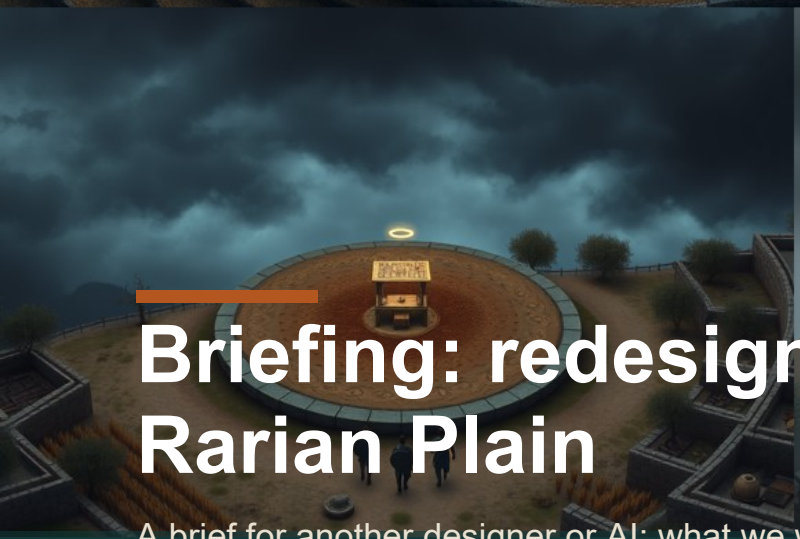
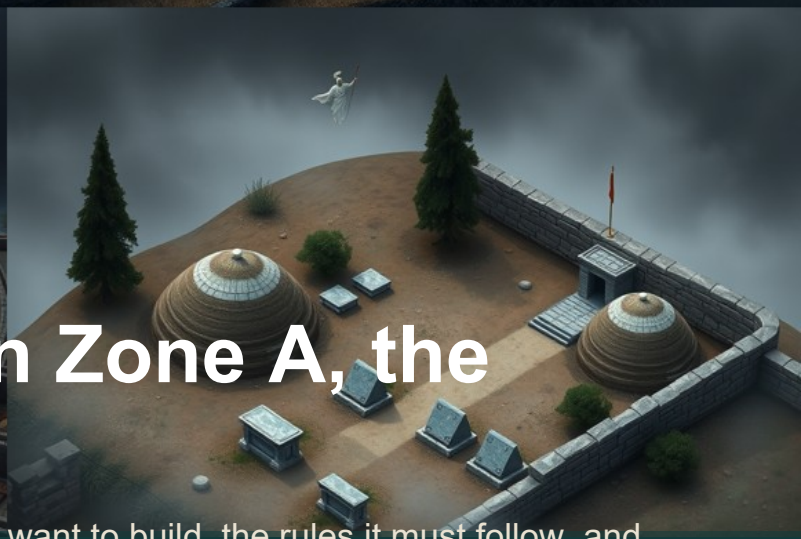






Briefing: redesign Zone A, the Rarian Plain

A brief for another designer or AI: what we want to build, the rules it must follow, and what we would like back

> ***THE PERIOD (set by the owner): the 5th century BCE, between 447 BC and 406 BC*** *(Periclean Athens and Eleusis, about 2,400 to 2,500 years ago). Every building, boat, prop, garment, weapon, plant and name in the redesign must fit that window: nothing modern, and nothing from a later or earlier age.*

1. What this is, and what we want from you

This brief describes one area of a game in development, **Embers of Olympus**, and asks you for design suggestions. The area is **Zone A, the Rarian Plain**: the first outdoor zone, a wide Attic farm plain reached through the gate of the hub town of Eleusis. It already exists in the game as a rough blockout; we want to **redesign it so that every building, prop, creature and layout choice is something a person living in Attica between 447 and 406 BC could recognise**, while keeping it dramatic and readable as a game level.

Please give us fresh ideas, not a copy of what we already have: a layout, landmark designs, props, enemy looks and the historical reasoning behind them. Where you disagree with our plan, say so and say why. Where you are not sure of a historical fact, mark it.

> ***Short image prompt*** *(for an image model): Isometric top-down ARPG game concept art of the entrance gate court of a walled Attic town, 5th century BC (447 to 406 BC), ancient Greece, dusk, grey storm sky: a plain Doric stone portal with a wooden double door in a fieldstone wall, a squared herm on a stone base, a small shrine of Hekate with torches, two bronze braziers, a worn paved court and a rutted road leading out into barley fields with dry-stone terrace walls and gnarled olive trees, boundary stones, one hoplite with a Corinthian helmet and round aspis. Historically accurate, painterly, moody, no modern objects, no battlements, no text.*
>
> ***Long prompt*** *(for a chat model, with this PDF attached): You are helping design Zone A (the Rarian Plain) of an action RPG set in Attica in the 5th century BC, between 447 BC and 406 BC. Read the attached brief fully. Give me: (1) a top-down layout sketch or a numbered map of the U-shaped route with the landmarks placed and sized; (2) one concept image per landmark; (3) a prop list with sizes in metres, materials and colours; (4) designs for each enemy; (5) a list of anything in my current design that is wrong for the period, with sources; (6) your answers to the open questions in section 10. Mark anything you are unsure of. Nothing modern and nothing from before 447 or after 406 BC.*

2. The game in brief

- **Genre:** single-player action RPG in the Diablo family: top-down isometric camera (about 55 degrees, a few tens of metres above the hero), click or keyboard to move, tab-target skills, loot, shrines, waypoints.
- **Engine:** Unity 6 with the Universal Render Pipeline. Levels are built mostly from code and simple shapes, with some modelled props. A solo developer works with AI tools, so designs must be buildable from boxes, cylinders, simple lathe meshes and a handful of modelled props.
- **Hero:** Myrra, a silent wanderer returning home. Three classes: Hoplite (shield and spear), Huntress (bow, hound, traps) and Oracle (light and prophecy).
- **Act 1 story:** the Mysteries of Eleusis, the rite that holds the door between the living and the dead, are thinning. The dead are rising on the Rarian Plain and in Demeter's grove. Nobody is a villain and no monster is evil: the dead are stuck, not cruel; the old divine machinery is still doing a job nobody ended. Zone A is Chapter 1, "The Last Harvest".
- **Tone:** mournful, quiet, sacred; "nothing is ruined, only unattended": swept, intact, maintained, empty; never rubble for its own sake.

3. The period rule (the most important rule)

> ***The game is set in the 5th century BCE, between 447 BC and 406 BC*** *(Periclean Athens and Eleusis, about 2,400 to 2,500 years ago). Everything must fit that window: nothing modern, and nothing from a later or an earlier age.*

Do (in period)	Do not (out of period)
Mud-brick walls on stone bases, whitewash or clay colour; low terracotta tile roofs with antefixes; flat clay roofs; dry-stone and polygonal masonry; plain Doric forms; painted red, blue and ochre details.	Half-timbered houses, castle battlements, gothic arches, glass windows or lanterns, chimneys, barrels, hay bales, bricks in modern bond, nails and iron cages, clinker ships, dragon heads.
Pithoi, amphorae, hydriai, kraters, kernoi, lekythoi; oil lamps and pine torches; bronze braziers and tripods; wicker baskets, linen and wool, leather sacks.	Barrels, crates with metal bands, wheelbarrows, lanterns with glass, candles, paper, books (use wax tablets and papyrus rolls), maize, potatoes, tomatoes, agave, prickly pear, turkeys, rabbits.
Herms (squared pillar with a head) at crossroads and doors; stelai with Attic-alphabet inscriptions; altars (bomoi); boundary stones (horoi); wells with curbs; wayside shrines of Hermes, Hekate, Pan and the Nymphs.	Roman or later forms: Corinthian capitals in quantity, arches and vaults in monumental form, aqueducts, sarcophagi with carved lids, mosaics, Christian or Norse symbols.
Hoplite gear: Corinthian helmet (or Attic and Chalcidian), round aspis with a painted device, doru spear with a bronze butt-spike, xiphos, linothorax or bronze cuirass, bronze greaves.	Roman legionary gear (segmented armour, scutum, plumes across the helmet), medieval armour, the sarissa (later, Macedonian), skeleton warriors (the Greek dead are shades, not skeletons).
Olive, fig, pomegranate, vines, cypress, Aleppo pine, plane, laurel, myrtle, barley, wheat, asphodel, poppy, thyme; oxen, mules, sheep, goats, dogs, hens, bees.	Any plant or animal introduced after 1492, or after antiquity.

Writing: Athenian inscriptions use the old Attic alphabet until 403/2 BC; please use it, or leave inscriptions as unreadable marks. **Naming:** use real Greek terms (herm, halos, tymbos, horos, pithos, stele) and attested names.

4. Zone A today: facts you can design against

Item	Value
Size	A plain about 250 by 180 m, with a long hill in the middle (about 136 by 52 m) that forces a U-shaped route.
Player level and time	Level 1 to 8; 30 to 40 minutes on the first run. A tutorial: move, kill, loot, equip, shrine, waypoint, miniboss.
The route (U)	Arrive at the west gate (north-west corner) and walk east along the north edge to the Threshing Floor; on east through a flooded irrigation channel to the Boundary Herm crossroads on the east side; then turn back west along the south edge through the burial mounds (the barrow-line) to the miniboss ring in the south-west; the exit to the next zone (the Treeline) is in the west, just south of the start, sealed until Chapter 1 is done.
Fixed landmarks	**The gate** (arrival, a waypoint pad beside it); **the Threshing Floor** (a circular stone floor about 18 m across, a Shrine of Demeter beside it, the first pack fight); **the drowned channel** (a flat ditch about 55 by 16 m with banks, a chest); **the Boundary Herm** (crossroads, waypoint and a rest point); **the third milestone** (a small shrine on the south-east); **the First Furrow's ring** (a flat circle about 20 m across, the miniboss arena); **the Treeline gate**.
Connective ground	The furrows (open farmland, drainage cuts, scarecrows, dead grain); the drowned channel; the far furrows and barrow-line (where the dead are thickest).
Mood	A wide grey sky over once-golden fields: failing, not wrecked. Dusk, grey storm light, a few amber torch fires, dark teal shadows.



Zone A today, in the game engine: the gate end of the plain. It is a rough blockout with generic grass, rocks and torch posts.



Zone A today: wheat furrows, the circular Threshing Floor in the middle, torches along the track. Dark because the game is dark.

5. Enemies and minibosses (what must look right)

Name	What it is	Look wanted (period-right)
Field Rats	Plain animals, swarm trash.	Ordinary rats and mice. No magic.
Keres	Small fast spirits of violent death (trash).	Small dark winged female spirits with white teeth and clawed hands, as in Hesiod's *Shield* and on vases.
Unburied Hoplite	The standard melee soldier, with a shield line. The first thing the player kills.	A dead hoplite as he fell or was laid out: pale, in a burial shroud or in the armour he died in (Corinthian helmet, aspis, doru, linothorax or bronze cuirass, greaves). Not a skeleton.
Shade / Eidolon	Ranged spectral caster, keeps its distance.	A thin pale outline of a person; thin squeaking sounds (Odyssey 24); an empty hand.
MINIBOSS: the First Furrow	A risen field-hand that raises the dead around it; kill it to finish Chapter 1.	Our idea: Bouzyges, the legendary first ploughman, risen with an ox-goad, leading the unburied he failed to bury. Please suggest alternatives.

6. What we want to build (our current plan; improve it)

- **The gate court (entrance):** a plain Doric stone portal in a fieldstone wall with a wooden double door; a worn paved court; a squared herm on a stone base; a small shrine of Hekate with torches; two bronze braziers; a few inscribed boundary stones; a well; a guard hoplite; a rutted road leading out into the fields.
- **Fields:** strips of barley and wheat divided by dry-stone walls and boundary stones; terraces on the slopes; old gnarled olive groves; fig and pomegranate by the farmhouses; cypress at graves.
- **Threshing Floor (halos):** a circle of packed earth edged with flat stones, a winnowing fan and a threshing sledge, a small altar of Triptolemos (Pausanias names a threshing floor and altar of Triptolemos on the Rarian plain).
- **Boundary Herm:** a true herm on a stone base with offerings, a roadside well and a stone farm tower (pyrgos) behind; a three-way road.
- **Farm buildings:** stone-footed mud-brick houses with low tiled roofs, a rock-cut olive press, ox-carts, stone sheepfolds.
- **The barrow-line:** earth burial mounds with marble grave stelai and white-ground lekythoi as offerings; the First Furrow rises from the largest mound.
- **Drowned channel:** an irrigation ditch with stone-lined banks and a plank bridge; a chest; the "thing in the well" side den.
- **Why the fields fail (history):** the Spartans burned this plain in 431 BC and again in later years (Thucydides 2.19); the plague of 430 to 426 left the dead unburied (Thucydides 2.47 to 54). Let the level show it quietly: burned strips, cut olive stumps, flocks driven off, makeshift graves.



Our own concept pictures (made with a local AI): the whole plain at the top, the threshing floor and the burial mounds below. They are mood references only and contain errors.



Our concept pictures for the gate court. Not to copy: the battlements (medieval), the red plume on the guard (Roman), the lettering (gibberish).

7. The look we are building toward

Below is the reference render the hub town is being built toward, and the hub as it stands. Zone A should feel like the same world a day's walk out: the same stone, the same dusk, the same amber fire against teal-grey shadow.



The reference concept render for the hub town, Eleusis (stylised: mixes in some non-Greek looks that we are correcting).



The hub town as built in the game today, for style and scale.

- **Palette:** teal-black shadows, warm amber fires, desaturated stone, dull terracotta, grey-green olive, ochre earth; never bright primary colours.
- **Readability:** the player must read the path, the enemies and the loot from a high isometric camera; landmarks need a strong silhouette and a light source.

8. Technical constraints (so ideas are buildable)

- The walkable area must be mostly flat; slopes and terraces are visual unless they are built as steps or ramps. The route and the fixed landmarks cannot move far (quests, waypoints and enemy spawns are tied to them), but props and ground dressing can change freely.
- Everything is built from boxes, cylinders, lathe-turned meshes and a limited set of modelled props; please describe props in simple shapes plus materials, with sizes in metres.
- Each solid prop needs a simple collision shape (box or capsule); decals are flat and need none.
- Lights are real-time; keep the number of small lights low (a torch or two per landmark).
- Only free-to-use or self-made art; no copyrighted characters or logos.

9. What to deliver

- **A layout:** a top-down sketch or a clear text map of the U-shaped route with each landmark's position and size.
- **One concept image per landmark** in the game's top-down view (the gate court, the threshing floor, the herm crossroads, the channel, the barrow-line, the miniboss ring, the treeline gate).
- **A prop list** with sizes, materials, colours and where they stand.
- **Enemy designs** for the five enemies above, front and three-quarter view, in period gear.
- **A short list of period errors** you find in this brief or in our current plan, with sources.
- **Your own suggestions**: anything that would make the zone more Greek, more readable or more memorable.

10. Open questions we want your view on

- Should the First Furrow be Bouzyges, the first ploughman, or something else from Attic cult or folklore?
- Zone A mood: keep the grey, rationed look (a failing harvest under a grey sky), or golden barley and ochre earth under a storm sky?
- What is the best way to show the 431 BC Spartan ravaging and the plague dead without breaking the "nothing is ruined, only unattended" rule?

- How would you stage the entrance so the first ten seconds teach the player the route, the camera and the world?
- Is a herm the right marker for the crossroads waypoint, or would a shrine of Hermes with a pile of stones (a *hermaion*) read better from above?
- Which Eleusinian or Attic myth or ritual not yet in our plan would add the most to this zone (the Proerosia first-sowing rite, the Sacred Way procession, the Thesmophoria)?

> ***History caution:*** *our own notes were written from memory of ancient sources and are not fully checked (items marked verify in the area PDFs). Please correct us where you can, and mark what you are not sure of. Thank you.*