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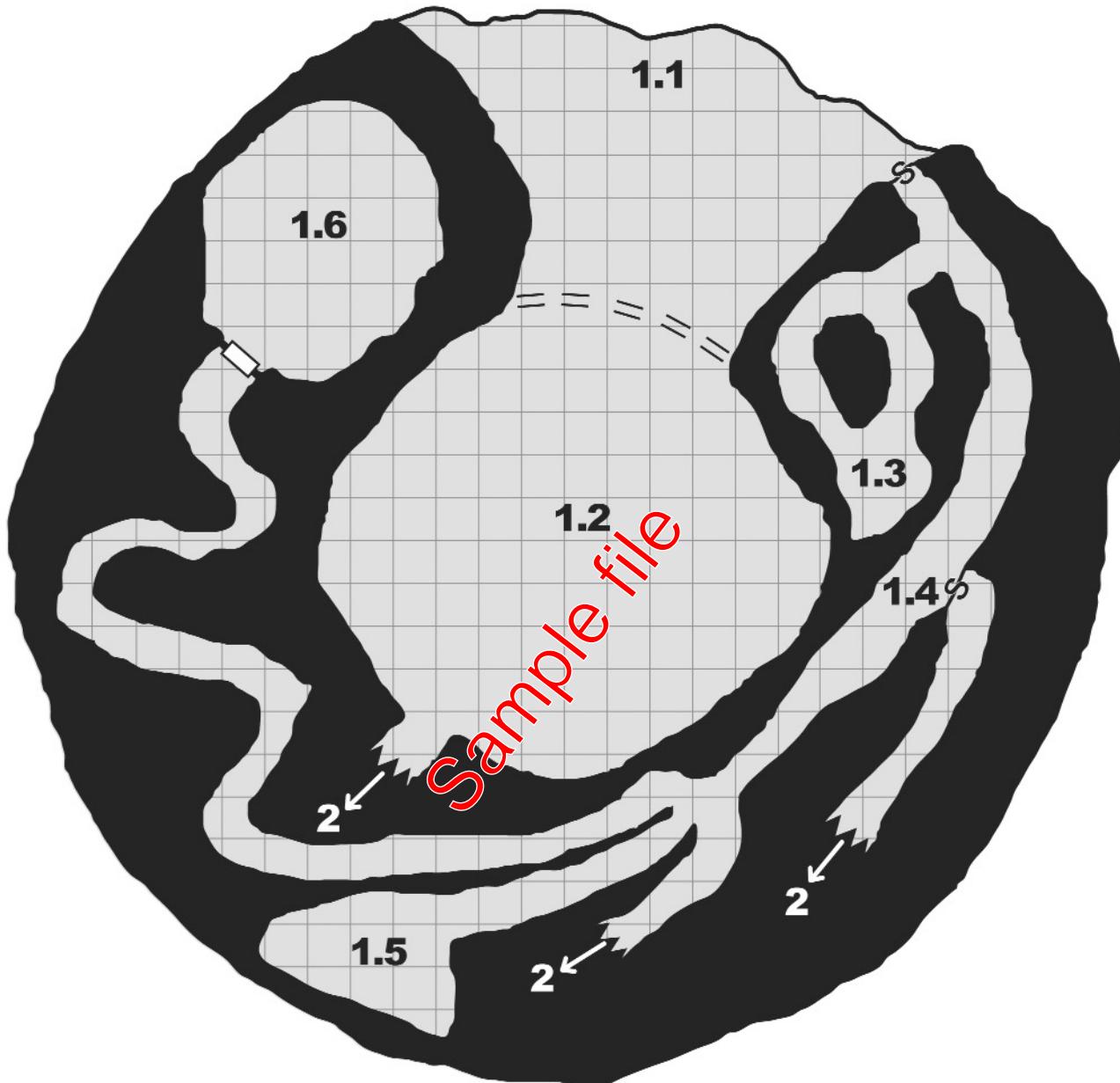
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Level 1

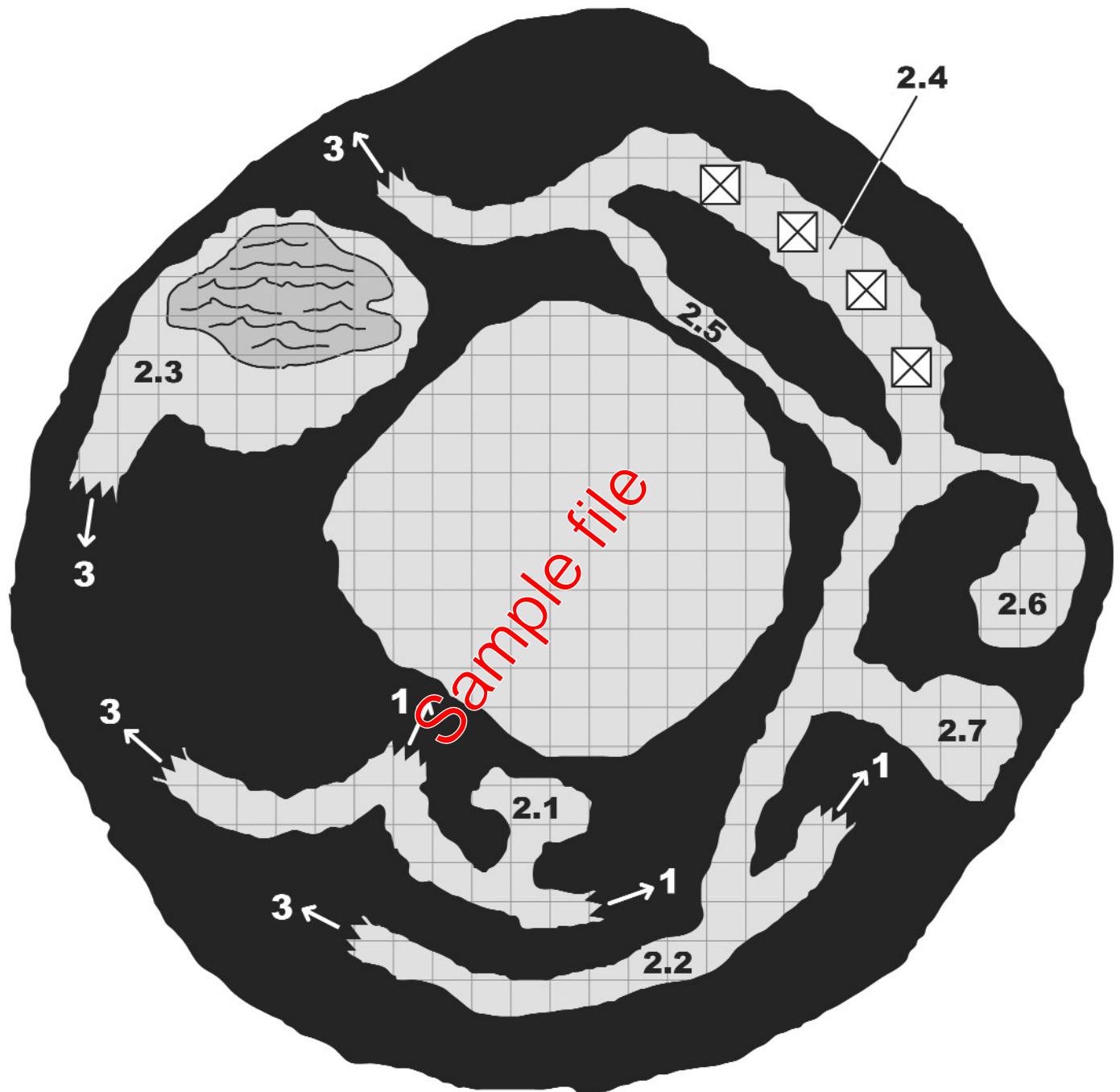
1 square = 5 feet



- | | |
|------|----------------------|
| □ | door |
| 螺旋 | to next level |
| 秘密 | secret door |
| ==== | boundary of illusion |

Level 2

1 square = 5 feet



Dungeon Crawl Classics #6

Temple of the Dragon Cult

by John Seavey

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 8-10



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Sample file

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Introduction

"You enter a ten by ten room...and YOU DIE!" All right, so maybe this adventure will be a little easier than that, but we've designed it as an old-school dungeon crawl. The monsters are mean, the rogue needs to go in front checking for traps, and NPC interaction will be taking place at the end of a broadsword. So get out your lucky d20, start thinking in terms of party order, and prepare to deal with both dungeons and dragons.

"Temple of the Dragon Cult" is designed for an adventuring party of four to six players of 8th to 10th level. We recommend at least 40 character levels among the party members. While the players can be of any class, a cleric will help them recover from their battles with greater ease, and a fighter or two will make the final battle that much easier. See the "Scaling Information" section for ways to tailor this adventure to your party's style of play.

Adventure Summary

The player characters have come upon a small army, devastated in the aftermath of a pyrrhic victory against a dragon named Pyraxis which has been tormenting the countryside for decades. The army's commander believes his men have mortally wounded the dragon, but it escaped before they could finish it off. A regiment of soldiers followed it to its lair, but they have not returned. The commander offers the party a quarter of the dragon's hoard if they will go in and finish it off. Unknown to both the commander and the soldiers, the mages and druids of the area believe the dragon to be an agent of the gods, and they will kill to protect it. When the characters get to the dragon's lair, they discover not just a wounded dragon, but an entire cult devoted to its worship.

Game Master's Section

Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter, listed as level and room number. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
1-2	6	T	Camouflaged pit	5
1-3	6	C	4 ankhegs	7
1-4	7	C	<i>Rama Savitri</i> , Drd5	6
1-5	8	C	Half-dragon minotaur	6
1-6	9	C	<i>Solgem Fleetfoot</i> , Rog6	8
2-1	10	C	Half-dragon troll	8
2-2	11	C	<i>Iborsum Shatter-fist</i> , Ftr7	9
2-3	12	C	<i>Nira Bavisar</i> , Sor7	9
2-4	13	T	4 concealed pits	5
2-5	13	T	Collapsing wall pit trap	3
2-6	14	C	Gibbering mouther	5
2-7	14	C	2 rust monsters	6
3-2	15	C/P	<i>Darsov Erikson</i> , Clr9	9
3-3	17	C	7 orcs 1 dragon-blood orc	6
3-4	18	C	Cloaker	5
3-5	18	C	<i>Gavuhn Donnell</i> , Wiz11	11
3-6	20	C	Roper	12
3-7	20	T	Falling rocks trap	7
4-1	21	C	2 otyughs	8
4-2	22	C	10 goblins 1 dragon-kin goblin	8
4-3	22	T	Greased slope	4
4-4	22	C	1 ogre, 8 kobolds, 4 hobgoblins, 2 gnolls	9
4-5	24	C	Wounded red dragon	11

Scaling Information

This adventure features a wide range of encounter levels. A party in the recommended range of four to six players of 8th to 10th level will have moderate difficulty with most encounters, no trouble at all with some, and an enormous challenge with a few. That is intentional: It goes against their expectations and creates interesting pacing. In some cases, it may even require strategies that incorporate retreats and reforming for a second attack.

The GM should feel free to scale this adventure for parties with more or less than the recommended 40 character levels between all party members. Here are some ideas.

For weaker parties (characters below 8th level or fewer than four players): Remove the illusion at area 1-2; make the pit obvious. Eliminate some of the more challenging encounters. In order of greatest difficulty, you can eliminate encounters 3-6, 2-1, and 2-7 without significantly altering the flow of the adventure; these are creatures that inhabit the caves alongside the dragon and its cult, not members of the cult itself. Reduce the number of ankhegs in area 1-3, orcs in area 3-3, goblins in 4-2, and humanoids in area 4-4. Leave only one otyugh in area 4-1. Reduce the power

of the NPCs (in areas 1-4, 1-6, 2-2, 2-3, and 3-5) by either taking them down a couple of levels or reducing their hp due to wounds from prior encounters with the army. But no matter what you do, you still have the problem of a dragon that can kill everyone in a weak party with a single breath weapon. Reduce Pyraxus' age to young or very young.

For stronger parties (characters of 11th or higher level, or more than six players): Apply the dragon-blood, half-dragon, or dragon-kin templates to more of the creatures in the adventure. Start with the orcs in 3-3 and the goblins in 4-2. You could also expand the ranks of the half-dragon minotaur and troll. Make the NPCs more powerful by adding class levels or removing their weaknesses (such as Gavuhn's sickness and Darsov's insanity). You can always increase the number of monsters in each encounter. Finally, raise Pyraxus' CR by reducing his wounds and giving him more hp, explaining that he's not nearly as wounded as the army believed, but instead wanted to lure them into the traps of his lair.

Getting the Players Involved

Many players love adventure for its own sake; few, however, love it so much that they'll be willing to go into a dragon's lair and fight a wounded, angry red dragon. The commander of the task force knows this, which is why he's been authorized to offer one-quarter of the dragon's hoard to the group of adventurers that brings the dragon's head back out of the caves. Another quarter of the hoard belongs to the nobles who raised the army, and the remaining half is to be distributed to the survivors of the first battle with the dragon. If the players want to haggle, they can, but the soldiers and the nobles will all point out that the PCs will be splitting their pot fewer ways. After all, the only reason this red dragon is manageable at all for characters of this level is that the army has already softened them up...

Character Death

If a character is left to die during an encounter with one of the non-sentient predators, they will be eaten and their belongings left for others to find. If they are left to die after a fight with the goblins or orcs, they will be stripped of their valuables, but won't be killed. But if they're unconscious and lying in a tunnel with no weapons or armor, they don't have great chances for survival anyway...

Characters who are injured may return to the cavern entrance where the army's clerics will treat their injuries. However, the company of soldiers has sustained serious injuries in the initial fight with the dragon, and unless the characters are near death, the clerics may well wait until others have been helped. "May" becomes "will" if the party returns too often, or treats the clerics disrespectfully, or asks for treatment for minor wounds. Use your discretion, but don't let the presence of a friendly cleric turn into free non-stop healing.

Preparation

Unlike most dungeon crawls, this one involves combat against a number of well-developed NPCs, rather than the usual endless hordes of humanoids. It is extremely important that the GM review this module carefully before play, noting the abilities and tactics of each NPC and how to use them in combat. This is the best way to make the NPCs a real challenge for the players.

The maps are also rather challenging, especially for players who don't map carefully. The mountain tunnels circle in on one another, and rise or drop in elevation throughout the adventure. Review the maps before the game. It's up to you how much help you want to give the PCs in order to prevent them from becoming lost.

Treasure

Pyraxus' hoard is a little on the sparse side for a dragon of his age, due to his preying on country farmers instead of richer pickings. However, the cult has aided him in this regard; cultists who have bonded with the dragon have voluntarily contributed any riches they can find to the hoard. (As a side effect, this does mean that very few creatures in the lair other than the dragon have treasure; most of it has gone onto the hoard, either voluntarily or otherwise.)

It's still a pretty impressive hoard, though. It stands at 215 platinum pieces, 6,500 gold pieces, 20,000 silver pieces, and approximately 50,000 coppers, for a total value of 11,150 gp in assorted coinage. (We do mean "assorted" here; the dragon did not organize the hoard into stacks, piles, or anything beyond a big heap in the middle of the room that it slept on. The party will have its work cut out for them organizing it.)

Scattered among the coins are 39 gems, as follows:

- 4 agates, worth 4, 5, 7, and 9 gp
- 2 chunks of polished obsidian, worth 12 gold each
- 4 freshwater pearls, worth 10, 11, 12, and 14 gp
- 4 rose quartz gems, worth 20 gp (x2) and 30 gp (x2)
- 3 pieces of polished amber, 2 of which are worth 50 gp and the third, which is larger and contains a preserved stirge, worth 80 gp
- 3 chalcedony gemstones, worth 40, 60, and 70 gp
- 1 onyx gem, worth 70 gp
- 4 silver pearls of varying sizes, worth 100, 110, 120, and 200 gp in order of size
- A lovely piece of unworked jade, worth 100 gp
- 2 large black pearls, each worth 800 gp
- 1 small emerald, worth 400 gp
- 3 fire opals, worth 400, 600, and 700 gp
- 2 star sapphires, worth 1,000 and 1,300 gp
- 3 pieces of topaz, worth 500, 600, and 700 gp
- 1 star ruby, worth 700 gp
- And the dragon's most recent acquisition, a large blue