Review: Axebane's Modular Dungeon Tiles

by loottheroom - Thursday, February 22, 2018

http://loottheroom.uk/review-axebanes-modular-dungeon-tiles/

"Axebane's Modular Dungeon Tiles Vol1" by Axebane Games

Product Type: Printable Terrain/VTT Tiles

$4.99 from DriveThruRPG

As with last month's review, I'm going to begin with some disclaimers. Firstly, I received a complimentary copy of this product for review purposes, though I have since paid for it. And, as with Trash Mobs, I'm already a fan of Axebane's work going into this review, so I'm predisposed to be favourable to these dungeon tiles. Still, I wouldn't recommend something on this site if I didn't genuinely think it was worth your time and money, so let's see how we get on.

To the dungeon!
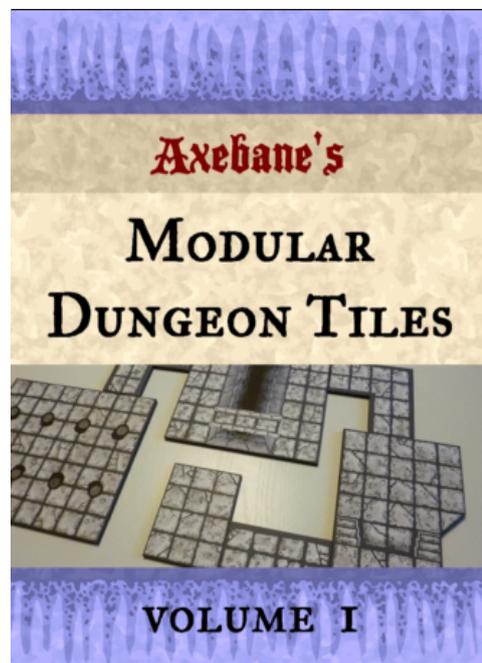
Axebane's Modular Dungeon Tiles is the latest release from Daniel 'Axebane' Walthall, the man behind the *Deck of Many Dungeons* and a ton of fantastic black and white stock art. These dungeon tiles are designed to be printed and cut out (or used as tiles on platforms like Roll20) to allow you to piece them together into a dungeon map during a game session.

The dungeon tiles come as a 12 page PDF; one page of instructions, and 11 pages of dungeon tiles. All in all there are 25 tiles in this pack. We'll get to the tiles themselves in a moment; first, let's talk about actually putting these together.

If you read last month's review you'll know that I'm not the best at complex tasks like cutting and gluing paper. Luckily, I fared much better this time around. The instructions that come with the tile are incredibly clear and simple, mainly because the process is incredibly simple - you print out the tiles, cut them out (which is entirely a matter of cutting in straight lines), stick them to thick card or foamcore, and you're good to go.

I didn't actually have enough foamboard to mount all 25 of the tiles, but I still ended up with a good variety. They were incredibly easy to put together - though if you're using foamboard, bear in mind that you'll also need a craft knife, a ruler (preferably metal), and a cutting board of some kind - and from printing the pack to having usable tiles took me less than an hour. And I think they look pretty good, if I do say so myself.


A large part of what makes them look so good is, unsurprisingly, the art. I'll admit that when I first opened the PDF I was a little underwhelmed; the only commercial dungeon tiles I've used in the past have been the official WoTC tiles and sheets pulled out of Dragon and Dungeon magazine, all of which have been lavishly illustrated in full colour. Axebane's tiles are rendered entirely in tones of grey, and my initial thought was that I would have preferred a splash of colour.

Then I printed them, and I changed my mind. Firstly, Axebane's work is predominately black and white anyway, so it was foolish of me to expect full colour. Beyond that, though, is the matter of practicality. I only have access to a black and white printer, and I have a strong suspicion that these tiles would not have turned out anywhere near as well as they did if they were meant to be printed in colour. The art is minimal without being bare, and it's coloured in such a way that even when I printed it at fairly poor quality with an office Laserjet printer onto even poorer quality office-grade paper, the tiles still manage to look really clear and evocative.

I also really appreciate the chunky, uneven black borders around all the tiles. They meant that the unevenness of my cutting (AKA my inability to cut in a straight line *even when using a ruler*) almost looked like a feature rather than a bug. Personally, I appreciate anything that makes me seem more capable than I actually am.

There are two main kinds of tiles in this pack - rooms and corridors - and there is a roughly even split between the two in terms of numbers. The rooms are either empty, or else they contain one of a limited number of features: steps, pillars, and pits spanned by bridges. The corridors are made up of a few straight runs of tiles of varying lengths, along with a number of corners and cross-pieces.

If you want quick, cheap dungeon tiles that look good, you can't go far wrong here. I bought a pack of 5 A4 sheets of foamboard for £7; to mount the whole pack of tiles I would have needed two sheets, which would bring the entire cost of making these tiles to around £18. I think that's pretty good; it's only a little more expensive than the official D&D dungeon tiles products, and while those are in full colour you also need to buy a second pack if you need more tiles (and they aren't designed to be used in a modular fashion, either). You don't actually need to mount Axebane's tiles if you don't want to - they're perfectly usable straight out of the printer - and being able to print multiples means you can build a full dungeon complex very quickly:
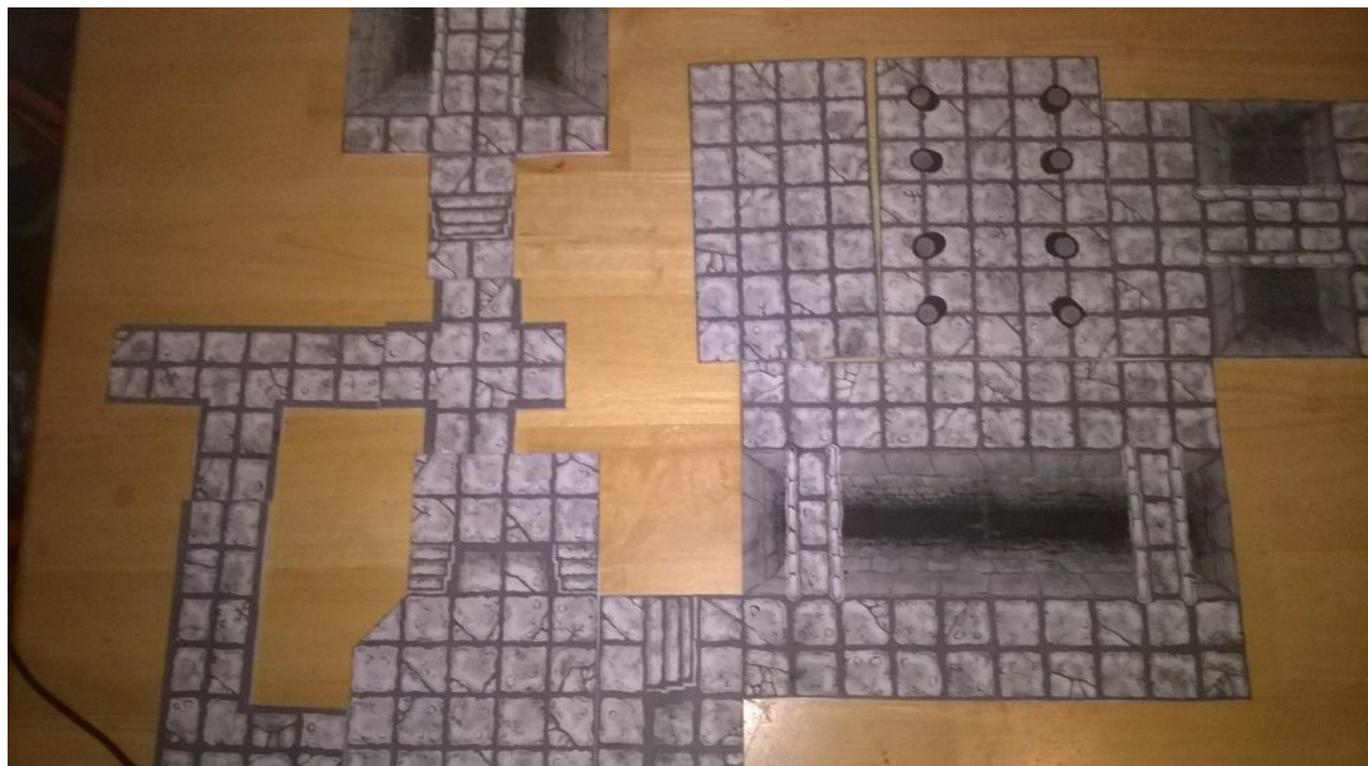
My only criticism really would be to do with variety and versatility. The room types in this pack are fairly limited, and I would have really liked it if the bridges were separate tiles rather than being already in place atop the pits. This is only the first of several packs, though, and I'm sure Axebane is already working on adding some variety to the next packs.

All in all, I'm really pleased with these tiles. Although I haven't actually used them in a game yet (due to having no time to actually play), I know that my players are going to love them. I also happen to think

that they look really good when used in conjunction with paper miniatures:

Yes, even poorly constructed, un-edged paper miniatures. I know, I'm a savage. And I'm OK with that.

One thing I haven't really touched on in this review is that the tiles also come with files prepared for VTT use. Since I don't play online, I can't really comment on that aspect of them, but I'm certainly going to keep these in mind for when I *do* start running games online.

Axebane's Modular Dungeon Tiles are inexpensive, good looking, and incredibly easy to use. If you use minis and want to take a step up from a plain grid or hand drawn maps, I think you'll get a lot out of these.

> **Pros:** Inexpensive; easy to use; simple, effective art; print as many as you need; does exactly what it says on the tin.

> **Cons:** Could have a little more variety; potentially time consuming to construct.

> **Verdict:** Recommended

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