enable the Telchines to regain their former form and thus their full powers which they will then use to free Dagon and his brothers. If asked how she came to this knowledge, she will reply with an enigmatic smile : "*The sea has its way.*"



Tanis the Sea Nymph

Tanis will then inform the characters that the sea and its folk will always remember those who aid it. If any character needs healing, she will perform Nature's Comfort on them, giving priority and special attention to followers of Poseidon.

The Sea Nymph will then bestow Nature's Favor on the adventurers who have volunteered to help to grant them the power to breathe and act underwater for a period of up to 7 hours (her Odyllic Charm bonus). She will also give each of the adventurers a necklace with three glowgems (see this issue's *Pandora's Box*), allowing them to see in the darkest recesses of any undersea cavern.

As soon as preparations are complete, the dolphins will carry the Oceanid and the adventurers to the underwater cave entrance...

What About Belis ?

Tanis will say nothing to the adventurers about her sister Belis : so far, she is still unsure about the actual role Belis played in this disastrous sequence of events (has she betrayed her vows to Poseidon or was she somehow coerced by dark powers ?) and intends to solve this specific matter herself – either rescuing Belis from her captors or, if necessary, by killing her herself for having betrayed her pledge to Poseidon (which could actually be interpreted as an act of mercy from Tanis' part, since it would spare Belis the terrible wrath of the Sea King).

See *Aftermath* at the end of the adventure for more details about Belis' possible fate.

Maze Master's Advice

Handling Tanis & her Powers

As an Oceanid, Tanis is a powerful character – but like most Nymphs, she is far from being a formidable fighter. She will try to stay out of melee as much as possible but will provide effective magical support to the party.

Among her Nature's Gifts, the two powers she is most likely to use during the expedition are Nature's Comfort (to heal injured combatants) and Nature's Seduction, to hold the most dangerous opponents away from her as well as to give the adventurers the advantage of striking first – which may come especially handy against foes such as a Quinotaur (see below).

Remember, however, that Tanis' Power total will already be reduced because of the various magical actions she performed after the fight on the ship. Tanis will use her magic wisely, however, and will prefer to keep such tricks in store for the most dangerous opponents.

Lastly, as a (covert) divine agent of Poseidon, Tanis has one 100% effective Divine Call. She will keep this a secret and will only use it as a last, desperate resort, especially since she has NOT alerted Poseidon of this situation : she hopes to be able to solve the crisis on her own (with, of course, the providential help of a few valiant adventurers) to spare her sister Belis the terrible wrath of Poseidon (and perhaps because she blames herself for not noticing Belis' strange behavior before it was too late).

See the end of the scenario for Tanis' stats.

Part Two : The Cave

This part of the scenario uses the **Undersea Caverns** map included in this issue (see p 11).

As the players descend they see a cave entrance about ten feet wide.

Tanis warns them that the entrance is guarded by Attack Kelps and there may be several Sons of Dagon inside the caves, as well as other dangers to be wary of but which are unknown to her. Tanis herself will accompany the party inside but will order the accompanying Dolphins to depart.

A : Entrance

The entrance of the cave is guarded by Attack Kelps (see *Creature Compendium* p 10). The number of Attack Kelps should be equal to the number of player-characters.

B : Statue Chamber

The players enter a large chamber. There are three large 30-ft high statues here. The hideous Statues represent the three Titans : Dagon, Kraken and Ktolos. Any Nereid, Priest of Poseidon or character with the Scholar talent will recognize them.

To the left there are stairs that lead upward. At the top of the stairs it levels out creating a waterway that allows air breathers and water breathers use of the same passage. The passage is lit by bioluminescent sea plants and the water level is 4 and half feet deep (deep enough for water breathers and low enough for air breathers).

C : Langustos Guardian

This area is guarded by a Langustos (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary* p 34). The passage is too narrow to allow more than one opponent at a time.

D : Second Langustos Guardian

Same as above (including space restrictions).

E : Two Abyss Lurkers

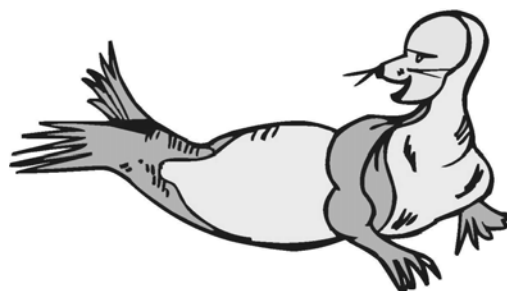
This is a wide room that seems to be empty with a corridor to the back and left. In this room are actually two Abyss Lurkers (see this issue's *Mythic Bestiary* p 32) which act as the final guardians to the treasure room.

F : Treasure Room

This room holds various booty taken from raids. Here the Maze Master can place treasure appropriate to the overall power level of his campaign.

G : Store Room

This room contains various goods and weapons (mainly spears and tridents) brought by the Sons of Dagon ; at the Maze Master's discretion, it may also contain a few marine mythic items, such as a Manta Cloak, a Net of Nodens etc (see this issue's *Pandora's Box* for more details on such wonders).



A treacherous Telchine

H : Sons of Dagon

A group of Sons of Dagon (see *Creature Compendium* page 106). Their number should be equal to the number of player-characters.

I : Barracks

This is the barrack chamber of the various guardians. The room is has several nest/resting pods, weapons, and miscellaneous personal items of little monetary value.

J. Sea Lion Guardian

This area is guarded by a Sea Lion (see *Creature Compendium* p 100). The key to the cell in K. Is around the beast's collar.

Sea Lions are noble creatures and this unfortunate Beast has been Enslaved by the Sorcery of Xalton. Tanis will actively oppose to the slaying of the Sea Lion : her choice of tactic will be to keep the Lion distracted and entranced (using her Nature's Seduction power) while the rest of the party cross the room unscathed and then to fetch the key herself. If the adventurers disregard her instructions and attack the Sea Lion anyway, she will not prevent them from doing so but will probably be a bit less ready to help or heal them afterwards.

K : Cell

Locked in a cell is a large male Triton – who is in fact the local Triton King, Nemos. He will inform the party that there was a massive assault on his domain in which most of his warriors were killed by a large underwater raiding party of Sons of Dagon and other foul creatures. The brave Triton warriors inflicted heavy losses on their enemies but could not prevent the capture of their King by the survivors of the horde. Ten young Mermaids from Nemos' royal household (including some of his sisters and nieces) were captured along with him and are to be sacrificed by the Sons of Dagon and their allies, a human Sorcerer and “two bloody Telchines”.

Nemos knows nothing about his captors' true goals, nor does he know why he has been separated from the other captives (Xalton intends to Enslave him later as part of his dark designs).

As soon as he is freed, the infuriated Nemos will join the party to free the Mermaids from their captors' clutches before it is too late. If magical healing is available, he will request it so that he can get his strength back (or at least part of it) before the fight. Also note that Nemos has been stripped of all his armament - but his fury is so great that he will even accept the trident of a dead Son of Dagon as a replacement weapon.

Nemos is a major Triton NPC (see *Heroes of the Sea* in this issue, p 12) : his detailed stats are given at the end of the scenario.

L : More Sons of Dagon

At this point, two Sons of Dagon will come to check out the noise caused by combat with the Sea Lion (or Nemos' own furious roars).

M : Floating Medusa

A Floating Medusa (see the *Mythic Bestiary* of this issue for this creature's stats and abilities).

N : Lair of the Quinotaur

A Quinotaur (see *Creature Compendium* p 91) guards the access to the sacrificial chamber. The ground of this cave is littered with the skulls, bones and other remains of various marine creatures (including a few unlucky Sons of Dagon).

This Monster is very tough and the adventurers will probably have a very hard time defeating it, even with the help of Tanis. The fight against the Quinotaur should be the “climactic combat” of the scenario – but not the final one, as detailed below. If Nemos is killed during this combat, allow him to utter a few last words to his newfound allies : “Please, bring the girls back home...”

O : Telchine Statuettes

The left-hand wall of this small corridor holds a carved niche with three 1-ft tall stone statuettes of bearded men wearing weird crowns. These actually represent the Telchines as they once were and are a priceless treasure to the cursed creatures, who (wrongfully) hope Dagon will be able to give them back their human appearances.

P : Sacrificial Hall

The party enters into a huge hall. There is an altar in the middle that is raised so that it is completely out of the water. Tied down to the table is a Mermaid. Above her stands Xalton the Sorcerer chanting in Old Tritonian (see the end of the scenario for Xalton's stats). Also there are two Telchines (see *Creature Compendium* p 114) perched on blocks on either side of the altar. Chained together are nine other Mermaids and an unconscious Nereid (Belis) guarded by four Sons of Dagon.

The Sons of Dagon will immediately attack the intruders, while an infuriated Xalton will throw Psychic Attacks at them. The Telchines will probably prefer to sneak away unnoticed while they can still save their hides... If he is still alive, the valorous Nemos will immediately rush into combat.

Q : Ascending Stairway

Here lies a spiral staircase that leads to the surface. This is the entry used by Xalton to access the half-immersed “temple” in area P.



Aftermath

Success & Rewards

In addition to any Glory points gained for defeating the various opponents in this scenario, warriors who succeed at preventing the rise of the Sea Titan should receive an extra reward of 200 Glory points each for their heroic deed.

Magician characters will gain Wisdom points as per the regular rules – and Xalton himself is worth 500 Wisdom points.

If the adventurers manage to rescue Belis and the royal Mermaids, they will gain the undying gratitude of King Nemos (or his royal heirs) as well as that of Tanis the Oceanid – a benefit which will prove invaluable should the characters decide to visit the local undersea realms in later scenarios.

At the Maze Master's discretion, Tanis could also reward each adventurer with one mythic item (taken from the various Treasures of the Tritons described in this issue's *Pandora's Box*); the Maze Master may even decide that Tanis brings such items with her during Part One, so that the characters can benefit from their use during the expedition, and then allows them to keep them afterwards.

Possible Loose Ends

This scenario may have various consequences which could easily form the starting point of further adventures. The most obvious ones are the vengeance of the Sons of Dagon or Telchines (who could come back to attack the adventurers or, in the case of the Telchines, attempt to sink their ship with a magical storm) or that of Xalton's brother (Phobos the Mad Sea Prince) and his allies, who could decide to hunt down the adventurers responsible for

thwarting the Sorcerer's mad plans... in which case our heroes' ship could suddenly find itself chased by two or three Tritonian warships ...

If the characters gain Tanis' friendship, the Oceanid could call for their help in a later adventure, especially if she is faced with a problem involving surface-dwelling opponents (such as Tritonians ?).

For players interested in exploring their characters' personal feelings, this story could also be the starting point of an interesting romance between an adventurer and one of the two Oceanid sisters – something that Poseidon might well disapprove...

Belis' fate may also be an interesting theme to explore, provided she survives the adventure. In this case, she will be stripped of her special Oceanid powers (and duties) by Poseidon, becoming a « rogue Nereid » riddled by guilt, sadness and longing for the secret abysses... Such a tragic character could make a very interesting ally (or nemesis ?) for the adventurers.

What About Failure ?

What if the characters fail to prevent Xalton from completing his unhallowed ritual ?

Maze Masters who are confronted to this extremely unpleasant turn of events have two choices : either Dagon does rise from the Abyss and, well, everybody dies... OR Poseidon himself suddenly intervenes at the last moment, mercilessly crushing the foolhardy Xalton and his nonhuman accomplices and getting VERY angry at Tanis, Belis and any surviving adventurers.

In this case, Poseidon's wrath could be used as a convenient plot device to embark our heroes (with, perhaps, the surviving but now disgraced Oceanids) on another marine quest to atone for their failure.

Important NPCs

Tanis the Oceanid

Level 4 Nereid

Might	12	Skill	12	Luck	20
Wits	16	Will	17	Grace	18

Initiative 12, EDC 18*, Hits Total 14

Melee +4, Missile +6

Danger Evasion +11*, Mystic Fortitude +12*, Physical Vigor +7, Athletic Prowess +4

Personal Charisma +10

Odylic Charm +7, Mystic Strength 19, Power 19

Magical Powers : Nature's Gifts (Nereid).

Divine Boons : Ocean's Favor, Guise of the Sea, Divine Call (one).

** This includes the +2 bonus granted by Tanis' special Ocean's Favor divine boon.*

Tanis' specific mission as an Oceanid is to monitor the interactions between adventurers and the various Folks of the Undersea, including Tritons, Mermaids and Dolphins. Thus, depending on an adventurer's attitudes towards marine Folks, Tanis can act as a very useful ally, providing precious pieces of information or even magical help (enabling surface dwellers to venture underwater, healing injured defenders of the undersea etc), as a behind-the-scenes troublemaker (summoning sea storms to stir them away from their intended routes, warning local Sea Folks about the presence of dangerous mortals etc) or even as a direct opponent (summoning storms to wreck ships, sending sea creatures to attack « enemies of Poseidon » etc).

Nemos the Triton King

Level 3 Triton

Might	19	Skill	17	Luck	16
Wits	11	Will	15	Grace	10

Initiative 21 (in melee), EDC 19 (16 if surprised), Hits Total 24 (15*)

** Nemos' Hits Total has been reduced to 15 because of various injuries sustained during his capture.*

Melee +9, Missile +5

Danger Evasion +4, Mystic Fortitude +4, Physical Vigor +8, Athletic Prowess +9

Personal Charisma +4

Weapon of Choice : Trident.

Xalton the Sorcerer

Level 5 Sorcerer

Might	13	Skill	10	Luck	17
Wits	19	Will	20	Grace	9

Initiative 14, EDC 16*, Hits Total 17

Melee +4, Missile +7

Danger Evasion +12*, Mystic Fortitude +8*, Physical Vigor +8, Athletic Prowess +4

Personal Charisma +7

Psychic Gift +8, Mystic Strength 20, Power 24 (18)**

Magical Powers : Sorcery.

Mythic Items : Amulet of the Nereids, Amulet of Protection, Staff of Command.

** These figures take into account the +1 bonus granted by Xalton's Amulet of Protection.*

*** When encountered in the caves, Xalton will only have 18 Power points because of the various magical operations he has performed beforehand.*

Xalton is the classic power-mad evil Sorcerer. He already envisions himself as the true master of the resurrected Tritonian sea empire, much like the Autarch magicians of ancient days, with a Sea Titan at his command – a very unlikely perspective, even if Dagon *did* rise again from the abyss.

Belis the Oceanid

Level 3 Nereid

Might	9	Skill	12	Luck	20
Wits	16	Will	12	Grace	18

Initiative 12, EDC 18*, Hits Total 12 (currently 0)

Melee +4, Missile +6

Danger Evasion +8*, Mystic Fortitude +9*, Physical Vigor +4, Athletic Prowess +4

Personal Charisma +7

Odylic Charm +7, Mystic Strength 19, Power 15 (0)

Magical Powers : Nature's Gifts (Nereid).

Divine Boons : Ocean's Favor, Guise of the Sea, Poseidon's Blessing (one).

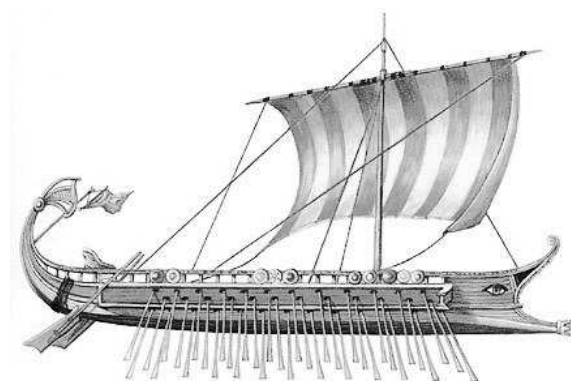
** This includes the +2 bonus granted by Belis' special Ocean's Favor divine boon.*

Belis is Tanis' younger sister. She is less self-disciplined and resourceful than her older sister and thus was a slightly easier prey for Xalton's Sorcery. If Xalton's death frees her from her Enslavement, Belis will feel terribly ashamed for letting herself fall prey to the Sorcerer's magic and will ask to be relieved from her duties as an Oceanid...

A TWIST IN THE MAZE

NAVAL WARFARE FOR M&M

Those of you old enough to remember the original M&M edition (yes, we can still talk about it !) may have hazy memories of the long-promised, eagerly-awaited but never published **Triremes & Tritons** supplement which would have covered everything you could possibly have wanted to know about ships and the sea for M&M – including a description of the elusive Mariner character class, *real* sailing rules and, of course, rules for naval warfare in the ancient fantasy world of Mythika. In a way, this first issue of *Minotaur Quarterly* is a final attempt to bring the whole thing to an end, more than 25 years after the first “coming soon” announcements for *Triremes & Tritons*. When we asked the M&M living legend known as Luke Reynard to write up a quick-and-easy set of naval warfare rules for this all-marine issue, he was thrilled and delighted – no, actually, he told us to go to hell but we at Legendary Games Studio are pretty persistent fellows. But enough idle banter ! It's wargalley-ing time !



Naval warfare in M&M can be dealt with using the mass combat system given in the wondrous *Mazes & Minotaurs Companion* (p 37-43), with a few modifications and additions reflecting the specific aspects of ship-to-ship battles.

Troops, Ships & Fleets

Just as ground troops are organized in Regiments, warships are organized in Fleets.

Each Fleet may include any number and type of ships. The type of ships determines two important factors : the number of troops it can carry (which will affect its Regimental Strength) and its Structure points (see *Players Manual*, p 43).

Basically, the M&M rules recognize two types of ships that can be used for naval combat : Merchant Roundships (which have 8 Structure points) and Wargalleys (which have 12).

Merchant Roundships can carry up to 20 man-sized creatures if not transporting cargo, while Wargalleys can carry up to 40 fighting men each.

Atlantean Wargalleys (*Maze Masters Guide*, p 45) have 20 Structure pts and can carry up to 50 men.

If the transported troops have a different Size, adjust the space taken by each individual on board as follows : Tiny 1/10, Small 1/5, Large x 2, Gigantic x 10. Thus a Wargalley could carry up to 40 Human Soldiers, up to 400 Myrmidons, up to 20 Titanians or a combined force of 20 Humans and 10 Titanians).

When a ship's Structure points fall to 0, it sinks, carrying all its crew and fighters with her...

Combat Factor & Fleet Strength

Combat Factor for sea battles is determined as per the standard mass combat rules, except that :

- The *Charge into Battle* special ability grants no CF bonus in naval combat, except for Aquatic or Winged troops.
- *Cavalry* and *Chariots* cannot be used (mmh, wouldn't have guessed that one, eh ?)

Fleet Strength is the equivalent of Regimental Strength. To determine a Fleet's Strength, first determine each Ship's Regimental Strength by multiplying the number of carried troops by their CF.

If the carrying Ship is a Wargalley multiply its RS by 1.5. Atlantean Wargalleys multiply the CF of troops they are carrying by 2.

Thus, a fully loaded Roundship (carrying its maximum of 20 fully equipped Human soldiers with a CF of 6 each) has a Strength of 120, while a fully loaded Wargalley (carrying 40 fully equipped Human soldiers with a CF of 6 each) will have a Strength of 360. A fleet consisting of ten such Roundships and five such Wargalleys would have a total Fleet Strength of 3000.

Morale & Command

No changes are made to these rules.



Round Sequence & Weather

Rounds take 1 hour each, as for land battles; they are conducted and resolved using the same sequence, but with an additional phase known as the Weather Phase, which takes place between the Strategic Phase and the Tactical Phase.

During the Weather Phase, each side must roll 1d10 on the table below – which is an expanded version of the table given on p 43 of the *Players Manual*.

D10	Weather	Next Round
2-	Dead Calm	-1
3-4	Adverse Wind	-
5-8	Good Breeze	-
9-10	Strong Gale	+1
11+	Storm	+2

Next Round : This modifier will be applied to the Weather roll of the next round. Weather modifiers are cumulative; thus, two consecutive rounds of Strong Gale will result in a +2 modifier. If both generals roll Storm, both of them will add +4 to their Weather Roll next round.

Dead Calm : Committed Fleets can only engage the enemy by rowing. All your Fleets have their Strength halved and get one level of Fatigue (see *M&M Companion* p 41) at the end of the round. Aquatic troops and Atlantean Wargalleys are unaffected.

Adverse Winds : Committed Fleets do not have favorable winds. All your Fleets have their Strength reduced by 20%. Aquatic troops and Atlantean Wargalleys are unaffected.

Good Breeze / Strong Gale : No effect.

Storm : All units are unable to fight this round. Each committed ship loses 1d6 Structure points (roll once for the entire fleet). Ships which carry player-characters and important NPCs can make a saving roll against the storm as per the usual rules (see *Players Manual* p 43). If a 5 or 6 was rolled, Aquatic units also lose 5% of their troops.

Resolution & Losses

Fleets suffer losses both in men and ships : the losing side Fleets reduce the Structure points of committed Ships by the Massacre Factor -2, while the winning side Fleets loses a number of Structure points equal to the Massacre Factor - 4.

Thus, if the MF is 5, each ship on the losing side will lose 3 Structure points and each ship on the winning side will lose 1 Structure point.

A ship reduced to 0 Structure points is sunk, along with all the troops it transports.

If the winner wins the combat round with a margin of 10 or more, he gets two additional choices : he may reduce damage to its Fleets by 1 point or worsen damage to enemy Fleets by 1 point.

Losses suffered by all non-Aquatic creatures are considered 75% dead and 25% Incapacitated instead of the usual 50%-50% ratio.

Retreats

A ship's ability to retreat may be affected by the weather. Storms inflict a -2 penalty on Morale rolls for Retreats to all types of ships; Dead Calm confers the same penalty, except for Atlantean War galleys.

Luke G. Reynard (2007)

MYTHIC BESTIARY

DENIZENS OF THE DEEP

A dozen and one new sea creatures to expand your M & M underwater universe

Abyss Lurker

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : As their name implies, Abyss Lurkers roam the deepest abysses of the undersea. These vicious predators look like a weird cross between a medusa, a murena and a giant sea urchin (see illustration). Their "head" is slightly bigger than a human one. They have mimetic abilities similar to those of a chameleon, display an uncanny degree of magic resistance and use a form of psychic awareness that allow them to silently communicate between them over several miles. They are often used as pets and spies by the Fomoros.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 15

Melee Attack : +4

Damage : 1d6 (nasty teeth)

Defense Class : 15

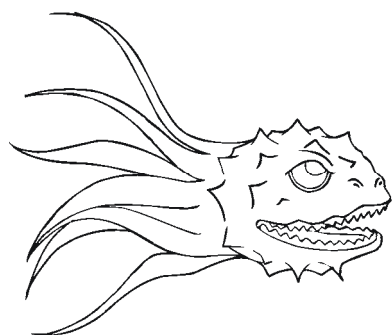
Hits Total : 12

Detection / Evasion : +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude : +6

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Camouflage (mimetic ability), Magic Resistance, Sixth Sense, Stealthy (18), Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 130, Wisdom 30.



An Abyss Stalker prowling the depths of the ocean



Enter the Hexapod !

Hexapod

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : These strange hybrid creatures have a human upper body and six scaly, tentacle-like "legs" that make them unnervingly agile. They are merciless killers and sometimes associate with Sons of Dagon to attack ships in the high seas.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 14

Melee Attack : +5

Damage : 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class : 17

Hits Total : 16

Detection / Evasion : 0 / +2

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Amphibian, Charge into Battle (Initiative 16, Melee Attack +7), Extra Arms (see below), Grapple (Might 16), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Note : The Hexapods' *Extra Arms* ability is less powerful than the Tetrax's (see *Creature Compendium* p 115) since it reflects their walking tentacles : in game terms, these allow Hexapods to make an extra Grapple attack per round (and add only 5 to their Glory MR).

Awards : Glory 130, Wisdom 10.

Hogrebos

Taxonomy : Folk

Description : These amphibious, man-sized humanoids (well, sort of) are quite hard to describe (I mean, just look at the illustration below).

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Aggressive

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 12

Melee Attack : +2

Damage : 1d6 (weapon)

Defense Class : 15

Hits Total : 12

Detection / Evasion : +2

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Amphibian, Grapple (Might 16), Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin.

Awards : Glory 40, Wisdom 10.

Additional Lore : Despite what their appearance might suggest, they are noble and honorable beings, who simply want to be left alone. They dwell in the Umbrian Sea and the warlike people of Umbria hunt them down as "sea demons", blaming them with all sorts of heinous acts. Hogrebos actually descend from humans who were subjected to horrendous experiments of magical hybridation by mad Atlantean wizards. Forever trapped in their grotesque body, they carry the weight of their curse with a strange, inscrutable sadness.



Yes, this is the Curse of the Hogrebos (don't laugh)



A groovy and petulant Ichtyosatyr

Ichtyosatyr

Taxonomy : Folk (Hybrid)

Description : You guessed it : Ichtyosatyr are (more or less) to Satyrs what Ichtyocentaurs are to Centaurs. These beings look like horned Tritons and are the hybrid and sterile children of Mermaids who have been impregnated by Satyrs (no, don't ask).

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Peaceful

Cunning : Clever

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 80'

Initiative : 18

Melee Attack : +1

Damage : 1d6 (weapons, but rarely fight)

Defense Class : 17

Hits Total : 8

Detection / Evasion : +4 / +10

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Lightning Fast, Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 50, Wisdom 10.

Additional Notes : Needless to say, Ichtyosatyr are treated as pariahs by Tritons – but Mermaids (and, for that matter, many Nereids) often find them strangely attractive ("His horns are so cute..."). Unlike Satyrs, these beings tend to be loners (as far as other male creatures are concerned) but the presence of a single Ichtyosatyr near a Mermaid community is always a motive of anger for Tritons – and you don't want to make them angry, do you ? A Ichtyosatyr tends to have a nomadic lifestyle, often drifting from one hot spot to another...



The notorious Crested Killer Fish of the Western Sea

Killer Fish

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : These 6' long, carnivorous fishes dwell in the deep waters of the Western Ocean. They often hunt in packs of 1-6 individuals.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Normal

Movement : 90' (360' cruising)

Initiative : 16

Melee Attack : +5

Damage : 1d6 (sharp teeth)

Defense Class : 14

Hits Total : 12

Detection / Evasion : +4 / +6

Mystic Fortitude : 0

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Cruise, Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (12), Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 100.

Langustos

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : Also known as Lobstermen, these creatures look like man-sized lobsters with human heads. They do not have the power of speech and communicate between themselves with their pincers, using a complex, unfathomable sign language. The true origins of the Langustos are completely unknown but are almost certainly magical, considering their weird hybrid anatomy.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 12

Melee Attack : +4

Damage : special *

Defense Class : 17

Hits Total : 16

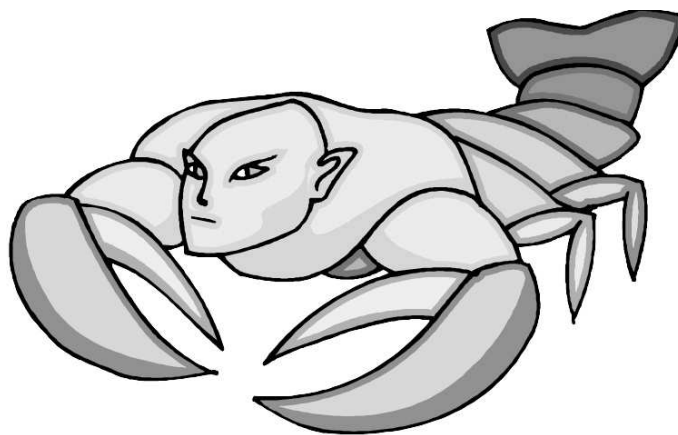
Detection / Evasion : 0 / 0

Mystic Fortitude : +6

Special Abilities : Amphibian, Crushing Damage (after grapple), Grapple (Might 20, the Langustos' pincers are so powerful that they give them the grappling strength of a Large creature), Magic Resistance, Natural Armor, Supernatural Vigor.

* The Langustos can only damage their foes with their pincers, by using Crushing Damage ability (for 1d6 Hits), which requires a successful Grapple attack first.

Awards : Glory 140, Wisdom 30. Their increased Grappling Might gives them a +5 Glory bonus.



Beware the pincers of the Langustos (not to mention his Space Filling special ability)

Large Octopus

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : The name says it all. Yes, strange as it may seem, this classic creature did not find its way into the *Creature Compendium*...

Size : Large

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 90'

Initiative : 12

Melee Attack : n/a

Damage : see below

Defense Class : 15

Hits Total : 24

Detection / Evasion : 0

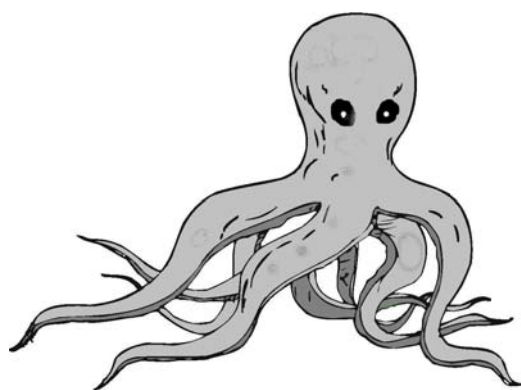
Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Entangle (tentacles, 20' range, Might = 20), Extra Arms (tentacles, see below), Tough Skin.

The Large Octopus' only weapons are its tentacles, which function as per the Entangle ability in game terms (Maze Masters Guide p 18). As for Sea Horrors, these tentacles do not inflict any damage per se but may be used to pull victims under water and cause them to drown. This attack may also be used against waterbreathing opponents to strangle and suffocate them, with exactly the same effects in game terms as drowning. Note that this additional effect should be applied to all similar attacks by other creatures, such as Sea Horrors.

The Extra Arms special ability of the Octopus reflects the creature's many tentacles; it allows it to make Entangle attacks against up to 4 different Medium-sized victims in a single round.

Awards : Glory 280.



Sea Lion / Triton hybrid ? Well, think again...

Merion

Taxonomy : Folk

Description : These creatures look like lion-headed Tritons (or half-humanoid Sea Lions, depending on how you look at it – but see *Additional Lore* below).

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Weird

Movement : 80'

Initiative : 19

Melee Attack : +5

Damage : 1d6 (claws)

Defense Class : 17

Hits Total : 16

Detection / Evasion : +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude : +2

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Charge into Battle (Initiative 20, Melee Attack +5), Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Supernatural Vigor, Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 75, Wisdom 10.

Additional Lore : Despite what some foolish naturalists have theorized, these beings are not the hybrids of Mermaids and Sea Lions, but a fully separate species, which may or may not be related to Leonids. Merions are on reasonably good terms with Tritons but are more primitive and are also far fewer in numbers, living only in certain specific spots of the Undersea (usually referred to as "Merion Territory" by Tritons).



Insubstantial, Entrancing & Dangerous

Morid

Taxonomy : Spirit

Description : Morids appear as 4' tall, insubstantial hippocampi creatures with the head of a beautiful woman and an entrancing voice.

Size : Small

Ferocity : Dangerous

Cunning : Crafty

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 60' (240' cruising)

Initiative : 19

Melee Attack : +4

Damage : see below

Defense Class : 14

Hits Total : 6

Detection / Evasion : +10 / +12

Mystic Fortitude : +4

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Cruise, Insubstantial, Life Energy Drain, Lightning Fast, Sixth Sense, Stealthy (24), Vocal Entrancement (16).

The Morid's only physical attack is its Life Energy Drain touch. Being insubstantial, these beings cannot be hurt by normal weapons.

Additional Lore : According to most undersea legends, Morids are the dead spirits of Nereids who incurred the divine wrath of Poseidon during their life and are now condemned to roam the abysses in search of victims to entrance and vampirize. Other tales say they are the cursed spirits of Mermaids who were unfaithful to their husbands – but this is obviously Triton propaganda.

Awards : Glory 24, Wisdom 140.

Psychic Medusa

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : Looks like an ordinary medusa... until you notice the human like features on top of its head. These strangest of creatures were originally created as "living weapons" by Atlantean wizard-scientists centuries ago. They can still be found in small groups, haunting the depths of the great western ocean.

Size : Small

Ferocity : Deadly

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 45'

Initiative : 16

Melee Attack : n/a *

Damage : See below

Defense Class : 16

Hits Total : 8

Detection / Evasion : +6

Mystic Fortitude : +8

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Magic Resistance, Life-Energy Drain (touch), Psychic Powers (Psychic Gift 3, Mystic Strength 15, 12 Power points), Sixth Sense, Stealthy (18), Uncanny Agility.

** The only physical attack form of the creature is its Life-Energy Drain touch but the Psychic Medusa usually prefers to use Psychic Attacks to weaken its prey at distance before striking.*

Awards : Glory 42, Wisdom 250.



A Deadly Psychic Medusa floating about



Come and get stoned under the sea...

Sea Gorgon

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : Sea Gorgons are similar to regular Gorgons, except that they are very attractive and that their hair does not appear to be made of snakes, but of dark green seaweeds – which make them less terrifying (and more inconspicuous) than their land-based cousins. Even though they are a nearly extinct breed, these creatures are obviously responsible for a fair number of stone statues found at the bottom of the sea.

Size : Medium

Ferocity : Deadly

Cunning : Clever

Mystique : Eldritch

Movement : 60'

Initiative : 15

Melee Attack : +6

Damage : 1d6 (claws)

Defense Class : 22

Hits Total : 20

Detection / Evasion : +8 / +6

Mystic Fortitude : +8

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Petrification (40' range), Regeneration (1 Hit per round), Sixth Sense, Stealthy (16), Supernatural Vigor.

Awards : Glory 300, Wisdom 90.

Tyrodon

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : This monstrous, vicious carnivorous fish dwell in the depths of the Umbrian Sea. Its scales are of a distinctive sickly bluish color – hence its name. Except no mercy from this relentless and lightning fast predator ! The only good news is that Tyrodons tend to be loners.

Size : Large

Ferocity : Deadly

Cunning : Alert

Mystique : Normal

Movement : 120' (480' cruising)

Initiative : 20

Melee Attack : +9

Damage : 2d6 (enormous teeth)

Defense Class : 16

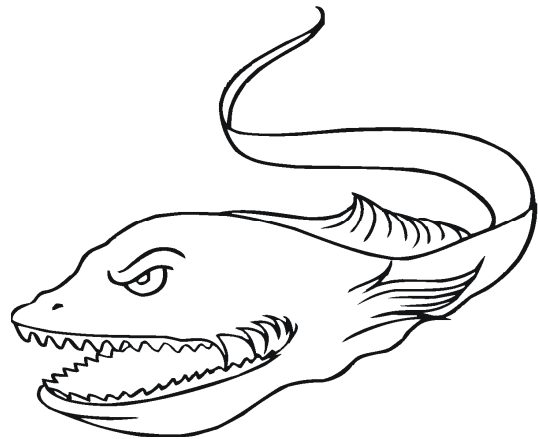
Hits Total : 30

Detection / Evasion : +6 / +8

Mystic Fortitude : 0

Special Abilities : Aquatic, Charge into Battle (Initiative 24, Melee attack +13), Cruise, Lightning Fast, Sharp Senses, Stealthy (14), Tough Skin, Uncanny Agility.

Awards : Glory 300.



A nasty Tyrodon looking for prey...

The Mythic Bestiary will return next issue, with a new selection of nasty critters... but hey, this installment is not over yet ! See next page for our truly titanic bonus monster !



Sea Titan

Taxonomy : Monster

Description : These gigantic, green-skinned spawns of primal Chaos are the last survivors of an ancient race that sided against the Olympian gods during the War of the Titans.

Size : Gigantic

Ferocity : Deadly

Cunning : Average

Mystique : Unearthly

Movement : 120'

Initiative : 15

Melee Attack : +10

Damage : 3d6

Defense Class : 25

Hits Total : 60

Detection / Evasion : 0

Mystic Fortitude : +10

Special Abilities : Amphibian, Charge into Battle (Initiative 21, Melee Attack +16), Crushing Damage (after Grapple), Crushing Missiles (stones etc), Fearsome, Grapple (Might = 24), Invulnerability, Magic Resistance, Supernatural Vigor, Trample.

* This is caused by effects the effects of their current enslavement to Poseidon.

Awards : Glory 1250, Wisdom 40.

The Three Sea Titans

Sea Titans are among the mightiest and deadliest creatures of the M&M bestiary. Adventurers who are unfortunate enough to meet one of these creatures are assured to meet a quick end, unless they can count on some divine assistance, powerful mythic items and extremely lucky die rolls...

Fortunately for adventurers, there are actually only three such beings left in existence and all three are actually kept captive in deep underwater caverns, under the watchful eye of Poseidon's servants.

The three Sea Titans are named Dagon, Kraken and Ktolos. Because even their worshippers feared to utter their names, they were also given a variety of colorful nicknames, such as Father of the Deep Ones (Dagon), the Fury from the Abyss (Kraken) and the Dreamer Below (Ktolos). Ancient lore also tends to associate these beings with completely unknown places, such as the Doomed City of Sarnathos or the Sunken Isle of Heryl.

The Sea Titans were defeated and enslaved by Poseidon, who occasionally unleashes one of them for a few hours to carry out devastating displays of his divine wrath. Driven by a blinding, primal fury, the Sea Titans gladly execute these destructive duties before getting back to the caverns in which the King of the Sea keep them imprisoned, where they fall into a deep slumber, dreaming of the day when they shall free themselves to wreak havoc on the world once again...

One of the two adventures included in this issue, *A Dark Alliance* (p 24), is directly tied to the ancient cult of the Sea Titans - and the possible release of one of them, Dagon. See also this issue's *Pandora's Box* for more details about the dreaded Tablets of the Sea Titans (p 17).

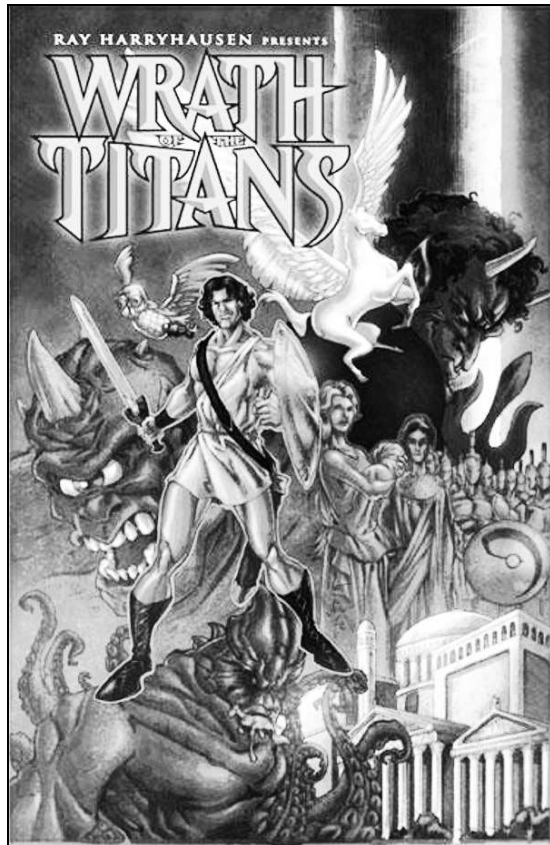


The Mighty Sea Titan rises...

(Mmmh, why do I get this feeling of déjà-vu ?)

Muse's Corner

Muse's Corner is a regular column about books, movies and other sources of inspiration for M&M players



Harryhausen Strikes Back !

Wrath of the Titans is part of [Blue Water Productions'](#) new line of comics based on the creative works of **Ray Harryhausen**, the special FX wizard of *Jason & the Argonauts* and many other wonderful movies of the previous millennium.

As its title implies, *Wrath...* is a direct sequel to the 1981 cult movie **Clash of the Titans**, probably the most M&M-esque movie ever made... and, quite logically, *Wrath of the Titans* is probably the most M&M-esque piece of literature ever printed.

Episode one reunites us with the freshly married Perseus and Andromeda... but the heroic Perseus soon finds himself once again embroiled in an epic adventure involving new monsters, old foes and, of course, the gods themselves. While Darren and Scott Davis' fast-paced script perfectly recaptures the glorious, pseudo-mythological spirit of the original movie – and is perfectly served by Nadir Balan's very dynamic artwork and Joey Campos'

fantastic colors. And if you need an extra reason to pick *Wrath...* up (SPOILER ALERT !) : episode one concludes with the return of the devious Calibos, everybody's favorite Satyresque villain (and the direct inspiration for M&M's own Calibans).

Definitely a must-read for all M&M enthusiasts !

And now, for something completely different...

A Gentler Voice

Thomas Burnett Swann (1928-1976) wrote various mythology-inspired stories which might be of special interest to *Mazes & Minotaurs* players, including the **Minotaur Trilogy** (*Cry Silver Bells*, *The Forest of Forever* and *Day of the Minotaur*) and the **Latium Trilogy** (*Queens Walk in the Dusk*, *Green Phoenix* and *The Lady of the Bees*).

Often presented as one of the gentler voices of fantasy, Swann gave his mythopoetic tales a sensual, sunny, Mediterranean mood that feels very different from the epic grandeur or heroic action usually associated with the genre. In the two aforementioned trilogies, violence is extremely rare and is always presented as the unfortunate result of mutual misunderstanding or as the worst possible way of solving a problem, magic is just another facet of eternal Nature and the « monsters » (yes, even Minotaurs) are often more sensible or sensitive than the humans they encounter.

Swann's novels were written between the mid-60s and the mid-70s and have a distinctive « flower children » feel, along with what the [Wikipedia article](#) about Swann aptly describes as « an undercurrent of sexuality » : they invite the reader to idly wander through a lost world of sacred woods and seas, populated by gentle Nymphs, bucolic Centaurs and even (yes) cute Minotaurs... which takes us quite far from the usual *Mazes & Minotaurs* vision of things (and Minotaurs in particular). Yet, aside from their own literary merit, these books are recommended reading for any *Mazes & Minotaurs* player interested in playing a Nymph : **The Forest of Forever** has a Nymph as its narrator, while **Green Phoenix** has a young, adventurous Dryad as its main character and offers a fascinating study of what « Nymph society » might be (including the Nymphs' tricky relationships with the local Satyrs).

That's all folks, for now !

Olivier Legrand (2007)

The Isle of Tempests

A Shakespearian Interlude for *Mazes & Minotaurs*

Introduction

The Isle of Tempests is not a detailed adventure with a fixed plot or labyrinth map – it is a flexible “background story” upon which various scenario situations can easily be constructed. Several story seeds are provided as examples of how the Isle and its characters may be injected into an ongoing campaign, either as a short diversion or as the basis for several interwoven stories.

This mysterious island and its inhabitants can easily be integrated into an ongoing seafaring campaign, either as an extended encounter or as a short scenario. This works best with a small group of low-level characters including at least one magician (especially a Lyrst or a Nymph, for reasons which will be detailed later.

As its title implies, *The Isle of Tempests* is (very) loosely based on William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* – transposed, of course, in the ancient fantasy world of Mythika. Knowledge of Shakespeare’s play is by no means necessary to use this scenario background, which takes *very serious* liberties with the plot of the Bard’s illustrious play. The names of most characters have also been changed so that the Shakespearian references do not become too obtrusive in play.

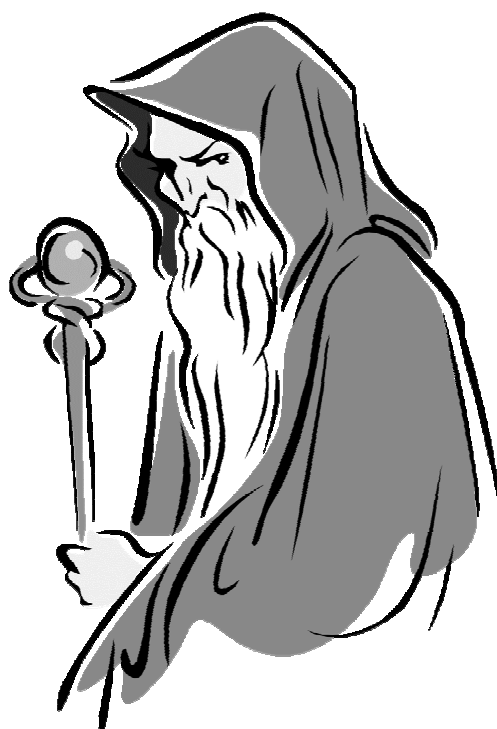
A Tale of Two Brothers

Twelve years ago, the head of a noble family from Thena, Lord Speros, vanished in mysterious circumstances. His ship, which was heading for the small island of Seriphos, was caught in a sudden, terrible storm and was presumed sunken – with all its passengers, including Speros himself, his spouse and their 3-year old daughter Randa.

Unbeknownst to the good people of Thena, this unfortunate event was actually a murder attempt on the person of Speros – a vile crime perpetrated by Speros’ younger brother, Antos, who was jealous of his elder brother’s power and craved for his position, lands and riches.

But before we uncover the true fate of Speros, more need to be said about the two brothers.

Unlike most ruling nobles, Speros was actually a Sorcerer – not a scheming, psychic manipulator but a well-meaning, good-natured scholar who had studied Sorcery as a logical extension of his already extensive knowledge. Speros was well-loved by his people, who rightfully view him as a wisdom-seeking



Speros the Sorcerer

Sorcerer... but many of them also acknowledged Speros’ major flaw : his love for learning was such that it often distracted him from the material world and its more direct concerns – including his duties as the ruler of a noble family. This enraged his brother Antos, who secretly craved for this temporal power that Speros so lightly neglected... but Antos had more than his lust for power and a talent for intrigue, for he too is a magician – an Elementalist, skilled in the ways of Air and Water.

When Speros announced he was taking a sea trip to Seriphos to visit the great libraries of Klebos, Antos saw the opportunity to dispose of his cumbersome brother and seize power in the family as Speros’ closest male heir.

Antos (who was secretly following Speros’ ship in a ship of his own) used his mastery of elemental magic to create a furious sea-storm that would wreck his brother’s ship – a “tragic accident” that would make him the new (and perfectly legitimate) ruler of his family. But things did not go as Antos had planned : as his magical storm began to rage, it drew the curious attention of a small band of frolicking Nereids, who were piqued by the obtrusive Elementalist’s weather manipulation.

When they realized a 3-year old baby girl was among the passengers of the drowning ship, the sea nymphs used their own magical powers to save Speros and his daughter from certain death (it was too late for Speros' wife, who had already drowned), causing the waves to bring the two castaways on the lonely shores of a small island, shrouded in mist, surrounded by dangerous reefs and treacherous currents, well away from the usual sailing routes.

Convinced that his devious plan had worked perfectly, Antos discreetly returned to Thena to wait for the "tragic news". Everything seemed to proceed as he had planned and within a few weeks, he was established as the new ruler of his illustrious and powerful family. This was 12 years ago...

The Lost Island

Let us now get back to the fate of Speros and Randa. At first, the death of his wife plunged Speros in a deep sorrow. He was now left alone on a desolate island, with a 3-year old daughter... but in his good-natured naivety, Speros did not yet suspect the treachery of his brother.

To his astonishment, Speros soon discovered that the small island had some inhabitants – an evil, mad Alseid named Sycorax and Klebos, a young Faun she had Enslaved with her Sorcery, making the poor creature believe she was actually her mother. Sycorax's powers had also enabled her to Enslave an Eolian spirit named Ariel, forcing him to act as her invisible spy and servant.

It was not long before Speros fought – and won – a sorcerous battle against the wicked Sycorax. Having vanquished the evil Alseid, Speros freed her two magically-bond slaves : the Faun Klebos and the Eolian Ariel, and then Enslaved them again with his own magic, for both of them were very useful servitors. A typical aristocrat, Speros could not imagine life without slaves or servants – but he proved a far better master than Sycorax, treating his two slaves with goodwill and gentleness.

This earned Speros the respect and loyalty of the Eolian... as well as the hatred and jealousy of the Satyr-child, who was hopelessly twisted and warped by years of abuse and enslavement under the thrall of Sycorax.

Soon after the demise of Sycorax, Ariel the Eolian went flying over the sea – something that he was not allowed to do as the sorceress' slave. He soon met the Nereids, who told him about the tempest and the Elementalist... The Eolian shared this information with his new master. Thus did Speros learn about his brother's foul treachery...

The years passed. Speros became the sole ruler of his lost island. Randa grew up into a comely and graceful maiden, who secretly dreams of discovering this "outside world" in which she was born and about which she knows so little...



Klebos the Caliban

Randa has also developed a solid friendship with the local Nereids, who, in the absence of Randa's mother, treated her like their foster-daughter. But the Nereids are highly aware that Randa is not one of them and will never be able to find her place in their undersea realm.

As Randa is slowly becoming a young woman, she feels more and more lonely and the almost tomboyish enthusiasm of her childhood years has left place to a deep, dreamy longing for the "world beyond the sea" – something that her self-absorbed father has not even noticed.

Speros is certain that his daughter is "perfectly happy" and that she has absolutely no reason to leave the island (not to mention her father) to discover the outside world and live her own fate – otherwise, she would have told him, wouldn't she ?

Klebos's Dark Dreams

Klebos grew up, too – not into a lusty, happy Satyr but into a dark-hearted Caliban, with secret dreams of his own : in the brutish depths of his Enslaved mind, he fantasizes about the day where he will be able to throw off the aging Sorcerer's domination, kill the old man and make Randa the toy of his darker, beastly passions.

So far, neither Speros nor Randa has the slightest suspicion about Klebos's dreams of betrayal and violence; Speros considers him as a loyal (if a bit lazy and simple-minded) slave, while Randa, who does not fully understand her father's sorcerous powers, still sees Klebos the Faun as her faithful childhood companion, not realizing that the "friendship" and "loyalty" of the Caliban is the result of her father's sorcerous powers.

This is the present situation. As alert Maze Masters will have already noticed, this situation is full of loose ends, hidden motives and unsolved problems – all of which may be used as adventure seeds, as shown by the following examples.

First Contact

The easiest (and, probably, most dramatic) way to embroil the adventurers in the affairs of Speros is to have their ship wrecked on his island by a furious storm of extraordinary magnitude.

This storm may be a natural phenomenon... but it could also be caused by the local Nereids as a way to bring strangers to the island, as a “first contact” for Randa, who has confided in them about how she longs to discover the outside world and meet other humans... If this justification is used, the Nereids’ storm does not even have to wreck the characters’ ship : it could simply force them to change their route... and discover the mysterious island “by chance”. If the player-characters’ group includes a Nymph (or, even better, a Nereid), this character could even be contacted by the Nereids beforehand to arrange the whole play.

Ah, Love...

Randa could well fall into love with the first young, handsome (Grace 15+) male adventurer she meets, especially if he is a Lyryst, since Speros’ daughter has never heard true music - but the Nereids have told her about this great wonder of the human world.

This will work best if the chosen character is played by a player who does not fear to verbalize or play out his character’s emotions (something that all players intending to play Lyrysts should consider). This could also work with a dashing, young Noble.

This situation could lead to various interesting dramatic developments, ranging from a simple comical interlude to a great, campaign-spanning, “true love” storyline, depending on how the character (and the player) feels about the noble but naïve maiden... Given his overall personality, Speros will almost certainly strongly disapprove of his daughter’s spontaneous infatuation with “the first stranger” she meets – a reaction which could lead to interesting dramatic developments, especially if the character’s player is willing to follow this romantic storyline and ‘free’ Randa from the authority of her over-protective father.

The Antos Alternative

Alternatively, some sailors could already have discovered Speros’ island and caught a glimpse of a strange, staff-wielding man (surely a magician of some kind) and a comely maiden (a Nymph ?) watching them from a distant cliff. Tales of this strange encounter could easily reach the ears of Speros’ brother, the treacherous Antos.

Suspecting his brother might have survived after all, Antos could hire a group of adventurers (enter the PCs...) to explore the mysterious island. Antos could even come up with a pretty convincing back story about an evil Sorcerer holding a comely maiden (“my dear, long-lost niece”) in sorcerous enslavement – the classic “damsel in distress” play.

The adventurers could come to Speros’ island with the intention of “freeing” Randa from the clutches of the “evil Sorcerer”, in order to bring her back to her “loving uncle” : this deception could easily lead to Speros’ death at the hands of the player-characters themselves, a situation which could have very interesting consequences, especially if the adventurers eventually learn the truth about Speros from Randa or the Nereids.

Uncovering Antos’ nefarious schemes could then become the only way for our heroes to gain Randa’s forgiveness – or to avoid the revenge of the Nereids (in the form of the dreadful Curse of the Drowned), if a stronger incentive is needed...

Klebos Unbound !

An entire scenario could also be based on Klebos’ awareness of his own Enslavement and on the Caliban’s dark dreams of revenge against Speros and Randa. In his fitful sleep, the Caliban fantasizes about killing the old man and turning his daughter into his own terrified, submissive slave... but fortunately for Speros and Randa (who are completely unaware of the Caliban’s secret dreams), Klebos has absolutely no chance of breaking the sorcerous enthrallment.

The Maze Master is free to decide where Klebos’ dreams come from : are they just “normal” dreams, born of the Caliban’s constantly repressed feelings of hatred and revenge... or are they sent by some hidden, malevolent power ? What if the late Sycorax had found a way to linger on as a ghostly presence, visiting her son in the secret world of his dreams ?

And what if her powers actually allow her to turn Klebos into a sleepwalker, making him temporarily immune to Speros’ power and turning him into a murderous, automaton-like monster ?

This dark power could also work in a subtler way, trying to trick the adventurers into slaying Speros – which would instantly break Klebos’ Enslavement and would allow him to have his way with the unsuspecting Randa...

What About Ariel ?

Readers who know their Shakespeare will have noticed that the Isle of Tempests does not include any equivalent of Ariel, the aerial spirit who serves Prospero in *The Tempest*. Maze Masters who wish to include such a being in the story could simply make him an Eolian, formerly Enslaved by the evil Alseid Sycorax and now in the service of Speros.

Each issue, Griffin Archives unearths an old Griffin article from the glorious 1980s

MOVIES & MINOTAURS

Using the Silver Screen as a Mine of Ideas for Maze Masters

From the 1963 cult classic **Jason and the Argonauts** to the more recent **Clash of the Titans**, movies have always been primary sources of inspiration for Maze Masters – indeed, the style and atmosphere of these two movies are probably closer to the mood of a true M&M odyssey than the original mythic tales from which they were derived.

But style and atmosphere are NOT the only things which can be borrowed from a movie : supporting characters, plot devices, adventure goals and other dramatic elements can all be borrowed from any adventure-oriented movie, regardless of its setting.

This fact is often overlooked by Maze Masters who tend to limit their search for dramatic ideas to peplums and « swords & sandals » flicks when there are so many other sources to plunder, as illustrated by the **following synopsis**...

Some twenty years ago, the many islands of the Archipelago lived in peace and prosperity.

This Federation of tiny kingdoms and independent city states was protected by its local Heroes, a brotherhood of valiant warriors and wise magicians (including Nymphs and Sorcerers)...

But a warlike and despotic faction of Nobles craved absolute power. Tensions soon erupted into a full-blown civil war. Betrayed by one of their own, a Sorcerer of great power, the Heroes were defeated and killed ; the Federation was turned into a totalitarian Sea Empire and there was no more Freedom in the Archipelago.

A few Rebel Islands still resist the tyrannical rule of the Empire. But the Imperial forces recently got hold of an ultimate weapon – a labyrinthine citadel built on the mysterious Isle of Doom, from which the Emperor's minions will be able to unleash the Wrath of the Sea, a terrible creature (a Kraken ?) or phenomenon (a magical tsunami ?) with the power to destroy entire islands.

Surrounded by deadly reefs, treacherous (possibly magical) sea currents and, perhaps, a few sea monsters, the Isle of Doom is said to be completely inaccessible – but there IS a secret sea route, known only to the local Sirens who are now under the command of the evil Emperor and can guide Imperial ships to the island.

A few days ago, Rebel-friendly Nereids discovered this secret sea route and have revealed it to the Princess of one of the Rebel Islands... but before she can bring this precious information back to her

father and his allies, her ship is captured by a small fleet of Imperial warships led by the Emperor's most powerful servant, the Dark Sorcerer responsible for betraying and eliminating the Heroes of the Archipelago some twenty years ago.

Among the Princess' travel companions are a friendly Dolphin (who swam alongside her ship) and a verbose but extremely Loyal Slave (of the scribe/interpreter variety).

Just before the ship is captured, the Princess manages to pass the vital information about the secret sea route to the Dolphin – as well as a desperate call for help for the Archipelago's last hero, an old man who now lives as a lonely hermit on one of the nearby islands...

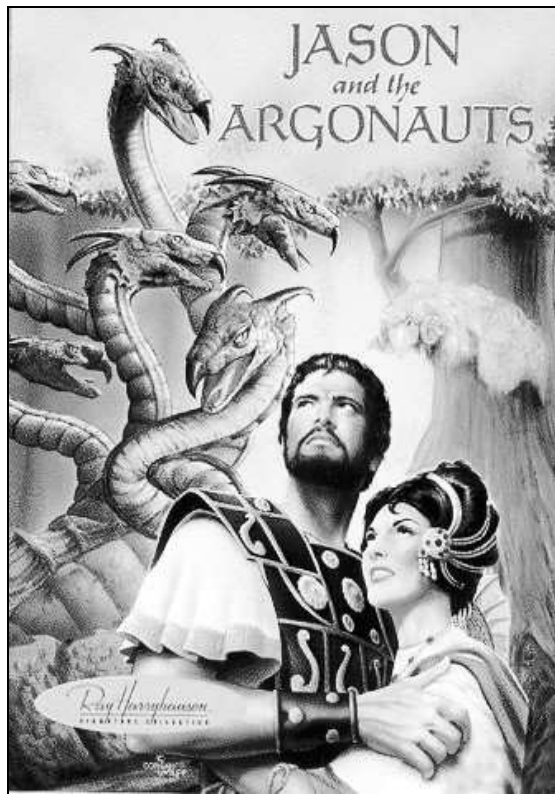
Being a marine creature, the Dolphin easily escapes the captors. The Loyal Slave also manages to escape - or perhaps he is simply thrown overboard by Imperial soldiers (laughing behind their identical helmets) and saved from drowning by our Dolphin friend. Anyway, the unlikely pair eventually reaches a small island which is already occupied by Imperial forces. The Dolphin (obviously) stays in the sea but the Slave is washed upon the shore, where he is promptly captured by a band of local scavengers who decide to sell him at the next slave market.

This is where the player-characters enter the scene. The characters are all local youngsters, just out of adolescence. In game terms, they are all first-level ; there may be some magicians among them but they do not know it yet, since the study of Sorcery and the worship of the Olympian gods were suppressed when the Empire seized power.

One of the player-character have been sent to the market by his uncle (probably a local, rustic Noble with a small villa and a few fields) to buy some new slaves – and his friends have decided to go along, since a trip to the local market is always a welcome distraction on this small, backward island.

There, the Loyal Slave comes to the attention of the characters and they eventually buy him (perhaps with a few other, more conventional slaves).

The Loyal Slave, who recognizes the characters as honorable individuals who are probably not too happy with the despotic Imperial regime, soon mentions his Dolphin companion (who is currently swimming as close as possible to the shores of the island). He also explains to the characters that the Dolphin has been given a very important message for some very important person.



Holy Athena ! Jason, my darling, do you realize this illustration has almost nothing to do with the article ?

As soon as the Loyal Slave mentions the name of this individual (whom he knows nothing about), the characters recognize it as that of the local hermit, a solitary old man who lives in a cave (or hut), a few hours of travel away from the coasts, far from the other human inhabitants of the island.

After a rough encounter with a band of marauding Beastmen, the characters find the hermit, who takes them to his hut or cave. The hermit reveals himself to be a Sorcerer of great power and tells them the story of his days as a Hero of the Archipelago...

This character (who will henceforth be called the Old Mentor) also reveals to one of the characters (or perhaps to all of them ?) that his true father was a Hero too – and that, like all other fallen Heroes, he was betrayed and killed by the Old Mentor's former pupil, who became the Dark Sorcerer, one of the emperor's most powerful vassals.

The Old Mentor (who knows the language of Dolphins) is able to understand the message given to the Dolphin by the Princess, in which she begs him to bring the information about the secret sea route to her own island...

After a short moment of meditation, the Old Mentor asks the characters to accompany him to the Princess' island. He will also take any aspirant Sorcerer in the group as his personal apprentice, helping him to unlock and master his powers.

If some of our novice adventurers refuse to accompany the Old Mentor in his quest, they soon find out that their homes have been raided and their families massacred by Imperial troops - who are almost certainly looking for them now...

At the seedy local sea port, the characters find a Dodgy Mariner, who agrees to transport them on his ship, the Magnificent Albatros. His associate is a tall, big, hairy Barbarian who doesn't speak Minean and seems to growl everytime he speaks. Some of the local heavies begin to bother them and the Old Mentor uses his Sorcery to neutralize them.

Our heroes decide to leave the island as quickly as possible, before the incident comes to the attention of some Imperial patrol. Meanwhile, the Dark Lord has discovered that someone escaped the Princess' ship carrying important information and has sent orders to the local troops.

Attacked by Imperial soldiers as they board the ship, our heroes make a hasty escape and soon reach the high seas, sailing away to the island of the Princess' allies, escorted by the cute Dolphin.

Meanwhile, on the Isle of Doom (...).

Of course, by now, most of you will have recognized the plot of the first **Star Wars** movie, revamped as a typical M&M odyssey synopsis...

My point here was to show how easily the various plot devices and story elements from movies that seem to have nothing to do with our beloved game can be replaced with some Bronze Age or mythical equivalent : in the example above, planets simply become islands, starships become... well, ships and everything else follows almost naturally (yes, even the Hyperspace has a Bronze Age equivalent – it's called the High Seas !).

The rest of the **Star Wars** movie could be as easily converted to the world of M & M : in such a setting, the rescue of Princess Leia from the Death Star becomes a daring expedition into the monster-infested and trap-laden labyrinths of the Isle of Doom (which extends a simple sequence into a full-length, classic maze adventure !), the laser-sword duel between Vader and Kenobi becomes a psychic duel between two Sorcerers and the final space attack on the Death Star becomes an all-out sea attack of the Isle of Doom, with each Rebel ship (X-wing fighter) being guided on the perilous sea routes by its own Dolphin scout (D2 unit), all this despite the Isle's vigilant Siren sentinels (sensors) and guardian sea creatures (Tie-fighters).

And if you are already thinking about the opening sequence of « The Empire Strikes Back », I'll just say this : Hyperborea ! When we get to see the final movie of the **Star Wars** trilogy (probably next year), I'm pretty sure its scenario will be as M&M-compatible as the previous ones...



Maybe you should add a crest on this helmet...

Why ? Because Lucas, like many other writers of heroic sci-fi or fantasy, has built his stories on timeless, mythical archetypes (the Young Hero, the Old Mentor, the Quest, the Final Showdown etc) that existed long ago before anybody dreamed about starships or robots...

In a movie like Star Wars (and in countless sci-fi novels), futuristic technology is just another form of magic and « alien » is just another term for « mythical creature ». Once you realize this, the process of transforming such stories into Bronze Age fantasy adventures becomes a simple (and fun !) exercise in creative deconstruction.

The easiest way to accomplish this is to think in terms of effect rather than in terms of nature : the important factor is not what the object is (its nature) but what it does or accomplishes in the story (its effects). Thinking in terms of effects will allow you to find equivalents that are both a bit more original and a bit less obvious than direct transpositions – in our example above, it was far more satisfactory (and interesting in terms of possible adventures) to transform the Death Star into the Isle of Doom rather than a big war galley with some sort of magical death ray mounted on it.

The trickiest element to convert here was the Droid R2D2. It would have been too easy to replace it by a Bronze Age Animate and the M&M Dolphin just seems to be the perfect equivalent for this character : he is cute, non-humanoid and can only communicate by making funny noises... Of course, the fact that Dolphins can't leave water forced me to adjust the story a little (since the cute water mammal would not have survived if he had been captured by the slavers too) – but absolute correspondence is not the point here : in fact, changing a few things here and there will make the disguise less obvious when running such scenarios.

Our example purposely tried to convert every plot device from the Star Wars script for the sake of demonstration, but various elements could have been modified or simplified to make the plot even more M&M-esque or less recognizable : the Loyal Slave / Dolphin couple of NPCs, for instance, could easily have been replaced by a single Nereid player-character, with exactly the same mission and the same chain of events (captured by slavers or less-human Jawa equivalents and meeting the other

characters at the market). Other elements could be tweaked : the gods could be made more important and the final « Use the Force » moment that allows Luke to destroy the Death Star could be replaced by a Divine Intervention from Zeus or Poseidon...

Listing all the sci-fi movies and novels which could be adapted or transposed in this way would be a truly titanic task... but here are a few examples.

Forbidden Planet : Use the same « space = sea » analogy as for Star Wars above - by the way, did you notice that this classic sci-fi movie borrowed many elements from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ?

Logan's Run : Simply start by replacing the « Carousel » ritual with good old-fashioned human sacrifices like the ones in the original Minotaur story and see where this gets you...

Battlestar Galactica : This one is obviously more Biblical than mythical, but can be « minotaurized » too : a big exodus ship wandering on the ocean, full of people trying to escape the genocidal Atlanteans and find the « promised island » of their ancestors.

Star Trek : Ocean, the final frontier... the heroic crew of the Argos goes where no man has sailed before... featuring a Noble captain, a grumpy Priest and an enigmatic Sorcerer with pointed ears and plenty of expendable Followers in red tunics.

Alien : Nasty Monster (or parasite-like Spirit ?) on board ! Okay, you can always jump overboard and escape by swimming... mmh, I guess the ship will have to be caught in a terrible storm, then.

Battle Beyond the Stars : If they can transpose *The Magnificent Seven* (which is itself an adaptation of Kurosawa's *Seven Samurais*) in space, well, there's no reason why this scenario shouldn't work in a Bronze Age minotaurian setting.

And finally...

The Empire Strikes Back : After the heroic raid on the Isle of Doom, our heroes are forced to flee the Archipelago, finding refuge in cold Hyperborea... until they are tracked down by one of the Dark Sorcerer's Spirits (or Sirens). Soon, Hyperborea becomes the scene of an epic battle between the Rebels and an Imperial invasion which includes fearsome Gigantic monsters. Having saved their lives, the heroes decide to split for a few scenarios : the Young Sorcerer (and his Dolphin friend) will seek the aid of an ancient, mysterious being of great power living on a desolate island of swamps and mists, while the Dodgy Mariner, the Rebel Princess and the Growling Barbarian will try to enlist the help of an old fellow adventurer of the Mariner – a former Thief who has become the merchant-prince of a small, prosperous island... Who knows what perils await our heroes during their journeys ?

Use the Force... of your imagination !

Igor A. Rivendell, October 1982

Minotaur Quarterly Play Nymph n°1



MERMAID, by John Waterhouse (1900)