Hex 17.23
The Lake of Abominations

Todd Leback

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Credits

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Populated Hexes

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Introduction to Populated Hexes

Welcome to **Populated Hexes**, the series of 6-mile hexes in the world of Absalom! The goal is to provide a number of individual 6-mile hexes, fully populated with lairs and features, that can either be dropped into an existing campaign as a point of interest, the destination of a treasure map found in the bowels of a dark dungeon, or as a stand-alone mini-sandbox.

These supplements use the *Old School Essentials* rules published by Necrotic Gnome, but like many OSR products, pretty much any system can be easily adapted.

Maps & Scale
Each hex will be presented with two hex maps: a smaller map with locations and features noted, and a larger map with only major features noted that can be printed and used as a player handout.

The scale represented on the maps included in these products are as follows:
- ❖ Large hex = 6 miles, face to face.
- ❖ Subhex = 1.2 miles, face to face.

Hexcrawling Rules

Thirdkingdom Games produces supplements that are used throughout these releases. Two of them – *Domain Rules* and *Hexcrawling Basics* – are free to download and are designed to work in conjunction with this series. You can find out where to pick up these and other supplements in the **Populated Hexes** line at patreon.com/Populatedhexes.

The following books will be useful to have access to throughout the series. Many of them are free!
- ❖ *Old School Essentials Classic Fantasy Rules Tome*
- ❖ *Old School Essentials Advanced Fantasy Genre Rules*
- ❖ *Labyrinth Lord Basic* and *Advanced Edition Companion*
- ❖ *OSRIC*
- ❖ A variety of other OSR resources

Absalom

The world of Absalom is one of constant change, where Law and Chaos are more than abstract philosophical ideas but are instead metaphysical realities that shape the very world itself.

Absalom is dominated by Cycles, each lasting between two to four hundred years. Each Cycle is divided into an Apex – when Law holds sway – and a Nadir – when Chaos sweeps over the lands, driving back the light of Civilization.

Cycles are marked in the beginning by the Apex and ascent of Law, and the end by the Nadir. During each Apex the civilizations of Man do their best to expand their domains and bring law to the land; these civilizations often shrink, or even crumble, during the Nadirs as barbarians, beastmen, and worse fall upon the kingdoms of Man.

Campaign Setting
The following assumptions are made in this setting:

Starting Date
This series is set at the beginning of the Sixteenth Cycle of recorded history. There have been many civilizations that have risen and fallen, some of Men, some of others.

Humanocentric
The adventurers will be human, setting out to explore the new world with the ebbing of the forces of Chaos. Non-human classes are certainly allowed – and indeed, these supplements present rules for many non-human classes – but the base assumption is that most PCs will be human.

Chaos Storms
During Nadirs – and occasionally in an Apex – events called Chaos storms can spontaneously occur, changing the very landscape, distorting distances, and wreaking havoc upon the nature of reality. Maps from the previous Cycle may prove unreliable.

The Gods

Gods are real but are local. They are the *Small Gods* of Terry Pratchett or the hearth deities of ancient Rome. Belief gives strength and power to spirits of the world.

Using Populated Hexes

As stated above, each 6-mile hex can be used as a mini-setting, a drop-in adventure location that is encountered during travel, or as part of a greater hexcrawl. Elements can be added or abandoned as needed, as is true of all supplements.

These hexes are released one at a time, seven in a series. Each series is a cluster of seven hexes: a central hex and the six surrounding it.
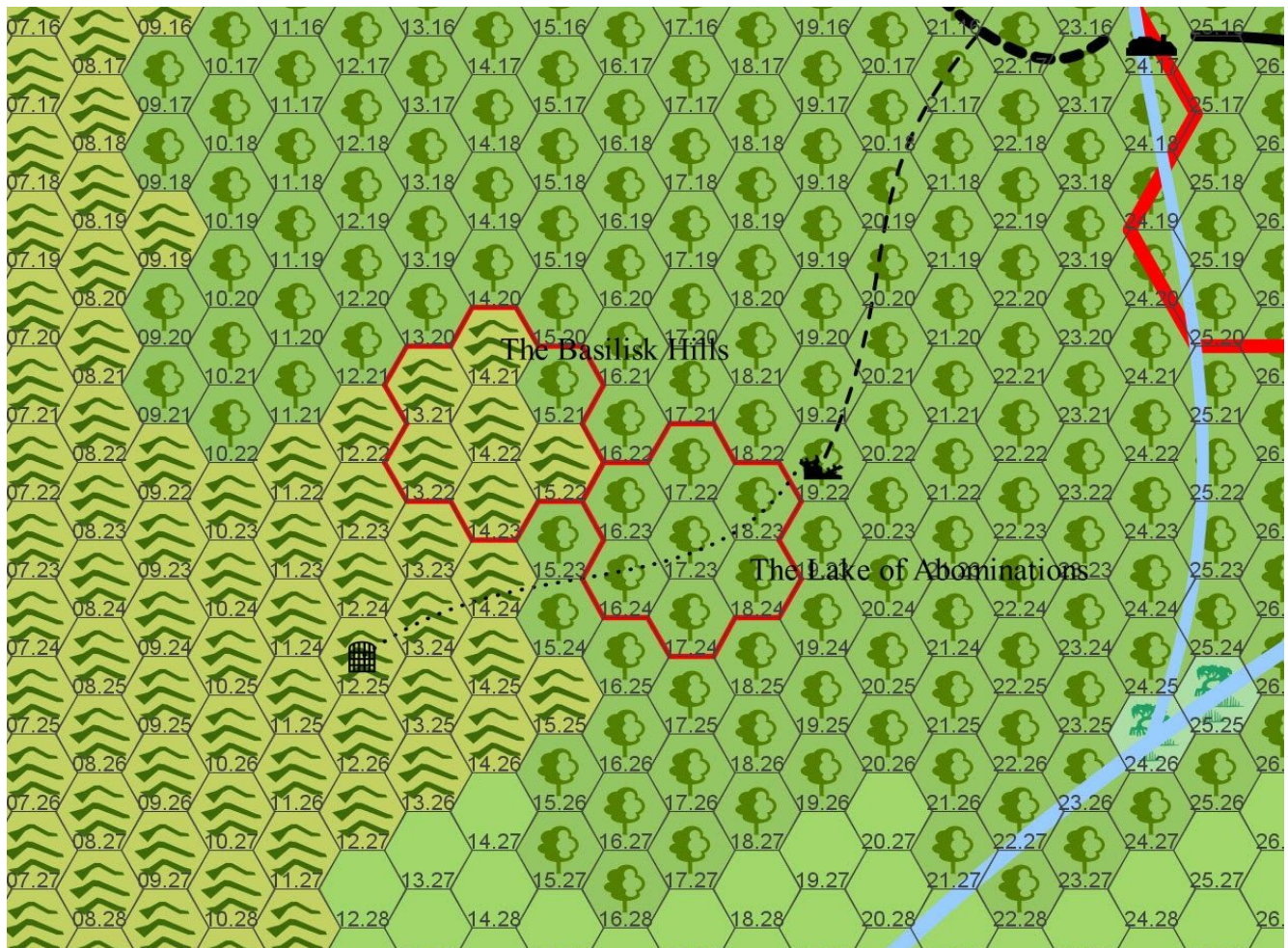
Each release will be divided into two sections: the hex itself, with keyed encounter locations, and an Appendix, which builds on encounters and concepts in the hex. **Populated Hexes** offers some expanded alternatives to the basic rules found in *Old School Essentials*, and these will be introduced as needed in each hex. Broadly speaking, the intention is to introduce character options – to bring some of D&D 5e into B/X. These rules can be used or abandoned, as desired.
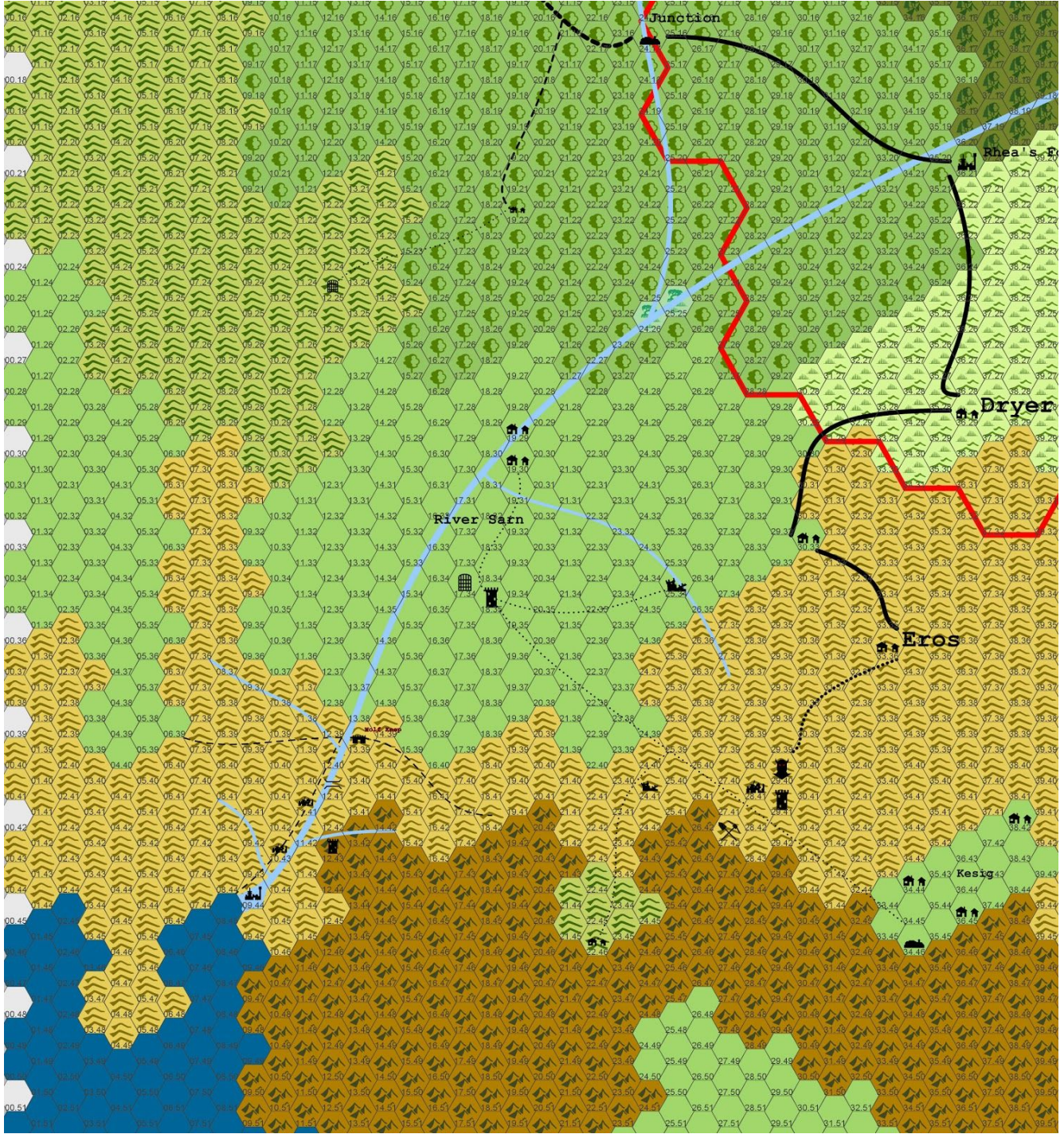
This Release

Welcome to the first in a series of 6-mile hexes in the **Populated Hexes** series! This hex contains rules for a basic skill system that will be used throughout later hexes.

You can support more hexes and additional supplements at patreon.com/Populatedhexes.

Hex 17.23 - The Lake of Abominations

Resources
- ❖ Vegetable (Timber, 2)
- ❖ Animal (Fish, 2)

Once just forest, the majority (about nineteen square miles) of this hex is a shallow lake, no more than twenty feet deep, created by a magical experiment that went horribly wrong.

An ancient road once bisected the hex but is reduced to little more than an overgrown trail with the occasional intact paving stone. The road leads into the lake from subhex 0703 and resumes again on the other side of the lake in Hex 16.24.

Several hazards lurk within the hex: a pair of giant catfish cruise the lake while a trio of owlbears terrorize the eastern portion.

An island in the center of the lake is home to a small population of inbred apes, the former servants of the mage who once dwelt here. The basement of the mage's ruined tower is a small dungeon containing a serpent made deadly by exposure to residual magical energy.

Over time the lingering magical energy leaches into the lake's water, concentrating in random eddies and occasionally giving birth to magical hybrids and abominations, hence the lake's name. These magical oddities are common around the lake.

Unless the magical energy is ended somehow there's a 1 in 6 chance per year that a new abomination will be introduced, even if the entire hex is cleared of danger and patrolled. Suitable abomination creatures are owlbears (and other animal hybrids such as chamelions), and oozes and jellies.

0206 and 0406

The trees in these two subhexes remain standing, years after being submerged, their branches just below the surface of the water. Watercraft entering either of these two hexes run the risk of having their hulls damaged by the branches. Each time a craft enters one of these two subhexes there's a 1-3 in 6

chance the boat hits a submerged tree, taking 4d6 hull points (*OSE Classic Fantasy Rules Tome*, p. 46).

0303

A spur of stone emerges from the water here, standing some sixty feet above the surface and measuring about forty feet in diameter. It is inhabited by 24 hungry stirges which relish the chance to snack on an adventurer or two. If the adventurers explore the top of the outcropping, they find a platinum circlet worth 4000 gp. The circlet is half covered by leaf-litter and stirge excrement. Ascending to the top of the outcropping is difficult and requires either a thief (no roll needed to ascend, takes 1 turn to make initial ascent without ropes), a grappling hook and rope (must hit AC 4 to snag on something) or magic.

There's a 1-3 in 6 chance all 24 stirges are perched atop the rock at any given time. 4-6 Otherwise only 4d4 stirges are present; the rest are out hunting, returning in 1d20 turns.

Stirges (24)
AC 7 [12], **HD** 1* (4 hp each), **Att** 1 x beak (1d3+ blood sucking), **THAC0** 19 [0], **MV** 30' (10')/180' (60'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 13, **NA** 1d10 (3d12), **TT** L

> ➢ **Dive attack**: First attack is at +2 to hit.
> ➢ **Blood sucking**: Upon a successful attack, attaches and drains victim's blood: 1d3 automatic damage per round.
> ➢ **Detach**: If stirge or victim dies.

0306

Two giant catfish lair in the shallows here, ready to attack anyone foolish enough to venture into the water. They automatically attack anyone swimming. If a boat enters this hex, roll a d6. On a 1 or 2, the catfish attack the boat, trying to capsize it. If encountered outside this subhex roll normally for reaction.

The giant catfish will only be encountered outside of this subhex as a result of a wandering monster check. On a roll of 1-4 in 6 both catfish will be lurking in their lair, or a roll of 5 only one is, and on a roll of 6 neither are.

The catfish have absorbed some of the latent magical energy present in the lake, and are highly resistant to magic. Roll any saves against magic twice, taking the better of the two results. Additionally, they have developed the power of speech. They only speak and understand Faery, the language of all Fey creatures.

Feelers: If slain their feelers can be used as special components for magical item creation, each with a value of 2d6x20 gp. If used to create *potions of water-breathing* they can be used as a principal (see Appendix for more information).

> ### Catfish, giant (2)
> **AC** 4 [15], **HD** 8+3 (hp 40, 44), **Att** 1 x bite (2d8), 4 x feeler (1d4), **THAC0** 12 [+7], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (F4), **ML** 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 650, **NA** (1d2), **TT** None.
> > ➢ **Magic Resistance**: Roll any saves against magic twice, taking the better of the two results.

0404

Lairing on the northern end of the island are four inbred apes, the last survivors of the servitor simians Slias the Unreasonable bred to do his bidding. These apes have stats otherwise identical to albino apes, except they're smarter than usual.

They have no qualms about venturing into daylight and can speak a word or two of the Common tongue.

They retain a deep animosity for the wizard that bred them, and reaction rolls have a -2 penalty if they see the conical hat of a magic-user among the party. They have no treasure, but if their arboreal nest is searched one can find the key to Room 3 in the basement of the ruined tower.

The apes are found in their lair on a roll of 1-2 in 6. If the result is 3-6 none of the apes are present, but they will return in 1d12 turns.

> ### Inbred Servitor Apes (4)
> **AC** 6 [13], **HD** 4 (17, 19, 24, 24), **Att** 2 x claw(1d4) or 1 x thrown rock (1d6) **THAC0** 16 [+3], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (F2), **ML** 7, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 75 **NA** 1d6 (2d4), **TT** None

0405

This subhex contains the ruined tower of Slias the Unreasonable, destroyed by the magical explosion that also turned the surrounding land into a lake. Only the basement is still intact, the stairs blocked by massive stones. It takes eight man-hours to move the stones enough to allow a man to pass.

There are several gaps in the fallen stonework, allowing the giant copperhead Azzikil access to the outside world while preventing larger creatures from entering. If Azzikil is within its lair when the adventurers begin moving stones to gain entrance, the snake is automatically alerted to their presence and retreats to Room 2 (see below).

The Tower of Slias the Unreasonable

Room 1

Measuring 25 feet east to west and 20 feet north to south, this room has low ceilings (no more than 6 feet), restricting movement during combat (-1 to attack rolls for human-sized characters). The floor is littered with dirt, leaves and other vegetable matter, underneath which is a flagstone floor. Adventurers searching the room find old bones and discarded giant snakeskins scattered throughout the debris. There's a closed and locked door in the eastern wall and an open corridor, 5 feet wide, in the southern wall.

1 sq=5'
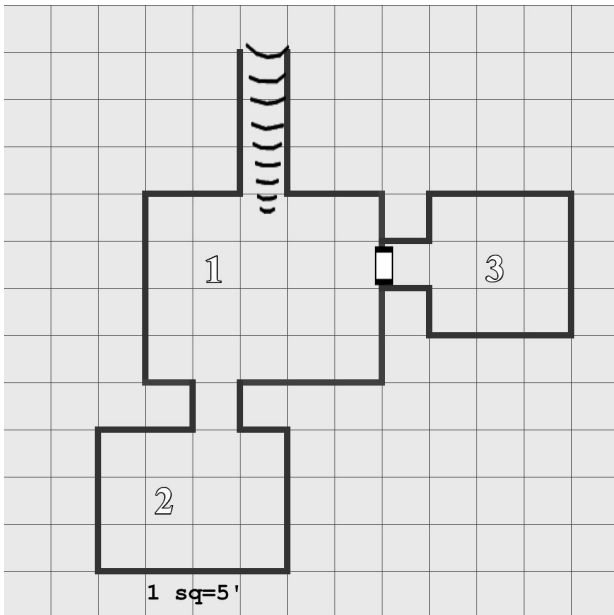
Room 2

This is the lair of Azzikil, a giant copperhead snake that has become irrevocably altered by the tower's lingering magical energy. The great snake seldom needs to feed; partially sustained by the magical energies that suffuse the basement, it only needs to eat once every couple of years. There's a 1 in 6 chance that when the adventurers discover the tower the great snake will be out hunting, returning in 2d4 hours.

Azzikil is preternaturally quick and difficult to spot, gaining a +1 bonus to both surprise and initiative. It strikes with its bite twice per round – once during its turn in the round and once at the end of the round – and typically targets different opponents within the same round. In addition to physical damage, those bitten must Save v. Poison with a -2 penalty or die instantly. Azzikil is also somewhat resistant to magic; any spells that specifically target it have a 25% chance of failing. Finally, the giant snake's skin is comprised of a rainbow of coruscating scales that reflect light in an entrancing pattern of colors. Those looking directly at the snake when it is exposed to light (or outside in the sun) must Save v. Petrification or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

In the snake's lair can be found two flawless diamonds, each worth 4000 gp.

Azzikil, the demon snake of the flooded forest

AC 2 [17], **HD** 10**** (59 hp), **ATT** 2 x bite (2d4+ poison), **THAC0** 11 (+8), **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10, **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 3800, **NA** Unique **TT** Special

➤ **Preternatural Speed**: Azzikil is preternaturally quick and difficult to spot, gaining a +1 bonus to both surprise and initiative.
➤ **Poison**: Those bitten must Save v. Poison with a -2 penalty or die instantly.
➤ **Resistance to Magic**: Any spells that specifically target it have a 25% chance of failing.
➤ **Scales**: Those looking directly at the snake when it is exposed to light (or outside in the sun) must Save v. Petrification or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Harvesting Azzikil

Due to Azzikil's age and constant exposure to magical energy parts of its corpse are valuable. The following can be harvested (see the Appendix for more information on harvesting monster parts):

Skin. Its skin, if undamaged, can be used as a principal worth 1,900 gp or a special component worth 3,800 gp. If damaged it can still be used as a special component worth 900 gp.

Fangs. Azzikil's two fangs can be extracted and used as principals worth 950 gp each or special components worth 1,900 gp each. If too damaged to be used for components each fang is still worth 50 gp to a collector.

Poison. The deadly venom can be harvested, yielding a total of 9 ounces minus the number of attacks Azzikil made, if any. The venom is considered equivalent to a wyvern's, for purposes of distilling poisons, although poisons made from Azzikil's venom are extra potent, imparting a -2 penalty to any saving throws and increasing the price of said poisons by 25%. See the Appendix for more information on poisons.

Room 3

This room was Slias's treasure vault and the door is magically trapped. Anyone opening it without the key takes 6d6 points of electrical damage, with a Save v. Spells for half.

Unfortunately, many of the goods within the room have been destroyed by age and dampness, but the following items of value can be found after an hour of searching: a small chest containing 450 gp (chest is trapped with poison dart, attacks as 4 HD monster, coated with a save or die poison, death in 1d4 turns), a moldy velvet sack containing a dozen agates worth 25 gp each, three finely carved tusks, each worth 250 gp and weighing one pound each, a *potion of healing*, and a *potion of flying*.

There are a number of books and scrolls scattered about, as well, of which only one scroll has survived, stored in a brass case. It contains notes relating to crossbreeding and is worth 1000 gp if added to a laboratory designed for such purposes.

0408

A single small river flows south out of the lake. It is about fifty feet wide, and no more than six feet deep in the middle, moving slowly and sluggishly through the forest. It is easy to ford, although in the spring when the rains are heavy there's a 2% chance every time it is forded that one or more individuals will lose their footing and be swept downstream. Roll 1d8 to determine the number affected. Each must roll under their Dexterity on 1d20 to avoid losing their footing. Characters that fall take 1d4 points of damage and are swept downstream 5d20 yards. They also likely suffer damage to their dignity, as the river really isn't that deep.

0608

Two giant hawks nest here in the branches of a large oak. On a roll of 1-2 in 6 both hawks will be out hunting; on a result of 3-4 one will be hunting and the other will be present, and on a 5-6 both will be in the nest. In springtime there's a 1-3 in 6 chance there will be 1d4 eggs in the nest.

Hawk, giant (2)
AC 6 [13], **HD** 3+3 (13, 14 hp), **Att** 1 x talons or beak (1d6), **THAC0** 16 [+3], **MV** 450' (150') flying, **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (F2), **ML** 8, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 50, **NA** 0 (1d3), **TT** None.
- ➤ **Swoop**: Can dive onto victims visible from above. If the victim is surprised, the attack inflicts double damage. On an attack roll of 18 or more, the victim can be carried away (if of appropriate size).
- ➤ **Carry prey**: Up to halfling-sized.
- ➤ **Feathers**: If slain each hawk yields 1d6-1 feathers suitable for use as quills to scribe magical scrolls. Each quill is worth 10 gp.

0703

A trio of owlbears lair here, descended from the original crossbreeds created by Slias before his untimely demise. They roam the nearby woods in search of prey.

The owlbears nest under the shelter of a partially fallen pine. In their nest can be found the gnawed corpse of a human adventurer. The adventurer wears a backpack containing 3 gems, worth, 100, 100, and 500 gp as well as a *potion of delusion* and a *potion of fire resistance*.

Owlbears (3)
AC 5[14], **HD** 5 (22, 23, 30 hp), **Att** 2 x claw (1d8), 1 x bite (1d8), **THAC0** 15 [+4], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D11 W12 P13 B14 S15 (F3), **ML** 9, **AL** Neutral, **XP** 175, **NA** 1d4 (1d4), **TT** C
- ➤ **Bear hug**: If a victim is hit by both paws in the same round, the owl bear hugs for an extra 2d8 automatic damage.

Wandering Monster Tables

Island of Slias the Unreasonable

1d6	Creature	No. Appearing
1	Ape servitors	1d2
2	Ape servitors	1d4
3	Giant hawk	1d2
4	Stirges	1d6
5	Stirges	1d12
6	Azzikil	1 (unique)

Lake

1d6	Creature	No. Appearing
1	Catfish, giant	1
2	Catfish, giant	1d2
3	Stirges	1d6
4	Stirges	2d4
5	Pegasus	1d2
6	Hawk, giant	1d2

Surrounding Forest

1d8	Creature	No. Appearing
1	Stirges	1d12
2	Hawk, giant	1d2
3	Owlbear	1d3
4	Pegasus; see Hex 16.24	1d2
5	Strigi; see Hex 17.24	1d4
6	Gnolls; see Hex 18.23	1d6
7	Goblins; see Hex 18.24	2d4
8	Goblins; see Hex 17.22	2d4

Appendix

Skills

Skills are general abilities that can be learned by adventurers. They are non-magical in nature and can be improved upon through play.

Each skill is divided into four ranks: Unskilled, Proficient, Skilled, and Expert, and each rank has a target number that is associated with it, as follows:

- ❖ Unskilled = 21+ *or* natural 20.
- ❖ Proficient = 15+
- ❖ Skilled = 10+
- ❖ Expert = 5+

Each skill also has an Ability score associated with it. When attempting to use a skill roll 1d20 and add (or subtract) the character's relevant ability score modifier. If the result is greater than the target number the attempt succeeds. If the result is 10 or higher than the target number the result is a critical success.

Critical successes imply some sort of extraordinary success at a task: in order to craft an item worthy of being enchanted a critical success is required on the craft roll, for example. It is often up to the DM to rule how a critical success is reflected in play. Perhaps a task can be completed in half the time; a critical success on a wilderness survival check may find food for twice the number of people.

When making opposed rolls (if two characters are in a footrace, or a character with Bargain is haggling with a merchant that also has the skill) each individual rolls a skill check. If one fails and the other succeeds the outcome is obvious. If both succeed, the one that succeeds by the most wins the contest.

Characters typically start play with one or two skill slots, plus an additional number of slots equal to their Intelligence modifier. A negative modifier cannot reduce the number starting slots to less than one. It costs one slot to become Proficient in a skill, an additional slot to improve that to Skilled, and two more to improve that to Expert. Therefore, having a skill at Expert requires a total of four slots.

Penalties may be applied based upon the difficulty of the attempted task.

Below is a list of the basic skills that are available. The Referee may add skills as needed. Some skills are "broad" and encompass a number of subskills (Broad skills are indicated with a "B"). When purchasing these skills the character has the option to:

- ❖ Choose four subskills. The character is Proficient in all four subskills.
- ❖ Choose two subskills. The character is Skilled in both of these.
- ❖ Choose one subskill the character is Skilled in and two skills the character is Proficient in.
- ❖ Chose one subskill. The character is Expert in this skill.

Skill definitions and applications are kept intentionally vague. The Referee is free to rule as desired on how skills will be used; it is likely that future Populated Hexes supplements will expand on what the various skills can do.

Alchemy (Int)

Is used to identify, isolate, and work with alchemical substances. Is useful when synthesizing poisons and creating magical potions.

Animal Handling (Wis, B)

The character knows how to train and care for animals. In order to train "monsters" (griffons, wyverns, etc.) a critical success is needed on the roll. As a general rule it takes 1d4 months to break/domesticate an animal, and 1d4 weeks to teach one trick.

Athletics (varies, B)

Can be divided into:

- ❖ Acrobatics (Dex)
- ❖ Climbing (Str)
- ❖ Endurance (Con)
- ❖ Jumping (Str)
- ❖ Running (Con)
- ❖ Swimming (Str)

Bargain (Cha)

On a successful roll the character can alter the price of a good they are either buying or selling. Use the difference between the target number and the result to determine the change in price:

Difference	Change in Price
1-3	5%
4-6	10%
7-9	15%
10-12	20%
13-15	25%
16+	30%

Deception (varies, B)

Includes
- ❖ Disguise (Cha)
- ❖ Escape Artist (Dex)
- ❖ Gambling (Wis)
- ❖ Intimidation (Str or Cha)
- ❖ Sense Motive (Wis)
- ❖ Sleight of Hand (Dex)

Healing (Wis)

On a successful roll the character heals 1d3 hp to a wounded target. Can be used once per day per person. This skill can also be used to treat those with the following ongoing conditions:
- ❖ **Diseased**. Takes one week to treat, less one day for each skill Rank. If successful the target is cured of non-magical disease.
- ❖ **Poisoned**. Takes one turn to treat, less two minutes for each skill Rank. If successful the target is no longer poisoned.
- ❖ **Injury**. On a successful roll the target heals at twice the normal rate (normally 1d3 hp per day of bed rest).

A character with the Healing skill can treat a maximum number of patients with ongoing conditions at any given time as follows: Proficient 2, Skilled 5, Expert 8.

Knowledge (Int, B)

Any number of fields of knowledge, such as history, religion, etiquette, etc.

Language (Int, B)

In Absalom certain languages can only be learned by purchasing skills.

Magical Engineering (Int)

Identify magical items, enchantments, etc. Important for crafting magical items.

Performance (Cha)

Any form of entertainment, song, dance, art, etc.

Profession (Int)

Select field of proficiency (sailing, blacksmithing, farming, etc.)

Riding

All PCs can ride a horse under normal conditions, but the riding skill allows the character to cast spells, attack or perform tricks on horseback. Must be selected again for exotic animals.

Survival (varies, B)

Includes:
- ❖ **Harvesting (Dex)**. Allows the character to dress slain animals and harvest parts for various purposes.
- ❖ **Herbalism**. Use plants and natural ingredients for medicinal or magical purposes.
- ❖ **Naturalist (Int)**. Identify and harvest plants for edible and medicinal purposes.
- ❖ **Navigation (Int)**. Make and read maps, navigate by stars, landmarks, cardinal directions, etc.
- ❖ **Tracking (Wis)**. Follow tracks left by individuals. Modifiers will apply based on terrain, age of tracks, size of group being followed, etc.
- ❖ **Wilderness Survival (Wis)**. Find food, shelter, etc. in wilderness terrain.

Poisons

Poisons can be divided into three broad categories based on their origins: Monsters, Plants and Synthesized. This section deals with poisons derived from monster venom. This is an expansion on the rules presented on p. 46 of the *Advanced Fantasy Genre Rules*.

When a venomous monster is slain the adventurers may attempt to harvest its venom in order to use it as poison. Doing so takes one person one turn per monster. The Harvesting skill is used to safely harvest venom from poisonous creatures.

The following modifiers are applied to the roll:

If the monster suffered damage from acid, fire, electricity, cold, or similar damage apply a -2 penalty per separate attack.

If the monster has been dead for more than an hour apply a -1 penalty for each hour past.

If successful, the character can harvest one ounce of venom, less the number of successful attacks the monster made with the poison, plus creature's HD.

Thus a killer bee yields one ounce of venom if it has not stung a target, and no venom if it has. A wyvern, with 7 HD, yields 8 ounces of usable venom at most.

Once the poison has been extracted it must be stored. A vial (*Labyrinth Lord Basic* Equipment list, p. 16) will hold one ounce of harvested venom.

If the adventurers plan on making a habit of harvesting venom, however, they may wish to purchase larger containers, specifically created to contain dangerous or volatile chemicals, called stoups.

Stoup

Crafted from a non-reactive ceramic, the production of which is known only to alchemists, stoups are stoppered containers that can hold up to six ounces of dangerous or unstable liquids. While inside a stoup the substance degrades at half its normal rate, and if required to make a saving throw (see Saving Throws for Objects optional rule on p. 55 of *Labyrinth Lord Basic*) they do so with a +2 bonus. Cost 25 gp, Weight 1 pound, considered to be a specialty item.

Once venom has been harvested it is only viable for a certain amount of time before it loses its potency. Unless otherwise stated, assume that harvested venom is only potent for a number of days equal to half the source monster's HD.

Monster venom, unprocessed, is not necessarily all that useful, and is most effective when turned into poisons by alchemists. This stabilizes the venom and turns it into an easily deliverable form.

The amount of time and cost to refine a venom into a poison is determined by the base cost of the venom, the number of ounces to be refined, and the type of poison the alchemist is trying to produce. Refer to the table below to determine the base cost of harvested venom. The price of the poison (and the difficulty to produce it), is determined by which exact type the alchemist is trying to produce. Alchemy will be described in greater detail in a later issue.

The *Old School Essentials Advanced Fantasy Genre Rules* divides poison into two categories: bloodstream and ingested, and those two into different types that vary depending on strength, onset time, etc.

Each poison has a cost. I make the assumption throughout this series that the cost of any item – whether keep or stagecoach, suit of armor or magical item – is 50% labor and 50% material. The same holds true for poison: if a dose of poison sells for 100 gold it will require roughly 50 gold in material; the alchemist who synthesizes the poison makes roughly 50 gold.

The venom that monsters yield has a gp value equal to the creature's XP divided by their HD +1 (round up). The venom of a killer bee is worth 5 gp per ounce; the venom of a wyvern is worth 143 gp per ounce.

Magical Item Components

At some point in every adventurers' career there will be questions about magical item creation: how it is done, how much they cost (to buy or sell), how long creation takes, what exactly is required to create an item, etc. The guidelines below deal with the first step of magic item creation: gathering components, specifically those harvested from monsters.

All magic items require a **principal**. Simply put, a principal is the primary ingredient of the item. The principal for a magic sword is a sword; the principal for a magic ring a ring. Principals usually have some sort of sympathetic ("like affects like") relationship to the item. A *potion of hill giant control*, for instance, would require the principal to be ingredients related to hill giants.

Not all items can be used as principals; they must be of the highest quality, without flaws, and have a minimum value (see below). The value of the principal determines the value of the item you can create.

As stated above in the section on poisons the cost of a given item is 50% labor and 50% materials. The same holds true for magical items. Half the cost of the creation of a magical item.

For magical items, at least 10% of the total material cost must be in the principal, 50% in special components, and the remainder is assumed

to be in miscellaneous magical and alchemical compounds that are used during the creation of the item. Therefore, a *sword +1* costs 10,000 gp to make, of which half – 5,000 gp – is the material cost. Of that 2,500 is in special components, 500 gp in the principal, and the rest in general consumables.

Assume that any prices listed below are what a magical item would cost to commission from a 9th-level magic-user or cleric.

Categories

There are several categories of magical items:

Charms/Fetishes

These are the weakest of all magical items, typically costing anywhere from 100 to 500 gp to create. Most of the time these are simple, one or two use items, that often have a limited lifespan whether the magic is invoked or not – these items can only contain magical energy for a relatively short period before they begin to fall apart.

Scrolls

Scrolls cost 500 gp per spell level scribed upon them. Once a spell is cast from a scroll the magic is consumed. Scrolls do not require a principal. Special components total the full 75% of the scroll's material cost. Assume that the various protection scrolls (elementals, lycanthropes, undead) are variations of *protection from evil, 10' radius* (a 4th level spell) and therefore cost 2000 gp. A protection from magic is a variation of the *anti-magic shell*, a 6th level spell, and therefore costs 3,000 gp.

Potions

Potions cost 500 gp and one week for every spell level they duplicate. Potions do not require a principal; special components total the full 75% of a potion's material costs.

Charged Items

These items have a certain number of "charges" that are used to create magical effects. The price is based on the effect, number of charges, etc. Once the charges are consumed the item is no longer magical.

The base price of charged items is equal to the total number of spell levels involved in the enchantment, times 500 gp. A *wand of fireballs* has a base price of 1500 gp, a *staff of power* has a total

of 20* spell levels, for a base cost of 10,000 gp. (*Assumes 2 spell levels for 2d6 points of damage per hit in melee.)

Add 50% of the base cost per charge to get the total cost of the item. When created wands have 20 charges, meaning that a *wand of fireballs* costs 16,500 gp to make, while the *staff of power*, with 30 charges, costs 85,000 gp to make.

The principal for charged items should cost 10% of the overall material cost.

Permanent Items

These items are permanently enchanted with some dweomer. These include magical weapons, armor, and miscellaneous items.

A +1 enchantment is the equivalent of a 1st level spell, a +2 enchantment a 3rd level spell, a +3 enchantment a 5th level spell, a +4 enchantment a 7th level spell, and a +5 enchantment a 9th level spell. Note that 7th and 9th level spells in OSE are considered ritual magic, and therefore have a multiplier of 750 gp per level instead of 500 gp.

Otherwise, the prices for permanent items are figured as follows. Like with charged items, add up the cost of all the spell levels involved in the enchantment of an item and multiply that total by 500 gp to determine the initial cost. The cost to make the item permanent is equal to 50% of the base cost of the item x 50. Add this to the base cost of the item to get the total cost.

If an item has a power that is limited either by the number of times it can be used per time period or the effect refer to the following:

❖ If a power can be used a limited number of times per period reduce the base cost of that power by .15 if it can be used once per turn, .2 if it can be used hourly, .25 if it can be used daily, .3 weekly, .35 monthly. For example, a *ring of invisibility* has a base cost of 1,000 gp, but since it can only be used once per turn the base cost is reduced by 15%, to 850 gp.

❖ If an item is limited in effect reduce the power's base cost by 10% for each restriction. For example, a *sword +1/+3 vs Undead* has a base cost of 500 gp for the +1 enchantment plus 1,350 for the +3 enchantment (1500 for the +3 enchantment x .9 for the restriction of being limited to undead). An *arrow of green dragon slaying* would have the effect (*disintegrate*)

reduced by 20%, since it is restricted to green dragons.

Note for Charged & Permanent Items

Charged and permanent items take a number of days to craft equal to the labor cost divided by 150.

Principals

Principal components can come from many sources: they can be monster parts claimed from the corpses of vanquished foes, ancient heirlooms wrested from the dead hands of defeated enemies, or commissioned pieces forged from starmetal, carved from the wood of ancient, primeval trees, and so forth.

Generally speaking, the greater the personal investment and risk involved in obtaining the principal component the more magical potential the item possesses; the claws from a dragon slain in single combat possesses more inherent value than if the dragon were slain by an entire party of adventurers, and even more value than if it is claimed from the corpse of a dragon that died of old age. Likewise, a sword forged from mithril is more potent if the adventurers journeyed into the bowels of the earth to obtain the mithril themselves, as opposed to simply buying the ore from a group of passing dwarves.

Principal components must be in perfect condition – whether a blade forged by dwarves, a staff carved from the heartwood of the rarest of trees, or armor fashioned from dragonhide – any flaws will result in the corruption of the item in question. If the item is flawed it most often results in a cursed item; unfortunately, any defects may not be obvious until the creation process is complete. Regardless, crafting and preparing the principal is not the work for a village blacksmith or carpenter, but for the best craftsmen in the kingdom. Finding such craftsmen, and persuading them to do the work, is often an adventure in itself.

In game terms, the crafted principal must be a masterwork item; that is, an item that resulted from a critical success on a Profession skill check. If the result of the skill check is a natural 20 increase the value of the finished item by 1d4x10%.

Many monsters, once slain, can be harvested for components for magical items. Only the most powerful – the oldest, deadliest, most dreaded monsters – can be harvested for principal

components. In short, in order to be used as a principal component the monster must meet at least one of the following:

❖ A minimum of 9 HD (note that this means Name Level characters count!).
❖ At least 5 HD and maximum hp.
❖ At least 5 HD, above average hp and fearsome enough to be named.

The monster must be responsible for mayhem, death and bloodshed, and can only be stopped by doughty adventurers. A grizzly bear minding its own business wouldn't qualify, but Blackfur the Nightstalker, mad with bloodlust and stalking the forest surrounding a small village, would be.

Special Components

Very rarely is the principal the only component needed to create a magical item. A magical sword might have leather wrapped around its hilt, or a gem set into the pommel. Special components are items are high quality and value used to complete the material cost requirements of a magical item.

Monster parts may be harvested for special components provided they meet at least one of the following requirements:

❖ A minimum of at least 2 HD and maximum hit points, or...
❖ At least 4 HD, or...
❖ A creature that is integral to the creation of the item.

Special components most often have some sort of sympathetic relationship to the item created. If the item also has secondary powers, some or all the components will relate to those. The special components for a *staff of power*, for instance, relate to the various powers it can produce (*cone of cold*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, etc.).

Harvesting Principals and Components from Monsters

As described above, monsters have a chance of yielding both principal and special components. Typically, a single monster will yield a single component worth no more than the monster's XP in gold.

If the monster meets the requirement to yield a principal that will be what is obtained if harvesting is successful. The principal has a value equal to the total XP of the monster. If a principal is used as a special component, rather than the

primary ingredient of a magical item, the value of the special component is doubled.

In order to harvest components from creatures the following rolls are needed:

- ❖ Harvesting at normal chances.
- ❖ Harvesting at a -5 penalty.
- ❖ If the creature was slain with a single attack make the roll with a +5 bonus.
- ❖ If the creature was slain by a number of hits that do not exceed their Hit Die add +2 to the roll.
- ❖ If the creature was hit only with blunt weapons add +1 to the roll.
- ❖ If the creature was subjected to fire, lightning, or acid attacks subtract -1 from the roll for every one of these attacks.

If the roll for harvesting principals is failed, roll again. If this second roll succeeds the parts can be used as special components with a value equal to the creature's HD. If this second roll fails the principals can be sold as trophies worth half the creature's XP value in gp.

If the roll is failed for harvesting components, the parts can be used as trophies worth half the creature's XP value in gp.

On a roll of 1 the parts are ruined in the harvesting process and cannot be salvaged.

Value of Components

Each component – whether principal or special – has a base cost in gold that contributes towards the overall value of a magical item. The value is somewhat arbitrary, as the value of monster parts is based upon the XP value of the creature. However, the real value of components as it relates to magical energy is dependent upon several other factors.

The base values given are what the components are worth if purchased or sold for. However, the value of a given component is intrinsically tied to the risk and effort required to obtain it, as follows:

1. If the monster slain is unique, incredibly old (1000 years+) or divine/profane in nature increase the base value of the components by 1d4x10%.
2. If the component was obtained by one person in single combat increase the value of the components by 2d4x10%.
3. If the component is to be used by an individual who had a hand in slaying the creature add 1d4x10% to the value of the components.
4. Components always sell for slightly less their actual value. When trying to sell or buy components roll 1d4: a "1" results in a cost 95% of the actual price, a "2" results in a cost 90% of the actual price, etc. Note that the actual sale price doesn't affect the intrinsic value of components.

Examples

A *potion of polymorph self* recreates the 4th level spell *polymorph self*. It has a base cost 2000 gp and takes four weeks to make. The material cost is 2,000 gp, of which 75% (or 1,500 gp) is required to be special components. The Referee rules that it will require the blood from a doppelganger and the hair from a lycanthrope.

Doppelgangers and werewolves are each worth 125 XP, so the magic-user creating the item would need to find 12 of them, in some order, to have enough components to create the potion. However, if the magic-user were part of the party that tracked down the creatures the value of the components would be increased by an average of 25%, meaning they would only need 10 of the creatures. If the magic-user were personally responsible for slaying all of the need creatures the value would increase by an average of 50%, meaning that each would be worth 188 gp, and they would only need to slay 8.

On the other hand, the magic-user could use the hair from a devil swine (worth 1600 gp) and be done with it.

Absalom Overview

Regional Referee Map
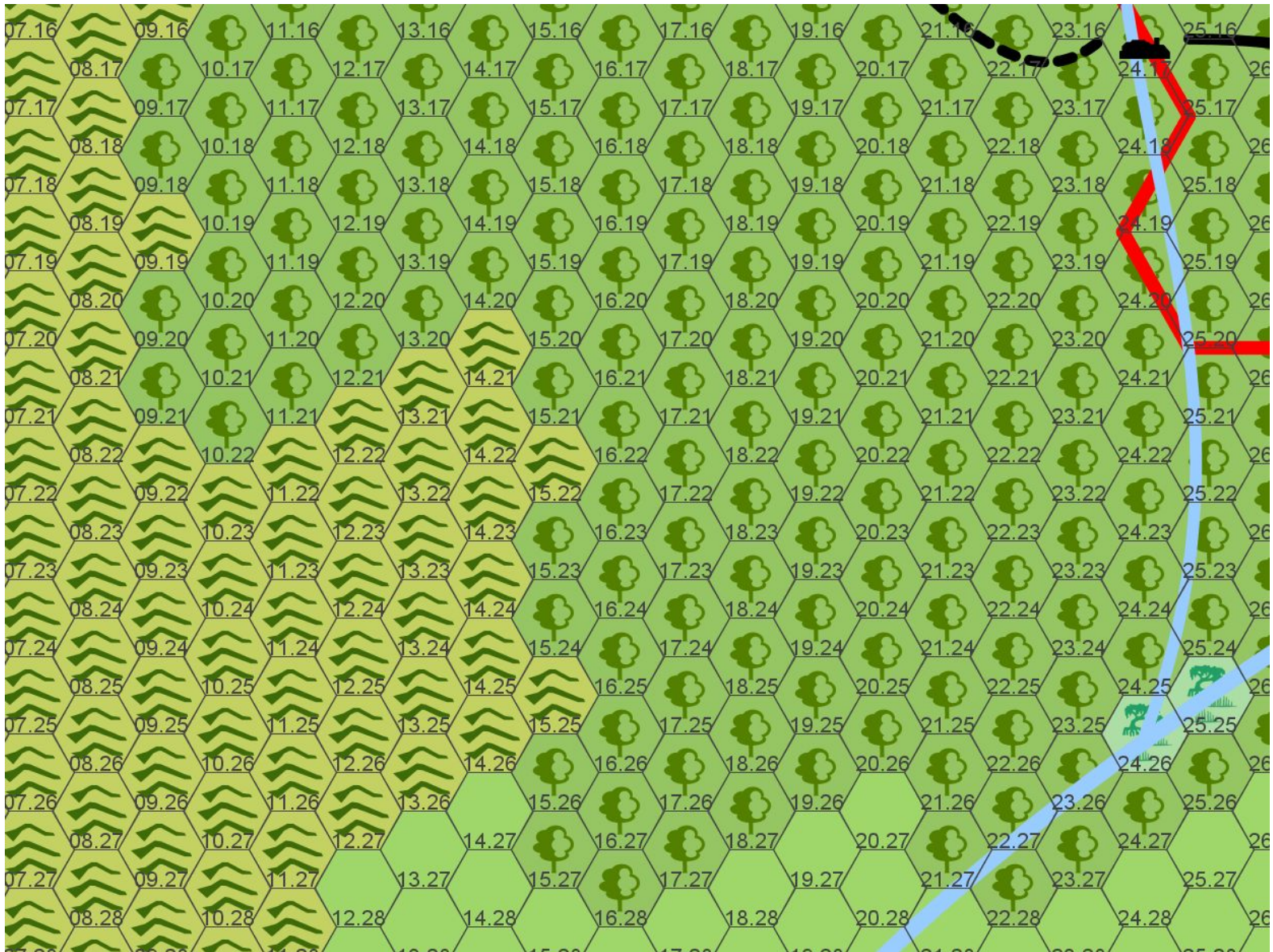
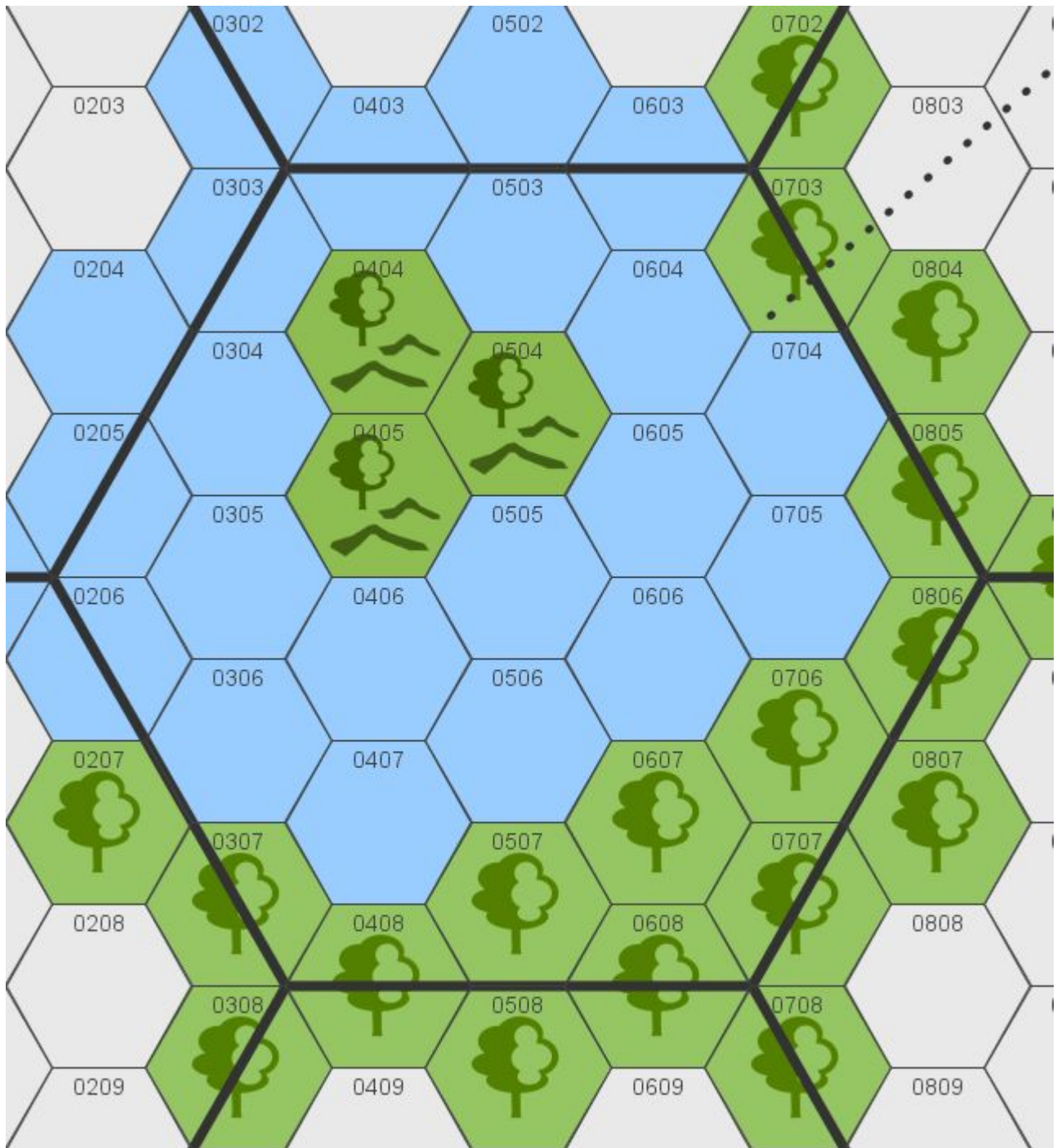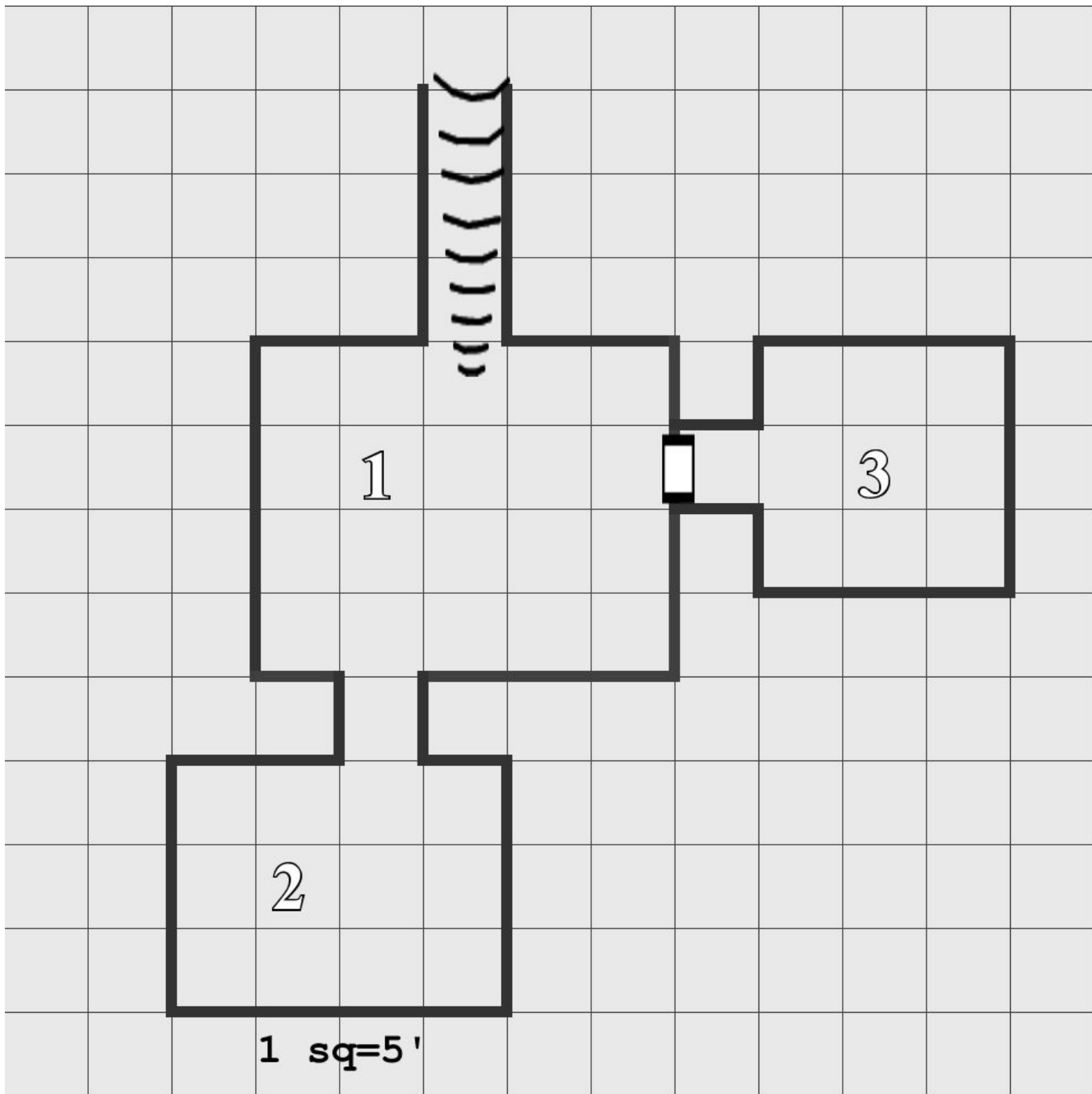# Regional Player Map

Hex 17.23 Referee Map

Hex 17.23 Player Map

1 sq=5'

The Tower of Slias the Unreasonable
Referee Map