



FOR 4 PCS OF
7TH LEVEL

LAMASSU'S SECRETS

A 5E WARLOCK ADVENTURE
BY RICHARD GREEN

LAMASSU'S SECRETS

Adventure Background

When the forces of the Mharoti Empire swept into Ishadia centuries ago, they smashed the Great Dam at Khazephon, unleashing a deluge onto the city and the armies of the Phoenix Throne. In the years since, Ishadia has rebuilt under the leadership of its Council of Commanders and stands firm against draconic expansion. But in the souks and coffee houses talk often turns to prophecies of a returning king.

The breached Great Dam still towers above the crowded streets of Khazephon. The abandoned palaces and gardens of the city's former elite sit atop the dam, watched over by a pride of lamassu who protect these residences from treasure-seekers. If asked, these sentinels say they await the return of a true king to Ishadia. Locals claim the lamassu have degenerated into greedy hoarders like the dragons they loathe. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two.

One of the most splendid palaces is that of House Zisuthros, who commissioned the extraordinary mosaicist, Baragisi Eridu, to decorate their home. Baragisi received

visions from the gods, inspiring his works, which are said to provide glimpses into Ishadia's future. The palace's secrets are guarded by the mighty lamassu Mesannaki, who hangs the corpses of would-be looters in gilded cages, burning like lanterns, from the side of the Great Dam.

The aasimar scholar Masreza Haddad has spent years studying prophecies that foretell the restoration of Ishadia's monarchy and the dawn of a new "golden age." He hires the PCs to sneak into the palace of House Zisuthros to search for clues hidden in Baragisi's mosaics. Masreza insists that the noble guardian of the palace not be killed. Perhaps the adventurers can persuade the lamassu to let them peacefully conduct their studies?

The Great Dam

The climb up from the city is steep and strenuous, but you have made it to the top of the sundered dam above Khazephon. Over twenty grand residences sit on the ridge ahead of you - the former homes of the city's elite.

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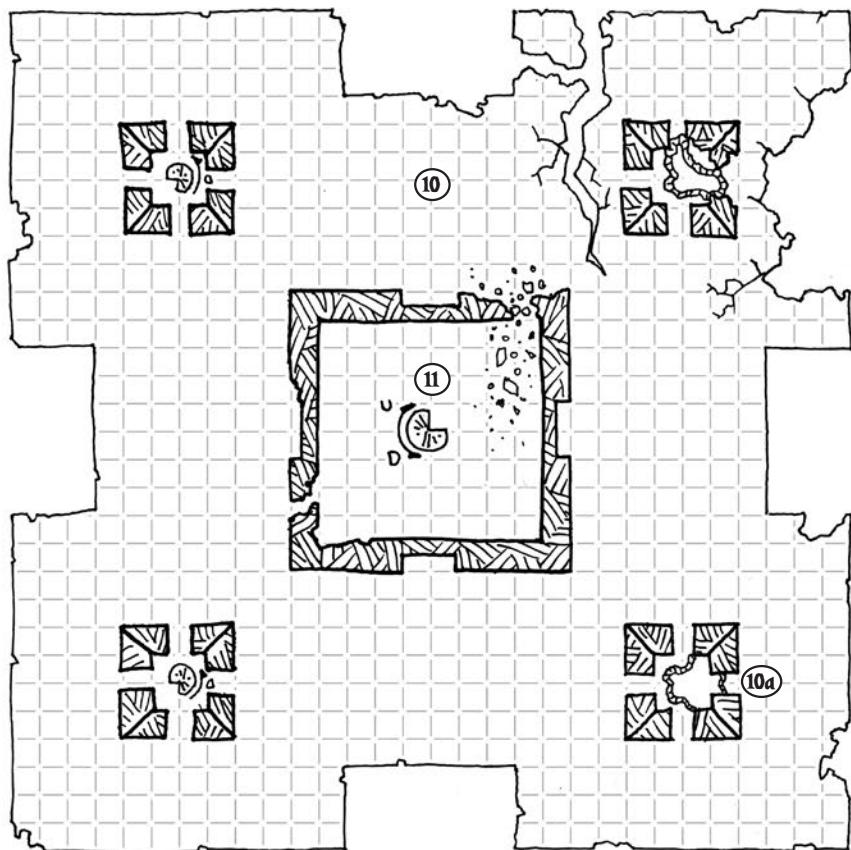
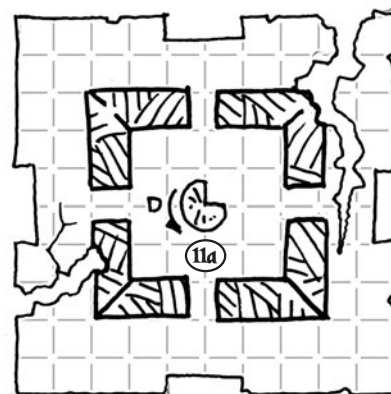
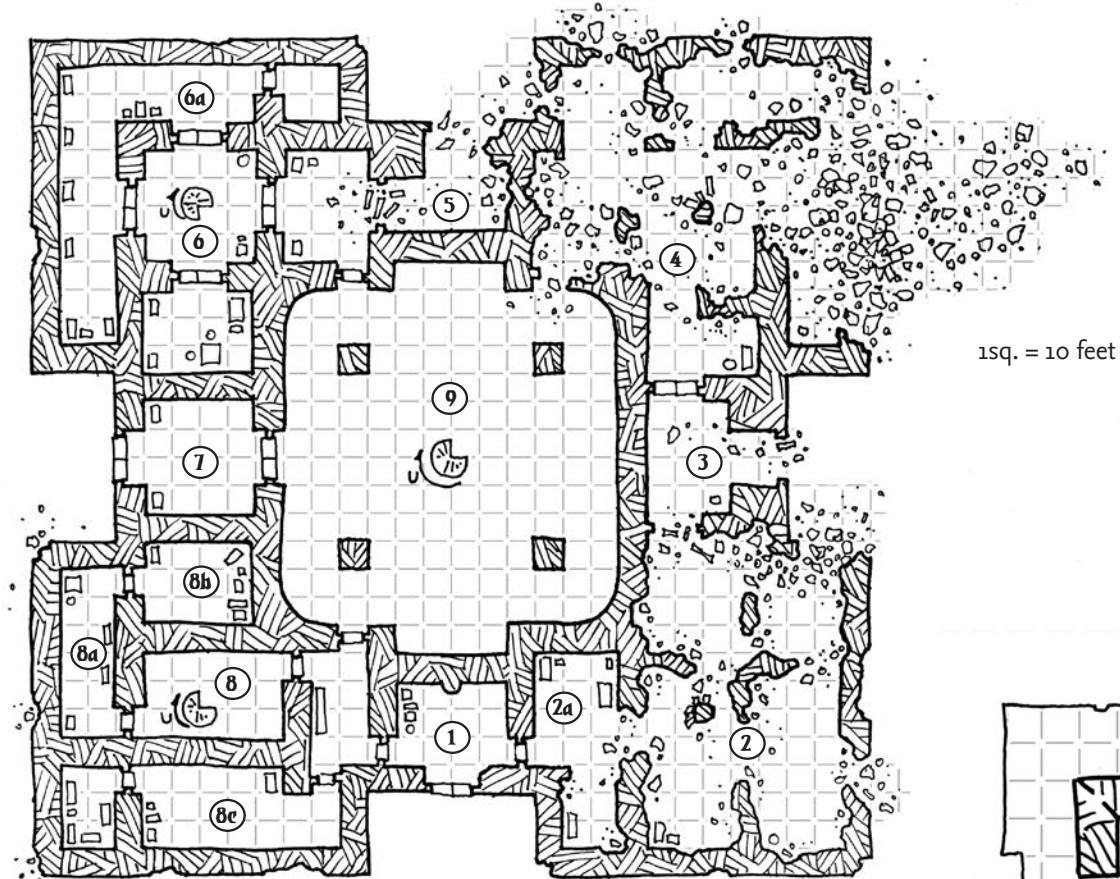
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The fourth palace is House Zisuthros. As the PCs travel to it, they spot the gilded cages that hang from the walls of the dam beneath them, holding the ever-burning corpses of past treasure-seekers. Climbing down the wall of the dam to reach a burning corpse requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The cages are latched but not locked. Any creature that touches a burning corpse takes 3 (1d6) fire damage. The corpses are too badly burnt to determine race or gender, but they are all recognizable as humanoids.

The Vacant Palace

The House Zisuthros is situated amidst overgrown terraced gardens on four levels connected by crumbling marble steps. Ornate fountains and statues of winged lamassu, sphinxes, and other magical creatures can be seen among the palm trees and cascades of flowering bougainvillea.

The palace building is almost an extension of the gardens with palms and ornamental plants growing on its flat roof. The roof is topped with five pyramids, a large two-storey pyramid in the center and four smaller ones at the corners. The walls on the eastern side of the palace have partially collapsed, while much of the northeast section has fallen into ruin. Though the roof is lined with cracks, the remainder of the structure is intact.

As the PCs explore the palace, sounds of combat and exploding *glyphs of warding* will alert Mesannaki (area 9) to their presence. The lamassu likes to use *dimension door* to appear without warning and confront intruders. If he takes more than 50 hp damage, he will withdraw to the central sanctum.

1. SOUTH ENTRANCE

A pair of huge double doors bearing the emblem of House Zisuthros, an aurochs with huge horns, lead into the palace.

The doors are unlocked, but they are protected by a *glyph of warding* (explosive runes), triggered by a non-celestial creature touching the doors. A PC can find the glyph with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A PC can disarm the glyph with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check or a *dispel magic* spell cast on the door.

If the glyph is triggered, each creature within 20 feet of the door must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Beyond is a large entrance hall with a polished marble floor, a 20-foot-high ceiling, and bas-reliefs recording the noble deeds of the Zisuthros family, including handing out loaves of bread to the hungry and ministering to the sick.

2. SCIONS' APARTMENTS

Once the luxurious living quarters of the sons and daughters of the Zisuthros family, these apartments have fallen into disrepair, and their floors are littered with debris. The exterior walls have been breached, and the spiral staircase up to the roof has collapsed.

If the PCs have not already dealt with the owl harpies (area 10a), they are likely to come under attack via the hole in the roof as they explore this area.

2a. This ornate hall remains more or less intact. Bas-reliefs on the wall show the family at leisure, and two marble sphinxes recline on plinths. Made from thousands of colored tesserae, Baragisi Eridu's mosaic inlaid in the floor draws the eye to its image of the Four Gates of Ashadon at Mardas Adamat. Two figures stand on the ramparts, holding hands: a golden-eyed man in shining armor and a woman with silver hair and small horns.

3. EAST ENTRANCE

A female aasimar in fine robes with striking, crimson eyes – actually a **lamia** under a *disguise self* spell – waits near the open archway from the gardens.

The “aasimar” introduces herself to the PCs as Delondra, and she claims to have a map of the palace showing where all the treasure is hidden. She offers to share her map with the party if they are willing to join forces. This is a ruse to lure them to her lair, a pavilion in the gardens, where her thralls, three bewitched aasimar **knights**, are waiting in ambush.

4. OVERGROWN APARTMENTS

This wing held the living quarters of the head of House Zisuthros and his wives. Where the eastern walls have collapsed, the gardens have encroached, plant life covering the walls, columns, and floors.

4a. Three barrel-shaped **cactids** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 50) covered in bright pink flowers lurk amongst the vegetation. They have scattered a handful of gold coins (23 gp) to attract prey.

4b. Vines and creepers have covered the mosaic by Baragisi Eridu that decorates the floor of this chamber. It can be spotted with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check and revealed by spending 10 minutes hacking back the greenery. The mosaic depicts the coastal city of Sequira, famous for its white buildings and shady reputation. In the top floor of an inn, a silver-haired woman with horns can be seen holding a newborn baby with shining, golden eyes.

5. NORTH ENTRANCE

Two greenish bronze **temple dogs** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 378), appearing as a cross between a large dog and a lion, stand on guard here and are easily mistaken for statuary. They attack any non-celestials that enter the room.

6. NORTHWEST WING

This part of the palace was used for entertaining important guests. A stone, spiral staircase leads up the roof.

6a. The northern wall of this L-shaped hall is decorated with a mosaic by Baragisi Eridu. The mosaic depicts pilgrims in the holy city of Shuruppak, heading to the Seven Heavens through the portal in the Basilica of the Golden Lion. One of the pilgrims is a young girl with golden eyes. She is holding the hand of an older, silver-haired woman with horns.

A giant bull-headed statue made of black stone and covered in hieroglyphics stands to the left of the double doors. The statue is a **possessed pillar** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 314) that animates and attacks intruders.

7. WEST ENTRANCE

A pair of double doors bearing the large-horned aurochs emblem of House Zisuthros lead into the palace. They are barred from the inside and require a successful DC 20 Strength check to open.

The entrance hall beyond is decorated in a similar fashion to area 1. The bronze doors at the eastern end are carved with images of the Seven Heavens and are protected by a *glyph of warding* (explosive runes). This glyph is like the glyph in area 1, except it deals fire damage when triggered instead of thunder damage.

8. SOUTHWEST WING

This series of lavishly appointed rooms was used for leisure and relaxation and includes an empty library (8a) and a reading room (8b). A stone, spiral staircase leads up the roof.

8c. A 10-foot-deep, tiled bathing pool fills the center of this chamber. The walls are decorated with mosaics by Baragisi Eridu depicting the construction of the Great Dam. The pool is empty and its floor is strewn with debris, but a mosaic showing a lake teeming with fish can be seen beneath the dirt.

The mosaic is a magical **trap**. A PC can find the trap with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, noticing a single out-of-place tesserae on the outer edge of the pool with blue, whirlpool-like swirls in it. A PC can disarm the trap for 24 hours with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check or permanently with a *dispel magic* (DC 16) cast on the pool.

If a PC enters the pool, the trap triggers and the PC must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be pulled into the mosaic. A PC pulled into the mosaic is 60 feet below the surface of a lake with a **hunter shark** swimming toward it. Use the standard rules for suffocating and underwater combat. The trapped PC can make a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check, seeing a rusty iron sphere wedged between the rocks 10 feet below on a success. The iron sphere is a set of *iron bands of binding*.

Any PC in the room above can determine that the trapped PC has become part of the mosaic with a successful DC

12 Wisdom (Perception) check. A PC outside the pool that wants to help a trapped PC can jump into the pool after the trap has triggered, bypassing the Wisdom saving throw. *Dispel magic* (DC 16) cast on the pool ends the effect early. The mosaic returns to normal after 1 minute or if successfully dispelled, and any trapped PCs reappear at the bottom of the empty pool. Once triggered, the trap does not function again for 24 hours.

If the PCs clear the debris and examine the mosaic closely, they see a golden-eyed girl pulling a ruby shard from the sand on the bottom of the lake.

9. CENTRAL SANCTUM

The walls of this vast chamber are decorated with exquisite bas-reliefs depicting life in the glorious kingdom of Ishadia. Four pillars of sparkling marble, their capitals carved with lamassu, hold up the ceiling. A golden flame burns in a large copper basin on a tripod between the northwest and northeast pillars. A stone, spiral staircase rises from the center of a floor mosaic.

This room was used for important meetings and for worship of the sun god Quorzu. Today, the lamassu Mesannaki guards the sacred flame which holds part of the divine spark. A true Scion of Ishadia who claims this flame can restore the Phoenix Throne.

The sacred flame burns eternally and cannot be extinguished. It gives off heat normally and can be used to light flammable objects, such as a torch. A creature that touches the flame takes 4 (1d8) fire damage. Mesannaki uses the sacred flame to ignite the bodies he hangs from the dam – the divine spark burns those who steal from House Zisuthros forever.

Mesannaki takes his role as protector of the palace and its secrets very seriously. He issues a single warning to leave immediately before he turns his full fury on intruders. Mesannaki will flee to his lair in the central pyramid (area 11) if reduced to 50 hp or less.

It is possible, but difficult, to reason with the lamassu. The PCs can persuade Mesannaki to listen to their story for a maximum of 5 minutes with a successful DC 25 Charisma (Persuasion) check. At the end of their tale, they can attempt a second check. If the PCs are good-aligned and truthful, they have advantage on both checks. If both checks are successful, the lamassu allows the PCs to spend 1 hour studying the mosaics in the palace. If they fail one check, he insists they leave immediately. If they fail both checks, he attacks the PCs, believing they are lying thieves come to steal the Zisuthros family treasure.

The mosaic by Baragisi Eridu on the floor of this chamber depicts the twenty palaces on top of the Great Dam. A golden-eyed girl visits each palace in turn and dips her torch in their sacred flames.

10. ROOF

The roof of the palace was once a well tended garden. Now, it is smothered with foliage, growing from cracks and holes in the stonework. The southeast pyramid (10a) is home to a pair of **owl harpies** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 246). Mesannaki tolerates these creatures as they are highly aggressive toward intruders.

Treasure: Tangled in the harpies' nest of sticks and twigs are six +1 arrows, an alabaster statuette of a Nurian pharaoh (worth 250 gp), a gold-plated mask of a drunken dwarf (worth 300 gp), a *potion of water breathing*, and 707 gp.

11. CENTRAL PYRAMID

Mesannaki makes his home in the central pyramid and will retreat to the upper floor (11a) to make his last stand. The lamassu is protected by a **uraeus** (*Tome of Beasts*, p. 392), a vibrantly-colored cobra with bronze wings, which gladly takes damage on behalf of its master.

Treasure: The lamassu keeps House Zisuthros' treasure in area 11a in a chest, protected with a *glyph of warding* (explosive runes) that works the same as the glyph in area 1. The chest contains 105 pp, 1,800 gp, an *Eye of Horus* (*Midgard Worldbook*, p. 408), and gold and silver art objects worth 2,500 gp total.

Concluding the Adventure

Masreza Haddad rewards the PCs with 500 gp for each mosaic they accurately describe to him on their return to the city. He is convinced that the golden-eyed girl is the long-awaited Scion of Ishadia.

LAMASSU

This magnificent creature has the head of a human, the body of a lion, and the golden wings of an eagle. It turns its majestic head and smiles benevolently at all travelers it meets.

Lamassu are noble celestial creatures dedicated to battling the forces of evil and protecting sites of historic and religious importance from harm. Most of the time, they inhabit abandoned temples and other ruins in the deserts of the Southlands and keep the surrounding area from being overrun by foul monsters. Kind and compassionate towards humanoids, their regal bearing and archaic turns of phrase can sometimes make them seem aloof and superior.

Immortal Nature. A lamassu doesn't require food, drink, or sleep.

LAMASSU

Large celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 147 (14d10 + 70)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +9, Wis +8, Cha +7

Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Insight +8, Perception +8, Religion +7



Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Enochian (Celestial), Nurian, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. The lamassu has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The lamassu's weapon attacks are magical.

Pounce. If the lamassu moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lamassu can make one claw attack against it as a bonus action.

Innate Spellcasting. The lamassu's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *detect evil and good, mage hand, magic circle, sacred flame, unseen servant.*

3/day each: *bless, calm emotions, command, dimension door, invisibility, thunderwave*

1/day each: *banishment, flame strike, glyph of warding*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lamassu makes two attacks with its claws.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Healing Touch (3/Day). The lamassu touches a creature. The target magically regains 22 (5d8) hit points and is cured of any curses or diseases and of any poisoned, blinded, or deafened conditions afflicting it.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The lamassu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The lamassu regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The lamassu makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Claw Attack. The lamassu makes one claw attack.

Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The lamassu beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the lamassu must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The lamassu can then fly up to half its flying speed.

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