



TEMPLE OF THE GLEAMING SANDS

A *Sandstorm* Web Enhancement

A Short Adventure for Four
5th-Level Player Characters

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Temple of the Gleaming Sands is a short adventure for four 5th-level characters that features monsters, spells, and items from the newly released *Sandstorm* book. You can use this scenario to introduce the new material on deserts and arid wastelands into your campaign, or you can just use it as a site-based adventure in a desert area.

The scenario is set in a remote area of the desert that very few humanoid travelers visit. The temple from which the adventure takes its name has lain forgotten for centuries and is now inhabited only by monsters who use it as a base. The area around the temple should be inhospitable enough to discourage humanoid settlement. As always, feel free to adapt the material presented here as you see fit to make it work with your campaign.

PREPARATION

You (the DM) need the D&D core rulebooks—the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*—as well as *Sandstorm* to run this adventure. The information presented here utilizes the D&D v.3.5 rules.

To get started, print out the adventure site, including the map. Read through the material at least once to familiarize yourself with the situation, site, and major NPCs (particularly their motivations). You must decide whether the PCs simply stumble upon the site or have a reason to visit. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter area in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, references to entries in the *Monster Manual* or *Sandstorm* are given.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Like most temples, the one known as the Temple of the Gleaming Sands was originally dedicated to a deity. Which god is inconsequential; simply choose one that is appropriate for a desert setting in your campaign. The logic of the site selection depends upon the deity chosen. For example, the followers of Pelor might have selected this location for its brilliant sands, or the followers of Erythnul might have chosen this site simply because it is isolated and dangerous to approach—especially for those traveling on foot.

The temple was in active use for many years, but eventually it was abandoned to the shifting sands. Perhaps keeping it supplied in such a remote location proved too difficult, or maybe the followers of a rival



god sacked it and slew all its defenders. Whatever the reason for its abandonment, the temple stood empty for several years. Adventurers visited it from time to time and carried off many of its finer treasures, but the desert creatures who took up residence within it brought other valuables with them. The temple has housed numerous beings through the years—some powerful and some not.

THE TEMPLE TODAY

When the adventure opens, the temple has been abandoned for at least a century. Almost all of its original treasures have been carried off, but some of the more recent tenants have left behind valuables of their own.

Currently, the temple is home to a canisphinx named Jarazim and his minions, who have gleaned a considerable cache of treasure from caravan raids and hidden it within the temple. Jarazim spends most of his time snoozing in the depths of the temple, but every few days he flies out at dusk and spends a night hunting in the desert. Jarazim has become the terror of caravan drivers and travelers for leagues around, though most do not know his true nature, and none know the location of his lair.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs find a temple in the desert wilderness. After defeating the monsters that guard the entrance, they can penetrate the temple and clear out the rest of its monstrous inhabitants.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

As DM, you know best how to involve your PCs in an adventure. If desired, however, you can use one of the following adventure hooks to draw them into the action.

- The PCs hear rumors of a massive “devil dog” that roams the desert at night. Like death on wings, it swoops down on campsites and slays desert travelers by the dozen. Recently, the creature made off with a small fortune in jewels and rare spices when it wiped out a particularly rich caravan.

The “devil dog” mentioned in these tales is Jarazim, though the rumors of the rich treasures he has stolen are exaggerated. If the PCs don't seem inclined to seek out the mysterious attacker, perhaps a merchant or caravan operator could hire them to track down and eliminate the creature.

- The characters camp for the night at a big oasis where a sizable caravan has already halted. Sometime after moonset, a commotion erupts within the caravan. Jarazim has arrived, and his roar attacks send most of the caravan's personnel fleeing. After the dust settles, the survivors ask (or hire) the PCs to determine what kind of creature attacked them and to end the threat it poses.
- The PCs find a map to the infamous Temple of Gleaming Sands—a building said to be covered with gold and stuffed with magic treasures. Reports of the temple's wealth are exaggerated—even during its heyday it was not fitted out in gold—but the map gives the temple's location accurately.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

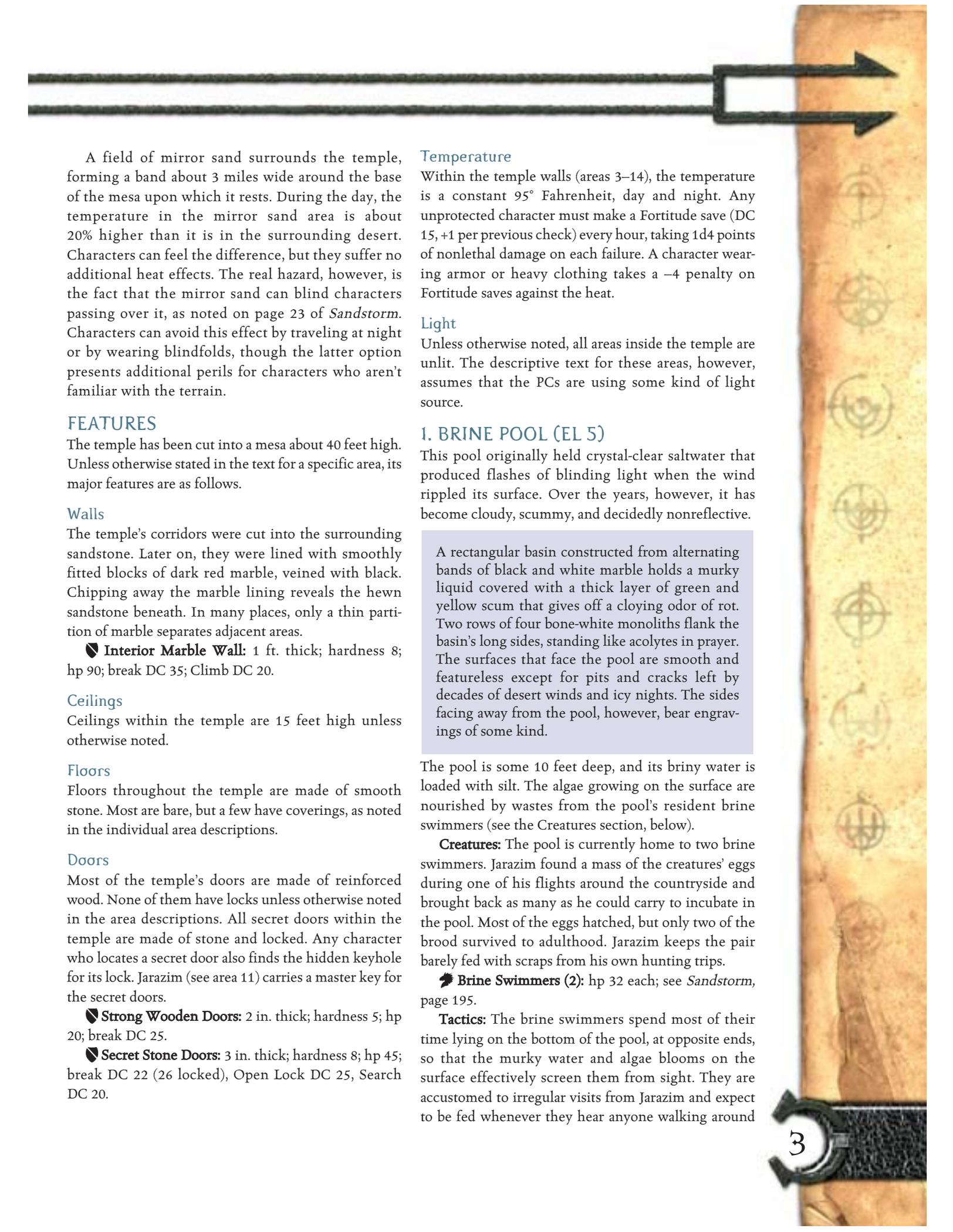
Temple of the Gleaming Sands is a site-based adventure that takes place in a largely abandoned temple deep in the desert. It begins when the PCs come within sight range of the temple.

THE TEMPLE AND ITS ENVIRONS

The temple lies in a shallow depression about 18 miles across. Numerous sandstone mesas dot the floor of this shallow canyon, rising like islands from the sand. Daytime temperatures within the depression range from 110° to 115° Fahrenheit. Each unprotected character traveling through it must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) every 10 minutes, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage on each failure. A partially protected character, however, need check only once per hour. A character wearing armor or heavy clothing takes a –4 penalty on Fortitude saves against the heat.

The typical player character needs at least 3 gallons of water each day to avoid dehydration from the severe heat. See pages 12 and 15 in *Sandstorm* and pages 303 and 304 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on the effects of heat and dehydration.

At night, the temperature within the depression drops to about 50° Fahrenheit. Any creature without warm clothing (such as a cold weather outfit), an *endure elements* effect, or some other protection from frigid temperatures must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) each hour or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per failure.



A field of mirror sand surrounds the temple, forming a band about 3 miles wide around the base of the mesa upon which it rests. During the day, the temperature in the mirror sand area is about 20% higher than it is in the surrounding desert. Characters can feel the difference, but they suffer no additional heat effects. The real hazard, however, is the fact that the mirror sand can blind characters passing over it, as noted on page 23 of *Sandstorm*. Characters can avoid this effect by traveling at night or by wearing blindfolds, though the latter option presents additional perils for characters who aren't familiar with the terrain.

FEATURES

The temple has been cut into a mesa about 40 feet high. Unless otherwise stated in the text for a specific area, its major features are as follows.

Walls

The temple's corridors were cut into the surrounding sandstone. Later on, they were lined with smoothly fitted blocks of dark red marble, veined with black. Chipping away the marble lining reveals the hewn sandstone beneath. In many places, only a thin partition of marble separates adjacent areas.

◆ **Interior Marble Wall:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

Ceilings

Ceilings within the temple are 15 feet high unless otherwise noted.

Floors

Floors throughout the temple are made of smooth stone. Most are bare, but a few have coverings, as noted in the individual area descriptions.

Doors

Most of the temple's doors are made of reinforced wood. None of them have locks unless otherwise noted in the area descriptions. All secret doors within the temple are made of stone and locked. Any character who locates a secret door also finds the hidden keyhole for its lock. Jarazim (see area 11) carries a master key for the secret doors.

◆ **Strong Wooden Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; break DC 25.

◆ **Secret Stone Doors:** 3 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; break DC 22 (26 locked), Open Lock DC 25, Search DC 20.

Temperature

Within the temple walls (areas 3–14), the temperature is a constant 95° Fahrenheit, day and night. Any unprotected character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) every hour, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage on each failure. A character wearing armor or heavy clothing takes a –4 penalty on Fortitude saves against the heat.

Light

Unless otherwise noted, all areas inside the temple are unlit. The descriptive text for these areas, however, assumes that the PCs are using some kind of light source.

1. BRINE POOL (EL 5)

This pool originally held crystal-clear saltwater that produced flashes of blinding light when the wind rippled its surface. Over the years, however, it has become cloudy, scummy, and decidedly nonreflective.

A rectangular basin constructed from alternating bands of black and white marble holds a murky liquid covered with a thick layer of green and yellow scum that gives off a cloying odor of rot. Two rows of four bone-white monoliths flank the basin's long sides, standing like acolytes in prayer. The surfaces that face the pool are smooth and featureless except for pits and cracks left by decades of desert winds and icy nights. The sides facing away from the pool, however, bear engravings of some kind.

The pool is some 10 feet deep, and its briny water is loaded with silt. The algae growing on the surface are nourished by wastes from the pool's resident brine swimmers (see the Creatures section, below).

◆ **Creatures:** The pool is currently home to two brine swimmers. Jarazim found a mass of the creatures' eggs during one of his flights around the countryside and brought back as many as he could carry to incubate in the pool. Most of the eggs hatched, but only two of the brood survived to adulthood. Jarazim keeps the pair barely fed with scraps from his own hunting trips.

◆ **Brine Swimmers (2):** hp 32 each; see *Sandstorm*, page 195.

◆ **Tactics:** The brine swimmers spend most of their time lying on the bottom of the pool, at opposite ends, so that the murky water and algae blooms on the surface effectively screen them from sight. They are accustomed to irregular visits from Jarazim and expect to be fed whenever they hear anyone walking around



near the pool. Thus, they quietly rise to the surface when visitors arrive. The creatures bite and grab anything tossed or poked into the water, and if they don't receive a few tasty morsels within the first 4 rounds, they break the surface and try to bite and grab anyone standing adjacent to the pool. Should they manage to grab foes, the brine swimmers try to drag they prizes to the bottom of the pool so that they can dine in peace. The brine swimmers have land speeds and are more than willing to climb out of the pool to reach their prey or retaliate against creatures harassing them, though they usually do not venture more than 20 feet from the pool's edge.

Development: Any combat or other loud and prolonged disturbance at the pool alerts the giant ant lion at area 2 and the salt mephit at area 3 to the presence of intruders. See areas 2 and 3 for details.

Once the characters have dispatched the brine swimmers, they are free to examine the stone monoliths. Each one measures about 6 inches thick, 5 feet wide, and 10 feet tall. The faded engravings on the sides away from the pool are so badly weathered that they're unreadable to casual inspection. A persistent character who studies the monoliths for at least 1 minute, however, can make a DC 20 Search check to find and trace the barely visible figures and letters. A successful check also reveals old chisel marks and traces of metal, indicating that the engravings were deliberately defaced long ago. A character with the stonecunning ability gets a +2 bonus on the check, as does a character with 5 or more ranks in Craft (stoneworking). These two bonuses stack.

Even with a successful check to find what's left of the engravings, however, a character must make a DC 10 Decipher Script or Knowledge (religion) check to understand what they signify. The markings include the holy symbol of the god to whom the temple was originally dedicated (see Adventure Background), plus a collection of sacred writings and images associated with that god. For example, if the temple was originally dedicated to Pelor, the monoliths would bear his sun symbol plus some admonitions involving the destruction of evil and the value of treating the downtrodden with kindness.

◆ **Monoliths (8):** 6 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 45; break DC 33; Climb DC 20.

2. DOORSTEP (EL 5)

A semicircle of monoliths similar to those in area 1 marks the temple's entrance. The doorway is still there, but a deep depression in the sand blocks the way to it.

In front of a sheer cliff at least 40 feet high stands a half-circle of worn, ivory-colored monoliths. The stone slabs have rounded edges and rippled surfaces, almost as if they've begun to melt in the heat.

A funnel-shaped depression, perhaps 20 feet deep, dips into the sand within the semicircle. In the cliff face, roughly in the center of the semicircle's flat side, is a rectangular doorway about 5 feet wide and 8 feet high. The shards of a broken door hang loosely on one side of this opening.

The monoliths are made from softer stone than those in area 1. They too bore inscriptions at one time, but these messages have completely eroded away. The wind-blown sand that literally eats away these monoliths is what gives them their melted look.

The temple entrance is located right at the lip of the sandy depression. To reach it, a PC must walk along the pit's lip and make a DC 17 Climb check to avoid sliding into the funnel. Characters can avoid this pit by flying or levitating over it, or by jumping. The horizontal distance between the inside of the entryway and any spot sufficiently firm for jumping is at least 10 feet. Any character jumping from the softer sand closer to the pit takes a -2 penalty on the Jump check. A character who tries to jump into the entrance and falls short of it drops into the ant lion's pit, taking 2d6 points of nonlethal damage and landing within reach of the creature's jaws, if it is still alive.

◆ **Creatures:** The depression in the sand hides a giant ant lion.

◆ **Giant Ant Lion:** hp 60; see *Sandstorm*, page 195.

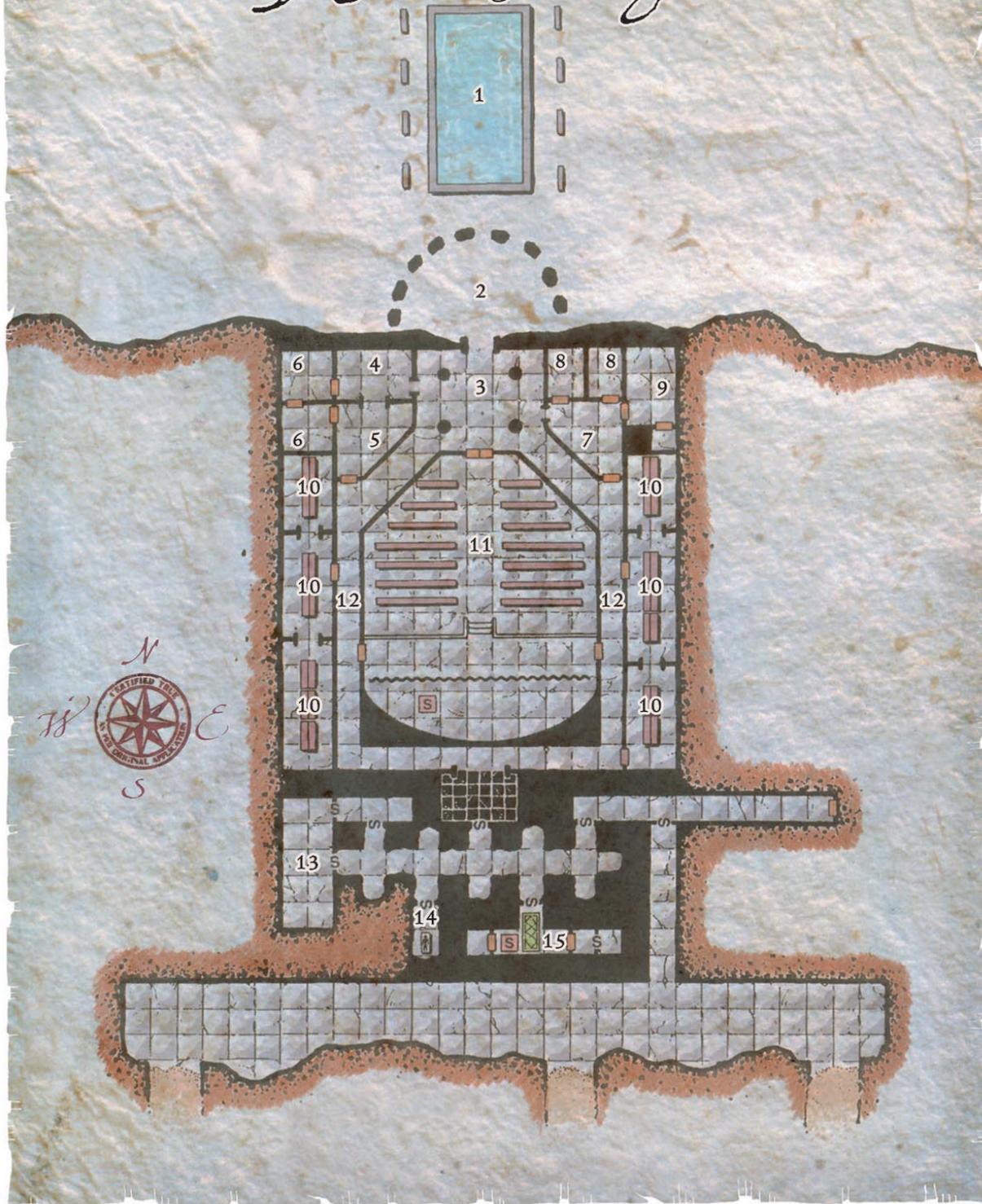
◆ **Tactics:** The giant ant lion lies mostly buried at the bottom of its pit. Any character who makes a DC 17 Spot check (with the usual -1 penalty for every 10 feet of distance) notices the creature's head and jaws sticking out of the sand.

The ant lion is content to lie in wait until someone slides into its pit. At that point, it uses its sand burst ability to bring the prey within reach, then bites and uses its improved grab ability.

If the PCs use ranged attacks against the ant lion while standing well away from the pit, the creature burrows into the sand and tries to come back up under the closest foe so that it can bite and grab. The ant lion has cover (+4 AC) when buried and total cover while burrowing.

◆ **Development:** The mephit in area 3 notices any fighting here and might fly out to harass the PCs while they deal with the ant lion, as noted in the Development section for area 3. If the party fought the

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brine swimmers in area 1, the ant lion heard the ruckus and knows that potential prey is nearby, but it takes no actions other than watching the rim of its pit for a potential meal.

3. ENTRANCE HALL (EL 3)

Light from the open doorway keeps this room illuminated during the day. The light is bright within 15 feet of the door and shadowy for 15 feet beyond that (see page 164 in the *Player's Handbook*).

In the temple's heyday, this room served as a casual gathering place for the faithful. The text below assumes the PCs enter the temple during the day, so adjust it accordingly if they visit at night.

This lofty chamber seems as dark as a forest at night compared with the desert glare outside. After a few moments, however, a quartet of thick pillars seems to emerge from the gloom. A bench, just high enough to seat a human comfortably, surrounds each pillar's base, and similar benches line the walls. A mosaic inlay near the peak of the vaulted ceiling depicts a design that might be a holy symbol.

The ceiling in here is 25 feet high. The holy symbol on the ceiling is that of the deity to whom the temple was originally dedicated (see introduction).

Creatures: A salt mephit lurks in this chamber.

☛ **Salt Mephit:** hp 19; see *Monster Manual*, page 184.

Tactics: The mephit usually sits slumped on a bench on the south side of a pillar so that he isn't visible from the doorway. When visitors arrive unannounced, the mephit takes to the air and demands that they remove their shoes and footgear before entering the temple. No matter how the PCs respond, the mephit uses his breath weapon, though he tries to aim the cone so that it misses characters who are complying. After that, the mephit uses his *glitterdust* power or his ability to draw moisture from the air, affecting as many foes as possible. If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, the mephit withdraws to area 12 or 11 (whichever is closer at the time) and uses his *summon mephit* ability to call in reinforcements. If the PCs pursue the retreating mephit, he flees to area 11 to warn Jarazim. He also flees to area 11 when reduced to 5 or fewer hit points, even if he has not yet summoned another mephit.

Development: The mephit has orders to report any intruders to Jarazim in area 11, but he isn't very good at following orders. He notices combat or any loud

disturbance in areas 1 or 2, but he has no love for the brine swimmers in area 1, and he detests the pool. When he notices a fight in area 1, he watches carefully and tries to determine who the most aggressive and dangerous PCs are. If the characters later fight the ant lion at area 2, the mephit flies out and uses his breath weapon on the PCs he has decided are the most dangerous. If they avoid the brine swimmers in area 1 but fight the ant lion, the mephit doesn't bother watching the fight. Instead, he takes up a perch above the entrance and tries to use his ability to draw moisture from the air, affecting as many PCs as possible when they enter. Otherwise, he uses the tactics noted in the Tactics section.

Any fighting with the mephit alerts the tumbling mounds in area 7 to the presence of a potential meal. The mephit and the tumbling mounds have an uneasy truce: He doesn't enter their lair, and the tumbling mounds won't go to his aid, but once he withdraws, the tumbling mounds attack anyone who stays behind in area 3. Likewise, if the PCs reach area 7 and fight the tumbling mounds without first dealing with the mephit, he moves in and attacks any survivors from that fight.

4. GUARDPOST

The temple garrison once placed guards here to keep watch over area 3, but looters ransacked this chamber years ago. More recently, the salt mephit from area 3 has been using it as a lair.

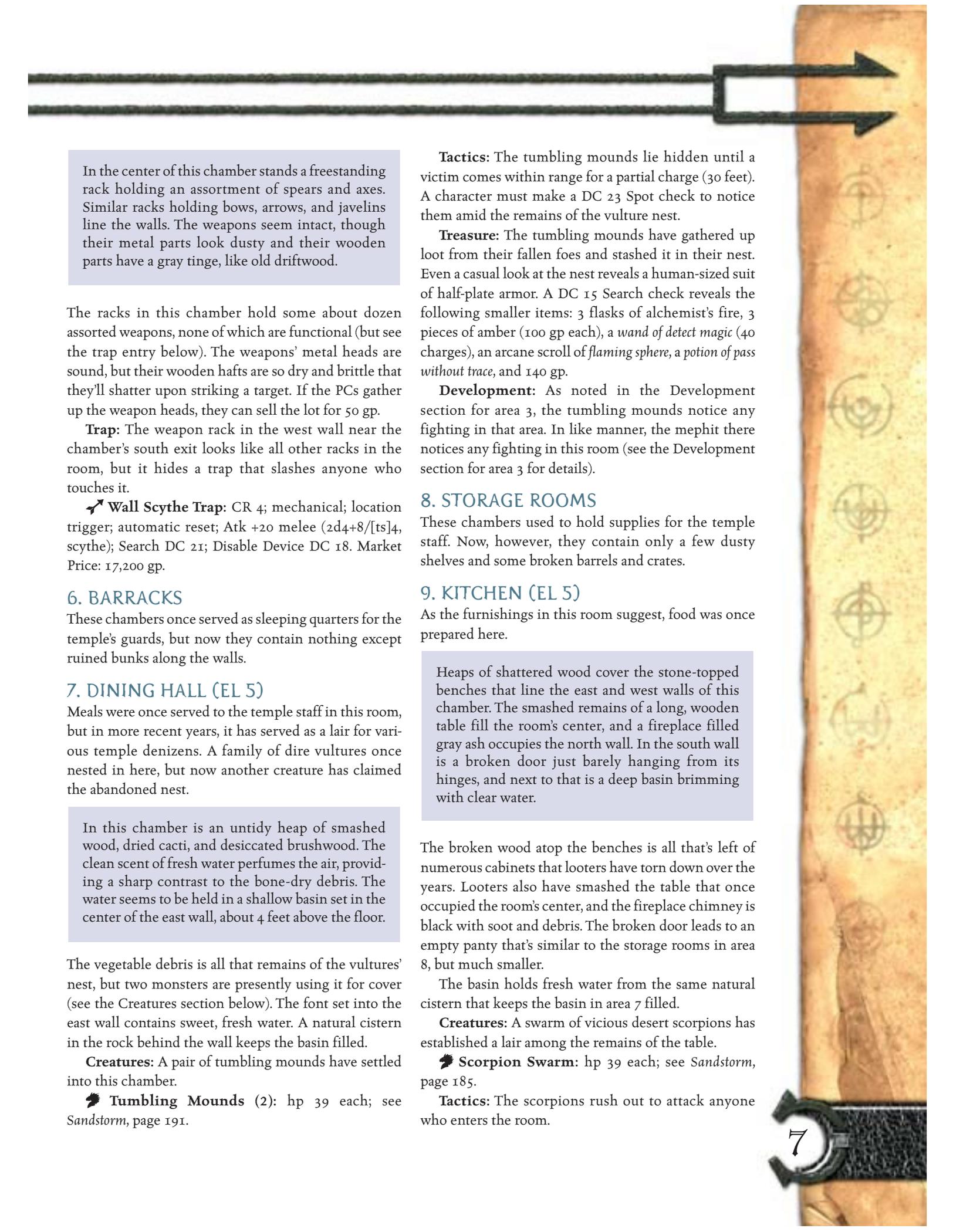
Shards of wooden furniture litter the floor of this chamber. On an overturned, legless, wooden table is a hollow mound of white, crystalline powder.

The white powder is a 25-pound pile of salt that the salt mephit has been using as a bed. Anyone who looks at it can identify it as salt, but it takes a full-round action and a DC 10 Appraise or Knowledge (nature or geography) check to determine that the salt is fairly pure, if a little gritty.

Treasure: The mephit has looted a considerable amount of treasure from the victims of the brine swimmers and the ant lion at areas 1 and 2. His treasure cache is hidden in a hollow in the floor under the overturned table. The collection includes 3 bloodstones (50 gp each), a sliver armband with black onyx studs (100 gp), 25 pp, 150 gp, 2 *potions of endure elements*, and a divine scroll of *resist energy* (fire).

5. ARMORY (EL 4)

This chamber once held weapons for the temple garrison. A few of these weapons are still here, along with a nasty surprise for unwary looters.



In the center of this chamber stands a freestanding rack holding an assortment of spears and axes. Similar racks holding bows, arrows, and javelins line the walls. The weapons seem intact, though their metal parts look dusty and their wooden parts have a gray tinge, like old driftwood.

The racks in this chamber hold some about dozen assorted weapons, none of which are functional (but see the trap entry below). The weapons' metal heads are sound, but their wooden hafts are so dry and brittle that they'll shatter upon striking a target. If the PCs gather up the weapon heads, they can sell the lot for 50 gp.

Trap: The weapon rack in the west wall near the chamber's south exit looks like all other racks in the room, but it hides a trap that slashes anyone who touches it.

Wall Scythe Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/[ts]4, scythe); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 18. Market Price: 17,200 gp.

6. BARRACKS

These chambers once served as sleeping quarters for the temple's guards, but now they contain nothing except ruined bunks along the walls.

7. DINING HALL (EL 5)

Meals were once served to the temple staff in this room, but in more recent years, it has served as a lair for various temple denizens. A family of dire vultures once nested in here, but now another creature has claimed the abandoned nest.

In this chamber is an untidy heap of smashed wood, dried cacti, and desiccated brushwood. The clean scent of fresh water perfumes the air, providing a sharp contrast to the bone-dry debris. The water seems to be held in a shallow basin set in the center of the east wall, about 4 feet above the floor.

The vegetable debris is all that remains of the vultures' nest, but two monsters are presently using it for cover (see the Creatures section below). The font set into the east wall contains sweet, fresh water. A natural cistern in the rock behind the wall keeps the basin filled.

Creatures: A pair of tumbling mounds have settled into this chamber.

Tumbling Mounds (2): hp 39 each; see *Sandstorm*, page 191.

Tactics: The tumbling mounds lie hidden until a victim comes within range for a partial charge (30 feet). A character must make a DC 23 Spot check to notice them amid the remains of the vulture nest.

Treasure: The tumbling mounds have gathered up loot from their fallen foes and stashed it in their nest. Even a casual look at the nest reveals a human-sized suit of half-plate armor. A DC 15 Search check reveals the following smaller items: 3 flasks of alchemist's fire, 3 pieces of amber (100 gp each), a *wand of detect magic* (40 charges), an arcane scroll of *flaming sphere*, a *potion of pass without trace*, and 140 gp.

Development: As noted in the Development section for area 3, the tumbling mounds notice any fighting in that area. In like manner, the mephit there notices any fighting in this room (see the Development section for area 3 for details).

8. STORAGE ROOMS

These chambers used to hold supplies for the temple staff. Now, however, they contain only a few dusty shelves and some broken barrels and crates.

9. KITCHEN (EL 5)

As the furnishings in this room suggest, food was once prepared here.

Heaps of shattered wood cover the stone-topped benches that line the east and west walls of this chamber. The smashed remains of a long, wooden table fill the room's center, and a fireplace filled gray ash occupies the north wall. In the south wall is a broken door just barely hanging from its hinges, and next to that is a deep basin brimming with clear water.

The broken wood atop the benches is all that's left of numerous cabinets that looters have torn down over the years. Looters also have smashed the table that once occupied the room's center, and the fireplace chimney is black with soot and debris. The broken door leads to an empty pantry that's similar to the storage rooms in area 8, but much smaller.

The basin holds fresh water from the same natural cistern that keeps the basin in area 7 filled.

Creatures: A swarm of vicious desert scorpions has established a lair among the remains of the table.

Scorpion Swarm: hp 39 each; see *Sandstorm*, page 185.

Tactics: The scorpions rush out to attack anyone who enters the room.

10. SCRIPTORIUMS/LIBRARIES

These sets of rooms once served as work areas for scribes, storage for books, and reading rooms. Sections of the tabletops can be raised to provide angled surfaces for writing, and drawers under the tables once held writing supplies. The iron lamps on the tables originally held *everburning torches* to provide light, but looters carried those away years ago. The tables are still mostly intact, but all the drawers have been yanked out and overturned. Empty bookshelves line the walls, and a few torn pages litter the floors.

11. AUDITORIUM

The ceiling of this vast chamber rises 50 feet above the main section. The raised area at the south end of the room is about 8 feet high, but the ceiling is no higher here.

This room once served as the main worship area. A statue of the temple's patron god once stood on the raised area at the south end of the room, but looters tore it apart and dragged it away years ago. Rows of pews for the faithful once filled the lower portion of the room (as shown on the map), but looters have overturned and smashed the pews, leaving the area filled with rubble.

The vaulted ceiling in this chamber looks high enough to hold a grove of trees. At the south end is a short flight of steps leading up to a raised dais, which rises higher than a tall human can reach. A vast curtain that looks as if it were woven from palm leaves hangs from the ceiling about 10 feet behind the edge of the dais. The entire lower area of the chamber is littered with shards of broken wood at least ankle deep.

The debris from the smashed pews hampers movement, and entering a square in the chamber's lower area costs 2 squares of movement. The DC for any Balance or Tumble checks in that area increases by 5, and the DC for a Move Silently check increases by +2. In addition, the chamber has superb acoustics that grant a +8 circumstance bonus on Listen checks.

The palm frond curtain replaces a rich tapestry that once hung above the dais. Jarazim had this curtain made and hung to screen him from view while he's in residence here (see the Creatures section below).

Creatures: Jarazim makes his lair here. He sleeps on the dais, hidden behind the palm frond curtain.

✦ **Jarazim:** Male canisphinx, hp 67; see *Sandstorm*, page 186.

Tactics: Jarazim spends most of each day snoozing, but his keen ears detect anyone entering the room or moving around in it unless the intruder uses a *silence* spell. Jarazim also keeps his nose or a paw propped against the curtain so that he can tell when anyone touches or disturbs it.

As soon as he notices intruders in the room, Jarazim looses a roar. If some of the intruders flee, he takes to the air and attacks the rest, using his pounce ability whenever he can. He moves around frequently to keep foes from using full attacks against him. If the opposition puts up a good fight, or if nobody flees from his initial roar, Jarazim roars again. He fights to the death and does his best to use up all his roar attacks before succumbing.

Treasure: Around his neck, Jarazim wears a silver chain from which hang the key to the treasure chest and a master key that unlocks the temple's secret doors. In addition, the secret trapdoor in the dais conceals a niche that contains a locked, ironbound chest.

♣ **Treasure Chest:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 50; break DC 30, Open Lock DC 20.

Inside the chest are the following items: a golden chalice set with small diamonds (worth 600 gp), a +1 *longsword*, and 600 gp.

Development: As noted in the Development section for area 3, the mephit there might try to flee to this room if forced out of his own. The mephit's arrival would sneaking up on Jarazim difficult, but it doesn't affect his tactics much. The mephit leaves the room as soon as the sphinx roars, even if he makes a successful saving throw against it.

12. RAMPS (EL 3)

The corridor slopes gently upward here, rising about 8 feet within a horizontal space of 10 feet.

Trap: Swinging blades from the ceiling discourage intruders from ascending the ramps. The traps are triggered by pressure plates on the floors and the bases of the ramps.

✦ **Ceiling Pendulum:** CR 3; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (1d12+8/[ts]3, greataxe); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 27. Market Price: 14,100 gp.

13. PRIEST'S QUARTERS

This chamber once served as sleeping quarters for the temple's high priest. The excellent furnishings that once graced the room were looted and smashed years ago.

14. BURIAL NICHE

A stone sarcophagus is the only feature of this chamber.

This cramped chamber gives the impression that tons of sun-scorched rock are bearing down upon it. On a stone pedestal in the center of the chamber lies a recumbent stone form wearing a priest's robes.

The sarcophagus is not magical in any way.

Creature: The sarcophagus holds a mummy that was placed here to help guard the temple. Thus far, it hasn't been a successful guardian, but it has another chance to prove its mettle with the PCs.

☛ **Mummy:** hp 55; see *Monster Manual*, page 190.

Tactics: The mummy lies in its sarcophagus until the PCs either damage it or try to remove the lid. Once disturbed, the mummy climbs out of its resting place as a move action, pushing aside the lid (also a move action) on its own if necessary. Once out of the sarcophagus, the mummy attacks the closest foe. If someone within the mummy's reach has been paralyzed by its despair power, the creature attempts a coup de grace against that foe.

♣ **Stone Sarcophagus:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 22 (DC of 20 to push off the lid).

Treasure: The mummy wears a jeweled pectoral made of gold, quartz, and obsidian that is worth 1,600 gp.

15. MEDITATION CHAMBER

Looters have ignored this tiny chamber thus far—or perhaps none of them ever found it.

This cramped chamber is shaped roughly like a T, with the crossbar pointing to the south. On the floor of the vertical part of the T is a thick but very dusty rug. On the wall at each end of the crossbar hangs a big holy symbol.

The holy symbols on the walls are those of the deity to whom the temple was originally dedicated (see Adventure Background).

Treasure: The rug in this chamber is exquisite under its coat of dust. It is worth 200 gp and weighs

50 pounds. The secret trap door in the floor at the west end of the T hides a treasure chest that contains seven pieces of gold altar plate (each weighing 5 pounds and worth 200 gp).

♣ **Treasure Chest:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 50; break DC 30, Open Lock DC 20.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have slain all the monstrous inhabitants of the temple, it can be rededicated to its deity or devoted to another purpose. If left unattended, it soon attracts a new cadre of monsters.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

After the PCs defeat or drive off the resident monsters (at least the most intelligent and aggressive ones), they might want to lay claim to the temple themselves. The building offers some protection from the desert heat and wind, plus at least a little fresh water. Even if the party doesn't care to call the place home, the temple would make an excellent base for exploring the Basin of Deadly Dust, Harrax, or the Mummy's Tomb (see Chapter 7 in *Sandstorm*).

However, the PCs can't count on complete safety when camped out in the temple. After a few days, they may discover that their refuge lies next to a vast nest of giant termites. The unkeyed section at the south end of the map would be an excellent place for termite workers or scouts to emerge and harass characters trying to shelter inside the temple.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies, and he served as the sage of *Dragon Magazine* for eighteen years. Skip is a codesigner of the D&D 3rd edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not his friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.