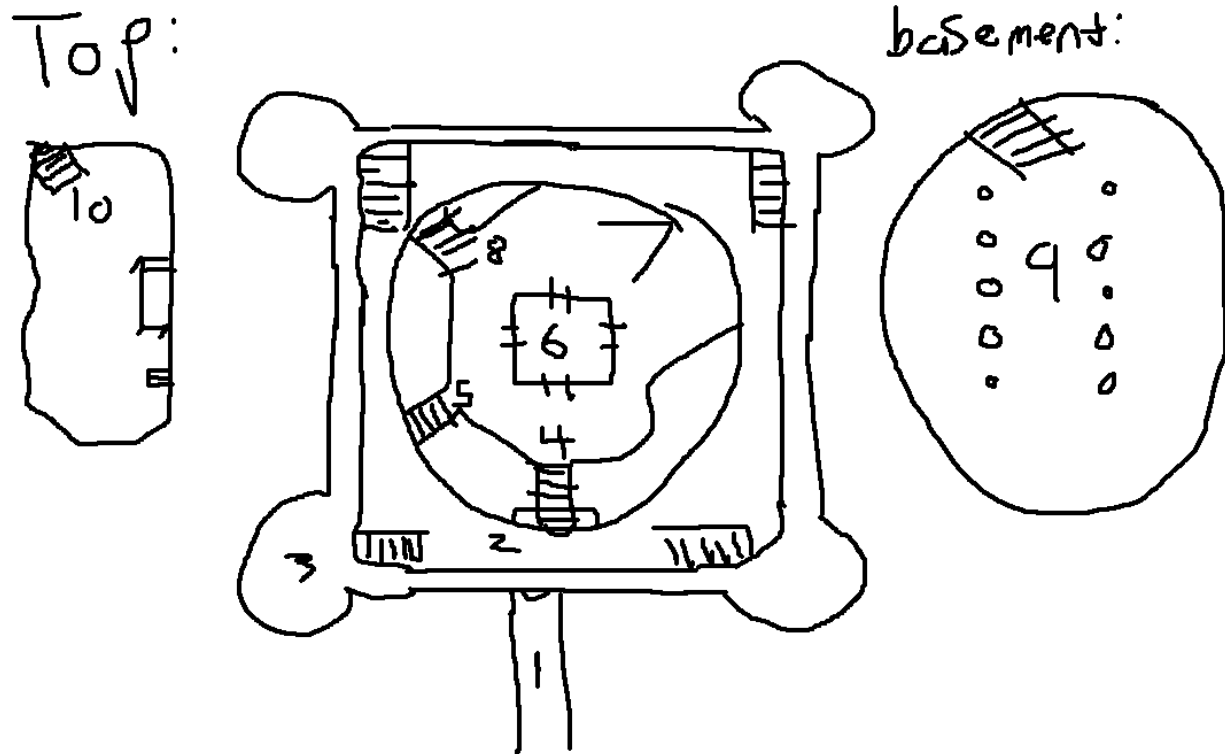


Connachtkeep (Continued)



2nd floor

1: The bridge into Connachtkeep ends with a fortified façade and two steel reinforced oak doors which are closed tightly shut. Four housemen of Aethelred stand guard and scowl as you approach. Archers peer down from the battlements looming overhead from turrets built into the wall.

Guards?

Will not let in anyone, have to be bribed or the party must sneak in.

They will attack if threatened.

2: As you pass (through the gate/over the wall) you notice that behind the battlements is a 10 foot wide courtyard surrounding the keep. Narrow staircases lead up to the fortress walls and housemen patrol the area, looking out toward the city of Alesia. There are a number of target dummies and weapon racks, as well as boxes and barrels of supplies in the courtyard. Other than this, it is bare stone.

Tower?

You can make it out in better detail now. The tower is covered in murder holes, fortifications and ramparts, most of which seem to have been built onto the original Imperial structure. The tower is marked by signs of siege, several spots of stonework are cracked or penetrated with bolts. There is a stone façade at the south face with another steel reinforced oak door. A single houseman stands guards in front of it, resting on one the marble ornaments.

3: Fortified turret with a ballista and two guards looking outward.

4: The opened door reveals a steep staircase towering into the keep, the walls are gray stone which might have once been painted with frescoes but appear scarred. The area is lit by torches.

At the top of the staircase is a circular hallway surrounding a colonnaded courtyard. The courtyard contains a broken fountain and stone flowerbeds, all of which are barren. The walls are decorated with fading frescos. There are pedestals present for sculpture, but the works themselves are absent. The numerous murderholes and ramparts on this level cause a powerful crosswind to howl through with fury. There are dark staircases leading down to the west and north west. The hallway widens to the north east into a throne room.

There are housemen standing guard every ten feet or so.

5: This steep staircase is similar to the one at the entrance, but is not alit by torches. It is a gaping black passage.

6: If search, find loot, magical ring.

7: This austere chamber is connected by an archway into the central courtyard. There is a plain-looking throne with red velvet padding situated at the north east wall, flanked by two braziers alit with burning embers. Two housemen stand on either side of the braziers, but the throne is empty.

8: This steep staircase heads up and is brightly lit by torches.

Basement

9: As you walk down the stairs the smell of sewage and sweat enters your nostrils. You enter into a massive circular chamber, bare, except for two sets of parallel ornately decorated arched stone pillars in the center which support the ceiling. Shackled to the pillars with iron bonds are several emaciated, sickly and bruised prisoners, some of which are motionless and may be deceased. Nertha is shackled to the farthest pillar from the staircase, about 70 feet to the south east.

A throng of housemen stand in the middle of the room in a half circle surrounding another man. That man appears to be King Aethelred, and he is viciously punching the midsection of a shackled old man with bare knuckles and grinning, shouting for a confession. After a few moments the old man lets out a

howl of pain and dies. The King turns back to the assembled housemen and grins saying "You see men? They never die with truth-bound honor intact. Now that witch..."

"Tell me hag, why did you try to cast a spell upon my men?"



"I am Aethelred, son of Myrdred, from the house of Connacht the Wolf. You intrude here without reservation!"

"I am the king of these lands, you pay homage!"

"This witch attempted to slay my men, and is very well an assassin sent by Leptus to poison our water supply! We found strange lizards on her person, to which my men viewed her eating. These lizards are poisonous, and are only consumed by the venom tested blood of an assassin! Why should I not dispatch her? And you, you might very well be spies too!"

"So you wish access to the Imperial library? The rate for admittance is a tribute in silver and gold, totaling 2000 Imperial crowns"

“If you cannot pay the fair passport tax, then I will ask for your service instead. You look like a strong enough company to travel the field. As I am a magnanimous and just man, I will also release your oracle, as long as you vow to finish this deed I now demand of you. What say you?”

“To the north of this city lies a hamlet which I hold dominion over: Birka. They have not paid their dues for some months, and I must have them collected. My collector Mauriac reports that they claim to have had their dues stolen by demons from the forest...[he chuckles]. Regardless of their lies, they mock me and compel my hand to action. If they cannot pay the 800 crowns owed to me, you have my authority to take 5 girls, the livestock and any excess grain supplies they are hoarding in defiance of my will. Show them blades for any insolence. Do this and I will conduct you with safe passage into the Mausoleum.”

3rd floor

10: This long rectangular chamber appears to be the personal bedchamber of Aethelred. Large sweeping windows reveal a spectacular view of the city in all directions. The floor is carpeted with bear skins. There is a large, velvet and silk lined bed to the east wall, with a locked chest at its foot. A simple wooden chair and table is all that else is in this room.

Chest: Loot. As per dmg.

Birka

Two days by boat you near your destination. The hamlet of Birka is situated at the northern most limit of the Gold River, shrouded to the east by a deep primeval forest. The locals call it “Forestheart” and it is said to be as old as the earth. Approaching it in your ship, you come upon a serene village barely the size of Hakonsfjord. Its palisades are in a state of disrepair and part of the dock is sagging into the rivers waves, there are only a few small rafts moored. The hamlet is silent. You can hear the distant sound of cows and a gushing wind from the forest. As your ship draws near you notice that a peasant girl is striking a warning bell atop the part of the palisade which protrudes toward the river. A commotion is heard from inside.

Entrance?

As you near the town the entrance to the palisades is closed shut by a sliding wall.

A frightened young voice comes from behind the palisade and a small slit opens in the wood. Panicked eyes dart from behind it, scanning your company.

"Hello... how can we help you?"

Opens the door without much asking/force.

Inside?

As the palisade entrance is opened you notice that the whole hamlet is congregated in the square, seated quietly in back of an elder, bearded man. He wears an embroidered red tunic. He supports himself with a walking stick and a dog sits next to him at attention. He shoots over weakly:

"Welcome, welcome!"

Greeting:

"Well met, I am Caithim. I was once the chieftain of this hamlet, yet by old age and infirmity I gave up my post to my son Aethelwulf a decade ago. This was before Aethelred's yoke came upon us, and now my son is pressed into his service and I am left alone as an old man to do what a young man must!"

We need gold:

"We tried to explain this to Mauriac, our dues were taken from us from things from the forest. Black, rat-faced monsters who demanded our gold or else they would burn the village! Our oracle tells us they were the Pukje, a race which one inhabited all of this land and return to punish us by taking what was once there! They are powerful sorcerers, and when we attempted to resist the first night they slew my son Hereward with a choking spell which crushed the wind out of him. As the king has taken all of our housemen into his service, we are defenseless! We cannot pay, please.... By Aurvandil, spare us, spare us! Have mercy!"

If pressed, daughter Gyda:

A beautiful girl in a long white dress stands up from the assembled villagers and elegantly walks over those seated toward Angvard.

"Father, be calm. I will be the first" gives herself up to angvard.

"Gyda, no! Return to me, others can go, she's a virgin!..."

The girl continues to walk toward your party.

"For shame, no!"

Enraged 15 year old kid Eorpwald with a sword rushes Angvard.

Where/When/How:

"They always come from the Forestheart, knocking on the palisades with hammers. If we do not give them the sacks of coin we have collected from selling our crops and goods at market, they threaten to burn the village down! They are due to collect in 2 weeks..."

If try to find Pukje before:

Tracking with -6, if successful go to Troll Lair

Pukje Raid

At exactly midnight on the end of 2nd fortnight of Haust-mánuðr 6 Pukje emerge from the forests east of Birka and slowly, suspiciously approach the eastern palisade.

They stand there for a few moments, then begin to knock on the palisade wall with warhammers and sickles.

Battle:

Pukje. AC 7 (leather armor and small shield). 1d6+1 damage (javelin), 1d4+1 (hammer), 1d4 (sickle). THACO 18. HP 20. Spells:

1st- Burning hands 1d3+8 (sv spell ½), audible glamer (save vs spell or sound), change self, chill touch (save vs spell or -1 str), color spray (5x20x20 spray, 1d6 peeps knocked unconscious for 2d4 rounds), enlarge/reduce (40%, 20 rounds), sleep (2d4 HD sleep for 20 rounds)

2nd- Blindness, Blur (-4 to enemy hit first attack, -2 second), flaming sphere (save vs spell or 2d4 damage in contact, or in area 1d4), fog cloud, Tasha's Laughter (save vs spell 30' cube at Those with Intelligences of 8-12(average to very) save with -4 penalties. Those with Intelligences of 13-14 (high) save with -2 penalties: laugh for a round, lose next round, then -2 strength for 2 rounds)

If more than 3 of them fall, the others run back into the forest, leaving a trail for Egil to track.

Loot (one set each plus base gear):

1: 15 gold, silver ring, purple decanter with a clear watery liquid inside (invisibility potion)

2: 2d6 arrows +1, 50 gold

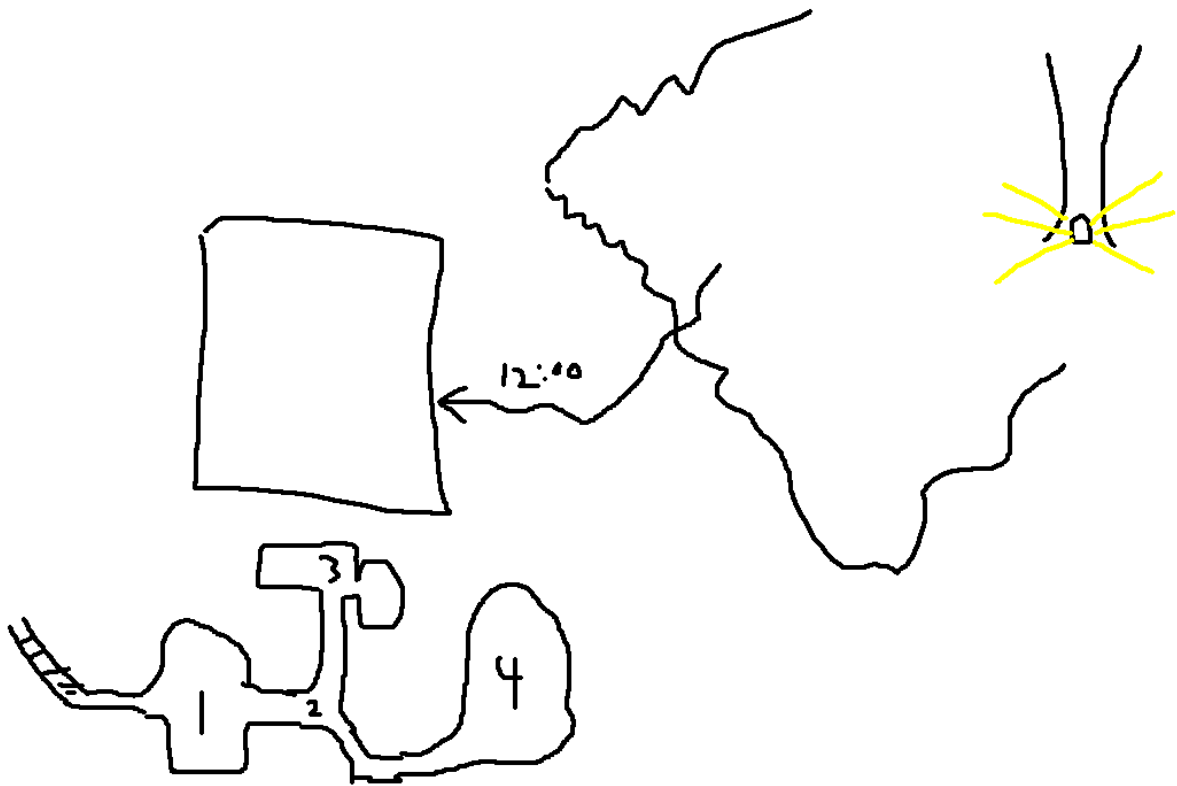
3: 10 gold, red flask with moss/dirt stopper (potion of speed)

4: Short sword +1, 21 gold

5: Sling +1, invisibility scroll, summon swarm scroll

6: Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter scroll, web scroll, 10 gold

Troll Lair



Chase:

You proceed into the forest after the pukje. Only the edge of the forest is visible from the moonlight, the inner depths are pitch black, the moon blotted out by a dense canopy.

The massive trees here are ancient and broad, many of them the width of a ship in diameter. The forest is filled with a cacophony of sounds: beasts, birds, falling acorns and twigs, the howling of owls and the grumble of wind blowing through trees. The air is moist and sticks to your blades, and the ground is covered in layers of leaves and quills. Mushrooms and shrubs litter the forest floor. A few streams are visible, running toward the river at your backs. You hear shuffling of feet ahead.

Follow:

As you follow the sound of the retreating Pukje a gold light becomes visible in the forest. As you approach it, you notice that it is light pouring from an open door in a massive oak. The vicious beasts scurry in, and then the opening in the tree seals quickly behind them, returning the area surrounding the tree to darkness.

Tree:

Can be opened by dispel magic, find traps + some weird combination or by Bestla animating the tree and opening it up or moving it.

What is revealed is a gaping hole in the earth, a natural stone cavern. From the mouth of the opening you can see that the passageway has a dark red carpet decorating it. There are muddy little prints on it leading inward.

1: The passageway leads down about 20 feet into the ground. You see now that the walls are limestone, protruding from dirt, covered in moss. The ceiling has sharp stalagmites sticking downward. The wind blows in from the forest and echoes eerily throughout the cavern. The air is chill and reeks of mold.

As you reach the bottom of the passageway the cavern narrows to the width of a single person and levels out flat. The carpet continues into the cavern. An upturned wooden table is blocking the way.

Trap in front of table: Alarm, shrieking klaxon fills the cavern.

Trap behind table: Poisoned arrow 1d6 damage, save vs poison. Feel nauseous for 4 rounds, then sharp stabbing pain for 5 rounds.

Alarm Goes off: Eyes flash from behind the table and bestial grunts are heard. Little black heads pop up from behind the barricade and throw missiles at you. You hear spellcasting.

Surviving Pukje from raid +2 attack

Interior:

You enter into the chamber the Pukje were defending. It is a large 50 foot cavern with a gradient elevation of five feet from the north to the south. The southern wall has a waterfall coming from the surface that pools in a deep, broad crevice below it. The northern side of the cavern has a dozen little dog-sized caves dug into it, wherein filthy straw mats, pillows and chests are collected. The cave continues east and narrows into another passage.

Trap in caves: 1d4 caves are trapped.

1: 1d6 arrow trap

2: Burning hands 1d3+6

3: Sleep

4: Color spray

Trapdoor at wall: Cannot be opened, bears will come out later.

If dive through 100' cavern and survive, find wand of monster summoning and a pile of 500 gold in a submerged hidden sack.

2: As you enter this passage you notice while it is wider than the entrance passage, the width of three or four men, it is also barricaded in a similar fashion by a hastily collected mess of barrels, tables and bedding materials. As you approach the bestial howling of the Pukje is heard and you can hear chanting

in their dark tongue. A wooden snap is heard, followed by a shutter, and two trap doors open in the large chamber you just left. You hear the unmistakable and terrifying noise of a hungry or aggressive bear and two massive 12' cave bears run out toward you with their vicious mouths open, rage in their eyes.

2 pukje behind barricade, 2 cave bears

Cave bears:

AC 6, 54 health, 13 THACO, 3 attacks: 1d8, 1d8, 1d12, attacks of 18 or higher = hug. Hug = +2d6 bonus damage

Trap in front of barricade: Colorspray

Beyond the barricade you notice that the cave bends to the north and south. You can partially make out what appears to be a kitchen of some sort to the north.

3: This passage splits into a T shaped set of caverns. To the west appears to be a collection of barrels filled with provisions, some straw bales and a chopping block with a meat cleaver stuck into it. Some pots and pans and cooking utensils are strewn about the room. Next to the chopping block is a partially eviscerated cow with a metallic bell hanging from around its sallow neck. There are large holes in the rock wall here, leading to the tunnels where the bears were loosed.

The eastern side of the chamber is partitioned by a rusty set of steel bars with a jail door built into it. The door is swinging open. There are piles of bear shit and mounds of rotting hay in the chamber, as well as some freshly cut slabs of cow.

4: You enter into a large rectangular chamber. The sharp rocks and stalagmites common to the other caverns have been sawed down and smoothed here. The whole of the cavern is carpeted with red linen. The rear of the chamber has an oversized bed, fitted with rough linens, and next to it is an oversized throne. A chest lies at the edge of the bed, with a silver lock on it. Torches line the walls and give the room a warm glow, casting long shadows on the furniture. There are several large sacks of coin in the other corner of the room.

Troll:

A 9' tall man sits silently on the throne, dressed in an elaborately embroidered green tunic. His clothes are decorated with runes and knotwork. His face is ugly, deformed and marked with pustules and rough patches of irritated skin. His eyes are narrow and squinty. He has a massive black beard, which appears to be meticulously groomed into knots. He is unnaturally muscled.

[Anvari/Bestla recognize him as a troll]

"You have barged into my home! Explain yourselves!"

"I am called Hildir by the earth"

"I only hoped to be able to collect enough of a fortune to buy a great dowry for the fairest of the fair. For I seek a wife. I seek Caithim's daughter Gyda. If I offer her what her father cannot, she will love me. But you seek this gold still? Not until she is my wife. Bring me her to wed, and I will give you the coins!"

Attacked:

The large man's face instantly becomes enraged and he disappears from view. You can hear deep, guttural chanting from where he was standing.

Hildir. AC 6. 2 attacks. 2d4+7 (hammer). THAC0 14. HP 60. Spells:

1st- Burning hands 1d3+8 (sv spell ½), audible glamor (save vs spell or sound), change self, chill touch (save vs spell or -1 str), color spray (5x20x20 spray, 1d6 peeps knocked unconscious for 2d4 rounds), enlarge/reduce (40%, 20 rounds), sleep (2d4 HD sleep for 20 rounds)

2nd- Blindness, Blur (-4 to enemy hit first attack, -2 second), flaming sphere (save vs spell or 2d4 damage in contact, or in area 1d4), fog cloud, Tasha's Laughter (save vs spell 30' cube at Those with Intelligences of 8-12(average to very) save with -4 penalties. Those with Intelligences of 13-14 (high) save with -2 penalties: laugh for a round, lose next round, then -2 strength for 2 rounds), summon swarm (1 damage per/round if defended, 3d4+3 if try to do anything, 20 AOE damage will disperse, caster must concentrate or dissipates in 2 rounds, 10 foot area), invisibility

3rd- Explosive runes, dispel magic, flame arrow (1d6 piercing, 4d6 fire, 2 of them)

4th- Confusion (1d4+10 creatures, wander away, stand confused, attack nearest creature, act normally, save vs spell at -2, 12 rounds), Contagion (save vs spell or -2 dex/char/str, -2 attack rolls, 1d3 weeks of bed rest or remove disease), fear (save vs spell or 60% -5%/level chance of running for 10 rounds), fire shield (12 rounds, any damage dealt to caster is dealt back to attacker)

5th- Conjure Elemental (4d8 damage, 13 THAC0, 64 health, AC 2, can bore through earth)

Hildir:

Cloak of Dryness

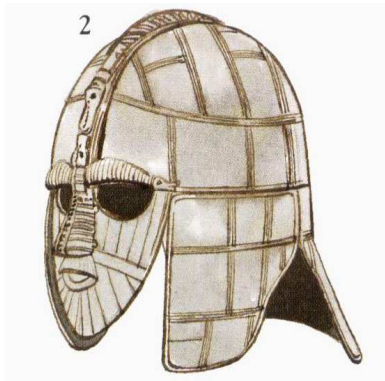
Chest:

Trapped with Wall of Stone, traps in top section of room.

Spellbook, trapped with Explosive Runes (5% chance per caster to detect, 5% for thief, 6d4+6 damage, also in 10' radius, save for half), 6 spells

350 gold

Wand of Fire







Rekonstruierte nordische Halle. Nach Valtyr Gudmundsson, Den islandske Bolig i Fristatstiden.
(Aus Olrik, Nordisches Geistesleben. Verlag von Carl Winter, Heidelberg.)



1) Hordes of skeleton archers (on high ground if possible) firing flaming arrows at a small army of giants operating catapults. Battle ensues until I call it off or it's discovered to be fake.

1B) The party is noticed, both armies turn and fire at the party, I am crushed beneath a rock.

2) Huge spiders appear from the {treeline, wall, hole in the ground (think HL2)}, grab me (I will actually be invisible, this will be an illusion of me), and carry me back to their place (if illusionary ground hole, it collapses when they go down it). If players appear to wound spiders, bleed accordingly (illusionary arrows appear to stick in them when they are hit by arrows).

3) Dirt rises from the ground around party to form clouds in the shape of a horde of ill defined humanoids, they aren't harmed by swords any more than a swarm of insects would be. They surround us with 10' between the wall of them and the party. My illusionary self (being closest to the edge) is attacked by one and melts like a candle when it strikes me. The dirt creatures then demand tribute of one prisoner for passage through their lands. If you run out of things to say just make them dissolve and fall back to the ground.