

Castle Zagyg, Volume 1 Yggsburgh

by
Gary Gygax

Special Thanks

The author wishes to give special thanks to Darlene not only for her excellent artistic contributions to this work but also to her efforts to make sense of his text information in locating various places in and around the Town of Yggsburgh.

So thank you Darlene!

Gary Gygax

Cover Art by Jeffrey Jones
Cartography by Darlene and Jason Walton
Edited by Matthew Cutter

Cover Design & Layout, Interior Art, Logos and Logo Designs by
Peter "20 Dollar" Bradley and Davis Chenault

Production managed by Team Troll

Davis Chenault, Stephen Chenault, Mike Stewart

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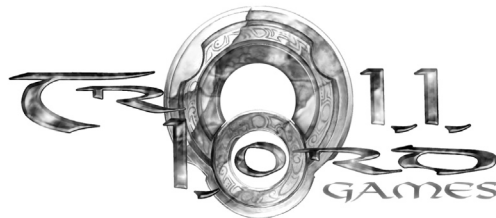


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The Table of Contents will likely become your best friend in this book, so familiarize yourself with it in order to more easily and quickly access those portions of the material you need or want.

Foreword



ONCE UPON A TIME there was a Mad Archmage whose castle and dungeons became synonymous with adventuring. That place remains today. Only the names have changed to protect the concerned parties for this publication. You are holding this product now, as it is a part of the changes necessary. In order to present the “abandoned” castle and its many dungeon levels, an area surrounding the place needs to be detailed. You have it! Note though that this base area is completely new, in order to facilitate the later addition of the old castle and dungeon material in revised form. Do not wonder why you never read or heard about Yggsburgh, and the other persons, places, and things in and around it. They are recent creations of mine and done with all of the spirit of the original work.

As you peruse the contents of this work, you will find all manner of adventure areas, even the location of Castle Zagyg. Unlike other places, though, that one locale, the castle and its dungeon levels, has no special encounters or details. Why? Because that part is massive. There are many floors of the fortification and even more underground maze levels yet to be done. What? Aren't those places already completed?! After all, scores, hundreds in fact, of players had their characters adventure in them in the past. Well, that assumption is correct, but as any Castle Keeper knows, material created that is ample for his own purposes is not at all suitable for commercial presentation in a module. A careful revision of the existing level maps and their brief notes is necessary. That is, of course, a monumental undertaking considering the projected size of the whole work. There are details of all encounters, cross-connections between many dungeon levels, and overall text descriptions to explain everything presented. So that's for later. A series of modules are also planned for the expansion of this base.

Right now what you have in hand is the environs of the Castle Zagyg complex. It is a complete playing module, a campaign setting unto itself. The area is large, so that characters can adventure in it sans the castle proper. To ensure this, the descriptions of many places are loaded with adventure hooks. The walled town for which the module is named, Yggsburgh, provides not only current playing opportunities, but it and its suburban area too, are meant to later serve as the base from which characters can operate in their dungeon delving. You will note that the greater community has all that is needed to supply and assist the adventuring team. It is developed with a history, economy, political structure, socio-economic information, and a detailed monetary system. There are also, as previously stated, many other areas on the map likewise ripe for derring-do, many detailed, some others purposefully left mainly for the able hands of the Castle Keeper to develop. A module wouldn't be complete, though, without a few dungeon-like areas, and this is a complete work. So you will find several herein. Check out the subterranean area maps!

Enough preliminary exposition. Let us move on to that which is here and now, Yggsburgh and environs. Enjoy the story and the action that follows and be sure to pick up the next installment of Castle Zagyg, The Dark Chateau, by Rob Kuntz.

Gary Gygax

Notes for the Castle Keeper



This setting is recommended for two sets of characters per person. The ones initially adventuring in this module should begin at low mid-level, 4th to 6th. These characters can be created on the spot or else drawn from the players' existing ones of that level spread. The adventures in and around the town call for such advanced ability...and more! Several levels should be gained in the action presented herein. When play moves to the actual castle and its many dungeon levels, each player should then generate a new character of 1st level. These characters can be relatives, friends, or henchmen of the higher-level ones used initially. With new characters of beginning level, the proper spirit of the original dungeons will be captured and enjoyed. When they delve to the depths of the Castle Zagyg dungeons, they will be adventurers of considerable power.

When dealing with encounters (whether random or those set forth herein), feel free to adjust the difficulty level for the party. If the characters are relatively low-level, reduce the number and strength of their opposition to make the match more even. Where the adventurers are of high level, add more power to their opponents and increase their number without hesitation. For example, if the foes are 1 hit dice humanoids, add a stronger “associate” monster, make some of the humanoids tougher, perhaps 2 or more hit dice. Do just the same with humans and demi-humans by adding levels. Put as many additional opponents, hit dice or levels to create as much force as is needed to give the party a severe test. Make it a real challenge to them.

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the layout and contents of this book, though not necessarily the details. The Castle Keeper should know where to go to get the information they are after. Part I of Yggsburgh is a historical and cultural overview of the setting. Part II details many of the places within the free town of Yggsburgh while Part III details the environs about Yggsburgh. The appendices are a wealth of information for the Castle Keeper so be sure to examine them as they contain the Orders of Battle, encounter charts and new monsters, to mention a few things.

Within, some encounter areas have non-player character stat blocks that are missing. These are located in Appendix I, Orders of Battle, as these non-player characters have a tendency to crop up in many places and in order to offer easy access to the stats they were placed together in one appendix. Further, within the stat blocks, HD is hit dice, AC is armor class, PA is prime attribute, SK is secondary skill and EQ is equipment. The remainder should be self-explanatory.

There is also a “Zagyg Adventure Reference” entry located with many area descriptions. This simply lists associated adventures, peoples and places and supplies a ready reference for Castle Keepers to allow them to make associations between places, peoples, and even events. There are varying levels of detail here reflecting the importance or significance of the encounter.

Finally, there are no rogues in Yggsburgh. There are just thieves. For all intents and purposes, the thief in this volume is like the rogue for Castles & Crusades, only more nefarious and not a tad bit evil.

Part 1 : Yggsburgh

Setting, History and Culture

Introduction



This section contains much information, that may or may not be common knowledge, about Yggsburgh. It is up to the Castle Keeper to decide what the characters know and how they came to know it. Should they be from a place far away from Yggsburgh, they may know little of its history and culture. Should the characters actually be from Yggsburgh, it is likely they will know a lot.

For those undertaking the task of running adventures in Yggsburgh, do not attempt to memorize all the remainder of the work. It is recommended, though, that you become familiar with the material in this section. Details of the town are needed when describing things to the players. Have the main map of the city handy as you scan the encounter information, and make a point of learning the general details of the city and its major features. There is also much room left for developing Yggsburgh to fit your needs as a Castle Keeper. Please examine Appendix A, Developing Yggsburgh for more details.

Background and Overview



The Free Town of Yggsburgh is a heavily fortified community of some 22,000 residents, with another 10,000 or so persons dwelling on the lands it claims as its own. The town is constructed on the rock bluff where the River Nemo is joined by the Urt River. The area encompassed by the community's walls is about one square mile. Because of the bluff Yggsburgh is built upon, its buildings climb from a street level of about 10 feet above the surrounding plain on the east edge to fully 40 feet above that plain at the western end of the town where its great citadel stands. Thus, one approaching from the east can see the place well, the incline of the bluff seeming to tilt the western end of Yggsburgh upwards for the viewer's inspection. The walls are built atop the solid rock of the bluff, the sides of the natural formation shelved at the waters' edges, then splayed to an upwards distance of about 10 feet, thereafter rising precipitously in near perpendicular face to the top. The town walls are set back an average of 20 feet from the edge of the bluff, but the many towers and bastions between them along its length are very near the rim, and have only a narrow path of some three to four feet around their verge.

As one comes nearer to the fortifications, it can be seen that there are war engines, scorpions and catapults on the gatehouse and tower roofs. A careful survey reveals a massive citadel at the west end of the town, it having two regular towers and a great one looming above the confluence of the Nemo and Urt Rivers. The thick town walls sprout 36 defensive towers by your count,

not including the pair that flanks each of the three gatehouses by which the place might be entered. The wall towers are set with about 500 feet distance between each. At the intervals between them are semi-circular wall bastions that thrust outwards from the walls, as do the towers. On each of these 36 bastions you can see a pair of scorpions and a catapult. One thing is certain: if Yggsburgh has a strong military garrison, this town can be defended against a massive attacking force.

Townbridge, the main approach to the walled community, is at its southeastern side. The bridge is something of a remarkable architectural achievement, as is the canal that serves as a moat on its eastern side. The town is well-known as an active trading center. In addition to the salt, gold, gems and jewelry, Yggsburgh's industries export quantities of flour, dried and salt fish, fine wood, furs, cloth, metal ware such as tools and cooking ware, and much good pottery. Its most famous buildings are the Grand Temple, its Citadel, the college complex, and the Mayor's Palace.

The town is particularly proud of its water and sewer systems, and its relatively straight, wide, and very clean streets. In the better districts, buildings have indoor plumbing and central heat, the streets lighted after dark. Yggsburgh also boasts two modest little parks, as well as two large and three small plazas, the latter just inside the three town gates. Most visitors remark on the fact that all of the buildings in the town are constructed of stone block, bricks, or a combination of the two. The newer structures in the eastern half of the town are mostly of brick and not particularly lovely, but not prone to fire even in crowded lower-class sections.

The town is ruled by a Lord Mayor and a council of eight important men. The Lord Mayor appoints officials to see to the administration of the community. A fair number of knights are vassal to the Lord Mayor, and with the regular military force employed by Yggsburgh, it is considered a strong and safe haven for honest folks. Thus the territory immediately around the town is prosperous, relatively quiet and free of raiders and bandits, so river and road commerce is active. That said, not a lot of questions are asked of strangers, and as long as local law is obeyed, "foreigners" are welcome in Yggsburgh. It has a large suburban area to the east, across the Yggsburgh Canal, this being called "The Outs." The population is modest, 4,000 or so, but all there are quite without the strictures of the town. The place isn't lawless, for the town law applies, but most of the time there is no town authority there to see to it that the law is obeyed.

The region is by no means idyllic, as there are three palatine nobles within three or four day's march of Yggsburgh, each of whom covets the town and its rich lands and would like to add them to his own demesne. Spies and agents provocateur are not uncommon in Yggsburgh, and thick in The Outs. The outlying areas are generally wild frontier, with bandits and humanoid raiders a menace, and dangerous creatures prowling.

History



The walled town of Yggsburgh is about 300 years old, but up until around 100 years ago it was no more than a large trading village with low walls and a lot of river traffic stopping at it to gain its salt and agricultural produce. When gold and valuable garnet and quartz gems were discovered in what is now known as the Glittering Knobs a century ago, there was an immediate dispute amongst three nobles whose lands were adjacent to the area—Huon (Baron Redfort), Delkart (Count Easmoor), and Edmund (Marquis Talworth). As there was no strong monarch ruling them, the dispute between the nobles soon broke into open warfare.

When Marquis Talworth managed to capture the area, he set his architect and engineers to work immediately. Soon Yggsburgh was aswarm with masons, other craftsmen, and laborers intent on building walls and towers around the burgeoning village. With the aid of various mages, the whole construction (including a considerable canal between the Urt and Nemo Rivers, serving as both a transport artery and vast moat for the new town) was accomplished in a mere five years. Costs were financed by the salt mine in the Serpent Ridge, and with ore and gems being mined from the Glittering Knobs.

Neither of Talworth's rivals was satisfied with the outcome, so Baron Redfort and Count Easmoor made common cause. Thus allied, their forces met and defeated those of the Marquis in what is known locally as the Battle of the Westfields. However, their victory did not bring the desired result. A local petty noble, Edward, Lord Yggs (to whom the village and salt mine had belonged), with a handful of knights, cut down the foreign garrison, closed the gates and defied the would-be conquerors. Because the local populace were heartily fed up with heavy-

handed rule and ruinous taxes, those in the community as well as those from the lands around flocked to the town in arms and swore vassalage to Lord Yggs, promising to defend it, him and his lands. Even so, there were scarcely enough warriors to man all the walls and towers properly. The massed forces of Baron Redfort and Count Easmoor laid siege to Yggsburgh.

Things looked grim for Lord Yggs, as the investing army managed to get across the canal and the Urt River, establish bridgeheads near the town walls, and attack both the Moatgate and the Rivergate by siege engine and magical spell. Although no spell-casters of note were within the walls, the attackers were driven back by great dweomers. Some unknown wizard had come to Yggsburgh, used his power to counter the assailants' magic, and used his own spells to rain destruction on the enemy. Having suffered great losses thus, the two nobles abandoned the field.

So it came to pass that the town was ruled by Lord Yggs for some 20 years, and under his guiding hand it grew and became wealthy from trade and manufacture, as well as exploitation of nearby mineral resources. As it prospered, he caused a great temple to be built in thanks for the deliverance, and the flourishing condition of town and lands around. When Lord Yggs died childless, his officers and knights were astonished at the contents of his will. Lewis Garmonde (Lord Yggs) commanded that his estates be kept as their own by those holding the lands, and that the town become a free one, the nobles owing vassalage to the community at large and its Lord Mayor. His will decreed that a council of eight great men of the community serve to make laws, and elect for a period of 10 years one other like man (who was not a council member) to serve as Lord Mayor and administer the town. At least six council members had to agree to the one to be chosen as Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor was to see to the maintenance, policing and security of Yggsburgh, enforce the council's laws, and levy taxes approved by the council.



The eight members of the council had been named by the dying lord as: the chief priest of the grand temple to serve as president, the masters of the two largest town guilds, its wealthiest banker as its treasurer, the most able mage in the town, the president of Yggsburgh College as its secretary, and two knights who dwelled in the town and held the largest estates adjacent to town-held land.

Of course the citizens of the town and its surrounding lands were overjoyed at this bequest. Not all of the officers and knights of the deceased lord were so pleased, though. There was much muttering and clandestine meetings amongst the two dozen or so highly influential persons in Yggsburgh, but all came to naught in regards to declaration of Lord Lewis Garmonde's Last Will & Testament as invalid. The most powerful figures decided that being a permanent council member

was better than risking a many-sided fight for rulership of the town, for surely those who elected its Lord Mayor held the real reins of power. So the will of the last Lord Yggs was carried out, and Yggsburgh and its adjacent lands are free, ruled by an elected Lord Mayor, this condition existing for over 90 years.

It need not be stressed that the council is so divided amongst power and interest groups that it rarely acts in unity, so the Lord Mayor is quite secure in his 10-year office tenure as long as he performs reasonably well and avoids open graft and corruption.

It is disturbing to the ruling elite of the town that the property owning burghers have recently proposed an elected Assembly to assist the Lord Mayor and Council through advice and consent, for matters pertaining to the common folk. All property owners would vote, and the 25 candidates for the Assembly receiving the most votes would be seated therein. Neither the Lord Mayor nor any Councilor has espoused the suggestion, and the property owners are becoming insistent. There is talk of withholding taxes and forming a Citizen's League with serjeants at arms to keep order.

Yggsburgh and the World at Large



Yggsburgh and its environs are large in content, but the area of land it covers is relatively small, a bit less than 1,700 square miles (or an area of some 50 miles east-to-west, 34 north-to-south). With some inclusion of areas "off the map," that size is sufficient for much adventuring but should be small enough, at most perhaps 3,000 or so square miles, if all the border areas described in the adventure text are included, to fit into any campaign world, whatever one is used by the Castle Keeper. The area is likewise suitable to serve as the core for building a complete campaign world around it should that be desired, a major undertaking to be sure and not a subject for further discussion here.

The society of Yggsburgh is assumed to be basically Western European, rather English in culture, and generally feudal in political structure. Feudalism is defined as lordship and vassalage, the vassal owing the lord fealty, service, and taxes from the fief granted. As in later medieval times, a fief of land is hereditary, as is the title that goes with it. Only treason or a like crime empowers the lord to reclaim the fief and title. Knighthood is non-hereditary,

Lords Mayor of Yggsburgh

- 1st Lord Mayor: Lewis Garmonde, Lord Yggs, two terms, died in office
- 2nd Lord Mayor: Sir Frederick Arleigh, one term
- 3rd Lord Mayor: The Supernal Harold Strong, two terms
- 4th Lord Mayor: Raymond Wright, Master of the Merchants' Guild, one term
- 5th Lord Mayor: Sir Hugh Burdock, one term
- 6th Lord Mayor: Brandon Proctor, President of Yggsburgh College, one term
- 7th Lord Mayor: Sir Maxwell Green, one term
- 8th Lord Mayor: Druid Lochinvar Beachwood, currently serving his 6th year in office

but lands granted to a knight pass on entire to his eldest male heir (primogeniture and entail). Feudalism is decentralized government, with vassals governing their fiefs, not the lord, and meting out even high justice (capital punishment included) in regards to villeins. Here the feudalism is a mix of the agrarian manorial fiefs and a kind of pension fief. That is, some of the vassals receive business enterprises in return for their vassalage instead of land. Such enterprise yields them an income for which they owe fealty, service, and taxes. In any case, both sorts of fiefs must be managed properly to support the vassals and generate a tax return.

The manorial fief includes villeins bound to the land and dwelling in villages, receiving all law and justice from their lord. The manorial fief also encompasses yeomen, freemen who own their land by having paid over money to the vassal for it, socmen, freemen who pay rent to the vassal for their land, and communities of such free folk. Freemen are entitled to high justice, that dispensed by the overlord, for major crimes, but they are subject to local (low) justice for ordinary misdemeanors.

Note that many places in this setting are independent of the Town of Yggsburgh, have an independent lord, or are free of any vassalage. Garham, for example, is just such a place. For purposes of this setting, the communities of free folk are classed as "thorps," settlements of some 100 persons, and "hamlets," communities of 200 or more persons, but under 1,000 (where "town" becomes proper name). The Castle Keeper can assume one craft or trade business for every 50 inhabitants over 100 persons in a community. So, a thorp of 150 persons might well have a blacksmith or an ale house, while a hamlet of 250 population would have both and perhaps a general store as well. The business fief does not include all of that, but the workers are employed at the whim of the vassal and he dispenses low justice to them, including life and death, and might have the power of taxation.

The cultural level is that of the High Middle Ages, and early Renaissance in developed states. Technology is at least on a par with that general period, more advanced in areas of agriculture, transportation and engineering, but lacking chemical explosives as is usual in a fantasy world setting. As the Romans of our real world built fine roads, bridges, and aqueducts, used concrete and had central heating, indoor plumbing, and underground sewers, including such amenities in the larger communities of civilized states is not a stretch, especially in a fantasy milieu that does not assume a total collapse of a former advanced civilization, the loss of virtually all of its important books and records, and a vast decline in knowledge that only time and great effort can regain. This was, of course, what happened to Europe when the Roman Empire fell to the invading Teutonic peoples.

Keep that in mind as you place this module in your campaign world, and there should be no problems. Further guidance as to the best locale for Yggsburgh and environs can be gained from the history section below. Of course the Castle Keeper is free to alter such information so as to suit his campaign.