

# THE ORDER OF THE PLATINUM HAND

*A short adventure for five 10th-level adventurers.*

By Corwin Riddle

*The Order of the Platinum Hand* is a standalone encounter designed for five characters between the levels of 9 and 11. The adventure takes place in Macetol, a golden city of justice and order with a terrible secret; their legendary heroes of peace were no more than fanatical tyrants, ruling the population with brutality and fear. Now, centuries later, Macetol's past has caught up with the city, and a terrifying new dawn is on the horizon.

## BACKGROUND

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Led by a dedicated order of paladins following the will of Bahamut, the city of Macetol is a paragon of peace, justice, and order in a world rife with chaos. But things were not always so calm inside the golden walls. Long ago, during a period of civil unrest, a paladin named Arturius was given absolute power to deal with the rampant crime and corruption. Calling themselves the Order of the Platinum Hand, Arturius and his council of knights decreed a state of martial law upon the city, believing the only way to bring back peace and order was through controlling the population and destroying those that opposed their rule. Serving a perverted sense of order, Arturius and his knights ruled from an ornately decorated table, perfectly round - indicating that all men are equally accountable to the laws of Macetol.

The Order of the Platinum Hand ruled the city without tolerance; those accused of dissent and sedition were executed, and the smallest crimes given excessive sentencing without a trial. After years of oppression, the denizens of the city fought back against Arturius and his council, subduing them. As a punishment for their atrocities, a group of wizards bound their souls to the round table, imprisoning Arturius and his council within. The temple itself was buried, and a new temple of Bahamut built on the remains.

Centuries passed, and the people of Macetol began to create a fiction in order to forget their darkest hour - a virtuous story of Arturius and his noble order, who defended the city during its golden age and now rest in a sacred chamber beneath their beloved temple. There are few left who know

the truth of Arturius, and they dare not mar the memory of the city's greatest hero.

But now, the past threatens to return. After a devastating earthquake, the entrance to the temple below was unearthed, the table broken, and the knights released. Those brave enough to investigate have been lost, and those above speak of a dark presence; of whispers heralding the city's return to true order.

## GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

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*The Order of the Platinum Hand* can be used as a standalone encounter, or as the basis of an entire adventure. The characters can stumble upon the old temple, or they can be sent there with one or more of the following hooks.

### HOOK 1: AN HEIRLOOM LOST

A paladin named Dremdor comes from a long line of those serving Bahamut in Macetol, dating back to before the Order. Dremdor proudly tells you an exciting tale of Arturius and his Order of the Platinum Hand, who righteously looked over Macetol for a golden age of peace and prosperity. One of his ancestors was a member of the Order, and a family heirloom was buried with him. The heirloom is an ornate sword, its name inscribed along the blade: Calibrax. He asks the PCs to find and return the sword, so it can be honored in his family's hall.

**Quest XP:** 500 XP and 500 gp for returning the sword.

### HOOK 2: THAT CLASSIC LOOK

Macetol's chief architect is a dwarf named Balin, and he has been tasked with repairing the temple of Bahamut, following the earthquake. Seeing this as a great opportunity to honor the past while making his mark on an historic building, Balin wants to bring back a classic feel to the temple's crests and banners. He asks the PCs to take an etching kit, venture down below, and use the kit to copy an ancient crest or shield displaying an image of the beloved Order of the Platinum



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

The chamber is well-lit and the roof is approximately 30' tall. The broken table, door, and earth color are difficult terrain.

**Runic Circles:** When Arturius or a Knight of the Platinum Hand enters a square covered by a runic circle, the prison tries to draw them in. They are immobilized and cannot make opportunity attacks until the start of their next turn. This effect only occurs if they enter the space from outside, not when they first appear and it does not persist each turn if they remain in it.

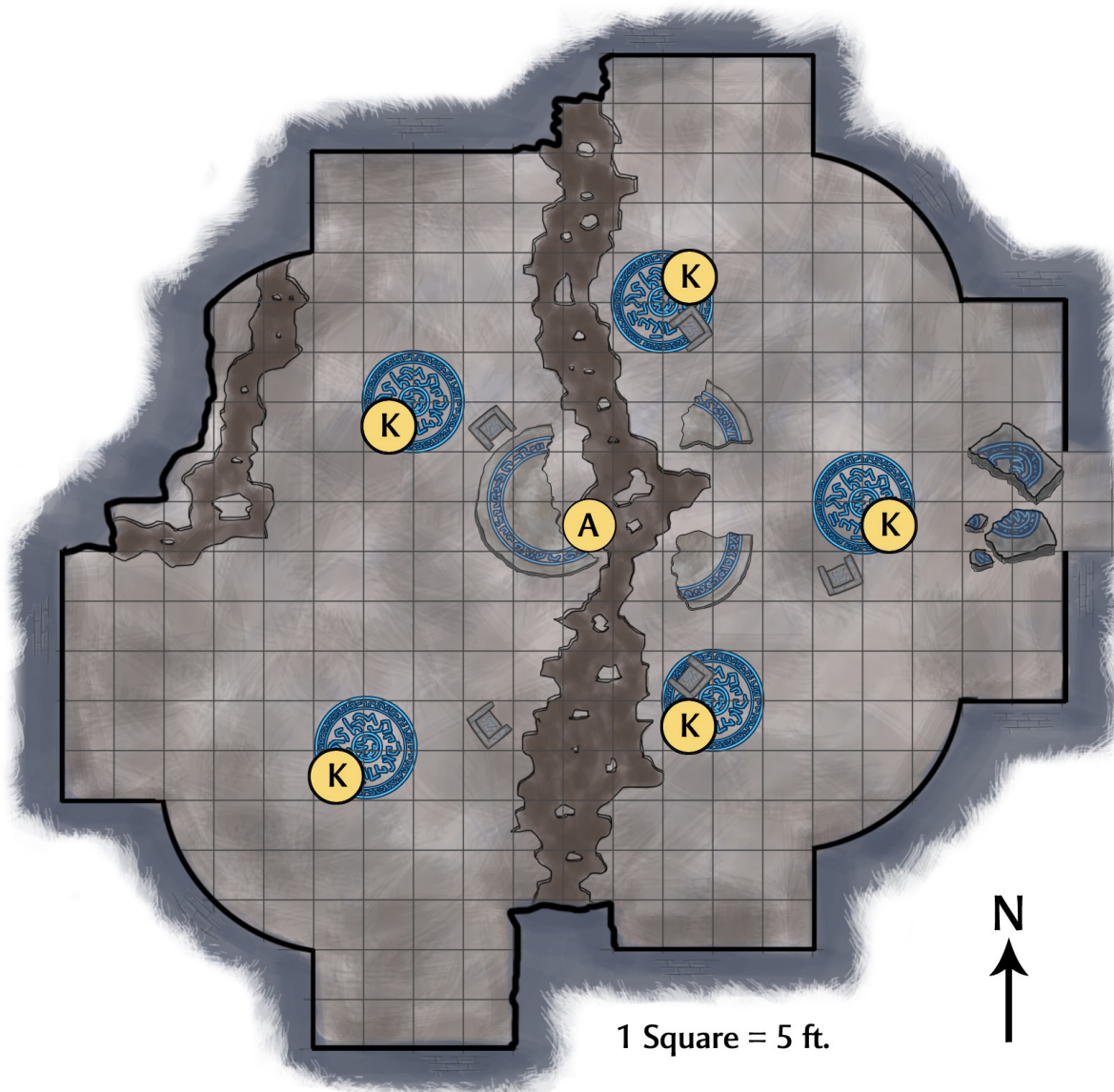
**Read this when the PCs stand on the runic circles:**

*The runic circles radiate a burning glow, and you feel a small amount of life force being pulled from you. Materializing from nothing, powerful knights appear in front of you, adorned in thick silver armor, and equipped with swords and shields. Arturius materializes in the center of the room, wearing armor that seems to be impenetrable, and says:*

*“Through your life force, we are released. How dare you imprison us - the saviors of Macetol! Your crime has not gone unnoticed; nor shall it go unpunished. Justice has found you, and the Order of the Platinum Hand will hasten its sentence. Prepare yourselves!”*

## TACTICS

The Knights of the Platinum Hand will immediately cast *Mark of Souls* as an immediate interrupt on whichever PC stood on its runic circle to summon it. The knights will try to avoid attacking that PC if possible, since the knight deals half damage to him or her, and will instead attempt to utilize *Phalanx Formation* by grouping up with other knights. Arturius will appear and remain in the center of the room using *Flash of Light* and *Platinum Justice* until all of his knights are killed, or the players begin to consistently land attacks on him; otherwise, he will not attack them directly. When he enters the fight, Arturius will use his *Sweeping Slash* and *Platinum Fury* abilities. The knights fight to the death, as knights often do.



If you dislike reading full powers and effects to players, instead read the following hints to inform them:

#### **When the knights mark a player with Mark of Souls:**

*The other knights appear powerful, protected by shining armor. The knight summoned to your circle, however, looks weak and frail; his armor is rusting and incomplete, full of holes and openings that you can take advantage of.*

#### **If they attack Arturius before a knight has died, he says:**

*"I feed on the power of my order; you must best my knights before challenging me!"*

#### **When a knight dies:**

*Pieces of Arturius' armor clatter as they fall to the floor, and he appears slightly more vulnerable than before.*

#### **If a knight becomes immobilized in a circle:**

*The runic circle glows brightly as the knight is momentarily imprisoned within.*

## PLAYER STRATEGY

The knights are unaware that the runic circles can still impede them, and will walk directly over them on their way to attack the PCs. The PCs should be very mobile, moving around to avoid Arturius' *Platinum Justice* and using the circles to immobilize the knights and keep them apart from one another to avoid their *Phalanx Formation* bonus. Each PC takes half damage from their knight and deals double damage to it, so when the party is attacking that knight - the corresponding PC should take advantage of their *Mark of Souls* bonus to burn them down. Arturius is almost invincible while his knights are alive, but as each one dies he becomes a little weaker.

## CONCLUSION

Upon killing Arturius, he will fall to the ground, saying as he gasps his last few breaths: *"We carried the burden of necessity... Is it not better to err on the side of order, rather than let chaos run free? There was no other way..."* On Arturius is a level 12 magical item, and platinum armor pieces worth 5,000 gp. Nearby, the PCs will find the sword *Calibrax*, still mounted on its stone housing. The PCs can take an etching of any one of the knight's shields, or one of the crests lining the walls.

Upon returning to the surface, the PCs can turn in their quests. If they return to the elder, he thanks them profusely and begs them to keep their knowledge a secret, saying: *"Arturius was not the first to bring a time of darkness to Macetol, nor will he be the last; such is the cycle of time. Our strength and order persist, however, not through the truth of our history, but in how we choose to remember it."*

## ADJUSTMENTS

If you like this encounter but aren't sure you can fit it into your current campaign, you can adjust and scale it to accommodate any adventure. Here are some suggestions:

#### **We don't have enough players:**

*If you have more or less than 5 players, change the number of knights and runic circles to the number of players you have.*

#### **We're not the right level:**

*Most of the abilities do not include numbers or damage, and can be easily added to any other similar monster of your level. The Knights of the Platinum Hand and Arturius were both based on the Knight Accordant monster, found in the Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide, the Monster Builder, and the online Compendium. If you have a D&D Insider account, you can use the Monster Builder to scale the monsters to your level.*

#### **It's too hard, we keep wiping:**

*This encounter is designed to be a technical and challenging encounter for experienced players. If it seems too difficult, or if something is going horribly, horribly wrong, please adjust the monster levels, damage, or hit points. Whatever you do, please don't murder all of your players in an ancient temple in the middle of Macetol; the city isn't prepared for Arturius to return, and your friends probably don't want to die at the hands of a King Arthur rip-off.*

#### **We don't like the theme or characters:**

*My feelings! Just kidding. A lot of the effort goes into the combat design, so if that part seems neat to you, steal it and dump the rest. They can be evil monks, or cultists, or anything you want - and the encounter can be adapted to any existing city you might already have visited in your current campaign.*

#### **We'd rather play a full adventure than a one encounter:**

*This encounter is designed to be tossed into any existing adventure as a standalone side trek, but if you want to turn this into an entire adventure with additional encounters inside the buried temple, there are many wonderful possibilities. Here are a few ideas for more 10th-level encounters on the way to meet Arturius.*

#### **Encounter 1:**

- 3 Skeletal Tomb Guardians (MM1)
- 2 Skull Lords (MM2)

#### **Encounter 2:**

- 1 Tomb Spider (MM2)
- 2 Tomb Spider Broodswarm (MM2)
- 3 Battle Wights (MM)

#### **Encounter 3:**

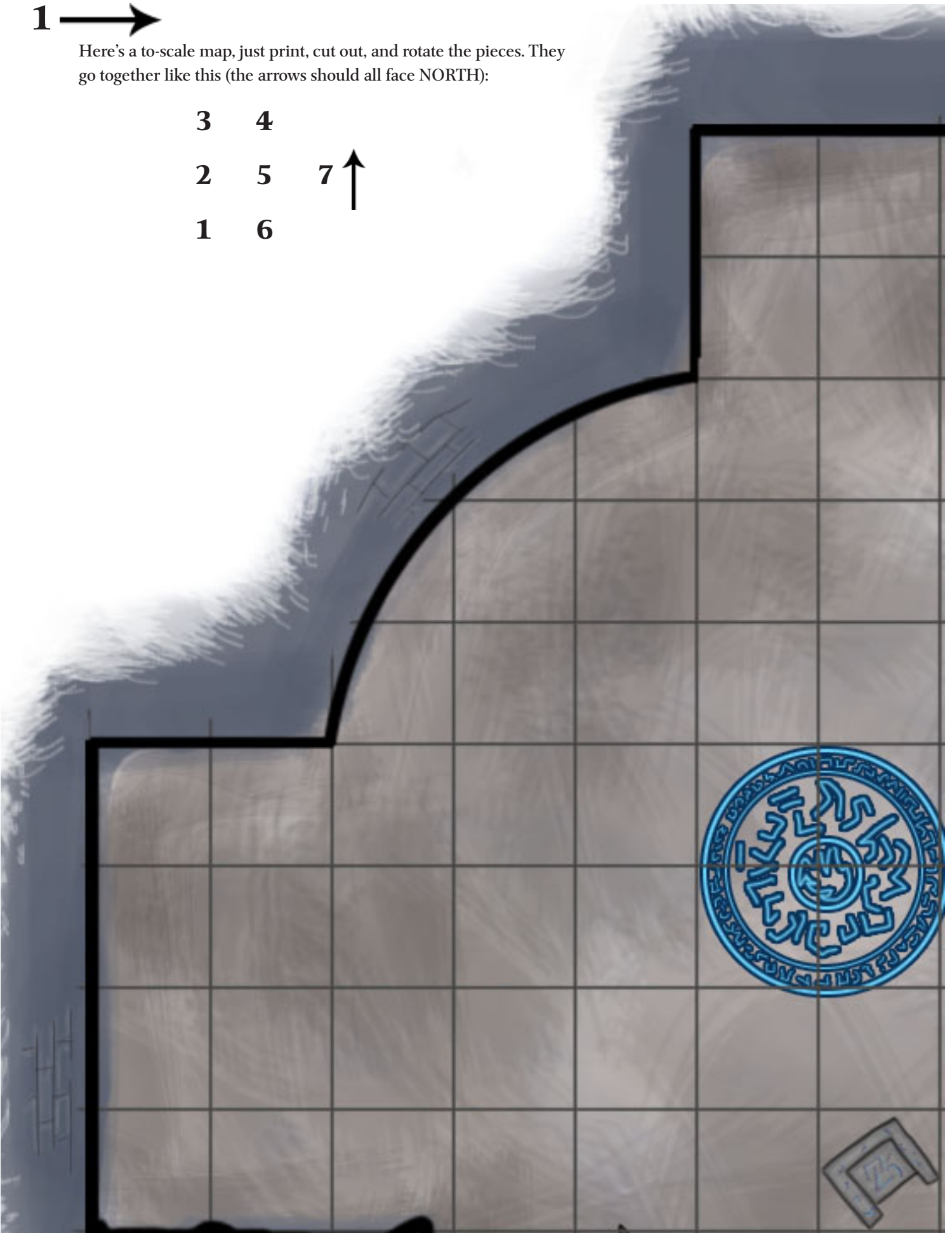
- 1 Mourner (Compendium)
- 2 Skeletal Hammerers (Compendium)
- 4 Shade of Fallen Heroes (Compendium)

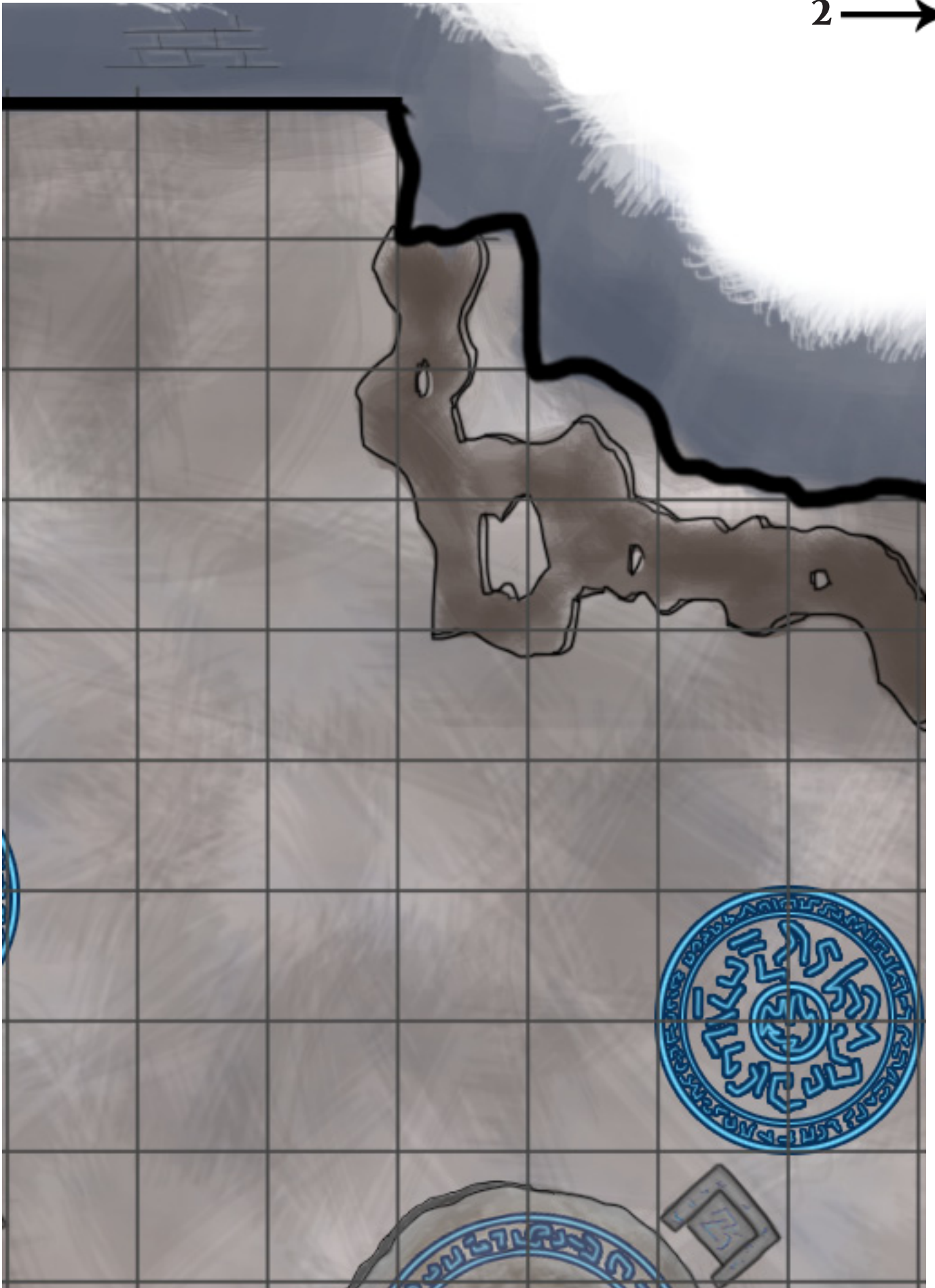


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Here's a to-scale map, just print, cut out, and rotate the pieces. They go together like this (the arrows should all face NORTH):

3 4  
2 5 7 ↑  
1 6





3 →





5 →





**1 Square = 5 ft.**

