

**DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL #1**

**THE SACRED TEMPLE OF ERWADU**

by R. Nelson Bailey

**A FIRST EDITION ADVENTURE FOR 5-7 CHARACTERS LEVELS 7-10**



The great ziggurat rises from the tall reeds and mucky pools of the vast marsh. This looming edifice serves as the sacred residence of a god—one that demands that heroes overcome the deadly tests and trials it contains. Those who succeed will be richly rewarded, while those who fail will never return!

*THE SACRED TEMPLE OF ERWADU* has four dungeon levels that challenge even the most experienced player. It includes background notes, four dungeon maps, a cutaway map of the temple, five new monsters, six variable endings, and numerous illustrations for players. The referee can choose to run this module in one of two ways—as a 'living' or 'lost' temple. Pre-generated characters are included for the 'living' temple.

DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL adventures by Dungeoneers Guild Games are classic-style modules designed to fit into any campaign for the Advanced 1st edition game. With little effort they can easily be adapted to most fantasy role-playing games, including the Advanced 2nd edition game, the Original game, the B/X and BECM I ("Basic") games, and most old-school renaissance (OSR) role-playing systems.

© 2021 Dungeoneers Guild Games. All rights reserved.



## DUNGEON DELVE SPECIAL #1

### THE SACRED TEMPLE OF ERWADU

*When Jupiter and Saturn meet,  
What a crop of mummy wheat.*

William Butler Yeats

**The Sacred Temple of Erwadu** is an adventure for 5 to 7 characters at levels 7 to 10 (about 48 levels in total). During the adventure, **player characters (PCs)** will explore a temple in the form of a ziggurat. While the module uses Sumerian mythology and culture as its foundation, it fits easily into most existing campaigns. The **Game Master (GM)** should thoroughly read the module text before play to ensure a solid understanding of the encounter areas and the opponents the party will face. An even mix of character classes is preferable for success (i.e., cleric, fighter, magic-user, and thief types).

#### BACKGROUND & NOTES FOR THE GAME MASTER

The Game Master can run this adventure as a **Living Temple** using the pre-generated characters provided herein, or as a **Lost Temple** with players using their own characters. The former works best as a standalone adventure, while the latter works well when integrated into an ongoing campaign.

**Living Temple Play:** In this version of play, the PCs are citizens of the city-state of Shuranak. As successful adventurers and people of importance in their society, they have been chosen for a special mission on behalf of the city's leaders.

Shuranak is a large, affluent city situated on the banks of a great river. Canals from this waterway irrigate vast fields of barley, wheat, and chickpeas. Barges carrying trade goods make their way up and down the river to neighboring city-states to trade surplus crops and livestock, as well as textiles, pressed oils, and manufactured goods. A king-priest, chosen by the city's patron god, Enki, the god of the waters, rules the city alongside a bureaucratic army of officials and clerics. Before play begins, read the players the boxed text below:

*The time of the Great Year has returned. Only once every twenty years, when the two great wandering stars conjoin in the evening sky, does Enki, the patron god of the city-state of Shuranak, open the doors to his sacred temple. You rank amongst a group of seven honored heroes selected by the priests and officials of the city to enter the god's domicile on this day. For only at sunset will the massive valves of the ziggurat open. An hour after the sun disappears below the horizon and the starry vault of heaven rises, the doors shut once again, not opening for another twenty years.*

*The success of its heroes on this day is of the utmost importance to Shuranak's prosperity. If any one of them exits the temple before the rising of the sun the next day, Enki will bestow his grace on the city and its citizens. Stability and prosperity will be ensured until the next Great Year. If the heroes fail, they will never return from the temple. This signals Enki's displeasure with his children, whom he will punish for their prodigal sins. Strife, war, pestilence, and plague are among the miseries the people of Shuranak will suffer during this time.*

*The priests and officials from Shuranak outfit your group in strict accordance with religious protocols. After five days of cleansing and meditation, your party, along with a clutch of priests and their attendants, boards river barges. These vessels*

*travel for many days downriver before arriving at the great, intractable marsh of Erwadu. For two days, the barge wends its way through waterways hidden in the marsh's tall reeds before finally arriving at a large, muddy mound. Atop this hillock rises a massive ziggurat—300' wide at its base and towering over 120' high. Each tier of the pyramid is painted in bright colors—rich vermillion at the bottom, deep celadon green in the middle, and vibrant cobalt blue at the topmost level. As the sun sinks below the horizon, priests bearing censers lead your party up the ziggurat's ramp, intoning prayers of thanks to Enki. They thrust lit torches into your hands and bless you with holy water before departing for their camp at the temple's base. Then you and your companions turn toward the darkened portal that leads to where your destiny awaits.*

In this version, the PCs have 12 game hours to reach AREA 40 and complete the final trial. If they fail to reach that room within the allotted time, Enki slays them. As a result of their failure, the city-state of Shuranak endures 20 years of calamity and misfortune as their patron god turns his back on them. The GM must keep a detailed record of the time the players spend during the adventure to ensure the heroes do not fail their quest by running out of time.

All **Living Temple** PCs can read their native language, Shuranaki, and therefore can read all written scripts found in the temple. They also possess basic knowledge of their native religion and mythology. The GM can provide the players with general information pertaining to the sigils, signs, images, gods, and monsters they encounter during the adventure. For example, they might know that lammasus are Good-aligned creatures or that Enki's symbol is the goat-fish. When in doubt about whether a PC knows information concerning a person, place, or thing, have them roll an Intelligence check. Success indicates they know something about it. However, do not disclose any specific information that would give them an undue advantage over a challenge or monster. If the players are overly persistent in asking whether their characters know information, give them only the smallest scrap of information ("Yes, you have heard of that god, but you don't know anything specific about them.").

Finally, Enki does not allow spellcasters to recoup spells while they are in his temple, including the ABZU SUB-LEVEL beneath the ziggurat. Whenever a spellcaster attempts to do so, the sound of torrential, raging waters fills the character's mind. This deafening roar prevents praying for or memorizing any spells.

**Lost Temple Play:** In this version of play, the city-state of Shuranak and its civilization have long since disappeared beneath the dust of time—a relic of a forgotten age. The temple of Erwadu still stands, though its exterior is neglected and crumbling. Though waning, Enki's magics remain potent, keeping the temple's dungeon levels functioning much as they did when the god's power was at its zenith.

The Game Master can incorporate the ruins of the ziggurat into their ongoing campaign, with players using their own game characters. How the PCs locate the temple is up to the predictions and imagination of the GM. Possibly, they have heard rumors of a forgotten temple somewhere in a vast marsh and set out to find it; they could discover an ancient map that leads them to the mound (with much false information, of course); or, while traveling through the marsh, they might accidentally stumble upon the ruined ziggurat.

It is unlikely that PCs in the **Lost Temple** version will know anything of the language of the long-dead Shuranak. This means the PCs must use *comprehend languages* (q.v., 1st-level magic-user spell) or a thief's *read languages* ability to decipher texts found within the temple.

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear throughout this module:

**AC** = Armor Class; **MV** = Move; **MC** = Maneuverability Class; **HD** = Hit Dice; **hp** = hit points; **#AT** = Number of Attacks; **Dmg** = Damage; **SA** = special attack; **SD** = special defense; **MR** = magic resistance; **INT** = monster's intelligence rating; **AL** = alignment; **L** = large size; **M** = medium size; **S** = small size; **xp** = experience point value; **THACO** = the number to hit AC 0; **PsA** = Psionic ability; **C** = Chaotic; **L** = Lawful; **E** = Evil; **G** = Good; **N** = Neutral; **F** = Fighter; **MU** = Magic-User; **C** = Cleric; **T** = Thief; **S** = Strength, **I** = Intelligence, **W** = Wisdom, **D** = Dexterity, **C** = Constitution, **CH** = Charisma; **d** = type of die; **rd/** **rds** = round/rounds; **cp** = copper piece; **sp** = silver piece; **ep** = electrum piece; **gp** = gold piece; **pp** = platinum piece

## KEY TO THE TEMPLE OF ERWADU

**Physical Properties of the Temple:** The great ziggurat of Erwadu is constructed from baked mud bricks, with its exterior clad in a façade of glazed, painted tiles. Interior hallways and corridors are 10' high, while most rooms have 15'-high ceilings. Wooden beams, placed every 5', support the ceilings of DUNGEON LEVELS I to III. Stucco covers the walls and ceilings on these levels, and passageways and rooms have tiled floors. Doors are heavy wooden doors reinforced with bronze bands and always open into rooms. Single doors are 4' wide and 7' tall. Room descriptions vary, however, so be sure to check the map key text for any deviations.

**Temple Guardians:** Two greater shedim patrol the temple grounds—one astrally, the other ethereally. These beings protect the ziggurat from wanton damage by marauding monsters, including the PCs. They intervene if any creature attempts to vandalize or damage any part of the temple's exterior, such as destroying the outer doors or burrowing through its walls. Those who do so are first contacted *empathically* (if their Intelligence is 4 or less) or *telepathically* (if 5 or greater) and warned to cease their destructive activities. Those of Good or Neutral alignment who do not heed the warning are told to leave and not return, under pain of death; Evil-aligned creatures receive no such warning before the guardians attack. Continued refusal to heed the warnings results in the appearance of a single shedu to do battle with the miscreants. Both appear to deal with any troublemakers who appear exceptionally powerful. These winged guardians fight to the death to defend the temple.

**Greater shedu** (2): AC 2; MV 15"/30" (MC: B); HD 14 + 14; hp 77 each; #AT 2; Dmg 3d6/3d6 hooves; SA **ethereality**, **invisibility**, and **(limited) telepathy** at will, psionics; SD radiates **protection from evil 10' radius**; MR 50%; INT genius (17-18); AL LG; Size L (6' at shoulder); xp 6790 each; THACO 8; MMII 109.

**Psionic Abilities** (used at 14th-level mastery): **body equilibrium**, **clairvoyance**, **detection of evil**, **energy control**, **ESP**, **hypnosis**, **mass domination**, **precognition**, **sensitivity to psychic impressions**, **shape alteration**, and **telekinesis**.

**Curse of Enki:** Destroying, damaging, or looting certain objects in the temple by the PCs invokes the wrath of the god to whom the temple is dedicated. The keyed areas indicate which objects are protected by the curse. Followers of Enki have a 3% chance per point of Wisdom to receive a flash of insight that continuing such actions will have a deleterious effect on them; non-worshippers gain no such warning. Characters who come under the curse immediately lose two points of Dexterity and suffer a -2 penalty to all saving throws. Each week that passes, the afflicted PC loses an additional point of Dexterity, dying when zero is reached. To remove the curse, the player must sacrifice 10,000 gp in coins, gems, or worked items at an altar dedicated to Enki. Furthermore, a PC can incur multiple curses from different areas in the temple. While this causes no additional loss of Dexterity or penalties to saves, the amount the PC must sacrifice to Enki is cumulative for each separate curse received. There is no saving throw to avoid this curse. A *remove curse* spell is ineffective in dispelling its effects, although *alter reality*, *limited wish*, or *wish* spells will negate it.

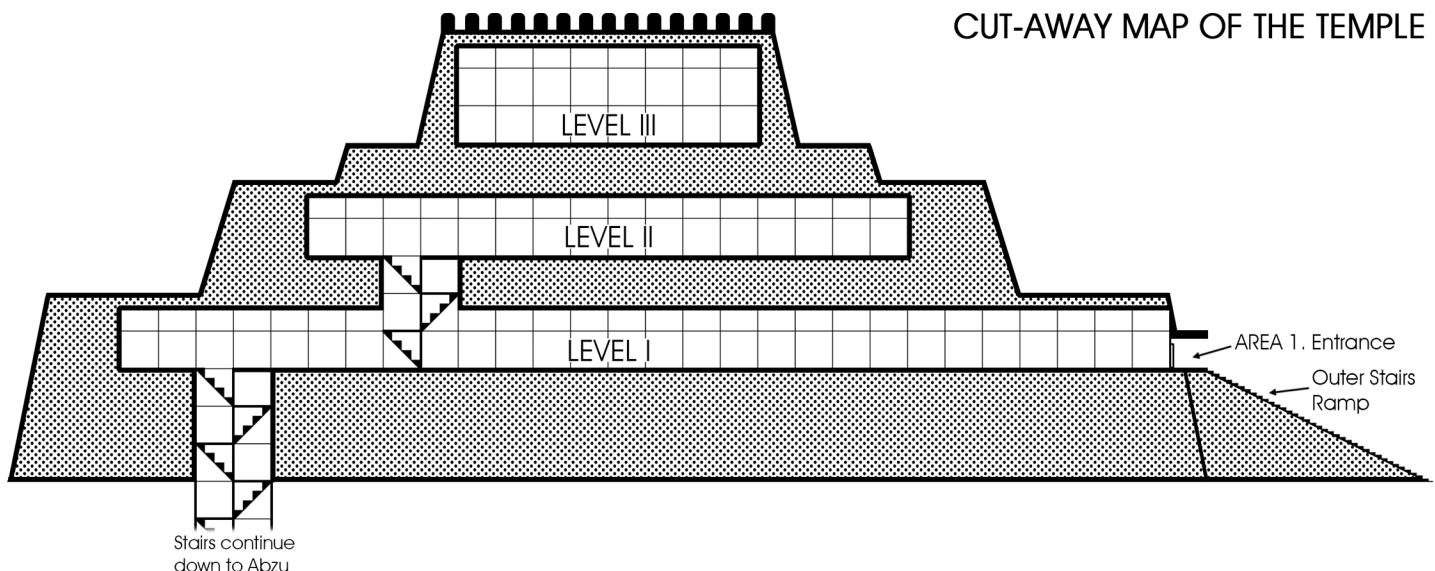
## SPECIAL OBJECTS

### Sacred Regalia of the King-Priest

These seven unique, magical objects are hidden throughout the temple—fell monsters guard most. These items register as magical if checked for. For those playing the **Living Temple**, locating as many of these as possible is imperative to ensuring the continued prosperity of Shuranak. In both versions, however, the number of objects the PCs discover determines which final enemy they will face (see "**Variable Ending Challenges**" in AREA 40 for details) and how much treasure they will find in the temple's vault (see AREA 41). The seven sacred items are listed below, along with their descriptions, details of their powers, and the locations where they are kept in the temple.

**Diadem of Rulership (AREA 35):** When worn, this magical crown increases the wearer's Charisma score to 18, or to 19 if the wearer already has that score. It also allows the wearer to cast **mass**

## CUT-AWAY MAP OF THE TEMPLE



**suggestion** (q.v., 6th-level illusionist spell) as an 18th-level caster once per week. Furthermore, the crown increases the *Morale/Loyalty Rating* of up to 1,000 creatures within 30" by +10% for 24 hours, once per week.

**Girdle of Wealth (AREA 28):** Every day at dawn, this ornate golden belt, set with precious stones, produces either 3d6 × 10 gold pieces (80%) or gems (20%). If the girdle produces gems, the value and number that appear are as follows: 1d20 with a base value of 10 gp (50%), 1d12 with a base value of 50 gp (30%), 1d6 with a base value of 100 gp (15%), or 1d3 with a base value of 500 gp (5%).

**Kilt of Longevity (AREA 16):** This magical garment causes its wearer to age less rapidly, at one-quarter the normal rate. It also reduces unnatural or magical aging, such as that from a ghost's aging attack, by a similar amount.

**Tablet of Knowledge (AREA 32):** Mystic runes covering this clay tablet contain secret knowledge normally accessible only to the gods. If kept within 50' at all times, this item permanently increases its owner's Intelligence and Wisdom scores by one point each after one month. By consulting the tablet's ultramundane text, its owner can use the **magic font** spell (q.v., 5th-level cleric spell) once per week and **commune** (q.v., 5th-level cleric spell) once per month. Both powers are used at 10th-level ability.

**Talisman of Warding (AREA 34):** Mystical runes and sigils cover this gold medallion. It protects its bearer from Chaotic-aligned monsters (i.e., Chaotic Good, Chaotic Neutral, and Chaotic Evil). Physical attacks by such creatures are made with a -2 penalty. Furthermore, its bearer gains a +2 bonus to all saving throws against adversaries with Chaotic alignments. This object also allows the keeper of the talisman to **abjure** (q.v., 4th-level cleric spell) and **remove curse** (q.v., 3rd-level cleric spell) once per day, as a 14th-level caster.

**Talking Mace (AREA 25):** This enchanted, intelligent **footman's mace** +3, named Sagdubdih ("Smasher of Chaos"), is fashioned to resemble the mace the god Enki carries into battle. It has an Intelligence of 17, an Ego of 18, and is Lawful Neutral in alignment. Sagdubdih has the following abilities: **detect chaos** (1" radius, as per the *detect evil* spell, q.v., except that it detects only Chaotically-aligned creatures or objects), **detect magic** (1" radius), and **free action** (as a *ring of free action*) when held. Its special purpose is to **slay Chaotics**, inflicting *double damage* each time it strikes a Chaotic-aligned creature. It speaks Shuranaki, dwarvish, lammasu, shedu, and efreeti, and can communicate **telepathically** with its wielder regardless of the language spoken. It can also **read languages and magical scripts**. As a foe of Chaos, Sagdubdih does not tolerate its wielder consorting with any Chaotically-aligned beings.

**Urn of Abundance (AREA 8):** Each day, upon command, this painted earthenware vessel can produce up to 1,000 gallons of water and 100 gallons of beer or wine, at a rate of one gallon per minute. Each liquid is produced one at a time.

## Zodiac Stones

These twelve periapts are dispersed across different locations on DUNGEON LEVEL I. The party must collect all of them to progress further into the dungeon. Inserting the twelve stones into the stone door of the **Gate of the Heavens** in AREA 30 (q.v.) grants the party access to DUNGEON LEVEL II. Each periapt is crafted from a different type of semi-precious stone and bears a rune representing a different zodiac constellation, as noted below. They do not detect as magical if checked for.

| Rune Type        | Gem Type     | Map Location |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Goat-fish        | Tourmaline   | 5a           |
| Warrior          | Bloodstone   | 7            |
| Two Fishes       | Jade         | 11           |
| Crab             | Moonstone    | 12           |
| Two-headed viper | Tiger's eye  | 13           |
| Eagle            | Turquoise    | 15           |
| Lion             | Rock crystal | 16           |
| Scales           | Smoky quartz | 17           |
| Bull             | Rose quartz  | 18           |
| Scorpion-man     | Sard         | 19           |
| Phoenix          | Azurite      | 20           |
| Barley stalks    | Citrine      | 21           |

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Wandering monsters are not used when playing the **Living Temple** version of this adventure. When playing the **Lost Temple** version, wandering monsters are encountered on DUNGEON LEVELS I and II, plus the ABZU SUB-LEVEL. None are encountered on DUNGEON LEVEL III. Wandering monsters found in the temple have no ecological basis for their existence there. The magic of the temple wills them into being at random, in the same manner as a *monster summoning* spell (q.v.). Thus, a leopard might come into existence in a section of hallway, where it remains for a short time, generally 1d4+1 turns, before disappearing.

Check for encounters once every three turns of play, with one occurring on a roll of 1 on a d6. If the die indicates an encounter, roll a d10 and consult the numbered list below.

- Carnivorous ape** (1d2): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 5; hp 25 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4 claws, 1d8 bite; SA rend for 1d8 damage; SD surprised only on a 1 on d6; INT low (7); AL N; Size L; xp 295 each; THACO 15; MM 7.
- Giant bluebottle fly** (1d4): AC 6; MV 9"/30" (MC: D); HD 3; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 bite; SA bite has a 10% chance to infect the victim with a disease; SD can attack and jump away up to 3" in same round; INT non- (0); AL N; Size M; xp 80 each; THACO 16; MMII 65.
- Giant fire beetle** (3d4): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 1 + 2; hp 7 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 bite; SD sheds light in a 10' radius; INT non- (0); AL N; Size S (2½' long); xp 34 each; THACO 18; MM 9.
- Giant toad** (1d6+1): AC 6; MV 6"+6" hop; HD 2 + 4; hp 14 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 bite; SA hop in melee; INT animal (1); AL N; Size M; xp 92 each; THACO 16; MM 95.
- Huge scorpion** (1d4): AC 4; MV 12"; HD 4 + 4; hp 20 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8 claws, 1d3 stinger + **poison** (save vs. Poison or die); INT non- (0); AL N; Size M; xp 265 each; THACO 15; MMII 107.
- Leopard** (1d2): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 3 + 2; hp 18 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3 claws, 1d6 bite; SA rake with rear claws for 1d4 each if both paw attacks hit, leap up to 25' forward or 20' upwards; SD surprised only on a 1 on a d6; INT semi- (2-4); AL N; Size M; xp 222 each; THACO 16; MM 60.
- Scorpion man** (1d4): AC 3; MV 15"; HD 4 + 1; hp 25 each; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4 khopesh, 1d6 sting + **poison** (save vs. Poison or die); SD save as 10 HD monster; MR 15%; INT low to average (5-10); AL CE; Size M (6' tall); xp 405 each; THACO 15; New Monster.
- Shadow** (1d6+3): AC 7; MV 12"; HD 3 + 3; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 touch; SA touch **drains** 1 point of