

# D4: ENCYCLOPÆDIA SUBTERRANICA

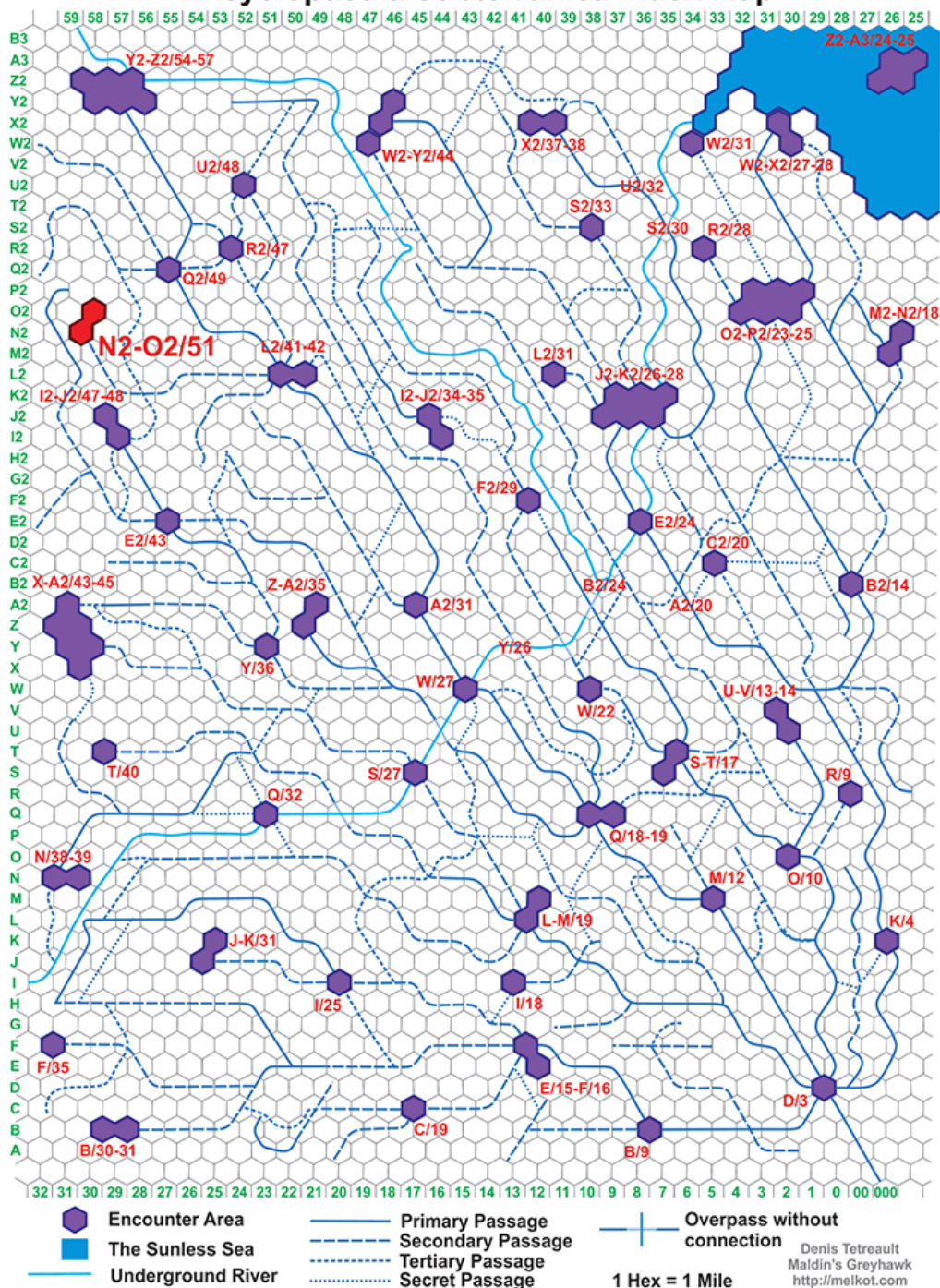
ENCOUNTER AREA N2-O2/51

The Drowad Caverns

by PapersAndPaychecks

Stuart Marshall © Stuart Marshall 2008-10

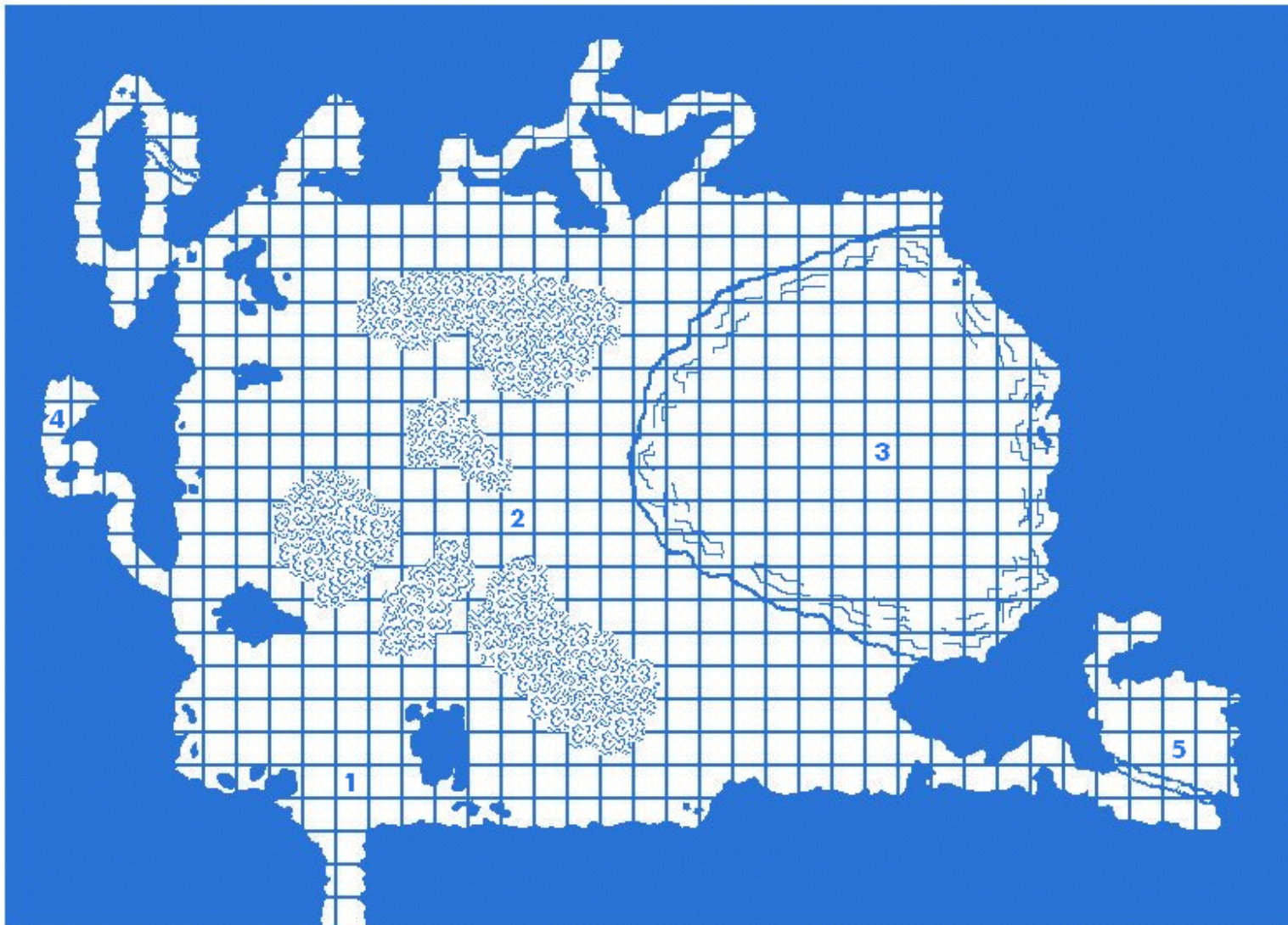
## Greyhawk's Underdark Encyclopaedia Subterranea Index Map



This encounter was developed as part of a collaborative exercise on the Dragonsfoot forums (<http://www.dragonsfoot.org>) to describe the rest of the "Depths of the Earth" from Dungeon Modules D1-3 by E. Gary Gygax, developing those areas illustrated on the map but not detailed in the modules themselves. For more information about D4: Encyclopædia Subterranea and the other encounter areas on the index map, visit **Maldin's Greyhawk - Greyhawk's Underdark** at <http://melkot.com/locations/underdark/underdark.html>



## ENCOUNTER AREA N2-O2/51: MAP A



### ENCOUNTER AREA N2-O2/51

#### The Drowad Caverns by Papers and Paychecks

1. **CAVERN ENTRANCE:** The entrance to this cavern is spectacular. In the ceiling of the cavern, a vast area of Tumkeoite is slowly decaying into Lacofcite, giving off the same strange, eldritch radiance that permeates the Vault of the Drow, and having the same effect on light and colors. Thus the party's perceptions are altered to an almost disturbingly psychedelic degree -- particularly if any of them happen to be using ultravision!

Stranger still are the fungi, which are things of beauty. Some are as tall as trees, with woody stems and bone white umbrellas, bracket-fungi-like scales encrusting their trunks; others are smaller and obviously tended, the most perfect in shape and form encouraged to grow. Twisted and gnarled fungi are nowhere to be seen -- presumably these are rapidly excised by some unknown hand.

In a forest in the surface world, birds would flutter from tree to tree, but here their ecological niche is filled by bats, which grow to a remarkable size.

Once the party has entered the Drowad Caverns, roll 1d6 every

three turns. On a 1, the party will be attacked by a huge swarm of stirges. From 41-60 (d20+40) stirges (6 hit points each) will flap down from places of concealment among the fungi, surprising on a 1-4 on a d6. They will attach themselves to the least heavily-armored target available. Note that no more than 12 stirges may attack a single man-sized individual (although up to 30 may attack a mule).

2. **THE DROWAD REALMS:** There are 23 Drowads in the cavern. 21 of them are 'normal' individuals (H.P.: 26 each). There is one clerical Drowad (HD 7, H.P.: 34, spells as a seventh level cleric: **command, cure light wounds, cure light wounds, sanctuary, chant, resist fire, spiritual hammer, dispel magic, glyph of warding, cure serious wounds**) and one magic-using one (HD 10, H.P.: 53, spells as a tenth level mage: **comprehend languages, detect magic, magic missile, magic missile, detect invisibility, mirror image, web, web, fireball, slow, slow, hallucinatory terrain, wall of fire, conjure earth elemental, magic jar**). These creatures are supported by 33 ghouls (H.P.: 10 each) that act as house-slaves, minions, and garbage disposal. The mage-Drowad wears a beautiful filigree necklace studded with emeralds; the value of this fantastic piece is probably as much as 50,000 g.p..

The GM should play the Drowads carefully. They will initially be curious about, but very wary of, the party and will hide from them. The Drowads will use their ability to appear as fungi while they

attempt to learn about the characters by using their innate **ESP** power. They will then report back to their leader, the mage, who will formulate a plan of action designed to deal with the party as safely and effectively as possible. If the Drowads learn the party has powerful magic items, they will certainly not wish for these items to leave their domain! They will attempt to obtain the party's magical gear, using **charm person** preferentially. If this fails, the Drowads may risk more direct action, such as having their ghouls fling **silenced** rocks at the party's spellcasters while their leader sends her Earth Elemental to attack and incapacitate any known clerics. If successful, the drowads will allow their ghouls to charge the players and paralyze them.

The mage-drowad will use her **slow** spells on the party as early as possible in any conflict, trying to double-**slow** them (one action every four rounds) if at all possible.

3. **THE LAKE OF GREED:** This lake appears placid, tranquil, quite clear, and up to 30' deep. In the center of the lake, at a depth of 20' or more, many beautiful gold coins, several rings, a pair of bracers, a crown, and a jeweled casket are visible.

The lake contains seven wraiths which lurk in the depths. The wraiths are very difficult to see underwater (treat as if AC 1) and owing to the action of the water, only thrusting weapons will do full damage against them; slashing and crushing weapons will inflict the minimum possible damage (assume a "1" on each damage die). The wraiths will attack together.

The jeweled casket has a **glyph of warding** on it that will drain one energy level (save versus spells) from anyone who opens it. It is empty.

Only one of the rings is magical: a **cursed ring of petrification** that will turn the first person to put it on into stone (save versus petrification at -4 to avoid). The bracers are perfectly ordinary **bracers of defense (AC7)**, while the crown (which contains gold and jewels worth 40,000 g.p.) also acts as a **helm of opposite alignment**.

4. **ROPER CAVE:** Three 12-hit dice ropers lurk at the end of this passage (H.P.: 77, 64, 61). They have normal (diced) treasure, while the largest one has a **gem of seeing** in its gizzard in addition to the ropers' standard treasure.
5. **PLACE OF SECRETS:** This natural-appearing cavern has been decorated in very realistic pigments with beautiful, but alien-looking, scenes. The walls are very entrancing to look at, and, if examined for more than three rounds, the scenes will begin to move.

The first scene witnessed by each character will be a simple, pastoral one, with a vision of the world above ground where unicorns gambol in grassy glades. The scene will last 1d3 rounds, and at the end, any character who has witnessed the scene will be relaxed and refreshed (and fully healed with all spells restored).

If the characters continue to watch, the second scene witnessed by each character will be a darker, more nightmarish one. Ask each player who is watching to describe his or her character's worst nightmare. The scene will last 1d3 rounds, and any character who watches to the end will lose 1,000 to 4,000 experience points.

The third scene is an image of the six hundred and sixty-fifth layer of the Abyss. Any character witnessing this scene must roll a save versus death magic or have his or her alignment changed to chaotic evil.

The fourth scene is an image of a single face. Even a glimpse of this face will be enough to subtract one point from the character's wisdom score permanently (no save).

The fifth scene, if any character is stupid enough still to be watching, will draw the character into the rock (no save) to become another image in the rock.

A careful search of this cavern will reveal a niche in the rock, high up at the back of the cave. This niche contains a small **bag of holding** in which the party will find a **longsword +3, +5 versus demons**, a **staff of power** and a **rod of resurrection**.

## DROWAD

FREQUENCY: Very rare  
NO. APPEARING: 6-36 (in lair); 1-6 (wandering)  
ARMOR CLASS: 6  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT DICE: 5 or better  
% IN LAIR: 90  
TREASURE TYPE: **See below**  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: **See below**  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: **See below**  
MAGICAL RESISTANCE: 60%  
INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional to Genius  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil  
SIZE: M  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

Drowads are to Dark Elves as Dryads are to the goodly elves of the surface. All Drowads are female, and they breed with Dark Elf males for continuance.

Deep beneath the earth there are great forests of fungi, of many strange and varied kinds. The greatest of these fungi have rigid structures for stems, which bear an outward resemblance to the trunks of great trees, and it is these fungi that serve as the habitat of the Drowads. It is rare for a Drowad to be far from her fungus for long.

Drowads are weak in combat. They use the attack tables of magic users, and do not receive any of the bonuses from high ability scores that their cousins the Dark Elves receive; neither can they fashion the strange semi-magical equipment used by the Dark Elves, nor do they show much interest in technology. However, the Dark Elves do keep them supplied with the +1 daggers they prefer for situations where combat is unavoidable.

Despite this seeming weakness, Drowads are dangerous foes because of their powerful spell-like abilities. All adult Drowads may use the following spell-like powers at will, once per round: **charm person**, **darkness 15' radius**, **silence 15' radius**, **sleep**. In addition they may affect undead as a 6th-level evil cleric does. Once per day, they may use the following additional spell-like powers: **transport via fungi** (exactly as the Druid spell **transport via plants**, save that fungi, obviously, are those affected), **fungus form** (exactly as the Druid spell **tree**, save that the form involved must be a fungus), and **ESP**. All of these effects take 1 segment to cast and require no material component.

Over and above these powers, some Drowads (typically 10% of their number) will possess the abilities of a magic user (75%) or cleric (25%) of 1st to 11th level (2d6-1).

Owing to their limited combat abilities, Drowads will typically accumulate undead, such as skeletons, zombies, or ghouls, to bear the brunt of any fighting that might be necessary.

Drowads are renowned for their potions. From the weird spores of the strange fungi they tend, they are able to manufacture potions of many kinds. They are the ultimate source of the sleep poisons employed by the

Dark Elves. Drowads possess this substance in abundance – all Drowads automatically carry 1d4 such potions. There is a 25% chance that any given Drowad will be carrying 1d4 other potions as well, typically ones of immediate, general purpose value, such as **invisibility** or **healing**.

Although Chaotic Evil, Drowads are not automatically hostile and will usually not fight unless this is clearly the best course of action. Their preferred approach with intruders into their realm is to control them using **charm person**; if this fails, they will negotiate or even bribe intruders to leave or do their bidding. However, the chaotic nature of Drowads means that they cannot be trusted to stick to their deals. There is a good chance they will renege if they can gain benefit from doing so.

Drowads have little use for most treasure, but prize small and delicate items of personal jewelry. A typical Drowad will wear 50-500 g.p. worth of rings, earrings, toe-rings, anklets, bracelets, necklaces, and similar things, usually finely-wrought in filigree and marvelously light.