

Level 9A: Caves and Caverns — The Hydra's Lair

This cavern, a large nexus point in the dungeon, leads to the goblin city on **Level 12A** and is the only access to the city within the halls of Rappan Athuk. The goblin clergy have set several allied and guardian creatures here (gargoyles, trolls and shadow dragons) to man the gates. A number of other creatures reside on this level, either known to the goblins (e.g., gugs and will-o'-wisps) or unknown (e.g., Lord Navarre). The goblins, unable to open the mithral gates, have no idea what lies beyond them. The main cavern requires several days' exploration to fully examine, as it is over 2 miles long and 1/3 mile wide. Numerous support columns stand fast throughout the cavern, and the limestone within the cavern is very much "alive," as evidenced by the thousands of stalactites and stalagmites "growing" from the ceilings and floors, respectively. Blind cavefish populate the rivers in great numbers, and rats, bats and other vermin thrive in the fungus-encrusted gloom. A map of this level is depicted in **Map RA-9A**.

Purple Worm: HD 28 (140 hp); AC 6 [13]; Atk 1 bite (3d12), sting (2d8 + poison); Move 9; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 30/7400; Special: Poison sting, swallow whole.

Gug: HD 15; AC -2 [21]; Atk 1 bite (1d8) and 4 claws (1d6); Move 15 (Climb 9); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 16/3200; Special: Immune to poison and disease.

Giant Rat: HD 1d4 hp; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP A/5; Special: 5% are diseased.

Troll: HD 6+3; AC 4 [15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Regenerate 3 hp/round.

Goblin Fighter: HD 2; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 weapon (1d6); Move 9; Save 16; AL C; CL/XP 2/30; Special: -1 to hit in sunlight. Gear: Ring armor, shield, handaxe, shortbow, 10 arrows, dagger.

Goblin Leader: HD 3; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 weapon (1d6); Move 9; Save 14; AL C; CL/XP 3/60; Special: -1 to hit in sunlight. Gear: Ring armor, shield, short sword, crossbow, 10 bolts, 25 gp.

Gargoyle: HD 4; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d4), 1 horn (1d6); Move 9 (Fly 15); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Fly.

Will-o'-Wisp: HD 9; AC -8 [27]; Atk 1 shock (2d6); Move 18; Save 6; AL N; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Change appearance, lightning.

Stirge: HD 1+1; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 proboscis (1d3); Move 3 (Fly 18); Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: blood drain (1d4), +2 to hit bonus.

Small Piercers: HD 1; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 drop and pierce (1d6); Move 1; Save 17; AL N; CL/XP 1/15; Special: None.

Level 9A

Equivalent Dungeon Level: 12

Entrances: Stairs from **Level 7A**, river tunnel from **Level 4A**

Exits: Stairs to **Level 12A** from room **9A-9**; rivers to **Level 10A**; mithral gates to **Level 11**. **Area 9A-5** leads to **Level 9D**.

Wandering Monsters: Check once every hour on 1d20:

1	1 purple worm
2	1 gug (see Area 9-4)
3	3d6 giant rats
4	1d3 trolls (see Area 9-5)
5	A company of goblin troops — 4d4 goblin fighters accompanied by 1d4 goblin leaders
6	1d6 gargoyles (see Area 9-1)
7	1 will-o'-wisp (see Area 9-8)
8	2d6 stirges
9	1d3 small piercers
10-20	No encounter

Detections: Strong evil emanates from the shadow dragon lair at **Area 9A-7**.

Shielding: Lead shields Lord Navarre's lair (**9A-2**) and the mithral gates area, preventing magical detections and any magical means of transport (such as *teleportation*) into or out of them.

Standard Features: Because the ground is slippery and uneven, each round of melee or running requires a saving throw at +4. Failure means the PC falls down. Monsters, more familiar with the terrain, enjoy normal movement. Climbing the wet and slippery walls, columns and other cavern features is difficult, but not impossible. Mist enshrouds all areas east of the hot springs, limiting vision to 60 ft. The umbral dragons and will-o'-wisps see normally, as they do not need eyes to "see." Monsters automatically surprise PCs using light sources, except for purple worms, which burrow up from below and cannot see the light source. Fungus encrusts most of the surfaces on this level; 20% of the fungus is edible, while 10% is poisonous (lethal). A druid, ranger or dwarf can determine which are edible.



LEVEL 9A

9A-1. Entrance

The tunnel opens into a vast cavern; dozens of rat tunnels dot its walls. Stalactites and stalagmites reach toward one another like hundreds of bony fingers. The roof of the cave is too high to see, and bats swarm in the torchlight. The path is smooth and slippery. PCs hear running water somewhere off in the distance. As the PCs enter the cavern, they may hear an evil chattering — a chilling cacophony comprising dozens of obscene, whispery voices emanating from the **48 gargoyles** that reside in the six caves above the entrance area. Numerous gargoyles immediately attack the PCs (see Tactics, below). Immediately check for an additional wandering monster if the PCs are using light to illuminate their path. Monsters equate “light” with “fine dining.”

Gargoyles (48): HD 4; AC 5 [14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d4), 1 horn (1d6); Move 9 (Fly 15); Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Fly.

Tactics: Immediately, 4d6 gargoyles swoop in, attacking; an additional 1d6 gargoyles join the fray each round until all 48 are involved in the battle. Slaves of the goblin priests on **Level 12A**, the gargoyles have been quested to slay all humans and non-goblin humanoids that enter the cavern through the passage from **Level 7A**. Gargoyles not swooping in immediately use their freeze ability to appear as stone, thus confusing any attempt to verify their numbers. Attacking from above, the gargoyles try to fly away with grappled victims, carrying them to the cavern’s roof and dropping them from heights of over 60 ft. One gargoyle can lift a held opponent weighing up to 150 pounds. Two gargoyles working together can lift a held opponent weighing up to 300 pounds 20 ft. per round.

Gargoyle Caves: The six caves that crown the cavern’s entrance contain the gargoyle’s nest areas. Because the caves are 40 ft. off the ground, PCs must climb up to reach them. Most caves contain little treasure, since the evil priests of Orcus routinely clean them out. However, cave number 4 does contain some treasure.

Treasure: Acquired from less-fortunate visitors to the cavern, the stash in cave number 4 contains the following items: 110 gp and 83 sp; a gold music box worth 1,250 gp; 3 uncut pieces of amber worth 100 gp each; a huge golden-yellow topaz worth 500 gp; a suit of *+1 leather armor*; and a *potion of extra healing*. The numerous articles of nonmagical gear include 4 longswords, 2 maces, 6 daggers, 4 oil flasks, 5 vials of holy water, a suit of chainmail, a heavy steel shield, a bastard sword, 2 suits of plate mail and holy symbols of Set, Hecate, Thyr and Ra. Hidden in one dagger’s hilt is a *ring of poison resistance*. The hollow, lead-lined hilt prevents magical detection.

9A-2. The Tomb of Lord Navarre

Special note to the Referee: PCs find this very dangerous and well-hidden lair only by carefully searching below the river’s water line, and only then on a successful find secret doors check. Even if the PCs locate the lair, none are likely to survive their encounter with its occupants. In the unlikely event that they triumph, the PCs gain two very powerful magic items. This area is intended for later adventuring or as a set piece for a quest, after high-level PCs hear some legend or consult a sage about Navarre or Deserach.

Four feet below the water’s surface, the PCs spy a strange symbol carved on the steep side of the river wall: crossed swords over a holy symbol of Set. This symbol covers a secret door leading to the long-undisturbed tomb of Lord Navarre, an antipaladin who has degenerated further, becoming a demonic knight. Undiscovered for over 500 years, the secret door is trapped with a *symbol of death* (see below). Detecting and opening the door exposes a 60 ft. long underwater passage that leads to an underground grotto featuring a cave opening. Sixty feet through that passage, the PCs enter a 50 ft. diameter cave that contains a single tomb.

Opening the secret river door awakens **Lord Navarre**, and he is awaiting the PCs’ arrival.

Lord Navarre the Demon Knight: HD 9 (43 hp); AC -1 [20]; Atk *+1 two-handed sword* (1d10+1 + poison) or 2 slams (1d6); Move 12; Save 6; AL C; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Breath of unlife (3/day, 10-ft cone, 2d4 strength damage, dead rise as shadow demons in 2d4 rounds), fear (flee 2d4 rounds when you hear his voice), magic resistance (30%), +1 or better weapon to hit, spells (*dispel magic* (2/day), *fireball* (1/day), *symbol of fear* (1/day), *wall of ice*), summon glabrezu 1/day (75%).

Glabrezu: HD 10; AC -3 [22]; Atk 2 pincers (2d6), 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite 1d4+1; Move 9; Save 5; AL C; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Magic resistance (60%), demonic magical powers, immune to fire, darkness 10-ft radius, spells (*cause fear*, *levitate*, *polymorph* (self)).

Tactics: Before the PCs arrive, Navarre *gates* in a glabrezu to help him, with a 75% chance of success. Once PCs enter the tomb area, he seals the entrance using his *wall of ice* ability. He then casts *symbol of fear* on any obvious spellcaster, and coordinates an attack with his demon ally. If surrounded, he casts *fireball* on his position (for 9d6 damage), trusting his magic resistance and ring to protect him.

Treasure: Only after defeating the monsters may PCs search the lair. Navarre himself wields a poisoned *+1 two-handed sword* and wears *+2 platemail*. He also has a *ring of fire resistance*.

PCs discover three large chests in addition to the tomb. The chests hold coins and gems as described below. In chest #3’s **secret compartment**, the PCs discover a magic chest containing a terrible monster and a valuable treasure horde. Navarre’s corrupter, **Deserach** the mage (now a demilich) placed her soul and her treasure within this chest and trusted the chest to Navarre’s keeping. The chest’s command word can be obtained by *legend lore* or *wish*; it is a musical sequence of notes that must be played on a harp by someone of talent. The intricate tune if played even a little improperly has no effect on the chest. When the musical key is properly played, the chest enlarges to full size and opens.

Chest #1: This chest contains 1,100 gp and 16 finely matched rubies worth 10,000 gp if sold as a set or 500 gp each if sold individually.

Chest #2: This chest contains a masterwork harp of silver and gold (worth 6,000 gp), wrapped in a silk blanket. The chest also contains a platinum locket, inside of which is a miniature painting of Deserach playing the harp, worth 1,000 gp (2,500 gp if Deserach is recognized).

Chest #3: This chest contains 2,500 sp and the secret compartment mentioned above. It is trapped with a *cloudkill* spell.

- Deserach’s chest contains the following:
- Spellbooks containing six each 1st through 6th-level spells, four each 7th and 8th-level spells and three 9th-level spells.
- *Staff of withering*

Deserach’s Chest

This chest resembles an iron chest except reliefs of powerful magic symbols and images depicting the lich-mage Deserach cover the outside. The magic used to create the item makes it almost impossible to open by means other than with a cipher created when the chest is created. The lid cannot be opened by either breaking it or picking the lock.



- A ring of protection +2
- Bracers of quickness (see sidebox)

slain (or, hypothetically, until she is slain).

The Tomb: Navarre's tomb contains nothing of value — rotted material and some burrowing rot grubs.

Bracers of Quickness

These items appear to be leather arm guards. They reinforce the wearer's reaction time and speed, granting him a +2 bonus to saving throws against breath weapons and death rays and adding +3 to his movement rate. Both bracers must be worn for the magic to be effective.

- The skull of **Deserach the demi-lich**. [Oops! That's not treasure!]

Deserach the Demi-Lich: HD 11; AC 0 [19]; Atk steal soul (*death spell* at will); Move Fly 12; Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: Immune to most spells (*power word kill* and *dispel evil* deal 50 points of damage, no save, to a demilich), +3 or better magic weapon to hit, immune to acid, electricity, fire, cold and polymorph, rejuvenation, steal souls, cast spells as 20th level magic-user, reforms in 10 days.

Tactics: Deserach casts *time stop* immediately upon being brought forth, *teleports* 120 ft. away from the PCs and casts *prismatic sphere*. If she still has time-stopped actions, she uses *death spells* until it expires. She then casts *wall* spells to maintain her distance and provide barriers between herself and any fighter types. She then attacks spellcasters (and anyone else) with her *death spells* until all of her teeth (9) and eyes (2) are full. The Referee is free to select any other attacks after this, until all are

9A-3. The Mithral Gates of Akbeth

As the PCs follow the river, it seems to disappear ahead. Upon investigating this odd phenomenon, the PCs stumble upon a wondrous site. Two huge gates, fully 20 ft. tall and half again as wide, block the river's course. A fine-meshed grate allows water to flow beneath the gate. Runes and writing cover the faces of both solid-mithral doors. Agamemnon the Wizard, directed by the goddess Hecate, used mighty magics and built this barrier to imprison Akbeth, betrayer of Hecate. Only a *wish* opens the doors, except as described below. This gateway is the only entrance to **Level 11**.

The door's magically written inscriptions comprise a series of prayers to Hecate. *Read magic* translates them. Most of these prayers are meaningless to the PCs, but one reveals the secret to opening the gates, as follows:

*"Enchanted water to the goddess feed
Bring her the blessings to heal her pain
And pass ye through the mithral fane
Know ye devout of the goddess the verse
Ever faithful finds ever cursed"*

Reciting this prayer opens the gates only if a *healing potion* (of any kind) is spilled into the river or the water is blessed. Once the ritual is performed, the gates slowly slide open of their own accord, revealing the room beyond.

Worshipping Hecate

Hecate, the chaotic goddess of magic, accepts only virgin priestesses as her clerics. Hecate's priestesses are always dual-classed female magic-user/clerics. Infamous for her strict and very unforgiving nature, Hecate requires that her priestesses dedicate themselves to the quest for knowledge and nothing else. Once a priestess commits any violation of those devotional precepts, she loses one level in each class. Serious transgressions (like those of Akbeth) result in a loss of all powers and other perils (like being turned into a statue). Numerous male magicians worship her, and she sometimes blesses them with knowledge beyond that normally attainable by mortals. Her symbol is a many-headed hydra poised before a flaming sphere.

Beyond the mithral gates lurks a **12-headed pyrohydra**. Under no circumstances does it leave this room. The river bisects this 60 ft. diameter room, flowing to and exiting on the far side, leading to a shallow river passage (through which the PCs can wade) to the top of the waterfall on **Level 11**. The pyrohydra attacks all intruders except priestesses of Hecate and can be turned by anyone dramatically wielding a holy symbol of Hecate.

Pyrohydra (12 headed): HD 12 (63 hp); AC 5 [14]; Atk 12 heads (1d10); Move 9; Save 3; AL N; CL/XP 15/2900; Special: Breath fire (each head, 15-ft. cone, 3d6 fire damage), immune to fire.

Note: Being a pyrohydra, the creature enjoys fire immunity. Thus, acid is the only way to permanently cauterize its severed necks — making a *jug of alchemy* (see below) invaluable.

9A-4. Lair of the Gugs

The cavern's stone changes form as you enter this tunnel. Torchlight gleams and refracts against the quartz crystals that bejewel the corridor. Anyone with an Intelligence score of 13 or greater has a 1 in 6 chance to decipher that the scrape marks on the walls and ceiling suggest that four-armed creatures often move through the area.

This area is the home of **4 gugs**. While the rest hunt for food, 1d3-1 gugs lurk in the main cave area. They have no treasure; however, a large vein of gold can be seen in the north corner of the room. If mined, it yields 200,000 gp of raw ore (weighing 10 times as much).

Gugs (4): HD 15; AC -2 [21]; Atk 1 bite (1d8) and 4 claws (1d6); Move 15 (Climb 9); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 16/3200; Special: Immune to poison and disease.

Tactics: None to speak of. Gugs just attack. On a 1 on 1d6, checked once per turn, an additional gug (up to a total of 4) arrives from another area.



9A–5. Sixteen Trolls with a Jug of Alchemy!

This cave's floor has collapsed, creating a 60 ft. deep sinkhole. One tunnel along the side of the sinkhole leads to **Area 9D–28**. Its walls are steep but not sheer. Muddy, giant-size footprints cover several rocks on the slope. At the bottom of the sinkhole, the PCs see a 10 ft. diameter cave entrance, from which emanates grunting noises and a terrible smell, like rotting fish.

In this cave are **16 trolls**, who guard this cavernous level for the goblin priests on **Level 12A**, while another **24 trolls** roam the level's caves and warrens. Once 40 trolls are slain, no more are found on this level. For each turn PCs spend near this area, there is a 40% chance (1 to 4 on 1d10) that 2d3 trolls either exit or return to the cave. Those trolls leaving the cave head off in a random direction if they do not detect the PCs.

The cave's 200 ft. diameter interior has various obstacles (e.g., columns, boulders, stalactites) that divide it into numerous interconnected chambers. The trolls bivouac in these chambers and attack all who enter the cave or sinkhole area.

Trolls (40): HD 6+3; AC 4 [15]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 11; AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Regenerate 3hp/round.

Tactics: Charge! Otherwise, the trolls avoid fire and run if seriously burned by fire or acid (over 70% damage).

Treasure: In the far north end of the cave, small pile of refuse contains bones and twisted pieces of metal. Hidden under over 400 pounds of disgusting filth is a long-lost *jug of alchemy*, requiring a search to find it.

Jug of Alchemy

This magical jug can pour forth various liquids on command. The quantity depends on the liquid summoned. The jug can pour only one kind of liquid, with up to seven decantations of that liquid, on any given day. Possible liquids and their respective daily maximum quantities are as follows:

- Ammonia, 1 quart
- Aqua regia, 8 ounces (a powerful acid causing 2d6 acid damage per ounce on a direct hit)
- Beer, 4 gallons
- Chlorine, 1 ounce
- Cyanide, 0.5 ounces
- Fresh water, 8 gallons
- Oil, 1 pint
- Pure alcohol, 4 ounces
- Salt water, 16 gallons
- Vinegar, 2 gallons
- Wine, 1 gallon

9A–6. The Hot Springs

Clouds of steam billow from the ground ahead, and water gurgles noisily. The air smells sulfurous and gets warmer as PCs approach the pools.

A geothermal pipe from **Level 10** feeds a series of pools in this area with hot (110+ F), mineral-rich water. Ranging from 5 to 25 ft. deep, the pools nurture large colonies of harmless bacteria, and fungus grows opportunistically in the humid environment. While the pools present no inherent danger, vision is obscured within 500 ft. of the pools due to steam, limiting visibility to 60 ft. Bats, rats and other small inhabitants of the level frequent this area, feeding off the overabundant fungus.

9A–7. The Umbral Dragons' Lair

Torchlight loses some of its vigor, and the hot springs' swirling mists create a surreal effect of shimmering colors as they reflect the feeble light. A vast darkness can be seen moving against the distant, gloomy background.

The **male dragon** inspects the visitors to determine if they are friend (goblins) or food (anyone else). Unless they are disguised as goblins, the PCs get some bad news. The dragon attacks immediately, and his **mate** joins him 1d6 rounds after the battle begins. These dragons serve the goblin priests on **Level 12** as the guardians at the goblin city's gate. They are not quipped like the gargoyles in **Area 9A–1**, but they are fed well and supplied with treasure by the goblins, to whom the dragons are fairly loyal.

Tactics: The umbral dragons initially breathe on as many opponents as they can. They then cast *ray of exhaustion* against a fighter PC and engage opponents in melee. The female flies over the PCs and attacks from the rear, using her snatch ability; the male holds the front. If severely wounded, the dragons retreat into their cave. If the male is killed, the female retreats into the nest to guard the eggs. If the female is killed, the male goes berserk, fighting until slain, using only breath and melee attacks (abandoning his spells).

Umbral Dragons (2): HD 19 (91, 86 hp); AC –3 [22]; Atk 1 bite (2d8), 2 claws (2d6); Move 15 (Fly 60); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 20/4,400; Special: +1 or better weapon to hit, immune to cold, death effects, paralysis and sleep, magic resistance (55%), breath weapon (50-ft. cone of negative energy, 10d8 damage), spells (1/day - *ray of exhaustion**, *invisibility*, *darkness* 15-ft. radius, *cause serious wounds*).

* This spell imposes a –4 penalty to attack rolls and saves for 19 rounds.

Treasure: The umbral dragons maintain their horde in the far reaches of the cavern, having constructed their 60 ft. diameter, bowl-shaped nest from the bones of hundreds of creatures, ranging from human to giant, atop carefully placed objects. The nest's edges are 10 ft. high. Piled within the nest are the following items:

- Three umbral dragon eggs (to hatch in 1 month)
- Two suits of plate mail
- One longbow
- Six flasks of holy water
- 11,000 gp and 83,500 sp
- Twelve gems (50 gp azurite; 250 gp garnet; 500 gp topaz; 500 gp emerald; six 50 gp red spinels; 2,500 gp blue diamond and 5,000 gp ruby)
- One fire opal pendant on a gold chain (850 gp)
- One platinum cup set with rubies (2,500 gp)
- One silver bracelet with diamonds (500 gp)
- 110 pieces of cheap jewelry, semiprecious gems and so on worth an average of 10 gp per item
- One +1 shield (*half damage from lightning bolts*)
- One scroll of *dispel magic* in a platinum tube (150 gp)
- One *ring of djinni summoning*
- One *staff of beguiling*

Note: Some items may require a large amount of time to locate. The magic ring, in particular, can only be found (using *detect magic*) 5% of the time per 10 minutes of searching. In addition to all this loot, the pile contains numerous less-valuable, mundane objects (such as weapons, armor and packs).

Wandering monsters approach eight hours after the dragons are slain. Each hour after the first eight that PCs spend here draws a wandering monster at double normal probability.



9A-8. The Will-o'-Wisp Lair

The passage narrows and winds — a seemingly endless maze! The slippery ground confounds PCs, who repeatedly lose their footing in foul-smelling mud. When the passage suddenly slopes downward, the PCs take a one-way trip down the slippery slope.

The slide deposits PCs in a natural depression filled with bad air and loose, knee-deep mud. Ascending the 120-ft. hill of mud that rises before the PCs requires a climb check (for thieves) or a saving throw for others. The acrid, stagnant air (make a saving throw each turn, or take 1d6 points of damage) and poor footing limit movement to 50% normal rates. One hundred feet past the mud-slide's nadir is a den of **3 will-o'-wisps**. Hearing the PCs, they venture out to look for food — though they prefer to have food come to them, dying slowly in the mud and poisoned air! The will-o'-wisps attack as soon as a PC moves to a point about 50 ft. between the hill and their lair. Bones and mundane equipment lie buried in the corrosive mud, all of it ruined and beyond use. PCs could spend weeks searching through the mud and gain nothing of value.

Tactics: The will-o'-wisps do everything within their power to keep PCs in the poisoned air, even gang-attacking those who try to escape while avoiding all the others. Opportunistic, they attack ropes or PCs, sending rope-climbing victims back into the mud. Individually, they bait PCs into the lair area, but fly away once the lair is reached. The will-o'-wisps feed less heartily on creatures they kill than on those that suffocate. If reduced below 5 hp, a will-o'-wisp retreats into its lair and blinks out, not returning to the fight.

Will-o'-wisps (3): HD 9; AC -8 [27]; Atk 1 shock (2d6); Move 18; Save 6; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: Change Appearance, Lightning.

9A-9. Passage to the Goblin City

The once-natural tunnel has been worked and cleared. Lights shine dimly along the way, seemingly radiating from the rocks themselves. The sandy floor reveals evidence of wagon tracks and humanoid footprints. Sloping slightly downward, the passage measures about 100 ft. across.

Following this passage for about two miles, PCs discover the goblin city (**Level 12**). Encounters along this passage are limited to wandering goblin parties, trolls and vermin (see the Wandering Monster encounter table above, ignoring gug, will-o'-wisp and gargoyle results). Other creatures know better than to venture down this road. Permanent *light* spells, cast on rock walls every 100 ft., illuminate the way to the city.