

Winter 2010

vol. 1, no. 2

Ordo Draconis

THE JOURNAL OF THE DRAGON WARRIORS ROLE-PLAYING GAME

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PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Northern Cornumbria



Map © Kristian Richards

Ordo Draconis

Winter 2010

This e-Zine is a non-official journal dedicated to the *Dragon Warriors* roleplaying game, published by Magnum Opus Press and written by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson. No copyright infringement is intended.

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All maps contained in this issue may be downloaded (unannotated) from the *Dragon Warriors* wiki.

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What a difference a day makes. Or, in the case of *Ordo Draconis*, 3-4 months.

The first issue had barely hit the proverbial stands when *Dragon Warriors* fans Stephen Dove and Cameron Smith expressed their enthusiasm in making *Ordo Draconis* better. A lot better. As quickly as it took me to type "Hell, yes", Steve and Cameron were off to the races, creating and gathering up a whirlwind of new material for issue 2. Massive new features went through first and second drafts while copy editors refined them even further. Map maker *supreme* Kristian Richards created some stunning new works depicting Cornumbria, while new artists Patrick Crusiau and Simon Bray offered up artwork to grace our humble pages. And, of course, *Dragon Warriors* stalwart and fan-favorite Jon Hodgson provided us with another stunning cover.

You will notice several new things in *Ordo Draconis* 2. The first is the massive 97-page count. You can thank Stephen Dove for that. Second is the addition of game statistics for *The Pathfinder Role Playing Game*. The latter may come as a surprise, but allow me to explain. Our primary goal at *OD* is to bring more players to *Dragon Warriors* and the Lands of Legend. Encouraging a multitude of *The Pathfinder Role Playing Game* players to sample our ezine will hopefully do just that.

Finally, you will have noticed that we are now charging for *OD*. The rationale is simple: we want to be able to provide you with the best possible product, and that takes money. Every shilling generated by sales of each issue will be ploughed back into the next one. This is a labour of love and we want it to be as good as we can make it. We hope we've succeeded. Please let us know how we're doing at <http://freeonlinesurveys.com/rendersurvey.asp?sid=l3gp6g6c3kpjik5702875>.

☒

- Bill Edmunds, publisher

The Thane

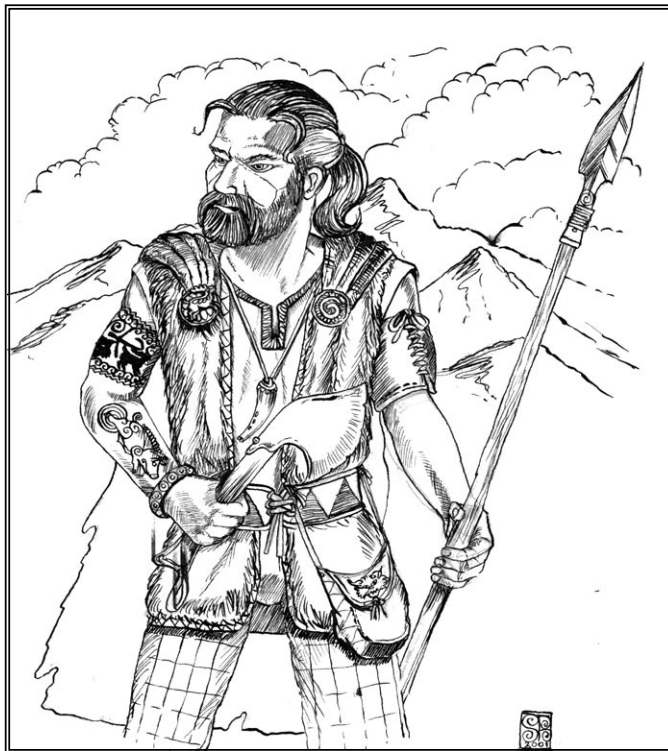
By Stephen Dove and Lance Melville.

Tactical champion and stalwart of the shield-wall, the Thane is a primal warrior whose fury grants him powers beyond the ken of mere fighters. We detail the Thane herein so that GMs everywhere can add this legendary Cornumbrian archetype to their stable of player-character Professions.

When the Legions of Selentium left the shores of Ellesland around 400AS, they abandoned a fertile but almost defenceless land. It was not long before the hoary Frenish tribes-peoples from Kurland crossed the Glaive and landed in southern Albion. These Frenga stayed that first winter and then more ships came the next year, and the year after, until the native Ceni Elleslanders were displaced ever westwards. Not content with carving up eastern Ellesland into a dozen petty-kingdoms, the Frenga turned their attentions to Erain and Cumri: the two last remaining Ceni kingdoms that then occupied the area which is now called Cornumbria. The Frenga were never able to overcome the fierce Dani of Erain, for these cunning warriors would melt into the bogs of the Coronach Marshes and would not give battle. The same was not true of the northern mountain tribes of the Mabinoi, who were eventually defeated. In time they gave up their own language and began speaking Elleslandic: the language gifted to these isles by the Frenga. From this new fusion of Ceni and Frenish cultures arose a warrior tradition that was distinct from anything seen anywhere else: the Thane. These fierce professional warriors of the shield-wall were vassals of the Eorl, Talidd or Chieftain and were a savage and latter-day equivalent of the Knight, save that Than

always fought on foot. Today the Thane is still a noble warrior who holds land from his lord and stands as the backbone of the Cornumbrian army.

So the marshal tradition of the Thane originated in Albion and Cornumbria but as the centuries passed it spread to many other places, including Thuland and Mercania. Albion meanwhile, became ever more influenced by the continent. One by one the Lords



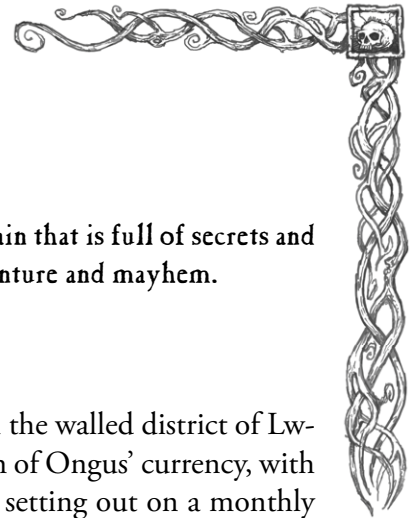
of Albion abandoned the old ways of their Frenga forebears and began to field Knights who fought from horseback and who would never deign to stand side by side with the peasants in the battle-line. Yet as recently as forty years ago, the Eorls still ruled most of Albion and the majority only lost their power with the coming of King Eadulf to the throne. Eadulf had adopted the ways of the mainland after many years spent in exile in Chaubrette. After deposing the Old King, he swept away the Eorls, not trusting to their loyalty. Instead, he installed his own followers, many of whom were from Chaubrette, as rulers of Albion and great castles began to dot the land: a symbol of the new King's iron grip.

It is only now in Cornumbria that the last of the Chieftains dwell with their warrior-bands. There the Frenish ways still hold sway in the lofty hill-

Artwork © Simon Bray

Darbon Barony

by Damian May



Nestled at the southern tip of Cornumbria, the Barony of Darbon is a prosperous domain that is full of secrets and hidden happenings. Damian May details this remote fief as a setting for adventure and mayhem.

The Barony of Darbon is a tiny fiefdom on the south-west coast of Cornumbria, close to the border with Albion and hemmed in from the north by the forbidding Coronach Marsh, which drains into the Tawny and Glasseel Rivers. The wind-swept hills are grazed by large herds of sheep and dairy cattle. The herds feed on grasses and sedges that grow thickly wherever water can gather. The entire Barony is criss-crossed by hundreds of tiny and not-so-tiny trade roads; some dating back to Selentine times. The low-lands are dominated by heather and moorland, and much of the land is perpetually moist underfoot.

Darbon is famous for the small but hardy ponies, which work the farms and carry produce to market, and also for great numbers of deer, both red and fallow, which populate the woods. The Selentine era Trade Road runs to the south east from Balstaple, carving through thick ancient forest to the city of Netherford in Albion.

BALSTAPLE, THE CAPITAL

The name of Balstaple derives from 'Balds Stapol' meaning the trading-post of a man called Bald. A small village appeared here in the centuries before the Selentine occupation and gradually became more important than the original hilltop farming settlement.

Located on the stormy coast of Darbon Barony, Balstaple has expanded markedly in the millenium since its establishment. The town has developed as a market and commercial centre, with pottery, metalwork and other industries now firmly established within the town. It enjoys a quasi-borough status due to Baron Blaidd-Dwrg's patronage and has recently begun producing its own coins.

The mint operates within the walled district of Lwydford and supplies much of Ongus' currency, with heavily guarded caravans setting out on a monthly basis for the capital of neighbouring Albion. Why King Hadric (or rather certain of his advisers) insists on the use of these 'foreign' coins in Ongus is best left to marketplace gossip.

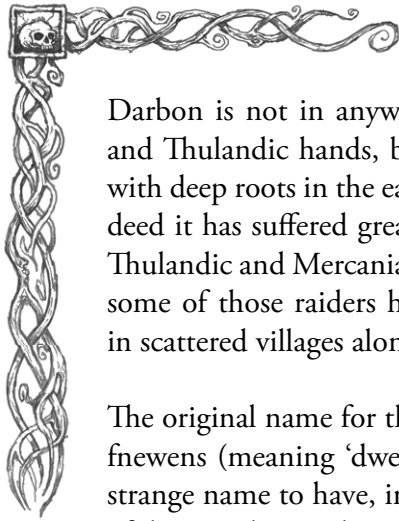
Those who hold power in the northern reaches have watched with some concern as the southern Cornumbrians trade all these coins with Albion. Yet as long as they continue to receive their tithe they are not yet inclined to interfere.

The mint was once highly productive, with an output that was estimated to be in excess of a 100 thousand coins since its foundation. Recently the fortunes of the mint have declined sharply as the fingers of royal patrons slowly slip from the reins of power in Albion and the Baron of Darbon, Baron Blaidd-Dwrg, grows ever more distant from his populace.

HISTORY OF THE BARONY OF DARBON

Darbon was once the cornerstone of one of Ellesland's most significant ancient Mabinoi kingdoms, recalled in local legend as Cyredig. Accordingly hilltop circles, burial mounds and standing stones from those far days scatter the hills and woodlands of the region.

Darbon's people are predominantly of original Elleslandic stock, with the tribal tongues of their Ceni forefathers being spoken well into living memory. Thus many ancient words remain in the place names, rural dialects, customs and culture of this area.



Darbon is not in anyway untouched by Albionic and Thulandic hands, but it has remained a place with deep roots in the earth since its beginning. Indeed it has suffered greatly from the predations of Thulandic and Mercanian reavers in past years, and some of those raiders have established themselves in scattered villages along the coast.

The original name for the Darbish people was Dy-fnewens (meaning 'dwellers in the deep valleys'; a strange name to have, in a time when the majority of the population clustered in hilltop forts). Indeed it is thought this name was applied originally to

those strange folk who lived upon the moors, and whose descendents still dwell there, and was gradually expanded to encompass all the inhabitants.

Darbon was one of the last areas to be conquered by the Selentines and later invaders have had almost as much difficulty. In fact, the region was only formally claimed by the Kingdom of Cornumbria early in the last century.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Inglesdon in Ilsingwyth parish is the seat of the ruler of Darbon, Baron Blaidd-Dwrg. The manor-house

is quite expansive and is set on a hill close by the woods. The Baron is well known as an avid hunter, and his prowess in the chase is well documented. However, rumours now hint that he spends more and more time in the woods, following a recent hunting accident, and is beginning to neglect the stewardship of his lands.

The Abbey of of Saint Pedr is one of the wealthiest religious houses in Darbon. This holy house was originally established some miles outside Balstaple by Warel Wasten, Abbot of Balstaple. It has since attracted support from a wide variety of prominent gentry of Darbon and their tenants. Indeed Baron Blaidd-Dwrg himself, took a personal interest in the construction and funding of Saint Pedr's in the early years after its foundation. Although the monastery has received a large number of exquisite and expensive gifts over the years, there is some recent concern over exactly where the gifts are now.

Tallistopp Priory was founded a few years before the rule of Baron Blaidd-Dwrg, upon the order of



Map © Stephen Dove



Location! Location! Location!

Eastmarch: The Fortress In The Marshes
By Stephen Dove

Dneasy peace has reigned in Eastmarch, since it was wrested from Cornumbria forty years ago, and made into an Albish fief. The town is now a hotbed of rebellion and intrigue and is detailed as a base setting for adventurers intent on exploring the trackless wastes of the Coronach Marshes.

Rebellion is stirring amidst the shifting waterways and reed choked islands of the Coronach Marshes. For years the Cornumbrians of Esgalen have suffered the cruel misrule of successive 'Marcher Lords' from Albion: ever since their king was killed and their land annexed by Hadric's father. Yet a shadowy figure has stepped from the murk and is gathering the people to his cause. Rumours swirl around him, as thick as mists above the marsh: that he is the lost heir to the fief and a man with a claim to the throne of Albion itself; that he is a servant of the Heron King, one of the Old Marshland Gods, and that he is seeking the Crown of Esgalen, lost to the marshes some forty years ago. The question on the lips of all, is "what will he do when he finds it?"

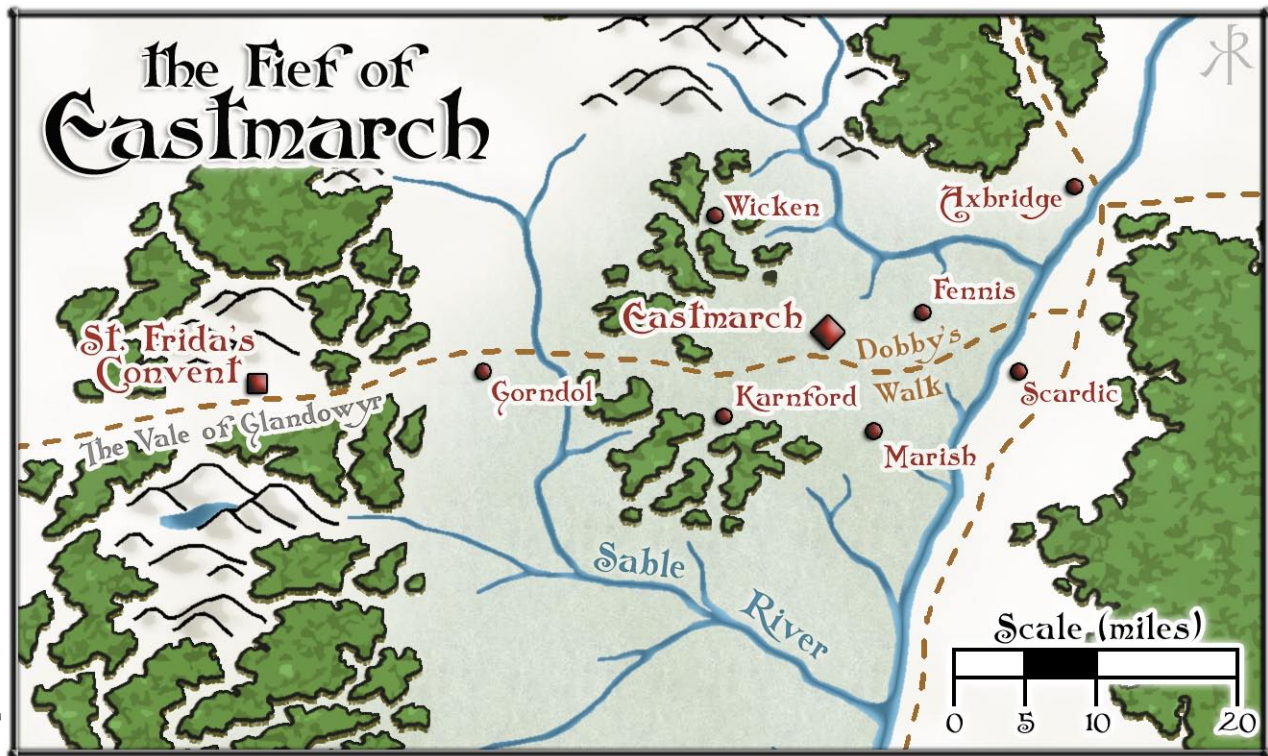
Eastmarch is a fief set in the Lands of Legend and designed to be a base for PCs exploring the Cornumbrian and Albish border. Yet Eastmarch is a base with a difference, because the area is not safe or settled and the potential for adventures abound (see adventure seeds). With rival spies, a rebellion in the offing, a druid cult, tomb robbing and the presence of gateways to other worlds, this is no place for the faint of heart. Eastmarch includes statistics for important NPCs for both Dragon Warriors and Pathfinder campaigns at the end of this article.

HISTORY

In a time before the bright-spears of the Selentine Legions first carved their way across Ellesland, the Old Powers held sway in the Coronach Marshes. This mist-shrouded labyrinth of shifting waterways and low islands was sacred to the two great peoples that fused to form Cornumbria: the Dani of Erain and the Mabinoi of Cumri. To them the fens were a place where the waking world and the lands of the Old Ones became one, at least on the great feast-

days of the Old Religion. Even today, Cornumbrian legends tell of heroes who entered the mists never to return or who emerged with stories of Alba, the land of giants, or Arcadia, the dream-like realm of the Fay. Indeed, the Old Gods themselves were said to walk the trackless wastes and so the Coronach was accounted a perilous place for mortals to tread. Yet even the High Kings of Erain and Cumri were required to pay a yearly tribute, consigning heirlooms of gold, bright blades and human sacrifices to the murky waters of the marshes as the Druids and their Gods demanded. Indeed the bodies of the fallen were placed in the river channels, for how else was a man's soul to find its way to Anuwyn, the land where the dead were thought to dwell? And so great barrows began to dot the marshland, as generation after generation buried their dead in the watery depths or raised them up in mounds of sodden turf.

Over the centuries, the Coronach became a place of fear and awe and none lived there, save the Druids. These High Priests of the Old Religion once braved the shadowy mists, reading the will of the Old Ones and raising stone circles to their glory on the many scattered islands. Most sacred of these sites was the Isle of Apples (Ynys Afal), the center of the Old Religion and the secret hiding place of the Druid-Lords. The Legions broke their power and slew all that they could find, though it is whispered that they never found the Isle of Apples. Indeed, none but a true follower of the old ways could ever approach its shores amidst the swirling mists as only they knew how to summon up the fabled Song-Roads that were required to reach the Isle.



THE TALIDD OF ESGALEN

Crossing the marshes is Dobby's Walk: an ancient causeway that has snaked across the fens for over two thousand years. Rising out of the flooded land, close to the Albish end of the Walk, is an Isle that was once sacred to the Gods of Anuwyn: the Isle of Ravens (Ynys Branna). The Druids who dwelt there were massacred by the Legions, who planted a fort right across the old sacred ground. With the coming of the True Faith, the fear of the marshes gradually subsided and a Cornumbrian chieftain built a hill-fort on the Isle about two centuries ago. He styled himself as "Lord of the Marshes" and taxed any who used Dobby's Walk, growing fat on the trade between Albion and Cornumbria. As the centuries passed the petty-kingdom of Esgalen grew up around the hill-fort and the Chieftain's heirs took the ancient title of 'Talidd' (petty-king or Chieftain) and grew very powerful. The last Talidd was Lord Corwyn of the house of Branna, an ambitious and wily man with eyes on even greater glory. He married Alice de Lacy, of Netherford: an Albish woman of impoverished family but in whose veins ran the noblest of blood, for Alice was kin to the King of Albion himself.

The Talidd dreamed of power on both sides of the border now that his marriage had lent respectability to his money. But his plans were dashed half a century ago when the usurper, Eadulf slew the Old King and his advisers, and installed himself on the throne of Albion. He quickly set about purging all those with a better claim than himself and slew any others who might challenge his legitimacy. So great was Eadulf's gall that he even attacked Esgalen, conscious that the Talidd's son might act as a banner for rebellion in later years. Dinas Branna (Fortress of Ravens) was taken by treachery and the Talidd and his wife were forced to flee. In the chaos of the escape, the treasury of Esgalen, including the Crown, was lost to the marshes: Corwyn and his wife were also drowned, but the fate of their son was never discovered. King Eadulf was furious at the loss of this gold but pleased that he would not have to murder the Talidd and his wife himself. He dismissed rumours of the boy's escape as wishful thinking on the part of the locals.

Eadulf annexed Esgalen to Albion whilst the Cornumbrian Chieftains were still arguing about who would lead their armies against the Albish. Eadulf



Map © Stephen Dove

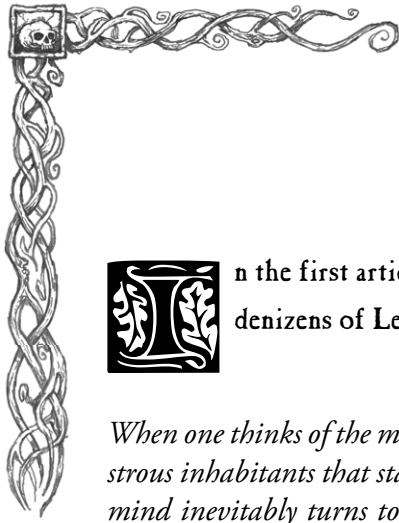


crossbow range of Dobby's Walk, and so Eastmarch controls the passage along the Walk unless travelers are willing to brave the marshes: something few will dare, even in these days. Mounted patrols ride along the causeway during daylight, and collect the toll from any merchants who cannot produce the token showing they have already paid it.

No Cornumbrians are allowed to live within the walls of Eastmarch because of a riot four years ago, but many can be found there at the market during the day (markets are held on all days but Haligdae).

The Cornumbrians now live in the nearby settlement of Rathlan: an island protected by turf ramparts and a staggered gate. These poor locals, who call themselves Esgaleni, live in terrible poverty: most are fishermen, reed cutters or hunters. No matter how low they sink, all must pay a harsh tax levied by Sir Brandwyn, who reasons that hungry men have no time or energy to rebel.

The whole Fief of Eastmarch is relatively small, encompassing about 35 square miles, including some good farmland where the marshes approach the



Codex Cryptozoologica

“White Light From the Mouth of Infinity”

by Andrew Wright



In the first article of a regular column, we unearth what is known about the rarest and most monstrous denizens of Legend, starting with the hideous Buggane.

When one thinks of the many books detailing the monstrous inhabitants that stalk the world of Legend, one's mind inevitably turns to the classic research tomes of yore. The scholar-monk Ecgric's Entire Compendium of Creatures Malign & Mysterious, for example. Or perhaps the epic Zoology of Philomenes, sage of ancient Emphidor. The much-travelled Lord Jadhak's mind-searing grimoire The Indigenes of the Realms of Demons. And even Claudio Fiorillo's mysterious Forgotten Bestiary. However, these works are mere theses and dissertations when compared to the greatest bestiary of them all: the Codex Cryptozoologica of the Krarthian Mage known as White Light, avatar of knowledge.

BUGGANE

Since the fall of Selentium, the more desolate parts of Cornumbria – the rocky coasts, barren islands, and high moors – have become the spiritual home of the kingdom's ascetic priests. Here, they often come into conflict with an even older resident of the region – the nefarious Buggane.

Bugganes are lanky yet muscular humanoids up to three meters tall, with pale, lumpy skin interspersed with thick patches of bristly fur. Their heads are especially horrific, resembling some warped cross between calf and mole, with elements of dog and horse thrown in for good measure, and crowned with a long, matted mane of dark hair. Red eyes gleam with hatred from within the deep folds of flesh on their face, and their drooling maw is crammed full of yellow tusks and fangs.

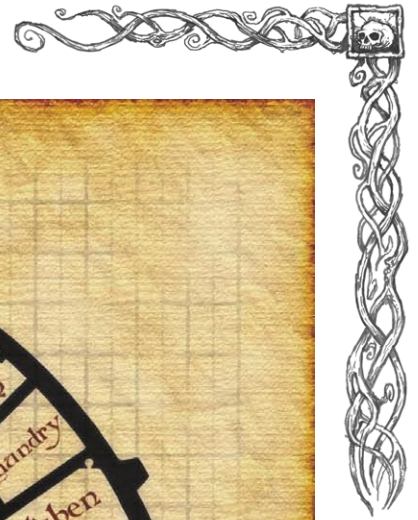
All Bugganes are relatively intelligent, and capable of conversing with men in broken Elleslandic, usually to utter threats and pronouncements of im-

pending violence. For most Buggane, this means ripping apart whatever irritates them with their long-clawed hands and toothy mouth, but some Buggane ape the ways of man and smite their foes with great clubs studded with rusty nails and shards of flint. These Buggane have even been known to anoint themselves in crude spirals of woad, and brandish the odd shattered shield taken from some forgotten battlefield.

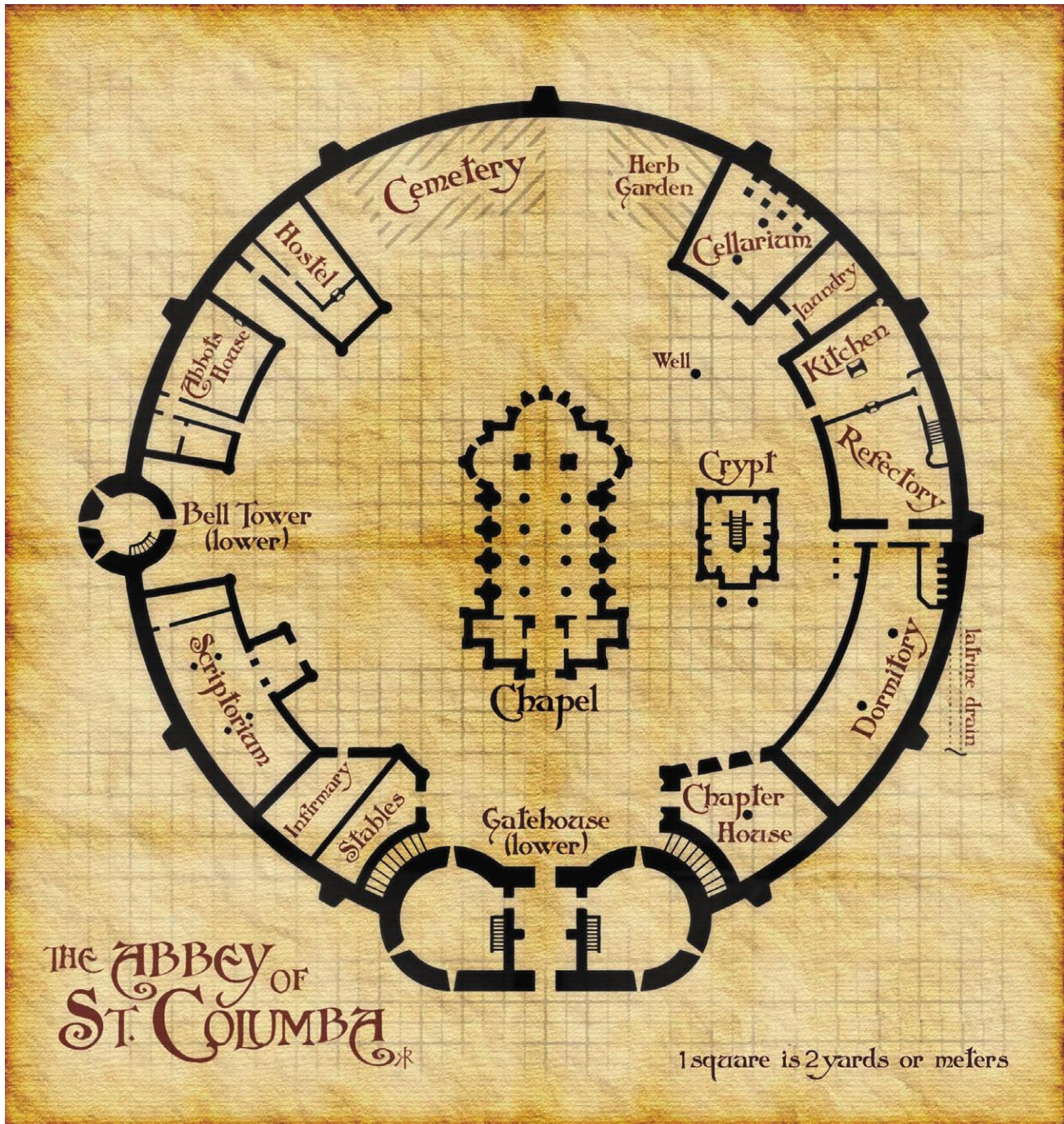
Because both Bugganes and the monks of the Cornumbrian Church often find themselves scrapping over the same isolated patch of land, there are plenty of accounts of the creatures tearing down newly constructed chapels and overturning sacred cairns.



Artwork © Patrick Crusian



Map © Kristian Richards



Map 2: The Abbey of St Columba is surrounded by a 3 meter high stone wall. This wall has no rampart save for a small section either side of the main gatehouse. The whole of the Abbey is built of local stone and is largely impervious to fire.

Abbey. Indeed, St Columba's briefly endured the indignity of becoming a stronghold for a band of brigands in 830 AS. The current Abbot is therefore troubled, since he is relying again upon the men of Tarlech, to keep safe the lands around his domain. Hence the Abbey is now fortified and its treasures

hidden in a trap infested labyrinth that is sited below the Abbey, close to the subterranean cisterns. Only the Abbot and the Librarian know safe ways through this twisting maze of passages: each Abbot is given knowledge of the secret way to the redoubt within the labyrinth, whilst the Librarian knows the



Map 3: The gates of the Abbey at the precise moment when the arrows are fired at Badan (B). The positions of the Thanes (T), of Lord Tarlech's son (S) and of Brother Padraig (P) and the Abbot (A) are indicated.

huge mossy statue of St Columba himself, standing in a glade with his arms raised skywards. The Abbot goes over to the statue and depresses the arm and then seems to disappear. A large crack has appeared in the back of the statue, large enough for you to squeeze into. A narrow stairway spirals down through the statue and deep into the rock below. You can hear the Abbot climbing down the stairs, softly calling for you to follow him into the subterranean gloom.

After you have all entered, you hear a loud clicking sound as the crack in the statue closes, and not a moment too soon, for voices could be heard in the glade above you. You reach the bottom of the narrow stair to find the Abbot waiting in a torch-lit passageway hewn into the rock. You follow him wordlessly down the short corridor and emerge into a vast flooded chamber of worked stone, whose vaulted ceiling is held aloft by a forest of tall stone pillars, each festooned with



Map © Stephen Dove



Map 10 showing the detail of the Chapterhouse and the wall rampart (C). At the exact moment of the attack by Adsel (Ad) and Cena (C); the Abbot (Ab), Aedon (A) and Badan (B) are talking at the Abbey's meeting table. The assassins launch their assault from the gallery (D) and then attempt to escape using a rope-ladder to rappel down the wall to a waiting horse (E).

Poison (DW) or Deathblade venom (*The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*). Allow all PCs a perception roll to hear the assassins as they ready themselves to attack. Any who fail are surprised as Adsel and

Cena rain fire down on those in the Chapterhouse. These assassins are hard to hit (+5 on the dice roll) with ranged weapons because of their commanding position over the room. It would also take a DC