

Part II: Symbols for special places

“Over the day-smitten towers and walls of Shudm (uglier by day, all its black filth and spiritual garbage too openly displayed), the air began to sing and to ripple, and then grow oppressively silent and motionless. And then the air hardened, like cooling lava. And like lava, the air darkened, until it let in the fierce glare of the sun, but nothing else. Nothing – no lesser light, no noise, no breath of wind or vapor, neither dust nor rain – no wisp of anything. Even the vagrant corpse-eater birds could no longer get in, or out. Like a tomb. Above and also beneath. Inside – not simply a dome but an egg of leaden crystal, there was Shudm now, and the afternoon went by, and sunset, which was true dawn to the ghouls, and night, and midnight. And in the first overcast minutes of the new morning, there was not one sensible thing in the city that did not know it had been trapped.”

Tanith Lee, *Delirium’s Mistress*

And so, the last days of the ghouls of Shudm began - trapped by this spell of Sovaz, the daughter of Ashrarn, Lord of the Night. In Tanith Lee’s novel these ghouls were an amalgam of ghouls and classical vampires, dependent on eating flesh and drinking blood but not harmed by sunlight. As they became trapped, they had only each other left as food and after the last had eaten himself, their fate was sealed. Sovaz had chosen her very special way of revenge for what they did to her before... Maybe it was inspired by this story of Tanith Lee, that in one of the sourcebooks of RdW the players started their adventure, waking up trapped under an invisible force dome in the house of a mighty vampire.

This chapter of my map-making article will be about making symbols for special places of the campaign. For those who read the WIP thread in the forum, this chapter may contain redundancies, but nevertheless for my understanding of fantasy maps it is maybe the most important chapter. I like it a lot when a map for an RPG campaign contains parts of the narrative of the world. That means that I like to build dedicated symbols, or scenarios on the map which tell stories, giving more information than just the landscape.

In this chapter I show several symbols I’ve made for the map, along with the explanation of how I made the symbol with the background as written in the original RdW sourcebooks.

Let's start with the symbol for the magic force dome I mentioned above, protecting a powerful vampire who is looking for fresh blood and trapped a group of players in his home:



The Tear of Desperation

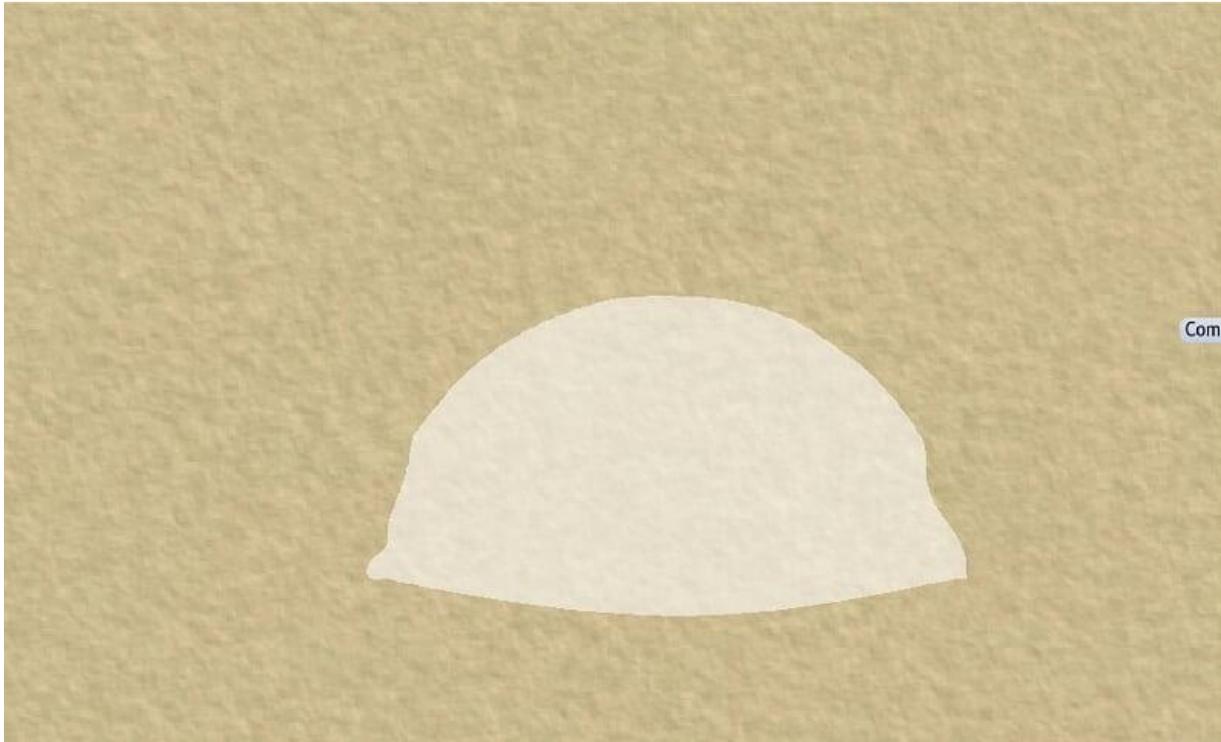
A long time ago was an intensive war between the two gods Halphas and Thongmor. The armies of Halphas destroyed the five major strongholds of Thongmor and even killed one of his disciples. As Thongmor saw this, he cried five tears - one for each stronghold. As these tears reached the ground, they became five highly powerful creatures, the five 'Vampyrs', created to take revenge for Thongmor's losses. Ever since those days they roam over Tanaris to fulfill their bloody task. They are known as the five tears of Thongmor: The Tear of Anger, the Tear of Hate, the Tear of Frustration, the Tear of Perfidy and the Tear of Desperation.

From time to time they need some years for rest and recreation, drinking the blood of the living. Caleb, the Tear of Desperation, chose a Villa in the Land of Ghorm for his 'sabbatical'. When he is resting, his home is protected by an extreme powerful magic shield. Rumors say that for some years people have disappeared in the land of Ghorm...

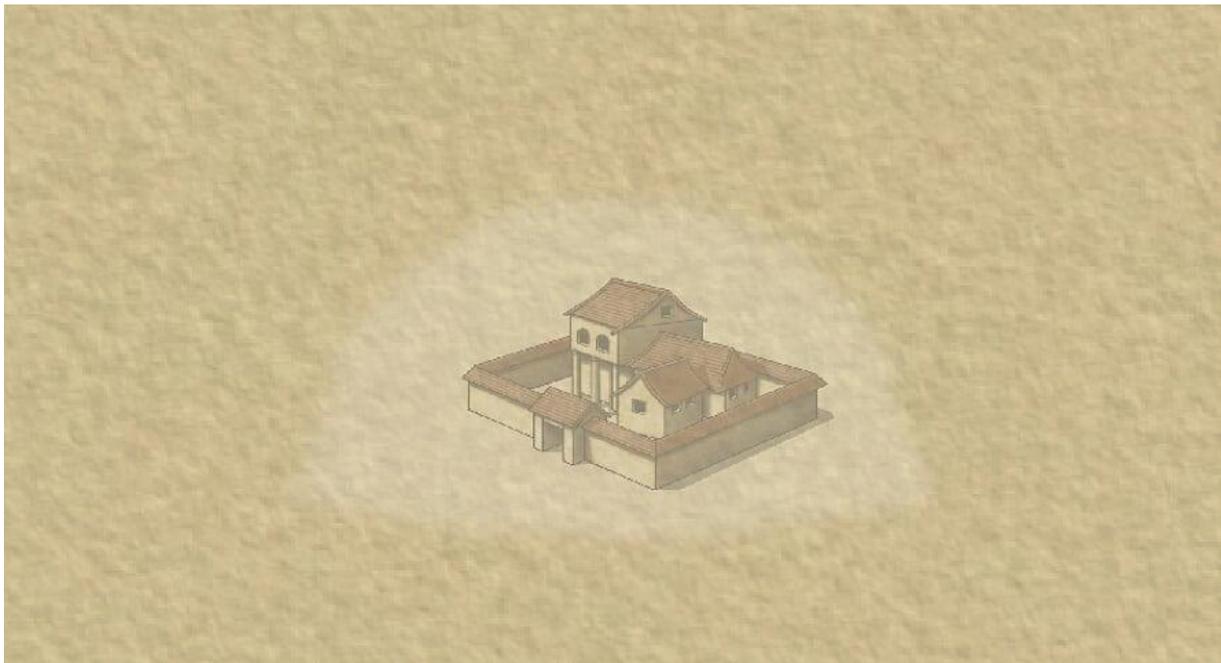
One of the original campaign books is about this scenario. For a player it is an unforgettable experience when your character wakes up at a place that he doesn't know and while exploring the house and the garden you find yourself trapped behind this invisible shield. And then you find the book, with the legend of the five tears and the explanation of the shield spell since it is on, its mighty master must be at home.

The first thing I do is to find a symbol for Caleb's Villa and I found a great one in the CC3 structures folder, the 'Asian Village'. The CC3 folder is always the first place I have a look in, as it has a rich variety of symbols and I like their style very much.

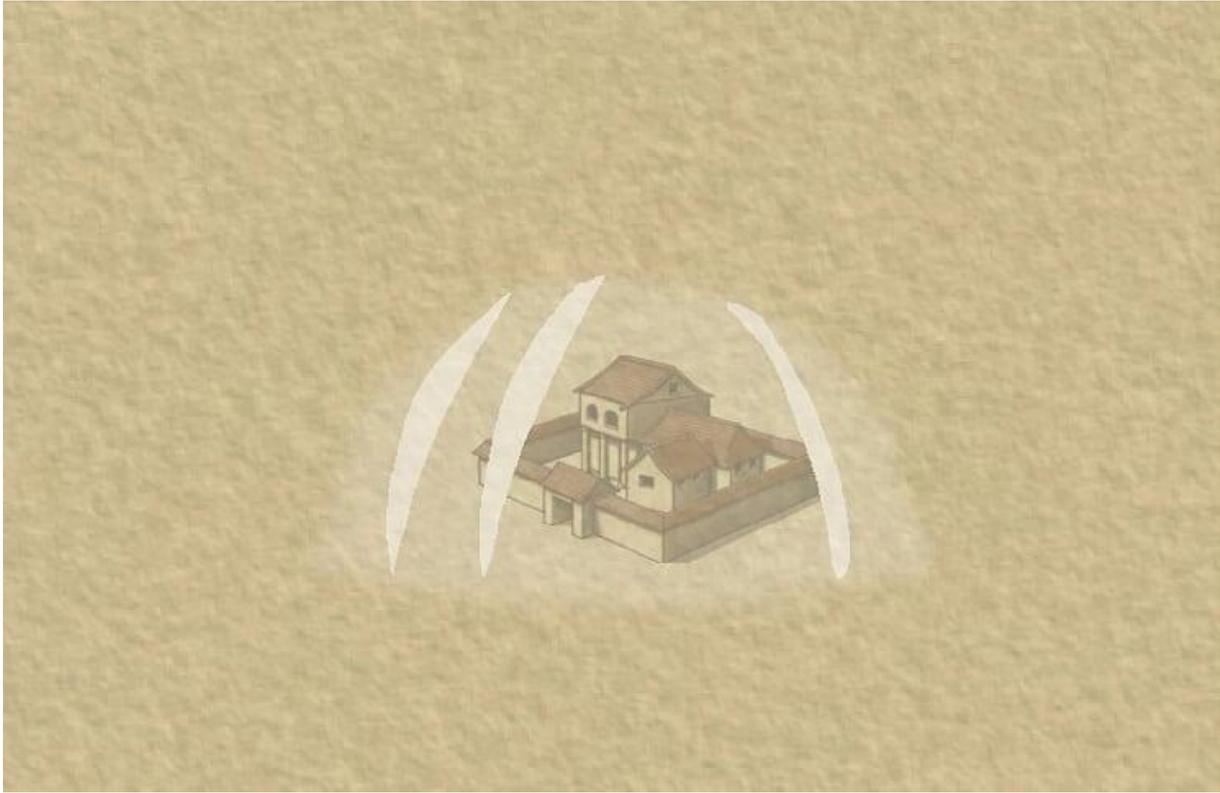
The next step is to draw a semicircle over the house, which I cut left and right and pull down a bit at the bottom line.



I add an edge fade, inner effect (edge with 2 map units, inner opacity 35%, outer opacity 0%) and a Blur effect (4 map units).



The next step is to draw some polygons to give an impression of 3D.



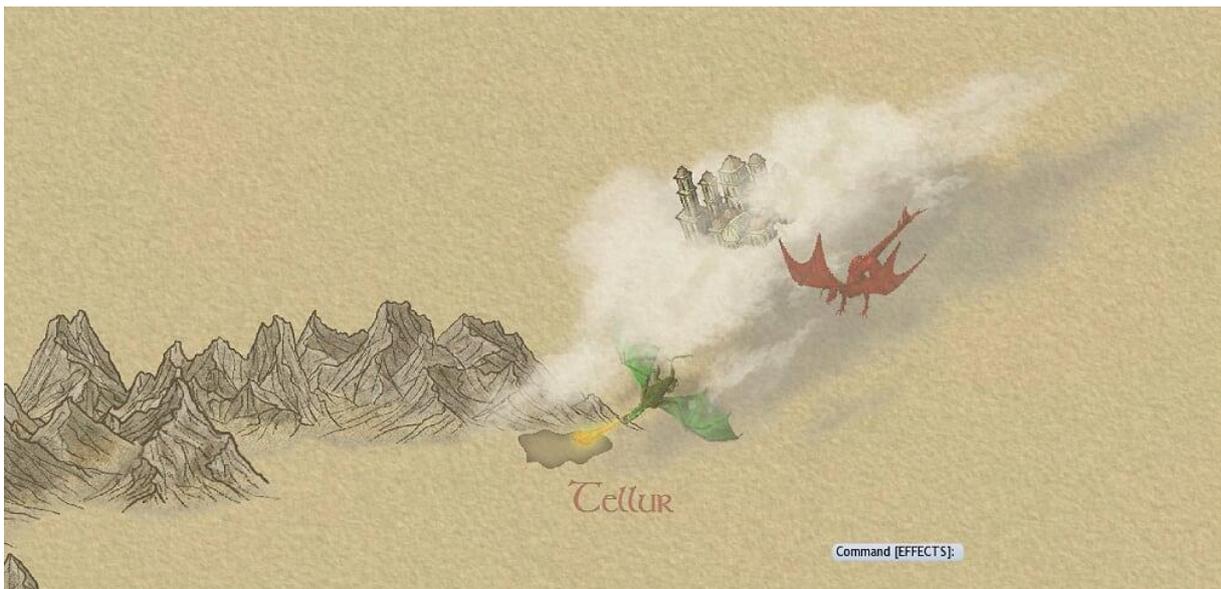
I put these polygons on their own sheet above the dome (see below), add an edge fade, inner effect (edge with 3 map units, inner opacity 75%, outer opacity 0%) and a Blur effect (2 map units).



Finally, I add some stuff, especially around the hills in the front to improve the 3D effect.



Maybe the main reason why I like Campaign Cartographer is because it enables me to bring ideas on a map which I could never realize when I had to paint them for myself. For example, I could never draw a picture of a dragon-town in the clouds, rushing down like an eagle to attack their enemies. And if I could, the amount of time needed for creating this, which is just one symbol amongst several others on the map, would not make sense for a campaign map. In CC3 I can, and it takes only a few minutes:

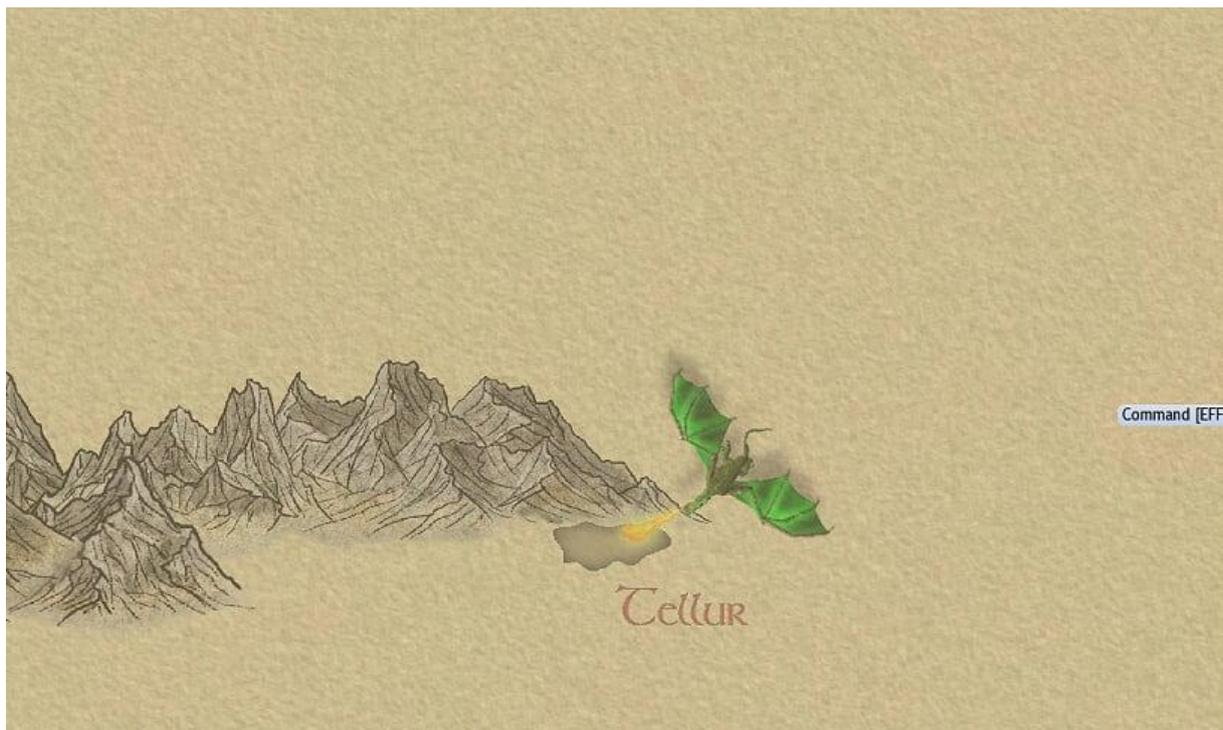


May'la, the flying town of the Dragonlords

A long time ago the Dragonlords ruled over eastern Tanaris, living in their flying town May'la. An alliance under leadership of the dwarves fought them and May'la turned to the West. The allied army

followed the town and the final battle happened where nowadays the city of Tellur is. The dwarven King himself killed the Dragonking while sitting on his back. As a final action the burning Dragonking cast a spell, opening a gate to Underearth, taking the other Dragons and the dwarven King as well. The Dwarves founded the City of Tellur where the gate to Underearth was created to make sure the Dragons wouldn't come back. Unfortunately, the entry about this in the sourcebook stops when it at the point of what happened with the flying town. The sourcebook says, this story is too long...

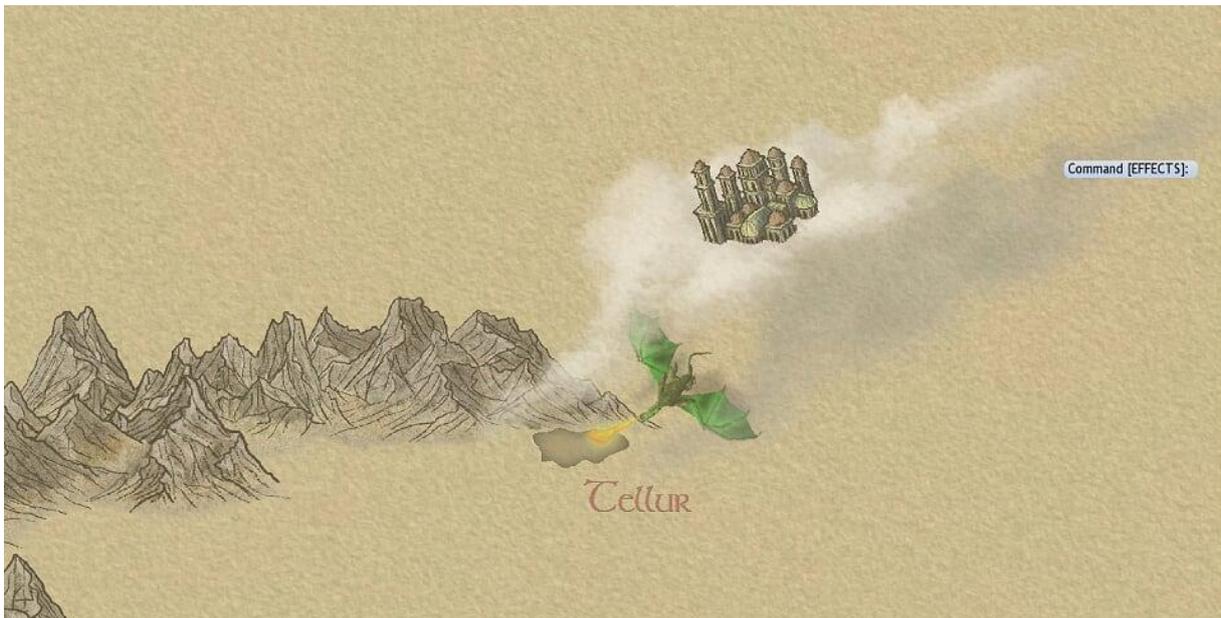
I start with a green dragon from the free CASUAC symbol set: **[and add a small pit in front of it?]**



I create a new sheet which lies above it and add a cloud from the Alyssa Fayden issue (annual issue 95):



On the cloud I put a city from the Herwin Wielink style (annual issue 64). It's originally an elven town, but I think it's imaginable that it could be the home of Dragons In the same way that I rotated the cloud, I also rotated the city symbol to give the impression that it attacks the town of Tellur from the sky:



To complete the scene, I added another cloud on a sheet above and a red Dragon from CSUAC.



The next place in this northwestern part of Tanaris is a very special one for me, as it contains certain memories as we played there. Besides that, it really kept my thoughts busy how to do it and I needed several attempts until I was satisfied.

Temple towers of Tinor

These four 'multicolored pulsating towers' are the most important religious center of Tanaris. In the town of Tinor there is armed truce between the gods and their believers, since thousands of people come each year on a pilgrimage.

Each tower is dedicated to two of the eight gods. Everybody may once in his life place his hands on one of the towers, changing his life. Maybe he gets a gift from his god, a vision, a mission or a special ability – only the DM knows. If someone does this twice, he immediately dies, becoming a burning flame.

The hardest part here is obviously the description in the sourcebook that the towers are 'multicolored pulsating'. The first thing to do for this task is to find suitable towers. I chose these ones from the classical CC3 set:



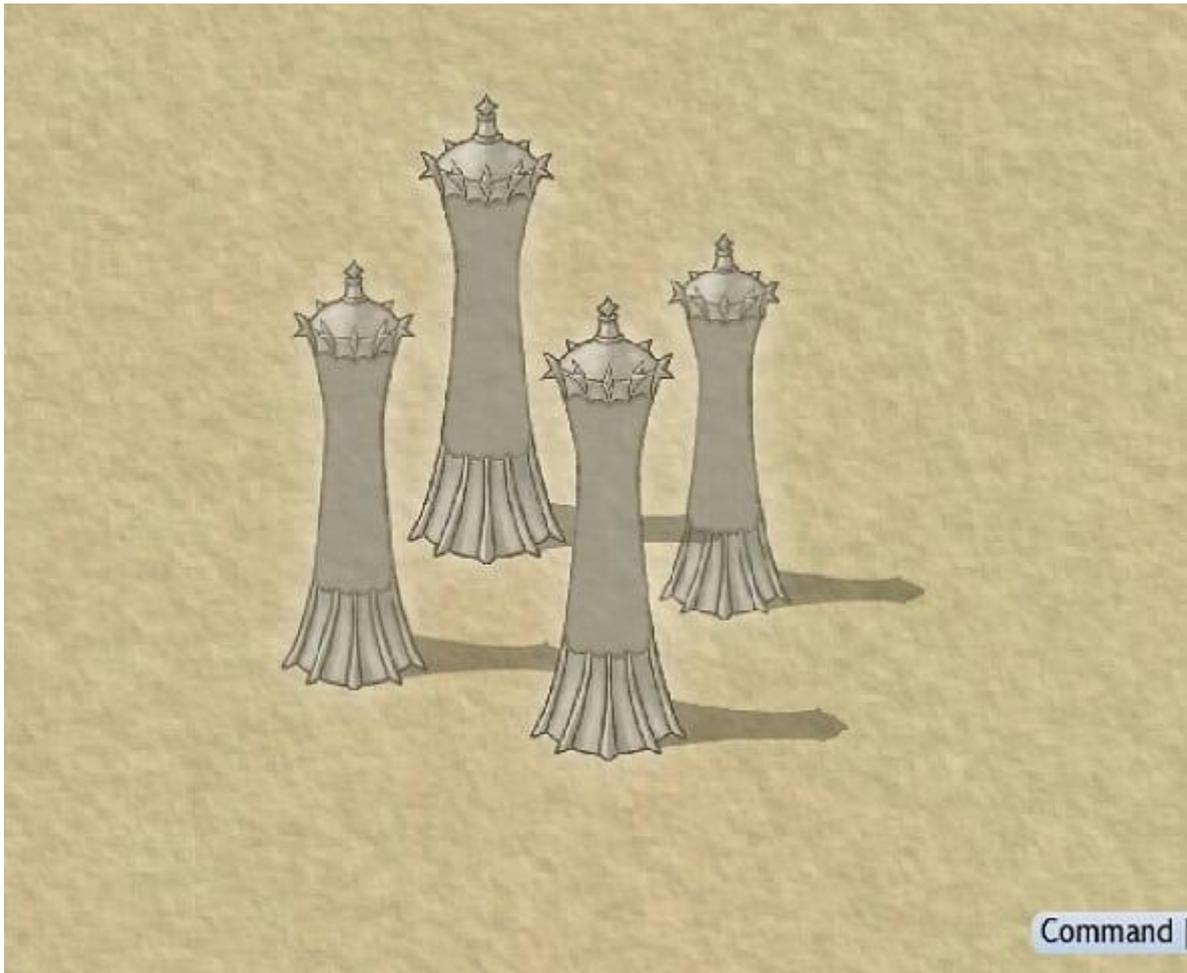
The next step is to give them some funny colors by drawing some polygons.



I add a Blur effect (6 map units) and a transparency effect (80%) and I get this result.



Because of the transparency effect you can see the windows of the original towers. To make them disappear I copy the polygons of the colors to a new sheet under the colors (so in the sheet list above), change the color to grey and give them an edge fade, inner effect with one map unit edge with.



At the finish, it looks satisfying for now, but maybe I will come back to them later when the rest of the map is done, and I can see how the colors will perform in front of the final background and if it makes sense to add a glow effect to improve the illusion of pulsating towers.

