# Masterwork Maps Strongholds & Sanctuaries

## **BRIAN MOSELEY**



## www.darkfuries.com

Interior Artists: DAVID CUMMINGS JEFF WOMACK

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Masterwork Maps: Strongholds & Sanctuaries!

There are times in every campaign, often from the very beginning, when heroes fight forces of evil and bring the light of good into dens of darkness. *Strongholds & Sanctuaries* showcases two fortresses, *Gorthond Keep* and *Vaugrox Castle*, which are filled with humanoids, undead, and generally unpleasant folk ready to test the mettle of any adventurer.

It isn't always about destroying the dark side though, and in this volume we've sunken to new depths with the inclusion of a submerged temple. With lizardfolk, merfolk, and one or two underwater surprises, this holy site spans from a salt marsh through a clear lagoon to a coral reef - but watch out for dragon turtles.

Enough about good! Evilly-aligned campaigns will find this sourcebook equally fun and useful. The strongholds can serve as bases of operations, the homes of evil bosses, or as estates that evil characters wouldn't mind owning themselves. Besides, as everyone knows, temples *always* have something of value in them. As a variant or to confound players who might accidentally sneak a glance at the pages herein, the background content can be swapped and interspersed between the structures or even completely ignored; after all it's your campaign!

All of the game mechanics in this volume are detailed using the d20 System<sup>TM</sup> version 3.5, but *Strongholds & Sanctuaries* is designed for use with any roleplaying campaign. The goal of *Masterwork Maps* sourcebooks is to provide highly detailed, exciting locations that are ready for immediate use and easily inserted into any campaign.

As always, these showcased structures are replete with colorful characters, rich background, nasty traps, and plenty of adventure plots to keep your campaign's heroes and villains busy for many gaming sessions to come. So please, read and enjoy!

Brian Moseley August, 2006

# **FLOOR PLAN NOTES**

With the exception of two aerial maps, the bailey of Gorthond Keep on page 4 and the overview of the Water God's Temple on page 27, all floor plans in this book are depicted at a scale of 5 ft. per square. Unless otherwise indicated by a compass on a floor plan, directional orientation is always presented as North being toward the top of the page.

The ascending direction of staircases is indicated with an arrow: arrows always point toward the stairs leading upwards. For example, a staircase terminating as it ascends to a floor will have an arrow just before the top step and the arrow will be pointing toward the top step.

# **GORTHOND KEEP**

"Worship whom you will. Respect those you must. Crush who you can. But know that this is my domain."- Rhadas Freen, Warlord of Sullen March.

Gorthond Keep is the guardian of an unpleasant and lawless region of low, broken hills known as the Sullen March. Built some sixty years ago from the gutted ruins of its former self, Gorthond Keep is an exemplary example of architectural competence rarely found in the March. This is the estate of Rhadas Freen, Warlord of Sullen March.

The keep is a lone fortification standing within a large bailey enclosed by a thin curtain wall barely 12 ft. in height. The curtain wall, lookout towers, and archer ramparts are poorly constructed from adobe clay brick. The wall snakes around a long, wide expanse of relatively flat land but, more importantly, the keep is built atop a natural spring of fresh water. The only road to Gorthond Keep approaches from the southeast, veering sharply to parallel the bailey's south wall before turning toward the gatehouse. All sides of the bailey are fairly defensible as the terrain slopes away for at least 100 ft. in every direction. The northern face has the severest slope and the postern staircase is built against it for this reason. However, while Gorthond Keep stands upon high ground, the uneven terrain allows ample positions of high ground nearby.

## CONSTRUCTION

The following is standard throughout the keep, with exceptions listed in individual descriptions: Floors and walls are constructed of cut stone. Exterior walls are faced with masonry 1 to 3 ft. thick, with a core of dirt and granite rubble. Each story is 15 ft. high, with vaulted ceilings peaking 11 ft. above the floor to allow 4 ft. of supporting timber and stonework between stories.

Walls are of average quality masonry (Climb DC 20). Exterior wooden doors (strong, barred and locked): 2 in. thickness, 5 hardness, 20 hp, Break DC 27, Open Lock DC 30. Interior wooden doors (good, barred): 1-1/2 in. thickness, 5 hardness, 15 hp, Break DC 20. The warlord, head

# Gorthond Keep

priestess, and garrison captain have keys to all doors.

Interior lighting is from candles, oil lamps, hearths, and *continual flame* spells. Windows are either rectangular or arched. Rectangular windows are 3 ft. in height and have interior wooden shutters. Arched windows are 4 ft. in height and have glass panes. Arrow loops are 3 ft. in height, 6 inches wide, and have no glass panes or shutters.

#### **BAILEY**

**01: Gatehouse.** The gatehouse is constructed of granite and granite rubble, a composition common for fortifications in the March. It contains two stories and rises to a height of 28 ft.

**02: Lookout Towers.** The three lookout towers are built of adobe clay and rise a mere 25 ft. in height.

**03: Archer Ramparts.** These rectangular protrusions permit line of fire along the bailey walls. Dirt has been shoveled in on the bailey side to form an earthen rampart that levels 4 ft. below the height of the curtain wall, thus permitting archers to fire over the curtain wall while maintaining cover.

**04: Postern.** A locked, iron-bound door set into a solid wood and granite frame is built into the curtain wall. The door accesses the stairs leading down the northern face of the bailey.

**05: Gatehouse - Entrance.** Two sets of double iron-bound doors permit entry into the bailey. The absence of murder slots and archer loop alcoves is glaring evidence of the gatehouse's inferior design. Ceiling: 13 ft., flat.

**06: Gatehouse - First Floor Guardrooms.** Each room contains racks of heavy crossbows and is littered with kegs of crossbow bolts, personal belongings, and debris. Ladders access the second floor. Ceiling: 13 ft. flat

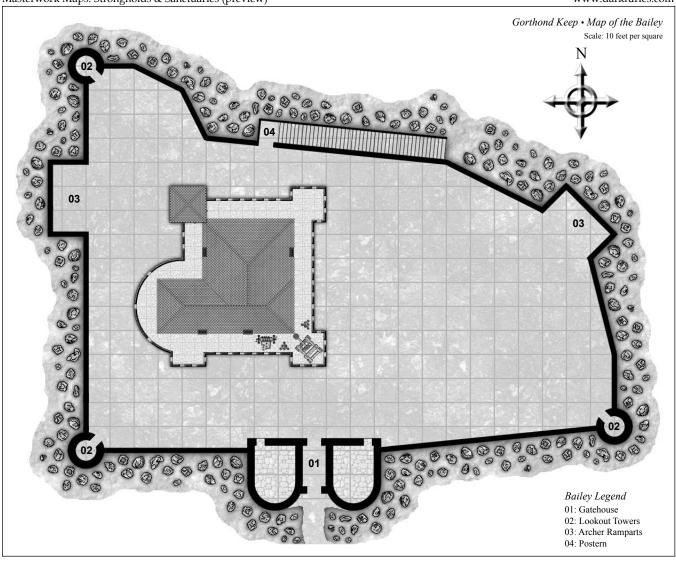
07: Gatehouse - Second Floor. This area is mainly used as makeshift storage. Ladders access the first floor and roof. Ceiling: 13 ft., flat wood.

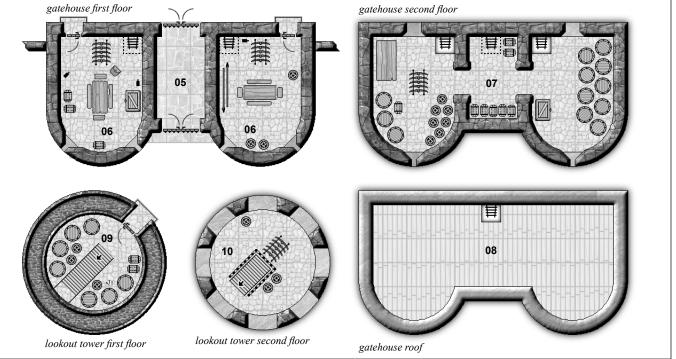
**08: Gatehouse - Roof.** The exterior wall extends to nearly waist height to afford partial cover for defenders. The ladder descending to the second floor is open to the elements.

**09: Lookout Towers - First Floor.**These three towers are nearly identical in design and content.
The first floor of each tower serves as makeshift storage, with adobe brick steps leading up to the second floor. Floor: adobe clay. Ceiling: 10 ft. adobe clay.

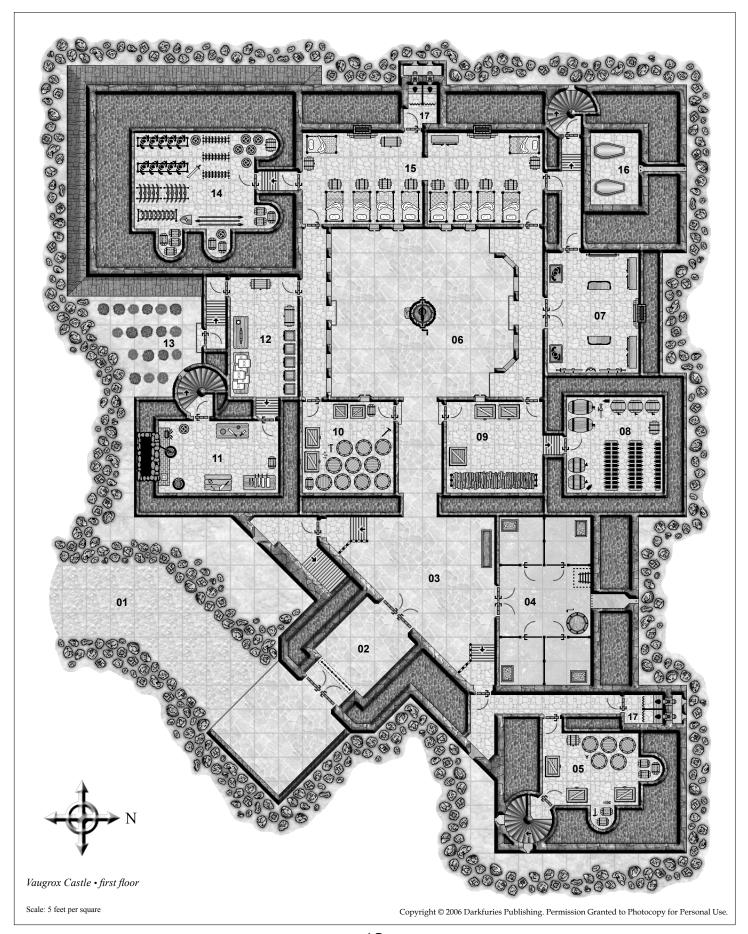


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been two years since the werewolf ripped him to shreds. Two years since Ryus found his dying body and saved him. Two years of living in the rotting ruins of this forsaken castle.

A debt owed. At least that's what Ryus called it. The vampire found great pleasure in Viktir's lycanthropic existence, and his laughter echoes unceasingly in Viktir's mind. Ryus saved him out of sheer whimsy, and Viktir is certain that the vampire will never let him leave. But there is a way out; there's always a way.

Matthias Potter, Ghost Male Human Expert 3/Fighter 4: CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 7d12; HP 45; Init +1; Spd Fly 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 12, or 22 (+8 full plate, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk incorporeal touch +7 melee or +9 against ethereal foes (1d6 or 1d6+3 against ethereal foes) or +11 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 longsword) or +8 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork composite shortbow); Full Atk incorporeal touch +7 melee or +9 against ethereal foes (1d6 or 1d6+3 against ethereal foes) or +11/+6 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1 longsword) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6/x3, masterwork composite shortbow); SA corrupting touch, malevolence, telekinesis, manifestation; SQ darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; STR 16, DEX 13, CON —, INT 12, WIS 10, CHA 14. Languages: Common, Elven.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3 (2), Bluff +7 (5), Climb +0 (4), Diplomacy +11 (5), Gather Information +10 (6), Jump -6 (4), Knowledge (history) +6 (5), Knowledge (local) +6 (5), Knowledge (nobility) +6 (5), Listen +13 (5), Profession (bookkeeper) +6 (6), Spot +13 (5), Swim -7 (4); Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: +1 longsword, masterwork composite shortbow, masterwork full plate armor, masterwork heavy steel shield.

Corrupting Touch (Su): A ghost that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack deals 1d6 points of damage. Against ethereal



opponents, it adds its Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls. Against nonethereal opponents, it adds its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls only.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, an ethereal ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a magic jar spell (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be manifested and try to move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 17). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the ghost vanishes into the target's body.

Manifestation (Su): A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and as an ethereal creature it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane. A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane, and is not considered extraplanar on either.

Telekinesis (Su): A ghost can use telekinesis as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + ghost's HD) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a ghost for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace.

For a quarter-century, Matthias Potter was the castellan of Vaugrox Castle. He was also the last to hold the position. A month after Ryus Vaugrox's eighteenth birthday, Matthias was killed in the great hall by his former lord. It was a night of horror during which the freshly-stricken vampire slew the castle's inhabitants in a rage of bloodlust frenzy.

Matthias is tied to the great hall, though he wanders freely throughout the castle grounds. He typically ignores Vaugrox's current inhabitants, but the gnolls have learned that he does not tolerate any intrusion into the great hall. Matthias is wrought with anguish over Ryus' vampirism and does not blame him for the evil he has done. Matthias remains at Vaugrox Castle in an effort to keep others from sharing his fate, and he will manifest to warn newcomers to leave the castle immediately.

Cau' Ree One-Eared, Gnoll Clan Leader, Male Gnoll Barbarian 6: CR 7; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 2d8+6 plus 6d12+18; HP 75; Init

cavern from the remainder of the caves. The sculpting of the *stone shape* was excellently accomplished and the sealed entrance is nearly indistinguishable (Search DC 40) from the natural cave wall. The hidden cave contains six stone coffers. All are affixed to the cave's stone floor and their lids are sealed by *stone shape* spells. The coffers contain numerous sets of rotting mundane clothing, a *horn of fog*, three *swan boat feather tokens*, three *anchor feather tokens*, and a cursed *orb of storms* that will function only within 10 miles of the temple.

**08: Submerged Caves.** The sea caves descend sharply at this point to become completely submerged.

**09: Guard Area.** A lizardfolk warrior stands guard in this area except during high tide.

**10: Cave Mouth Opening to Lagoon.** The sea cave opens to the lagoon at a depth of 30 ft.

#### **CORAL REEF**

**11: Worship Room.** The ancient shell of a dragon turtle rests at the top of the coral reef, and forms the chamber for the merfolk's worship



area. A crustacean layer slowly covered the dragon turtle's head, tail, and legs after the beast died, leaving behind hollow tunnels within the reef when the turtle's flesh was finally eaten away. Only the top of the shell remains above the water at high tide, though the entire shell is visible and the interior is empty of seawater at low tide. The shell is the only portion of the reef caves that is not constantly underwater.

**12 - 14: Reef Openings.** These short tunnels were formed by the dragon turtle's rear legs and tail, and open directly to the sea.

**15: Reef Opening.** This tunnel was formed by the turtle's head, and opens into the lagoon.

16, 25, 27: Reef Caves. These caves are home to the merfolk clan.

17: Zilgan's Lair. This chamber is home to Zilgan, an old water naga.

**18 - 24: Reef Openings.** These natural tunnels open to the sea and lagoon. All of the openings are underwater, even at low tide.

**26**: Chamber. Shul-Thay, leader of the merfolk clan, shares this cave with Shul-Bron, her mate and clan shaman.

**28: Shoal Cave.** This shoal contains a small cave that the merfolk use as a watch post.

**29: Seaweed bed.** A variety of fish spawn here, and it is a prime hunting area for the merfolk.

## INHABITANTS

**Lizardfolk Tribe:** 1 leader/shaman (Clr-8), 1 elder (Sor-6), 1 lieutenant (Rgr-4), 48 adults (War-1), and 24 noncombatants.

**Merfolk Clan:** 1 leader (Brd-4), 2 lieutenants (War 3 and War-2/Clr-1), and 13 adults (War-1).

Grubok, Tribal Chief, Shaman of the Temple, Male Lizardfolk Cleric 8: CR 9; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 10d8+20; HP 68; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26 (+7 banded mail armor, +2 shield of faith spell, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d6+2) or +8 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk 2 Claws +9 melee (1d6+2) and Bite +7 melee (1d4+1) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6, javelin); SA turn undead 3/day; SQ hold breath; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +10; STR 14, DEX 12, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 18 (16), CHA 10. Ht: 6′ 10″; Wt: 260 lbs. Languages: Common, Draconic.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3 (3), Concentration +10 (8), Jump -2 (3), Spellcraft +8 (8), Swim +0 (4); Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (2 claws), Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 - cure minor wounds x2, detect magic, guidance, read magic; 1st - bless, calm animals (d), cure light wounds, divine favor, obscuring mist, shield of faith; 2nd - augury, bull's strength, calm emotions, fog cloud (d), hold person; 3rd - dispel magic, cure serious wounds, dominate animal (d), water breathing x2; 4th - control water (d), freedom of movement, neutralize poison.

Domains: Animal, Water.

*Hold Breath:* A lizardfolk can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to four times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Possessions: 3 javelins, +1 banded mail armor, periapt of wisdom +2, wand of cure light wounds (42 charges), silver holy symbol, spell component pouch, 10 lbs of silver dust (50gp), powdered diamond (200gp), platinum and pearl necklace (800gp), 7pp, 19gp, 13sp, 6cp.

Grubok, son of Roggtu, is the tribal chieftain, as was his father before him. Grubok, however, came into the role unexpectedly after



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