



Note: For judges already running chronicles in this region (and point in history), the following can be inserted into their existing milieu with little additional effort, for it really is a detour in the wider world.

## BACKGROUND

The characters have found a map. Old and water stained, its Latin text is barely legible, even to the most learned eyes. A faded X marks an old wall notable for being the only thing standing in what is otherwise a field of toppled architecture. A grand Roman villa stood here once, but time and local hands have robbed its former glory. Following the wall north leads to an opening in the ground with steps leading into darkness...

There can be little doubt this is the place, for secrets such as this are best kept in the dark. But the breach is little more than a hole in the ground, unwelcoming at best. Still, the map says DIVITIAE, Latin for riches, the lure of which makes men do foolish and unwholesome things. But how did this old map fall into the character's hands? This is left to the judge, who can insert this into their setting, perhaps after the following suggestions:

(1) The characters find the map on a fallen traveler, his rusted pick and shovel suggesting the place was always his goal. Local clergy (for a donation of 2d6 silver) recognize the old wall and translate the map's promise should this be necessary. The particulars are left to the judge.

(2) A slain enemy (perhaps a Danish bandit who foolishly attacks the party enroute to the nearest town) carries the map in a leather tube. He is running from the brigands he stole it from and might even assist the characters if spared, only to betray them - or not, depending on how things go.

(3) The map is won in a game of dice, its former owner swearing dubiously on his cross (Thunor's hammer, but close enough) to its authenticity. This one likewise requires the assistance of the clergy or other learned persons (should these be available) to get the characters to the old ruins.

(4) Anything else the judge can think of. If incorporated into an existing chronicle, there should be abundant opportunities for characters to find such a map and no shortage of learned persons to help them on their way.

By whatever means the map is found, there is a small village (Stânweall) a day north, complete with a church and folk willing to share their superstitious beliefs about the countryside, of which there are many. Ghosts allegedly roam the lands south and east of town, and some still leave offerings to the pagan gods (when Christ alone is not enough). This can be placed in a suitably remote part of the judge's setting, someplace lawless and in need of adventurers...

## THE VILLAGE

Stânweall (Stone Wall in the local dialect), stands on the site of a long-vanished Roman settlement. The locals are well aware of this, having an oral tradition going back centuries (and having plundered its finest stones for various projects, including the chapel and an upstream dam, long ago). There are a dozen low houses and small outbuildings surrounding the chieftain's quarters, with family plots and assorted livestock on display.

There is no lodging; but a few of the more adventurous folk will rent their outbuildings (1-2 SP per night), adding a wholesome meal of vegetables and porridge to the bargain. The men gather in the chieftain's home (which doubles as a meeting place) at night to share drink and local rumors, a hospitality shared with outsiders who behave themselves around town:

1d6

### RUMOR

- 1 A Saxon witch lives in the woods, avoiding others (TRUE)
- 2 Brigands are a problem on the old south road (TRUE)
- 3 Ghosts haunt the Roman ruins, cursing intruders (FALSE)
- 4 Heathen outcasts worship at the Roman Ruins (FALSE)
- 5 The Romans built over a much older religious site (TRUE)
- 6 Wolves prowl the woods and have become bolder (TRUE)

The judge should roll once per night, role-playing any exchanges and speaking with confidence to further convince the players of their integrity.

## NOTABLE FIGURES

The following notable figures may become important as the characters interact with the locals and make a good accounting of themselves:

OSBEORN, the village priest, occupies a small stone chapel north of the chieftain's house. A stern man of faith, he is nevertheless earnest in his love for the people of Stânweall, fretting for their soul's sake.

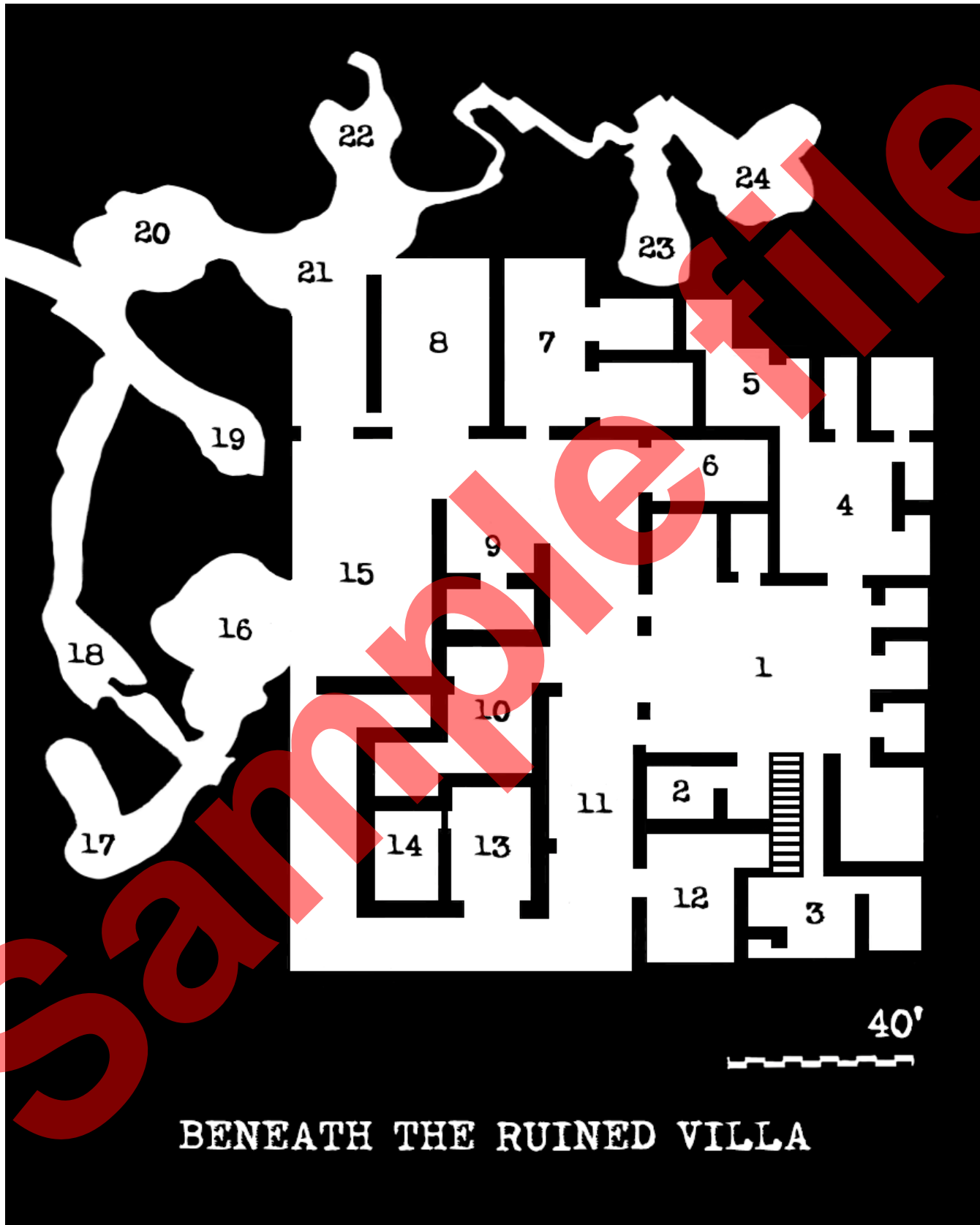
LITERACY: literate SOCIAL CLASS: clergy LUCK: 10 Move: 50'

WIHTRED sits as village chieftain. He was ambitious in his prime, but the recent death of his wife has left him despondent, turning more of the duties of leadership over to his sons (Blaec and Leof), who are most unprepared.

LITERACY: literate SOCIAL CLASS: nobility LUCK: 10 Move: 50' (30' armored, noting that he owns a chainmail coat and a fine sword he values as a reminder of his youthful exploits. Although deeply depressed, Wihtrred takes up arms should danger threaten his people, for the pull of duty is stronger than that).







Of course, the judge is free to add additional personalities and expand their map to include even more destinations. Indeed, a blank graph sheet is provided should they wish to do so. More than just a module, this can be the starting point for new chronicles or an expansion of existing ones...

## REACHING THE RUINS

It is one day's journey from Stânweall to the Roman ruins on foot, meaning that if the characters depart at sunrise, they arrive after dark (or vice versa, as the case may be). Horses cut the journey in half barring some distraction enroute (an imaginative judge can always find some) and make it easier to avoid the threats that await travelers. That said, there is a 1-2 in 1d6 chance of some deadly encounter going each way, rolled as follows:

Roll 2d6	RESULT
2-4	Adder (instantly killed, but deals a weak venom)*
5-7	Brigands (2d6) LUCK: 1 MOVE: 50' (iron spears, unarmored)
8-10	Strange noises frighten horses to bolt (1-3 in 1d6)#
11-12	Wolf pack (1d6) LUCK: 6 MOVE: 50' DAMAGE: bite, claw +2

\*One character (or horse, when mounted) targeted at random

#Roll an easy task for each rider; failure deals 1 LUCK damage

The brigands only attack if they have a numerical advantage or think they can mount an effective ambush. Otherwise, they may (1-3 in 1d6) trail the group, waiting for a good time to strike. If arriving at the ruins after dark, it may be necessary to set camp, as the ground is treacherous, and following the map (such as it is) would be extremely difficult. Lone guards are a tempting target for brigands - and worse, as are supplies and horses left behind.

## LEVEL 1: BENEATH THE VILLA

The time-worn steps descend 15' into the darkness below. It was clearly a cellar in its day, and the characters may wonder why it has not been uncovered until now - at least until they remember that someone made the old map that brought them here. Daylight reaches the bottom of the stairs, but no further, while a light source is needed immediately at night. Approximately 5' wide (and with a low ceiling), single-file movement is necessary.

**Note:** This is not a fantasy dungeon where one can go room to room taking on monsters and stealing their stuff. The cellars are (realistically) smaller, following historical plans, and its human occupants are well organized, having both eyes - and ears - to recognize intruders. That said, the judge should READ THIS BOOK IN ADVANCE, make any adjustments needed to suit the strength of the group, and decide how to insert its content into their chronicle...



1 - LANDING. The stairs descend into an empty chamber with a cracked mosaic floor and several smaller alcoves (storage spaces, now empty save for broken pottery) on its northern and eastern walls. The latter might serve as an easy hiding place for resourceful characters, who can elude enemies or even stage an ambush if conditions permit. Careless intruders have a 1-3 in 1d6 chance of stirring the brigands in areas 2 and 3, who emerge to fight.

Note: A gang of brigands (nominally aligned with the ones on the south road) reside within, living in areas 1-14 and barricading areas 15 and 21 against the wolves that seek refuge here. That said, there are small oil lamps in every occupied area, shedding flickering light in a 5' radius.

2 - SIDE CHAMBER. HALIG, a monk-turned-brigand, stays here. Unsited to the monastic life, he joined the gang and fancies himself its chaplain, fighting with twin daggers and angling to corner his quarry and slip these into some vital spot. A swift fighter, he spends up to 5 LUCK improving rolls, reciting Latin if bested and appealing to Christian mercy. Halig carries 9 SP on his person and keeps a priceless (-- SP) leather Bible in his bedroll:

LITERACY: literate SOCIAL CLASS: commoner LUCK: 10 Move: 40' (leather jerkin)

3 - ANTEROOM. OXA (the Ox) sleeps here with his dog (HUNDR), a hound that eats the big man's scraps. Broad shouldered and armed with a club, he awakens at any noise in the hopes of procuring stolen drink and is quick to react to strangers, calling Halig and setting up a well-rehearsed ambush. Oxa uses up to 4 LUCK improving his dice and has 12 SP in a belt pouch:

LITERACY: illiterate SOCIAL CLASS: commoner LUCK: 12 Move: 40' (hide jerkin)

Hundr attacks on sight, rolling at +1 so long as Oxa still lives:

LUCK: 5 MOVE: 50' DAMAGE: bite, claw +1 (a territorial beast, Hundr barks for an additional 1 in 1d6 chance of alerting others unless promptly dealt with, noting that he uses any LUCK necessary in defense of those he calls his pack).