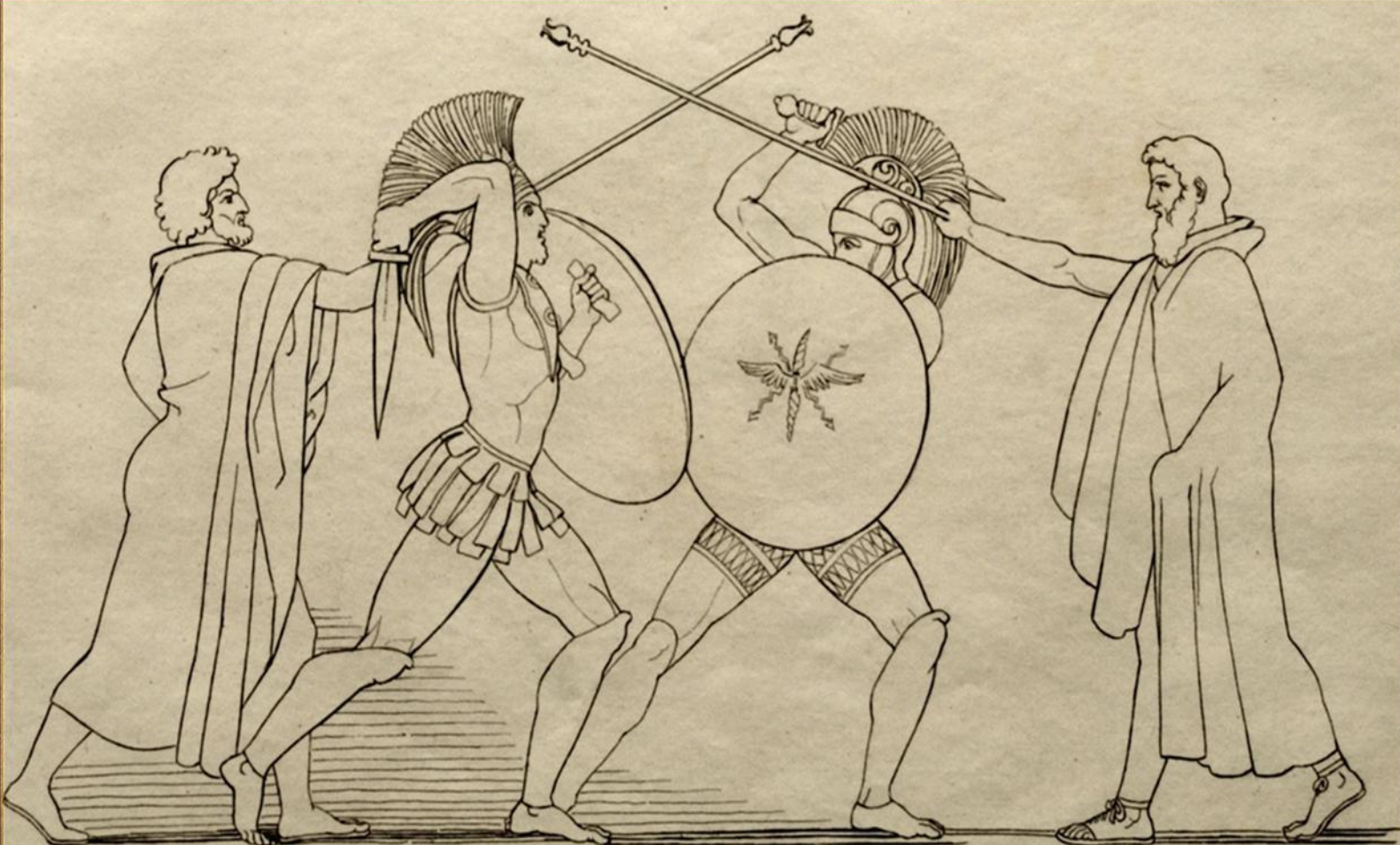


# THE TOMB OF AJAX

An Advanced Fighting Fantasy adventure for 3-5  
low-experienced adventurers in the Blackmoor Living World

For Directors' eyes only!



THE COMPANY OF THE MAIDEN



CHIMERAE



## IN FULL RESPECT OF THE COPYRIGHT

Chimerae Hobby Group, compiler of this adventure, believes that it has in no way infringed other parties' copyrights and shares the efforts to protect rights and intellectual properties. It declares its willingness to correct any omissions and / or involuntary violations of these or other rights, inviting those who think they have been damaged to report any concern to the e-mail address [chimeraehobbygroup@yahoo.it](mailto:chimeraehobbygroup@yahoo.it). Finally, it is emphasized that there is currently no economic income from the distribution of this adventure, even though possible changes of this situation in the future are not excluded.

Chimerae Hobby Group reasserts its moral rights to be known as the compiler of this adventure.

The texts and images are copyright of the respective authors and are used with their written permission, or they are images with free license, free content or public domain. The compilation of this publication is copyright of Chimerae Hobby Group and has been realized with the written permission of the author of the text. All rights of this work are reserved.

It is not permitted to reproduce this material - in whole or in part - in any way or form (on paper, disk or via the Internet) without the express written permission of Chimerae Hobby Group. Even with this authorization, the following caveats remain permanently: no profit must be taken from this publication; the publication must be distributed in an integral form; the publication must not be changed in form and content; if changes in the format are made, which are necessary for presentation and / or compatibility with other programs and / or operating systems, these changes must be communicated to Chimerae Hobby Group.

This adventure may be altered for private use, but such unofficial modified versions may not be distributed without the written permission of Chimerae Hobby Group.

We ask not to abide by these conditions not just for legal reasons, but above all out of respect for the work of those who have spent many hours in this job just out of passion.

It should also be noted that any use or distribution of this adventure implies acceptance of these terms and conditions of use.

**Blackmoor** is a registered trademark of the *Wizards of the Coast*, which is a *Hasbro* division and some associated intellectual properties belong to *Zeitgeist Games* and *Goodman Games*. Their use is NOT intended to constitute an infringement or a claim relating to this right. The content of this adventure is NOT officially approved *Blackmoor* material, as it is a no-profit, amateur, fan fiction production.

**Living World RPG Campaign** concepts were made popular by *RPGA*, now a division of the *Wizards of the Coast*. The content of this adventure is NOT officially approved *RPGA* material, as it is a no-profit, amateur, fan fiction production.

**Advanced Fighting Fantasy 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** and **AFF2** are registered trademarks of *Arion Games* and their use is NOT intended to constitute an infringement or a claim relating to this right. The content of this adventure is NOT officially approved *AFF2* material, as it is a no-profit, amateur, fan-fiction production.



This adventure is free to download from the website of **Chimerae Hobby Group**

[www.chimerae.it](http://www.chimerae.it)

Cover image from By © Foto H.-P.Haack (H.-P.Haack) - Antiquariat Dr. Haack Leipzig, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4003495>

Back cover image from: <https://pixabay.com/en/bomarzo-forest-monsters-viterbo-1938087/> CC0 Creative Commons

The Tomb of Ajax (CHBLWP3en) – 1<sup>st</sup> Edition – Würzburg, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019

# Contents

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND .....	5
Ajax.....	5
The village of Oldtower .....	5
The village of Greybanner .....	5
ADVENTURE HOOK .....	6
CHAPTER 1: STRANGE SCARS .....	6
The Sheep.....	6
Oldtower .....	6
The Goblin .....	7
Follow tracks .....	7
Carry on .....	7
CHAPTER 2: THE MOUND .....	7
General Description and Entrance.....	7
Where is Ajax?.....	7
Room 1: Entrance .....	7
Corridor 1-2 .....	8
Corridor 1-7 .....	8
Room 2 .....	8
Room 3 .....	8
Corridor 3-4 .....	8
Room 4 .....	8
Room 5 .....	8
Room 6 .....	9
Room 7 .....	9
Room 8 .....	9
CHAPTER 3: FACING AND KILLING AJAX.....	9
CONCLUSIONS .....	10
Conclusion A .....	10
Conclusion B.....	10
Conclusion C .....	10
CHARACTER SHEET NOTES.....	11
Trapped on the way to Greybanner .....	11
Fake Caradegg Relic .....	11
The Gratitude of Oldtower .....	11
The Despisal of Oldtower .....	11
Handout 1: a view of the mound.....	12
Handout 2: the vase .....	13
Appendix 1: Ajax .....	14
Appendix 2: Mant Akrag.....	16

Appendix 3: map of the Tomb of Ajax.....	17
Appendix 4: shards of memories.....	18

We welcome your feedback about your Advanced Fighting Fantasy adventures in the Blackmoor Living World and about this humble publication. That is the main thing that pushes us to publish more and, if we can, better.

Please contact us at: [chimeraehobbygroup@yahoo.it](mailto:chimeraehobbygroup@yahoo.it)

This adventure is dedicated to Tad Kilgore.

This adventure is designed for the Blackmoor Living World campaign and is suitable for three to five low-experience adventurers, i.e. adventurers with 1-300 XPs.

Typical Blackmoor Living World adventures take a single gaming session of approximately two to four hours to be played and this adventure is not an exception.

The Director is invited to review carefully all notes on the character sheets, as some may be relevant for this specific adventure. This adventure takes place in Oldtower, that the characters may have briefly visited as part of adventure CHBLWP1en: *Red Ice on the Black Sea* and their behaviour during that adventure may have some impact on this.

---

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

---

### Ajax

Ajax was a knight that, many centuries ago, accompanied King Robert of Geneva when Thonia colonized the Northern Marches, now known as Blackmoor. He was a valiant knight and helped greatly the cause of the King, with his arm and great personal sacrifice. However, the King seemed to benefit more, with titles and lands, other followers that were better politicians and administrators, rather than great fighters like him. Eventually Ajax resented this situation and behaved erratically, committing atrocious deeds and even betraying the King. For this reason, Ajax received a terrible punishment, that included being entombed alive and having his life extended beyond natural laws, to make his torment longer. Only a recent earthquake and some Goblin tomb raiders broke the century old seals of his tomb, releasing him in a very changed land, not far from the village of Oldtower. Confused, maddened by the extremely long torment, forgetful of most of his own past, Ajax is now a walking danger for the surrounding land, as he never forgot how to fight.

One of Ajax' greatest achievements as a knight, was a duel against the Elven Prince Uhlmar, son of Queen Maragainie, that initially opposed the Thonian colonization and the associated forest cutting activities. The duel took from dawn to sunset and Ajax had the upper hand on Uhlmar, that barely managed to hang on. When the sun set, that was the agreed time to end the duel, Ajax stuck to his chivalrous ethos and let Uhlmar return to his forest as for Ajax the duel ended with a draw, while Uhlmar expected his opponent to keep chasing him until death. Uhlmar was very impressed by this valiant show, that made him reconsider a lot of things about the Humans, that all Elves considered treacherous barbarians

(often, but not always, with good reasons) and, as a sign of homage, gave Ajax his valuable Elven sword as a personal present. Ajax in turn gave Uhlmar his shield. When Ajax was condemned by King Robert of Geneva, that very sword was shattered and, as part of the curse, the only way to release Ajax' soul was for him to be killed by that very sword, that was entombed with him. However, a shattered sword can't kill anybody.

### The village of Oldtower

Oldtower is not far from the coast of the Northern Downs, 30-35 miles west of Maus. Once it was a watch post for a well populated area, but now it is isolated, as Skandaharian raids left the northern coast depopulated. Oldtower is made of a dozen log houses built around an old, crumbling tower, surrounded by a palisade. Once there was a small but safe port nearby, but, when a Skandaharian fleet occupied it, Blackmoorians catapulted huge rocks at the ships, making the port in practice unusable, as the rocks have never been removed. Nowadays, Oldtower survives mostly on hunting and on a communal flock of sheep. The inhabitants are very suspicious in the best of circumstances as they always had to fend for themselves between Skandaharians, Goblins, wolves, harsh climate... and treacherous neighbours (Greybanner villagers are said to kidnap lost hunters). Inside the tower at the centre of the village there is an old relic: a piece of metal completely corroded by rust that is said to be the tip of the spear of the ancient hero Caradegg, the Giant Slayer (this is of course a tribute to Havard's *Legends of the Vales* campaign <https://blackmoor.mystara.net/forums/viewforum.php?f=80> ).

### The village of Greybanner

On the coast of the Northern Downs, going east from Maus, a traveller can find the village of Oldtower, the village of Greybanner and then the Old North Watchtower. Greybanner is the closest settlement to Oldtower, however it looks like the inhabitants of these two isolated villages look at each other with suspicion. While during this game there should be no need for further detail about Greybanner, more information about this village can be found in the adventure *Red Ice on the Black Sea*, published on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018.

---

## ADVENTURE HOOK

---

*You always wanted to see a true Dragon with your eyes, even if from a safe distance, so you had the crazy idea of going as close as possible to the Old North Watchtower, known as a big Dragons' nest, and look up, hoping to see a real Dragon. For this reason, you decided to band together and march west from Maus, along the Raider Road, even if Winter is not over yet.*

This is the perfect opportunity for the players to describe their characters and for the characters to be introduced to each other if they didn't adventure together before.

*When you are about 30-35 miles away from Maus, where the Haven Peaks give way to the Crofter's Fen, you notice an old, crumbling tower between the Raider Road and the Black Sea. A great opportunity to take a break in a safe place!*

---

## CHAPTER 1: STRANGE SCARS

---

*As you approach the crumbling tower, you realize that it is surrounded by a few log houses protected by something between a fence and a palisade, good enough to keep out wolves and, perhaps, Goblins. Small, tender, green blades of grass are growing where the ground protects them from the fiercest winds coming from the Black Sea. As you walk on, maybe a hundred steps from the little village, you notice several sheep on the ground, cut in pieces, but there is no blood all around, as you'd expect.*

### The Sheep

Read the following if the characters stop and look at the sheep: *You notice a sheep, not far from you, cut in two pieces: on one side there is the head with the two front legs, and on the other side the tail with the two back legs. There is not a drop of blood next to the animal so cruelly butchered.*

If a character bends over the sheep to observe the cut in more detail, read: *Where the animal was cut, its flesh appears to be dry to the point of looking withered, parched, as if cauterization was applied. Then, as you are getting closer and closer to have a better view, the sheep, that you thought dead, suddenly turns and tries to bite you! As you jump back in horror, you notice that also the back legs are occasionally moving, although more meekly.*

The sheep are in fact still (barely) alive, although horribly mutilated, breathing slowly in pain and shock, but, given a chance, quite aggressive, considering their horrible condition. They have been in hurt this way by Ajax two days ago, after sunset, while they were going back to Oldtown, where they belong, from the nearby pastures.

### Oldtower

If the characters approach this little village, they will soon find that its few inhabitants are keeping the gate tight shut and are not open to talk (initial social reaction: unfriendly, but, if there is a Skandahar in the group, the initial social reaction is hostile) unless the characters pass a social test as described by the AFF2 ruleset at page 50-51 or visited the village in a previous adventure (for example *Red Ice on the Black Sea*) leaving a good memory behind. At the best of times they are an unwelcoming lot because of their isolation in this ungrateful land and of their neighbours in Greybanner that are suspected of kidnapping their hunters when they go too far from the village, and now they are more suspicious than ever, as someone or something butchered big part of their communal flock two days ago, in the evening. The sheep show some horrible injuries (see above) and their meat appears all rotten and not edible.

On top of this, the villagers, yesterday at dawn, found a traveller with a leg amputated showing a strange injury, like the ones of the sheep. The man, probably a bard, as he was carrying a harp, is now talking nonsense in his fever (see Mant Akrag in Appendix 2).

The villagers also inform the characters that four days ago there was an earthquake in this area, and their old, crumbling tower was damaged, but the debris falling from the tower luckily didn't hurt anybody. Anyway, this is a streak of bad omens.

The village head, Guimond, a kind of old, local sage (in the sense that he knows how to make cheese, choose roots that are edible, preserve meat with salt...), and the rest of the villagers are extremely nervous, as the flock is critical for their survival and they know they will go hungry soon. For this reason, they will buy or barter food paying it twice the going Village prices (see AFF2, pages 106-108) and will not sell any food or animal. However, they have maximum 50 gc to spend, between them all. Other normal objects can be traded at normal Village prices. If the characters try negotiating too much before selling food or mounts, Guimond will "reluctantly" offer them the most precious relic of the village: the tip of the spear of Caradegg Giant-Slayer, an ancient hero, for 200 gp (negotiable down to 100 gp): the item is a piece of very corroded bronze said to be a powerful relic, but Guimond will offer just a fake. If the characters buy it, add the note *Fake Caradegg Relic* on their character sheet.

If the characters manage to build a good relationship with the villagers, they will warn them against going further west towards the village of Greybanner, as they say that they risk being kidnapped by their neighbours, that surely must have forged an unholy pact with some dark power to kidnap people so carelessly.

### The Goblin

If the characters investigate a bit more the half-frozen countryside around Oldtower, read the following: *A short stroll from the village, on the ground, you notice the body of a Goblin! Both its legs and an arm have been amputated and are laying nearby, but he is not in a puddle of blood as you'd expect.*

This Goblin was part of the group of Goblin scavengers that found out that a recent earthquake opened a way into Ajax's mound (see Chapter 2) and three days ago, at sunset, went in hoping to find some hidden treasure but instead freed Ajax. He has been attacked by Ajax three days ago as he was trying to escape from the Tomb but couldn't outrun Ajax and was mutilated and left there to die slowly. The Goblin will react a bit like the sheep mentioned above, staying calm until the characters come to close and then suddenly trying to bite them. On his belt there is a knife, in his backpack a piece of rope, a grappling hook, a short shovel and five gold coins (that the Goblin recently scavenged) bearing the symbol and the name of King Robert I of Geneva.

If the characters will do something to help the injured Goblin, he will recover some sense and speak, while sobbing: *"Please take me away from here! I never hurt a living thing in my life and don't deserve to die here! HE will come back soon... tonight... and chop off more of me! I won't stand seeing his flaming eyes once more... I never saw such a terrible creature of darkness before! He must enjoy letting me die, slowly... slowly... withering a bit more every day..."*

The Goblin will point at the Mound (see Chapter 2) as the source of his problems, without providing much more detail.

### Follow tracks

Read this if the characters roll successfully against a suitable Special Skill for looking for tracks (for example, Awareness with a +1 bonus as the tracks are quite easy to find): *The ground is still covered by frosty patches and it doesn't take long for you to spot some big tracks moving in big strides in the area. Following the tracks, you notice a dry, greyish wreath.* If a character touches the crumbling wreath (that looks like the one in Handout 2), make a roll as per Appendix 4.

If the characters keep following the tracks after finding the wreath, they will lead them to a nearby mound.

Go to Chapter 2.

### Carry on

If the characters choose to ignore the situation and keep walking towards the Old North Watchtower to see the Dragons as originally planned, go to Conclusion A.

---

## CHAPTER 2: THE MOUND

---

Show the players a view of the mound in Handover 1. The characters may have reached it following the tracks of Ajax or talking with the injured bard Mant Akrag that is in Oldtower or with the amputated Goblin in Chapter 1.

### General Description and Entrance

*Your investigation eventually leads you to this barren, windswept mound. Walking around it, you notice that on one side there is a cave in, that opened a way towards the inside of the mound. You find a shovel and realize that the cave in have been excavated: the entrance is now three steps wide.*

A group of Goblin scavengers found that a recent earthquake opened a way inside the mound and excavated it to plunder whatever was inside, but unfortunately, they found Ajax. The little dungeon inside the mound has been closed for about one millennium and it was recently shaken by an earthquake that damaged it, but not too much. Inside, it is all made in stone, covered by ancient paintings on the wall. Moisture penetrated a bit everywhere, but the paintings are generally visible. There is no source of light inside, but every five or ten steps there is a bronze ring for holding up a torch and about half of them are still in good enough conditions. In general, the atmosphere inside is creepy and tense, with the expectations of finding a breakthrough in it often frustrated.

### Where is Ajax?

The position of Ajax inside or outside the dungeon depends mostly on the time of the day: during the day, Ajax walks around in the dungeon and typically lets visitors come in, just to ambush them later on, maybe when they are distracted by what they find inside. When it is sunset, Ajax goes out as a bloodthirsty nightmare, butchering any living creature he can find. During the night, Ajax comes progressively more and more to his senses and, when dawn approaches, he is invaded by sadness and wishes he could die. If Ajax is "defeated" (see Appendix 1, behavior section), independently of the time of the day, Ajax recomposes in the sarcophagus and jumps out of it in a fit of rage. Check also Chapter 3.

### Room 1: Entrance

*This room is painted with peaceful scenes of hills covered by flowers, with colorful birds flying around. There is a passage leading north, to the exit of the mound, two corridors going south and one to the east. On the floor there is a Goblin, with all four limbs severed off.*

The Goblin, with his limbs withered like all other victims of Ajax' sword, is completely in panic and all that he begs for is "to die" and not to see anymore "the flaming eyes".

He dropped a knife and a shovel not too far and, in his backpack, there is a rope and a bag with 20 gold coins from the ancient Thonian mint that bore the image of King Robert I of Geneva. With an Awareness roll, a character looking at the dust and moisture on the floor can identify that there was quite some footfall here, recently, leading to and from the passages to the north and south. Not much traffic went east.

#### **Corridor 1-2**

*This passage is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced.*

Ajax defaced the sheep in a fit of rage.

#### **Corridor 1-7**

*This passage is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced on the walls going from the entrance room [room 1] to the first bend.*

Ajax defaced the sheep but couldn't do it on the walls with the secret passages going to rooms 5 and 6, as they are protected against the undead by Odir. A successful Awareness test (or other suitable Special Skills) will allow spotting the secret passages, if the characters specifically look for them in the "right" places.

#### **Room 2**

*This room is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced on the north, east and west walls. There is an archway leading north and what looks like an opened secret passage going south. The floor is quite dusty and there is a small shovel in the center of the room.*

Ajax defaced the sheep in a fit of rage (not on the south wall, because of the image of Odir in room 5), but he passed by this room just once or twice, as he prefers other parts of the dungeon. The Goblins tomb raiders, before dropping the shovel in panic when they faced Ajax, found the secret passage going south and left it half open.

#### **Room 3**

*This empty room is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced on the east, west and south walls. There is an archway leading north and another going south.*

Ajax defaced the sheep in a fit of rage (not on the north wall, because of the image of Odir in room 6). A successful Awareness test (or other suitable Special Skills) taken while exploring the right wall, will allow spotting the secret passage.

#### **Corridor 3-4**

*This passage is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced.*

Ajax defaced the sheep in a fit of rage.

#### **Room 4**

*This room is painted with the images of green hills and sheep grazing peacefully. The heads of the sheep, however, have been defaced on the east, west and south walls. There is an archway leading north and another going south. In the centre of the room there is an alabaster urn, gracefully chiseled with flowers. On the front of the urn there are two interlinked coats of arms: one bears the gilded shape of a predatory bird and the other has been carefully defaced without causing further damage to the urn.*

Ajax defaced the sheep in a fit of rage (not on the north wall, because of the image of Odir in room 6). A successful Awareness test (or other suitable Special Skills) taken while exploring the right wall, allows spotting the secret passage. The urn preserves the ashes of Ajax' wife, after she was killed in the Abbey of Fitz and the defaced coat of arms used to be Ajax' coat of arms (this is part of his *damnatio memoriae*), while the other was his wife's. If the characters stay in this room for 1d6 rounds, a ghost will appear: it is the ghost of a beautiful lady in tears. If the ghost is attacked, it will just disappear, but if the characters will speak with her, she will tell the sad story of her husband (and hers). She doesn't know how to break the curse that is effectively keeping her husband and her in this mound (see Chapter 3), but she can provide some useful hint, especially if the characters have finished their ideas. Ajax can not see or hear the Lady of Tears. If the urn is opened or anyway mishandled, the Lady of Tears will take the appearance of a horrible Smoke Demon (see BtP, page 128) and will chase the characters until she is defeated, or they exit the mound (Ajax wisely will not show up while his wife is so upset).

#### **Room 5**

*This room has walls that are not painted, and it is full of ancient furniture, mostly rotten. There is an open secret passage going north.*

In this secret room the furniture and other funerary gifts were forgotten when Ajax was entombed. Checking out the drawers, it is possible to find 30gp for each character participating to this adventure, all minted with the image of King Robert I of Geneva. There is a little, blessed statue of Odir that has the power to keep undead at ten steps of distance, but it is made of ceramic and is very delicate: in fact, every time it is moved, the character will have to make a SKILL roll or break the statue (dissipating its effect on undead). While the secret passage to the north has been left open, the other two are still closed.



In this room there is also a Goblin with both arms amputated by the sword of Ajax (objects on the Goblin: a knife and a backpack with a rope). He is in better conditions than the other Goblins and says that a horrible creature with a phantasmal sword and flaming eyes haunts the mound with very changing mood: sometimes it sighs and cries, some other times it is a bloodthirsty butcher, and during the night it goes outside. He noticed that the creature never enters this room, so he hid here and can't find the courage to go out anymore.

#### Room 6

*This room has walls that are not painted, and it is full of ancient furniture, mostly rotten.*

In this secret room the furniture and other funerary gifts were forgotten when Ajax was entombed. Checking out the drawers, it is possible to find 100gp for each character participating to this adventure, all minted with the image of King Robert I of Geneva. There is a little, blessed statue of Odir that has the power to keep undead at ten steps of distance, but it is made of ceramic and is very delicate: in fact, every time it is moved, the character will have to make a SKILL roll or break the statue (dissipating its effect on undead). All entrances are closed secret passages that need to be identified to gain entry to this treasure room.

#### Room 7

*This room is much bigger than most other rooms you encountered so far inside the mound. The walls are decorated with images of green, grassy hills, with many sheep and lambs grazing. In the middle of them there is a seated, fat man, with blond, curly hair, playing a harp. Both the man and the sheep have been defaced. Along the east wall there are three stone sarcophagi: two are empty, pristine and don't have covers, while the third looks like it was inhabited: the stone cover has been removed and crashed on the floor, where there is also a long chain. In the centre of the room there is also a strange ceramic vase, carefully decorated [show Handout 2].*

The fat man is of course the one that offered his tomb for entombing Ajax, so Ajax defaced him and his stupid sheep in a fit of rage. The sarcophagus that was occupied is the one where Ajax was entombed. The inside of this sarcophagus is full of deep scratches. The chain is magic and can chain a mummy, holding it magically. The clay pot is decorated with strange symbols, but also with a human figure (see *Handout 2*), indicating that Ajax can finally meet "death" by suiciding with his own sword. The ceramic vase is full of Magic Quicksilver and, if the vase is shattered, the Magic Quicksilver slowly goes back to its original position and shape. Breathing in a closed room with open quicksilver causes the characters to roll 3d6 vs. SKILL+STAMINA every turn and a failure causes the loss of one point of STAMINA. Touching the metallic

liquid causes the loss of one point of STAMINA and a test of LUCK. In case of bad luck, the loss is permanent. This Quicksilver is here as a trap and a red herring, taking the focus away from more effective ways of ending the curse. Anyway, if the characters can find a highly creative way to remove the Quicksilver from here, they can sell it to an Alchemist for 200 gp.

#### Room 8

*This room is much bigger than most other rooms you encountered so far inside the mound. The walls are decorated with images of green, grassy hills, with many sheep and lambs grazing. In the middle of them there is a seated, fat man, with blond, curly hair, playing a harp. Both the man and the sheep have been defaced. The floor is completely covered by little hills of charred material.*

The charred material is what is left of all Ajax' belongings. Potentially, a rare magic effect reversing the carbonization may return some vest bearing Ajax' insignia: green with a white prancing horse and a lot of suitable objects, like saddles, lances, tents, etc. Checking out very carefully the charred stuff (test for Awareness -4 each turn), it is possible finding a medallion with the symbol of Thanatos: it is associated with Ajax' conversion to that ungodly cult and it is impervious to fire. The fat man is of course the one that offered his tomb for entombing Ajax and Ajax defaced him and his stupid sheep in a fit of rage.

---

## CHAPTER 3: FACING AND KILLING AJAX

---

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (section: *Where is Ajax?*), it is likely that Ajax will be met again and again in different places and at different times during this adventure, while the characters search for information about him and how he can be killed (permanently).

Perhaps the characters will find him inside the mound, and Ajax will go for a surprise attack while they examine his sarcophagus (please note that rooms 1-8-3-4-7 are in a circuit, so while the characters take one way, Ajax can well sneak on them from the other way and stage an ambush), or maybe they will encounter Ajax in the evening, while he is bent on destruction of all living life, or maybe they will meet him around dawn, when he politely begs them to chop off his head (and then picks up his head saying they failed to kill him, before turning into dust and being recomposed in the sarcophagus, or maybe, still at dawn, they will witness as Ajax tries drowning himself or diving on his own sword, all in vain.

Ajax can in fact be killed with his own sword, but the sword is now shattered, and the phantasmal blade doesn't hurt the undead. As the sword is an ancient Elven relic, it can be successfully repaired at Ringlo Hall or at other well reputed Elven smiths (this will cost something in the range of 100 gp, but other deals may be proposed). If the characters can't realize this by themselves or by using their lore, the Lady of Tears (room 4) and maybe Mant Akrag or some other Oldtower villager may guess it. Of course, snatching the sword of Uhlmar from Ajax' hands can be difficult, but not impossible: for example, the characters may chop off the right arm of Ajax (this is detailed in Appendix 1, *The Sword of Uhlmar* section) and get the sword from it, or they may trap Ajax with the Magic Chain or the blessed statues of Odir to get it. They may also simply trick Ajax out of the sword, around dawn, when he is more talkative and full of senses, for example asking him the sword to give him "ultimate death".

Another option to "kill" Ajax would be by showing him his insignias (green with a prancing white horse), that were magically erased by all memories due to the curse. One option to do that is by reversing magically the fire that burned all Ajax' belongings, but this is quite uncommon magic. Another option would be getting the shield that Ajax gave to prince Uhlmar many centuries ago, when they exchanged gifts after their famous duel (the shield is magic and gives a +2 bonus on armor rolls). Once again, the characters will have to go to Ringlo Hall, where the son of Uhlmar (that eventually became King of Elves, before eventually passing away) currently reigns, asking to borrow the shield (if they pass a social test, as per AFF2, page 50, they will be granted the shield on loan, but it will be accompanied by six experienced Elves shield bearers that will make sure the relic will be returned). The characters may even opt to exchange the sword (that was originally Uhlmar's sword) for the shield.

If Ajax is defeated as mentioned above or in some other creative way, go to *Conclusion B*.

Upon Ajax' defeat, all amputees will still be amputees as before, but their limbs won't be withered anymore, and their withering conditions won't progress daily as previously. The villagers will tell the characters that in Maus there is some specialist that can replace an amputated flesh limb with a clockwork limb. This replacement costs 250 gp and takes three extra tendays to be grafted and trained out properly, but removes the SKILL penalty due to the amputation.

If the characters can't find a way to overcome the curse and/or are badly injured by Ajax to the point of having to give up, go to *Conclusion C*.

---

## CONCLUSIONS

---

### Conclusion A

*You carry on west and, after one more day, the ground of the path you are walking on suddenly gives way and you find yourselves in a trap, totally surprised!*

The characters can now take part, as a follow up of this adventure, only to the second adventure of *The Long Vigil* adventure arc, still to be published, and to no other adventure. There they will find out who trapped them and why. Add the character sheet note: *Trapped near Greybanner*.

### Conclusion B

*You learnt a sad tale of the old times, when Blackmoor was an unending forest and when Kings ordered merciless curses to be cast. Now it is time to go back to Maus, as there is no food in Oldtower, but they will gladly return the favor when they will have again a good flock and sufficient food.*

*As you turn east, you see in the far distance, behind you, a huge shadow and burst of flames in the sky: it must be a Dragon! After all, your desire of seeing a Dragon, even if from a safe distance, has been fulfilled!*

The characters earn 50 XPs, plus up to 20 extra XPs depending on good roleplay. Add also the character sheet note: *The Gratitude of Oldtower*.

### Conclusion C

*The good villagers of Oldtower take pity on you and transfer you to Maus on a cart pulled by a donkey. They will live in fear for the next future and you swear to yourselves that you will come back and find a way to help them. As soon as you are back in decent shape.*

The characters get 0XPs, but they have the option of coming back later on and go through this adventure again. When the characters will be back, chances are that the Goblins and the sheep will be already turned into mummies, as their withering progressed. In Maus the characters that may have the withering sickness can be cured by some priest. Add also the character sheet note: *The Despal of Oldtower*.

All surviving characters, whatever conclusion they reached, can restore their LUCK, STAMINA, MAGIC and MAGIC POINTS scores to their initial levels before taking on new adventures.

---

## CHARACTER SHEET NOTES

---

Here are the consequences of each note added to the character sheets.

### Trapped on the way to Greybanner

The character gets no Experience Points and the follow up adventure after this can only be the second adventure of *The Long Vigil* adventure arc, still to be published, and no other adventure.

### Fake Caradegg Relic

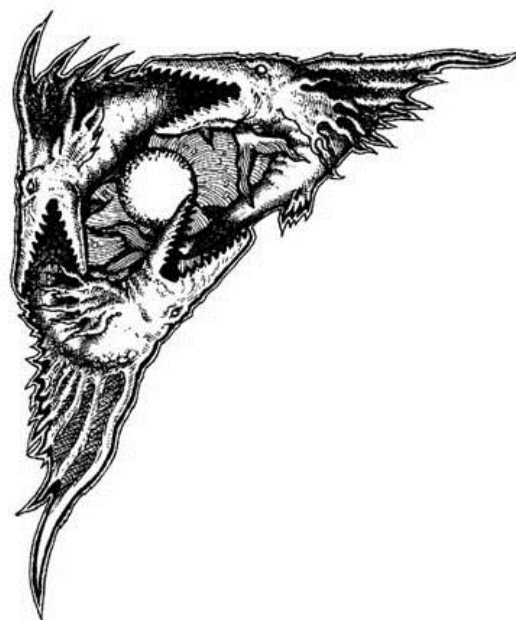
The characters tried taking an advantage on the hungry villagers of Oldtower and they sold the characters a fake relic of Caradegg Giant-Slayer. The villagers are a bit shy, because of their naughty deed and, if the times will be better for them, they will discreetly try buying it back or anyway covering up their cheating.

### The Gratitude of Oldtower

The characters can rest for a tenday as guests in Oldtower, with free meals and accommodation, but only once the village will be out of current starvation times and back to a decent level of wellbeing.

### The Despisal of Oldtower

The villagers of Oldtower despise the characters, laugh at them and think they are good for nothing. No hospitality, nor support can be expected from Oldtower, until the characters defeat Ajax and earn, finally, *The Gratitude of Oldtower* (see above).



Copyright-free image by Tony Hough <http://www.tonyhough.co.uk/>



## Handout 1: a view of the mound



Aianteum, or Tomb of Ajax, by Clarke Edward Daniel - 1824.



## Handout 2: the vase



Detail from a krater from Vulci - 400BC-350BC (circa)

## Appendix 1: Ajax

SKILL 9

STAMINA 12

ATTACKS 2

**Appearance:** Ajax appears like a tall and broad (although withered) walking husk, with flaming eyes and imposing black hair and beard. There are no traces of clothes on the body, so it is possible to spot scars left by cruel chains (with an Awareness check). In his right hand he carries the hilt of a sword, but the blade was shattered long time ago and is now completely missing. Just observing it, it is easy to notice that the hilt of the sword is made with a green metal and is decorated with delicate leaves (with a SKILL roll + suitable Special Skill, such as World Lore or similar, it can be recognized as Elven craftwork). When the sword is in the hands of Ajax, in place of the missing, physical blade, there is an eerie, translucent shape, but if the sword is not in the hands of Ajax (or another undead creature), the mentioned, phantasmal blade disappears. If Ajax is reduced to zero points of STAMINA or less, his body and his sword quickly turn into dust and are carried away by a swirling wind back to his burial mound and his body reforms in two turns, fully healed, in his sarcophagus (see Chapter 2). However, if Ajax is reduced to zero points of STAMINA while not wielding his sword, the sword doesn't turn into dust and doesn't follow Ajax in his sarcophagus, but stays where it is.

**Background:** Ajax was condemned to undeath centuries ago and, technically speaking, he is now a Mummy (as described in OotP, pages 85-86), apart from the fact that his body is naked and not covered by highly flammable wrappings like the standard Mummies (this removes the weakness to flames that other Mummies have). He came from the Thonian Empire following King Robert I of Geneva and distinguished himself by fighting the Elves that, at the time, occupied the vast forests covering all Blackmoor and were not happy with the scale of Thonian colonization, with associated destruction of their forests. The noble knight Ajax expected the King's gratitude for his deeds in the shape of titles and lands, but the King instead granted them to other followers that were not warriors, but rather "politicians" and merchants (prominent among them was a sheep and wool merchant, interested in cutting the forest along the Northern Downs to make room for pastures, that was treated very kindly by the King, despite being a coward in war). Some important episodes of Ajax' life can be re-lived by touching his wreath (see Chapter 1), his sarcophagus or the vase with quicksilver (see Chapter 2 and Appendix 4). After Ajax lost his wife during the war, due to King Robert's stone heart, he finally started going wild and begun worshipping Thanatos. His actions, once extremely chivalrous and honourable, became ruthless and bloodthirsty. This, unsurprisingly, didn't earn him any more lands and titles so, eventually, he committed treason in a terrible way. King Robert, out of his mind, condemned Ajax to a horrible punishment: first of all, he ripped the page with Ajax' coat of arms from the magic book of Thonian nobility and burned it (and the effect of this was that everybody forgot his coat of arms and his family, erasing him and his ancestors from Thonian history!), then the sword of Ajax (that was actually the gift from the Elven Prince Uhlmar, see more detail below) was shattered, leaving only the ornate hilt intact (effectively removing him from knighthood) and finally Ajax was entombed alive, held by a magic chain, in a sarcophagus, but was also magically kept undead, to make him suffer the pains of being entombed in eternity. The only ways to be relieved of this terrible curse (all curses need to contemplate conditions to break the curse) are either remembering again his own coat of arms or be killed by his own sword. These deeds happened about one millennium ago and the combined effect of the earthquake and the Goblins tomb raiders just freed Ajax from the magic chain and the sarcophagus. It goes without saying that the landscape looks very different from what it used to be over 1,000 years ago, when forests abounded.

**Behaviour:** Ajax' behaviour changes with the time of the day: when the sun is up, Ajax prefers staying inside the mound, wandering aimlessly in the dungeon, and he goes out during the night. At sunset, Ajax is full of blind rage and likes chopping off limbs out of any living creature, just to leave them die, withering slowly and painfully, as he experienced while entombed alive. As the night passes, Ajax progressively recovers more and more memory and awareness, eventually desiring his own final death. For this reason, Ajax was seen by Mant Akrag while trying to kill himself by diving on his own sword, but that sword doesn't damage undead (see below), so he was unsuccessful. Approaching dawn or during the day, it may be possible speaking with Ajax and Ajax may ask the characters for help to die. However, if Ajax is "defeated" (i.e. his STAMINA goes to 0) and his body reforms in his sarcophagus, he awakes as the mindless nightmare that he is at sunset, unable and unwilling to talk or think, but just bent on making other living beings suffer. If the characters agree to help Ajax to die, he will ask them to chop off his head (using the characters' weapons, as Ajax' sword doesn't hurt him). As Ajax' head will fall, he will pick it up and the head will tell them that they failed, then he will turn into dust as if he was "defeated", as described above.

**The Sword of Uhlmar:** the ornate hilt of the broken sword that Ajax wields is what's left of the sword that Prince Uhlmar gave him as a chivalrous present when Ajax had a chance to kill him, but didn't do it, as that would have been against chivalry. In exchange for the sword, Ajax gave Uhlmar his shield, that is still preserved in Ringlo Hall. Uhlmar was an Elven prince and Ajax fought against the Elves because they were resisting Thonian colonization led by King Robert of Geneva; at the times, the Northern Marches, as Blackmoor was known, was a mighty, unending forest. This sword, that was originally a Sword of Sharpness (see AFF2, page 148), as a side effect of the curse of Ajax, has now a "phantasmal" blade that can hurt the living (it leaves scars that look like burns, rather than cuts, and mundane Armors can't reduce the damage), but doesn't deal any damage to the dead / undead. If Ajax rolls a double six or his roll to hit is 4 points or more above the minimum required, he chops off a limb from his enemy (1: left arm, 2: right arm, 3-4: left leg, 5-6: right leg – re-roll if a limb is already missing); for fairness, if the characters declare that they want to chop off his weapon hand, they should be allowed to do so at the very same conditions. The limbs chopped off do not cause any bleeding (stopping, for example, the *death and dying* rules from AFF2, page 65) as the glowing blade cauterizes the injuries, so that, instead of bleeding, they rather dry up and wither. For this reason, these amputations do not cause loss of STAMINA, but a loss of 2 points of SKILL (on top of this, spell-caster may have big problems casting, rogues may not climb as easily as before, etc.). Living creatures that have been amputated are under shock and they can do an action only if they pass a 3d6 roll vs. SKILL+STAMINA.

Once a living creature has been amputated, every day, at the same time the amputation was dealt, has to test for LUCK. If the test of LUCK fails, the creature loses one point of STAMINA and the body part that is increases in size. Once they reach zero STAMINA because of mentioned withering, they become a Mummy under control of Ajax and they can re-attach the severed limbs as a normal action. For this reason, Ajax, after severing a limb, prefers not killing his amputated victims, but let them wither slowly and die.

If Ajax is somehow "killed" (see Chapter 3), all amputated (but still living) creatures are healed from the withering sickness but are still amputated.

## Appendix 2: Mant Akrag

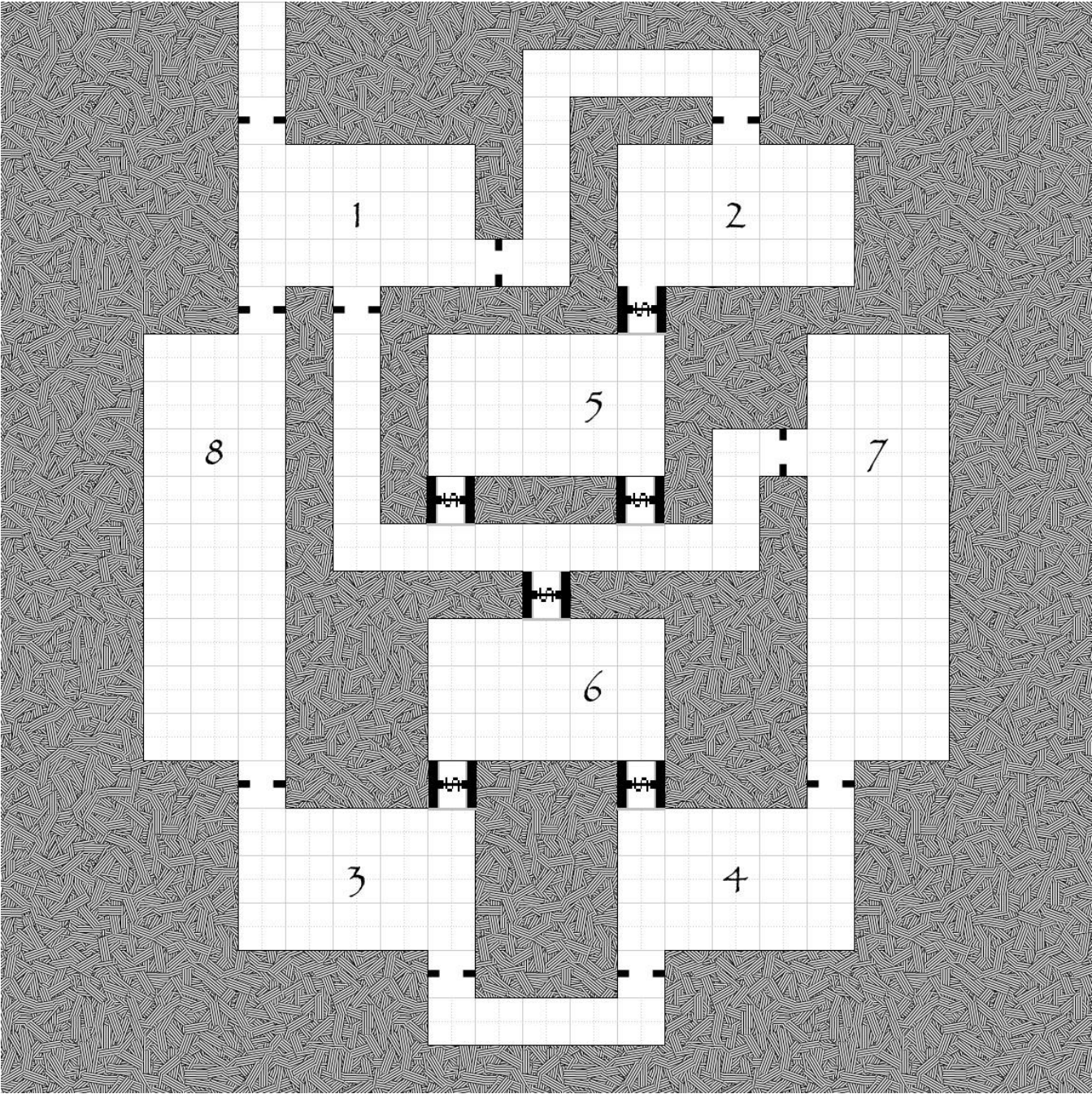
**Appearance:** this Thonian man is clearly suffering, but still, at times, he manages to crack a joke by sheer force of will. His right leg has been amputated above the knee by Ajax and what is left is parched and withered (as if it was the limb of a mummy). His face, although twisted by pain and worry, is the face of a naughty scoundrel: broken nose, lively sky-blue eyes, cheeky smile exposing crooked teeth. His clothes are made of big yellow and green checks, including his wide mantle, and besides him are a quarterstaff and a lute.

**Background and behaviour:** Mant Akrag is a wandering bard that was walking towards Oldcastle and, at dawn, he came across Ajax that was carefully fixing his sword on the ground so that the blade was pointing up, then he dived on the sword, as if trying to suicide. Unfortunately, the shattered blade can hurt only living creatures and not undead, so Ajax couldn't kill himself and had a fit of rage. Mant was just another casualty of Ajax, that severed his limb and left him there to die slowly. Mant, however, digging deep, managed to crawl to Oldtower and the villagers took pity on him, even if they are not well known for their hospitality. The villagers (correctly) guessed that Mant is a bard and are taking care of him even if they have suffered the loss of many sheep. Mant now is confused by the withering sickness and can focus only for short times, but he can reveal bits of what he has seen and may add some other conjectures (the Director may choose or select randomly what Mant says):

- 1) The creature must be an undead.
- 2) He (rightfully) believes that the creature came from a nearby mound (see Chapter 2).
- 3) The body bears the signs of chains and maybe it can be chained again.
- 4) The creature looked deeply intelligent before trying to suicide at dawn and maybe it can be helped to achieve that.
- 5) The creature suddenly looked very feral when enraged: clearly it is not very stable.
- 6) His sword hits the living but spares the undead.



Appendix 3: map of the Tomb of Ajax



Dungeon map generated with <https://donjon.bin.sh/> and subsequently modified manually.



## Appendix 4: shards of memories

To find out what shard of memory you will re-live, roll 2d6 and check below:

First dice	Second dice	Flashback description
1-3	1	<p>You see yourself near a funeral pyre: your father is dead. You hear the voice of the priest of Odir: "My lord, your father squandered all the wealth of your noble family, but you can still gain it back by going with King Robert to colonize the Northern Marches."</p> <p>You are overwhelmed by the mixed feelings of the sorrow for the death of your father and the sudden discovery that your father gambled away all family riches: if you want to give an honourable life to your newly-wed spouse, you have no chance but enrolling yourself under the King's banner.</p> <p>This is the reason why Ajax went to war and was under pressure to earn lands and titles.</p>
	2	<p>You are on a ship anchored in a bay surrounded by black stone outcrops. Behind you there is all the Thonian fleet, under attack by many Elves. The army is in panic under a rain of arrows, surprised by the sudden attack. You raise your shield against the arrows and charge against the attackers, saving the fleet almost singlehandedly. The Elves manage to sink just a ship and you receive several injuries, barely surviving. You feel the war rage and the taste of blood in your mouth.</p> <p>This is an early episode of the colonization when the fleet in Blackmoor Bay was attacked and Thonia was almost defeated.</p>
	3	<p>King Robert is listening for pleads and administering justice in the open. A blond man, kneeling in front of the King, says: "Your majesty, one of my ships sunk as your warriors didn't defend it adequately... please refund me and punish your coward soldiers...."</p> <p>You shake your head, as you know that you fought valiantly, while the blond man was cowering in the safest place he could find.</p> <p>This episode was the first that pushed slowly Ajax out of royal grace, even if he fought valiantly.</p>
	4	<p>You are fighting Uhlmar, the Elven Prince, in a duel, under the eyes of the armies, and you are winning. He bleeds from several wounds, his breath is heavy and you keep pushing him as he defends more and more desperately. Suddenly, the referees of the duel step forward and order you to stop, as it is sunset, the agreed time to stop the duel. You stop fighting even if you are in clear advantage, as carrying on would be against chivalry. Prince Uhlmar, the Elf, seems surprised that you didn't take the chance to kill him and comes forward: "I didn't know that there are such noble Men. Please accept my sword as a gift of honour."</p> <p>You feel surprised by this gesture, but you take the sword and exchange the gift with your shield, with your family insignia. Turning around, you notice that somebody is whispering the King's ear and the King nods, looking worried. You hate with all your heart that kind of people that passes the time whispering rather than fighting...</p> <p>This episode should be a hint that Ajax' shield (with its coat of arm) may still be found at the Elves'.</p>
	5	<p>You are kneeling in front of the King: "Your Majesty, the Abbey where my wife lives, is under attack. I ask permission to mount a counter offensive and save her and the other civilians staying in the Abbey." The King turns to you with a hard face: "No, Ajax. The permission is not granted. Your knightly duties force you to stay here, protecting me from a possible surprise attack. You are assigned to this camp." "But... Your Majesty..." "I said no. You are dismissed" You feel the pain of the loss invading your soul as a river of fire and desperation.</p> <p>During the early times of colonization, the army stayed mostly around Blackmoor Village, near the fleet, while various abbeys were founded inland, to expand Thonian influence.</p>
	6	<p>The Court is all around King Robert, that is distributing lands and titles. It is your turn in front of the King, that speaks without even looking at you: "For your services on the battlefield, including leading the clearing of the Northern Dawns from enemies, you are granted a new saddle. Raise, you are dismissed."</p> <p>You go away, struggling to control yourself, as you received an abysmal reward for your services and sacrifices. Right after you, a blond man with curly hair and pink cheeks kneels in front of the King: "For cutting the forests of the Northern Downs and turning that lands into pastures for your flocks, you are granted that lands as your personal propriety." You feel yourself invaded by a terrible rage: you fought in</p>

		<p>battle and obeyed the King even when he ordered you to let your wife die, while coward politicians and merchants reap the benefits of it!</p> <p>Ajax, after this episode, goes really wild.</p>
4-6	1	<p>You are completely armed and covered with blood, striding towards the Throne room, with a grim smile: you realize how Thanatos made you so much stronger in war, compared to Odir! You finally stop in front of the King, but you don't kneel. "What was the outcome of your last attack, deep in the forest?" The King asks, with a nervous voice. You rip open the big sacks that you are carrying and out of them roll the severed heads of many Elves: men, women, children, elders... the Court is shocked and in horror, but you smile and blood swiftly drips out of your mouth. You walk out without bowing to anybody, looking forward to more massacres.</p> <p>After converting from the cult of Odir to Thanatos, Ajax becomes more and more bloodthirsty and ruthless.</p>
	2	<p>A soldier walks towards you: "My Lord, the inland camp has been attacked by overwhelming forces. We have to help them as soon as possible!" You answer, with a grim smile: "No. The permission is not granted. Our knightly duties are to stay here. We are assigned to this camp." The soldier seems extremely surprised: "But, My Lord, you know that the inland camp is the one where the son of the King is... if you don't help them, you will be charged of treason!" Your smile becomes even grimmer: "He's not his son... he's his <u>bastard</u> son... and anyway I don't care. The King gave us the order to keep this position and I will gladly follow this order. I don't care about anything else." Your nostrils are eager to smell death.</p> <p>The consequences of this act will lead to Ajax' terrible curse.</p>
	3	<p>You are suffering in chains, exposed to the insults of the crowd as you see all your belongings being burned in public. The King, in front of you, with an old man wearing scarlet robes decorated with strange symbols besides him, opens a book, that you recognize as the magic book of Thonian nobility. He goes to the page with your family coat of arms and titles and, with a sudden gesture, he rips it away! You hear the howls of pain of your ancestors. The King lifts the page and then burns it in a magic fire just summoned by the old man in scarlet. "Due to your act of treason, you and your family are stripped of your nobility and your insignia are condemned to oblivion!" You suddenly realize that you don't remember your family coat of arms anymore!!! "You will find peace only when you will remember again your insignia!" You can only scream in desperation.</p> <p>This is another part of the curse, leaving a possible escape in the shield donated to Prince Uhlmar, as it bore Ajax' insignia.</p>
	4	<p>An old man wearing scarlet robes decorated with strange symbols takes your sword, dips it in a container full of a smoking liquid and, when he pulls it out, it is covered of a blue ice incrustation. Then he shatters the blade against an anvil and you realize that this revokes your knighthood. "You will find peace when this sword will kill you!" He smiles cruelly as you feel unending pain and desperation growing in your heart.</p> <p>This is part of Ajax' curse and the reason why he tried (unsuccessfully) to suicide by diving on his sword.</p>
	5	<p>The King says: "Let's excavate a tomb for this traitor to lay... until then, keep him in chains!" and a man, with pink cheeks and blond, curly hair replies: "Your majesty, some time ago I ordered to excavate a family tomb in the dominion that you generously granted me... I am happy to make it available to expedite your orders..." The man avoids your gaze and you feel your rage burning.</p> <p>The blond man was worried that the King, with time, may have changed his mind and shown some mercy to Ajax.</p>
	6	<p>You are in the darkness. You can't breathe, you can't move, even if you are pushing with all your strength to get free, your body is in terrible pain, you are in panic, you can't remember anything as the pain and the panic overwhelm you.</p> <p>This is the eternal torment ordered for Ajax by King Robert. It lasted many centuries, unchanged in their horror, until a few days ago, when Ajax was freed by the earthquake and the Goblins.</p>





*Tou always wanted to see a true Dragon with your eyes, even if from a safe distance, so you had the crazy idea of going as close as possible to the Old North Watchtower, known as a big Dragons' nest, and look up, hoping to see a real Dragon. For this reason, you decided to band together and march west from Maus, along the Raider Road, even if Winter is not over yet.*

*During your march, you notice an old, crumbling tower between the Raider Road and the Black Sea. A great opportunity to take a break in a safe place!*

*What adventures will you find there?*

