

THRESHOLD

ISSUE #9

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This issue's cover:

Quetzalcoatl (by I. Calvin): Commissioned specifically for Issue 9 of *Threshold*, this illustration depicts the Immortal Atraughin flying high above the surface of the Hollow World. His chosen form, that of a feathered serpent, is well known to adherents and foes alike throughout the lands beneath Mystara's surface.

Thanks To: The Mystara Community, for your support, hard work, and dedication to Mystara.

The aims of *Threshold* magazine:

- to provide a venue for community members to present material
- to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there
- to increase the exposure of existing and new articles
- to encourage authors to revisit and revitalise existing articles
- to motivate interest in Mystara in general

Beneath the Surface



I was first introduced to Dungeons & Dragons during my eighth birthday. One of my friends gave me the red boxed set as a gift, and while we played a few one-offs at the time, that box sat in a drawer in my bedroom, largely forgotten, for years afterward. At some point my brothers and I began playing in earnest and the two of them chipped in and bought me GAZ 8 The Five Shires for Christmas. After that I was hooked. I took every opportunity to plead and beg with my parents to buy yet another chunk of my beloved Mystara... but those occurrences were few and far between.

That situation changed drastically once I got my first part time job after school, and it is also why I have a special place in my heart for the Hollow World. I can still remember walking into my friendly local gaming shop and seeing that boxed set for the first time. It was one of the first purchases I made with my own hard earned cash... and it was money well spent.

Memories of those times have not been forgotten. I remember the smell of the books, the background music I played when PCs first emerged from the Broken Lands into the great stone bowl at Atacalpa (it was Kaboom!!! from the soundtrack of The Hunt

for Red October), and most of all I remember the cacophony of plots racing through my skull.

Along with substantial nostalgia, the Hollow World has fueled a more recent pastime of mine, a hobby I've taken to calling Fantasy Archaeology. With its early connections to Blackmoor, and teasing references to ancient cultures such as Nithia and Taymora, Mystara has always been a world with rich history... something that is not always immediately apparent to players. In the Hollow World, that history came to life; it drove myself, and countless others, to explore Mystara's unearthed past. A past with just as much potential for adventuring as the modern era's setting. Yet that is a topic for another time, and dare I say it, a future issue of Threshold!

I am very proud of the work we've done in this issue of Threshold. So prepare yourselves! What lies below will refire the imagination, for within the depths of these pages shines an ever burning light, the rays of a Red Sun...

John Calvin (Chimpman)
Issue 9 Editor-in-Chief

This Issue's Contributors

Argentmantle - commonly referred to as **Leland**, this author is a graphic and web designer by day and an avid gamer by night. Besides lounging in the glories of Mystara, he is also the site administrator for www.strangerskies.com, the home of Calidar on the web. He has written for Louis Porter Jr. Designs in the past on supplements like Magic of Neo-Exodus, written for the Silven Trumpeter magazine, and cleaned up after his greyhound Harmony.

Even though *Sturm* (a.k.a. **Francesco Defferrari**) loves any alternate world, he believes Mystara is incomparably the best for its vibrant community endlessly delving into ethnography, linguistics and history just to make a little sense of it. Something like the real world, but with dragons.

Geoff Gander has been heavily involved in the Mystaran community for longer than he cares to remember. He has since been published by Solstice Publishing, Metahuman Press, AE SciFi, and Expeditious Retreat Press. He primarily writes horror and dark fantasy, but is willing to give anything a whirl. When he isn't writing or toiling on a cube farm, Geoff spends his time reading, entertaining his two boys, watching British comedies, playing roleplaying games, and travelling. Not at the same time.

John Calvin is fascinated by the depth of Mystaran history, and has always wanted to share that more fully with players. To that end he has been developing sub-settings like The Hollow Moon and Mystara 2300 BC.

Giuliano Michelin has been playing D&D since the late 80ies and, like many others, had his start with the Red Box. He soon moved over to AD&D and divided his gaming time between his favored settings: Mystara and Ravenloft (although playing more the latter). With the coming of 3e, he moved fully back to the first setting, Mystara. He collaborated with (and was a member of) the Overlord club in Padua, designing and developing D&D tournament modules for PadCon 2001 and several editions of GiocaPadova. Nowadays, he concentrates fully on his own gaming group, with a weekly D&D Mystara campaign, soon to switch to the 5th edition of the game.

Håvard (aka *Håvard Blackmoor*) does not, contrary to popular theory, have six arms. When he is not writing about Mystara at The Piazza or is working on his Blackmoor Blog, he goes out raiding neighbouring villages like any true Norwegian. He also runs The Comeback Inn, a forum dedicated to Dave Arneson's Blackmoor.

I. "Meandratbel" Calvin enjoys drawing fantasy, and animals that can kill. Namely wolves, dragons, horses, and most large felines. Human animal hybrids are not excluded either; she often draws human versions of her favorite animals. She does, however, despise drawing things that are unbearably cute. It's a pretty awful thing to do.

Joseph Setorius (aka julius_cleaver) began roleplaying in '79, & besides a few brief intervals is constantly involved in one campaign or another. Though a longtime Mystaran DM & player; including a thirteen year campaign throughout the eighties & early nineties, which helped create much of his material; he is relatively new to the Mystara online community. Besides Mystara he enjoys original settings & campaigns set in Greyhawk, Harn, and Dark Sun. A map loving surveyor, his other interests include reading, hiking, and playing/teaching piano.

Michele "LoZompatore" C. played BECMI for most of his life, starting way back in 1987. He most of all likes mixing and matching canon and fanon material about Mystara to see how many new adventure hooks can be churned out. In the little spare time away from Mystara he helps other guys in designing oil and gas pipelines around the (real) world.



**FROM
THE VAULTS
OF PANDIUS**

Some features in issues of Threshold carry a “From the Vaults of Pandius” tagline. As one of our stated aims is “to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there”, we hope you will enjoy these revised or extended treasures from that [website](#).



FROM the
Mystara
FORUM at



Some features in issues of Threshold carry a “From the Mystara Forum at The Piazza” tagline. These Discussion Boards are an active and dynamic home of creativity for the Mystara community and many other game worlds. We hope you will enjoy the articles that have arisen from that [website](#).



The Piazza
The Premier community
for discussion of
D&D Campaign Worlds
<http://www.thepiazza.org.uk/db/index.php>

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Threshold editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the next issues of the magazine.

We are looking especially for contributions fitting the following themes:

Issue 10 - Elves

Proposal Deadline: Expired, but proposal could still be submitted if the author is confident that the article will be completed by the below deadline

Manuscript Deadline: October 31st 2015

Issue Published: End December 2015

Call for proposals for main themes of forthcoming issues (2015):

Isle of Dawn, Thyatis and Alphatia

The editorial team will accept proposal on the Isle of Dawn, Thyatis, Alphatia and dependencies (Ochalea, Pearl Islands, Alatians, Bellisaria, Esterhold and any other colony).

Ages Past

The editorial team will accept proposals on Mystara's past ages (Y'hog, Blackmoor, Mystara 2300 BC, Taymora, Nithia, or any culture or location that existed before present day Mystara).

Articles about other topics are still welcome and the editorial team will evaluate their publication in an issue, taking into account space available and that issue's theme.

Threshold accepts (and invites) the submission of extended or revised versions of works having appeared on The Piazza or the Vaults of Pandius.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to, articles (short stories, short adventure modules, NPCs, historical treatises and timelines, geographical entries, new monsters and monster ecologies, etc.) and illustrations (portraits, maps, heraldry, illustrations, etc.)

The Threshold editorial team strives for edition neutrality, but edition specific articles (e.g., conversions) are also accepted. Statistics for new monsters and NPCs may be included in articles (e.g., adventure modules, new monsters or NPCs) in any version of Dungeons & Dragons. The editorial team also offers help in providing conversions to some specific rules set (including BECMI/RC, 2nd Edition, 3rd edition/Pathfinder). However, they should be limited to the minimum -- for most NPCs, it is sufficient to mention class, level, and alignment. For important NPCs, a one or two line stat block could be included.



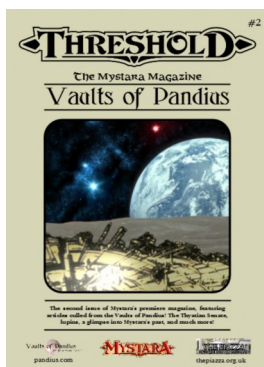
Previous Issues

Issues #1 to #8 of **THRESHOLD** - the Mystara Magazine, are available for download from the [Vaults of Pandius website](#).

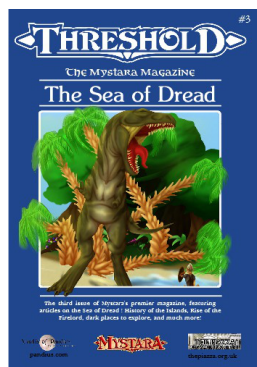
Also available at the same location are higher resolution versions of the maps that were included in the issue's PDF, allowing greater detail to be viewed.



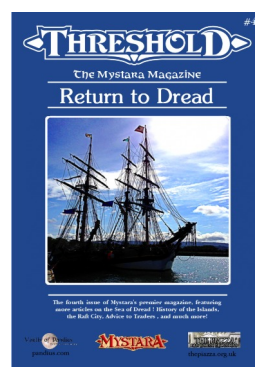
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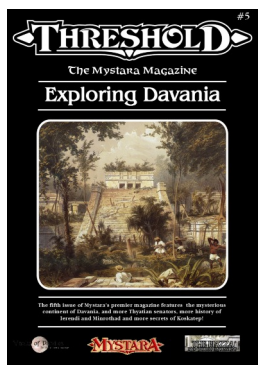
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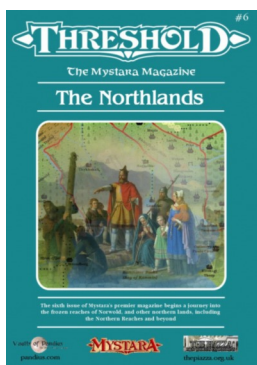
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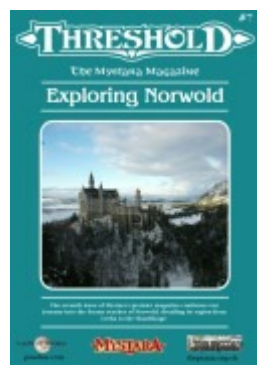
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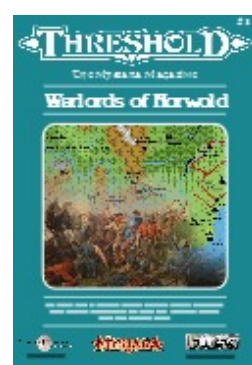
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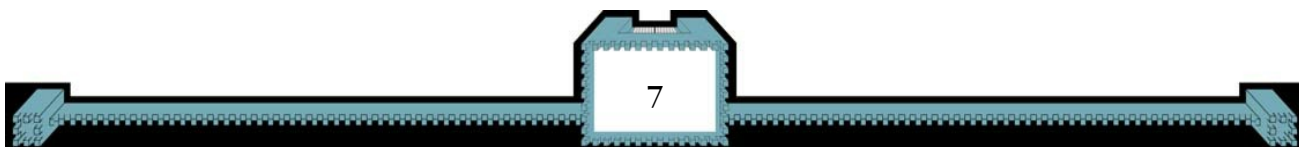
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The Northlands



#7
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Warlords of Norwold



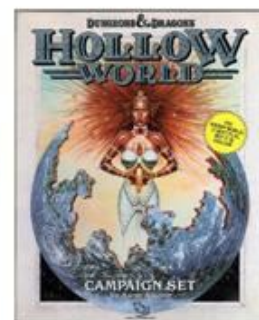
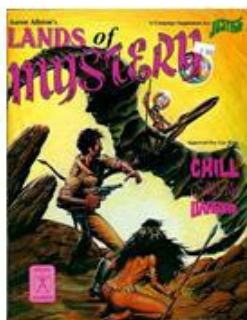
Before the Hollow World:

Aaron Allston's first attempts at a Hollow World Setting

FROM the
Mystara
FORUM at



By Håvard

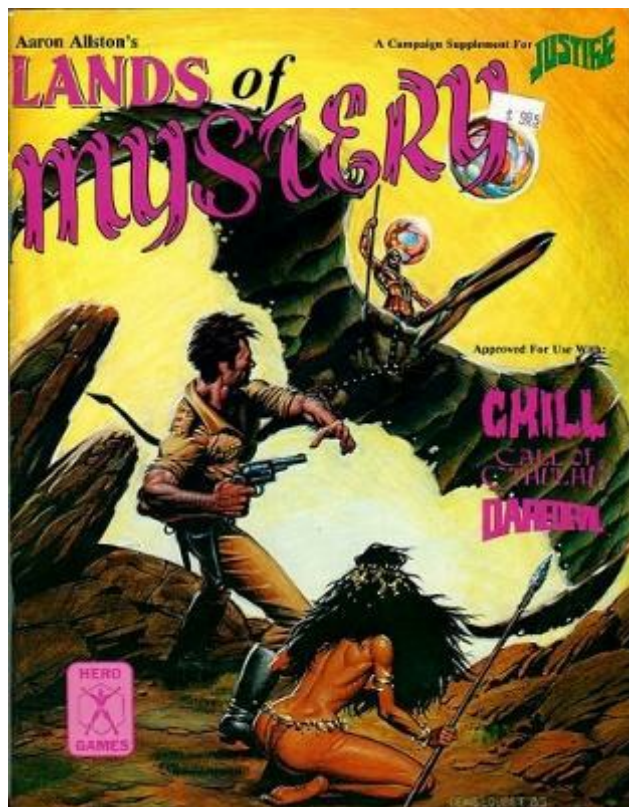


The concept of a world on the inside of the planet filled with prehistoric creatures and peoples is something that has been explored in the world of literature and comic books for ages. Journey to the Center of the Earth (Jules Verne), Niels Klim's Underground Travels (Ludvig Holberg), The Pellucidar Series (Edgar Rice Burroughs), The Skartaris Series (DC) and the upcoming Iron Sky 2 are just a few examples of this idea. In the world of Dungeons & Dragons, there was some talk about giving Greyhawk its own Hollow Oerth beyond the Land of the Black Ice. However, it was Mystara, then only known as the D&D Game World© or the Known World that was finally selected to incorporate that concept. Product Manager Bruce Heard selected Aaron Allston (1960-2014) to create this subsetting to be published as a boxed set in 1990. While Allston had not yet become the

famous fiction writer he would later grow into with his popular Star Wars novels, he was already a well established game designer, having worked with multiple companies. For Mystara, he had also designed essential products such as the Grand Duchy of Karamaikos, the Dwarves of Rockhome and the Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set.

However, the Hollow World boxed set was not Aaron Allston's first attempt at designing a Hollow World-like game setting. Two other, earlier products by Allston are worth taking a look at for those who are interested in seeing how this concept had been developing in the author's mind for years before beginning his work on the Hollow World Boxed Set. Those are Lands of Mystery for the Justice Inc RPG (Hero Games) and The Worlds of Ultima: Savage Empires PC Game.

LANDS OF MYSTERY (1985)



Cover to "Lands of Mystery"

This hard to find campaign book was published in 1985 for the Justice Inc RPG, which was a rules light variant of Hero System. Lands of Mystery presents the Land of Zorandar, a world where primitive humans struggle for survival among dinosaurs. Zorandar is also home to ferocious lizardmen, and a despotic Roman Emperor with a legion of Roman soldiers in his service.

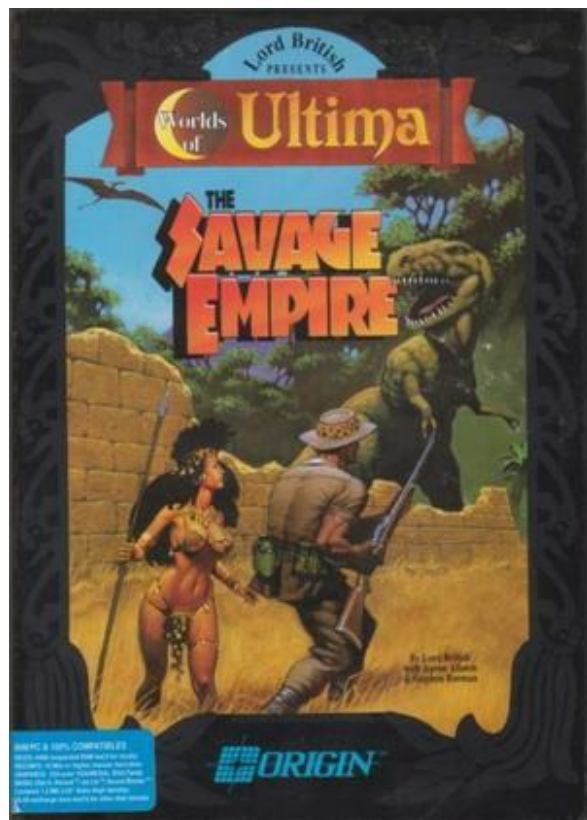
The book is both a sourcebook discussing the Lost World genre and how to create your own Lost World settings with it, as well as an adventure allowing the characters to explore

the world of Zorandar. This 96 page booklet is filled with illustrations of lizardmen, cave girls and other Lost World tropes and also contains conversion guidelines for Chill, Call of Cthulhu and Daredevil RPG.

While this booklet was high quality for its time, some critics feel that the design choices used by Allston in the book have been copied so many times later that the book may seem less impressive to a modern audience than it would have done to those picking it up in 1985.

Comparing this book with the Hollow World Boxed Set, it is easy to note the presence of dinosaurs, lizardmen (Malpheggi) and brave natives (Neathar?) in both products. The Roman Legion has been replaced with the Milennian Empire in the Hollow World. Some critics felt that the Roman Legion was one of the elements that did not fit so naturally into Zorandar, but the Hollow World boxed set solves this by making the preservation of ancient civilisations a key feature of that setting. Beyond this, Land of Mystery's section on Lost Worlds settings in general would have provided Allston with a lot of research that would have been very valuable for him when working on the Boxed Set. Zorandar and the Hollow World are clearly two different settings and two different products, but with the same author behind the two, it is easy to see the inspiration behind both. Whether the title Lands of Mystery had any influence on the eventual naming of the D&D Game World © setting as Mystara is not something we can confirm, but at the very least it is an interesting coincidence.

WORLDS OF ULTIMA: SAVAGE EMPIRES (1990)



Worlds of Ultima: The Savage Empire cover!

This sequel to the popular Ultima Series came out in 1990. That was actually the same year that the Hollow World boxed set came out, meaning that Allston was probably working on the two simultaneously. It should be noted that Allston is credited for the story of the game, not its technical aspects.

Unlike the other Ultima Games, Savage Empires is not set in the land of Britannia, but instead in a place called the Valley of Eodon. This strange valley is filled with various primitive tribes and different breeds of dinosaurs, both hostile and peaceful varieties. It should be noted that most of the

tribes are most likely descended from our own real world, but having at some point arrived into this strange valley. While it isn't quite explained how this all works, the valley of Eodon exists on our own World although its exact location is unknown. Its inhabitants have somehow been magically transported there from various time periods and places on earth. Sounds familiar yet?

The goal of the game is to learn of the various stone age tribes and their jungle magic and find a way to fight the insectoid race known as the Myrmidex which have recently arrived to wreak havoc on the valley. Learning the secret behind the Myrmidex and their origin will allow the hero to restore peace in the valley.

Again, while this is a different setting and universe than the Hollow World, many ideas and concepts are similar. Not only do we have the presence of stone age cultures, Neanderthal like Brute-Men, dinosaurs and magic, but even the concept of tribes being magically transported and preserved in both



Savage Empire map!

cases. There is also the presence of science fiction style high technology in both settings. Without spoiling too much of *Savage Empires*, I can reveal that it does have something to the equivalent of the Blacklore Elves, even if those takes are fairly different in the two incarnations. Examining the tribes of the Valley of Eodon, it is even possible to find similarities between each tribe and the many cultures of the Hollow World. The Kurak are similar to the Oltecs, the Yolaru are similar to the Tanagoro, the Nahuatla are Azcans etc.

CONCLUSION

A professional game designer like Aaron Allston certainly did not just reuse old ideas and throw them into the Hollow World. *Land of Mystery*, *Savage Empires* and the *Hollow World Boxed Set* are three quite different products and settings. At the same time, comparing the three offers a chance to pick at the author's brain a little and see how his ideas and inspiration worked their way into each game.

From a Mystara fan point of view, those looking for more inspiration to further develop their *Hollow World* or even *Outer World* campaigns might want to investigate more into these and other works by Allston. For the *Hollow World* specifically, it should be possible to incorporate material from *Land of Mystery* or *Savage Empires* directly in the *Hollow World* or simply use them as inspiration to get into the right atmosphere for a *Hollow World* campaign. *Savage Empires* is actually available for free from Gog.com



Aaron Allston

Read MORE ON the Piazza FORUMS:

[Land of Mystery](#)
[Savage Empires](#)

APPENDIX: SOURCES

[Lands of Mystery at rpggeek.com](#)
[Prehistoric Pulp Blog](#)
[Dino's Guide to the Savage Empire](#)
[Worlds of Utima: Savage Empire at Wikipedia](#)



HISTORY OF THE ICEVALE

ON the SURFACE

More than 2500 years ago, around 1700 BC, Glantrian elves were exploring the Broken Lands. During their explorations, they stumbled across an ancient Blackmoorian device, whether discarded, hidden away, or simply forgotten no one knows. When the device was discovered, through simple accident or curiosity, the device detonated. This poisoned the air and caused a deadly rotting sickness amongst the elven peoples.

Through the Darkness

Driven underground by the wicked rotting sickness, the elven population began a long journey through the tunnels. Some say it was inspired by the immortals, others say that it was a matter of desperation, for the trip through the caverns was harrowing. With each day, the waste of rotting sickness diminished the population of the elders. These elves were too frail to carry on in the subterranean trek or succumbed quickly to the wasting. The youngest elves were poisoned by the same disease and died as their parents looked on, unable to do more than wail at the losses. Those still in the womb at the time of the disaster were twisted and deformed by it, stillborn or worse, being born hideous and broken. In time, even the adults suffered the effects of the wasting disease, the arduous journey, and the simple of attrition of their long march. This strange combination of casualties caused the Icevale population to lose almost all of its adults, children, and elders in a short span.

Tale of the Lonely Elf

During their wanderings through the deepest places of Mystara a legend has sprung up. There is a tale, a hushed one, whispered in the cruel hours when the floating islands obscure the sun. Our people came across a lone elf, amidst a cavern full of bodies. The rumor that your mother may have told is that the elf was mad from the pain of the loss and was unable or unwilling to be roused to join our ancestors. That tale, my child, is simply not true...

Our scouts, operating far from the bulk of our people came across a group of elves in the darkest places here. We were happy, we were overjoyed, though they suffered as did we from the hideous sickness. We could take solace in knowing there were more survivors, that the whole of the world did not end. Supplies could be shared, perhaps a feast could be planned, no matter how meager in the place where the sun brightens not.

The survivors ambled toward their kin. Our column of refugees raised the few pendants and banners of our home and marched to the cavern where our brethren had last been seen. The scouts, operating much closer to the main group came across it first. But the whole of the group, elves far too young to see such things, saw it as well. There was nothing that could be done that would not sear those images into their minds.

The whole group, hundreds if not a thousand, all lay withered by the sickness, or their throats cut, bodies hewn, or torn by spell. Sitting in the middle of it all was one lone elf, sorely wounded. He was their king, maddened and spent by the loss around him. While our healers endeavored to tend his wounds, our diviners conjured up what little magic we could muster. In the visions that came, they saw that this one elf had acted with great evil, a twisted sense of compassion. Rather than see his people suffer, the king, had called upon his guards to slay the people, then he in turn slew the guards. He was all that was left of his people.



Atzian

In their wisdom the elders recorded what they could on their stony deathbeds. Mortally wounded adults spent their last moments, recording the secrets of their trades or crafts, not wishing their loved ones peace or a blessed future without them. This strange amalgamation of knowledge and the bitter realities of their survival transfigured the Glantrian Elven culture into the culture that grew up in the tunnels.

Under the Eternal Sun

Guided by their immortal patron Wotan, they finally emerged from the darkness and harsh tunnels into flat plains bathed in the light of a crimson sun. The elven survivors, a motley bunch, immediately settled in and recovered after the terrible ordeal. The land was strange and alien; they encountered strange reptiles, creatures akin to the size and appearance of dragons. These creatures fit the descriptions that had been passed down from the most ancient elven traditions - the great and terrible 'thunder lizards.' Living near these ancient herds and their predators were men. Simple and savage men from the times before the Blackmoorian cataclysm, the Neathar.

After a brief succour on the plains, the group turned their eyes to the north. They spotted the cold glimmering peaks that their people had left in the chill lands of Glantri. With purpose and a renewed vigour, the elves once again broke camp. This time though, they needed no immortal guidance to spur them on, theirs was a goal finally in sight of their keen elven eyes.

Unable or unwilling to sentence our own kin to death, even in such a dark place and at such a dark hour, or perhaps because of that, they scoured the caverns for remaining supplies and materials. They tended his wounds but bound the mad elven king in the dark, banishing him alone in the dark.

-Tale of the Lonely Elf

Laelithriana reciting a bit of the Icevale Elves' experience within the dark lands.

With their remnants of their culture in their hearts, the knowledge of crafts and trades far too complex for mere youths, and the few artefacts and trappings of their country on their back, the elves quickly sauntered through the last few days and weeks of their journey, until finally they arrived at their new home.

In the Icevale

With the trek behind them, Fredar and Fredara, the husband and wife guided the elves on settling the new lands, building homes and making the valleys and peaks their own. Finally, the elves had a land of their own and began the long process of turning the land into their home. The clan of elves has spread out and learned about the mountainous terrain. Once the necessities of survival had been seen to, the young adult elves who had matured far too much along the journey began the process of scribing and recording what they could of their ways, their culture, and their crafts. Collectively, the whole clan breathed a sigh of relief. Their ways and people would carry on. In celebration of this, they turned their memories back to the ancient celebrations of the elves on the surface and did as best they could to emulate the fae feel of such a raucous event.

Ever since, the clan has inhabited the Icevale. For the first few years, the Icevale elves worked diligently in the constant sunshine to build small timber cabins to live in while they carved out the caverns on the sides of the cliffs and slopes. They honed their almost forgotten skills of skiing, hunting, farming, and woodcraft. For a few, it was the first time

in their lives that they could remember happiness and home, it was the first time that they could feel the cold raw air of a mountain wilderness. It was the first time they truly had a home.



Icevale Party

Celebrations, feasts and dances were common. If there was a holiday they could remember, the Elves of Icevale chose to celebrate it as passionately as they could. Drinking and dancing, singing and storytelling soon became a craft that was as appreciated as much as smithing or leather working.

After several years in their new land, the Hollow World experienced a drought. The people that had inhabited the plains to the south remembered the strange travellers. Thinking these travellers knew of more plentiful game, the Neathar tribes sent hunting parties ranging deep into the mountains. At first the elves were curious. Watching the crude spears bring down game, but soon the desperation of the human tribesmen caused them to over hunt the area.

New Friends and Foes

The elves found this disrespect of nature abhorrent. Yet the clan leaders were

unprepared. Of all the things that their ancestors taught them as they lay dying, war was not truly one of those things. Yes, they knew the elven skill with the longbow and sword, but they had no idea how to fight a protracted engagement. The young leaders used the skills they had learned, treating the whole thing as vicious pranks and lightning attacks. The elves used their mastery of the wild and their knowledge of the mountainous climate to wage a guerrilla war against the Neathar. They would trigger an avalanche to tear through a camp of the hunters, and then strike immediately after the confusion on skis. Eventually, the Neathar, fearing they awoke some vengeful mountain spirits retreated, telling tales that the hunt of game is allowed, but take too much and the mountains will scorn them.

Celebrating the victory was of course a necessity for the Icevale Elves. It was during the celebrations that one couple, a pair of young elves madly in love, at least for that week, snuck off from the rest of the gathering to become better acquainted. This pair was walking through the snow when they came upon a lump of fur in the snow over a small hole. The lump of fur was a sorely injured mountain wolf, a she-wolf who had been injured by the Neathar while hunting for her pups.

Upon their examination, they found that she could barely sit up and struggled to protect her den of pups. The elf couple spoke to the wolf in the language of the old elves, singing to her, calming her, and demonstrating that they meant no harm. After the first day, the couple returned, bringing the wolf a few scraps of raw reindeer meat. Slowly they earned her trust and on the third day, the

wolf could sit again on her haunches. They brought more food for the pups and slowly earned the strange lupine kinship that the Elves of Icevale keep today with the wolves that pull their sleds. After that, the elves of course threw a party.

The elves also met the Antalians during these early years in the Hollow World. The Antalians were traveling far from home, when they came upon a cabin that had not been there before. The raiding tradition they were famous for got the better of them and they struck at the elven home. Though violent and sudden, they harboured little brutality and stole steel, gold, winter wine, and furs from the elves living there. Thinking it plentiful loot, the Antalians moved on to the next cabin, but found it strangely deserted.

In the snowy peaks, the elves made ready to push these new invaders out of their homes. Striking with sleds drawn by wolves, sniping with arrows along rime covered tree lines, and using the land for trap and ambush, the Antalians retreated. Oddly, the next year the Antalians returned, this time under a flag of truce. They brought with them trade goods, strange furs, exotic spices, smoked fish, sea shells, and things that elves were lacking. In return, under a cautious eye, the elves invited these strangers into their homes and soon built up a respect for their neighbours. In fact, the elves threw a magnificent party to celebrate the victory against the raiders the previous year and their new friends they found in the Antalian traders. Of course, a few seasons later the Antalians would start the cycle all over again.

Far stranger than the raiding Antalians is the first meetings that the elves had with the

Beastmen. Whatever the events that transpired, the elves and Beastmen have taken turn attacking, defending, surrendering and trading with strange ebbs and flows that are as wild as Beastmen bloodlines. From these northerly neighbours, the elves trade steel and smithed items for materials, raid for it the next, have it all stolen back a couple years down the road, and then settle it all with odd diplomacy. Of course to celebrate their Beastmen friends, trade, or victory the elves planned feasts and festivities to commemorate the date.

The Krugel Horde

Only three times in the course of fifteen centuries have the Elves of Icevale come in contact with Krugel Horde. Every battle has been bloody, the fighting fierce and the orcs pushed out of their lands. The animosity between elf and orc is the stuff legends are spawned from and the meetings between these two members of their respective races have been the same. The Krugel orcs strike with their thundering cavalry, destroying and killing elves as they go. In time the elves mount vicious ambushes and terrific traps and force the orcs away from their homeland. The elves follow the orcs back to their lands, harrying the orcs and in turn being driven out by the response of the Krugel Horde. Few things will anger the elves more so than an orc, Krugel or other, on the sacred soil of their mountains.

Reign of Rimebite

A century or so ago, during the cold summer nights and colder winter nights on the frosty slopes of the Icevale Mountains, there was concocted a plan both terrible and heinous.

An Icevale Elf had been cast out from their community when just but a babe. It was the beginning of just a few unlucky coincidences that led to a year of terror among the rest of the Icevale. The babe was found on the slopes by of all things a rather matronly white dragon. Now, not the most intelligent nor compassionate of the dragons, this old motherly sort was not about to abandon a babe on the slopes. Whatever her name was, it matters little to the tale.

The dragon raised this twisted elf, a club foot, black hair, with pocked skin, and loved him like only a mother could. In time, a century or so, the even now nameless elf child, learned cruelty and hatred weaned from the poisoning tales of a very cunning white dragon. So venomous were her tales that she raised him to hate the elves. In time, he grew powerful as a wizard, for as a warrior he was too twisted by his birth to master. With his power, he slew his adoptive mother when one of her children had returned. He took the time and power to subdue that fell wyrm. A white dragon by the name of Rimebite. With a dragon under his control, this nameless elf soon rallied a few packs of winter wolves and tribes of frost giants of Kular to his cause. His cause? It was simply to rule the people who cast him out.

With the fierceness of someone with little to lose, the nameless elven outcast soon began to lead his strong force against the Elves of Icevale. Striking from the cold wintry snowstorms, the group of giants and wolves would raze settlements that would not capitulate, and enslaved the ones that did. It was soon apparent that village after village would fall against these cold-hearted villains. The elves tried their tactics, but found that

the cold weather and rugged terrain did not hamper the wolves, giants, or the dragon any more so then it slowed them. They found that nothing they did could stop the powerful army of creatures arrayed against them until one young elven warrior, Heshalon, found the courage and means to stop them.

He rallied the demoralized elves and setup the first military that the elves had seen since they had come to the land of the Eternal Sun. In rank and file, they met the giants and wolves. Reindeer used as cavalry, sleds were wielded as chariots, and turned the natural magicks of the elves against them in full fury. Striking on skis and dancing away the elves turned the tide. It wasn't until the final battle, when the unnamed elf and his frosty mount were slain was the threat to the Icevale finally over. It would be a grand reason to celebrate if Heshalon had slain the beast and rider in mortal combat, but the elven leader was slain trying that. It was an unlikely thing, a timid hero, an elven woman of slight stature but keen mind that slew the white dragon and its rider, casting upon him spell after spell, and weathering the frosty breath in a winter wolf pelt cloak. She stepped in when Heshalon was slain, not to rally the army in disarray, but simply protect her dying brother. With the threat to their homeland, nation, and people vanquished, the elves of Icevale began a celebration that lasted a week with a great feast, dances, drinking, and singing.

The most recent years have passed relatively peaceably for the elves. The Antalians and Beastmen trade some seasons, raid the next, and life in mountainous land continues as it has for centuries.

IMMORTAL GRUDGE

One of the most vicious things that the Icevale Elves may be responsible for is their own oppression at the hands of Rimebite and the nameless elf. Some of the priests of Wotan have seen that this was caused by the meddling of another immortal. If this is true, what immortal has a vested interest in causing them such harm? Unknown to most of the Icevale Elves is the legend of the Lonely Elf is true and they had stumbled upon Atziann in the dark tunnels. If so, Atzanteotl may hold a personal vendetta against them.

PEOPLE OF THE ICEVALE

The people inhabiting the Icevale region of the Hollow World are the elves who bear the same name. These elves are a blond, pale skinned, race descended from the Glantrian clan that once lived in the frosty peaks of that region on the surface world. They migrated through the tunnels that snake through the bowels of Mystara. They are surprisingly strong and healthy for elves. Some have likened their fitness to that of the dwarves of Kogolor, but that would be a tall tale. The average Icevale elf is well-built, not the slight slender frame normally found on the elves. The very active lifestyle of the elves and high altitude also help the elves develop their hearty constitutions.

The Elves of Icevale are a merry sort, celebrating and feasting whenever they get together. This culture of merriment is one of the ways that they forget the nightmares of

their past and the price they still pay for it today. To keep their people strong and healthy, the Elves of Icevale have made the cultural decision to cull the sickly and twisted infants born as a legacy of the Rotting Disease they bore out of Glantri. These grotesque mockeries of elves are called the 'Silent', a nod to the fact that they would have been better off stillborn. Of course with this in mind, the celebrations also help them forget the many children who are stillborn, coming out of the womb but never drawing a breath. This is part of the burden that they still bear for the sins of their ancestors.

Another survival trait that has become part of the culture is that the infirm or elderly will leave the communities they are part of. They will gather their friends and family together, disseminate tales and farewells, and pass on whatever knowledge they carry to the ones staying behind. With this 'going away' party, the elves will revel in the life of the soon to leave, enjoying a celebration of joy to remember them with. Once the party or feast is complete, the guest of honour will leave the community and enjoy the solitude and peace of the world before passing.

The Elves of Icevale are truly omnivorous. The high cold mountains make agrarian pursuits challenging to say the least. As such, a large part of their diet is formed of meats, cheeses, freshwater fish, dried fruits, berries, nuts, and a few strapping examples of root vegetables that eek out their existence on the mountain slopes. Having lived for more than five decades underground, the society does know how to cultivate mushrooms and fungi to augment the crops. And then there is honey. This summer time treat is used to sweeten things and make a form of mead that

is fermented with mushrooms and mountain berries. This drink is truly potent; besides being alcoholic it has more than a little hallucinogenic property to it. Now, back to the honey, even if the elves are on the hunt, they may stop at a beehive for a while. The elves will gather around a few combs and share a laugh or two, celebrate the bounty of nature, and then pack up a few combs for the rest of the community and get back to business.

The average Icevale elf wears leathers made from reindeer they herd and the beasts they hunt. These garments are by no means clumsy or crude, as the elves have practiced their craft for generations. The trousers and jackets are fur lined whenever possible; sometimes they add more exotic linings like silk, flannel, or wool when it can be acquired. Cloaks and overcoats are either made from furs or lined with them, keeping off the vicious wintery air. The boots worn by the elves are hardened and formed leather, sometimes with steel for solid traction on the loose rock and stone, all while keeping the feet warm and dry. When the time arises, the leathers are augmented with heavier pieces of armour ranging from stiffened bear leathers to suits of elven chain.

SOCIETY OF THE ICEVALE

Unlike the idea of a nation of hunters and furriers, the elves of Icevale aren't nomadic. They are an advanced steel using society that uses steel tipped arrows and spears, iron traps, and leather snares to assist with whatever task is at hand. The idea is that just because something is made of steel doesn't mean it is better. The Icevale elves are

practical and as such, they use the best, not the flashiest.

Like other elves on the surface world, the Icevale elves have a leadership structure governed by their elders. These elders are revered until they decide to leave their place of governance and walk into the mountains. Strangely, even the most revered and respected Icevale Elder would be considered an immature adult on the surface. This has a lot to do with the fact that the culture was founded in the Hollow World by the memories of the survivors of the trek through the tunnels and most of these were adolescents or young adults.

This means that the Icevale society is one of constant youth. Not perpetual or eternal youth, but one where the culture does not know how to mature beyond its current state. They are curious, fiercely individual, and very willing and able to learn. This is tempered with the awkward price that they pay for this immaturity.

Elves of the Icevale have learned to find joy, beauty, and pleasure in all sorts of activities from sports to singing. This is in part to ward off the boredom that passing centuries can weigh on an elf's mind, but it is also a cultural tradition that sprung up in the dark caverns. Because of the tragic history, Icevale elves do have a more rapid pace than most elves. They try to cram much into shorter periods of time, in comparison to other elves, to strive to maintain a balance between relaxation and tedium.

The tests of survival from just getting to the Hollow World though have created a society that is knit together on every level. Religion,

magic, marriage, child rearing, hunting, crafting, and every other aspect are geared to the future of the race. This makes the other aspects of an elf's life immensely valuable as expressions of the individual elf's personal freedom and individual natures. The style of clothing, dancing, singing, cooking, and individual customizations all are immensely personal. What this has done is actually an amazing aspect of the Icevale community.

Considering that their population had been decimated by the disease and flight from the surface, the value of an individual elf became so high, their companionship so valued, and their elven spirit so important, that protecting all individuals became a paramount concern. In turn, this created a strong drive to preserve the culture and people as a whole. Even though they are all fiercely independent, they value others' worth to be something that brings them joy and would not want to diminish their own merriment.

Even the Icevale pranks are a sign of their strange cultural immaturity. The elves are actually practicing military manoeuvres against the butt of the joke but are willing to simply laugh it aside. It's a strange game of 'play war' where if no one gets hurt (severely) or killed, the elves will invite the travellers for a feast or celebration. This also means they are constantly honing their arts of hunting, ambush, and wintery travel, all skills they need for survival in their alpine homes.

RULERSHIP

Royalty

The Icevale Elves try to practice simple laws and rules that are easy to understand. Clan leaders and towns make the decisions that govern and arbitrate their peoples, but there are times when the elves need a single ruler. For this they turn to the original clan of Icevale elves, the clan that all the others are descended from. This 'Icevale' family provides leadership in times of conflict or when a decision is necessary for the whole nation. They are advised by a council of elders from the rest of the clans, but the decision they make is final and solely their own.

Clans

The elves of Icevale are divided up into large groups of families, commonly referred to as clans. Like their Glantrian ancestors, the diversity of such clans is large enough to keep the race from suffering from inbreeding. In the years following the Glantrian accident, the elves took careful notes of bloodlines, not in an effort to keep them pure but, in an effort to keep them from interbreeding. The bloodlines of the Icevale elves are scattered across the mountains but still are more prevalent in the lands of their 'clan'.

In matters of law and governance, the clans rule over their own for most day to day activities. For more important rulings, say that affect an entire region, the clans involved will meet and send a representative.

Each clan provides a respected elder to the group and are careful to always maintain an odd number of participants without the ability to abstain. This insures that there is not a tie vote and matters are decided instead of lingering forever. For matters involving the whole of the nation, the clans each send an elder to advise the king or queen on the views of their peoples.

The Icevale Clan are the original clan of elves that migrated so long ago to the Hollow World. The members of this clan have actually dwindled, with only the eldest of a family being allowed to keep the name originally. This promoted the growth of the younger clans to help diversify and expand the battered population of Elven youth into a full nation.

The Argentmantle Clan is the clan that is now most famed for the number of wizardly elves it produces in the Hollow World. It carries a higher percentage of wizards than every other clan. The elves of this clan are also expert furriers, hunting game across the mountainous peaks and into the valleys below. They have a tendency toward solitary existence, wandering the woods between towns, trapping and hunting down animals for their coats.

The Silverstreak Clan are the farmers and herders of the region. These elven families hate to be simply referred to as farmers since their craft is far more intense than planting a row of crops. They quest across the highland pastures tending their herds of sheep, reindeer, and protecting them from the wild predators of the region. They get their clan name from the wolves that have been

adopted into their work as herd tending animals.

The Steelarm Clan is the clan most associated with mining and ironworking. Their population is clustered around the rich ores of steel, silver, and other metals near Tuathar. They also produce a limited number of suits of fine elven chain each year, gifting it to the other clans and to the royal family. Their expertise also includes the fine manipulations of forging as well. A surprising amount of skill, subtlety, and delicacy goes into their craft.

The Pinedancers Clan members are an anathema to what most people think of as elves. These are the loggers and builders of the Icevale elves. They have a reverence for the land and plants, like all elves, but believe that tending the forests are part of the natural cycle. Their carvings and bows are works of function combined with beauty. In addition, they have a nearly supernatural gift with herbs and concoctions, using their woodcraft to create poultices, salves, and oils to heal wounds, cure infirmaries, or poison a particularly deadly foe.

The Frostwalker Clan came about as the scouts of the original group of migrant elves formed their own clan after they had established their new home. These hearty members range far and wide across the lands of the Icevale. Originally, they kept their eyes and ears open, constantly scouting for new threats and bringing news between communities. As the centuries progressed this tradition continues, but they have added a new skill to their repertoire. Oddly, they are the most powerful trading party amongst the elves, venturing so far as the Antalians to

the west, Neathar to the south, and Beastmen to the north. They travel in small caravans between communities, trading goods.

Families

Beneath the clans are the families. Basically, a grouping of everyone related by a three generational spread. In these groups, the elders give advice to the younger members of the family but live with the idea that the youth will make their own decisions, mistakes, and successes. Each family passes their skills and traditions internally, but will often 'trade' the training of a younger member who is disinterested in a family skill for one from another family or even clan. This helps to create strong relationships with the neighbouring families.

ECONOMY

The Icevale Elves are a barter based economy. They do accept coins from outsiders but not always at the face value of them. An elf may take it as a lump of precious metal that might be valuable to trade. In the event of very large transactions, the elves will use an oral contract and then arrange the logistics of the trade later.

In times of hardship, the elves adopt a more socialistic approach, sharing resources so that as many as possible will live better. Sometimes the favour can be returned, sometimes not. This is actually a source of the hospitality of the Icevale Elves. If they come across travellers in need, they may very well lead a deer to the group or leave some

food to strengthen them. Of course, the pranks may happen beforehand, but the elves enjoy good sports.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE ICEVALE

The Icevale is an alpine land. The high peaks of the mountains are covered with snow. In fact, more snow falls on these points than melts during a year. Below the highest peaks these towering mountains have a ring of shale and stone, often bare or with just a hint of plants that cling to the surface. This area of terrain extends from the bottom of snowy caps to the treeline. About half the mountain is covered in usable forest or pastures, the other half in bare rock, snow or ice fields, frigid mountain lakes, or lichen fields. The descent into the pine covered trees that make up most of the forests on the mountainside is broken up by a pasture or two. Between the mountains are the valleys. These provide another tract of arable land that the natives graze their reindeer and plant a few hearty crops.

The weather of the Icevale is common amongst the other mountainous areas of the world, both Known and Hollow. The sun shines brightly some days, nearer to the heavens than few other places. Yet, the place is cold and with a sort of emptiness to the air. During the summer, some of the snow melts filling arboreal lakes and streams, eventually becoming rivers below. The area is wracked by cold storms though. These range from the daily gentle snow storms in the winter to terrific blizzards. During the warmer months, the area sees a goodly

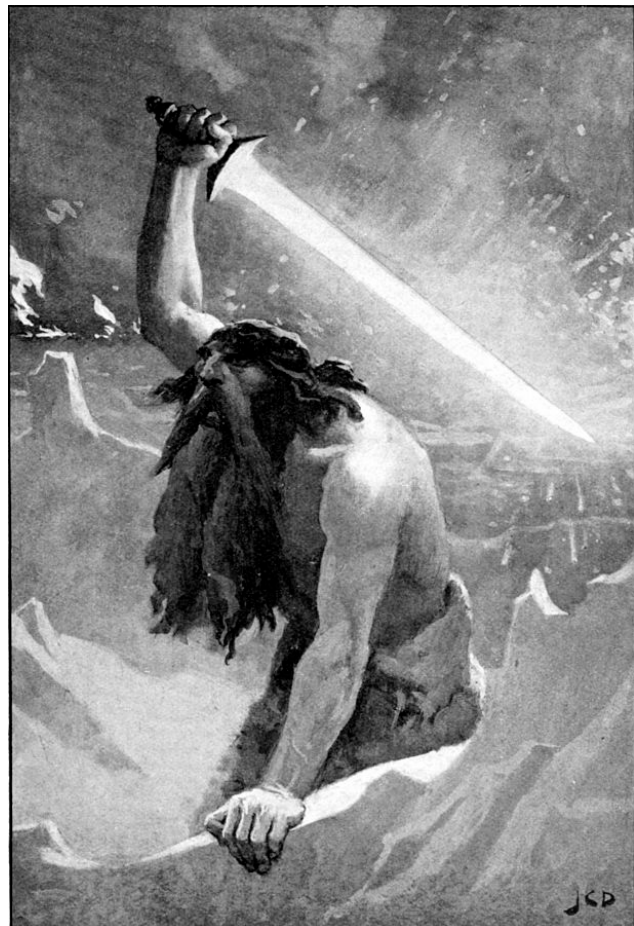
amount of rain to keep the game and plants plentiful even in times of drought.

Dominating the mountains of the Icevale is Mount Svelthys. This inactive volcano towers above the surrounding peaks like a giant among gnomes. The heart of fire and magma has long been asleep, but every decade or so, it shakes and belches soot and smoke to the heavens. The volcano has become a natural place that elven elders seek out at the end of their days. Of course, the impetuosity of youth also calls many elves to the mountain to explore. Climbing the slope of the mountain is difficult as the last eruption, long before the elves, sheared off the southern and western part of the top. This has created a treacherous ascent in the best of conditions. Considering the tendency for nasty weather at the top of the world's peaks, this makes Svelthys an almost suicidal climb. According to some legends, Rimebite's corpse, and the corpse of his rider was tossed into the fiery pit at the heart of the mountain. If so, the fire dwarves rumoured to live within must have been a bit worried when he fell into the pit.

Not far to the west of the Icevale is the Mid World Gate, this pass connects the frigid north to the Azcan plains below. The mountains are easily crossable here after ascending the plateau on either side. The volcano Gatterfang stands like a lone sentinel over the pass, the last part of Icevale range. This volcano shows none of the signs of life that Svelthys does.

Not far from the mountains that the Icevale call home, is a quiet little pasture called Aifar, a giant man shaped few standing stones and rocky lumps break up the green fields nestled in the coniferous forest. It is hard to

believe that one of the fiercest battles against the Nameless' horde and Heshalon's newly formed military occurred here. Heshalon's sister, Laelilathra led a force of elves here to stop the depredations of the giants and the winter wolves that were threatening her people. The Battle of Aifar turned into a massacre, only the sorceries wielded by the elves held the giants back, and only when they used their most powerful magicks. If one looks closely at the lichen covered stones, they can make out the features of a man carved into the rocks. If someone studies the rocky outcroppings, they can see the fine details of a wolf mid stride, frozen in stone.



Frost Giant Attack

Beyond Aifar, halfway to the Antalian coast to the west is a village similar to the Antalian ones not too far away, if not for the sheer size. This village, named Kulear is the home to a powerful frost giant chieftain, a jarl, who commands the giants like chiefs command lesser men. This settlement is composed of a massive wooden palisade and wooden long houses all cantered around a great mead hall in the centre. In it are no less than seventeen adult male frost giants, fifteen females, and twenty-two young. The culture of these frost giants is an imitation of the Anatalians further to the west. In fact, the frost giants here have even gone so far as to try and raid the Icevale Elves and then strike up trade with them. So far, this has not met with much success, though the elves are warming to the endeavours.

COMMUNITIES OF THE ICEVALE

(One of the interesting pieces of material is the fact that original map listed Argandir as a ruined city, however, in the PWA1010, it is listed as the largest city of the elves.)

Argandir is the capital of the Icevale elves. This walled wooden city is located deep within the mountains on one of the slopes of Mount Argan. It is home to over five thousand elves living in the protective pine forest all around them. This city swells to over ten thousand during times of festivals and gatherings. With the great feasts and celebrations that are part of the Icevale Elves culture, it is no strange thought that the largest city is home to the biggest.

Avair is a typical Icevale Elven community. Built with great care and respect to the natural surroundings, this city is located along a large stream in the middle of a deciduous glen. The town is home to a few of the greatest thinkers (and pranksters) of the nation and seems to birth more wizards than the rest of the nation combined.

Goidec is the first stop on the Antalian trading route or raiding plan. This large elven city is protected by thick timber walls that are reinforced with glacial ice. Located on the upward rise above the plains they can also spot large groups of Beastmen before they can reach Llyr. This town is the primary trading post for many of the elves who range to the north.

Gotlund is located closest to the Midworld Gate and the forests to the south. Many furriers and hunters come to this town to trade after a season. Of the Icevale communities it is almost less reminiscent of an elven town and far more similar to human trading post. The buildings house more than three hundred elves year round but these numbers can swell.

Llyr is an oddly deceptive town. There is but one entrance into a large network of caverns that the elves have moved into. Here, it is strange to see the woodland subtlety of the elves built into the rock walls, but everywhere is it present. Llyr is located in a valley that is often the first place that Beastmen traders or raiders (depending on the mood) visit. Llyr is home to nearly six hundred elves, many of whom are shrewd traders and capable warriors.

Mag is a city left in ruins by the vicious fighting against the nameless elf in the past few centuries. Even today, there are still the broken ruins of buildings and mouldering pieces of the palisades that lay about. The town has been rebuilt in the centre, but is only home to about two-hundred elves.

Tuathar is located nearest to the volcano Svelthys. This is the primary smelting and mining town in the Icevale. The elves here practice their trades of smithing for hours at a time, taking great joy in the goods they produce. The metalwork of an elven craftsman from Tuathar is said to be equal to that of a dwarven smith, luckily there are few dwarves in the area to argue this matter.

MILITARY OF THE ICEVALE

The last couple centuries in the Hollow World have seen the rise of a martial tone in the nature of the Icevale Elves. This has led to the semi-formal creation of regional defenders, a militia, so-to-speak. The territory is divided into ten regions and in turn each of those regions plays host to ten squadrons. This puts nearly thirty five hundred of the Icevale's population under arms at any one point. The military is strong considering its small size, which has been deemed large enough to hold out long enough to mobilize perhaps ten times that number if the situation is truly dire. Though nominally equipped with swords, spears, longbows, and chain mail, many of the soldiers make use of their own weapons and armour.

The tactics employed by the elves are harrying in nature. They strike using natural terrain features and creatures as much as possible. Avalanches, rock slides, angry predators, traps, and natural barriers to strike quickly and then fade away. The elves also make use of their superior mobility in the mountainous terrain, skis, snowshoes, and sleds are as commonplace as swords.

SKIING, REINDEER CAVALRY, AND SNOWSHOES

The Elves of the Icevale live in an area that can be very dangerous to the unprepared. This danger is magnified if the elven military is making the terrain work against an opponent. The elves will wear white cloaks, or camouflaged with magic as their outer world kin, and trackless move across the snow to strike from ambush. In a wintery campaign, few demi-humans or humanoids can match their fleetness. This is made possible by the use of many winter accoutrements.

Elven cavalry rides on the back of the strongest reindeer of the domestic local herds. These animals are able to navigate the poor conditions and are hearty enough to survive trekking through the mountains on military missions. More than a few lines of reindeer have been bred to haul especially heavy loads for trade and to haul cargo. If the need arises, it is not unheard of for the elves to harness these animals to pull three person ski chariots. A driver will control the beasts as they pull the chariot sled, while the other two will use spears and bows to whittle down their opponents. These light war machines harry an opponent's flanks and

cavalry, tying them up with surprise attacks and quick withdrawals.

The elves make use of snowshoes and skis in their daily lives. Using them to cross otherwise exhausting terrain with haste. In a military use, this makes most of the Icevale's infantry as fast on snow as the opponents cavalry is on good ground. This allows the elves to pick and choose their battles, engaging the enemy on terms that allow their tactics of hit and fade to work for them.

MAGIC OF THE ICEVALE ELVES

The elves of the Icevale are not as apt to practice magic as their surface world cousins. However, they make up for this lack magical ability by focusing on elemental magic. Their magic is less subtle than some forms, but embraces the elven traditions of living in tune with nature. Icevale Elven magic is includes other types of magic but favours the elemental forms. These are all enhancing abilities for a wizard's survival in the frozen lands.

TREE OF FROST

A Tree of Frost is the most holy relic of the Icevale Elves. Like their surface world cousins, they use this to create powerful magic items. The frostbrand sword, the icelances, oils of cold resistance, and of course the hoarships.

Like the surface world's trees of life, the Trees of Frost are large trees that have sylvan intelligence to them. These arboreal wonders are always coniferous in nature, with brilliant blue green needles that are always frosted and cool to the touch.

An Icevale elven Clanmaster, Icevale elven Treekeeper, and many aids will make use of the Tree of Frost to create magical artefacts.

The Treekeeper will draw a single ounce of sap from the Tree each month, distilling it down to a single bluish drop of liquid cold. The process of a year's worth of distillation only creates a single ounce of the liquid. Over time, the Treekeeper, Clanmaster, and the aides guide the tree by pruning off branches and needles. These are saved for uses in crafting the magical items noted below.

Table 1: New Equipment

Item	Description	Cost	Encumbrance
Snowshoes	No penalty for regular movement on snow	2 gp	4 pounds or 40 cn
Skis	Allows 'running' movement rates on snow	5 gp	8 pounds or 80 cn

Adventure Note

The Tree of Frost at the town of Mag has been missing since its ruination. No one is sure of its whereabouts and finding it would provide friendship with the Elves of Icevale for generations to come. Naturally, along with this friendship this would include an amazing feast and celebration beyond the other more material rewards.

Oil of Frost

This bluish liquid is constantly cold. The Treekeeper will take the distilled oil from the tree and drop it into a small globe of water. The magic of the oil freezes the water around the oil in a flask of unmeltable ice. The flask weighs just 5 cns or a half pound. When broken and applied, this oil grants immunity to cold and fire for 3 turns (30 minutes). This process uses a 1/12th of an ounce of the oil (i.e. 1 month's worth.)

Frostbrands

These elven swords are forged of silver and steel by the Clanmaster and his aids. The Treekeeper will tend a forge made by the burning of the needles and branches gathered from the Tree of Frost that it will melt the alloy allowing a sword to be forged. The sword is tempered in no less than a half-gallon of the precious oil, sixty four ounces.

This counts as a sword +3 of extinguishing. In addition, it glows at temperatures below freezing. While it is glowing it adds the extra talent of slowing.

Ice Lances

Ice Lances are crafted from the branches of the Tree of Frost and then soaked in a half gallon of the precious Oil of Frost. They must be fitted with a spear head fashioned by the Clanmaster from a shard of ice.

This counts as a +3 spear of slowing. When the temperature falls below freezing the spear always inflicts maximum damage against living creatures.

Hoarboats

To build a hoarboat, the Clanmaster and Treekeeper must fashion it using the branches from the tree, collected for a century as the planks. The needles are woven together to lash the boat together. Finally, when this is done, a centuries worth of the oil is spread across the hull on the coldest night of the year.

The hoarship is then complete, able to fly through the air at 360' per turn with perfect manoeuvrability as long as the temperature remains below freezing. If exposed to temperatures above 80 degrees, the boat immediately starts to melt. After a turn at the temperatures above 80 degrees, it is reduced to inert wood and water.

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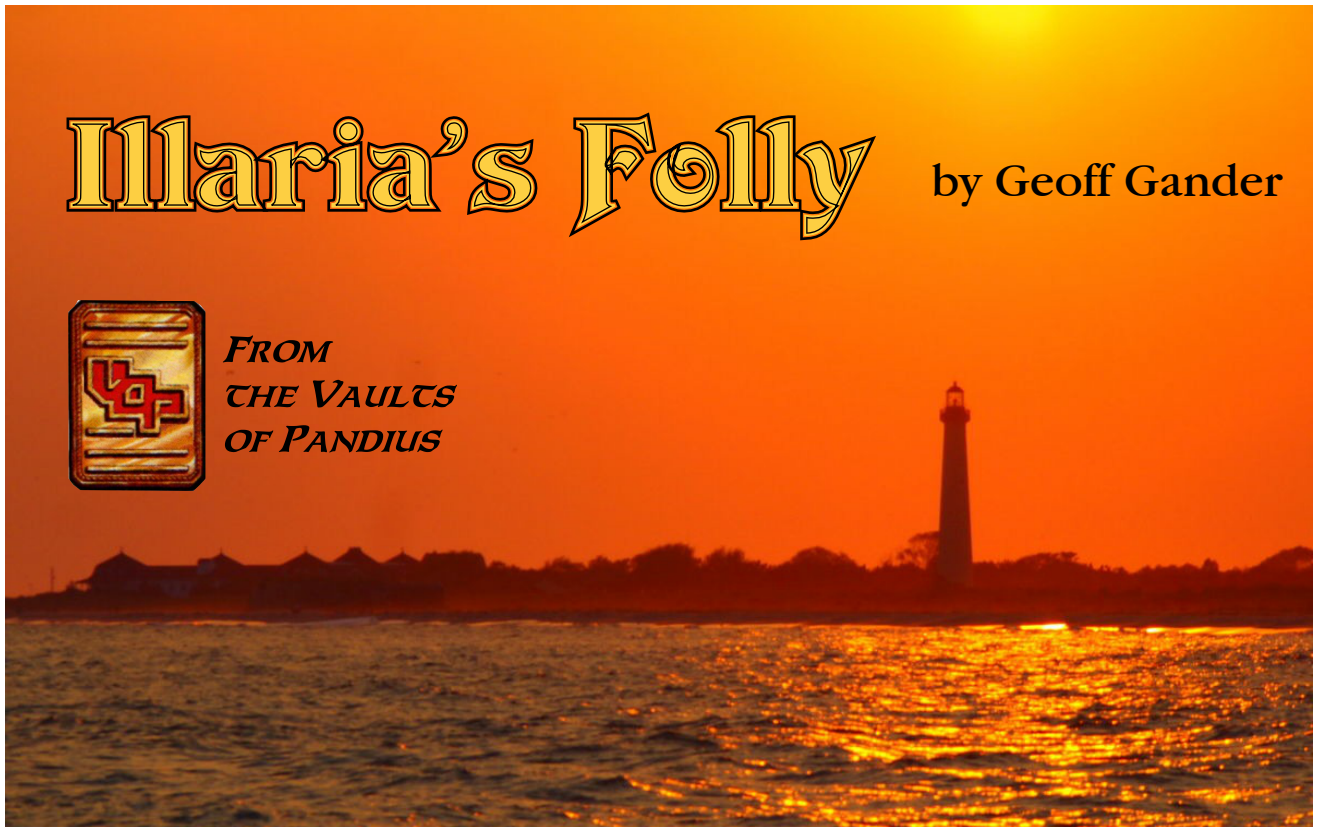


Illaria's Folly

by Geoff Gander



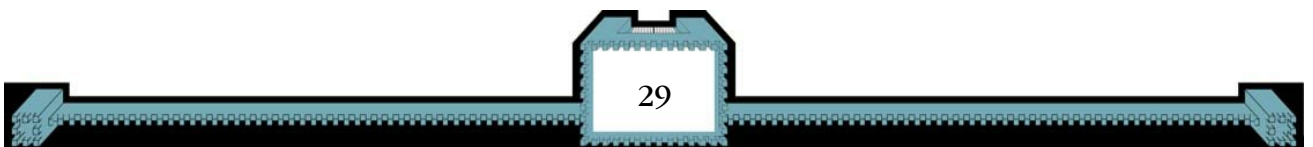
*FROM
THE VAULTS
OF PANDIUS*



The Empire of Selhomarr is a land that is ancient even by the standards of the Hollow World – so much so that it has ebbed and flowed several times over the millennia, and is built on many layers of its own ruins. The empire's history has had many dark chapters, some of which are so far back in history that they have been forgotten. This article presents a region on the fringes of the empire, where one of the darker chapters played out: The blasted ruins known as Illaria's Folly, where naïve hope was dashed against the rocky shores of political expediency.

HISTORY

Several thousand years ago, a young and very studious priestess of Xeron (Ixion) named Illaria of Annurios, daughter of Thessara, was approached in her rural temple by an older man who spoke with the smooth accent of someone who grew up in the capital, Regemnon. The man, who did not give his name, told Illaria that her devotion to Xeron - and to knowledge itself - had been noticed, and she could better serve her people if she accompanied him. At first skeptical, Illaria demanded proof. The man demonstrated magical prowess that was well beyond the ability of any spellcaster she knew or had heard of, and he shared details about her life that only she and her immediate family knew. Convinced at last that the stranger was an



emissary of a great power – perhaps Xeron Himself – Illaria accompanied him to the nearest port, where a waiting vessel carried them beyond the frontiers of the empire, to the continent of Iciria. There, the pair journeyed overland to a secluded valley inhabited by peoples of a vast multitude of cultures – the Lighthouse. Illaria's guide, who called himself Rallian, explained that his people watched out for those who were driven to expand and preserve knowledge, and that he had selected her to join his order if she wished. Illaria, passionate in her faith but increasingly frustrated at the hierarchical, hidebound nature of the Church of Xeron, eagerly accepted.

After training for several years, Illaria was sent back to Selhomarr to look out for the Lighthouse's interests. Armed with a more accurate knowledge of the history of the Hollow World and its peoples, she sought out obscure records and other treasures that found their way back to her order's headquarters, where they would be preserved. At first she was happy to fulfill this role, but as time passed she discovered fragments of lore that, if disseminated amongst the populace, might advance the knowledge of her people and improve their lives. Rallian told her all that he knew about the Spell of Preservation in an effort to dissuade her from that line of thinking, but all she saw were Selhomarran treasures being sent to the Lighthouse to be kept under lock and key. Eventually Illaria's frustration got the better of her, and she secretly began sounding out her fellow Lighthouse operatives in the empire. A handful felt as she did, and they made plans of their own.

When the time was right, Illaria and a half-dozen other Selhomarran Lighthouse operatives abandoned their posts, took whatever treasures they had, and headed for a prearranged meeting spot beyond the “eastern” fringes of the empire, on a grassy plateau. There, they established a stronghold, where they could study the artifacts and other treasures they had recovered. Illaria also urged her companions to round up as many supporters as possible and lead them to their stronghold. The Lighthouse soon learned of Illaria's actions, and Rallian tracked them down several years later. He implored his former apprentice to return to the fold. Illaria denounced the policies of the Lighthouse, which she believed unnecessarily held the peoples of the Hollow World back. Realising that he could not break through her misguided idealism, Rallian left – but not before telling her that the Lighthouse did not tolerate rogue operatives. Knowing that retaliation was coming, Illaria urged her followers to fortify their position while she redoubled her efforts to find out if any of the treasures they obtained, some of which they had figured out, would help them against possible attackers.

The Lighthouse was not idle, and used its connections to encourage the nobles of Annurios to march against a purported nest of bandits and insurgents on the fringes of their territories – in a region where no organised communities of any sort had ever been known to exist. When scouts (some of whom were agents of the Lighthouse) reported that a fortified base was under construction, the local army moved in quickly. Illaria's stronghold – essentially a fortified village of roughly 200 – was not

nearly as formidable as described in the reports, but the Lighthouse's careful manipulation ensured the Selhomarrian commanders viewed it as a serious threat. The armies of Annurios battered the half-built stronghold with catapults while Illaria led her people underground, and once the dust had cleared hundreds of soldiers were sent forth.

Although Illaria and her followers were passionate, and many of them were experienced (i.e., higher-level) adventurers, she knew they would not last long against a concerted attack. Some of Illaria's former Lighthouse colleagues led a defence in the upper levels of the underground complex to delay pursuit, while she led the remainder into the deepest levels. The delaying action bought her the time she needed to activate one of the artifacts that had been kept from the Lighthouse – a magical transportation device that had been brought to the Hollow World as Lhomarr sank, thousands of years previously, which Illaria had not had the time to fully study. Although the device was functional, it had been damaged during the Sinking of Lhomarr and it now required someone to stay behind to operate it. Illaria sent her remaining followers into the artifact and activated it, hoping they would be sent someplace safe. Her followers vanished and the artifact exploded, causing much of the stronghold above to collapse. Almost everyone who was in the complex at the time died instantly. Although the ruins were searched thoroughly, there was no trace of Illaria or her remaining followers – leading everyone to conclude that she had been destroyed.



Illaria's Artefact

After Illaria's disappearance, Rallian ensured that all records of his wayward protégé were destroyed, and that her reputation was discredited – both to prevent average people from learning what the Lighthouse did not wish them to know, and as an example to his subordinates of the cost of treachery. Only fragmentary tales of Illaria now remain, and where she is recorded at all, she is mostly remembered as heretical cleric of Xeron who had to be destroyed for the good of the empire. However, Rallian was not able to suppress the truth entirely; some of her followers did manage to escape the assault on her stronghold and sneak back into the empire, where they preserved what little knowledge of her works that remained and continued it – very slowly and under a deep veil of secrecy.

Province of Annurios, 1000 AC

Based on Geoff Gander's map (2009)

Cartography by Thorfinn Tait, March 2009

www.thorf.co.uk



DM INFORMATION

The artifact that Illaria used was built shortly before the Sinking of Lhomarr, by a now-forgotten sorcerer who had foreseen the destruction of his homeland and sought a means of escape. Had it functioned properly, the artifact would have transported his entire estate and its inhabitants into a pocket dimension for a period of 100 years, during which everyone inside would be in stasis. After that period, the pocket dimension would expel its contents to the nearest suitable location, and the estate and its inhabitants would continue as before. Unfortunately, the artifact did not function as intended. Instead, it teleported itself to the nearest safe dimension – which happened to be the vortex created by the Immortals to transport what they saw as the best elements of Lhomarrian society to the Hollow World. The sorcerer and his estate ended up at the bottom of the ocean.

The transition to the Hollow World, followed by thousands of years of neglect, did not do the artifact any favours. The Immortals were aware of the item but concluded that the Selhomarrians, now held back by the Spell of Preservation, would never be able to figure out how to repair it. By the time Illaria found it in BC 2500, the artifact was heavily deteriorated.

The fateful conflict took place in BC 2468, and when Illaria used the device it transported her followers, but also sent her into a semi-ethereal state, and tied her to the ruins of her stronghold. She now wanders the ruins as a ghost; although she is not dead.

CAMPAIGN HOOKS

Forbidding Ruins: Illaria's Folly is known to the people of Annurios as a cursed place visited only by the truly foolhardy, but even though it was destroyed certain parts of the lower levels of the complex could still be intact. The DM would have to decide what sort of items might await discovery, and what kind of dangers would await the PCs. It is possible that the portal that the artifact opened may have allowed creatures from another dimension to enter. What these creatures might be, and how they would react to the PCs, is up to the DM.

Illaria's Fate: As stated above, Illaria was thrown between dimensions when the artifact exploded, and now lives in an eternal, ghostly half-life. She has not aged, but the centuries of solitary imprisonment have driven her insane. She would beg the PCs to help her free herself, but once freed she would seek to win their confidence (perhaps with promises of sharing her considerable knowledge) and use them in her personal vendetta against the Lighthouse – especially Rallian (who is now long dead). Depending on their own moral leanings and ambitions, the PCs might very well decide to help her. If freed, Illaria would be a cleric of Xeron (Ixion) of 14th-16th level.

Illaria's Heirs: A small cabal of Selhomarrians secretly carries on her work – that of uncovering the true nature of the Hollow World. They operate in a dangerous environment because their ideas fly in the face of accepted doctrine and because the Lighthouse has been trying – largely unsuccessfully – to stamp them out for

centuries. This has made the cabal extremely secretive, but also quite fervent because (in their view) their ideals must be important if the authorities are trying to silence them. Free-thinkers, rebels, and heretics form much of their membership now, and periodically factions splinter off to pursue their own ideas. It is possible that the Order of the Homebound (from the [DM's Selhomarr Sourcebook](#)) could be one such group. The PCs could run into one such group, and become enmeshed in its plans.

Lost Followers: The ultimate fate of the people whom Illaria helped escape is deliberately left vague. Although it is likely they were killed when the artifact exploded, it could be more rewarding to have them be transported to another dimension (where the PCs may run into them), or even to a remote region of the surface world. It could be very interesting if PCs who have visited the Hollow World come across an isolated village of strange people who claim to have originally come from a land with a red sun...

OldDawg Presents: GazZF





CONTINUING the Gazetteer Tradition BEYOND the KNOWN WORLD



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The Lighthouse's guide to Unknown Cultures

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)

ANTIQUITY OF THE HOLLOW WORLD

Once, it was widely believed our world of the Eternal Sun was a relatively recent Immortal creation. But in recent times our numerous encounters with ancient races have led us to believe otherwise. Mystara's cultural history, both on the surface and the interior, may be far more ancient than previously hypothesized. The Hollowdeep (1), the Depths of the Oceans and the Floating Continents are home to alien and exotic creatures, straight out of Mystara's ancient past (2).

Notes

1 - In the ["Mystara's Underdark?"](#) and previous threads on The Piazza, and in the [Shadowdeep Index](#) on the Vaults of Pandius, the Mystara community more or less decided to call "Shadowdeep" and "Hollowdeep" the underground regions of Mystara's Outer and Hollow World.

2 - Many creatures and civilizations described in this article came from my ["99.9999985% Mystara History"](#) article, which presupposes a much more ancient Mystaran history than the one normally described in canon.

THE ABYSMAL ELEMENTAL KINGDOMS

Many years ago, an expedition reached the World Shield. Needless to say, such journey was unbelievably challenging, nearly killing all the participants. Still, the survivors managed to return with an incredible account. Evidently, the underground of the Hollow World is much more vast and intricate than we could have possibly suspected before this report. The authors state, a sea of fire lay deep below, dividing the Hollowdeep from the Shadowdeep of the Outer World. Upon this ocean of lava, islands dotted with mighty palaces and cities float, home to creatures of fire and flame; asserting they once dominated all Mystara. The expedition was just able to barely escape them. In other regions of the Hollowdeep, they discovered an ancient, shifting realm of Earth creatures and a subterranean sea so extensive its shores could not be seen. The sea also held inhabitants, aquatic creatures vaguely resembling ancient Crabmen and other water breathing inhabitants.

We named these realms the Deep Elemental Kingdoms. We do not know yet how big such realms may be and how many creatures they might contain, nor if we will ever be able to establish friendly relations with them.

LAIRS OF THE BURROWERS

Above the Elemental Kingdoms, lies a vast layer of the Hollowdeep which contains the lairs of the Burrowers, the great worms that thousands of years ago almost destroyed the Hollow World, and Ka-Na (1) civilizations. It is well known some of the monsters still lay dormant in those subterranean chambers. As we have learnt, attempting to destroy them is always dangerous, as they could be too powerful to be dealt with once awakened. Leaving them be; however, could be likewise dangerous, as they might exert influence on nearby societies. This entire level of the Hollowdeep is mostly inhabited by Decapus, Fungoids, Scamilles, Wurmlings (2) and other bizarre creatures whom ignorants may consider aberrations. Yet most are intelligent races, vastly different from humanoid species, who had great civilizations in Mystara's ancient past. It is true; however, that some among these communities have already been corrupted by sleeping Burrowers.

Notes

1 - I arbitrarily gave the Brute-Men this name, as the word they would use to name themselves.

2 - Appears in the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)



A Burrower

THE ETERNAL DARK

Undying creatures neither alive nor dead, whom people of the Outer World call undead, live, if this verb can be used for them, in the Hollowdeep below Milenia, Nithia, Bahlor, Azca and other human nations. Indeed, Lighthouse scholars suspect their caverns are all somehow interconnected, but we know nothing of their purpose. Are they pawns of the Burrowers? Are they allies or adversaries of the Shattenalfen? We will have to further explore their caverns to provide answers to these questions. Another matter concerns the nation of Intua (1), which apparently is a branch of the Oltec civilization, living beneath the Oltec hills and the Schattenalfen caverns. We have not yet discerned if undead lords likewise dominate them.

Notes

1 - See the ["\[Nation\] Intua - Kingdom of the Sun"](#) thread on The Piazza Forums for more info about Intua:.

MAPPING THE HOLLOW WORLD



Above is a thumbnail of a Hollow World map drawn by me using the HW boxed set Planetary map and joining Thorfinn Tait's [Map of Iciria](#), Geoff Gander and Thorfinn's [map of Selhomarr](#) and Robin's [Map of Blacklore](#). The scale of these maps was originally 40 miles per hex, but I think it should be considered to be 60, or the Hollow world is only 5040 miles from pole to pole and has a circumference of 10080 miles. In the HW planetary map the circumference was indicated at 11908 miles: in this case each hex of the Iciria's map should be around 47 miles. I'd prefer a 60 miles per hex scale, with a resulting circumference of 15120 miles wide, which fits better with the size of the planet that I calculated for my [Outer Mystara maps](#). Each DM however may choose the scale he or she prefers. A full size version of this map will be also published in the Mystara forum at The Piazza and on the Vaults of Pandius.

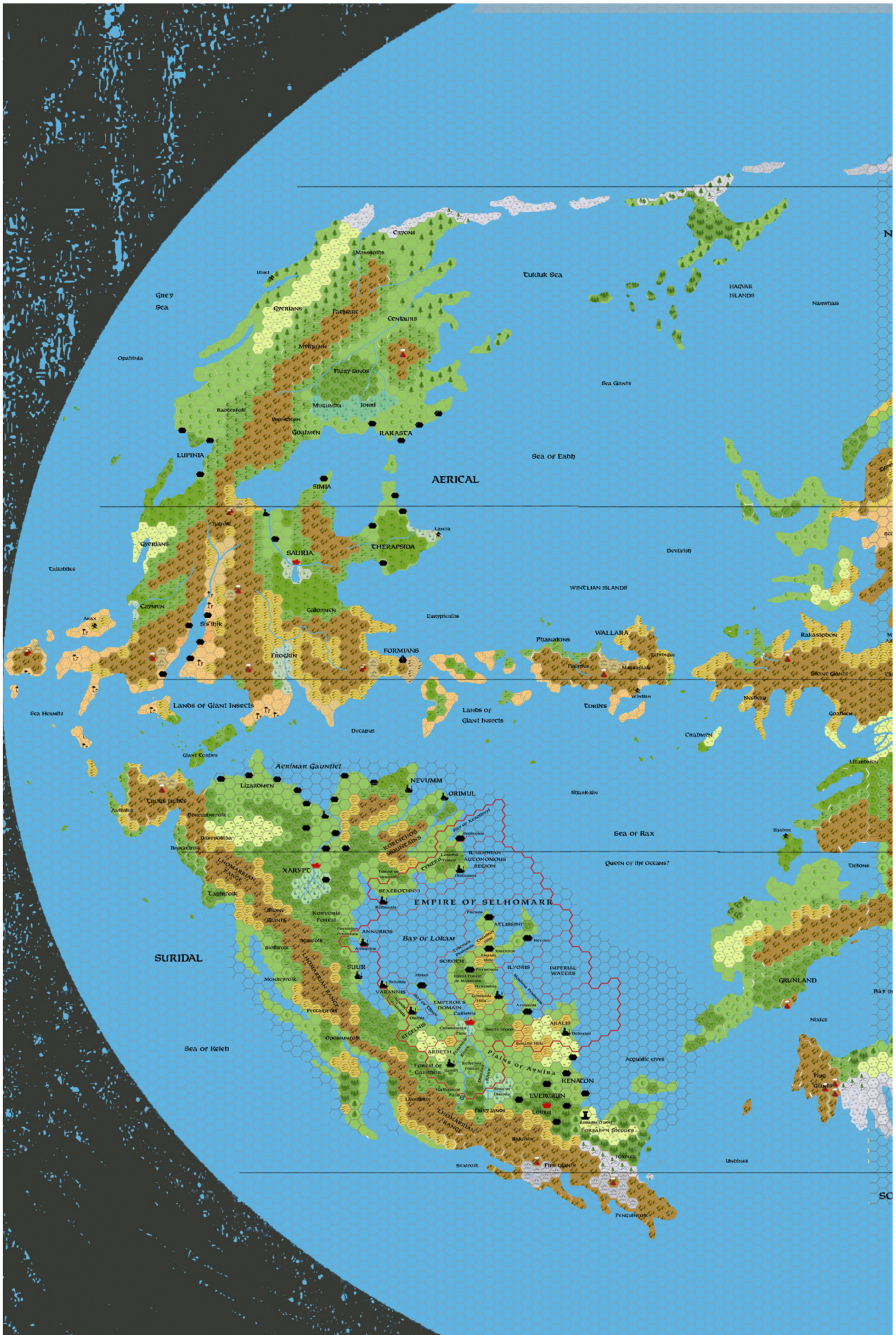
The Eastern, Central and Western Hollow World maps

These three maps on the following pages include locations described in this article, in "Who is Who in the Wyrksteeth part II" in this same issue (regarding Hollow World dragons) and other fanon locations. Håvard placed several canon and fanon cultures in [his map](#) available at The Vaults. He also gathered some informations on [Barrik's Vale](#) and the [Radiant Vale](#). Andrew Theisen wrote an article about the [Anathy Archipelago](#) (at The Vaults).

The Central Hollow World map was mostly taken from Thorfinn Tait's map of Iciria, as explained above, with some added canon and fanon locations, as per Håvard's or other suggestions.

On the Western Hollow World map, Shahjapur locations were taken from Thorfinn Tait's [8 miles per hex map of the island](#).

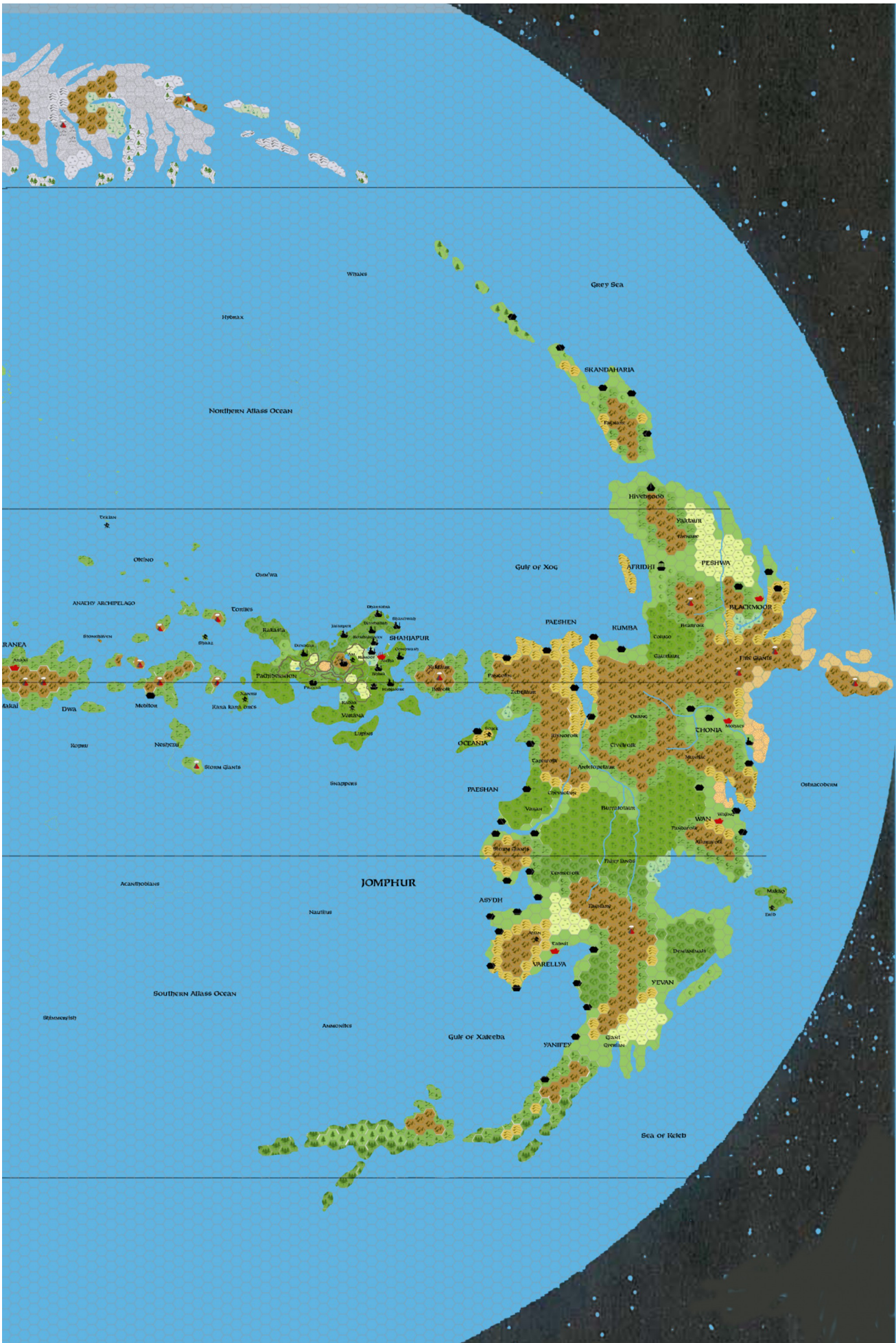
Map of Eastern Hollow World



Map of Central Hollow World



Map of the Western Hollow World



LANDS OF THE GIANT INSECTS



Milenian book depicting an Aranea

From the Eastern Coast of Iciria to the Wintlian islands; including the Aerimar Gauntlet between Aerial and Surical, Northern Jomphur and the Anathy Archipelago; nearly all the equatorial lands of the Hollow World beyond Iciria support giant insect life. Aside from normal and giant insects species, several Insectoid (1) cultures and nations inhabits these lands. Crabmen and Scorpionfolk are usually counted among them, even if technically they are not, with communities and nations in the Wintlian Isles. Two distinct breeds of Scorpionfolk also inhabit the deserts of Boglucubul (2) and Nithia. Araneas exist on Arana (3) Island in the Anathy Archipelago and in Jomphur, while Hivebrood claim territories in northern Jomphur. Formian and other intelligent insects might be numerous in southern Aerial and northern Suridal, but accounts are fragmentary, with more surveys certainly needed. Reports of additional Aranea and Formian cultures in Iciria's jungles have yet to be verified as well.

Notes

- 1 - I use the term "Insectoid" to denote intelligent insect races.
- 2 - In Krugel Horde territories, see the [map of Iciria](#) at the Vaults of Pandius.
- 3 - Not explicit in the Hollow World boxed set, but I think the name gives us a definite clue as to what beings reside there.

LANDS OF THE REPTILIANS



Dinosaurs of the Hollow World

Dinosaurs live in many areas of the Hollow World, but intelligent specimens, known as Saurials, founded a nation on Aerial. Other reptilian cultures live in the Eastern continents. Therapsids, Gatormen, Caymen (1), Troglodytes, Sis'thik, Chameleon men (2), Frogkins and Frogfolk (3) have their nations in Aerial, Suridal and surrounding islands. Tortles also are known to exist in the Anathy Archipelago. Xarypt, a nation of Serpentes (4), lies in Northern Suridal. The entirety of the Hollow World's tropics are ideal habitat for reptilian species. Several

reptilian cultures thrive around Nithian and Krugel Horde territories, and also in the proximity of the Malpheggi swamps, beside the Lizardmen, Jorris (5) and Dragons which are the swamp's main inhabitants. Troglodytes also inhabit the World Spine and the Azcan Mountains (6) in great numbers. Saurials, Gatormen (7), Ratlings and Neshezus (8) inhabits the Bakoto swamp within Tanagoro lands.

Notes

1 - Gatormen and Caymen appear in the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#). Therapsids are my creation based on real word [therapsids](#): .

2 - Or Wallara, appear in the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#).

3 - Frogflins appear in the Goodman Games' 2004 Blackmoor Campaign Setting, while Frog folk appear in DA2 Temple of the Frog, page 14 and are described in The Vaults by [Andrew Theisen](#) and [Jamie Batty](#).

4 - Introduced by James Mishler in Davania in the article ["The Age of Blackmoor"](#) , in Threshold Issue #5. I supposed Arypt was the name of their empire, and gave the name to that entire region of Davania. Xarypt would simply mean "New Arypt".

5 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)

6 - Listed in the Hollow World boxed set as inhabiting the mountains.

7 - Included because the Hollow World boxed set lists Crocodile, Sasquatch, Weasel and Wererat as creatures of the swamp; yet I think Gatormen, Jorri, Neshezu and Ratling may be more appropriate.

8 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#).



Some species of Therapsids

THE ANIMAL KINGDOMS

The mountains and temperate areas of Aerial, Suridal and Jomphur have been named by Lighthouse's explorers The Animal Kingdoms, as they are inhabited by several Demianimals (1), such as Actaeon, Cryons, Faenare, Goatmen (2), Gyerian, Jorris, Lupins, Minotaurs, Mugumba (3), Mythu'nn (4), Nagpas, Neshezu, Pachydermion, Phanatons, Rakastas, Ratlings (5) and many more. Additional animal kingdoms remain hidden among the savage lands of Iciria. It is common knowledge among our agents that Apefolk, Bearfolk and Sealfolk live in the north among the Beastmen, as well as ancient breeds of Lupins and Rakastas, who



Foxfolk lupin

also live in Neathar lands. Icirian forests and jungles are home to a great diversity of Demianimals, including Bearfolk, Boarfolk, Gazellefolk, Giffs, Minotaurs, Pachydermion, Phanatons, Rabbitfolk, Ratlings (6), Rhinofolk, and many races of Monkeyfolk and Apefolk. The World Spine mountains and hills are home of Rock Baboons, Goatmen, Saquatches and many others. Indeed, the Demianimals races are too many to list them all. As an example, the Hollow World hosts infinite variations of Minotaurs races, such as Bisontaur, Muskoxtaur (7) and Wisentaur on Northern Iciria; Aurochtaur and at least two races of Buffalotaurs in Southern Iciria and Jomphur. Antelopetaur, Gaurtaur, Yaktaur, Zebutaur inhabit Jomphur, while Elandtaur, Gnufolk, and Nyalataur exist in Southern Iciria. The same is true for all the others Demianimal orders (8), so you can encounter such races as the Tapirfolk (9) of Suridal, the Penguinfolk of the far South, or the Civetfolk of Jomphur (10).

Notes

1 - A term I invented here to indicate the races of intelligent animals, to match the term demihuman.

- 2 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 3 - Appears in [Champions of Mystara](#)
- 4 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 5 - See Thunder Rift's [Quest for the Silver Sword](#)
- 6 - The Hollow World Boxed set list a variety of werecreatures as inhabitants of the Hollow World's woods. I think Demianimals races may be more appropriate to the Hollow World, but werecreatures could live alongside Demianimals races or substitute them as the DM prefers.
- 7 - As proposed in the "[Muskoxtaurs in HW tundra](#)" thread on The Piazza
- 8 - For example, these are the [Mammals orders](#)
- 9 - As proposed here by Havard in the "[Tapir-Folk: Runequest's Morokanths on Mystara?](#)" thread on The Piazza Forums:
- 10 - The latter two were created by me here and do not appear previously in canon of fanon sources of which I am aware.

FLYING PEOPLES OF THE FLOATING CONTINENTS

The Floating Continents (1) of the Hollow World host a variety of people and races capable of flight. Hiak-Lor is home to the Hiakrai Neathar, who astride their giant eagles exploit their homeland's annual orbit to raid Azcan, Neathar, Krugel and Antalian lands, and even Aerial and Jomphur. Ashmorain is home to the Feathered Serpents. Oostdok is the flying island of the Gnomes. Other Floating Continents are inhabited by Dragons (2), Drakes, Ee'aars (3), Enduks (4), Faeries (5), Gargoyles (6), Harpies, Hawkfolk (7), Krollis (8), Pegataurs, Rocs, Shedus, Sphinxes, Pteryx (9), Pegasus, Red Hawk Dragons (10), Tabis and stranger creatures like the Apteras. The latter are a



Aptera

race of intelligent flying insects, probably once inhabiting the Outer world (11). A variety of Aerial creatures and Djinn also roam the Floating Islands. Beside intelligent species, further flying animals and beasts populate these continents, including Chimeras, Flapsails (12), Ghriests (13), Griffons, Hippogriffs (14), Hydras, Pterosaurs and Pteranodons, Tyminids (15) and Wyverns. In the last few decades, Outer World visitors in flying ships have also been spotted in the Hollow World's skies (16); and we have now a growing concern they could disrupt the unique cultures of the Floating Continents.

Notes

- 1 - A [list of the Floating Continents](#) by Andrew Theisen can be found on The Vaults.
- 2 - See my article "Who is Who in the Wyrksteeth part II" about Dragons of the Outer and the Hollow World in this issue of Threshold.
- 3 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 4 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 5 - Canon creature, also described in "[Faerie Subtype and Faerie](#)" on The Vaults.
- 6 - As intelligent creatures, some immortal may have chosen to preserve them, indeed they are indicated as inhabitants of the Mountains in the Hollow world boxed set, page 30 of the Adventure Book.
- 7 - Or Werehawks, as they were exterminated in Minrothad according to Gaz9 The Guilds of Minrothad.
- 8 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 9 - They already live in the Hollow Moon, see "[Hollow Moon Cultures: Pteryx of the Apennines](#)" on The Vaults and Chimpman's "Once in a Blue Moon" in Threshold issue #2, in Threshold issue #5 I also hypothesized that some may still live in the Brasol mountains of Davania.
- 10 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 11 - Created by me, already hinted at in Threshold issue #5, where I place some in the area of Pelatan in Davania
- 12 - Pterosaurs, Pteranodons and Flapsails are described in the Hollow World boxed set.
- 13 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 14 - Listed in the Hollow World boxed set as populating the mountains.
- 15 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 16 - Heldannic Knights starts exploring the Hollow World in 960 AC and The Princess Ark makes her first exploration in 965 AC. The arrival of Alphatia in 1010 AC will obviously worry even more The Lighthouse, and will have a huge impact on the people inhabiting the other Floating Continents.

THE FLOATING CONTINENTS OF THE HOLLOW WORLD



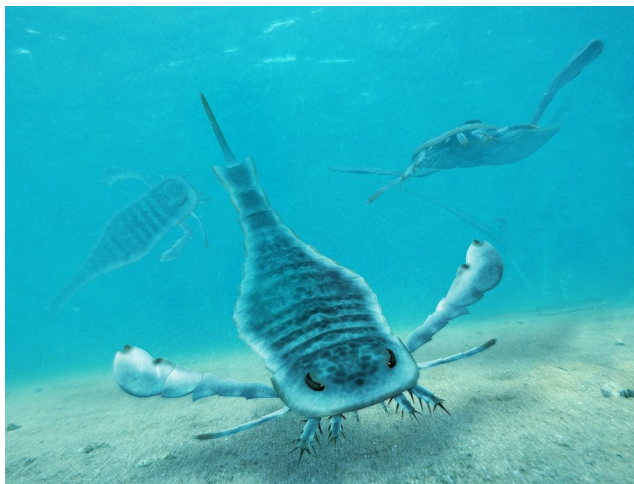
The position of the biggest floating continents on Nuwmont the 1st, as given in the Poor Wizard's Almanac III, page 132. Resi and Tama annual orbits were inverted in page 129 and 131: I decided to assume the ones on page 131 are the correct ones. Only 8 floating continents were listed, but Andrew Theisen added [some information](#) (available at The Vaults) about the other 3 canon ones (Ashmorain, Hiak'lor and Oostdok). I decided arbitrarily their position on Nuwmont, the 1st and the orbit. Alphatia is shown as if the Hollow World has a circumference of 15120 miles and each hex is 60 miles (see caption to the Hollow World full map). With hexes at 40 miles, the size of Alphatia in comparison to the Hollow World would be bigger and, in my humble opinion, quite excessive. The first diameters given in Table 1 on the following page appeared in the

Poor Wizard's Almanac III page 129, without Ashmorain, Hiak-lor and Oostdok, whose dimensions were in canon for Ashmorain and Oostdok, but I had to invent for Hiak'lor. When a second diameter is present, it's the adjusted size the floating continent should have if the Hollow World has a circumference of 15120 miles. Also, with a bigger Hollow World the values in Table 1, particularly Orbital Speeds, should be adjusted accordingly, but for now I left the information as given in the canon source, even if I am not sure they are all correct. The white outline around each floating continent should reflect, approximately, the diameter of its shadow. Chijioke's shadow is quite bigger due to its height. A full size version of this map will be also published in the Mystara forum at The Piazza and on the Vaults of Pandius.

Table 1 - Orbital data and other information for the Floating Continents of the Hollow World

Floating Continent	Altitude (mi)	Diameter (mi)	Annual Orbits	Orbital Speed (mi/day)	Shadow Diameter (mi)	Shadow Speed (mph)	Shadowfall Lasts (hh:mm)	Intelligent Inhabitants
Alphatia	17	1545	12	421	1559	17.7	3:15	Humans and others
Ashmorain	100	60 - 76	3	110	65	4.6	0:13	Feathered serpents
Cassia	417	73 - 92	6	166	93	8.9	0:11	Drakes, Krollis, Pteryx
Chijioke	1378	218 - 277	5	48	797	7.4	1:35	Rocs, Gargoyles, Faeries
Disa	163	181 - 230	3	97	198	4.4	0:24	Ee'aars, Enduks, Pegataurs, Pegasus
Gowon	199	112 - 142	7	222	126	10.3	0:15	Grondheim (see below)
Hiak-lor	52	350	2	63	353	2.6	2:15	Neathar humans, Hawkfolks
Kjell	154	109 - 138	1	33	118	1.5	0:14	Harpies, Tabis
Oostdok	2	40 - 51	2	67	40	2.8	0:14	Gnomes, Sprites
Resi	943	76 - 96	2	34	151	3.0	0:17	Apteras
Tama	997	69 - 88	4	71	145	5.9	0:18	Shedus, Sphynxes

QUEEN OF THE OCEANS



Eurypterids under the sea

The mysterious Queen who is supposed to be ruler of all the Hollow World's oceans and has a lair or palace someplace within the Sea of Rax. She is said to be an enormous sea dragon according to some accounts. In others she appears as an ancient dragon turtle. Yet she could even belong to a hitherto unknown species. Legend says she protects denizens of the sea when in extreme danger, either from natural causes or powerful enemies. Acanthodians (1), Aquatic Elves, Ammonites, Crabmen, Decapus, Devilfish, Dolphins, Sea Dragons and Dragon Turtles, Eurypterids, Sea Giants, Sea Hags, Sea Hermits (2), Hydraxes (3), Knas, Koprus, Sea Lizardmen (4), Mermen, Narwhals, Nautilus, Nixies, Opabinia, Ostracoderms, Omm-wa (5), Sealfolk, Sharkkin, Shimmerfish (6), Snappers (7), Trilobites, Tritons, Undines (8): all the intelligent inhabitants of the oceans and seas have their own legend concerning the Queen, and how she once saved them. Is she

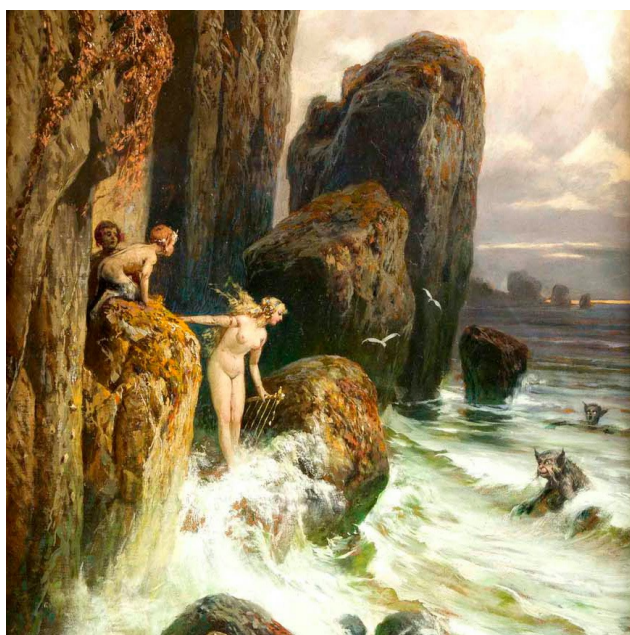
an Immortal? A Behemoth? It's possible we may never find the answer to this question.

Notes

- 1 - This intelligent creature and all the following not included in canon Mystaran products were created by me in my "[99.9999985% Mystara history](#)" article and inspired by the namesake real world animals.
- 2 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 3 - Described in the Expert set and the AD&D Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix.
- 4 - Sea Lizardmen, Mermen, Nixies, Dolphins, Devilfish, Sea Hag and Wereseals are listed in the Hollow World boxed set, while the others are entirely my supposition.
- 5 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 6 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 7 - See the [Savage Coast Monstrous Compendium](#)
- 8 - Described in the AD&D Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix.

DRAGON AND FAIRY LANDS

The mighty dragons have their domains within the Hollow World as they have in the Outer World (1); often protecting some ancient races or creatures from stronger forces surrounding them. They are frequently allied with local fairies, which in the Hollow World normally take forms more suited to local culture amongst which they live (2). Lighthouse scholars classify dragons and



Fairies on the sea

fairies together because of ancient similarities and ties, both usually uninclined to submit to the will of the Immortals. Furthermore, ancient legends recount both fought the Immortals in the ancient past. Therefore, It is widely believed in the Lighthouse that Dragons and Fairies now in the Hollow World not only belong to some ancient races rare or extinct in the Outer World, but they must also have made a pact with Ka The Preserver or other Immortals. This assumption has been confirmed several times, as dragon and fairies have often come to the aid of our agents on several occasions. Certainly there are and always will be some dragons and fairies amongst the most learned and wise sages of The Lighthouse.

Notes

1 - See also my article "Who is Who in the Wurmsteeth part II" about Dragons of the Outer and the Hollow World in this same issue

of Threshold magazine.

2 - As the Tepictoton, described in HWR1 Sons of Azca and in ["Tepictoton"](#) at The Vaults.

THE MEK LANDS

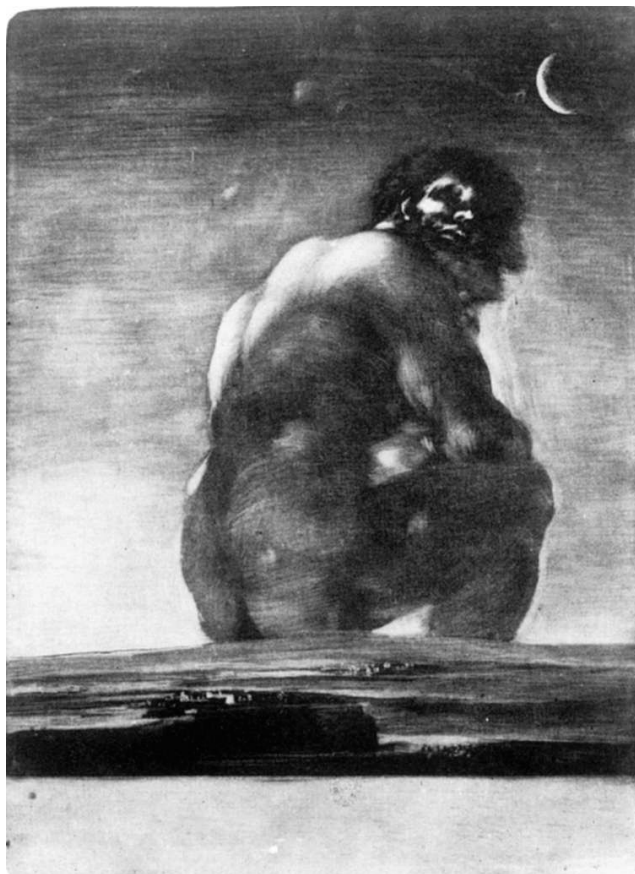
The beings known as Meks have so far escaped our burning desire to learn more about them. They seem very elaborate metal constructs of some sorts, but they are inevitably aggressive and hostile and obviously unwilling to let us study them. Only once have we spotted one of their mysterious masters, an insect-like creature vaguely resembling a beetle (1), which avoided our attempt to communicate with him, later escaping in a flying machine. The only definitive information remains that Meks are more common in the Antarctic regions of Iciria. Other sightings of metallic constructs in the southern Sea of Yr have yet to be confirmed (2).

Notes

1 - Mek are canon creatures "created by a long-dead race of inhuman insect-like sorcerers" (Rules Cyclopedia). In ["99.9999985% Mystara history"](#) I created the Kolemek empire in the remote past of Mystara to explain them. Remains of the empire could also still exist in southern Davania, as hinted in Threshold issue #5.

2 - Such sightings should instead be related to Blacklore Elves, see the article by Havard in this same issue and also the work done by Robin in the ["Blacklore Peninsula HW"](#) thread at The Piazza Forums.

THE GIANTS LANDS



The giant

Several areas of the Hollow World are dominated by Giant cultures(1). Frost Giants are numerous in Northern Icaria and rule a great kingdom (2) between Antalian and Icevale lands. Fire Giants live in Western Krugel lands, Southern Nithia, Southern Suridal and near many volcanoes. Cloud Giants are common in Northeastern Icaria from Neathar lands to the Ostzee, and in the Floating continents. Hill Giants live in countless areas, ranging from the Southern Beastmen lands to the World Spine and Milenia. Their culture displays the greatest

variations from clan to clan, with some very civilized and others quite savage. Stone Giants are more common around the World Spine and in the eastern deserts, and in Suridal. Storm Giants roam from the Southwest and the Anathy Archipelago to Jomphur. Hephaestons (3) live in the mountains north of Milenia. Garls (4) are common in the eastern World Spine. Cyclops tribes inhabits Southwestern Icaria and the Anathy Archipelago. The ancient Trolls (5) live in several areas of northeastern Icaria, while Giant Trolls (6) live among the hills between the Krugel, the Neathars and the Antalians. Giant Gargoyles (7) live between the Traldar lands and Milenia. Lastly, a mysterious and reclusive nation (8) with a mixed population of Giants, Fairies and ancient Trolls is rumored to exist in one of the Floating continents.

Notes

- 1 - Indicated in the Hollow World boxed set as living in the Hills and Mountains.
- 2 - Indicated in the Icaria map with Kulear as capital.
- 3 - Canon monster, not indicated in the Hollow World boxed set, but they seem appropriate for the area.
- 4 - Not listed in the Hollow World boxed set, but they seem appropriate for the area.
- 5 - The only humanoid mentioned in the Other Monsters section of the Hollow World boxed set (Adventure Book, page 30) under "Hills": I decided ancient Trolls, more intelligent and civilized than modern ones, could be more appropriate, as the trolls which inhabited ancient Grondheim as developed by Chimpman in the ["\[Nation\] Grondheim"](#) thread on the Piazza Forums.
- 6 - Gargantuan Trolls are listed as creatures of

the Hills in the Hollow World boxed set.

7 - Gargantuan gargoyles are listed as creatures of the Hills in the Hollow World boxed set.

8 - A good placement for Grondheim in my humble opinion, check the ["\[Nation\] Grondheim"](#) thread on the Piazza Forums.

THE ANATHY ARCHIPELAGO AND JOMPHUR

The area (1) is the home of a variety of cultures, from Colimans and Traldars to the Merry Pirates, Makai, Kara-Kara orcs, Oteino (2), Dwa (3) and Kumban (4), Water Elves (5), the newly arrived Heldannic Knights of Stonehaven, the powerful nation of Shahjapur, Araneas, other Sea Peoples (6) and, some believe, Kopru masterminds (7) just below the waves. Indeed, the Southern Atlass Ocean is called the Sea of Ships, as is traversed by vessels of the above mentioned cultures and also by ships from Milenia and the cultures of south western Jomphur: Asydh (8), Paeshen (9), Varellya (10) and Yanifey (11). Even the cultures from the other side of Jomphur, Blackmoor, Skandaharia and Thonia (12), tend to cruise toward the numerous human cultures of the Atlass Ocean rather than the predominantly non-human nations of Aerial and Suridal. Jomphur is also inhabited by other human cultures, such as Afridhi (13), Peshwa (14), Wan (15) and Yevan (16); these nations having less navigational skill, but still can be spotted occasionally on the seas.



Pachydermion in a Jomphurian drawing

Notes

1 - Many ideas taken from Andrew Theisen's ["Thoughts on the Anathy Archipelago"](#)

2 - Seafaring Oltecs, name created by me for the 2300 BC setting in the topic ["\[Nation\] Taymora - Empire of the Dead"](#) on The Piazza Forums, but previously supposed by Giampaolo Agosta and Atila Pires Dos Santos in their ["A Timeline of the Oltec Man"](#)

3 - Name invented by me, based on the seafaring Tanagoro that populated the Pearl Islands, may also live in the Sea Kingdoms of the Outer World and be similar to real world melanesians.

4 - Name invented by me, supposed seafaring ancestors of the Tanagoro who colonized Yavdlom and several areas of Davania

5 - Seafaring elves, ancestors of the Water

Elves of the Minrothad Guilds.

6 - A reference to the [Frontierlands](#), as discussed on The Piazza Forums

7 - A reference to [Adhuza](#), as discussed on The Piazza Forums

8 - A culture I supposed in Threshold issue #5 could be related to Nithians, Thothians and Aryptians and correspond to real world Middle East cultures.

9 - A culture I supposed in Threshold issue #5 could be related to the Peshwa of ancient Blackmoor, ancestors of Ochalean and Yasukan and corresponding to real world South East Asian cultures.

10 - Created by Bruce Heard in Dragon Magazine #157, see also here the [Varellyan Timeline](#) by Geoff Gander

11 - In canon the exact culture of the Yanifey was never specified, but looking at modern Alphatia images, I'd link them to real world Persian culture.

12 - Cultures from the Blackmoor campaign setting that should be similar to Europeans cultures.

13 - Also from the Blackmoor campaign setting, they seem to have a culture vaguely related to Jennites and Yanifey.

14 - Also from the Blackmoor campaign setting, they should be the ancestors of Ethengarians and other cultures similar to real world Mongolian people in Skothar.

15 - A culture I suppose could be related to real world Chinese people, see also the ["MORIENT Material Compilation v0.1"](#) file at The Vaults for more on Oriental cultures in Mystara.

16 - Name I invented here to indicate possible ancestors to Slavic cultures in Mystara, such as modern Traladarans, Yevo and Vantalian; see ["Timeline of Norwold"](#) and ["Empire of Zuyevo"](#) at The Vaults

NATIONS OF SURIDAL



Sea battle

Even if Aerial and Surical are inhabited by Insectoid, Reptilian and Demianimal races, as explained above, there is also a powerful human nation, Selhomarr (1), allied with the minor nations of Suur, Nevumm, Orimul and Ilarnn (2). The Selhomarrians are great mariners, and their ships are known to have reached almost every coast of the Hollow World at least once. Suridal is also the home of the Elves of Evergrun, the Halflings of Kenaton, and the Serpentine of Xaript (3), all of whom have considerable mercantile fleets. Needless to say, all seafaring cultures of the Hollow World waver between raiding or competing with their neighbors to intermittent trade and cooperation. The Lighthouse easily recruits willing explorers among them. Such is the nature of human curiosity, even in a place like the Hollow World, where every being is often bound to her birthplace and afraid to leave his home.

[\(Continued on page 62\)](#)

Children of Azca

Expanded Player Options in the Hollow World

FROM the
Mystara
FORUM at



by John Calvin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article started out as a thread at [The Piazza](#), in which several forum members participated. I would like to thank maddog, Andaire, Khuzd, Big Mac, Seer of Yhog, and Havard for their participation in that discussion, and for inspiring me to finally revisit it and formalize it in the article you see today.

Unfortunately, I was unable to include all of their ideas in this article, so I encourage you to visit the thread for yourself and to even expand on it! It is a topic that can continue to grow and mature. The Azcan Empire, after all, is expansive, and both DMs and Players should have plenty of territory and material to explore for years to come.

INTRODUCTION

Right or wrong, I've always felt that the portrayal of Hollow World cultures was very monolithic. Beastmen populate the Beastmen Wastes, the Milenean Empire is comprised entirely of Milenians, Nithians live in Nithia, and very rarely do individuals from these diverse cultures mix. From a world building standpoint this may make a lot of sense, and I think that jives with the overall spirit of what the Hollow World is meant to be - a cultural archive, where the immortals can place cultures that they want to keep safe... and pure.

Unfortunately, when dealing with a role playing world, a world where players and DM work together to build a story the limited options for player characters can be restricting. Would a group of diverse players all want to play in Azcan lands if their character choice is essentially relegated to “Azcan” characters? Yes, building a multi-cultural party from disenfranchised individuals across the Hollow World is always an option, but in this article I would like to explore the possibility of building a racially and culturally diverse party, all from within the Azcan Empire.

RACES

Following is a list of races that can be found within the Azcan Empire. It should be noted that any individual considering themselves to be a member of the Azcan Empire, whether human or otherwise, will be subject to all of the cultural biases of Azcan citizens, as defined in the Hollow World boxed set. Individuals visiting from foreign nations will be subject to their own cultural biases, whether or not they are living within the borders of the Azcan Empire.

Cueyatli (Frogfolk)

Frogfolk have existed alongside the Azcans since before being relocated to the Hollow World. Their culture originated on Davania and dispersed across portions of Brun and Skothar even before the rise of Blackmoor. On the Outer World, along the northern coast of Davania and following the Immortal’s Arm to the southern shores of



Frogfolk

Brun, various frogfolk tribes were either conquered or assimilated by both the Oltec and Azcan Empires. Most frogfolk races descended into extinction shortly after the Great Rain of Fire, being extremely susceptible to the effects of the Wasting¹.

Nearly half the size of their human counterparts, frogfolk in Azcan lands are brightly (colored/hued), having moist skin with padded fingers and toes, helping them climb even the sheerest of surfaces. Adult members of the species are able to secrete various poisons from specialized glands upon their bodies. Entire guilds exist, solely devoted to collecting and processing these poisons, employed for purposes both mundane and nefarious.

The size and dexterity of frogfolk, not to mention their uncanny ability to move through thick jungle terrain, make them

¹ The Wasting is a term used to denote the sickness and disease caused in the aftermath of the Great Rain of Fire. For more information see the [Mystara 2300 BC Campaign Setting](#) at The Vaults of Pandius.

excellent scouts and trackers. Such skills often translate fairly well in urban settings, where frogfolk take on roles as acrobats and thieves. Thus, frogfolk fill this niche in Azcan lands, the way halflings do on the Outer World.

HUMANS

Major human races in Azcan lands are of course the Azcans and Oltecs. Although Azcans dominate, there are several regions in the southeastern interior where Oltec populations predominate.

Numerous Neathar tribes, primarily in the northeast, have been subjugated by the Azcans since their arrival in the Hollow World. Some have truly been assimilated into Azcan society, while others only accepted Azcan ways out of necessity, waiting for the day when they are able to overthrow their cruel masters. Both factions may be found throughout the empire, largely in less populated northern territories.

Highly adaptable, humans may excel at nearly any task set before them, as long as they devote enough time and energy to the endeavor. Along these lines, Azcans place great regard in martial efforts; many of them aspiring to be great warriors, though just as many dream of entering the priesthood. Mystical and arcane arts, while not shunned outrightly, are perceived as lesser vocations, though devoted practitioners do exist throughout the empire.

CEUTZPATLI (LIZARDMEN)

Though the Malpheggi lizardmen existed on the Outer World long after the Azcan Empire perished; enclaves exist along the southern and southwestern borders, where saurians have been accepted as citizens of the empire. In truth fully assimilated lizardmen no longer associate themselves with Malpheggi, having fully embraced Azcan culture. Their skills and talents are especially appreciated when dealing with their southern swamp living brethren.

Malpheggi lizardmen are also tolerated within the empire's borders, even if not entirely trusted. As mercenaries lizardmen are afforded certain latitudes; however, most Azcan citizens remain suspicious of their motives.

Lizardmen from Azcan lands tend toward being slightly larger than the average human; both in breadth of shoulder and height. Their scale coloration can range from dull to bright green, with blues being uncommon, and reddish hues quite rare. Occasionally albinos are born, but they tend to fare poorly under the harsh, unsetting red sun.

Strength, persistence, and patience are all traits defining lizardmen, making them well suited to roles as warriors and mercenaries. Though often perceived as slow and dimwitted, lizardmen are just as perceptive as other races, though their thinking may seem alien. Often spiritual, many lizardmen serve as sagacious councilors and advisers among Azcans or their own kind. Within Azcan lands, lizardmen fill the niche dwarves do on the Outer World.

Lycanthropes

Were-jaguars were not present in the ancient Azcan Empire of the Outer World, which vanished before both the plague of Taymoran lycanthropy was unleashed, or strains of Alphatian lycanthropy were dispersed throughout the world, starting in Landfall². Since their appearance in the Hollow World however, were-jaguars sightings are sporadic, if not commonplace, especially in more rural areas and in villages situated deeper in the jungles.

Like rakasta and shifters, were-jaguars are oftentimes idolized by common Azcans, though displaying a darker and more sinister side. In the Hollow World, a lycanthrope can only satiate their hunger by feeding in animal form; therefore a were-jaguar living amongst other Azcans must do well to control their darker instincts, lest they unwittingly feed on those they care for.

Ocelotli (Rakasta)

As with frogfolk, many rakasta, both pardasta and jakar tribes, lived alongside the Azcans on the Outer World. While some tribes were conquered or assimilated, just as many managed to remain free of Azcan rule in the untamed jungles³. Such is still the case inside of the Hollow World. Rakasta are

² Taymoran lycanthropy is theorized by me (and others working on ancient civilizations) as starting somewhere circa BC 2300 and evolving over time. In canon Alphatians are credited with bringing lycanthropy into the world when they made Landfall in BC 1000.

³ It is possible that rakasta populations, untainted by Azcan culture, still exist within the borders of the empire.

most commonly found faraway from larger cities, inhabiting jungle regions near small settlements and villages.

Pardasta breeds tend toward a darker pelage in the jungled terrain of Azca, with many seeming to sport coats of pure black. Jakar pelts tend to be tawny and dappled with dark rosette spots, though darker coats often mask the marks. Though rakastodon breeds had long been extinct on the Outer World, their territories in the Hollow World overlap with the Azcan Empire. Some tribes have actually been integrated into Azcan culture. Within the deep jungles rakastodon are treated with awe and respect, and more than a modicum of fear, by fellow Azcans.

Many rakasta are idolized and often sought out as mentors by aspiring Azcan warriors. Their natural skills and instincts make them excellent candidates for warriors and scouts. The stronger, often more brutish rakastodons, are sometimes seen as uncivilized, often flying into fits of uncontrollable rage. In Azcan lands, pardasta and jakar frequently fill the niche that elves do on the Outer World, while rakastodon may take on a role normally fulfilled by dwarves.

Tzatzli (Shifters)

Shifters have long existed in the empire, both on the Outer World as well as the inner. Normally indistinguishable from other humans, a shifter's body is closely bound with their chosen animal spirit. In the Azcan Empire, most shifters are aligned with jaguar or eagle spirits, but other spirit animals also exist. Only during times of agitation or

Using Races from Eberron

I believe several of the races and classes from the Eberron Campaign Setting may be appropriate to use in an Azcan campaign, specifically the shifter and warforged races. In both cases, while the race mechanics can be used outright, I believe a certain amount of window dressing is necessary in order to better fit them into the Mystaran setting.

Shifters are humans with special beast-like capabilities. In Eberron, shifters may also exhibit animal-like appearances, possibly derived from purported lycanthropic ancestry. In Azcan lands, they are called tzatzli, which means “screamers,” and appear human. Their powers are tied to the spirit world rather than a lycanthropic lineage. This allows their existence on the Outer World, as well as in the Hollow World, to be a known and accepted aspect of Azcan culture since its inception.

Momoztli, or alterborn, are living constructs that have existed since before the Azcans were moved to the Hollow World. As such they are creations of Azcan sacrificial rituals, transferring spirits of the sacrifice into new bodies. Like the warforged of Eberron, these creations are still fashioned of wood and stone, however metal components are missing. In general they should appear as statues of Azcan humans with obsidian filigree and stylized masks carved as faces.

duress does the animal spirit manifests itself, granting a shifter skills and abilities beyond human bounds.

A shifters innate skills make it well suited for the warrior class, yet ties to the spiritual world also lead many down a more religious path. It is also not uncommon for shifters in more populous areas to gravitate toward careers thievery or even as military scouts. In Azcan lands shifters take on attributes normally assumed by elves upon the Outer World.

Momoztli (Warforged)

Although somewhat rare when the Azcans lived beneath the yellow sun and stars, warforged have become more abundant in the Hollow World, especially in the major metropolitan cities of the empire. Constructed of wood, stone, and obsidian, the warforged are living statues imbued with the essence of warriors sacrificed on Azcan alters. Although a warforged may remember flashes from their past lives, they are new individuals - reborn through divine power and rituals of the Azcan priesthood.

Warforged often serve as guards of temples and other places that are frequented by the nobility and priesthood of Azca. They also often join military orders and make excellent warriors. Some few have a gift for the magical arts, and the House of the Magician even has a sect made entirely of such individuals.

In Azcan lands warforged may fill the niche left by dwarves (serving as warriors) or by elves (as magic wielding warriors).

Other Races

Other races are found throughout the empire, though neither in great numbers, nor within homogenous communities.

Beastmen Mercenaries

Beastmen sometimes serve as Azcan mercenaries in the northern frontiers, most often being pitted against Neathar tribes or even other belligerent beastmen clans. Therefore, it is not unheard of, seeing beastmen in the empire's northern territories, despite most Azcans mistrust and contempt towards them.

Krugal Caravans

Though the Krugal Hordes reside far to the east, occasionally a well armed group of traders will successfully navigate Neathar lands, looking to sell the spoils of former conquests. As long as such visitors come looking to trade, and not plunder, they usually find cautious welcome among curious Azcans looking to buy foreign and exotic merchandise.

Milenean Merchants

By and large Azcans are wary of seafarers. Nonetheless they regularly welcome merchants from distant lands, whether arriving by land or sea. Consequently, Milenians routinely come ashore to buy and sell exotic goods, and are often found up and down the western Azcan coast.

Neathar Trappers and Hunters

Azcans clash with the Neathar tribes just as often as barter with them, but many craftsmen subsist through trade with the empire. Neathar hunters and trappers may be found along Azca's northeastern territories. Though most are justifiably wary of aggressive Azcans, as Azcans are suspicious of them, cordial interactions do take place. Neathar become less numerous the further one travels into core Azcan territory.

Traldar Traders

Traldar come to Azcan shores as traders nearly as often as raiders. Thus, many Azcan cities are apprehensive upon spotting their ships at sea, yet once friendly intentions are established, Traldar traders find tepid reception in Azcan ports.

PERSONA NON-GRATA

For good or ill, when recognized, these races and cultures are spurned within Azcan lands.

Gentle Folk

Unfortunately for the Gentle Folk, the Azcan's most hated enemy are the Shattenalfen to the south, and while most Azcans are familiar with elves, or have at least heard tales of their description, few would be able to distinguish between the two cultures. Regardless, very few of the Gentle Folk ever leave their refuge to intermingle with their neighbors.

Icevale Elves

Like the Gentle Folk, Icevale Elves are the unfortunate victims of mistaken identity when it comes to dealing with the Azcans. Unlike the Gentle Folk, however, they are more than willing and capable of defending themselves. Though the two cultures exist in close proximity, their preferences for extremely different environments makes their interaction irregular at best.

Merry Pirates

The Azcans have engaged in far too many conflicts with sea raiders along their western shores to view ships of the Merry Pirates as anything but trouble. Larger towns and cities may have defenses prepared for this scourge, but smaller settlements are usually abandoned to the raiders with the inhabitants seeking shelter further inland.

Shattenalfen

Schattenalfen are the reason that Azcans hate elves. Though the two cultures have more in common than either would care to admit, despite - or rather because of - the fact that they both worship the immortal Atzanteotl, the Schattenalfen and Azcans have been waging war since the dawn of their first encounters. That is not to say Schattenalfen have not infiltrated Azca, but those that have either stay concealed or use magical means to mask their identities.

ORGANIZATIONS

Jaguar Knights “Defenders”



Jaguar Knight

Several martial orders exist across the Azcan Empire, though the Jaguar Knights are by far the most prestigious, in part due to the order’s association with the jakar rakasta upon which it was modeled. The order is most prevalent in northern and central Azca, coinciding with the largest jakar populations, headquartered in the city of Xochimilco.

An Azcan warrior must consistently prove himself in battle if he ever hopes to become a Jaguar Knight. Once his prowess is established the warrior must petition a current member to act as his mentor. Upon

induction, a knight typically abandons local loyalties and obligations and assumes the responsibility of protecting the Empire. Many are itinerant, traveling throughout Azcan territories, honor bound to render aid⁴ to any and all Azcans in need.

Blue Darts

Though allegedly a secret organization, whispers of the Blue Dart assassins constantly flow across the upper echelons of Azcan society. The order's history stems from the mists of antiquity; frogfolk tradesmen then banding together into a cooperative guild. Their headquarters are secreted within the city of Yuzihuapac, near the northern expanse of the Malpheggi Swamp, though branches exist in most cities and towns south of the Atizapan River.

Blue Darts are renowned for their stealth, their ability to retrieve information and items undetected, and above all for their skills in poisonous arts. Azcan nobility seek out Blue Darts as spies and assassins, though gold alone is insufficient incentive for a Dart to accept a higher profile job. Darts covet artifacts, magical and mundane, and it is rumored that their guildhall in Yuzihuapac harbors a museum of relics rivalling all others across the empire.

Lizard Mercenaries

Lizardmen are fierce and deadly warriors, especially among the marshes of the deep

⁴ The rendering of aid may take on many forms, including participating in raids and skirmishes.

jungle, and Azcan war parties make use of them whenever possible. Several mercenary bands exist in the villages around the Tolmecac Swamp, and south to the Snake River. Though these bands are much smaller than the troupes hired from the Malpheggi Swamp, they have a reputation for being especially trustworthy, for the lizardmen that form them follow Azcan ways and tradition.

Sometimes these mercenary bands commission themselves, effectively becoming thrill seeking adventurers, that journey across the Azcan Empire in search of gold and a good fight. These lizardmen are also often appointed to deal with actual Malpheggi Mercenaries, especially when Azcans mount campaigns into Schattentalen lands.

House of the Obsidian

A cloak-and-dagger magical order comprised entirely of warforged mages, the House of the Obsidian is an offshoot of the House of the Magician. The order is based in the capital city Chitlacan, and never spoken of in more than a hushed voice. A rivalry exists between the House of the Obsidian and the ruling theocracy. The order's main objective, unlocking the mysteries and past lives of its members, has been deemed an extremely dangerous endeavor by Atzanteotl's priesthood. Should the warforged ever fully reclaim their past lives, they may become a threat to the ruling class.

Despite this, the House of the Obsidian continues to operate, responsible for most of the Empire's magical reconnaissance, and intelligence gathering. In the Empire, one is

never sure if the statue they pass daily is actually carved of stone, or is a patient, and ever-seeing member of the House of Obsidian.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

The following campaigns can be run in the Azcan Empire, either by a party of Azcan natives or foreigners to these lands.

The Games of Chitlacan



Tachtli

The PCs are all foreigners to Azcan lands having been captured and taken to the capital city of Chitlacan. There they are forced to participate in the annual tlachtli games, a brutal sport where two teams compete to throw a small rubbery ball

through a stone circle. The stakes are high however, as the losing team will be sacrificed on Atzanteotl's alter. Many teams competing do so willingly - lizardmen opportunists from Uexotzinco, Jaguar Knights and their rakasta allies from Xochimilco, and even a team composed of frogfolk and shifters from Inxi.

Victors of the games may fare little better, as their fate is also to be sacrificed, in this case upon the altars of the House of the Magicians, creating a new band of warforged. Should the PCs continue to win, and find this fate undesirable, they must devise a means to escape their captors and flee the Azcan Empire. Their best escape route is ascending the pass at Mount Kalaktatla and seeking refuge in Colima, where they can book passage on a ship to farway lands. Should the PCs need assistance in this endeavor they can be joined by fellow captives Spart, a bruteman warrior, and Akuss, a lizardman scout, who can help them navigate the jungles, avoid Azcan slaver parties, and help defend against the various dinosaurs roaming the area⁵.

The Obsidian Mask

The streets of Chitlacan are abuzz with activity as the city prepares for the next Obsidian sacrifices - a ritual creating the next generation of warforged to serve the Azcans. Heroes and legends from across the Empire, now worn and past their prime, have come to the great temple hoping they might be chosen for the sacrifice, so that some portion of their knowledge and wisdom might live on

⁵ The Spart-Akuss slave rebellion was devised by Khuzd on the [\[Player Options\]](#) [Azcan thread](#) at The Piazza.



The Obsidian

in the stone beings. Such rituals, while far from common, are well known to the Azcans, and in fact greatly anticipated. After nearly a quarter circle of celebrations and games have passed, the chosen few will be led into the temple and their spirits will infuse newly fashioned warforged frames.

Mages from the House of the Obsidian have been striving to ensure the rituals performed this year will not go as planned. Deep beneath the temple they have hidden the Obsidian Mask, a powerful and ancient artifact dating back to construction of the first warforged. With the mask in place, the ritual will consume the life essence of the participants and use that power to fully unlock the memories and past lives of the masters of the House of the Obsidian. As warforged bodies are immune to the effects of aging, some of the masters have existed for centuries, if not millennia, should the

modified ritual succeed, it could have detrimental effects throughout the Empire. Ancient heroes and warlords, long since dead across the expanse of the Empire will awaken, finding themselves within powerful warforged bodies. It is unlikely after their awakening, such individuals would hold similar goals, possibly fueling the flames of civil war, and splitting the Empire into several opposing fiefdoms.

Temple of the Poison Darts

Murmurs of a foul curse fill the streets as the city's nobles fall like flies. At first many of the nobles appeared to perish in freak accidents or petty squabbles, but as deaths become recurrent, the populace fears some maleficent hand is at play, and people across the city of Yuzihuapac begin placing protective runes upon their dwellings. In truth those investigating the deaths will soon discover that most are the result of poison... and shortly thereafter will find themselves evading the real culprits perpetrating these crimes - Blue Dart assassins.

The ancient frog cult plans to remove all leadership from the city, as well as prevent all travel and communication between it and the outside world. Unbeknownst to all but the highest ranking members of the Blue Darts, the cult is more ancient than any surmise; its goals more sinister. In fact the assassins guild can trace its origins back to mythical Ythlil⁶, before even the time of the Carnifex, when frogfolk dominated Mystara. The Blue Darts have unearthed an ancient evil⁷ from that time in the nearby swamps,

⁶ See Geoff Gander's work on [Ythlil](#) (in addition to others) at the Vaults of Pandius.

dormant for eons, and are preparing to awaken it. If successful they intend to offer the entire population of Yuzihuapac to appease it and slake its ravenous hunger. Eliminating the city's leadership and communication network is the first step in their plan. PCs must expose and prevent this diabolical plot, or the entire Azcan Empire - even the whole Hollow World - may be threatened.

Sabre Toothed Warlord

Unrest has been growing near the city of Teotihuatli, south of Lake Chitlalo. Rumors abound of a great Jaguar Knight in the adjacent jungle calling warriors to his banner. Chicitztl, the "strong tooth", is in fact a rakastodon warlord of great renown, having fought both in the arena of Chitlacan and against enemies of the Azcan Empire on the northern and western fronts. His enthusiasm for the precepts of the Empire is waning however, and Chicitztl has utilized various pretenses to gather support. Namely, a return to the old ways under the guidance of the immortal Otzitiotl.

All is not as it seems in Chicitztl's camp however. His rule is brutal and bloodthirsty, and many of his rakasta generals are cruel and capricious. In fact most of them are not rakasta at all, but were-jaguars. Neither is Chicitztl a true follower of the New Way, but rather Atzanteotl's servant. Instructed by his dark immortal patron, the rakastodon's plan is to ferret out as many traitors to the priesthood as possible, leading them into a

⁷ This may in fact be one of the ancient Burrowers, or perhaps even an entity related to the Outer Beings.

trap. When his forces are ready, Chicitztl will march against the fortress of Cuetzpallinan. Unfortunately the real battle will come once the rebel warband is surrounded by rakasta and were-jaguar warriors, Chicitztl and his lieutenants turning upon their own men. PCs caught up in this scheme must strive to discover the truth about their brutal commander, or failing that find a way to prevent the ambush and insure the safety of Otzitiotl's faithful.

REFERENCES

[[Player Options](#)] [Azcan](#) thread at The Piazza Forums

[History And Evolution Of Rakastas](#) by Simone Neri

[Mental Ramblings](#) by Geoff Gander, John Nephew, HWR1 Sons of Azca, TSR 1991

The Lighthouse's guide to UNKNOWN CULTURES

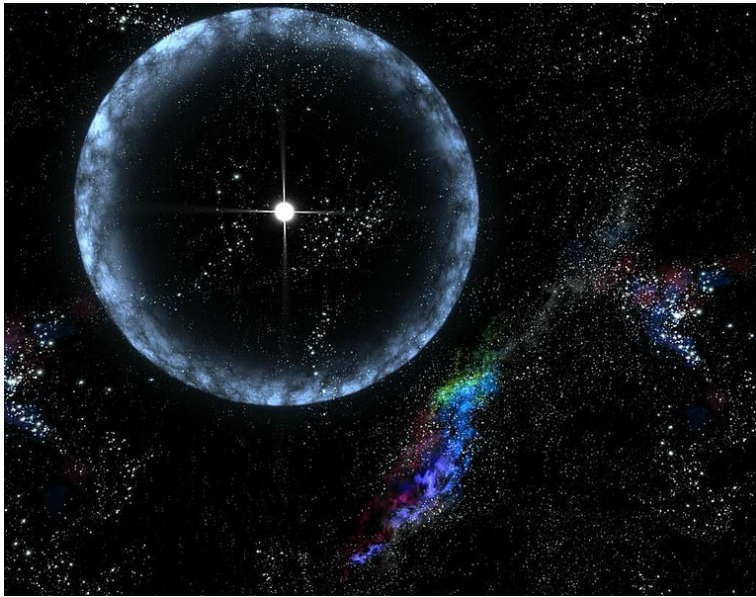
[\(Continued from page 51\)](#)

Notes

1 - Developed by Geoff Gander in "[Lhomarr in the Hollow World](#)", based on his previous works on Lhomarr in the Outer World, "[Lhomarr: The Land, Its People, and Their History](#)".

2 - Also developed by Geoff Gander, see above.

3 - Cultures of ancient Davania, see Threshold issue #5 and James Mishler's "[Age of Blackmoor](#)"



Ecology of the Megaliths and the Norns Cycle

by LoZompatore

PROLOGUE

AN INCORPOREAL CONVERSATION between Tiresias and Ssu-Ma¹, somewhere way above Mystara, AC 1015

The Incorporeal Form of Tiresias appeared over one of the many clusters of asteroids surrounding the low orbits of Mystara. The glowing, incorporeal silhouette of Ssu-Ma was already there, contemplating the changing landscape of dim and bright dots, sunlight briefly reflected by other, faraway asteroids moving on their path around the planet². An impressive view impeded for

¹ According to the Codex Immortalis by Marco Dalmonte, Tome 1, Tiresias is a Temporal of the Sphere of Thought whose main interests lay in dreams, prophecies and legends. Ssu-Ma is an Empyrean of the Sphere of Thought widely considered as the patron of memory, history and written knowledge.

² Asteroid fields between the Skyshield and

most of the mortals on Mystara by the absorption properties of the Skyshield³, the Immortal pondered.

Ssu-Ma: So you are here, Tiresias. Our master Noumena⁴ gave you fairly accurate

Matera are described in VotPA episode 8 (events of Eimir 16, 1965). The Princess Ark find some clusters of asteroids after 1 day of space travelling from Patera. This moon is some 51'500 miles away from Mystara, which also corresponds to 4 days of Princess Ark's space travelling beyond the skyshield. By doing the math these asteroid fields should lay between 38'000 miles and 65'000 miles beyond the skyshield. In the same episode it is inferred that the Heldannic Knights may have some kind of "voidshipyard" in outer space, likely in the asteroid fields themselves. The Emerondians (from VotPA episode 13) may come from similar asteroid fields as well.

³ See Champions of Mystara boxed set for details on the Skyshield

⁴ Noumena is a hierarch of the Sphere of Thought patron of knowledge, inquiry and research. He is fond of investigations about the mysteries of the Multiverse.

indications and a proper timing about my current location, I see. Welcome to my favorite meditation chamber. As you see its floor, its walls and its ceiling still have to be found.

Tiresias: I am glad to meet you, master Ssu-Ma. Mortals know me as a teller of legends and a weaver of prophecies but, in truth, so many things are beyond my grasp. Look at the Brasol Range, right below us at this moment. There, right now, in the labyrinthine tunnels of the Heart of Kirac, the prince-priest Paha is laughing and scoffing at the best advices his wisest clergy is giving at him. Day after day, that old prince is growing more and more self-important and presumptuous.

Ssu-Ma: A definitely bad attitude, especially from someone in charge of the destiny of so many of his people.

Tiresias: Indeed. The prince is coming to believe that the sturdiness, and the nearly-immortal life span of his race, will by themselves prevent any external menace, allowing his rock-men people to live forever in safe and splendid isolation. Unfortunately I foresee that, within the next century, those who follow his guidance will be literally smashed and shattered into pieces by the foul Crystalline Army of geonids led by the King of Isigg. The King of the Deeps is assembling his army right now, covetous of the gemstone marvels waiting for him in the Heart of Kirac.

Ssu-Ma: Rock-men are a quiet, meditating kind. I believe they should ponder better about their environment. Being able to detect enemies is a necessary skill for every

living being, the more so for the civilized ones. I come to suspect that such naivety, such wickedness is due to the interference of the entropic agents.

Tiresias: So do I. That's why I would like to counter such interference by providing the rock-men with proper advice. I wish to spread new legends about the ancient past and the far future of the world, to shake their false confidence in an unchanging environment.

Ssu-Ma: And now I'm starting to figure out why you asked for this meeting.

Tiresias: Master Ssu-Ma, in order to be able to relate more information to the mortals, I need to know more myself. Our hierarchs told me that you hold the secrets of the past, the present and the future of this world. Some mortals believe I am some kind of jealous keeper of secrets, which I am not. Actually I am just a humble Temporal of the Sphere of Thought formally asking the help of a mighty Emypyreal of his kin. Will you disclose those secrets to me, for the benefit of our Sphere and for the balance of power in the Prime Plane?

Ssu-Ma: You spoke about secrets, but secrets they are not. The truth about this place has always been known by some, while countless others rediscovered and forgot it many times over the ages. I understand your scopes and I respect and appreciate your efforts, so I will tell you about what you are asking for.

Let us just hope that our little meeting will yield fruitful consequences for our Sphere and this part of the Prime Plane...

ECOLOGY OF THE MEGALITHS⁵

Ssu-Ma: I need to start by telling you something about **Megaliths**, the mighty living beings like our beloved Mystara⁶ below

⁵ What follows assumes that Mystara is a megalith as per the original Immortal Set, and that an endless cycle of creation and destruction happens on this celestial body. This is a very different view from the other possible approach taken by the fan community in which Mystara is, more or less, an Earth-like world with a proper geological and biological prehistory (for a summary on this see, for example, Francesco Defferrari article [“99,9999985% Mystara history”](#)). Note that canon material (especially the HW boxed set) is intentionally vague about the ancient past of Mystara, so both scenarios are possible. Other fan-made theories say that Mystara is now a dead megalith, possibly killed or incapacitated by some giant impact with an asteroid in the faraway past (see [“Karimari Cult”](#) by Marco Dalmonte or [“The Megalith”](#) and [“The Megalith \(Part 2\)”](#) by Robin D). In this article this approach is also dropped and, in the following, it is assumed instead that Mystara is so a big and old living being that could withstand possibly anything until the very end of times. Notice, however, that it is still possible that the Norns Cycle described in this article worked until the impact with a giant meteor - sent by the Entropic forces, of course - and that things involving the megalith and the Norns are going pretty differently since then. Maybe this is the last proper Norns Cycle of Mystara and the “end of times” hinted in the following about the disappearance of Verthandi is really approaching.

⁶ In the following, the terms “Mystara” is used instead of “Urt” - which appears in the original Immortal Set - to address the megalith. Both terms may be used interchangeably but, in this article, “Urt” is dropped to avoid confusion with the name of

us. They are highly-magical, intelligent creatures, only apparently similar to moons, rocky planets, gas giants and small dust nebulae⁷. They are extremely old, they were already there when the first, forgotten Immortals surfaced in the Multiverse. Megaliths do not reproduce and, when asked, the first memories of all of them are to freely float in the void or to orbit around the very first stars in the Prime Plane and nearby locations⁸. We strongly believe they all were created by the Old Ones at the same time of this colossal puzzle we call the Multiverse.

Megaliths seem not to age - albeit our Entropic colleagues might say something different about this - constantly rejuvenating their surface through an endless set of **cycles of activity and slumber**. Think of this cycle as the common “days” and “nights” of a mortal being, only millions of times slower. You could consider it as the true pace at which the Multiverse flows⁹.

the Immortal Norn “Urd”, which often appears in the text.

⁷ According to the original Immortal Set, megaliths vary in size between 3’000 miles in diameter - the size of Mercury or Callisto - and over 1’000’000 miles - which is 10% more of the diameter of the Sun. No real planet with such a big radius is known so far - the largest one being the “puffy planet” Wasp-17b which is about double the radius of Jupiter. Moreover it is assumed in this article that megaliths never resemble stars - albeit this could be an interesting variation. That’s where the idea of a gas nebula comes from. Nevertheless, there might be solid megaliths with such a huge size located somewhere in other Planes.

⁸ Megaliths could also live in the Nightmare Dimension. For a brief description of Tru, the nightmare counterpart of Mystara/Urt see [“Nightmare Megalith”](#) by Travis Henry.

⁹ The article [“Dwarven Timekeeping”](#) by

A megalith may stay awake, or slumbering, for as little as 10'000 years, and up to 100 times more, and its communication is usually just as slow as well. The same information conveyed in a conversation of a few minutes between mortals or even Immortals usually needs centuries to be delivered by a megalith, even if its quality, fineness and depth cannot be reached even by the finest philosophers of our Sphere of Thought.

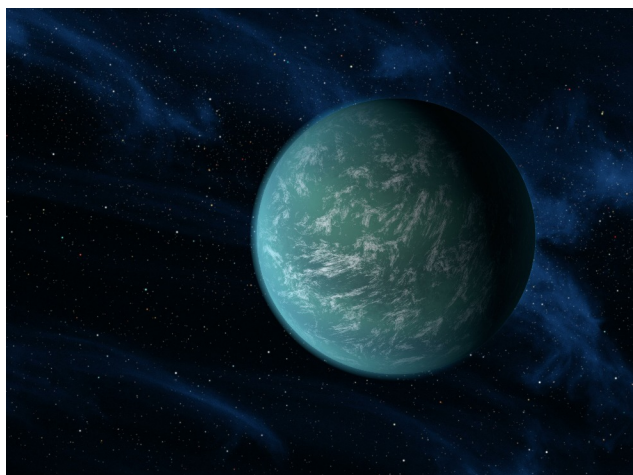
As I told, megaliths are very intelligent, and highly magical. They may generate a **mighty magic field** that can be extended to bath their whole external surface - which is ultimately the source of most magic in Mystara - and they are able to **open or close large gates** to the other Planes - especially the Elemental Planes - at will.

Megaliths are also able to **modify the shape** of their external surface with ease, a continent rising two or three miles from the seafloor is nothing but a wrinkle on the external skin of those creatures. With manipulation of their own magic they can create **artificial gravity fields, anti-magic shells and keep or release an atmosphere or an oceanic layer** at will. They are **able to teleport themselves** onto other orbits - or move away to orbit around another sun - even if I must say that the drainage of magic in such cases is so massive to be detected in the whole solar system of departure.

But, most important to all, **megaliths may create life**. We believe they are the only beings able to do so, together with us Immortals and some major elemental powers. Life may spread and colonize other barren and dead places including "common"

Bruce Heard hints at the the "heartbeat of Mystara/Urt".

planets but, in the end, from our knowledge all this life comes from just one of the three sources.

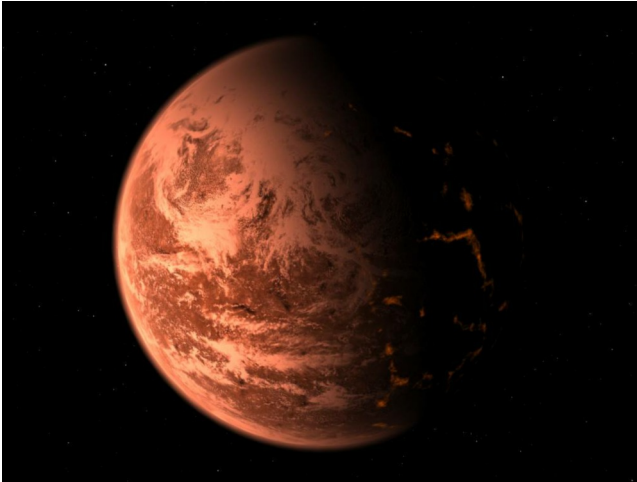


Ocean active megalith

While in its **active phase**, the megalith is wide awake and uses its powers to create life and an environment suitable for its development, all the while attracting existing life from other places of the Multiverse. This usually involves the opening of many gates from the Planes of Air and Water to create an uniform worldwide ocean.¹⁰ The continents are then added later by gates from the Earth and Fire Planes, and by subtle pressure on Mystara's will by the available Immortals.¹¹

¹⁰ See PC3 "The sea People" for a myth in which the Aquarendi (sea elves) are believed to be the first race living in the global ocean before the rise of continents. If the original D&D supplement 2 "Blackmoor" [1975] is used (see entry about the Shauagin) then it is also possible to assume that the sea elves, the mermen and the Shauagin are born from an original ancestral race during this early phase of Mystara.

¹¹ See PC3 "The Sea People" for a description of the struggle between the elemental powers about the rising of the continents. It is also possible to link such elemental upheavals to the global floods



Slumbering megalith

On the contrary, during its **slumbering phase**, the megalith loses interest in keeping life forms on its surface, it accelerates its rotation to cool down and to expel all air and water over itself, and it shuts down the magical energy field. In this phase the megalith no longer cares about keeping a stable orbit and repels any communication attempt. If disturbed, it reacts with violence by means of huge earthquakes and volcanic eruptions so fierce their lava is able to destroy even artifacts and Immortal bodies.

Tiresias: Master, most of this information was already known to me, and I am grateful for the extra details you provided. It conveys the notion of an ever changing world and also gives a maximum time limit for life to prosper on the surface of Mystara. If properly weaved, such information will shake the

hinted in the original D&D supplement 2 "Blackmoor" about the Shauagin race. In a late phase of the elemental struggle, turtles and snappers may have been used by the Immortals to do the "refining" work, raising or sinking single mountains, hills and plains, as per Bruce Heard's article, "[The Truth About The Ancient Turtles' Frightening Secret](#)", on the Vaults of Pandius.

misleading self-assurance of the rock-men in an unchanging world. But I also know that the Hollow World deep inside Mystara is used as a - rather static - storage yard of worthy cultures, species and races by my fellow Immortals. What is the fate of such a place, and how is it possible to keep this artificial equilibrium when the very rock over which this museum is built is going to change anyway?

Ssu-Ma: My dear Tiresias, you just hit a very sensitive nerve crossing and splitting our Immortal community in many opposite factions. Actually, the **Hollow World** will be turned into a wasted, lifeless surface like the external skin of the megalith when the slumbering phase begins. At every cycle the huge, dark, empty cavity at the center of the world is rediscovered by the available Immortals and used in a different way.

As you know, during this cycle the hollow is some kind of eternal museum. In other, previous cycles of the past it was used to double the surface of Mystara, to host alien breeds of creatures of the night, or it was not considered worthy of an use. I know that there were even some cycles during which the cavity was not discovered at all, being sealed from external screening by the powerful anti-magic layer created by Mystara's magic lava.

Notice also that the **Spell of Preservation** is a rather recent add-on, at least in terms of Mystara's life cycle. This spell was cast about 6'000 years ago¹², while the current active phase is about 500'000 years old, and it will last for as long as this time¹³, as I'm going to

¹² See HW boxed set for details.

¹³ According to the Immortal Set, Mystara as a megalith is approaching the middle of its

tell you. The Immortals are divided about this spell. It was cast during an emergency and it served the scope, but now it is causing stagnation among the living. While the Sphere of Matter may be proud of such stability, and even our Sphere of Thought may appreciate the clever tricks used to preserve every culture without overly violating the free will of their components, the Sphere of Time is more and more vocal about the removal of the spell. Even the Sphere of Energy is going to believe that the potential of so many races and people is bridled without scope. What is worse, the Sphere of Entropy is pretty much satisfied that, in order to get stability, stagnation was summoned to the hollow world. This is something that the Spheres of Life should fight with all their powers to avoid it becoming permanent. But I digress.

current active phase. According to AC10 there are cloud giants on Mystara which are a few hundreds of millennia old (although they remember just the last decades of events due to their small brains), so the length of the active cycle already spent should be at least 300'000 years, with at least other 300'000 years to go. In this article the duration of the active phase was increased up to the possible maximum value of 1'000'000 years.

MEGALITHS AS PLANET BUILDERS

Tiresias: You mentioned many different uses for the hollow world of Mystara, except possibly the proper one. What is the real scope of the cavity inside the megalith? Why it is shielded by a powerful anti-magic field produced by Mystara itself? What is the point in sheltering an empty space?

Ssu-Ma: It is because such space is not supposed to always be empty, at least that's what the current generation of Immortals believes. We presume that the hollow space inside megaliths is nothing but a **womb to create new planets**¹⁴. I don't have final proof of this - I don't think any of our kin has - and, to my knowledge, no Immortal has ever attended the birth of a new planet from a megalith. The megaliths themselves are very elusive about this subject. If this task was assigned to them by the very Old Ones maybe they fear unwanted attention from the Sphere of Entropy.

What follows is just the sum of our speculations so far. We believe that when the building of a new planet is in place, the anti-magic aura of the Wordshield totally seals the internal from the external surface, to prevent any physical or magical interference. It seems also that, in order to create a planet, very specific requirements - which are currently not met in the void around Mystara - must be in place in the surrounding space. That's possibly why we

¹⁴ A different fan-made view on the Hollow World - as an extraplanar location - is suggested in "[Reconciling Urth and the Hollow World](#)" by Kheldren.

have not seen our megalith involved in the creation of new planets since its first meeting with our kin.

Tiresias: Which kind of requirements may be needed in the void, master?

Ssu-Ma: Well, most of them should be related to the amount of elemental matter available around. You already know that new stars are created at a steady rate at the very center of each galaxy through the opening of special gates from the Elemental Plane of Fire¹⁵. We Immortals do not have any control over this process, which is entirely regulated by the Elemental Master of Fire and its servants¹⁶.

New stars are created without planets - as planets are not made of fire but of many different kinds of elements - and they slowly spiral away from the center of the galaxy to its periphery, a process which usually takes dozens or hundreds of millions of years. It seems to us that the main scope of the galaxies is to fill the void of space with stars. We don't know if this task will ever be completed, as the void itself is expanding - and I strongly believe Entropy is involved in this process - but new stars are created at a regular pace.

Somewhere along the route of the new star, at a distance far enough from the crowded and potentially disruptive center of the

galaxy, **new planar rifts** form in space, this time connecting the Elemental Planes of Earth, Air, Fire and Water to the Prime Plane. Such gates occurs very close to each other around a promising star, as every elemental Sphere races to fill the space around the new sun with its own element. Again, such gates are governed by the will of the Elemental Masters and their servants. After a first, enthusiastic and turbulent flood in the void of space, the gates end up impeding each other and they are shut down by their own controllers. Long chunks of elemental matter drifting around the new star are the remnants of this process.¹⁷

This is where we believe the megaliths come into service. There are sightings of them teleporting in these pristine solar systems and orbiting there for hundreds of millennia. Over time, there is indeed a reduction of elemental matter and the **sudden appearing of celestial bodies** of many different sizes, always smaller than the size of the megaliths currently orbiting the system. We believe that the elemental matter is drained by the megalith from the solar system and assembled in a new planet inside the cavity. The newly built planet is then teleported into a suitable orbit by the megalith.

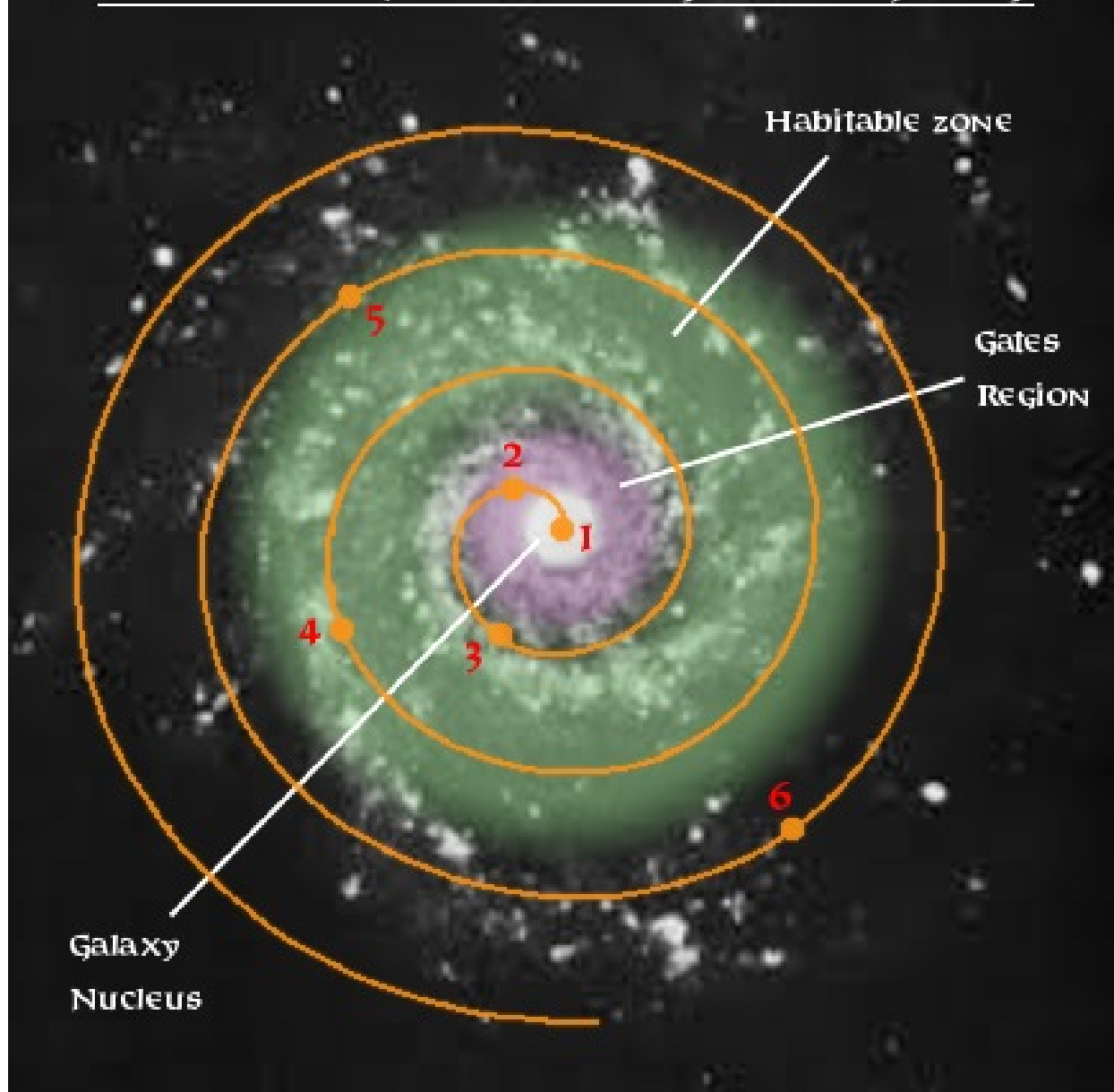
Sometimes it was even possible to see the megalith teleporting somewhere else in the solar system, leaving its previous position occupied by a new planet. In this case we believe the megalith just did the opposite process, by teleporting its own body away

¹⁵ See IM1 adventure, "The center of the galaxy" section. Here it is stated that the gate from the Elemental Plane of Fire is the only way for a galaxy to acquire new stars.

¹⁶ Again, from IM1 adventure of Note 13. The servants of the Elemental Master of Fire which are devoted to the task of opening or closing the central galaxy gate are called Firemasters.

¹⁷ The creation of the many worlds of Spillword described in DotE might match this process. No parent star is explicitly described in Spillword, but a source of heat and light should nevertheless be provided to these new worlds.

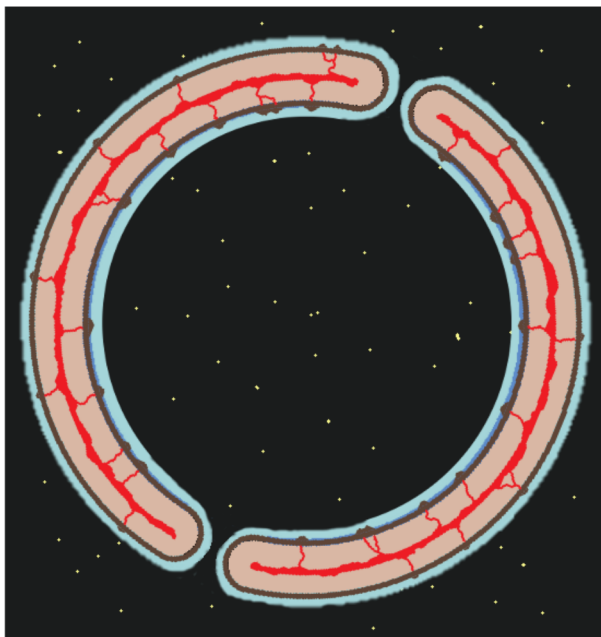
Evolution of a star in Mystara's Galaxy



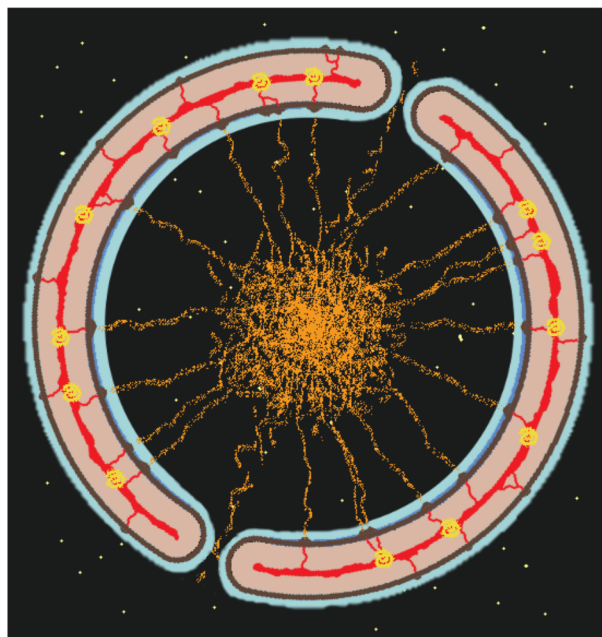
- 1 = The star is born in the center of the galaxy
- 2 = Gates open from the elemental planes
- 3 = The star enters the habitable zone of the galaxy
- 4 = Middle of the habitable zone
- 5 = The star ages and exits the habitable zone
- 6 = The old star enters the galactic halo and dies

How a megalith builds a planet: Steps 1 to 4

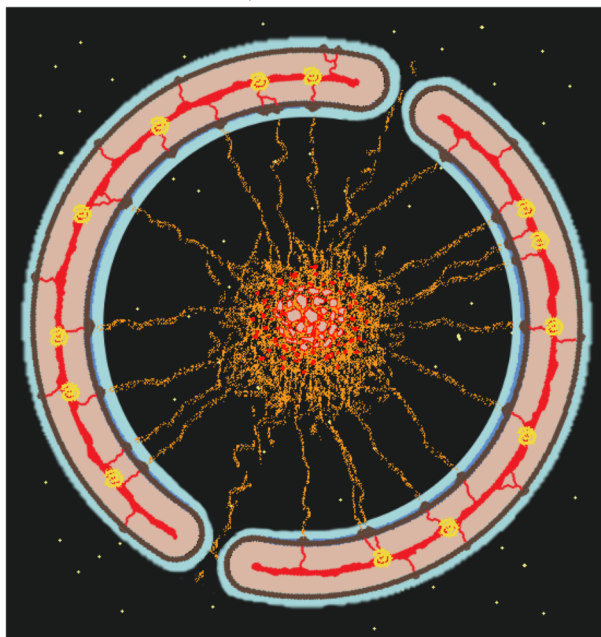
Step 1: The megalith is alone



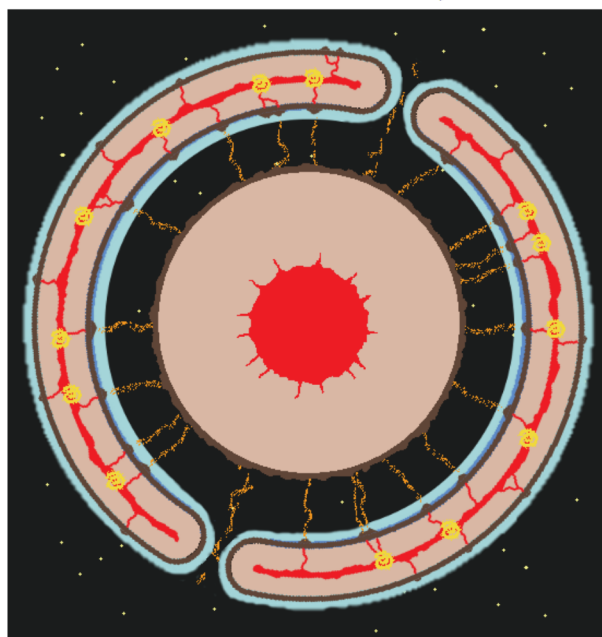
Step 2: Fire is shot through magical gates and volcanoes to the inner void



Step 3: A nucleus start to form into the inner void

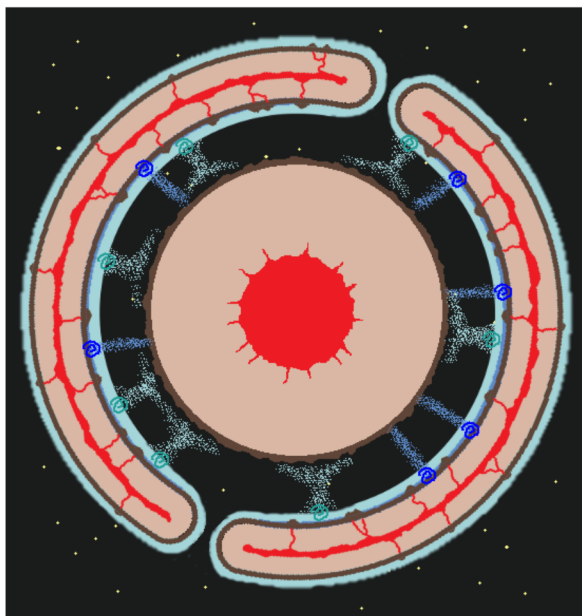


Step 4: Earth is shot through gates and volcanoes around the nucleus

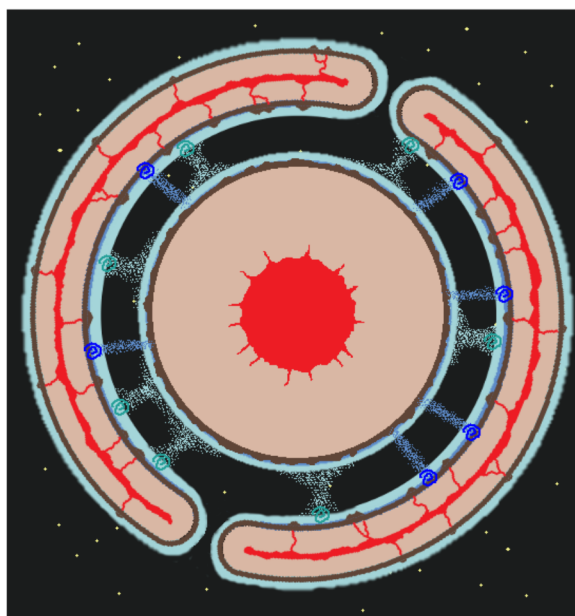


How a megalith builds a planet: Steps 5 to 8

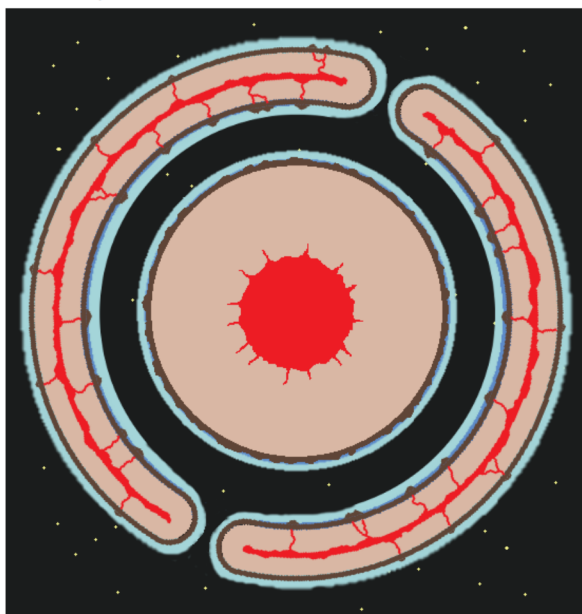
Step 5: Air and Water are added through gates to the rocky body



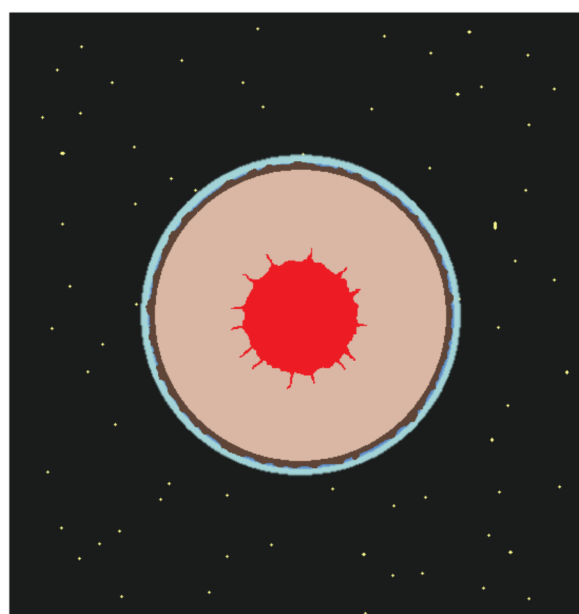
Step 6: An atmosphere and oceans are created on the surface



Step 7: The newborn planet is done. Simple life forms may be added



Step 8: The megalith moves away or teleports the planet to its final orbit



from the planet it had just completed inside its womb.

Notice that other explanations are possible for all these processes, maybe the stars themselves teleport the planets from faraway places, or the elemental matter from the gates is slightly magical and suddenly self-assembles to form planets, or maybe other hidden powers and forces are involved. We simply do not have enough information to provide a final theory on this.

As megaliths say they are unable to reproduce we believe that **only “standard”, lifeless planets and moons will be created in their wombs**. It is even possible that many of the oddest shapes of the worlds of this galaxy may hail from some megalith wishing to show its “artistic talent”.

We believe that megaliths are able to imbue common planets and moons with magic fields - albeit usually weaker in intensity than Mystaras’ own - by **draining magic from other worlds** of other Planes of Existence and passing it to the new celestial body.

Usually the new planets are found to already include some habitats filled with basic forms of life. At least in this we are almost sure that the megalith was involved, as it is the most obvious agent able to spread life on a nearby lifeless body.

THE HOLLOW MOON, PATERA AND THE ASTEROIDS

Tiresias: Master, if the theories of our Sphere are true, it seems likely that megaliths create places suitable for life, but that they cannot always care for the life forms they nurtured due to the slumber which inevitably falls upon the megalith sooner or later. I’m starting to figure out the real scope for the many habitats the Immortals established in the space surrounding Mystara. I guess that, when the right time will come, people and races from the two surfaces of Mystara will be moved away from the megalith in some of the habitats, to wait until the slumbering phase is over. Is this the way in which the megalith is repopulated at the beginning of every active phase?

Ssu-ma: You are right, Tiresias, indeed this is part of the truth. Many of the life forms now living high above Mystara are potential candidates for repopulating the world in the next cycle. **Matera** and **Patera**, the two moons are possibly the most important places for this task.

The Immortals believe Matera to be the last creation of Mystara¹⁸. For sure the megalith itself is pleased to have this moon orbiting

¹⁸ Notice that Matera is too small to be a megalith, as the moon has a diameter of 1000 miles, while the diameter of the smallest known megalith is 3000 miles. The same is true for Patera. Notice also that Mystara was not responsible for the creation of the gas giants of the Mystaran solar system (and possibly, also of M-Venus and the planet Charon described in the Immortal Set) as they are too big for the size of Mystara’s “womb”.

around itself like some kind of jewel or decoration. Patera was actually built by the Immortals in a way that I'll describe in a moment, while the asteroid fields - like the one we are contemplating right now - are part of Mystara as well.

Let me digress for a while on the **asteroids**, as they are the easiest to describe. These debris may have three possible origins. They could be nothing but soil, water and air expelled from the external surface at the beginning of previous slumbering phases¹⁹; they could come from solidified lava extruded to repel intruders while the megalith was hostile to any contact and communication; lastly, they are pieces of the external surface torn from some cataclysmic event during the active phase.²⁰ As they are discarded pieces of Mystara, the Immortals see them fit for every kind of

experiment, without worrying about possible opposition by the megalith itself. Many new races and cultures are first tested here before being moved to the moons or to the surface of Mystara²¹. Unfortunately the asteroid habitats themselves, while many, differentiated, and growing over time²², are not enough to repopulate the whole surface of a megalith, with its myriad of ecological niches.

Tiresias: And I guess, this is where the two moons come into play.

Ssu-Ma: Exactly. Early in the collaboration between the Immortals and Mystara, our kin made a special agreement with the megalith, who allowed them to modify Matera, the only moon orbiting the world at that time. The Immortals then carved a huge hollow space inside the moon²³. The "marrow" resulting from this operation was compressed into a dense sphere 950 miles in diameter and placed in a polar orbit around Mystara to form its second moon, Patera. Both moons were to be used as the main staging and storage habitats for cultures facing destruction or wishing to be preserved by the Immortals.

¹⁹ If the megalith spins faster to remove all life support from the surface at least part of this material should end up orbiting the planet as a set of asteroid fields or as a faint ring system. The meteor that crashed on the Darokinian/Glantrian border during the Wrath of the Immortals (see WotI boxed set) may be part of this group of orbital debris. Notice that WotI suggests that such a meteor may be inhabited. The Shining Isles of O2 module "Blade of Vengeance" may be another example of inhabited asteroids floating above Mystara.

²⁰ The explosions of Blackmoor which caused the Great Rain of Fire and the giant eruption of Kikianu Caldera which created the Ierendian archipelago (see GAZ 4 for details) may be examples of such events. Other examples might be the volcanic eruptions of Vulcania after the Great Rain of Fire, the cataclysmic events which followed the loss of the insular civilization of Tangor (see HWR2: Kingdom of Nithia DM's booklet compared with HW pre-cataclysmic map for details) and the Glantrian catastrophe.

²¹ The Outer World colony of Emerond on Davania (see Note 2) might come from this process.

²² If the Immortals manage to keep the orbits of the current asteroids stable - something that the Entropic Immortals are more than happy to disrupt - then the number of asteroids surrounding Mystara is going to grow as new rocks and elements are thrown into space at the end of every active cycle.

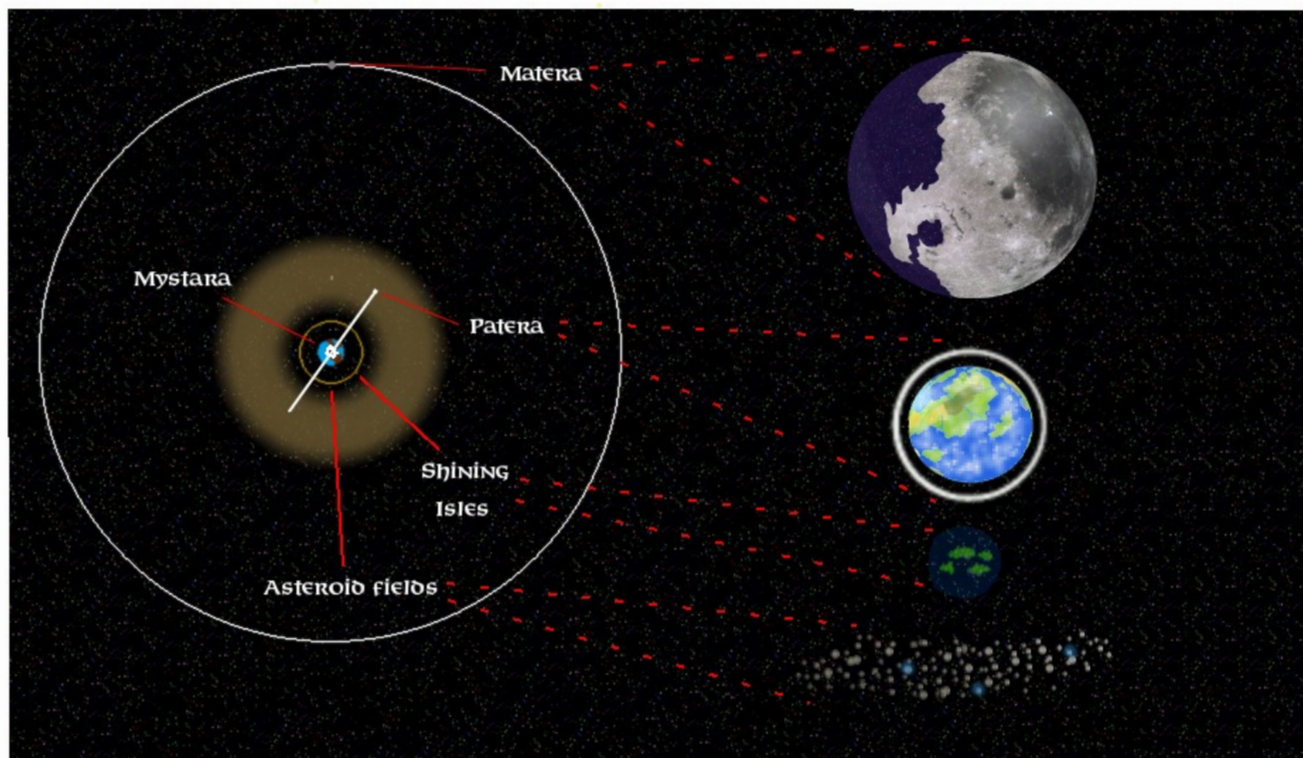
²³ What follows is based on the Hollow Moon scenario by Sharon Dornhoff (see [here](#)). For a summary by John Calvin detailing Hollow Moon properties and geography see Threshold Magazine Issue #2.

Further modifications were added on Matera: in order to prevent the collapse of the thin shell now forming the old moon, the central layers of the shells were turned into a dense and nearly-unbreakable **translucent crystal** with a thickness of 30 miles. This crystal was partly covered on the interior and exterior surfaces by layers of original lunar soil, not thicker than 10 miles each. The whole far side of Matera was not covered with soil and was turned into a colossal, semi-transparent window to let the sunlight enter the interior of the hollow sphere. The **Hollow Moon** was thus created.

At the same time a powerful invisibility field was activated on Patera, bending most of the visible light around the moon to prevent its detection by the mortal beings of Mystara.

A special spell called the **Spell of Remembrance** was cast on the Hollow Moon: it prevented all cultures placed in the hollow moon from forgetting the knowledge and habits of their ancestors, at the same time allowing for that accumulation of cultural and technical knowledge we usually call "progress".

Differences arise between the three habitats. Any people or race in the asteroid fields is allowed to freely interact with any other culture on Mystara - people living in the asteroids are just difficult to reach. Those living on Patera may do the same, but they have the advantage of almost complete invisibility to Mystaran denizens. The Immortals would move to Patera the cultures they wish to continue their development



Mystara its moons and the asteroid fields

through interaction with the rest of Mystara, but which wish to spare from extinction. Note that, thanks to the polar orbit of Patera, its denizens are able to fly over - and potentially reach - any point of Mystara, sooner or later. It is not uncommon for the denizens of Patera to establish small colonies back on the Mystaran surface²⁴.

Finally, people living in the Hollow Moon do not usually interact with the external worlds. They may evolve and prosper in a cyclic way from barbarism to the peak of their civilization, and then revert back to barbarism due to the **periodic global cataclysms** that happen on the moon.

When Mystara reaches its slumbering phase, and this can be calculated fairly accurately, the Hollow Moon will likely host those cultures of the Outer World and the Hollow World the Immortals will deem worthy of survival as-they-are. The cyclic pattern embedded into the Hollow Moon habitat will prevent extreme changes in those cultures until the end of the slumbering phase of Mystara. Usually the Hollow Moon is progressively emptied soon after Mystara becomes habitable. Sometimes - like during the current active cycle of Mystara, for example - the huge cavity inside Matera is left unused for dozens or hundreds of millennia, until worthy enough cultures develop on the surface of the megalith. Irrespective of this, at the end of the active cycle of Mystara the

²⁴ The kingdom of Bellayne may be a colony of the rakastas of Patera (or just the opposite). According to CoM "Heroes of the Princess Ark" booklet, rakastas of Bellayne use feliquines as steeds in place of sabertooth tigers, which they deem kind of "obsolete". Looks like Bellayne is an evolved culture with respect to Patera's ones.

Hollow Moon is usually full of races, people and cultures²⁵.

Cultures left on Patera and the asteroids when Mystara enters the slumbering phase will be usually left free to evolve, develop, and interact with the additional threat of the showers of new debris ejected from the surface of Mystara to be faced and avoided.

At that time many Immortals of the Spheres of Life **will abandon Mystara**. Most of them will try to bring with them their followers, sponsoring migrations to other planets, stars or Planes of Existence²⁶. They usually never come back, but sometimes an Immortal from a previous cycle will show up with its retinue and ask Mystara and the local Immortals permission to settle its evolved group of

²⁵ A note on the use of magic on the Hollow Moon. Assuming that magic on Mystara is possible mostly due to the magic field created by the megalith itself, magic on the Hollow Moon may be provided by the Immortals - who established a magic field similar to Mystara - or by the very sunlight, enhanced and concentrated by the semi-transparent material of the Farside. Notice that, according to M4 module "Five coins for a kingdom", the sun of Mystara is highly magical in nature.

²⁶ The Alphatians may be travellers from another megalith who entered its slumbering phase. It could be possible that the final spell cast by the Followers of the Air on their original homeworld (see DotE and M1 adventure module for details) actually caused the megalith to enter a sudden slumbering phase. Local Immortals may have had a different set of agreements with their megalith and so no safeguard mechanism like the Council of the Norns was ever in place there - or such a mechanism might have been disrupted by an Immortal strife mirroring the war between the Followers of Air and Followers of Fire.

followers on the surface. Not always this right is granted²⁷.

THE COUNCIL OF THE NORNS²⁸

Tiresias: Master, you just said that the end of the active phase may be predicted with great accuracy. This puzzles me. Isn't the future unpredictable by its own nature? How is it possible to foretell the effects of Entropy and the actions of countless Immortals and other intelligences in advance of hundreds of millennia? Surely Mystara may be induced to exit its active phase sooner or later than the due time, or there can be short outbursts of slumber inside a longer active phase.

Ssu-Ma: This is the core of the question about the cycles of life and death on Mystara, something that wraps the past and the future, and the Immortals and the megalith, in the same unique pattern.

²⁷ Many extraplanar invasions of the past may be explained by a refusal - or by an agreement - to settle the surface of Mystara. The other Immortals may not be happy to share the surface with the newcomers, even if the megalith has agreed for the settlements to be established. Some other planets of the Mystaran solar system may be inhabited by people from previous cycles who were not allowed to settle on the megalith.

²⁸ What follows may be considered a derivative work of the Codex Immortalis by Marco Dalmonte which attempts to provide a more detailed background about the three Norns - the female Immortals Urd, Skuld and Verthandi.



The Norns

Eons ago, the very first group of wandering Immortals who entered the solar system of Mystara and made contact with the megalith, realized that Mystara's surface was an ideal place to establish **projects aimed at the testing and birthing of new**

Immortals. But assembling this kind of project is never an easy task, as you know much better than me. You need millennia, a developed historical and biological background and a more or less stable and predictable environment to breed suitable candidates.

While Mystara was more than willing to help the Immortals and the lifeforms they wished to implant on its surface, at that time it was not possible for the megalith to fully control its behaviour. Sudden “naps” - outburst of negative, disruptive slumber - were always possible without warning.

A **complex set of agreements** was thus established between the megalith and those early Immortals to create the needed stability²⁹.

Mystara agreed to extend the duration of its active phase up to the maximum possible value for its own biology - a sheer aeon **one million years long** - and to keep this phase as stable as possible. In order to comply with this request Mystara needed a **following slumbering phase some**

500'000 years long. During the deep sleep all communication would have ceased and all the Immortals' projects on the megalith would have been erased. Finally, Mystara requested a small, but permanent, **contribution of Immortals' life force** to help the megalith with staying awake (or sleeping) all the time during the active (or slumbering) phase.

Three female Immortals of the original exploring party were selected for the establishment of this lasting bond with

²⁹ A set of special agreements between the Immortals and the megalith is hinted in the Immortal Set, while not explicitly described. In the following it is supposed that such agreements were made to maximize the duration of the stable, active phase of Mystara, while minimizing the duration of the slumbering phase to a defined and precise span of “deep sleep”.

Mystara, partially merging with the megalith to provide, in turn, the required flow of power.

Tiresias: Master, this is the first time I've heard of such a link between Mystara and some of our kin.

Ssu-ma: As I told you in the beginning this is not secret information, but the actions of the three Immortals are dispersed over so vast a time span, and so taken for granted, that most of the youngest Immortals do not know about this. Some of the youngs are even barely aware that Mystara is a megalith, an ignorance the Sphere of Thought is steadily trying to dispel. The hierarchs of each Sphere and their servants, however, are all fully aware of the three ancient Immortals and their fundamental contribution to the cause of our kin.

Over the epochs, the three Immortals changed many times name and status. Currently they are known as **Urd** - of the Sphere of Time, **Skuld** - of the Sphere of Entropy, and **Verthandi** - of the Sphere of Matter.

I believe they are among the oldest Immortals still active in this part of the Multiverse, while I must admit that very old beings like Ixion and Thanatos might be of different opinion.

When the agreements were finalized, Urd was a Hierarch of the Sphere of Time, Skuld a Celestial of the Sphere of Entropy and Verthandi an Eternal of the Sphere of Matter. The three Immortals **established a cycle** in which two of them simultaneously gave part of their power to the megalith

while the third Immortal was "off-duty" and busy in slowly regaining her power after the long drainage³⁰.

In that archaic time Urd and Skuld were drained first by Mystara, giving time to Verthandi to gain enough power to be able to replace the weakest of the couple at the right moment. Skuld - being lowest in power - was immediately absorbed into the megalith itself - temporarily disappearing from the ranks of the Immortals. This adsorption was part of the agreement, as a "guarantee" for Mystara that the Immortals would never leave their service in fear of an excessive dwindling of their power.

- After 150'000 years of service Skuld was reduced to Temporal status³¹; the megalith then released the Immortal from its body to let her regain the lost power. Verthandi - now at hierarch status in power - substituted Skuld.
- After 500'000 years of service Urd's power was reduced so much that she was temporarily absorbed into Mystara as well, just like Skuld many millennia before.
- Urd was released at Temporal status after 650'000 years of service. Skuld - whose power increased up to hierarch status in the meantime - substituted for her.

³⁰ A scheme depicting the evolution over time of the power of the three Norns is included in the Appendix.

³¹ In game terms, every Immortal is released from Mystara to begin the "off-duty" phase once her unadjusted power is reduced to 1000 PP. See also Notes 41 and 42 below for further details.

- Verthandi was absorbed into Mystara after 1 million years of service (just when the megalith started its slumbering phase) and was released after 1'150'000 years at Temporal status. Urd - back again at hierarch status - substituted for her, thus completing the whole cycle.

This sequence of events was repeated over and over for every cycle of wakefulness and slumber of Mystara. As all the three Immortals reach hierarch status sometime during the cycle - although never all of them at the same moment - **their group is officially addressed as a Council** by the rest of the Immortals.

The three Immortals collectively **call themselves "Norns"** which, in an old language of those forgotten origins, may be translated as "*Those who secretly communicate*"³². This name refers both to the ability of the Norns to communicate with Mystara through a preferential channel, a channel which is denied to all the other Immortals, and to the possibility that the Norns have to use Mystara's vast array of natural phenomena to send cryptic messages to mortals and Immortals alike³³.

Like the Norns themselves, their Council is possibly the earliest and the longest lasting

³² This is also one of the possible meanings of the word "Norn" in the real world mythology.

³³ As described in the original Immortal Set these messages take the form of slight changes in the environment, which can be detected and understood by druids as omens and signs coming from "nature". Most druids of Mystara may actually be considered as clerics of the megalith.

Immortal's Council in this part of the Prime Plane.

Other consequences of the agreement between Mystara and the Norns

Tiresias: I cannot believe an Immortal deliberately wished to face such a wearying service for millions over millions of years. From what you say, Master, the Norns never have the opportunity to become the Full Hierarchy of their Sphere, even when they fully deserved such honour multiple times.

Ssu-Ma: Those Immortals of antiquity have slightly different beliefs on what constitutes true power than we do. Becoming a Full Hierarchy is not a priority for any of the Norn. As our colleagues of Time may teach you, the more we glance into the past, the more the very Spheres of Power and their relationship with the Multiverse are different from our present day experiences. But this is a subject for another lesson.

Back to topic, the close relationship between the Norns and Mystara provides other important consequences, including a few benefits for the three Immortals as well. Let me just describe some of these other aspects, and many more things will be clear to you.

First of all, the agreement **permanently seizes** inside the megalith $\frac{3}{4}$ of the current life force of the Norns. This is part of the "guarantee" that Mystara will always have enough Immortal power to stay awake (or remain in deep sleep) for the agreed time. This seized power is not in the availability

of the Norns anymore; for their everyday tasks, the Norns appears as Immortals of a ranking which is just $\frac{1}{4}$ of their true power. Moreover, as I already told you, Mystara **automatically absorbs** all of the Immortal life force if the unadjusted power level of a Norn drops below a given threshold at any time.

While adsorbed into Mystara a Norn cannot use most of her powers. Her life force is spread within Mystara's molten mantle, from which she cannot escape without Mystara's permission. She cannot use planar or dimensional travel, create avatars nor use spells. She can communicate only with Mystara and the other two Norns, even if a careful manipulation of the megalith's environmental phenomena enables her to **send cryptic messages** to informed recipients³⁴. Mystara always allows the trapped Norn to listen to their followers' prayers and to grant clerical powers³⁵ and benefits to worthy mortals in order to prevent the Norn from fading³⁶.

Thanks to their special status, the Norns act as the **main ambassadors** between Mystara and the Immortals. At any time Mystara may temporarily absorb all the life force of a Norn for "talks" inside of the megalith's

³⁴ See Note 39 above.

³⁵ As an option such powers may be druidical in nature. If so, clerics of Skuld could be some sort of "evil druids" devoted to the most disruptive expression of nature. Druids of Urd would be mostly concerned with evolution and cycles of nature, while the portfolio of the druids of Verthandi would be centered on the buildup of ecosystems. and their stability.

³⁶ According to WotI, Book I, an Immortal may fade into nothingness if it has no followers for some amount of time.

mantle. Usually the most powerful “in-duty” available Norn is taken. Such talks are not very common. They may happen when some earth-shaking event perturbs the surface, causing major changes to the environment and to the mortal beings living on it³⁷.

As I told you before, communication with a megalith is a very slow matter, so this kind of talk may require years before the Norn is released. Moreover, Mystara is notoriously meticulous and deeply-pondering before taking any action. The **disappearance of Verthandi** during the last chain of events³⁸ - a disappearance which greatly alarmed some groups of mortals and low-ranking Immortals - is due just to a round of such talks. Verthandi will surely be released within a short time, to the disappointment of those among mortals and Immortals who believe her disappearance to be a bad omen foretelling the end of the world³⁹.

Among high-ranking Immortals a member of the Council of the Norns is always much respected. Both "on-duty" and "off-duty" Norns, irrespective of their current level of power, are granted honors and privileges usually not available to the other Immortals and, while acting as ambassadors of the megalith's will, they have immediate access to the Full Hierarchs of all Spheres. After all, even the most selfish and evil-oriented

Immortal is forced to recognize the important service the Norns provide for the development of all the Immortals' projects - including the Entropic projects - on Mystara.

Bias in the Norns Cycle and the Ages of Mystara

Tiresias: I never had the opportunity to know Urd in person, as she disappeared long before my ascent to the ranking of the Immortals⁴⁰ - now I understand that she is merged inside the very substance of Mystara. Skuld, I tried to talk with her in the past, but she is extremely reclusive, I never suspected such a great involvement in Mystara's affairs. I thought she was deliberately avoiding me because I am of lowest ranking, some Entropic Immortals give these things a lot of importance. About mighty Verthandi, she was definitely more talkative but, again, before her disappearance she never spoke about the heavy burden she has to bear.

Ssu-Ma: That's because the three Norns have performed their duty for so long and believe their service so common that it is not even worth mentioning. You are less than two thousand years old⁴¹, a newborn Immortal by the Norns' standards. They tend to forget there are many like you in our ranks, who cannot know their whole story.

³⁷ A couple of such recent events are the Great Rain of Fire and the Wrath of the Immortals. [“Blackmoor: Grief Eternal”](#) a fan-made novelization by Cab on describes how Mystara “felt” after the Great Rain of Fire.

³⁸ The reference here is to the Wrath of the Immortals events.

³⁹ See also Note 5 for a variation on this scenario, in which the disappearance of Verthand would really foretell the end of times.

⁴⁰ According to the Codex Immortalis by Marco Dalmonte, Book 1, Urd disappeared in 3000 BC, while Tiresias ascended to Immortality some time after 1000 BC.

⁴¹ See the Codex Immortalis by Marco Dalmonte, Book 1.

But we are now to the part of the Norns Cycle which likely will fascinate you most. Its about the **effect of the Norns' service on Mystara** and its inhabitants over the epochs.

As Mystara drains power from a specific Norn, it is impossible to avoid a **slight bias** in favor of the Sphere of Power the Norn belongs to. Two Norns are always drained at the same time, but one of them is almost always drained more than the other. Over centuries and millennia of continuous draining from the same predominant source, this "bias" slightly affects Mystara's behavior. As most of the mortal beings living on the megalith are made with the same elements which Mystara itself is made of, this bias is also effective on these beings and on the cultures they produce.

The results of this biasing are different cycle after cycle and they also depend on a myriad of other factors - the most prominent being the will of the Immortals and the peculiarities of the intelligent mortals living on the megalith at a given epoch. Nevertheless, it is possible to recognize **six, very broad, general patterns** during a full cycle of Mystara⁴².

Assuming that year 0 corresponds to the awakening of the megalith from the previous slumbering phase⁴³, we have:

⁴² See the Appendix for a detailed scheme of what follows.

⁴³ To have a reference for the current cycle of Mystara, according to the Immortal Set, present time may be set at 500'000 years since the last awakening of the megalith. See also Note 53 below for details.

0 - 100'000: Entropy and Matter biases are almost equivalent. Mystara awakes from its previous slumbering era and the building of a new surface begins. Water and air are drawn on the surface, while a volcanic cycle and a magic field are established on the megalith. There is an **initial succession of building up and catastrophes** - less and less violent over time - involving, in this temporal order, continents, large landmasses and mountain chains. This turbulent activity usually attracts many Immortals from other parts of the Prime Plane, who start establishing their own projects on the megalith and take advantage of the turmoil. At the end of this phase a few, sturdy intelligent living species are usually firmly established on the surface and in the oceans. This final part usually coincides with the moving of most of the species and cultures of the Hollow Moon and surrounding celestial bodies to the surface of Mystara.

100'000 - 500'000: Matter bias is prevalent - although constantly dimming over time. **Stability is predominant.** Species and cultures tend to live without major modifications for ages; less evolution and innovation is produced in the world with respect to subsequent eras⁴⁴. While no

⁴⁴ The distant past of Mystara. This is an attempt to explain why the past of Mystara - say before BC 10000 - is so devoid of intelligent life, and the Hollow World before 6000 BC was filled mostly with primitive cultures and dinosaurs. There are exceptions, of course - dragons, giants, treants and gakaraks, the carnifex people, the insectoid creators of the meks, the Eldar from the Dragonord Trilogy are all examples of very ancient races living in the distant past of Mystara. The underlying idea here is that the previous ages of Mystara were more static and produced less cultures and

proper stagnation is ever in place, at the beginning of this phase the practical effects on mortal cultures and biology is very close to the Spell of Preservation currently cast on the Hollow World.

500'000 - 600'000: Matter and Time biases are almost equivalent. This is a **golden age for life on Mystara**⁴⁵, as the stability inherited by the previous epoch mixes with new ideas and changes brought on by the bias of the Sphere of Time. Species tend to change at an accelerated pace, ideas and philosophies spread and evolve faster and faster. A widespread sense of progress is established in the world.

600'000 - 1'000'000: Time bias is prevalent - although constantly dimming as this epoch draws to an end. This is an **eclectic, long-lasting era** which builds on the conquests of the previous golden age and in which change is predominant. No two places in the world look similar, at least not for long. There is a progressive dispersion and fragmentation of species and cultures which leads to the greatest splendors and the deepest sorrows of the whole active

civilizations due to this bias from the Sphere of Matter.

⁴⁵ According to the original Immortal Set, the megalith of Mystara is approaching the middle of its active phase, i.e. 500'000 years in the model described in this article. The idea is that the Wrath of the Immortals was (one of) the landmark event(s) signalling the half of the current active phase and the beginning of the 100'000 years long golden age. Notice that this time span is so long that many civilization may rise and fall, even catastrophically, during this epoch. The term "golden age" applies when compared to the other ages of the Norns Cycle described in the list.

cycle of Mystara. Conflict is common throughout this age, even if proper, violent, destruction usually happens in a later stage, when cultures also begin to stagnate and become decadent due to the growing influx of Entropy⁴⁶.

1'000'000 - 1'100'000: Time and Entropy biases are almost equivalent, marking the end of the current active phase of Mystara. The fragmented species and cultures of the previous eclectic age are **led to extinction** by the efforts of Entropy. It is also an era of **cataclysmic events** of every possible kind, as Mystara enters its slumbering phase and slowly removes any support for life like air, magic and water. By the end of this phase the megalith is but a dead body, devoid of all life. While the Norns still tend to Mystara, most of the other Immortals of the four Spheres of Life usually leave the megalith - often taking their followers with them - to continue working on their projects elsewhere on the Prime and other Planes. This is also an important event, as many of these Immortals, who were born on Mystara, never come back to their birthplace. In this way, the megalith effectively acts as a diffusion point for the Immortals in the Multiverse.

1'100'000 - 1'500'000: Entropy bias is prevalent - although constantly dimming

⁴⁶ At the end of this phase life on Mystara could be pretty similar to the "Dying Earth" setting by Jack Vance. Although the sun is not going to die living conditions on the megalith are worsen and worsen over time due to the progressive shutting down of all life support by Mystara. Magic may become less powerful and unpredictable as well, as the magic field emanated by the megalith become progressively unreliable.

over time. This is a **quiet era of decay and oblivion**. Under the careful supervision of most of the Immortals of Entropy every ruin, every bone, every written glyph, every remnant of previous civilizations and cultures is slowly erased from the megalith. Mystara itself avoids any contact with other intelligent beings and violently repels inquisitive intruders, including its previous denizens now living on the moons and asteroids. During this phase increasing numbers of Immortals of Entropy leave the megalith to pursue more attractive objectives elsewhere. A few of them even self-destruct once they believe their task on Mystara is done. At the end of this phase Verthandi, the Norn of Matter, takes over the supply of immortal power and slowly begins the awakening of the megalith for a new cycle.

Balance of the Spheres in the Norns Cycle

Tiresias: Master, what you just disclosed to me is amazing. By using this general pattern as a guideline it would be possible to create prophecies and legends dipping into the most remote past and referring to the end-times of the far future. With this, I'll definitely be able to shake the false foundations of the rockmen prince.

Ssu-Ma: I'm really glad you consider the information I provided you useful for your goals, then.

Tiresias: One last question, Master. While I agree that the effect of the biases induced by the Norns are small and become effective over very long times, how is it

possible to preserve the balance of the Spheres?

Ssu-Ma: This **balance** is still preserved overall, but in a very subtle way. The aims of every Sphere are satisfied by the full cycle and its effects. I'll delve more in detail into this.

The Council of the Norns definitely provides stability - as in the main scope of the **Sphere of Matter** - to Mystara and, in doing so, to the "backbone" over which most of the Immortal projects are established and developed.

The **Sphere of Time** is obviously represented by the cyclic pattern established by Mystara and the Norns. Notice also that, while every cycle has the same phases and broad succession of events of the previous ones, the Sphere of Time also takes care that **no two cycles are exactly equal**: events may be anticipated or delayed by a few thousand years, without any major disruption to the overall pattern. For example, in the current cycle Urd was absorbed into Mystara after the Great Rain of Fire, some 4000 years before the expected time. This difference means very little in a cycle spanning over 1'500'000 years.

The **Sphere of Entropy**, on its side, ensures that, during every cycle, some part of the "backbone" is permanently lost, depleted or destroyed and that, at the beginning of a new active phase, the background is slightly less stable and safe for the implementation of projects of the Immortals of the other Spheres. Moreover, Entropy is effectively in charge of the slumbering phase of the megalith - by all purposes, with the final effect of

subjugating a hostile and dead planetary body in which every trace of the previous cycle is forgotten and cancelled.

The **Sphere of Energy**, while not represented by a specific Immortal, is anyway an essential part of every cycle, as the constant flow of Immortal power - the gainings by the three Immortals and the subsequent drainage by Mystara, and the building of new projects at the beginning of every cycle - is undoubtedly within the scope of this Sphere.

Finally, as you may guess, the whole arrangement of the cycle sequence, as well as the choice and power level of the initial Immortals, was set by the **Sphere of Thought**. Even if a specific Immortal of Thought is not directly involved in the Norn's cycle our Sphere, as a whole, gets great benefits as it manages to order and control many powerful beings of the other Spheres - including Entropy. Mystara itself may be considered under control, as the whole cyclic mechanism prevents excessive, unpredictable behavior from the megalith.

With this in mind, my lesson on Mystara, its true nature, its past and its future is over. With the new information in your possession you could definitely weave more effective prophecies to warn the mortals of the future of this world.

I'd like to leave you by remarking upon the **many questions still to be answered** in my speech, as I'd like you to ponder about them.

Is this cycle endless? Will Mystara be destroyed by Entropy, at last? Do megaliths

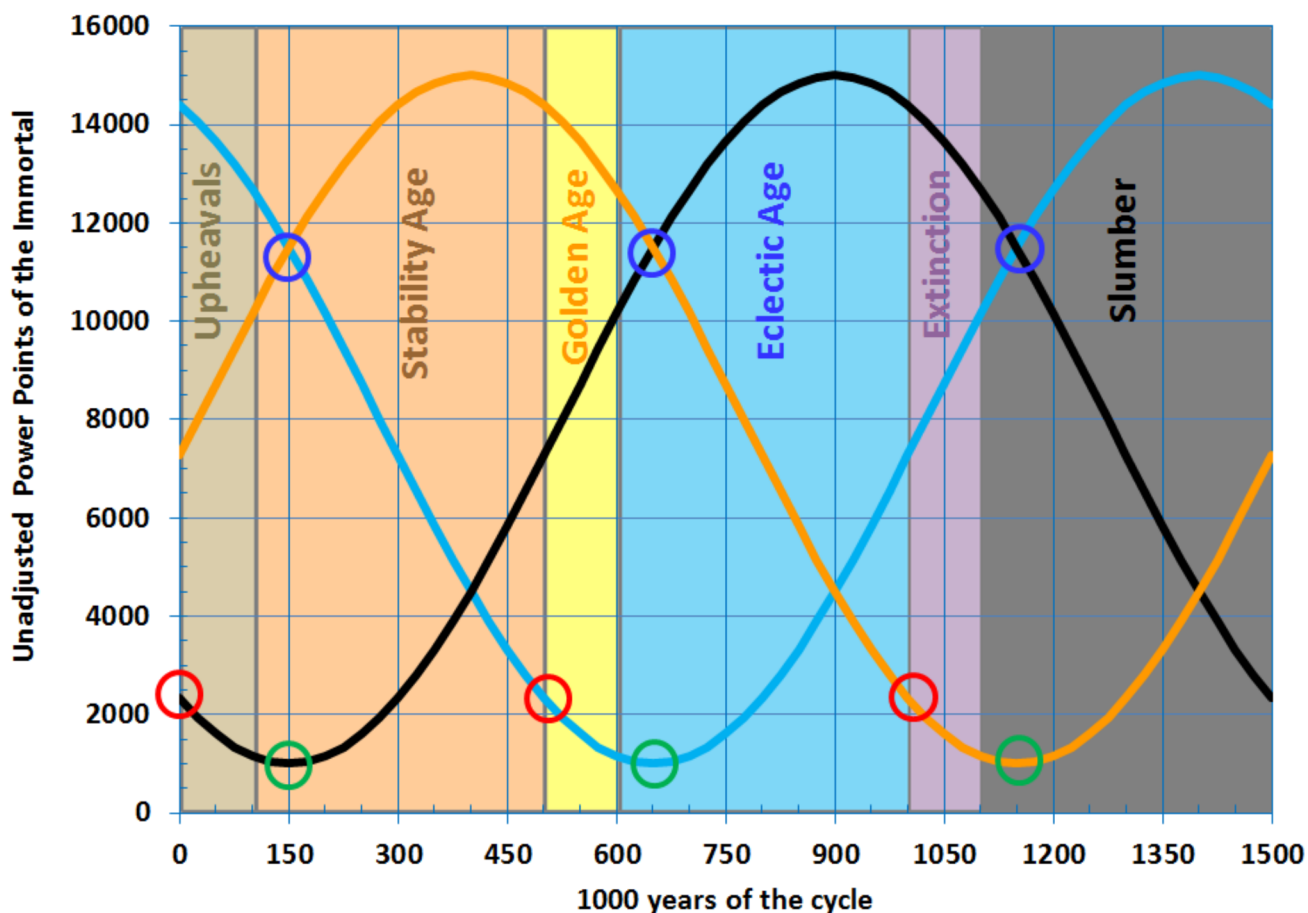
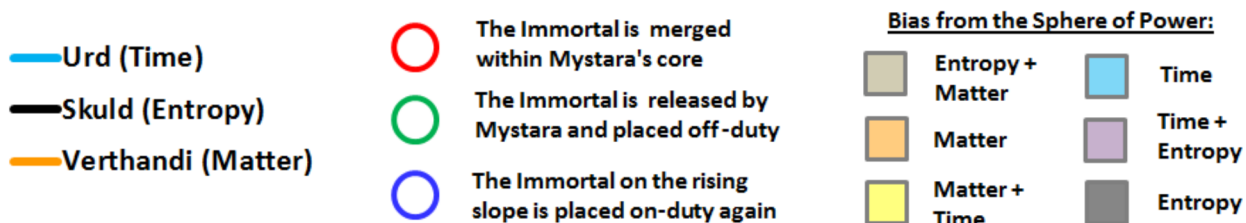
truly build planets and moons? Will this process end, sometime in the far future? Do the megaliths know anything about their original creators? Were they the Old Ones? Questions like these, and many others, are still beyond the grasp of even the Immortal kin.

While the last question was still echoing inside Tiresias' mind, the glowing silhouette of Ssu-Ma disappeared from the asteroid field. Tiresias lingered for a while focusing on a distant party of raiding rakastas pursuing a voidship of some kind through the asteroids, possibly an Heldannic Warbird. Both groups, likely unknowingly, were moving close to the ancient Nithian wreck of Nebta, guarded by one of the fiercest and largest onyx dragons of its kind. The voidship crew would definitely need some good ideas to escape the dire situation, the same for the raiding rakastas if they really want to gain their loot. Maybe it could have been an interesting challenge to watch and, possibly, to direct in a way useful for the Sphere of Thought. Tiresias moved faster than light away from the tumbling rocks toward the place of confrontation.

APPENDIX: SCHEME OF THE NORNS CYCLE IN GAME TERMS

As a reference for DMs, in the following scheme the total, unadjusted Power Points of the three Immortals are represented over a full cycle of the megalith. As every cycle is slightly different from the previous ones, drifts of a few thousand years in the power level of each Immortals are possible. The sketch just depict an ideal cycle.

Summary of the Norn Cycle of Mystara



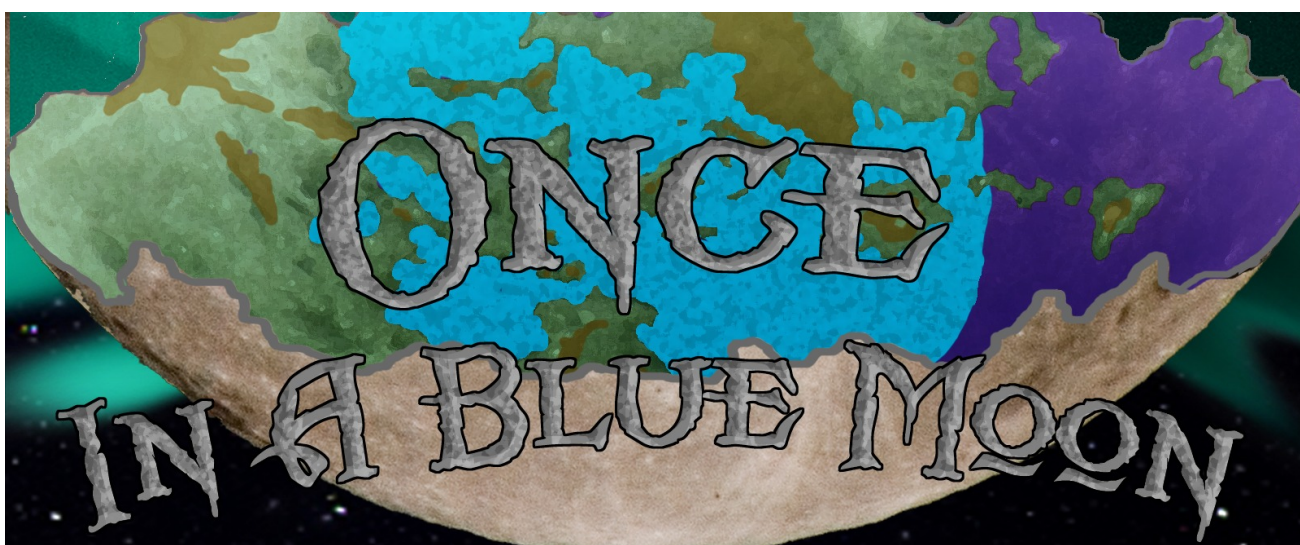
References to official products

AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants
BECMI Immortal Set
CM1 Test of the Warlords
CoM Champions of Mystara Boxed Set
DA1 Adventures in Blackmoor
DotE Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set
DT Dragonlord Trilogy Novels
GAZ4 The Kingdom of Ierendi Gazetteer
HW Hollow World Boxed Set
HWR2 Kingdom of Nithia
IM1 The Immortal Storm
M1 Into the Maelstrom
M4 Five Coins for a Kingdom
O2 Blade of Vengeance
Original D&D Supplement 2: Blackmoor
PC1 Tall Tales of the Wee Folks
PC3 The Sea People
PT Penhaligon Trilogy Novels
VotPA Voyage of the Princess Ark
WotI Wrath of the Immortals Boxed Set

References to fan-made products (sorted by author's name)

[Damocles Q&A](#) by Giampaolo Agosta
[Blackmoor: Grief Eternal](#) by Cab
[Threshold Magazine Issue #2 article on the Hollow Moon](#) by John Calvin
Codex Immortalis [Tome 1](#) and [Tome 2](#) by Marco Dalmonte
[Karimari Cult](#) by Marco Dalmonte
[99.999985% Mystara history](#) by Francesco Defferrari
[The Megalith](#) and [The Megalith \(part 2\)](#) by Robin Dijekma

[Collection of articles about the Hollow Moon](#) by Sharon Dornoff
[The Truth About The Ancient Turtles' Frightening Secret](#) by Bruce Heard
[Wendar -- Power Lines & Sentient Buildings](#) by Bruce Heard
[Dwarven Timekeeping](#) by Bruce Heard
[Nightmare Megalith](#) by Travis Henry
[Reconciling Urth and the Hollow World](#) by Kheldren
[The Origins of Human Kind](#) by Sheldon Morris



*FROM
THE VAULTS
OF PANDIUS*

Seshay-Selene, patroness of the Hollow Moon by John Calvin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the work that Sharon Dornhoff did over the years on the Hollow Moon material, particularly at this time, her creation of Seshay-Selene, one of the driving forces behind the setting. More can be found out about the immortal by gleaning information from the many Hollow Moon articles on the Vaults of Pandius, but I have attempted to accumulate here all of the major facts and events of her life (both mortal and immortal), as well as add some touches of my own.

I would also like to thank Marco Dalmonte for compiling the Codex Immortalis, the format of which I have chosen to use for this entry.

SESHAY-SELENE

Hierarch of Time, "Moonsinger" [Aquarendi], "Singer-To-The-Moon" [cetacean], "Tchirichee/Great Stormspume" [cryion], "Tidemother" [var. lunar cultures], "Nephtisi" [ancient Nithian]

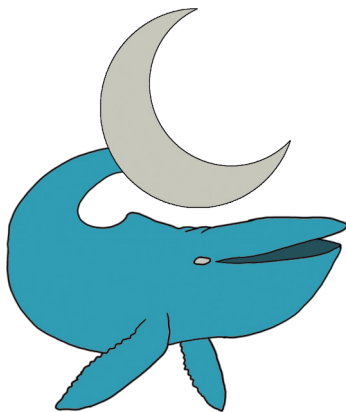
Though long forgotten by many cultures and races on the surface of Mystara, Seshay-Selene has played an active role during much of that planet's history, and continues to do so with her work on the Hollow Moon.

Level, Alignment, Sphere

36th (Hierarchy), CG, Time

Symbol

A whale with a shiny crescent moon for her tail-flukes



Portfolio

Materan weather, Materan seas, tides, whales, migration, natural and biological cycles

Worshipped in

The Hollow Moon, all oceans

Appearance

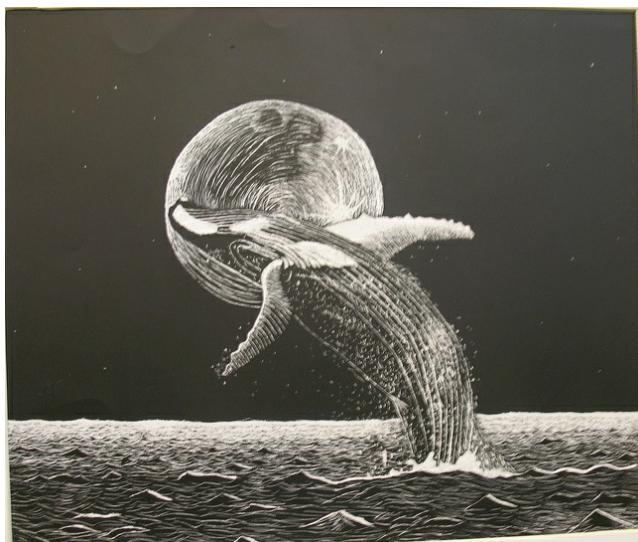
In life Seshay-Selene was a humpbacked whale, and to many sea races she still appears as such. Other times she takes the form of a giant whale of indiscriminate type, combining the traits of blue, gray, right, and sperm whales (and sometimes even sharks). To land dwellers she appears as a young woman (Nephthisi) with pale skin and curly white hair that dances across her face as if waves crashing upon rocks. Silver jewelry adorns her body amidst flowing robes and gowns of blue and white. Whatever form she chooses to take, her eyes remain the same - stark white orbs of moon rock.

History

Long before the rise of Nithia and Blackmoor, or even mythical Lhomarr, Seshay-Selene's people lived a simple life in the Great Ocean¹. The whales of the Great Ocean spent their time harvesting krill, tending to their family pods, and frolicking in the sunlit waters. That life was not to last however, as ancient evils rose from abyssal depths to torment them... krakens. The young matriarch of a modest pod, Seshay-Selene was ever vigilant against the threat, and eventually united the pods into a common nation so that they could defeat their foes. During her twilight years Seshay-Selene developed the Unending Sojourn, a ritual of migration (followed by whales even to this day) from one pole of Mystara to the other, the creation of which eventually led to her ascension to immortality in the Sphere of Time.

Not long after having attained immortality, Seshay-Selene was invited to the newly formed Hollow Moon Council, replacing a vacancy left by Ixion when that immortal refused service in a world that would remain mostly dark. The immortal whale's vast knowledge of tides and seasonal changes proved invaluable in the creation and maintenance of Matora's internal environs, and her sympathies with Time, and or innovation helped shape the cultural makeup of the moon.

¹ The Great Ocean is located on the far side of Mystara (opposite the continent of Brun) and before the days of Blackmoor spanned the globe from pole to pole with scant more than distant islands to break up its vastness.



Seshay-Selene

Intrigued by the Hollow Moon experiment, Seshay largely abandons interests on Mystara to devote all of her time to the new project. Her early career is filled with trials and tribulations over managing the saurian races placed in the moon near the end of the Carnifex Wars (and after the Outer Beings had been imprisoned). Though the troglodytes were prolific, Seshay-Selene constantly fought to keep the ur-carnifex tribes from being wiped out by the more advanced pteryx. The Saurolunarian conflict finally came to an end in BC 5100, when the immortal moved the ur-carnifex to the distant Jura Peninsula, and wisely invited a remnant of her Mystaran followers, the cryions², to populate the Crystalbarrens between them.

² The cryions are one of a very few cultures that know they are inside of Mystara's moon, Matera. The cryions built void ships under Seshay-Selene's instructions that were capable of leaving Mystara and traveling across the cold void to Matera. Other cultures who have performed similar feats are the Taurus gnomes, and the Nephthisians.

Although still a young immortal by comparison, Seshay provided a much needed insight in developing the Spell of Remembrance, an analogue to the Hollow World's Spell of Preservation that would not only keep cultures safe on the Hollow Moon, but would allow them to continue to grow and advance. When the spell was finally cast by the Hollow Moon's Council in BC 4950, the immortal's real work began, and since then she has saved dozens of cultured by placing them inside of Matera. Some of her most devout followers include the shark-kin (of both Mare Crisium and Mare Humorim) who she moved on two separate occasions, and the Nephthisians of the Haemus Isles who fled Nithian persecution under her guidance in BC 691. It was shortly after that occurrence that Seshay-Selene achieved her current rank of Hierarch in the Sphere of time and assumed leadership of the Hollow Moon Council.



Personality

As the creator of the Unending Sojourn, Seshay-Selene is a planner, albeit one that revels in the unknown. She has a soft spot in her heart for the sea races, especially those facing persecution from malignant evil. In Ka she sees a kindred spirit, and often thinks fondly of him, even if she does consider him to be overly stuffy and rigid. With Korotiku she has a friendly rivalry, one which involves the immortal analogue of playing practical jokes on one another - while Korotiku is thoughtfully proactive with his antics, Seshay simply waits for the right time and place to strike. Of all the immortals on the Hollow Moon Council, she has worked most closely with Ordana. Over the millennia she has come to appreciate zeal and dedication of that immortal, even if the two share vastly different interests.

Though she occasionally has spats with Sasskas and Slizzark over the fate of seafaring Mystaran races, she feels less antipathy for them than they do for her. Seshay-Selene's greatest enemy in the Hollow Moon is also a being that she looks upon as her greatest failure - Demogorgon³. The two immortals constantly struggle for the spiritual center of the Hollow Moon cultures, particularly that of the pteryx, though should Demogorgon ever win that contest it would spell doom for the entire Hollow Moon.

³ Demogorgon has a history directly tied to that of the Hollow Moon. Once a crazed pteryx, she was corrupted and enticed by Thanatos who sponsored her bid for immortality. Now her sole purpose is to destroy her former people, and anyone and anything else inside of the Hollow Moon.

Patron

[Protius⁴]

Allies

Protius, Ka, Ordana, Korotiku, Khoronus

ENEMIES

Demogorgon, Saasskas, Slizzark

FOLLOWERS' ALIGNMENT

Any (she is placated by many evil lunar races)

Favoured weapon

Sickle or Khopesh

Clerics' skills & powers

Seshay-Selene's clerics can cast *find the path* once a month. This enhanced version will location specific creatures as well as destinations, however all targets of the spell must be connected in some way to the sea (or to the Void of space).

Domains

Animal (sea creatures only), Time, Travel, Water

APPENDIX: SOURCES

Hollow Moon Introduction: "[Freiburg, der Adler hat gelandet...](#)" (by Sharon Dornhoff)
 Hollow Moon Exploration: [A Brief History of Space \(Travel\)](#) (by Sharon Dornhoff)
 Hollow Moon [Planetology: Blue Moon - Animal Life](#) (by Sharon Dornhoff)
 Marco Dalmonte's [Codex Imortalis](#)

⁴ In all probability Protius sponsored Seshay-Selene to immortality, though there is no direct mention of this in any of Sharon's original material. Although Khoronus is also mentioned as a "friend" that immortal (typically portrayed as a Blackmoorian in his mortal life) would be too young to act as her sponsor.

Who's Who in the Wyrksteeth part 2

The Outer and Hollow World of Dragons

by Francesco Defferrari
(Sturm)*



Image of Wei Huang Long, the Great Dragon Emperor of Skothar

I once heard a human say that tales are important because they tell you that even the powerful dragons can be beaten, but that's only if the dragon is stupid enough to engage such an inferior creature directly.

Quote attributed to Vitriol.

* This article follows "Who's Who in the Wyrksteeth" article published in issue #8 of THRESHOLD magazine, which described the dragons of the Wyrksteeth kingdom and of the rest of Norwold

DRAGONS AROUND THE WYRMSTEETH

In the lands surrounding Norwold there is an ongoing complicated Cold War between the Wyrksteeth dragons and their allies on one side and The Onyx Ring and the Church of Idris on the other. The arrival of Synn (in 1010 AC) will further complicate the picture as no one could initially know which side she will pick. Each of the dragons listed below will have, as usual, several smaller dragon allies and probably also humanoids and human agents in their service.

Question marks, "?", listed after a dragon's name indicate that the true power and nature of the specified dragon are unknown, even by other dragons. DM's are encouraged to adjust the power levels of these dragons to better fit their campaigns

Auragentus, 16 HD Large Gold Dragon

Auragentus¹ is a sorrowful and bitter dragon, who feels even other golds have abandoned her. She guards the ruins of Drax Tallen but she now knows Landryn Teriak is back from death as the Shadow Lord, allied with the Church of Idris. Her warnings at the Parliament a century ago fell on deaf ears, and she lost her mate and her friend Henadin as a consequence, along with several other allies. She knows eventually Idris and Teryak will kill her, but she stopped pleading to the Dragonking, other golds, and even the immortals long ago. Some young golds and other small dragons help her at the moment, but she will send them away to spare their lives, when the last attack comes.

Therandael, 10 HD Small Gold Dragon

The daughter of Thelvaenier (now the immortal Diamond) and Khaerendaen, she

¹ She is described in Gaz F2 Denagoth with more or less the same story as here, while in X11 she is already dead once PCs reach Drax Tallen. Note also that in ["A Traveller's Guide to Norwold"](#) (Threshold magazine #7, page 40) by Simone Neri, the events are supposed to have already happened decades ago. In this latter case too Auragentus will be long dead.

was raised by Marthaen in the Wyrmssteeth, but is now living in Glantri under the human identity of Veronique Gaudin². Many indeed know she was sent on some secret mission by the King and Marthaen, but very few know where and why. She is indeed spying on Amanth, Jaggar (and later Synn too) on behalf of the Parliament.

Raknaar, 22 HD Huge Gold Dragon

This old gold occupies Anton Vlaardoen's body in Glantri. It's widely believed that he is there to coordinate the spies who keep on eye on Amanth, human dracologists and, more recently, Synn. Another wild rumor says that Juliana Vlaardoen too is a dragon in disguise, even if she doesn't know the truth herself.

Originally a mandrake who maintained the human identity of Sir George Kirbey, treasure hunter, he was a personal friend of the now immortal Diamond. Rewarded with the transformation into a gold dragon, Kirbey is a close friend of Marthaen, Daresha and Raknaar, and cooperates with them watching over Therandael.

² Therandael was just born in 513 AC, at the end of the Dragonlord trilogy by Thorarinn Gunnarsson, see also Simone Neri's [History of Dragonkind](#). I've arbitrarily decided to unify her with Veronique Gaudin, a gold dragon in disguise who appears in "Mark of Amber", page 64.

Galishan,
14 HD Small Gold Dragon

Once a bodyguard of the dragonking Thelvaneir, Galishan³ is an experienced agent for the Parliament and Raknaar in Glantri, and eventually his main mission will be to thwart the plans of Synn.

Amanth,
19 HD Large Red Dragon



Portrait of Amanth

The Dragonking and the Parliament do not trust Amanth⁴ at all, but she has been partially useful so far in providing information about Vitriol, dracology and, recently, Synn. Therefore she hasn't been declared a renegade yet, also because she

³ Created in [this article](#) by Duncan TKD
⁴ She appeared in Dragon Magazine issue #171, reproduced at The Vaults in "[Who's Who Among Dragons](#)" by Bruce Heard.

indeed controls a vast area of northern Glantri. That could happen however, should she openly defy or betray the Parliament, or if she makes a pact with Entropy to steal the Ivory plume of Maat from Azem (see below), as she is currently planning.

Brulefer,
15 HD Large Blue Dragon

This dragon⁵ is employed by the Shadow Lord to hinder Vitriol, and he now controls a strategic pass between Wendar and Denagoth. For this reason at the moment the Dragonking is maintaining good relations with him, even if he and the Parliament wonder if the Shadow Lord and his cronies could be worse than Vitriol and Idris.

Malypir,
15 HD Large Blue Dragon

A member of the Onyx Ring⁶, he controls the arid lands between Ghyr and the Shattered Plateau, commanding over the Orcs of the Skeleton Bone. He doesn't like Viridis (see below) much, but could cooperate with him upon Vitriol's request.

⁵ More on him in Gaz F1 [Wendar](#), and Gaz F2 [Denagoth](#) at The Vaults of Pandius.
⁶ Appears in Gaz F4, [Ghyr](#) and Gaz F5 [The Western Alliance](#) at the Vaults.

KORBUNDAR, 16 HD Large Blue Dragon

Supposedly also a member of the Onyx Ring, no one is sure of where exactly his lair⁷ is, nor if he is working for Idris, for himself, or for some other power. The Dragonking suspects he is up to something and would like to have more information about him.

Ravellia, 13 HD Large Black Dragon

Part of the Onyx Ring, she⁸ is the mate of Vitriol himself and lives in the Wildlands north of Wendar, effectively ruling a huge territory from the Dark woods of Bamoor in Wendar to the Swamp of the Beast. Some say indeed she is the namesake Beast. She is about to give birth to three baby dragons.

Fafnimorn, 10 HD Large White Dragon

He⁹ controls the Fuin River Gorge and is a member of the Onyx Ring too, but resents the power of Ravellia over the region and would like to get rid of her. Representatives

⁷ A major character in CM2 Death's Ride, the location of his lair depends on where the DM wishes to place the Two Lakes Vale Barony in the Norwold area. He could be connected to some entropic immortal, or to Synn, rather than to Idris and The Onyx Ring.

⁸ She appears in AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants, where the PCs are supposed to guard her eggs, and in Gaz F3 [The Northern Wildlands](#) at the Vaults, but the hypothesis she could be The Beast is entirely mine.

⁹ Appears in Gaz F3 [The Northern Wildlands](#) at the Vaults.

of the Dragonking are carefully approaching him.

Odamaen, 17 HD Large Gold Dragon, High Priest of The Great One, Keeper of Shadowmere

Shadowmere in the Foxwoods, in Wendar, is the largest sanctuary of the Great One. Odamaen¹⁰, a close friend of Eruptaar, Marthaen and all the other golds of the region, is the High Keeper. He personally knows the immortal Diamond, his mother Arbendael and his mate Kharedaen, who occasionally visit the place in physical form to meet their daughter (and niece) Therandael and their friend Kirbey.

Shurilax, 12 HD Large Green Dragon

He¹¹ is working for the Church of Idris in the Forest of Shadows, resenting the power and prestige that the golds of Shadowmere have in Wendar. His game however is quite dangerous and if discovered he will probably escape to Bamoor where many greens and blacks dwells, controlled by Ravellia.

¹⁰ This dragon was created by me. Shadowmere appears in the Dragonlord trilogy and has been also placed by Thorfinn Tait in his [Kingdom of Wendar map](#), but no keeper is indicated in the books.

¹¹ Appears in Gaz F1 [Wendar](#) at the Vaults.

Synn,
25 HD Greater Night Dragon,
Queen of the Night Dragons,
Dolores Hillsbury in Glantri

Synn¹² arrives in Glantri, under the guise of Princess Dolores of Hillsbury, in 1010 AC. Initially, neither the Wyrksteeth dragons, nor Vitriol, Amanth or others know of her true nature, but later her secret is discovered by Prince Malachie du Marais (who could inform the Dragonking, as a known ally of werereatures) and eventually also by Vitriol and Amanth. If confronted by one of them, Synn will assert she is in Glantri only to further the cause of dragonkin, but she will try to play each faction against the other to defeat and control them.

Vitriol,
18 HD Huge Black Dragon

A very old, rich and powerful dragon, Vitriol is also a wizard and a priest of Idris and controls a great number of dragons, humans and humanoids in Denagoth¹³. Nevertheless he always took great care never to openly defy the Wyrksteeth kingdom, and he adamantly maintains that his patron deity Idris has always been a friend of dragons.

¹² Statistics for Synn appear in Champions of Mystara (as a 20 HD BECM dragon) and Glanti Kingdom of Magic (as a 20 HD AD&D dragon). I increased her HD as I wanted her more powerful than other dragons. Synn is supposedly allied with entropic immortals, and Idris belongs to Entropy too, it's up to each DM to decide if that could make them allies or enemies.

¹³ Created in X11, Saga of the Shadow Lord, page 27, but greatly expanded in Gaz F2 [The Denagoth Plateau](#) at the Vaults.

Indeed Idris and her church have always worshipped dragons, but the golds say that is done only to impose her rule on humans and humanoids. Therefore in the Wyrksteeth there are those who ask for an intervention against Vitriol and those who counsel caution (or are secretly in league with them). And there are some, such as Auragentus, who decided long ago to openly fight Vitriol and Idris regardless, because of their evil ways.



Symbol used by Vitriol and the Onyx Ring

Verit,
10 HD Large Black Dragon

A chief agent of Vitriol in Wendar, Verit¹⁴ has to establish a foothold in the north east to keep an eye on Brulefer and harass him. She is cunning and has gathered a sizable number of orcs and other servants.

Viridis,
12 HD Large Green Dragon

This green dragon¹⁵ is in league with the Denagothian wizard Parindes in the Great Olde Woode west of Norwold, working on behalf of the Onyx Ring and controls an army of humanoids.

¹⁴ She appears in Gaz F1 [Wendar](#) at the Vaults.

¹⁵ Appears in AC10 and then in Gaz F4, [Ghyr](#) and Gaz F5 [The Western Alliance](#), both at the Vaults.

DRAGONS AND SECRETS OF THE ADRI VARMA PLATEAU

It's hard to tell if full fledged Dragon Realms exist in this savage region, as it seems that local dragons have been fighting for centuries for the control of treasures left here since the time of the Overlord invasion¹⁶ and from the time of Blackmoor. Known dragons of the Plateau¹⁷ are: Asarak the Blue of the Lonely Death Desert, Durmegh the Gold of Far Clouds, Zadmula the Amber of Verdant Clouds, Viturak the Red Scourge of the Amaranth Mountains, Izal the Black of the Misty Swamp, Parasana the Gold of Gold Hill, Ashul the Blue of the Blue Dragons Plains, Jaya the Jade of the Jade Tower, Ghanaz the Ruby of Sand Thunders, Purasti the Green of Green Fortress, Krisanu the Black of Black Bog, and Gahima the White of Deep Ice. How many of them are to be considered an ally of the Dragonking and how many of Vitriol, or even pawns of Amanth, is hard to tell, as often their allegiance changes from year to year in their struggles for power and control of the Plateau's inhabitants.

¹⁶ See the Dragonlord trilogy by Thorarinn Gunnarsson and in Simone Neri's [History of Dragonkind](#) article.

¹⁷ All these dragons were created by me in my [Adri Varma 8mph map](#) at the Vaukts.

OTHER DRAGON REALMS OF THE OUTER WORLD

Even if the Wyrksteeth Kingdom officially claims all the eastern half of Brun, a number of other independent kingdoms exist whose allegiance to the Wyrksteeth is, at best, perfunctory. Beyond that, many more dragon realms exist, but only some are known to Wyrksteeth dragons.

AMBUR, 17 HD Large Red Dragon

He¹⁸ rules a vast area of the Dwarfgate mountains in Rockhome. He is a rival of Amanth and Druuwor, and ally of Jargnir. He profess loyalty to the Dragon Kingdom, hoping he will have permission to take the dominion of Druuwor, creating a large territory under his rule. Several in the Parliament however fear his power will grow too much.

ARGOS, 14 HD Large Green Dragon

He¹⁹ rules the Dymrak Forest in Karameikos, controlling several humanoid tribes. He fears Attura, who almost bound him, and has been seeking an alliance with Marudi. He has several vassals, such as Verdilith, 10 HD green dragon.

¹⁸ Created by Bruce Heard in Dragon Magazine issue #171, reproduced [here](#) at the Vaults of Pandius.

¹⁹ As note above

Attura,
16 HD Huge Green Dragon

Attura²⁰, rules a large forested area in the southern Atruaghin Clans and her lair has access to the Hollow World. She plans on establishing her dominance over Thalkor and is rumored to have established an alliance with Alphatian wizards.

AZEM,
18 HD Large Gold Dragon

Azem²¹ appears as a common looking, little old halfling lady, but from Wereskalot in the Shires she rules over several other dragons, including Vulomar²², 12 HD Large Black Dragon, lady of the blacks of the Blight Swamp, Markram²³, 16 HD Large Gold Dragon, who lives in disguise in Threshold, and is also her mate, two children, the bronze Valamaeraen²⁴, other golds and even a son of Argos, Krolovaash²⁵, 10 HD Small Green. She also owns the Ivory plume of Maat. She is on good terms with Marudi and Khanistar. Argos fears her and Amanth covets her treasure.

²⁰ As note above

²¹ As note above

²² Created by Giampaolo Agosta in "[Lords of the Cruth Lowlands](#)" adventure.

²³ Name created by me here, but a gold dragon in disguise in Threshold appears on page 40 of the D&D Expert set. I've also arbitrarily decided he could be the mate of Azem mentioned in Dragon 171, and that they could have two children.

²⁴ Created by Tim Haney in "[Valamaeraen the Bronze](#)". DMs who do not use AD&D metallic dragons could change him to a small gold. See also "More Dragon Breeds" below under Dragons of the Hollow World.

²⁵ Created by Giampaolo Agosta in "Lords of the Cruth Lowlands".

UINAG,
14 HD Small Red Dragon and
Wufworanden,
21 HD Huge Red Dragon

Ulnag²⁶ has ambitiously founded his own kingdom between the Black Peaks and the Eastern Cruth Lowlands in Karameikos with some vassals who include Ahkriin, 8 HD Small Green and daughter of Argos. Many dragons thought it was only a matter of time before Azem or Argos would subdue him but as they haven't done it yet, now they suspect Ulnag could be a pawn of the mysterious Wufworanden²⁷, an old red long detached from dragon society who lives in the Wufwolde hills.

ORGONIR,
13 HD Huge White Dragon

Controls²⁸ part of the Altan Tepes mountains from Karameikos to Thyatis with several white dragon subjects, but is slumbering now. He is on good terms with Blethinferelth but dislikes Hytiliaph and the other Thyatian dragons who joined the Retebius Air Fleet.

²⁶ As above.

²⁷ Named by me, but mentioned on page 60 of Gaz 1 "The Grand Duchy of Karameikos". The possible connection with Ulnag is entirely mine.

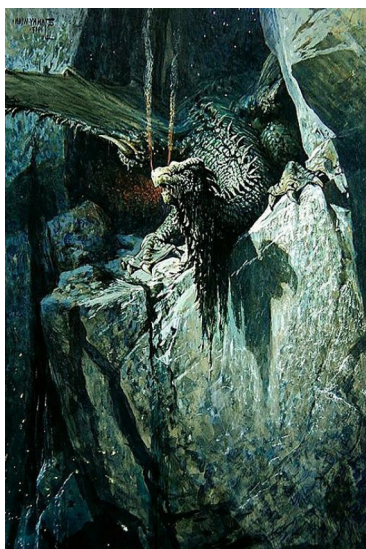
²⁸ Created by Simone Neri in his "[The Central Altan Tepes](#)" mini Gazetteer.

Coldcrest,
11 HD Large White Dragon

She²⁹ controls the Altan Tepes mountains from Karameikos towards Darokin and Rockhome with some white vassals. She hates Snagglefang and is considering an alliance with Argos.

Blethinferelth,
21 HD Huge Blue Dragon

From the Cave of the Great Lizard in Ylauruam, bordering Karameikos, the ancient female blue dragon, and one of her young daughters Bluenstrinel, 14 HD Large Blue Dragon, rule the southwestern highlands with a host of dragons, humanoids and human vassals.



The Dragon's Cave

Blethinferelth is more than 3000 years old and very respected among dragons. She is neutral toward Marudi and has no particular enemy, and recognizes the authority of the Dragonking.

²⁹ As above.

Snagglefang,
12 HD Huge Black Dragon

He³⁰ rules a small dominion in Fenhold, Darokin, hoping to expand it and gain more vassals. An ancient Blackmoor city is hidden in the swamp of his dominion. Should he discover its secret, his power could grow quite fast.

Druuwor,
11 HD Large White Dragon

Druuwor³¹ rules the Makkres Mountains between Rockhome, Vestland, and Soderfjord, occupying the ancient fortress built millennia ago by a forgotten civilisation, with many white vassals and frost giants. He hates Jargnir, who scarred him 20 years ago, and knows Ambur wants his territory. He is increasingly paranoid and refuses to even meet the envoys of the Dragonking, who is considering allowing Ambur and Jargnir to take his land.

Jargnir,
12 HD Large Black Dragon

She rules³² the Great Marsh in Soderfjord, the hills to the south between the Great Marsh and the Hardanger Mountain Range, and part of western Rockhome, with

³⁰ Appears in CM9 Legacy of Blood. Events of the module could have killed him or brought him more power, as he is said to be halfway between a large and huge dragon. The ancient Blackmoor city is mentioned in the module.

³¹ As note 18

³² As note 18

dragons, trolls, oozes, slimes and other vassals. She hates Druuwor, who killed her progeny 20 years ago. She failed to exact her revenge, as Druuwor was scarred by her retaliation attack but not killed. As Druuwor killed her son while she was in the Wyrmssteeth, she thinks the king should have punished Druuwor immediately, and she secretly allied with Vitriol when that did not happen. Now envoys of the Dragonking have promised her that Druuwor will be punished, but that's too late to turn her from the allegiance with Idris.

Sappho,
14 HD Large Blue Dragon

She lives in Vestland³³, but the true location of her lair is unknown. Renowned for her beauty, she is also vain and rumored to enjoy parties in human form all around the Known World. Druuwor and Jargnir fear her, but have never been able to locate her lair. Her allegiance, if any, is also unclear. Some also say she is the companion of Xanesh, others of Dominagor³⁴.

Khanistar,
17 HD Large Blue Dragon

She rules³⁵ from the World Mountain, at the centre of the Land of the Black Sand in eastern Ethengar, deep inside a tall mountain

³³ She appears in CM7 The Tree of Life, on the Rainbow Bridge but over Norrvik in Vestland.

³⁴ See the first part of Who's Who in the Wyrmssteeth in issue #8 of Threshold magazine.

³⁵ As note 18

dotted with sinister towers. She built an impressive library of rare and ancient spells, including a few abominations dating from Nithia. Khanistar is on good terms with the Wyrmssteeth kingdom and has no bitter enemies. Emissaries from Vitriol however are courting her promising rare magical items, a tactic that could succeed.

Balefire or Urwalk,
15 HD Large Red Dragon

Known for his violent ways, this dragon³⁶ could be the father of Khordarg or Histizt. He has harassed Alfheim and nearby lands in the past, but some say he failed to create his lasting dominion as he was defeated by Ambur. He escaped after the fight, refusing to submit, and the location of his lair is currently unknown.

Khordarg,
11 HD Small Red Dragon

Ambitious and violent, this red female³⁷ is carving a realm in the Emerlas, between eastern Alfheim and the darokinian Orclands, along with her mate Histizt, 10 HD Small Red Dragon, and her children Fagtorx and Shalkmog, 7 HD Small Red Dragons and humanoids vassals. She doesn't care about the rules of the Dragon Kingdom and is ready to ally with Vitriol or Idris to have her way.

³⁶ He appears in X10 Red Arrow, Black Shield, occupying the tomb of King Alevar in Alfheim. PCs are supposed to kill him to gain the Elves' allegiance against the Master.

³⁷ Protagonist of the module O2 Blade of Vengeance, in which she could be killed.

Marudi, 14 HD Large Blue Dragon

He³⁸ rules in the desert of Ylauruam, in a invisible palace guarded by lesser djinn. A master of illusions, he is a rather peaceful creature and on good terms with most dragons. He is the son of Khanistar. He is loyal to the Wyrksteeth Kingdom and has received Vitriol's envoys just to report their words to the Dragonking.

Thalkor, 13 HD Large Black Dragon

Thalkor³⁹ rules the Malpheggi Swamps in Darokin, from inside the petrified remains of a very large, ancient ship built by a race of forgotten giants. Thalkor is the current king of the lizard men. Thalkor hates Azem, who defeated him more than once, and is now in league with Amanth to discover her lair and kill her. For the moment however he pretends loyalty to the Dragonking, but is ready to turn to Vitriol any moment now.

Thundar, 13 HD Huge Sea Dragon

Her⁴⁰ lair is located within an inactive underwater volcano crater called Thun, just north of the Aloysius Reefs, in the hollowed out hulk of a fossilised kraken. She tries to influence tritons to build an empire. As other Sea dragons, she doesn't care about her

³⁸ As note 19

³⁹ As note 19

⁴⁰ As above



Ancient milenian mosaic depicting a Sea Dragon

surface cousins, but has agreed to become a sort of representative of the sea in the rare case in which the Dragonking needs information or contacts.

Hytiliaph, 22 HD Huge Gold Dragon

The unopposed leader of Thyatian dragons, Hytiliaph⁴¹ is the companion-mount of Magist Demetron Karagenteropolus and the informal leader of the Knights of the Air and the Retebius Air Corps. Hytiliaph and his extended family⁴², draconic and elven, dominate almost all the dragons in Thyatis and have also great influence on elves and fairies. He has fought Alphatians many times and does not like Alphatian dragons at all. He is on good terms with Azem, Marthaen and the Dragonking, but many say he is more loyal to humans and elves than to other dragons.

⁴¹ He appears in Dawn of Emperors Thyatis and Alphatia, DM's guide page 26.

⁴² Much more on Hytiliaph, his family and the reason behind his hate of Alphatians can be find in a [series of articles](#) by John Calvin.

Kevran,
14 HD Large Gold Dragon and
Althea,
11 HD Small Gold Dragon

Father and Daughter, these two golds control a large area of the northwestern coast of the Isle of Dawn⁴³, near the Gulf of Westroucke. They have good relations with the Dragonking and Hytiliaph and mediate between them when there are contrasts.

Respen-ak-Tarpis
15 HD Large Red Dragon

Ruler of Arentela⁴⁴, an island in the southern sea, he is known to be on friendly terms with the Dragonking, visiting the Wyrmssteeth quite often. He is also an ally of Wang Jinse but among his subjects there are many who would like to remove him and turn to Vitriol.

Wang Jinse,
22 HD Huge Gold Dragon

He⁴⁵ rules a powerful draconic kingdom in the Dragon Mountains of Ochalea, with many

⁴³ They appear in AC10, page 34, located in Denstehn Keep near the seaport of Nandua and Carack. Such locations were never placed in Mystara by canon or fanon, but I think the Isle of Dawn would fit nicely for them.

⁴⁴ He appears in Gaz 4, Ierendi, on page 27. Note that in his article "Advice for Traders in the Sea of Dread", published in issue #4 of Threshold magazine, page 36, LoZompatore places Arentela near Ochalea, but in canon it is just described as an "island kingdom".

⁴⁵ A dragon kingdom was indicated by Giampaolo Agosta in his "[Gazetteer of Ochalea](#)", but the name, which simply means Golden King in chinese, was added by me.

gold and jade vassals. There are several sea dragon kingdoms in the seas around Ochalea, but they do not answer to him, even if they maintain good relations. Traditionally the kingdom considers itself independent from the Wyrmssteeth, but maintains cordial relations with the Dragonking.

Mathanephet,
23 HD Huge Undead Dragon

Death of a thousand years⁴⁶, the meaning of his name in Thothian, is considered by many the absolute ruler of the southern Isle of Dawn. His lair would be somewhere in a lost pyramid of the Great Escarpment. Despite its nature, the current rumor says he is an ally of the Dragonking against the machinations of Vitriol and Idris.

Everdire,
15 HD Large Red Dragon

From his lair in the Kurish Massif in Peshmir, Sind, this great red⁴⁷ controls several tribes of humanoids and terrorizes local humans. Some say he is a pawn of Amanth, some say of Verminthrax, others that he is allied with Vitriol, but he has often spurned the Dragonking's envoys. He also controls the copper dragon Vasilyon the Younger.

⁴⁶ Created by me here, as I am not aware of any named dragon in the Isle of Dawn, either in canon or fanon sources.

⁴⁷ Everdire and Vasilyon appear in the Poor Wizard's Almanac III pages 232-233, where Everdire is killed by the prophets of Gareth on Vasilyon's request. If the DM does not use copper dragons, Vasilyon could be a small gold.

Dylkes Sahib, 15 HD Huge Black Dragon

Ruler of the Great Salt Swamp in Sind, this dragon⁴⁸ is a local mythological figure (as his parents were). In the month of Asin (Ambyrmont) the locals drive goats into the Swamp as sacrifices to sustain Dylkes Sahib ("Mister Charming"), the legendary father of all crocodiles, through the increasing dryness of the swamp, until the monsoon returns. He rules in the deep of the swamp over his crocodile followers, according to the legend. Dragon rumors say he is an ally of the Dragonking and an enemy of Vitriol and Idris.

Jaelynix, 20 HD Huge Blue Dragon

She⁴⁹ rules in the lower Sind Desert between the Twin Oasis and Kesret Oasis, and has controlled a vast area for over 600 years with sis'thik minions. Jaelynix also tried to subjugate the fire giants of the Burning Wastes but was defeated and maimed. Since then she has become much more aggressive, searching for magic that could heal her, and has cut off the once cordial relations with the Dragonking. Vitriol's envoys are now courting her to gain her allegiance, and if they bring the right type of magic they could succeed. Her daughter Eshtelyx⁵⁰, 10 HD

⁴⁸ Mentioned in Champions of Mystara, Explorer's Manual page 18

⁴⁹ Created here by Tim Haney in "[Jaelynix the Blue Scourge](#)" at the Vaults.

⁵⁰ Created by Robin D in "[The Great Pass](#)" discussion thread at the Piazza Forums, a small blue dragon is mentioned in the area in Champions of Mystara Explorer Manual, page 28.

Small Blue Dragon, controls the northwestern territory toward the Great Pass, and is on friendly terms with Archivaarr and his daughter.

Asparadispeyllies, 15 HD Large Blue Dragon

He rules⁵¹ over the northern Plain of Fire, respecting the territory of Verminthrax, who he fears. Some indeed say he has already been subjugated by the larger red, who uses him as his surface guardian. Asp resents Verminthrax's power and could ally with Idris to get rid of him.

Archivaarr, 15 HD Large Red Dragon

Guardian of the Well of the Moon in the Great Pass of the Black Mountains, Archivaarr⁵² has great influence in the area and over local dragons, a power that will probably increase thanks to his control of the portal. His daughter Arstratorr⁵³, 11 HD Small Red Dragon, is his first agent, and she has developed cordial relations with Eshtelyx in the nearby cacti fields of the Great Waste. Archivaarr is the son of Verminthrax, and has good relations with his father and the Dragon Kingdom.

⁵¹ Created in "[Locations of the Great Waste](#)" by Sirloin here:

⁵² Appears in X5 The Temple of Death, page 9 as HD 13 Dragon, expanded greatly in "[The Great Pass](#)" discussion thread at the Piazza Forums by Robin D.

⁵³ Created by Robin D in the thread above.

VERMINTHRAX, 21 HD Huge Red Dragon

From the Moktor Fire Pits under the Plain of Fire, Verminthrax rules over all the northern Sind desert and has been trying for quite some time to subjugate Graakhalia too. He and Jaelnyx have so far stayed away from their respective territories, and their relations are even more cordial as Verminthrax's niece and Jaelnyx's daughter have become friends, but all that could change if Jaelnyx will switch her allegiance to Vitriol. Verminthrax is very independent but so far has respected the authority of the Dragonking.

THE HIDDEN ONE, 20 HD Huge Red Dragon?

Everyone knows that a dragon, most certainly an ancient red, guards the Dragon Den, O Antro de Dragão⁵⁴, an ancient Oltec, Nithian and Elven city in the Red Land, La Terra Vermelha of the Savage Coast, probably ruling humanoids and dragons of the area with discreet agents, usually dragonkin that sometimes also visit the Wyrksteeth. If Pyre knows who the Hidden One really is, he hasn't shared this information with anyone,



Ancient Oltec bas relief depicting an offering to the Hidden One

⁵⁴ The Dragon Den appears in The Savage Coast Campaign Book, Atlas, but it's not specified if the guardian is a dragon or otherwise.

and the same goes for the upper rulers of the Wyrksteeth.

GREUDNAX, 18 HD Large Red Dragon

This red female⁵⁵ and her daughter Grimmiax⁵⁶ rule a vast area of Robrenn and beyond in the Savage Coast. They are rumored to control humanoid tribes and other dragons, and to be allied with or pawns of Pyre.

PYRE, 22 HD Huge Vermilion Dragon

A powerful red contaminated by cinnabar, he is the Overking⁵⁷ of the Orc's Head Peninsula and rumored to rule over many dragons all over south western Brun. He owns the Ebony Eye stolen from Robrenn's druids. Despite his power, Pyre shows deference to the Dragonking and visits the Wyrksteeth relatively often. Many in the Dragon Parliament are very suspicious of his true intentions.

⁵⁵ They appear in Voyages of the Princess Ark, where they are both killed by the King of Robrenn and Haldemar's crew in AY 2000 (1000 AC).

⁵⁶ I invented the daughter's name as she wasn't named as far as I know. As Pyre too was from Robrenn according to Savage Coast Orc's Head sourcebook, page 44, they could also be his daughter and mate.

⁵⁷ Created by Bruce Heard in Dragon Magazine 196 and also described in the [Savage Coast Orc's Head Peninsula Campaign Book](#). He is present in the Wyrksteeth in Bruce Heard's ["The Future of Heldannic Knights"](#) article.:

Aurik, 23 HD Huge Gold Dragon

Powerful Lord of the Dragonwatch keep⁵⁸ near the Sylvan Realm, Aurik is also a high priest of The Great One. He has many dragon vassals and rules also over several mountain rakasta clans. Aurik knows how to use the Rainbow Bridge and has also a magical lair in the clouds above Specularum. He is friends of many Wyrksteeth dragons, particularly Marthaen, and of Azem. His dominion has been endangered after the fall of the Sylvan Realm by Moorkroft and the dragons who are allied with him, so is trying to arrange for the elves to return.

Sulfar and Fosfar, 17 HD Large Red Dragons

These two brothers⁵⁹ are allied with Moorkroft and are known to guard the Rainbow Bridge. They have an extensive dominion in Western Brun, competing with Aurik and the other golds of the area for the control of local dragons and humanoids. Some say Moorkroft is indeed their pawn, others that they are pawns of Pyre. They are also known to roam in Alfheim and Glantri.

⁵⁸ Aurik appears in CM7 in the Rainbow Bridge, where his magical lair above Specularum is mentioned. The Dragonwatch keep appears in the Dragonlord trilogy as also explained in [“Thoughts on Western Brun”](#) by Simone Neri and in [“Thoughts on Western Brun”](#) by LoZompatore

⁵⁹ They appear in CM7, where Sulfar is in Alfheim and Fosfar on the Rainbow bridge over Glantri city.

Uflog, 15 HD Huge White Dragon

This incredibly big and ancient white dragon⁶⁰ is rumored to rule over Hyboria from the depths of a huge crevasse, but many consider it long dead or slumbering. If Aurik knows more about the matter, he has not revealed it

Other Dragon Realms in Brun

More dragon realms exist in Brun, with thin or nonexistent relations with the Wyrksteeth. Powerful whites, blues and blacks competing on the plains of Borea. A huge gold, friend of gnomes, near the Yalu sea. Golds and Reds in the Endworld Line and the Arm of the Immortals. Three huge greens would rule the Tunguska forest, the Great Zdredanyan forest and the Ozungan Plateau. A Black and a Green would be in the service of Hule. Some Dragons would be involved in the Neutral Alliance, the Lawful Brotherhood and the Chaotic Sisterhood. A mysterious Huge and Ancient Black ruling in Yavdlom. The world of dragons is more complicated than humans, and many dragons, could imagine.

⁶⁰ Created in [“Hyborean Timeline”](#) by Steven Wilson

Sapphreet Cyanbolt, 16 HD Large Blue Dragon



Skotharian portrait of the Crystal Lord

Divided as Alphatian dragons are, Sapphreet⁶¹, also known by humans as Lord Gellan, Royal Treasurer of the Kingdom of Randel, is their informal representative when dealing with the Wyrksteeth. Brun dragons do not like Alphatian dragons much, as there have been wars in the past with the Alphatians and they feel dragons should not ally with them. Despite that, dragons do cooperate with wizards not only in Randel but also in Ar, Haven and other Alphatian kingdoms. The gold dragon Jaq'antixuen⁶²,

⁶¹ Mentioned by Bruce Heard in [his blog post](#) , I'm not aware of other Alphatian dragons in canon or fanon.

⁶² As explained in Threshold issue #8, page

under the human identity of Quentin Jax, was recently sent to the Wyrksteeth as a diplomatic envoy by the Alphatian dragons

Wei Huang LONG, 30 HD Huge Grey Dragon?

The self styled Great Dragon Emperor⁶³ rules a vast area of Skothar, having conquered it from humans in recent decades. Wyrksteeth dragons do not know what to think of him, but generally they believe it could belong to the same race of ancient dragons as Saerna, or to another, even more ancient race. He has cordially received an ambassador from the Dragonking quite recently.

The Council of Skothar, Huge Gemstone Dragons

The leaders of the Gemstone dragons⁶⁴ that live in Skothar have formed a Council composed of the six most powerful dragons, one of each kind. They are currently on good terms with the Dragonking but very worried about the rise of the Dragon Emperor. Vitriol has tried to court them over without much success. The Six Great Dragons of Skothar would be a Huge Crystal in Nentsun, a Huge Ruby in the Thonian Range, a Huge Onyx in Minaea, a Huge Sapphire in Esterhold, a Huge Jade in the Tangor Bay and a Huge Amber in the Tangor Chain.

106 by Simone Neri, recently being in dragon terms about a century ago.

⁶³ Created by me in [this thread](#) at the Piazza Forums.

⁶⁴ See Gemstone dragons sidebar in [Who's Who in the Wyrksteeth part 1](#), in issue #8 of Threshold magazine, for more information.

Ehamakeribh, 30 HD Huge Gold Dragon?

Believed to be 9000 years old, this ancient dragon knows many secrets and is currently the chief advisor of the Golden Matriarch of Pelatan⁶⁵, in northwestern Davania where the Golden Realm of metallic dragons once was before the Great Rain of Fire⁶⁶. He has visited the Wyrksteeth at least once and it is rumored he controls all the many dragons of western Davania: Golds, Silvers, other Metallics, Crystals, Rubies and Sapphires.

Apsidar, 23 HD Huge Gold (Orium?) Dragon

An ancient Gold female or, some say, an Orium Dragon⁶⁷, she is a friend of Ehamakeribh and the Wyrksteeth. Ruling over Eastern Arypt, she protects the local therapsid race, last remnants of a lost civilization, and has often aided the nearby nations against the Night Dragons of Oceania and the Serpentine Empire of Central Arypt.

⁶⁵ Created in "[Pelatan \(Golden Matriarchy of\)](#)" by myself.

⁶⁶ As described by James Mishler in his "[Age of Blackmoor](#)" article.

⁶⁷ Created by me, mentioned in Threshold issue #5, page 27. Orium Dragons were introduced in the 2008 D&D 4ed Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons

The Night Dragons of Oceania

An unknown number of Night Dragons inhabit⁶⁸ Oceania in the far south. Many dragons of the Wyrksteeth and beyond suspect they are servants of entropic powers, but their true allegiance and purpose has remained a mystery so far, as well as what exactly happened on Oceania. Probably high ranking dragons know more about this. The relation between Night Dragons and the Church of Idris, if any exists, is also unknown. The situation could change after the arrival of Synn⁶⁹ in the Known World in 1010 AC.

Tupakmjr, 29 HD Huge Gold Dragon?

This ancient Gold⁷⁰ would be the King of a huge dragon nation dominating the Ice Peaks in southern Davania, ruling over a vast population of dragons, fairies, giants, elves, halflings and rakasta. Some says he has visited the Wyrksteeth at least once and is on good relations with the Kingdom.

⁶⁸ They appeared in The Voyages of Princess Ark from Dragon Magazine #154, then #155 and #163, and in Champions of Mystara boxed set, Heroes of the Princess Ark page 92. See also "[Greater Night Dragon](#)" by Jamie Baty and on page 10 of Simone Neri's "[History of Dragonkind](#)" article.

⁶⁹ See entry for Synn above, Voyages of the Princess Ark, Poor Wizard's Almanacs I, II and III, Glantri: Kingdom of Magic.

⁷⁰ The dragon nation was hinted in Threshold issue #5, page 28.

The Sea Dragon, **25 HD Huge Sea Dragon?**

An incredibly big Sea Dragon, some say the true ruler of all sea dragons in the world, would live off Davania's western coast. He or She would be the cause, every five years or so, of the event known as "The Sea Dragon's Wrath"⁷¹, a hurricane season of thunderstorms and floods in all the area from the month of the Basilisk to the month of the Pegasus (Flaurmont to Sviftmont). The only one who may know the truth behind this rumor, if there is any truth, could be Ehamakeribh.

Dimelian, **17 HD Huge Jade Dragon**

This ancient female rules the city of Nive in Viridin⁷², a magical place even in the already enchanted fairy nation of Davania. Nive is the center of the Saved World, where Dimelian has gathered an incredible number of races on the verge of extinction. Wary of any interference in her realm, Dimelian however maintains good relations with other dragons.

Amarald, **13 HD Large Jade Dragon**

Supposedly a daughter of Dimelian, Amarald leads the Emerald Squad⁷³, a flying force composed of drakes and gargoyles that

⁷¹ Created by me in issue #5 of Threshold magazine, page 105

⁷² This dragon and the fairy nation of Viridin were created by me, see Threshold magazine issue #5, page 109.

⁷³ Created by me in issue #5 of Threshold magazine, page 106.

defends the city state of Amara in North Western Davania, mostly from Kwythellar, Kilmurian and Izondian airborne raiders.

Divimiagh, **15 HD Large Silver Dragon**

Living in the nation of Duur, friend of Ehamakeribh and Dimelian, this female dragon⁷⁴ leads the Defenders of Duur, an airborne force made up by a variety of flying creatures that defends the mountain nation against Izondians and Kwythellars.

Sinsama, **16 HD Large Silver Dragon**

Rumored to be the sister of Divimiagh, Sinsama⁷⁵ lives near a namesake active volcano in Kilmur, near the Kwythellar border. She leads an active resistance against the Kwythellars and Kilmurians, sheltering escaped slaves and aiding external spies and adventurers. The Kwythellar Empire and the Kingdom of Kilmur have tried to kill her for centuries, in vain so far.

Shais, **14 HD Large Brass Dragon**

Native of the plains of Eseri⁷⁶, she leads a very effective air force composed mostly of

⁷⁴ Created by me and mentioned on page 119 of Threshold magazine issue #5, a DM who doesn't use AD&D metallic dragons in her/his campaign may turn her into a Large Gold.

⁷⁵ Created by me, can be a Large Gold if the DM does not use AD&D metallic dragons.

⁷⁶ Created by me, hinted at page 126 in issue #5 of Threshold magazine.

pegataurs, dragons and pegasi which has been instrumental during the centuries in the efforts to resist Izondian and Kwythellar aggressions.

Akl'tlikat, 12 HD Large Bronze Dragon

This dragon lives peacefully among the crabmen on the Tlik'kill⁷⁷ coast, aiding them if the nation is in danger. He has cordial relations with surrounding dragons.

Kashar, 15 HD Large Red? Dragon

Some says Kashar is not really a red, but a fire dragon⁷⁸ from the elemental plane of Fire, or a hybrid between an elemental and a Mystaran dragon. Whatever his true nature, he is a respected scholar in Rakasi and has good relations with other dragons.

Kadia and Dakia, 20 HD Huge Gold-Green Dragons

These ancient sisters, daughters of a gold father and a green mother, rule over the Adakkian sound, Kadia claiming the jungles of Ka, Dreka and Alol⁷⁹, Dakia the Adakkian jungles on the opposite shore. Their rivalry is the stuff of legends.

⁷⁷ Created by me, hinted at page 128 in issue #5 of Threshold magazine.

⁷⁸ Created by me, hinted at page 133 in issue #5 of Threshold magazine.

⁷⁹ See Threshold issue #5 from page 130 for more informations on these nations, the two dragons are my creation.

AdizamihN, 29 HD Huge Gold Dragon

Supposedly a brother of Ehamakeribh, this ancient gold is infamous for his evil ways in Pelatan, but highly respected in Izonda. He has aided the izondian army against Pelatan (and his brother) in the past. Izondians bring tribute to his lair in the deep of the desert.

Telkum, 14 HD Large Copper Dragon

This dragon, a friend of Ehamakeribh, has aided for many years every people and group who has tried to resist Izonda's expansion. The izondians have tried to locate his lair in the northern desert for centuries, but always failed, even with AdizamihN's help. They respect him greatly as a cunning and worthy enemy.

Other Dragons Realms of Davania

Other legendary dragon realms are known to exist in Davania⁸⁰. A Bronze, a Jade and a Green battling for supremacy in the Jungle Coast. A Mad Copper lives in the Adakkian mountains. A Red (with Ambers and Rubies) and a Gold (with Sapphires, Brasses and Coppers) vie for domination of the Aryptian Basin. Bronzes, Jades, Onyxes and Greens live in the Brasol woods. Silver and Golds in the Ice Peaks. Other Bronzes in the Sea of Steam. Golds, Reds, Ambers and Rubies manipulate the many factions of Vulcania.

⁸⁰ AD&D dragons could be considered Gold breeds under BECMI rules.

IMMORTAL DRAGONS

DIAMOND,

30 HD colossal unique dragon,
16th level celestial



Portrait of Diamond

The current Star Dragon, Ruler of all Lawful Dragons, Golds, Crystals, Sapphires and Rubies. He was born as Thelvaneir in 500 AC Glantri, the son of The Great One and the Gold Dragon cleric Arbendael⁸¹. He later became the Dragonlord and the Wyrksteeth Dragonking for a short time, defeating the Overlord's army and the renegade Gemstone dragons, before ascending to Immortality. He now lives in the Draconic Cluster with his mother Arbendael, his mate Kharendae and many Dragon Guardians. All three frequently visit Mystara to meet Therandeal and Kirbey in Shadowmere and Marthaen and Daresha in Windreach, but obviously such visits are

⁸¹ His story was detailed in the Dragonlord trilogy by Thorarinn Gunnarsson and in Simone Neri's "[History of Dragonkind](#)", and also in Marco Dalmonte's [Codex Immortalis](#) volumes.

not common knowledge. Diamond is obviously a strong supporter of the Wyrksteeth Kingdom and of any dragon realms which promote peace between dragons and with other races. For this reason, he is to be considered an enemy of Idris and Synn.

The previous Star Dragon was killed by the Overlord and the renegade Gemstone Dragons a few years before Thelvaneir's ascension. Some say he was a close relative of Ehamakeribh from Davania. Around AC 999 or 1001 Jaggar Von Drachenfels, High Master of Dracology in Glantri will defeat Diamond, but he will refuse the rulership over Lawful Dragons. This event may prompt the rise of a new Immortal Diamond, with Thelvaneir as a simple Dragon Guardian⁸².

Pearl,

24 HD Colossal Unique Dragon,
10th Level Temporal

The current Moon Dragon, Pearl⁸³ is the Immortal ruler of all Chaotic Dragons, Blacks, Greens, Reds, Ambers. Like all immortals, Pearl is not supposed to directly interfere on the Prime Plane. However, the Draconic Rulers generally treat this as a guideline, and will deal with draconic affairs on the Prime as they see fit. Pearl in particular is prone to go to the Prime in

⁸² As explained in Simone Neri's History of Dragonkind, page 18.

⁸³ Mentioned in Giulio Caroletti's [Gazetteer of the Wyrksteeth](#) as Syare, but in Marco Dalmonte's Codex Immortalis and Simone Neri's History of Dragonkind she is a powerful Red from Skothar. The latter could be Syare in another incarnation or a new dragon who defeated her, as the DM prefers.

order to destroy powerful dragon hunters. Her mortal form, when travelling to the Prime Plane looks like the largest dragon ever seen, at well over 100 feet long, with scales like mother-of-pearl - white but iridescent, constantly shifting, like her Chaotic nature. As normal in case of the Immortals, her mortal life is linked to more than one dragon, one would be the Red Dragon Syare who ruled over the Wyrmssteeth from 1900 to 745 BC, another, the powerful Red that ruled a vast area of Skothar from 300 to 850 AC, and it's hard to tell if they are the same dragon or two different ones that became the Moon dragon.

Pearl visits Wyrmssteeth from time to time, but normally manifest her presence only to the Dragonking or her most powerful priests. Once quite intolerant toward lawful and neutral dragons (and toward Diamond and Opal), whom she considered weaklings, she has revised her position recently. The growing power of Idris and, in the last years, the activities of Synn, concern her much, as well as the rise of Wei Huang Long in Skothar. She despises Idris and Synn more than lawful and neutral dragons, as she considers submitting themselves to entropic powers very demeaning for a dragon.

Opal, 27 HD Colossal Unique Dragon, 13th Level Celestial

The current Sun Dragon and Immortal Ruler of all Neutral Dragons, Whites, Blues, Onyxes and Jades. According to a story, Opal was a Jade dragon in Atruaghin or Sindian lands whose mate and sons were slain by humans. According to another story, Opan was a Jade

dragon who had a powerful reign in Brasol, Davania, between 100 and 550 AC, when her kingdom was destroyed by humans. Probably the stories refer to different incarnations of the same Sun Dragon or to different Sun Dragons, as supposedly a new one ascended in 650 AC⁸⁴. Opal was not much interested in the Wyrmssteeth Kingdom until recently, when the threat of Idris and Synn began to concern her too. She is however still much more concerned about Wei Huang Long, who seems about to subjugate all the dragons of Skothar. She also has a particular interest in the dragon realms of Brasol, heirs to her former kingdom.

The Great One, 40 HD Colossal Unique Dragon, 26th Level Eternal

Incredibly ancient even for dragon standards, The Great One belonged to an ancient breed of flying dragons. His main concern is the future of all dragons and what worries him most nowadays is the ascent of Wei Huang Long, whom he suspects could led the dragons to another disastrous war with other Immortals. Idris and Synn are maybe minor menaces, but still dangerous, and he works actively against them too. He has at least a son, the Immortal Diamond, whom he

⁸⁴ According to Wrath of the Immortals, Book One page 30, Opal was a Jade dragon of the Known World. According to Marco Dalmonte's Codex Immortalis, she was from a great forest in the Davanian continent. According to Simone Neri's History of Dragonkind, she was from the northern jungles. The Mightiest of Dragons article, in Dragon Magazine #158 describe a contest for the Sun Dragon's position. I created a reign for her in the jungles of Brasol in Threshold issue #5, pages 48-49.

created with the Gold Dragon cleric Arbendael to stop the Overlord's invasion⁸⁵. The Great One favors peaceful dragon realms and tries to hinder any dragon who promotes wars against dragonkin. He does not plot with other Immortals, but has good relations with Ordana, Terra (his patron) and Ka.

Idris, 15th Level Celestial

All is mysterious about Idris⁸⁶: her history and nature, her allegiance and goals, as if her faith was purposely a web of lies, as some dragons suspect. Even the tenets of her Church in Denagoth are shrouded in mysteries and secrets. Was she a black dragon or an elf? How many mortal lives has she lived? It is true that she was an elf who betrayed Ordana's faith twice in the past of Davania? It is true that she was one of the Korrigans, the mysterious protectors of Wendar, from before the Great Rain of Fire? It is true that she brought to an end the Antalio golden age staging the humanoid invasion? It is true that Hel was her patron? What kind of connection has she with Night Dragons? Has she created them? Could Synn be another one of her avatars? Not even the wisest and oldest dragons know the answers to these questions. If Idris and her Church have a plan in motion as it seems, the world

⁸⁵ As note 81.

⁸⁶ She was introduced in X11 Saga of the Shadow Lord, with little details. Very different version of her history appear in Gaz F2 [The Denagoth Plateau](#), The Codex Immortalis and other fan sources. In Threshold issue #2, page 171 I imagined she was a member of the Korrigans already before the Great Rain of Fire.

could discover the truth quite soon, in the worst way. Dragon followers of Idris maintain she is a champion of the Dragonkin against those, humans or elves, who tried to destroy dragons and other ancient races. But the Wyrmssteeth dragons dismiss this story as simple propaganda and the vast majority believe that Idris is indeed an evil and dangerous servant of entropic powers.

Other legendary, maybe Immortal, Dragons.

Some say other dragons have reached immortality, or at least the status of Immortal Guardian, as Lhoran the Blue, former Wyrmssteeth Dragonking, or Kharendaeen, sister of Marthaen and mate of Diamond⁸⁷. Some believe that also famous (or infamous) dragons of the past have reached Immortality, as Calor⁸⁸ or Yealeletherveri⁸⁹. Insellageth, Tsartha and their son Chamber⁹⁰ were supposedly Immortal Dragons in Skothar 5000 years ago. Several dragons believe Insellageth was just an avatar of The Great One. Some dragons also believe that the Korrigans⁹¹, some of them if not all, were dragons.

⁸⁷ See previous article about the Wyrmssteeth dragons in issue #8 of Threshold magazine

⁸⁸ Appears in Wrath of the Immortals Book II The Immortals' Fury and [The Expanded Darokin Timeline](#) by Aaron Nowack.

⁸⁹ See Son of Dawn novel by Dixie McKeone and [The History of Karameikos](#) by Simone Neri from Threshold issue #1.

⁹⁰ Created in Dave Arneson's Blackmoor, published by Goodman Games in 2004.

⁹¹ Described in Codex Immortalis and in ["The Korrigans"](#) article. The rumor they could be dragons is just mine.

Table 1: Dragon Breeds

Metallic Breeds	Chromatic Breeds	Gemstone Breeds
Adamantine - Underground - 21	Amaranth - Tropical - 10	Amber - Arid - 22
Brass - Arid and desert - 14	Black - Swamps - 14	Amethyst - Lakes - 17
Bronze -Tropical, Sea - 15	Blue - Plains and arid - 18	Crystal - Ice - 12
Cobalt - Dark forests - 16	Brown - Arid and deserts - 17	Emerald - Tropical - 13
Copper - Hills - 13	Cyan - Clouds - 22	Jade - Forests - 16
Electrum - Mountains - 10	Green - Forests - 16	Jacinth - Arid - 11
Gold - Any terrain - 22	Grey - Badlands - 13	Moonstone - Fairy lands - 19
Iron - Forested hills - 17	Yellow - Arid, savannah - 15	Obsidian - Underground - 21
Mercury - Volcanoes - 12	Orange - Forest, savannah - 11	Onyx - Wetlands - 14
Mithral - Magical areas - 18	Purple - Underground - 21	Pearl - Cliffs - 10
Orium - Ancient ruins - 20	Red - Mountains - 20	Ruby - Mountains - 20
Silver - Cold mountains - 19	Violet - Coasts - 19	Sapphire - Plains - 18
Steel - Cities - 11	White - Ice - 12	Topaz - Coasts - 15

DRAGONS OF THE HOLLOW WORLD

The Hollow World is the place chosen by the Immortals to preserve cultures on the verge of disappearing from the Outer World. So what kind of dragons could live in it? Probably some strange breeds, as the ones described below.

MORE DRAGON BREEDS

BECMI rules list 4 lawful breeds of dragons (Golds, Crystals, Sapphires and Rubies), 4 neutral breeds (Whites, Blues, Onyxes and Jades) and 4 chaotic breeds (Blacks, Greens, Reds and Ambers). They could also be divided in Metallic (1) Chromatics (5) and Gemstones (6) AD&D and D&D 3ed instead have Metallic Dragons as Good, Chromatic Dragons as Evil and Gemstone Dragons as Neutral. A way to increase the variety of

breeds in Mystara while preserving the lawful/neutral/chaotic division is explained in Table 1.

All these breeds appear in D&D sources, except for Amaranth, Cyan and Violet that I created here. Some however may have different alignments than those I have listed in Table 1.

Breeds in Bold are the original Mystaran one. Breeds in Black are Lawful, Breeds in Blue are Neutral and Breeds in Red are Chaotic. The preferred habitat and Maximum Hit Dice are listed too.

Outer World Gold dragons say the metallic subspecies have their origin in Davania, in the area that hosted The Golden Empire of Dragons⁹² before the Great Rain of Fire, now the (mostly) human nation of Pelatan. Some say they are the descendants of the Golds

⁹² See [Age of Blackmoor](#) by James Mishler: and Threshold issue #5

who consented to aid Ka against the Burrowers thousands of years ago. Some say they are there to protect ancient and forgotten civilization. Only Ehamakeribh or Ka may know the truth.

Some Outer World dragons also says the Hollow World dragon breeds are almost extinct in the Outer World because they were exterminated in wars against the Immortals, or among the dragons themselves. Such breeds may still be present in remote areas of the Outer World, or where dragons have a strong presence, but they are much more common in the Hollow World.

The Chromatic dragons say that the rare races are crossbreeds (Amaranth from Red and White, Brown from Black and Red, Cyan from Blue and White, Grey from Black and White, Orange from Yellow and Red, Purple from Black and Red, Violet from Blue and Red), but that doesn't explain why more crossbreeds do not exist as well. Some say that such minor races were almost exterminated by other stronger chromatics, but some of these dragons are indeed as strong as the more common ones. Some Chromatics distrust or despise Hollow World dragons, considering them weaklings who have submitted to some Immortal's will to escape extinction.

The Gemstone dragons believe their Hollow World cousins are those who cowardly escaped the Outer World during their war against Blackmoor. Others however suspect that the vast majority have lived in the Hollow World since many centuries before that, maybe from the time of the Burrowers or even earlier.

Many Hollow World dragons are divided in the lands of their preferred habitat, and often they take some lost race or civilization under their wing, playing a complicated game to assure the survival of their pets.

Names of famous Hollow World dragons are given below, but information about them are tentative at best, and some of them may be dead or just myths. No one knows how big or powerful such famous dragons are.

The World Spine and the Mountains

The greatest mountain range of the Hollow World is the preferred home of Golds, Electrums, Irons, Mithrals, Greys, Reds, Whites, Amethysts, Crystals and Rubies, but not of them only. In secluded valleys also the mighty Earth Dragons⁹³ live, an ancient breed long gone extinct in the Outer World. Some also say that more of them live in Jomphur and other continents.

- Huyanac the Gold,**
the protector of the Oltec lands.
- Ladja the Electrum,**
the founder of the Lighthouse.
- Querash the Iron,**
an important Shattenalfen agent.
- Ishwelak the Mithral,**
another Lighthouse agent.
- Wedak the Grey,**
the ruler of N'djavar ruins.
- Camoc the Red,**
master of the Serpent Fangs volcanoes.
- Ronath the White,**
lord of the Ronani glacier, competing

⁹³ [AD&D Oriental Dragons](#) could be used for them

with Yohen the Crystal.

Kaxya the Amethyst,
who roams to the north of Lake Menkor.
Kumtis the Ruby,
a friend of the Kogolor dwarves.

Other mountain ranges, such as the north of Iciria, are inhabited by Silvers, Whites and Crystals reigning over old humanoid races.

Vjya the Silver,
protector of the Antalian in the Vjarnik glacier.

Omta the White,
revered as a goddess by the beastmen in Mont Om.

Murmid the Crystal,
who rule north western Iciria uncontested.

The Malpheggi Swamp

Cobalts, Blacks and Onyxes dragons rule over this great swamp and the others of the Hollow World. The lizardmen and the other reptilian inhabitants of the swamp would be divided in tribes secretly controlled by different dragons.

The most importants of these dragons would be:

Tihuag the Cobalt in the north,
renowned for her cruelty.
Sneam the Black in the centre,
styling himself Emperor of the Swamp.
Gawal the Onyx in the south,
an enemy of Shattenalfen and Azcans.

FORESTS AND JUNGLES

Bronzes, Cobalts, Golds, Amaranths, Greens, Oranges, Jades, Emeralds and Moonstones inhabit the wooded areas of central Iciria, with ever changing alliances and dominions. Their agents and minions are often reptilian and humanoid races, or strange lineage of fairies unknown in the Outer World.

The most powerful of these dragons would be:

Exul the Bronze in the Gulf of Aztlan,
fighting Azcan and Shattenalfen.

Sheara the Amaranth among the Kubitts.

Tyxa the Gold among the Hutaakans.

Dyla the Moonstone
protecting the Gentle Folks.

Bak the Cobalt in the Bakoto Swamps.

Bwila the Green in the Dark Jungles.

Djuha the Orange among the Tanagoro.

Laka the Jade in the Forest of Lakogo.

Huakila the Emerald aiding rebels
in the Azcan empire.



Portrait of Djuha the Orange

The Sea of Ships

The Southern Atlass Ocean coast between Milenia and Jomphur, with its many Milenian, Traldar, Merry Pirate and Shahjapuri cities and ships is a favorite habitat of Golds, Bronzes, Steels, Amaranths, Greys, Violets, Jades, Pearls, Topazs. All of them can be quite cosmopolitan breeds of dragons, often hiding in human and demi-human forms to further their mysterious goals.

Amntha the Gold, a sage in Shahjapur.

Atian the Bronze, protector of Varellya in Southern Jomphur

Sirus the Steel, general and captain in Milenia

Flarinn the Amaranth, disguised as a female captain in Baraga

Xanru the Grey, war leader of the Kara Kara orcs.

Teklan the Jade and her progeny **Sotek**, who lead several seafaring people of the sea

Shaaz the Pearl, who command on a island of monsters

Kadak the Topaz, who rules as a priest king in Jomphur.

The Deserts and the Plains

The Arid lands of Eastern Iciria, the Wintlian islands and Southern Aerial host the domains of Brasses, Coppers, Oriums, Blues, Browns, Yellows, Ambers, Sapphires and Jacinth. Many breeds of dragon which have to coexist, but sometimes cannot.

Teuz the Brass in the Jennite plains

Wintlan the Copper of the Wintlian Islands

Saha the Orium in the Tanagoro plains

Yudh the Blue of the great river

Raaneh the Brown,

lord of the Western Desert in Nithia

Anjiur the Yellow

lord of Boglucubul desert

Agay the Amber,

lady of the Ayskudag wastelands

Okai the Sapphire,

protector of Brutemen plains

Arax the Jacinth,

lady of south eastern Aerial

The Sea and Island Dragons

Ancient breeds of Sea Dragons and Dragon Turtles dominate the deep seas, ruling over forgotten civilizations of the deep. In the many islands and coasts of the seven Hollow World seas (Yr, Eadh, Rax, Keleb, Grey, Northern and Southern Atlass) Bronzes, Mercuries, Amaranths, Violets, Pearls and Topazs steer seafaring cultures in an endless game over the waves.

Orys the Bronze in the Pirate seas of the Northern Atlass

Lahir the Mercury in the Sea of Yr

Shadar the Amaranth in the Sea of Rax

Lantia the Violet in the sea of Eadh

Utret the Pearl in the Grey sea

Erid the Topaz in the sea of Keleb

The Shadowdeep

Legends say that three rare breeds of dragons battle for dominion of the Shadowdeep, between the Hollow and the Outer world. The lawful Adamantine dragons shelter ancient races best suited to life underground rather than under the Eternal Sun. The neutral Purple do the same things, but



Portrait of Hona the Purple

compete to gain more territories. The chaotic Obsidian harbor and create undead far from the blinding light. Some occasionally ally with the Schattenhalfen, hated by the Adamantines and the Purples.

Kawi the Adamantine,
hunter of Burrowers.

Hona the Purple,
protector of forgotten people.

Thyrfel the Obsidian,
ally of the cruel elves of the deep.

The Floating Continents

Home of flying creatures such as pterodactyls, feathered serpents and flapsails⁹⁴, the Floating Continents are also the favorite homes of some dragon breeds who favor the heights, such as Golds, Cyans, Blues, Whites and Ambers. One of the Floating Continents, Cassia, would also be the home of the “Ancient Grey”, the breed of

⁹⁴ Unintelligent and small red dragons, used as mounts by the Shattenhalfen, described in the Hollow World Boxed set, Book III Adventure Book, page 23

The Great One and Saerna, now extinct in the Outer World.

Ashak the Gold lives in Ashmorain and Oostdook.

Ijishek the Cyan is the ruler of Chijioke

Kisien the Blue claims Disa and Kjell.

Striak the White claims lordship of Resi and Tama.

Lawan the Amber claims ladyship of Gowon.

The Arrival of Outer Worlder and Alphatians

When the Heldannic Knights start flying all over the Hollow World and the Alphatians first establish a settlement in the Neatharum, and then later when Alphatia is made into the largest Floating Continent, these events will obviously have a major impact on the Hollow World's Dragons. The first exploration of Heldannic Knights in 960 AC and The Princess Ark⁹⁵ in 965 AC may go almost unnoticed by dragons, but not for long. Battles with the Heldannic Warbirds will probably start right away after their conquest of Oostdok in 978 AC, if not before, and continue for years. The arrival of Alphatians in Neatharum around 1004 AC may be relevant at first only for the dragons living in the Neathar forest, but the arrival of the entire continent in 1010 AC will also bring Skyships and thousands of Alphatian Dragons. Their impact on the Hollow World's dragons will probably be huge in the following years.

⁹⁵ Events described in Canon sources: Voyages of the Princess Ark, Dragon Magazine #161-163, Wrath of the Immortals, Poor Wizard's Almanac I-II-III, Champions of Mystara, see also [Hollow World Timeline](#) by Andrew Theisen here:

SECRETS OF KOSKATEP, LEVEL 7

This level can be reached going down from area 14 of Level 6 (Kundrak, published in Issue 8 of Threshold magazine) or also from the shortcut of area 13 in Level 5 (Ieronyx, published in Issue 7 of Threshold). The PCs will find themselves in **Level 7, Kosmoteiros**, the ancient city sacred to Nyx in Taymoran times and now inhabited by the powerful and ancient vampire known as The Last One.

The text below repeats the original description of this level in issue 1 of Threshold Magazine (Mirror of Eternal Night article). Read on to discover more on this level of Koskatep!

Level SEVEN, SIGNS OF THE UNIVERSE

This level was the Taymoran city of Kosmoteiros, that the Church of Nyx herself partially destroyed to prevent it from falling into the hands of Thanatos' followers. The holiest room is the great cave containing the Starlake, a great pool that mysteriously reflect stars and constellations. The artifact, being a small lake, cannot be obviously removed from here. "Night is truth, Light is lie" says the silver engraved inscription, in old Taymoran, on the walls of the cave.

Here resides The Last One, a vampire follower of Thanatos, immensely powerful, last surviving member of The Death Hand, a group of vampires that terrorized old Traladara 2500 years ago. He has magic and undead minions in large supply and only

very powerful PCs, or PCs with very powerful allies, should be able to defeat him. Even if they can, he will not die but will escape to level TEN.

The secret: The Last One has defiled the Starlake. The waters will now slowly (3-12 years) kill any living being touching them and corrupt any undead creature. The effect is so slow that it cannot be easily detected and indeed Nyx herself isn't yet aware of it.

If several spells are cast on the lake during a particular cosmic alignment happening once every 936 years, a permanent gate to Nyx's home plane will be opened, the Sun will be extinguished, and the True Life of Nyx (Undeath for all) will triumph. Her followers could not complete the ritual in 1777 BC because the city was assaulted by Thanatos' followers. Neither could they in 841 BC as gnolls had occupied the city and could not be defeated. In 95 AC the Darkers almost succeeded, but were killed at the last moment by priests of Ixion. The next alignment is in 1031 AC, and they will not miss it. Obviously Ixion will do almost anything to avoid this and Thanatos will do almost anything to use the event for his own ends. If the defilement of The Last One is not discovered in time, the rite will open a permanent gate to the home plane of Thanatos, and not to the one of Nyx as intended.

The Darkers will think, wrongly, that they have destroyed The Last One along with his minions and will transform the level into the main headquarters of the Sons of Night in Karameikos. At least a hundred people will live here permanently, with more coming and going. Among them there will be several

powerful wizards and priests, like Mogren, the Grand Darker and most powerful wizard, and the Grand Daughter of the Night, Lady Sonya, the most powerful priestess of Nyx. The followers of Nyx will be here studying the place day and night.

In the year **1031 AC** at the very last, every plan should come to fruition and if any side manages to use the artifact, the fate of Karameikos could change forever. The PC's actions should decide the outcome of the millennia old fight for Koskatep.

Relevant history (expanded from issue 1 of *Threshold*)¹

2.080 BC: In a time of crisis in Grondheim, Taymora, and Intua, lizardmen and troglodytes escaped from Mogreth occupy Krystallac and keep it for a hundred years.

1.976 BC: After a long siege Taymora conquers Krystallac and renames it Kosmoteiros, building a new city. Nyx knows about Ixion's artifact but rather than try to steal or destroy it she decides to exploit the magical aura of the place to build her own strongest artifact that will bring fulfillment of her Dream.

1777 BC: To prevent Kosmoteiros from falling into the hands of Thanatos, the priests of Nyx destroy the city with a terrible

earthquake. The Great Chasm of Level 12 rises up to Kosmoteiros and The Dark Waterfall is created. Thousands die and the place is abandoned for many years as seismic activity increases in the area.

1664 BC: After the destruction of Taymora, fairies of the Unseelie court, ancient inhabitants of Krystallac exiled long ago, build their city of Kudrak over the ruins of Kosmoteiros and try to use the Starlake in Kosmoteiros, but do not know of the hidden temple of Ixion below.

1597 BC: Lord Keiros, a Tal nosferatu and follower of Nyx, conquers Koskatep from the dark fairies. Keiros rebuilds the city as Ieronyx (sacred to Nyx). Vampiric followers of Thanatos attack several times but are defeated. Kosmoteiros houses the main temple of Nyx and The Chasm is partially covered.

1423 BC: A great crusade against vampires and nosferatu of Traladara exterminate a greater part of the nation's undead in the space of two years. Many innocent followers of Nyx are likewise massacred. Lord Keiros of Ieronyx and a few others are spared because they make a deal with the crusaders. His long time friend Leukos, disgusted with the deal, gathers a group of powerful wizards, priests and undead to continue the fight.

1421 BC: Leukos' band falls into an ambush and is destroyed by the crusaders. Leukos survives by making a dark deal with Thanatos.

1415 BC A group of five vampires called "The Death's hand" bring havoc in Traladara for five years, from their hideout of Mokan in

¹ Several details of this history come from my [History of Traladara](#). Other histories may differ, as the one presented in issue 1 of *Threshold* magazine did (History of Karameikos by Simone Neri, page 37), but this timeline could easily fit into them too.

the Dark Wood (in the peninsula between modern Mirros and Vorloi) in the south.

1412 BC: The Hutaakans take Ieronyx from Lord Keiros, exterminating his followers, and renaming the city Ranekek (Light over the Darkness). Hutaakans and Traldar settle the city, which over four centuries establishes peaceful relations with nearby giants and fairies. The hutaakans build over Ieronyx and seal the levels below, including Kosmoteiros and the Starlake.

1411 BC: At last The Death's Hand is destroyed by a priestess of Ixion and her companions. Leukos, now The Last One, hides for centuries in the former Dark Wood, now known as the Cursed Forest, which remains uninhabited for centuries due to his presence.

1021 BC: The red orcs sack and conquer Ranekek, renaming it Rak. The orcs make the former storage and treasury of the temple of Pflarr their main city but do not explore below Kundrak.

954 BC: Despite the successful campaign of the Traldars against the gnolls, the west is still in their hands and orcs still rule the city of Rak. In these years a large dwarven expedition sent by Loktal Ironshield of the Glittering Realm reaches the Cruth Mountains and conquers Koskatep-Rak, renaming it Karrast. Level 5 is sealed by the dwarves who are unable to completely eradicate the undead orcs that infest it, and so are the levels below it.

912 BC: The dwarves are finally defeated by the gnolls, who build their own city of Ranesh over the ruins. Shamans of Ranivorus

and Thanatos reopen the levels below and begin to study the Starlake².

841 BC: Followers of Nyx, aided by ogres and giants, attack Koskatep but are unable to conquer it from the gnolls. Yet they succeed in reaching Kosmoteiros and the Starlake, killing the most powerful shamans of Thanatos and burning their notes.

603 BC: The ogre king Kulfan conquers Koskatep in the name of Nyx and ogres rule over the area for centuries. Human priests of the Lady of the Night live in the city along with them. Kosmoteiros and the Starlake are once again a great temple of Nyx, and The Chasm is covered.

95 AC: The Darkers almost complete the ritual to use the Starlake and bring forth the Eternal Night, but are stopped at the last moment by an army of priests of Ixion, from all over the Known World, who drive out the ogres and occupy Koskatep for years. Soldiers of the Duchy of Achelos join the attack and establish good relations with the temple of Ixion that is consecrated in the akropolis of Kotesh. The priests try to cleanse all the levels up to Kosmoteiros, which is then sealed.

227 AC: The priests of Ixion have repelled several attempts by ogres, giants and followers of Nyx trying to reclaim the ruins, but are destroyed at last by The Last One, who establishes his seat in Kosmoteiros and begins to corrupt the Starlake and explore the levels below. In the following centuries

² As explained in issue 1 of Threshold magazine (Mirror of Eternal Night, page 144), Koskatep is the center of a millennia old struggle between Nyx, Ixion, Thanatos and Hel.

ogres, giants, followers of Nyx, and even adventurers sent by Ixion try to reclaim Koskatep, but The Last One destroys them all.

445 - 788 AC: Adventurers from Achelos, ogres and giants or agents of Nyx and Thanatos sometimes reach Level 7, only to be slain or captured by The Last One or his minions.

818 AC: Lord Vudar's expedition³ eventually reaches Level 6 but is stopped, his soul taken by The Last One.

856 - 934 AC: Groups of adventurers, humanoids and later Traladaran rebels and Thyatian explorers manage rarely to reach Level 7, but are slain as the others before them.

944 AC: Thyatian priests of Ixion reach Level 6, but are repelled by the Dark Fairies and minions of The Last One. Shortly after they are all slain by orcs on Level 1.

955 AC - present days: A few adventurers, ogres and followers of Nyx manage to reach Level 7 but are slain or repelled to the levels above.

The Random Critters table of level 2B (in issue 3 of Threshold magazine) and the **Wandering Parties** table may apply here if the DM wishes so. In this case there is a 1% chance in each room that a Wandering Party will be encountered. There is also a 30% chance that such creatures or people are already under The Last One's control, and will therefore try to capture or trick the party.

³ See [Level 1](#) in issue #2 of Threshold magazine.



Nyx creating the Starlake

The **Followers of The Last One** encounter table of level 1 (in issue 2 of Threshold magazine, page 122), can also still be used here if the DM wishes so. One such follower could try to join the PCs to explore this level, with the final purpose of bringing them in the presence of The Last One himself (in Level 7). After the Darkers take control (see issue 1) any Follower of The Last One will obviously keep a much lower profile and maybe even aid the party against the Darkers to use them or lead them to their deaths.

Spells that provide magical transportation, such as teleport, passwall, dimensional door, magic door, travel, gate and spells such as clairvoyance and find the path do not work on this level as on Levels 5 and 6 due to powerful wards placed by The Last One and others before him. The DM could decide to apply the same rule to the levels above the 5th, at least from Level 2 and below, particularly if the PCs are of high level.

There is also a magical alarm in place all over this level: whenever a clerical or magical spell is cast, The Last One will sense it and the general direction of the caster.

The Level and its inhabitants

The original Taymoran city has been repaired and modified several times during the centuries, but the renovation has not been consistent lately and therefore most of the level is ruined. The city had thousand of inhabitants at its height, while now a much lower number of The Last One's minions inhabits it, so many houses and palaces are dark and abandoned. Some however are inhabited and sometimes even lit by blue or white magical lights. Most of the residents

are undead and do not really need lights, but some use them anyway for preference or practical purposes.

Kosmoteiros is now inhabited by hundreds of undead, the minions of The Last One. Their exact number and power should be left to each DM's decision depending on PC's levels. All the indicated levels are indeed just suggestions to be lowered or augmented by the DM as they see fit. Unless the DM decides otherwise, it should however be almost impossible for a single party to defeat The Last One and his minions here, unless the party is backed up by an army of allies. When the Darkers takes the level indeed they succeed thanks to a surprise attack and a relevant force (see The Battle in This Level paragraph below). Not all the areas of the city nor all its inhabitants will be detailed, as they are too many, so each DM may add many more as he or she prefers.

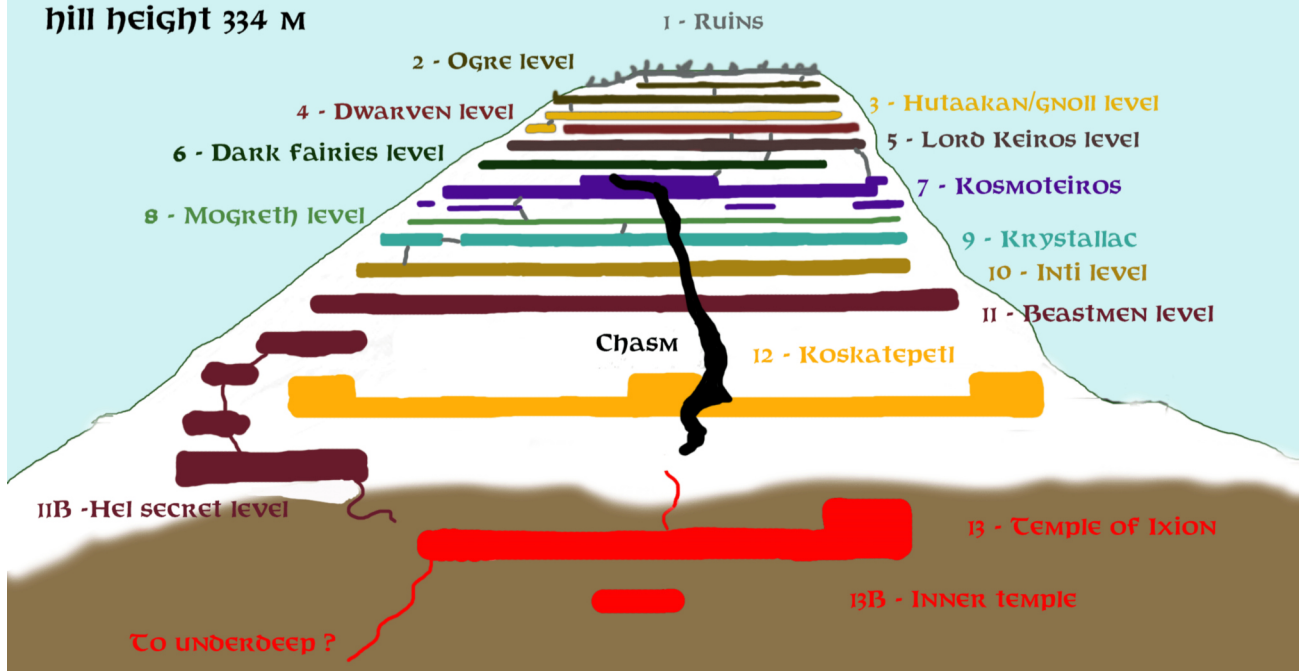
About the map

Depicted in light grey inside the city are the multi story areas, which can have up to four floors. In dark grey at the boundaries of the map is solid stone which is very difficult to dig. Once the city was surrounded by mighty walls long crumbled, as were many areas on the outskirts of the original city, which were never repaired. In white are the open areas. As in levels above, "Open areas" should be considered a relative term as much of the terrain is rugged and full of debris. Area 5, above the Starlake, and the central area are those in better conditions, where most of the debris has been removed. As said above, most areas are dark or only partially illuminated by magical lights, if PCs do not bring their light. If they do bring light, of

koskatep, level 7



Koskatep sections hill height 334 M



course, it makes the party quite visible.

The Black area is the Chasm opened by the earthquake of 1777 BC, which goes all the way down to Level 12.

As explained above, this level can be reached from Level 6, arriving in area 9, or from Level 5, arriving in area 14. The level also has two sublevels, which can be reached only by secret passages in area 10 and 14. There is only one way to reach Level 8 below, through the Starlake's sublevel below area 5. The Starlake's cave, its treasure room and the two other sublevels will be described below but are not depicted on the map.

1 - The Great Plaza and The Chasm

This huge area is about 200x300 meters and was once the main plaza of Kosmoteiros, where its market and any other public event took place. It is now partially occupied by the big chasm opened by the earthquake which buried the city in 1777 BC. The plaza appears to be empty. Looking inside the chasm a Dark Waterfall can be seen, formed by waters dripping from the levels above and this one. As the walls of the chasm are wet, it is extremely dangerous to try to reach Level 8 and below going down from here.

Touching the Dark Waterfall may also cause random teleportation effects to Annwyn, particularly the areas where it borders the Carnifex prison⁴.

Once the plaza was completely covered in ceramic tiles and its walls were decorated, but now only a partially destroyed fresco of some people leaping

(1) - There are objects and weapons from all of the last 8 centuries half buried everywhere on the plaza, if someone has the patience to search for them. Some of these objects may be magical, but several could still be in the hands of their original owners, now roaming undead.

⁴ This idea comes from RobJN's [Thorn's Chronicle blog](#). For more information about the Carnifex, see Geoff Gander's "[Of the Lore and Legends of Y'hog, City of the Unclean Ones, and of that Race](#)" and [Carnifex](#) by Jamie Baty. Annwyn is the home plane of the Dark Fairies, see also [the previous level of Koskatep](#) in Threshold issue #8.

over a bull remains. It was a depiction of a ceremony held here in Taymoran times, celebrating Nyx's domination of Ixion.

The Chasm has also partially opened the Palace on the left side of the plaza, and some of its interiors can be seen. At the time of Lord Keiros, the Chasm was partially closed on this level, but The Last One decided to open it again.

Random **undead** (at least $2d10+2$), from skeletons to spirits, roam the plaza, all unfortunate remains of adventurers and spies that The Last One reanimated during the last 8 centuries.



Leaping the bull

When The Last One's spies in the levels above warn him that the Darkers are coming, he will gather many of his minions here under the command of **Skloros** (from Area 14), anticipating their arrival through the stair on the left side of the plaza. The Darkers however will arrive in area 14, gather some more allies and then fall on Skloros and his minions from behind, defeating them. If Skloros somehow survives, he will escape toward the Starlake.

After their victory, the Darkers will start cleaning the plaza, but it will take time. $1d10+1$ Darkers (priests, warriors, ogres and hill giants) may be encountered roaming here at any time, and the plaza will be partially lit by continual lights.

2 - The Great Corridor

The corridor was once a sort of public street lined with vendors, which led to the great plaza. The houses around the corridor were mostly artisan shops and warehouses. Colorful ceramic tiles once decorated the walls, but now not much remains.

The Darkers will disarm the traps and place three **obsidian golems**⁵ here instead, which will attack anyone without the current passphrase and a Nyx amulet on his person. A captured Darker, if menaced, will tell the passphrase but will conveniently forget to mention that the amulet is also needed. The activation of the golems will also warn the Darkers Mogren, Sonya, Anna (see below) and Lord Keiros (in Level 5) of the intrusion.

3 - The North quarter

This area contained the northern gate into the city, leading to once great structures which might have been temples but now lay in ruins. The Last One placed here a **Druj** (HD 16) as guardian, once a cleric of Thanatos which displeased him.

The Darkers will destroy the Druj. They will not start rebuilding this area, for the time being. They will not find the cache of scrolls either.

4 - The Fountain

This area contained a great public fountain inside a three storey tower. The fountain still exists but the surrounding buildings have almost completely decayed. Some **Wraiths** (HD 5) are hidden near the fountain, once Traladaran adventurers slain by The

⁵ For BECMI statistics see Companion set or Rules Cyclopeda, for AD&D see [Golem \(Athas\) II](#) at Monstrous Index, or [Obsidian Golem](#) 3ed rules by John Walter Biles.

(2) - There are three explosive magical traps in the corridor, placed by The Last One and his minions against trespassers proceeding to the Starlake (Area 5). If the traps are sprung, a magical alarm warns The Last One wherever he is.

(3) - There is a cache of hutaakan scrolls buried in this area, very difficult to find. A priest or follower of Ixion, or an Hutaakan, may receive the right inspiration and find the scrolls. Most of them are spells useful to fighting undead.

(4) - There are some more hutaakan objects in this area, including a mace +1. +3 against the undead, once property of a cleric. It's well buried, but Hutaakans or priests of Ixion may receive an inspiration and find it.

Last One's minions 40 years ago.

The Darkers will try to convince the Wraiths to join them as **Uncorporeals**⁶, and they will accept, joining them against The Last One.

5 - The Temple of the Starlake

This great building of about 100x200 meters was and is the Temple above the Starlake. Once consecrated to Nyx, it is now a shrine to Thanatos, decorated with skulls, skeletons and darker images.

Dakria, a nosferatu and powerful cleric of Thanatos (C16), is often here (30% of the time she will be below in Area 5B, The Starlake), with 4 **apprentices**, all nosferatu and clerics (C5-7) and 2 **Nightshades** (HD 20) who guard the access to The Starlake below. Dakria was turned into an undead by The Last One two thousand years ago, after she was captured in the Cursed Forest. She is extremely loyal to him and will fight until forced to return to her grave, which is inside a secret room on the right side of the temple. Her apprentice's graves are in the same room.

A hidden trapdoor on the bottom left corner of the temple leads down to The Starlake through a narrow stair. The stair contains a magical trap (delayed fireball) which will spring if it's not deactivate by the phrase "Glory to Thanatos" in ancient Taymoran.

The Darkers will try to convince Dakria to betray The Last One, but she will refuse. If she doesn't escape below with him, she will be destroyed with her apprentices and the nightshades.

After that, The Darkers will destroy all Thanatos' paraphernalia and consecrate again the temple to

⁶ See [page 146 of "Mirror of Eternal Night"](#) article in Threshold issue #1.

(5) - There are several magical objects in the temple and in Dakria's room. All of them however have been blessed by Thanatos and will therefore be cursed items if used by anyone who doesn't share His faith.



The Temple

Nyx. **Samira** (C10), a cleric of Nyx from Ylauruum, will almost always be here with **3 apprentices** and **2 obsidian golems**, **4 Undecayed**⁷ (HD 2, as zombies) and **4 Uncorporeals** (HD 5, as wraiths)

5B - The Starlake

The Starlake is contained in a cave about 100x200 meters big as the temple above. It's a great pool that mysteriously reflects current stars and constellations, day and night. "Night is truth, Light is lie" says a silver engraved inscription, in old Taymoran, on the walls of the cave. Since the earthquake of 1777 BC the surface of the waters, once perfectly still, has small ripples. This happens because some droplets of water are dripping into the Dark Waterfall of the Chasm (Area 1) and down to Level 12. That is also the reason why the Artifact can now be used only once every 936 years, while it was supposed to work once a year before the earthquake.

The next alignment in which the Starlake will work will be on 1031 AC. On such an occasion priests and wizards casting the appropriate spells will be able to open a permanent gate to the Plane of Entropy and the Domain of the desired Immortal. In the case of Nyx, such a gate would obscure the sun in a 160 miles radius (covering almost all Karameikos and more than half the Shires, Darokin and Alfheim), slowly transforming the area into something more akin to the Immortal's domain. In the case of Nyx the number and importance of intelligent undead will rise quickly. However any other party could use the Starlake with the same purpose. If used by the Church of Ixion, for example, the area will experience no more nights, and all undead will be weakened and eventually die. If an Immortal is able to maintain control of the Starlake for some centuries, he or she will absorb the whole planet, i.e. Mystara will become permanently a part of his or her domain. Such

(5B) - What the Darkers and Nyx do not know, and neither the other possible parties such as Ixion, Hel and the Fairies, is that The Last One has corrupted the Starlake in recent centuries. Now anyone attempting to use it will open a portal to the home plane of Thanatos, instead of the plane of her or his Immortal. The immediate effect would be the same as in the case of Nyx, with eternal night over a vast area and more undead, but such undead will be very evil and accompanied by all kinds of evil monsters and fiends. For every year the Darkers or any other party study the Starlake before the ritual, there is a 10% chance they can spot the corruption and correct it. If Fairies use the Starlake instead, the portal will open in Annwyn, home of the Dark Fairies, dangerously close to the Carnifex prison (see note 5).

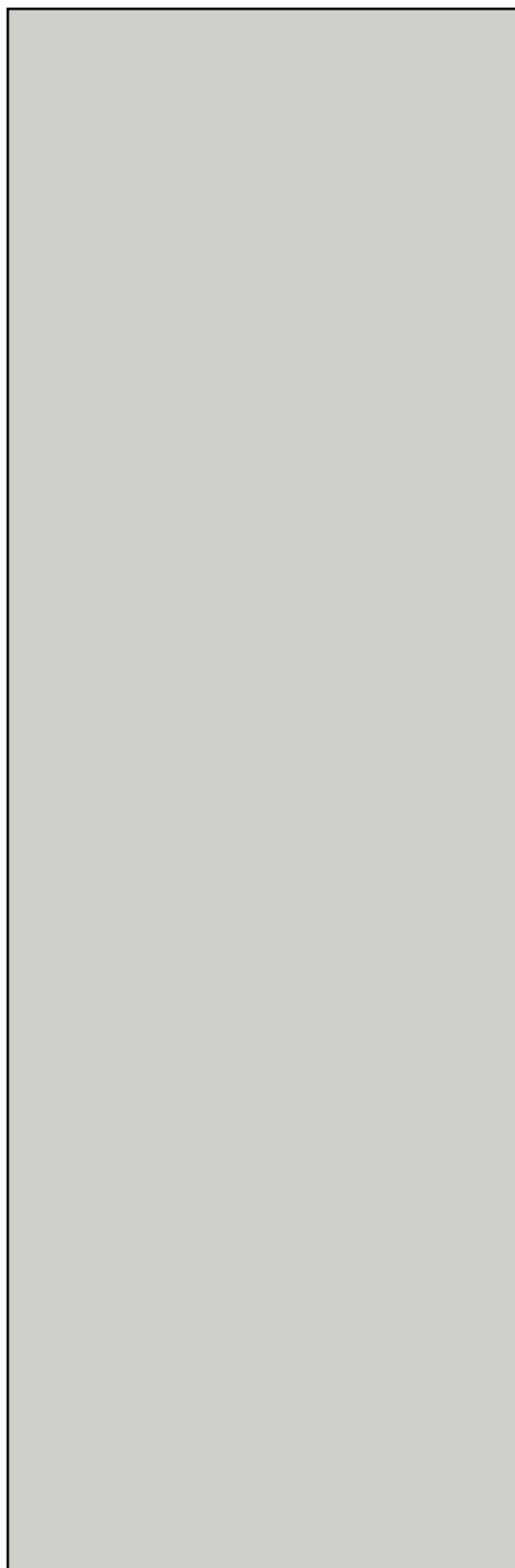
⁷ See note 5 above.

occurrence will give to that Immortal a huge advantage over the others. Should the Darkers succeed in completing the ritual of 1031 AC, Nyx will call most of her followers and undead from Mystara and beyond to protect the Starlake from the retaliation of other Immortals. She cannot do this now however, as she would attract too much attention too soon.

At the moment **Louma** (see Area 9), **Dakria** (see Area 5) and **Koros** (see Area 16) are often here (50% of the time each one, day and night) studying the Starlake a preparing the complex rituals for the alignment. **The Last One** (see Area 9), is often here too (50% of the time). Beside them, there are always **2 Nightshades** (HD 25, formerly storm giants) and **3 Revenants** (HD 15, formerly warriors consecrated to Thanatos) on guard duty in this area. The stairs going down to Level 8 are closed by a bronze trapdoor. The revenants normally stay over it, even if the level below is firmly under The Last One's control, for now.

The Last One will make his last stand here with any remaining minions, after The Darkers' attack, but as many will be slaughtered in area 10, where The Darkers will take them by surprise, he will be defeated. As a boon from Nyx, the Starlake will also grant powerful magic to the Darkers. The Last One however will cast a powerful illusion, making the Darkers believe he and any remaining lieutenants have been disintegrated, while escaping to level 10, where he will hide for a year, waiting for the right time to strike back. Even if she survived, Louma will probably abandon him and join the Darkers. If still alive, Koros, Skleros and Dakria will instead escape with him. The Last One still has an hideout in the Vorloi peninsula, in the south, defended by monsters and magic, but will not escape there unless forced to, or defeated by the Darkers a second time (see the Battle on this level below).

After The Last One's feigned death, here around **ten Darker priests and wizards** (Mogren, Sonya,



Anna, Thaddigren, Basco, Samyra, Skoghios and Lord Keiros could be among them, see Areas 5, 9, 10, 16 and Level 5) will always be present studying the Starlake, along with **3 experienced warriors** (F7-10) and **2 obsidian golems**. The stair leading down to Level 8 will be closed with the bronze door, now also bolted and trapped. Only Mogren, Keiros, Sonya and Anna will have the keys.

6 - The Fallen Temple

Here once stood a huge temple dedicated to Nyx, the main public temple of the city. The Starlake temple in area 5 was in fact closed to the general public. The temple was damaged in the earthquake of 1777 BC, then rebuilt and destroyed again. Now it is a pile of rubble, but three massive columns and another partial one still stand.

Several **Spectres** (HD 7) roam the area, most of them adventurers from the last 8 centuries or former minions of The Last One who fell from his grace.

The Darkers will offer the Spectres the same deal they offer to all the undead: join them or be granted eternal rest. Some will accept. Eventually the Darkers may find the hidden cache of objects when they start rebuilding the Great Temple, but that work will not start very soon.

7 - The Western quarter

This quarter was once the administrative center of the city and contained also many private houses. Most of the internal walls of several houses and buildings have fallen, but the area still contains many places in which to hide and many objects

(6) - There is a hidden crate near to one of the massive columns, which contains a diary, scrolls, books about Nyx and Taymora, potions, objects, jewels and weapons from Lord Keiros' times. They were all hidden here to save them from the hutaakan invasion. Such objects would have a huge value for Lord Keiros and for any sage of the Known World.



Taymoran statuette of Nyx

(7) - Besides many objects from Taymoran, Dark Fairies and Lord Keiros' times, including potions and scrolls, there are also the remains of a dwarven party from 950 BC in this

from the times of Taymora and Lord Keiros' reign. A group of **Baldandars**⁸ (HD 6) lives here preying on intruders with the blessing of The Last One. They also have the special permission to leave the level and Koskatep when they want via phantasmal form, so they often scout the outskirts of the area.

The Darkers will leave the Baldandars alone if they agree to scout for them as they did for The Last One and promise not to prey on them. The Baldandars will agree, but will not aid the Darkers if any other party attacks them.

8 - The Warehouses

This area once contained the great warehouses of the Palace. They were mostly looted by Hutaakans and Traldars after the fall of Lord Keiros Ieronyx in 1412 BC, but one has remained untouched from Dark Fairies' times. The Fairies hid within the body of a **Storm Giant**, who seems to be asleep rather than dead. Shovran, that was his name, was captured by the Fairies when he attacked their city with his giants in 1621 BC. The Fairies meant to do something with him, but they simply forgot. His magical slumber could be dispelled by a cleric or a wizard. Shovran could be grateful and willing to cooperate with PCs, but he will not aid anyone allied with the Dark Fairies or Thanatos. He will accept aiding anyone aligned with Nyx for a year in exchange for his freedom, considering that sufficient to pay his debt.

Another warehouse is still closed, but it was set by The Last One and contains some **Wights** (HD 4) including 2 former kobolds, an ogre, an hobgoblin, an orc and 7 humans, all explorers gathered in the last centuries.

⁸ Described in AC9 or 1993 Creature Catalogue, but see also [this article](#) by Robert J Schwalb, [this article](#) by Jamie Baty or [AD&D stats](#) at Monstrous Index.

area. Some of the dwarves in Level 5 may recognize their possessions. Their objects include some magical armor, that can only be used by dwarves, and weapons.

(8) - There is a hidden cache in one of the warehouses containing hundreds of ingots of silver and gold from Taymoran times. Their worth would be enormous but their weight also is.

The Darkers will try to free the Wights, offering them the chance to join their fight against The Last One, and will succeed with some of them. They will also free Shovran, who in gratitude will accept to serve them for a year. Eventually they will also find the treasure and will use it to further their goals in Karameikos and beyond.

9 - The Great Palace

This great building with five storeys was once the Great Palace of the city. Rather than the house of a ruler, it was a residence and a school for priests and acolytes of Nyx, some of them obviously undead. Now part of it is collapsed, divided in half by the Great Chasm (Area 1). In Lord Keiros' times the damage was partially repaired and the Chasm partially closed, but The Last One has decided to open it again as he enjoys the sight and the potential danger of the Dark Waterfall.

The Last One (nosferatu and MU36) indeed has here his main home, his laboratory and his treasure, which contains an enormous amount of magical objects. The Last One appears as a middle aged man with dark hair and great confidence. If anyone surprises him here in his Palace (difficult, as there are several magical alarms, **10 Nosferatu** and **20 Revenant** guards in this area) they will simply receive an invitation to speak with him in the main parlor. The Last One is confident that there is always time to tear someone's soul from their bodies or use them for magical experiments. Captured PCs will likewise be brought to his presence. The Last One could speak with them for months, hosting them in the finest rooms of the palace, before deciding what to do with them. He is always keen to have updated information on the world outside Koskatep. His unwilling main companions are **Louma** (Nosferatu and MU 21), who has her grave near to his, and **Lord Vudar** (Nosferatu and F22). Louma was the former wife of

(9) - The Last One's laboratory contains almost any possible magical objects and any possible undead creature known in the world. It indeed occupies all the bottom floor of the Palace. Above the Chasm, several tormented wights, spectres and wraiths hover, and will attack anyone getting too near. Magical traps and locks also guard the rooms with the most precious possession of The Last One.

The Last One when he still was Leukos. She left him in 1420 BC after he made the pact with Thanatos, and came in Ieronyx to Lord Keiros. She was killed in the hutaakan invasion of 1412 BC, but The Last One somehow managed to take her soul. A moon shaped pendant he keeps at his neck gives him absolute control over Louma, who has tried in vain to steal it several times. Louma will ask for help any chance she gets. The Last One however will horribly torture anyone helping her. Lord Vudar, the last powerful Darker who led an expedition to Koskatep in 818 AC, is in the same situation, albeit for a much shorter time. The Last One controls him with a bracelet he always wears, but Lord Vudar doesn't know that yet and is kept in check by the fact that some of his former companions are also in The Last One's power. Lord Vudar however is still defiant and unbroken, and The Last One often enjoys tormenting him, either with magical means or by telling him about the suffering of his former friends and companions, like Nera and Mila⁹, the now deformed Darkers in Lower Kotesh¹⁰, the spectres in Karrast¹¹, Adu and the others in Kundrak¹².

As the Darkers will storm this level by surprise, they will take almost all the magical treasures and free all the Last One's undead thralls, except for those sincerely loyal to him who will die fighting. They will also free Louma and Lord Vudar, who will take residence here along with **Lady Sonia** (C36) High Priestess of Nyx, and **Lord Mogren** (Nosferatu and MU36). He appears as a lizardman with brown grey scales, but some say he is really a dragon or even another, mysterious and ancient creature.

At least **5 priests** (C5-15), **5 elite warriors** (F7-15),



Interior of the Great Palace

⁹ Check Level 1, Area 18 in Threshold issue #2,

¹⁰ Check Level 2A, Area 10 in Threshold issue #4

¹¹ Check Level 4, Areas 1 and 7 in Threshold issue #6: these are not really in The Last One's control but Gilas' however, but Vudar doesn't know that.

¹² Check Level 6, area 8 in Threshold issue #8

5 obsidian golems and dozens of **Uncorporeals** and **Undecayed** will also take residence in the Palace after the Darkers win. Lord Keiros (from Level 5) and the occupants of Area 10 may also be here occasionally.



Priestesses

10 - The Priestess' Palace

Here was the abode of the Great Priestess of Nyx at the height of the city, and her servants. A painting of some priestesses is still visible on one of the internal walls. **Asteria**, (MU13) a nosferatu wizard, live here with **3 nosferatu apprentices** (MU 4-8). Asteria was one of the companions of Lord Keiros captured by the Dark Fairies (see Level 6) and The Last One recruited her because she was a former lover of Lord Keiros. The 3 vampires are Traladaran adventures from the past five centuries that he controls, placed here to learn from Asteria but also to check on her. Asteria hates The Last One but cannot break his control, for now. The palace contains her quarters and her laboratory, plus several unused rooms.

(10) - There is a hidden sublevel which can be reached only by turning a sun shaped plaster relief, forgotten on a wall on the ground floor. No one has discovered it yet, not even Asteria and The Last One. The sublevel contains the intact tomb of Lyeria, (C21) the human priestess of Ixion who defeated The Death's Hand in 1411 BC. The Church buried her here so that she could awaken if the Light needs her. Indeed any cleric or follower of Ixion may find her and obtain her help against The Last One and/or The Darkers. If not found before, she will awaken when Level 13 is opened and the followers of Ixion attack from below (see issue #1 and #2 of Threshold for more details).

When the Darkers arrive in this room with Lord Keiros, the shock will be enough to free Asteria from The Last One's control. The three younger vampires will have also a 50% chance to escape his control and join the Darkers. After The Last One's defeat, Asteria will remain here with 2 more apprentices, human wizards, and here will reside also **Anna Exoter**¹³ (MU10) with 5 apprentices and, occasionally, **Basco Trius**¹⁴ (MU7) and **Thaddigren Dentiata**¹⁵ (MU6), where the latter two are not on missions outside Koskatep. Skoghios (area 16) and Lord Keiros (Level 5) may also be here occasionally.

11 - The Audience Hall

This great hall decorated with double axes was a tribunal, an audience chamber and a general official hall for the High Priestess at the time of Kosmoteiros. It was used more or less with the same purpose at the time of Ieronyx, then abandoned. The Last One placed **10 Agarats**¹⁶ here as guardians. They will attack anyone entering the area.

¹³ Described on page 24 of Agathokles' [Lords of the Cruth Lowlands](#) adventure module.

¹⁴ Described on page 35 of Agathokles' [Lords of the Cruth Lowlands](#).

¹⁵ Thaddigren appears in the [Dungeon Magazine #24](#) adventure "In the Dread of Night" where he is clearly evil, as The Sons of Night or Darkers are. Agathokles and I however, after a discussion on the [Piazza's Mystara Forum](#) board decided to use them as a non-evil Nyx organization in [Lords of the Cruth Lowlands](#) and [Mirrors of Eternal Night](#), in issue #1 of [Threshold](#) magazine.

¹⁶ See AC9 Creature Catalogue for BECM stats, or these [AD&D stats](#) or these D&D 3ed stats by [Robert J Schwab](#) and [Jamie Baty](#).



Lyeria

(11) - There is a hidden tomb on the lower level of this area, never discovered by The last One nor by previous occupants of the ruins. It contained Kedira, (nosferatu and C15) priestess of Nyx when the city was in the hands of Lord Keiros. She managed to hide when the hutaakans conquered Ieronyx and was cast in a sort of suspended animation. Only Lord Keiros will be able to find her tomb, which contains all her objects and weapons, and a part of the old treasure of the Priestess Palace.

As Lord Keiros will be with the Darkers when they will arrive here, he will be able to awaken Kedira, who will then join them against The Last One. After their victory, she will be the custodian of this area along with **2 apprentices** (C3-9). Lord Keiros may be here visiting her from time to time.



Kedira with her double axe

12 - The Tower quarter

This area dominated by a five storey high tower was a residential quarter for common people of the city and soldiers. Few houses are now still standing, and most of the area is obstructed by rubble. The Last One placed here **3 Banshees**, once Dark Fairies who were too friendly with adventurers or humans and were therefore given to him at different times. The Banshees also command a host of about **50 zombies and skeletons** of orcs, ogres, gnolls and giants gathered at different times, to use them against intruders.

The Darkers will try to convince the banshees to join them. The creatures will not immediately join them against The Last One but will eventually join the Darkers, who will offer a new meaning to their existence. The zombies and skeletons will be destroyed.

(12) - The possessions of previous adventurers can be found in this area, some of them fairly recent. There are for example the remains of a group of Darkers spies, of which a small diary with maps is also left, and other remains of some ogres who came from Level 1.

13 - The Eastern Area

This area is made of decayed structures that cannot be recognized anymore, but included barracks at the height of the city. **Sh'namg**, (MU15) a powerful sidhe nosferatu and wizard has an underground lair here, with his grave and treasure. He also has a **Soul Render**¹⁷, a **Mummy** (once a Nyx's priest) and several **zombies** at his service. The Last One visits him from time to time, and it appears that they have some common project. It's hard to say if Sh'namg is somehow a thrall of The Last One or has rather deceived him for his own purposes.

The Darkers will try to convince Sh'namg to join them. He will accept without many difficulties, but has he really betrayed the Last One or will he aid him when he returns after a year? Or has Sh'namg his own, even darker goals?

Regardless, the Darkers probably will not immediately discover his true motivations and will leave him be. The mummy however will be freed from his control immediately and will join the Darkers, while the zombies will be destroyed. Sh'namg however will hide the Soul Render and will slowly create more incorporeal servants in secret.

(13) - There is treasure of magical objects, scrolls and potions in the underground lair of Sh'namg, but also many dangerous magical traps and cursed items.

14 - The Fortress

This area of about four floors was a fortress at the time of Kosmoteiros and Ieronyx. Later abandoned, it is now the headquarters of **Skloros** (nosferatu and F25), a huge man who is the general of The Last One's forces. He commands over a hundred between **skeletons**, **zombies** and **ghouls**, 10

(14) - There is a hidden sublevel under the Fortress with the remains of Lord Edwac, (nosferatu, A21) an Avenger of Nyx who led the assault against the gnolls in 841 BC, preventing the Church of Thanatos from using the Starlake. Edwac fell and his companions hid the body here. A handful of them were able to escape and relate the story. When in 603 BC the Church of Nyx had again

¹⁷ Created by Geoff Gander [here on the Vaults of Pandius](#). Sh'namg may well be a servitor of the Outer Beings as described in "[Insanity, Horror, and the Outer Beings in Mystara](#)" by Geoff Gander.

wights, 7 wraiths, 5 mummies, 5 spectres and 3 nosferatus (F9-15). The latter 3, along with Skloros, ride **Nightmare horses**¹⁸.



Skloros and his followers

The Darkers will arrive here secretly, finding the fortress empty as Skloros and his minions will be in Area 1, waiting in vain for them. The Darkers will awaken Lord Edwac and the priests and proceed to ambush Skloros and his minions, who will be defeated, then they will go to the Starlake in Area 5. After The Last One's defeat, Lord Edwac will stay here with Lira, Jaken, 1 **obsidian golem**, 10 **uncorporeals and undecayed**, 3 young clerics (C1-6) and 10 **warriors** (F1-5) he will train.

15 - The Southern quarter

A residential area for priests and merchants, this area was once filled with beautiful gardens now long decayed. The Last One placed here 3 **Dusanu**¹⁹ (HD9), an ogre, an orc and a gnoll with

¹⁸ See AC9 or 1993 Creature Catalogue or these [AD&D stats](#).

access to this level, the tomb was renovated and trapped, and Lord Edwac's body preserved so that he might serve Nyx again in the future. Two other priests of Nyx, Lira and Jaken (C11) also remained here, in magical sleep, to aid him upon his awakening.

(15) - There is a collection of potions and other concoctions where each Dusanu has his laboratory: it seems the creatures are trying to develop some sort of preparation for their mysterious purposes, or following The Last

about 3 dozens **zombie** servants, moldy and rotten, some humans, and some humanoids.

The Darkers will try to communicate with the Dusanu to bring them to their side. It's up to the DM to decide if they can succeed or not. The Darkers will regardless request that the zombies be destroyed, as unintelligent undead are anathema to the Church of Nyx.

One's orders. Needless to say that trying to use such potions may be quite dangerous.



Main hall of the South Palace

16 - The South palace

This palace was an academy for wizards at the height of Kosmoteiros, and is now inhabited by **Koros** (MU 24 and nosferatu), a former follower of Nyx who was a friend of both Lord Keiros and Leukos. He repudiated his faith sometime after 1411 BC and became a servant of Thanatos and The Last One. He has **6 apprentices** (Nosferatus and MU 2-12) and a host of two dozen **skeletons**, **wraiths**, **wights** and **spectres** serving him.

(16) - There is a sizable magical treasure of wands, potions and scrolls in Koros' laboratory and among his private possessions, but most of them are well hidden and protected by magical traps. Some of the items are also cursed and will slowly influence the bearer, turning him or her to the worship of Thanatos.

When the Darkers attack, Koros and his apprentices will probably be caught in Area 1 as the rest of The Last One's minions. If Lord Keiros spots Koros, he will try to destroy him immediately. Another Darker, **Skoghios** (Nosferatu and MU 20) was a former friend of Koros and will try to kill him for his betrayal of Nyx. Skoghios will take residence here with **4 apprentices** (Nosferatus and MU5-10), **2 obsidian golems** and about **10 Uncorporeals** and **10 Undecayed**.

¹⁹ See AC9 or 1993 Creature Catalogue, or in the [AD&D Mystara Monstrous Compendium](#) for AD&D stats, and these [D&D3.5 ed stats](#).



THE BATTLE ON THIS LEVEL

When the Darkers attack, they will have a sizeable army, including at least a hundred or more ogres and hill giants with their leaders Golbag and Trosh (as detailed in Level 1, issue #2 of Threshold). They will also have at least a hundred Darkers between wizards like Mogren, Anna Exoter and Basco Trius, Clerics as Lady Sonya, Kivid and Ilena (the latter two are described in Level 5, issue #7 of Threshold), thieves and warriors. They will have also around 50 undead with them, including Undecayed and Uncorporeals (described in issue #1 of Threshold), Skoghios and his nosferatu, and some obsidian golems.

As explained in the above levels of Koskatep in the previous issue of Threshold magazine, the Darkers will also gather several more

allies among the undead of the levels above, as many will join them, as Gilas and her ghosts in Level 4 (in issue #6 of Threshold) and Lord Keiros in Level 5 (in issue #7 of Threshold).

They will also have the strategic advantage to strike from the secret passage leading from Level 5 to area 14 of this level, thus surprising The Last One's minions.

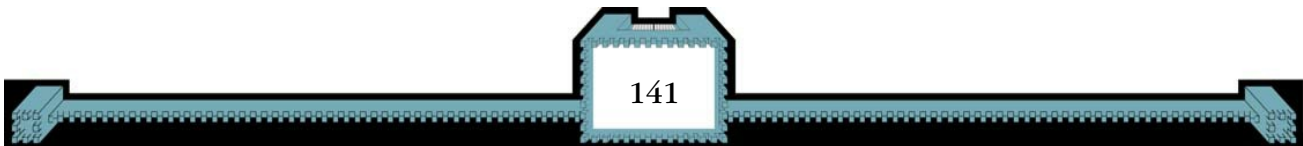
Approximately a year after the first battle, as explained in issue #1 and #2 of Threshold, The Last One will probably strike back from Level 10, but also Hel's beastmen of Level 11, Ixion's followers in Level 13 (with some more allies from the above levels as detailed in each one) and the Fairies in Levels 9 and 6 could be involved in this second battle.



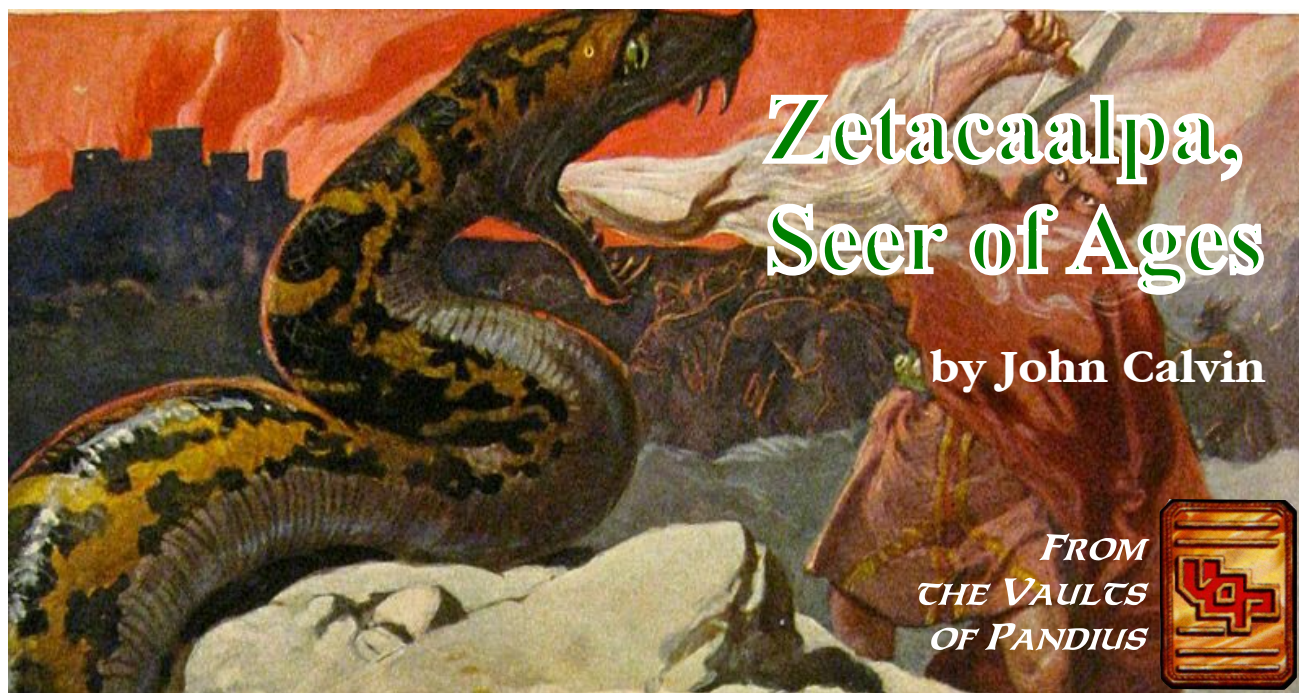
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VILLAINS OF MYSTARA



Zetacaalpa, Seer of Ages

Male awakened giant snake, half-green dragon cleric

Conversation between two House Umbarth agents:

“I have it on good authority that this will be a most prosperous venture.”

“But what about the Atruaghin? Even if you could get them to allow mining efforts on the Great Escarpment, the concessions you would have to make would narrow our profit margins by too much. I don't understand how we can pull this off.”

”Funny thing that... seems most of the savages have fallen ill... victims of a most unfortunate plague. We can cut them out of the deal entirely...”

Description

An enormous snake with malachite scales and bony horns covering his face and spine, Zetacaalpa is the size of a small building. Folded amid his coils are giant bat-like wings and the yellow fires of desire burn deep from within his lidless eyes. One can never tell if the giant snake is staring into the future or gazing into the core of one's soul. Zetacaalpa constantly whispers his own name, whether in private or giving an audience to deserving supplicants.

Motivation

Zetacaalpa is a seer and peers into the future, divining events for individuals in return for offerings and favors. Many Thyatian and Darokinian merchants come to him for

advice on their entrepreneurial endeavors. Zetacaalpa is secretly a servant of Atzanteotl, and all of his prognostications are designed to further that immortal's goals.

The Seer of Ages has been prodding his supplicants into continuously more callous acts of violence against lower class citizens and foreigners and is slowly pushing many regions towards rebellion and revolt. His main goal is to see Darokin at war with as many of her neighbors as possible. Once this is achieved Zetacaalpa will bring forth the city of Oenkmar from the depths, ruling it in Atzanteotl's name. Besides the unknowing dupes that Zetacaalpa coerces into doing his will, the creature has a cult of fanatic followers devoted to carrying out its will.

History

Born in the land of the red sun circa AC 700, Zetacaalpa's early struggles in the Hollow World were accentuated by the fact that he was born alone. Whether abandoned by his parents, or stolen as an egg, Zetacaalpa never knew, though as he grew in power he began to acknowledge a steady sibilant voice constantly whispering in his head... a voice he soon accepted as that of his true father - Atzanteotl.

Constantly on the move, the itinerant creature eventually found succor near the ruins of Axateotl in southern Azcan lands. The degenerate Azcan tribes there, brought low by constant Schattenalfen attacks culminating in BC 322, mistook Zetacaalpa as an avatar of their immortal Kalaktatla, and the wily snake did not disavow them of their error. He ruled over the tribe for nearly a

century before being driven out by true followers of the immortal Ka.

Once again on the run, Zetacaalpa followed his master's whispers through the earth's crust before finally emerging in the borderlands of Darokin.

Followers

Although Zetacaalpa chiefly works unseen in the shadows, he has encountered several individuals on the surface world that he considers as minions.

Alfek "the Silversmith" Vickers

Male, Darokinian human, Merchant

Alfek apprenticed with his father as a silversmith at a very young age, quickly mastering the craft, but his nickname stems rather from the uncanny ability that Alfek has of turning a profit from any business deal he pursues. A rising star in House Umbarth, and also one of Greenleaf Vickers few surviving nephews, Alfek walks a very narrow line between making himself useful to his uncle, and becoming a rival that could threaten his power.

As a lad Alfek fell down a silver mine shaft while on an outing with his father, and was lost for days. In the darkness of the caverns he stumbled upon the lair of Zetacaalpa, who took Alfek under his wings rather than devour him. In fact Alfek's current success is due entirely to the snake's machinations, and visions that he shares with his acolyte. For now Alfek is more than happy to help his uncle destabilize the country, but once that

is done he plans on killing his uncle and seizing power for himself.

Coaxoc “Serpent Flower”

Female, Atraughin human, Shaman



Coaxoc has fired the desires of Tiger tribesmen since she first flowered into womanhood. Twice she has been captured as a “prize” by warriors of rival tribes. Twice she has been forced to marry against her will... and twice she

murdered her unsuspecting paramours in cold blood. Coaxoc lives on the fringes of Python tribeland near the eastern borders of the Forest of Death in Atraughin, where she is sought out as an expert in the brewing of poisons.

The only thing she hates more than her own people are the brutes from Darokin who constantly encroach upon her land. Though she has never met Zetacaalpa directly, she dreams visions of him every night, and sometimes even hears the snake whispering in her ear while awake. Zetacaalpa has been her constant comfort through troubled times, and never hesitates to heed his warnings, nor his advice.

Noktica

Male, Oenkmarian humanoid, Cleric



Noktica, and his line, have been preparing for Oenkmar to resurface for generations. Years ago his master saw visions of a giant winged serpent, and knew that Atzanteotl had sent a savior to once again lead the Oenkmarians to glory. Too frail to

journey into the depths himself, his master sent Noktica in his stead, and the young orc was soon confronted by the greatness of Zetacaalpa.

Having since assumed his master’s mantle, Noktica now spends his time performing experiments on the gifts given to him by the serpent - Zetacaalpa’s venom. Through alchemy and dark arts, Noktica has created a serum that grants a temporary frenzied strength to those injected with it. The crafty orc is now slowly building up a cadre of trusted warriors so that when the time is ripe, he can take over the city and impose the will of Zetacaalpa... and of Atzanteotl.

Dhoka Naag (Eyes of the Viper)

The Dhoka Naag are a semi-spiritual assassin's cult dedicated to serving the whims of Zetacaalpa. While the core of the group formed in Sind, offshoots have since spread into Darokin, Glantri, and Ylaruam. At least one disciple of this order attends the great serpent at all times, even if they are not seen. The Dhoka Naag are experts in the martial arts and master assassins, and many of the cult's masters are practiced diviners and prognosticators - skills which only increase their formidability as opponents.

Adventure Hooks

The following adventure hooks can be used to introduce players to Zetacaalpa and his machinations, and may even be weaved together to form a fully fledged campaign arc.

Defenders of Canolbarth

The southwestern defenders of Canolbarth forest have disappeared. Alfek Vickers and his trusted followers have secretly killed the local elves, and are now goading unsuspecting Darokinian merchants into profiting from their absence. Several logging camps have sprung up in the borderlands between Alleybrooke and Fenhold, and the loggers are felling trees as quickly as they can.

Meanwhile, elves from Desnae and Shieldtree have sent scouts to investigate the sudden silence from their guards on the southern border. Once they encounter the human loggers their response will be swift and violent. The PCs will need to think quick in order to stop this encounter from

escalating into a full scale war between Alfheim and Darokin.

Neither will Alfek Vickers take kindly to anyone meddling in his affairs. Once his discovers the PCs are involved, Alfek will spring into action. While the PCs are busy fending off his assassins, Alfek will make sure that all of his involvement in the situation is erased from existence.

Evil Whisperer

The sole survivor of a bloody attack, a maiden known as "Serpent Flower," was taken in and nursed back to health by the Coyote tribe of the Great Escarpment. After hearing her chilling tales of depraved attacks against her own tribe, the Hawks, all of the Children of the Bear have begun to flock to her aid and are preparing for war with Darokin.

In reality, this is an elaborate trap set by Coaxoc and the Children of the Tiger. She and her followers set upon a small tribe on the plateau and slaughtered them all, subsequently staging the attack to appear as if it were performed by Darokinian merchants. Left among the dead bodies, Coaxoc's apparent trials and bravery have pulled at the heartstrings of the Atroughin warriors. Once leave the plateau to attack Darokin, the Children of the Tiger will strike, eradicating the undefended tribesmen left behind.

Not only will the PCs need to broker peace between Darokin and the Children of the Bear, but they will have to unmask Serpent Flower's treachery and prevent Tiger Clan's sneak attack. Coaxoc may try to persuade

the PCs of her sincerity rather than oppose them outright (depending on whether or not she believes they can be convinced). In such a case, Zetacaalpa may recruit Alfek Vickers to provide damning evidence of Darokinian duplicity.

Snakes on a Caravan

Goods being shipped north from Corunglain have not been reaching their destination, and the merchant houses in Darokin are beginning to take notice. Neither bandits, nor humanoid brigands are to blame for these mysterious disappearances however, since the caravans, along with all shipped goods, have been recovered along the roads they were set to traverse. What is troubling the merchants is not the loss of goods... but the loss of all the traders and guards without a trace of violence or bloodshed.

PCs may be tasked with unraveling this mystery, or they may stumble upon the eerie remains of such a caravan on the open road. In fact the cultists of Dhoka Naag have been targeting merchant caravans on the northern roads leading into Glantri. Infiltrating the caravans from within, the assassins capture and incapacitate the merchants and their crews at the most opportune time. Afterwards the captives are led away, and all traces of the attacks are erased. The fate awaiting the unfortunate merchants is grim... a short journey to dark caverns in the nearby Broken Lands where they await sacrifice to the cult's dark patron.

Discovering the assassins in their lair and freeing any remaining prisoners should be the PC's ultimate goal.

Oenkmar Rising

With the countryside destabilized, and his magical reserves bolstered by blood sacrifices, Zetacaalpa is prepared to achieve his greatest accomplishment... the raising of the lost city of Oenkmar. As the earth rumbles, and fires pour out of the Broken Lands, very little time is left for the PCs to thwart the evil viper's plans. They must rush headlong into the humanoid infested wastelands north of Darokin and battle magically fueled zealots from Oenkmar who have already begun their conquest of the lesser humanoid clans.

Though deadly, the Oenkamrians are not the most immediate threat. To stop Oenkmar's rise, the PCs must rush past its defenders into the bowels of the earth to confront Zetacaalpa himself. Only by disrupting the snake's vile rituals will the surface world be saved, and Oenkmar once again sink into the depths.

CONSEQUENCES

The ramifications of Zetacaalpa's plots could be severe, whether the giant viper succeeds partially or in full. At the very least, Darokin and its surrounding regions may become destabilized, with mistrust and ill will sowed between the merchants and their neighbors of Alfheim and Atruaghin. Depending upon their actions, the PCs may be able to alleviate such conflict to some degree, but if not Darokin may face grave danger in the immediate future. Threats may come from the Empire of Thaytis, Ierendi pirates, or even from the Master of Hule. Playing

through these adventures may pave the way for module X10, Red Arrow, Black Shield.

Should Zetacaalpa succeed however, consequences may be even more dire. Both the physical and political landscape of the region will change drastically, with the appearance of Oenkmar devastating the region with volcanic activity and earthquakes. Whether or not Zetacaalpa can maintain control over the humanoids will have very little impact on their ultimate behavior. The Oenkmarians will quickly dominate all of the lesser humanoid clans living in the Broken Lands, and then turn their sights to Darokin, Alfheim, Atruaghin, Glantri, the Shires, and beyond. All of these lands fell under humanoid control at one time or another in the history of the Known World, and they may again...

Appendix: References

Aaron Nowack, [A Brief History of Umbarth House](#)

Thorfinn Tait, [Atruaghin Clans Updated Map, 8 miles per hex](#)

Bruce Heard, GAZ10 Orcs of Thar, TSR 1988

Carl Sargent, GAZ13 Shadow Elves, TSR 1990

William W. Connors, GAZ14 Atruaghin Clans, TSR 1991

John Nephew, HWR1 Sons of Azca, TSR 1991
Redwall, by Brian Jacques 1986 (the Asmodeus character)



The Ultimate Discussion Fan Website for Dave Arneson's Blackmoor. Great Forum Discussions and Legendary Play-by-Post Campaigns set in the Original Fantasy Roleplaying Setting.

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<http://spelljammerblog.wordpress.com/>



An adaptation of module B7 for D&D 5E

by Giuliano Michelon

INTRODUCTION

This article provides an adaptation of the old adventure module B7 *Rahasia*, by *Tracy and Laura Hickman*, for the new **Dungeons & Dragons® 5th edition**. Possessing the original module will be essential because this conversion will not contain original texts, maps, pictures or other vital information to run the game properly.

My intentions for the story narrated in this module are that it will fit perfectly as a sequel of TSR's module DDA3 - *The Eye of Traldar*. In fact the two modules together constitute a mini campaign called "The Eyes of Traldar" (see the background section for more details). In the end the epilogue will explain how to use these adventures as an introduction to the biggest campaign of Elemental Evil including its last iteration, *Princes of the Apocalypse*, set in *Mystara*.

About this Module and Special Thanks

In the first issue of the magazine "Threshold", dedicated to the land and myths of Karameikos, I found a really interesting article entitled "The History of Karameikos" by Simone Neri (aka Zendrolion). It included the history of various orbs, magical items that affected the history of ancient Traladara. Simone goes beyond the individual stories of two powerful gems, the Black Opal Eye (introduced in B7 - Rahasia) and the Eye of Traldar (DDA3 - Eye of Traldar) and builds a charming story that bonds together the two artifacts, now known collectively as the "Eyes of Traldar".

But what exactly is their history? Simone hypothesizes that the Traldar hero Zirchev, before he achieved Immortal status, trained and entrusted an apprentice with the delicate duty to protect ancient Traladara. To do this he entrusted him with two powerful magical items, two orbs gifted with great divination and enchantment powers known as the Eyes of Traldar. This point gave rise to the first question: who made these orbs? Are they a product of Zirchev's powerful magic or maybe they're more ancient than the Immortal itself? And lastly where do they come from? What is their origin? Later I'll try to give my personal idea about this aspect of their history.

Zirchev's apprentice became the first Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams; the first in a long list of wise protectors of the land, until the malevolent wizard Trinkla, in BC 308, came and took the Black Opal Eye from its rightful owner.

But a thief, whose name is lost in time, had other plans for Trinklas' treasure; infact he stole the orb from the sorceress' tower. Unfortunately for him, things went bad and he went lost in the Blight Swamp, ending up buried with the orb. After about 150 years a new player made his appearance in the form of the good hearted wizard Elyas. Even in this case, Simone, speculated about the origins of the mage. He wrote that Elyas could be the first non-Alphatian, native of Thyatis, to be trained to the art of magic and that he quickly became a powerful wizard. Displeased with the methods of the Alphatian rulers and disgusted with the wide corruption of the Thyatian bureaucrats, he chose for himself the way of the hermit in the remote wilderness of Traladara. There he became a good friend of the Callarii elven tribes and of the current Seer. Once he became the new Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams, he started his quest to recover the lost orb from Trinkla's Tomb. There, at last, he found and recovered the Black Opal Eye. During his life as Seer, Elyas divided his time between his tower in the Hantu Valley (where he kept the Black Opal Eye) and the Lake of Lost Dreams (where he kept the Fire Opal Eye).

The story then goes on as described in the B7 - Rahasia module with the fight between Elyas and the three witches, Elyas' sacrifice and the foundation of the Temple of the Quiet Way, until the arrival of the Rahib and of the heroes.

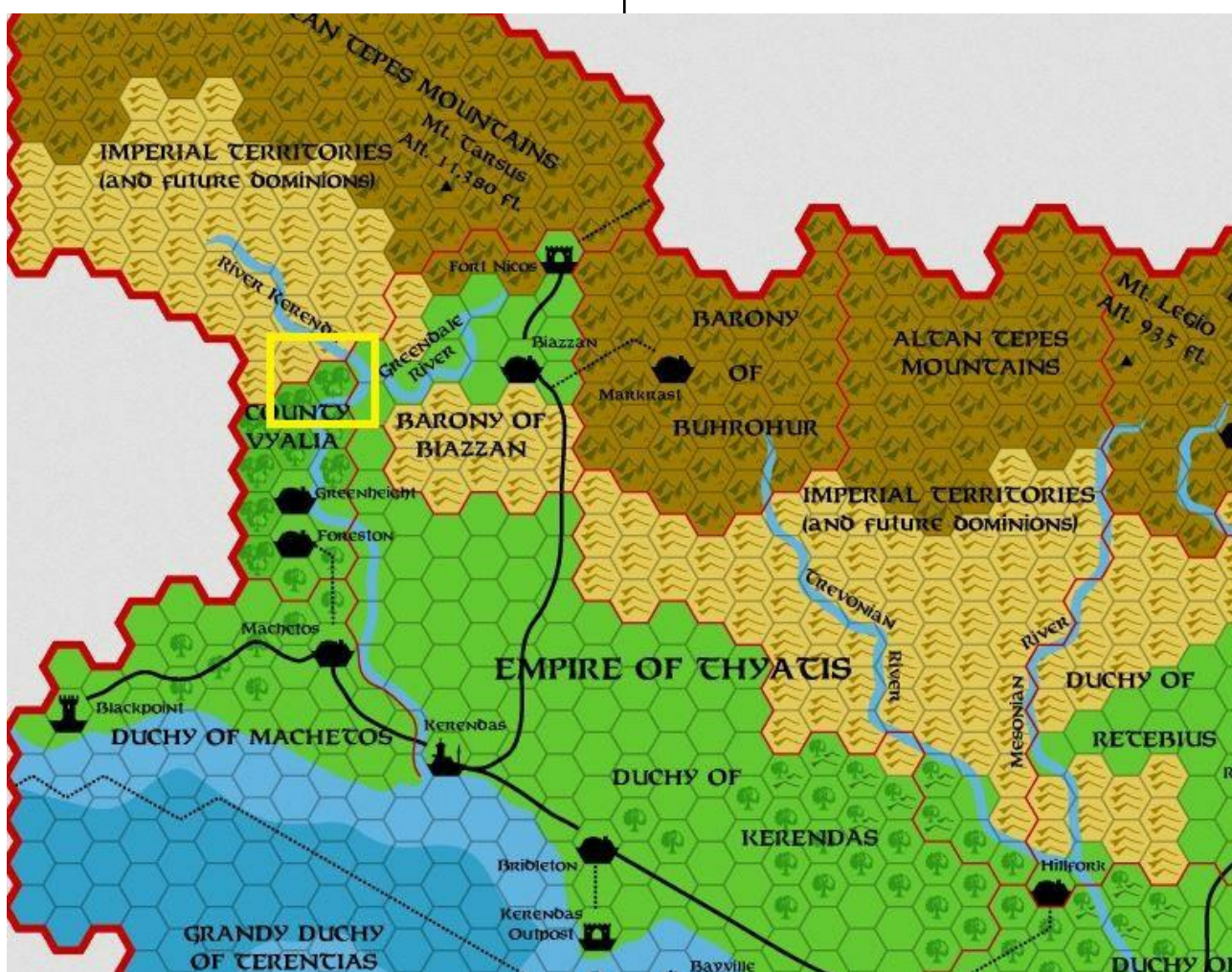
This is undoubtedly a good story and can work magnificently as well as it's written.

I'll try however to add, and not subtract, details to the story only to, if possible, render

it more complete and, I hope, more suggestive.

Before you start with my version of the story, I'd like to thank a friend of mine, a great Mystara expert and developer. I have always turned to him for opinions or when I've had doubts, and he has also influenced a lot the development of this idea. So, a special thanks goes to **Marco Dalmonte** (aka Dek Shari).

A very special thanks goes to **Simone Neri**, even if I don't know him personally, for his precious article over Karamaikos history and finally to another web-friend, **Stelio Passaris** for his work on DDA3 - Eye of Traldar 5th Edition and that has made it easy for me to play it like an introductory adventure for my first 5th edition campaign, and of course **Glen Welch, Giampaolo Agosta and John Calvin**, of Threshold Editorial Team, for his precious help with this translation.



Map of Thyatis showing location for Rahasia (yellow box)

SUGGESTION FOR ADVENTURE'S LOCATION

The original module is designed to be a generic adventure, easily adaptable to an exotic setting. However, in the later module "B1-9 In Search of Adventure", the adventure is placed in the Great Duchy of Karameikos.

In my opinion, the middle-oriental style of the Siswa elves, combined with the name of the main villain of the story, the Rahib, fit better in an environment with Arabian flavor. So I decided to place the elf village of Kota-Hutan in the far north region of the County of Vyalia. The river that's possible to see in the original map of the Rahasia module will be the Kerendas river. Beyond the river there's the lands of the Barony of Biazan that are heavily influenced by their Alasiyan origins; Alasiyans that, in the past centuries, may have influenced with their rich culture even the more isolated of the elven clans.

BACKGROUND AND AN ALTERNATIVE BACKGROUND

The apex of the technological development of Blackmoor corresponded also to its greatest territorial expansion; an age that saw the powerful technocracy dominate over much of the lands of Mystara. However, an Empire of such greatness requires a considerable expenditure of resources to maintain its control. So it was that the elite in command of the nation became convinced of the need to develop a new technology and with it new tools to serve their purpose.

At that time a brilliant young scientist, answering to the name of Rafiel, was carrying

out futuristic studies about thought transmission and super-symmetry (a very complex matter that studied and developed the thoughts of the collective unconscious). His studies were at that stage still very theoretical but undoubtedly had already attracted the attention of the highest officials in the military ranks, who foresaw enormous potential in them.

The project was never completed due of adverse events that led Mystara to the edge of oblivion. In the days preceding the cataclysm known as the Great Rain of Fire, Rafiel was involved in the construction of fifty devices, called "eyes", in the shape of spherical metallic orbs with a diameter of about 10 feet. Once launched into orbit around the planet these "eyes" would be connected to each other through an embryonic form of collective thought becoming whole and thus forming a kind of protective shield around the planet.

Through these "eyes", able to see even the smallest detail on the surface of Mystara, Blackmoor would be able to exert an almost total mind control over individuals "selected" and placed under "observation". When the Blackmoorian civilization collapsed, destroyed by its own technology, only twenty of these devices were in orbit around the planet of Mystara. They never entered into an operational phase and over time some of them were lost or were destroyed. Some were never properly positioned and escaped into the infinite void of space. One even crashed into the moon of Matera. Two of these, finally, had a strange common fate.

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries B.C., in an unspecified year, two of these

"eyes" collided and fell to earth. Their fall was confused by the court astronomer of Prince Traldar, of the then Kingdom of Nithia, as twin shooting stars. The sign was interpreted as a good omen, given the twin birth of the Prince's children, his son Meketre and daughter Isisalam.

However, the omen came with a warning that one day their birth would have generated fratricidal struggles for control of the barony of Traldar. The first act that was undertaken by Prince Traldar was to organize an expedition to recover the remains of the two fallen stars. In the days that followed, the fallen stars were brought before him with great difficulty. The charred remains of two ferrous clusters were little more than one meter in length but possessed an extremely great mass.

It took several weeks before the magicians of the court were able to "open" the metal casings and reveal their hidden content. At their center was what looked like a great eye of metal and wires, and they were declared "a gift of the gods". The blue core, no bigger than a quail's egg, was said to have "an alive and pulsing" energy. The core's metal had the consistency of quicksilver and had to be placed in special containers. Some experiments made by the wizards of Traldar revealed unusual properties of the metal; the two liquids attracted each other but, never melded and always returned to their original size and shape. They also found them to possess strong divination and enchantment charms. The Prince then commanded his most powerful mages and clerics to create two gem settings for the cores, called "the Eyes of Traldar" as gifts to his two children. The gems, at whose center pulsate the

energy of the cores, were equipped with unique powers individually, but with much greater power if used together.

Under the tutelage of a loving father and the best teachers, Meketre became a sorcerer-warrior of unmatched value while Isisalam dedicated her life to the worship of the Immortal Pflarr becoming favored among her priestesses. When Prince Traldar deemed his children ready, he gave them the gift of the two "eyes". Isisalam received the Fire Opal Eye, a yellow-orange gem equipped with powers of divination. Meketre was given the Black Opal Eye with its bewitching powers. As a condition of his gift he tasked them with leading part of the clan of Traldar south of the Altan Tepes Mountains to colonize the new lands in his name. His conviction and secret hope was that his two children would learn to collaborate and use the combined powers of the two gems. It was his plan to give the newly colonized land to one child and the "motherland," Traldar, to the other.

But things did not go exactly as desired by the prince. Princess Isisalam, soon discovered the valley of Hutaaka and its mysterious inhabitants, "heralds on earth" of the immortal Pflarr. She joined them and spent every day of her life devoting herself to the worship to the jackal headed immortal. Her brother Meketre conquered with ease and took total control of the lands south of the Altan Tepes Mountains (now Karameikos). His reign was long and peaceful, marked by prosperity for the peoples he ruled over. Over the years his subjects adopted without distinction the name of Traldar. Like his sister, he never returned to their ancient home of Nithia, because he adapted more quickly to life in

the rich and fertile lands watered by the rivers of Volaga and Rugalov. After his death his subjects built his mausoleum near the headwaters of the river Volaga. Among its treasures was found his most valuable asset: the Black Opal Eye.

Popular tradition was that was the Traldar hero Zirchev created the Eyes of Traldar but this is a distortion of reality, due to the effects of the Spell of Oblivion that wiped out the civilization of Nithia and almost all of the memories concerning it. Zirchev had reached the rank of Archmage under the teachings of the last hutaakans, and had the generosity to bring together the two objects and to "donate" them to the people of Traldar. He entrusted to a special trained elect, the two orbs. This elect became the first Seer. In this way was born the figure of the Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams (or Seer of the Lake of Lost Souls, or simply Seer of Traldar).

Almost eight centuries later the immortal Rafiel, really active in the search for technological artifacts dating back to Blackmoor, has perceived in the Eyes of Traldar a dangerous remnant of his deadly work. He was determined to put them in safe keeping in order to prevent accidents that could generate a new holocaust, like the one that created the Broken Lands. He assumed for himself an avatar, a mortal identity named Elyas. With his affinity for magic and the elven people he soon became the new Seer of Traldar. His first act was to separate the gems: the Fire Opal Eye was left on the island in the middle of the Lake of Lost Dreams; the Black Opal Eye was instead entrusted to the care of the Vyalia elves in the small village of Kota-Hutan in the current Empire of Thyatis. There, in the Valley of Hantu, he founded the

philosophy of Quiet Way and the order of monk-elves Siswa. The rest of the story and the death of Elyas, one of the Avatar of Rafiel, are described in the module B7 – Rahasia.

Before attempting to separate the two objects Elyas used his power to locate the "Arrow Station", a laboratory and underground bunker located in the heart of Dymrak Forest, forgotten from the time of Blackmoor's demise. This laboratory, similar to others scattered throughout the planet of Mystara, was designed to collect data sent to the planet by the various "Eyes". After that the data was conveyed to a Central Unit located in the center of the Empire for the analysis of information collected.

The Station, though waiting to be destroyed, was temporarily made safe by the Immortal with the use of technological traps and guardians. But the death of his Avatar and the loss of the Black Opal Eye by the hand of the three witches, thralls of Orcus, persuaded Rafiel to desist from his primary goal. He thought that it was unlikely someone would be able to put together the Eyes of Traldar again, and to locate and access Arrow Station's secrets. For the following centuries all Rafiel's efforts and energies were absorbed by the development of the Chamber of the Spheres and the care of "his" people... until now. Now Rafiel has perceived that, in the far east, a long forgotten enemy has awoken from hibernation. An enemy so powerful and dreadful that the people of Blackmoor preferred to annihilate themselves and their own civilization with the Great Rain of Fire, rather than succumb to its will.

Adventure Synopsis and Hooks for the Players Characters

This adventure can be run as a stand alone but, works better as a sequel to DDA3 - Eye of Traldar. However Eye of Traldar is a typical introductory module that works perfectly for 1st level adventurers. Instead Rahasia, is an adventure ideal for 3rd level characters. Parties composed of fewer than 6-7 adventurers may have troubles with this module if they are not of higher levels. In either case you may need to connect the two stories using side tracks or secondary adventures necessary to allow your party to achieve the sufficient experience to face Rahasia. Since Eye of Traldar ends with an escape from Fort Doom and Rahasia begins in the far east of the Karameikos-Thyatis border, you can use whichever adventure you prefer to connect the two.

From the moment the party recovers the Fire Opal Eye and one PC attunes with it, he becomes the chosen one of the Eye. From here the character starts to dream and has visions about the Fire Opal Eye and most important of all of its true history. It is up to the DM, to decide how clear or cryptic these visions must be. At least at the beginning of his visions, the chosen one doesn't have an idea of the technological nature of the

devices. As the adventure progresses, the visions can become clearer and clearer as to the true nature of the gem. This is a good opportunity to introduce remnants of ancient Nithia in your campaign or to make your players aware that something has existed centuries before them and the present nations. The party can become aware of the urgency to go to the Seer of the Lake of Lost Dreams to obtain more information. The Dymrak Forest also offers a lot of suggestive opportunities for adventure.

DDA4 - Dymrak Dread or Tabi Hunt? (from PC2 - Top Ballista) are useful adventures usable for the purpose of bridging the two adventures. They are not overly long and present more the characteristics of a side track adventure than those of a long module adventure. Both end with a dead end passage that the authors suggest to use to develop further explorations. This offers the opportunity for the players to find the entrance to Blackmoor's Arrow Station. However it will be necessary for the presence of the two Orbs to open it, as described in the **Conclusions and Aftermath** section. Once at the Lake of Lost Dreams they will instead be directed to the Seer to the County Vyalia where the adventure Rahasia will begin as described in the original form.

CONVERTING TO 5TH EDITION

The adventure is calibrated for a 3rd level party composed of 5-7 PCs.

XP Thresholds by character level are the following:

Easy	525
Medium	1,050
Hard	1,575
Deadly	2,800

Table 1: XP Thresholds

If you play with a lower number of PCs I suggest to utilize 3rd - 4th level adventurers.

Courtyard and Upper Temple Level

[Use Map 2 for areas 1-24]

In the courtyard and upper level, check for random encounters every thirty minutes (game terms). Roll 1d6. A result of 6 means the PCs encounter something. When an encounter occurs, roll 1d12 and use the resulting encounter on **Table 2**.

11. COURTYARD POOL [EL 700 = Medium]

No. 01 Water Weird [MM page 299] Challenge 3 (700 XP)

13. SOUTHEAST SHRINE [EL 450 = Easy]

No. 01 Gargoyle [MM page 140] Challenge 2 (450 XP)

20. STORAGE ROOM [EL 500 = Easy]
No. 05 Siswa Acolytes [new monsters] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

21. HALL JUNCTION [EL 1,050 = Medium]

No. 03 Bandits [MM pag. 343] Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

No. 01 Bandit Captain [MM pag. 343] Challenge 2 (450 XP)

24. CLOAK ROOM [EL 200 = Easy]

No. 01 Alki, Elven Eldritch Knight [see NPCs] Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Middle Temple Level

[Use Map 3 for areas 25-35].

In the middle level, check for random encounters every third game turn. Roll 1d6. A result of 6 means the PCs encounter something. When an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 and use the resulting encounter on **Table 2**. Do not use encounters 9-12.

27g. PRIESTHOOD CELL [EL 300 = Easy]
No. 03 Siswa Acolytes [new monsters] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

27n. PRIESTHOOD CELL [EL 500 = Easy]
No. 05 Siswa Acolytes [new monsters] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

27o. DARK CELL [EL 500 = Easy]
No. 05 Siswa Acolytes [new monsters] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

29. SISWA GUARDS [EL 150 = Easy]
No. 02 Siswa Guards [new monsters] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

Die Roll	Table 2: Wandering Monster [No.]	Source Book	Special Notes / Chal.
1	Swarm of Poisonous Snakes [1]	MM pag. 338	2 (450 XP)
2	Giant Spider [1d2]	MM pag. 328	1 (200 XP)
3	Gelatinous Cube [1]	MM pag. 242	2 (450 XP)
4	Gargoyle [1]	MM pag. 140	2 (450 XP)
5	Swarm of Rats [1]	MM pag. 339	¼ (50 XP)
6	Siswa Guards (High Elves) [2d4+2]	New Monster	¼ (50 XP)
7-8	Skeletons [1d4+2]	MM pag. 272	¼ (50 XP)
9-12	Siswa Acolytes (High Elves) [2d4+2]	New Monster	¼ (50 XP)

Die Roll	Table 3: Wandering Monster [No.]	Source Book	Special Notes / Chal.
1	Orcs [2d4]	MM pag. 338	2 (450 XP)
2	Shadow Elf Mercenary [1]. Roll again if he is already defeated.	MM pag. 128	5 (1,800 XP)
3	Goblins [2d4]	MM pag. 166	1/4 (50 XP)
4	Ogre [1]	MM pag. 237	2 (450 XP)
5	Rahib. Roll again if he is already defeated.	See NPCs	
6	Black Panthers [1d2]	MM pag. 333	¼ (50 XP)
8	Gelatinous Cube [1]	MM pag. 242	2 (450 XP)
9	Giant Rats [3d6]	MM pag. 327	1/8 (25 XP)
10	Giant Bats [1d10]	MM pag. 323	¼ (50 XP)
11	Zombies [2d4]	MM pag. 316	¼ (50 XP)
12	Giant Spider [1d3]	MM pag. 328	1 (200 XP)

From Maze Area	Table 4: Arena Opponents [No.]	Source Book	Special Notes / Chal.
A	Skeletons [8]	MM pag. 272	1/4 (50 XP)
B	Orcs [5]	MM pag. 246	1/2 (100 XP)
C	Phase Spider [1]	MM pag. 334	3 (700 XP)
D	Zombies [8]	MM pag. 316	1/4 (50 XP)
E	Ogres [2]	MM pag. 237	2 (450 XP)
F	Panthers [8]	MM pag. 333	¼ (50 XP)
G	Minotaurs [1]	MM pag. 223	3 (700 XP)
H	Green Dragon, Wyrmling [2]	MM pag. 95	2 (450 XP)

30. HALLWAY OF THE GREAT TEMPLE

[EL 450 = Easy]

No. 01 **Gelatinous Cube** [MM pag. 242]
Challenge 2 (450 XP)**35. THE GREAT TEMPLE [EL 450 = Medium]**No. 01 **Bone Golem** [new monster]
Challenge 3 (700 XP)**Lower Temple Level [Use Map 4 FOR AREAS 36-49].**

In the lower level, check for random encounters every third game turn. Roll 1d6. A result of 6 means the PCs encounter something. When an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 and use the resulting encounter on **Table 2**. Do not use encounters 9-12.

37. LIBRARY [EL 1,100 = Hard]No. 01 **The Rahib** [NPCs] Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)**40. THE RAHIB'S BEDCHAMBER [EL 150 = Easy]**No. 02 **Black Panthers** [MM pag.333]
Challenge ¼ (50 XP)**42. ULAR-TAMAN'S ROOM [EL 1,800 = Deadly]**No. 01 **Ular-Taman** [new monster]
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)**46. STORAGE ROOM [EL 500 = Easy]**No. 08 **Giant Rats** [MM pag. 327] Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)**47. GUARDROOM [EL 400 = Easy]**No. 04 **Siswa Guards** [new monster]
Challenge ¼ (50 XP)**49. PRISON CELLS [EL 400 = Easy]**No. 01 **Baik Telor**, human fighter [Thug, MM pag. 350] Challenge ½ (100 XP)No. 01 **Hasan**, elf scout [Scout, MM pag. 349] Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Note. These two NPCs offer the opportunity to easily replace previously dead PCs. If they are simply prisoners, **Baik Telor** is a human fighter coming from Ylaruam. Use the **thug** stats for him substituting the mace with a scimitar. Instead **Hasan** is an elf **scout** from the village of Kota-Hutan.

Halls of Grandeur [Use Map 5 FOR AREAS 50-84].

In the Halls of Grandeur, check for random encounters every third game turn. Roll 1d6. A result of 6 means the PCs encounter something. When an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 and use the resulting encounter on **Table 3**. Do not use encounters 7-12.

51. CORRIDOR OF THE UNEXPECTED [EL 600 = Medium]No. 02 **Spies** [MM pag. 349] Challenge 1 (200 XP)**54B. SOLORENA'S CRYPT [EL 50 = Easy]**No. 01 **Skeleton** [MM pag. 272] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)**58. OUTER EAST VAULT [EL 450 = Easy]**No. 01 **Gelatinous Cube** [MM pag. 242]
Challenge 2 (450 XP)**63. MIRYALA'S CELL [EL 0 = N.A.]**No. 01 **Miryala**, commoner elven maiden [MM pag. 345] Challenge 0 (10 XP)

64. SPIDER LAIR [EL 200 = Easy]
 No. 01 **Giant Spider** [MM pag. 328] Challenge 1 (200 XP)

65. MAGICIAN'S CELL [EL 200 = Easy]
 No. 01 **Merdiz, human magician**, AL N [LMoP pag. 57 ref. Evil Mage] Challenge 1 (200 XP). He has the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): light, friends, prestidigitation, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): sleep, silent image, witch bolt, expeditious retreat

2nd level (3 slots): arcane lock, spider climb, web

76. KITCHEN [EL 750 = Medium]
 No. 01 **Karelena, Witch** [NPCs] Challenge 2 (450 XP)

No. 01 **Black Panthers** [MM pag.333] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

77. GAS-FILLED ROOM [EL 500 = Easy]
 No. 08 **Gian Rats** [MM pag. 327] Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Note for the Gas-Trap: the Saving Throw is a Constitution save with DC10. On a failed save, everyone inside the room suffer 1d10 points of damage. Characters who make the save suffer only half damage.

80. ORC'S ROOM [EL 1,000 = Medium]
 No. 05 **Orcs** [MM pag. 246] Challenge ½ (100 XP)

Note: one of them has 20 hp and uses a mace +1

Elyas' Treasury [Use Map 6 FOR AREAS 85-95].

In this level, check for random encounters every third game turn. Roll 1d6. A result of 6 means the PCs encounter something. When an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 and use the resulting encounter on Table 4.

90. SOLORENA'S BEDROOM [EL 750 = Medium]

No. 01 **Solorena, Witch** [NPCs] Challenge 2 (450 XP)

No. 01 **Black Panthers** [MM pag.333] Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

95. THE ARENA [EL = Variable]

NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

Eye of Traldar (Fire Opal Eye)

Wondrous item, legendary. Requires attunement by an arcane caster.



The Eye of Traldar is a gem almost as big as an ostrich egg, lit by orange and yellow tones and multi-faceted. It is traditionally set in a base of solid gold shaped like a dragon's claw.

The Fire Opal Eye, again according to myth and legend that surrounds it, is a powerful object with divination powers.

The gem has up to ten charges that are temporarily consumed when used to activate a power.

The object regains 1d4+1 per caster level charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1 the gem loses all its powers and it will take one year to regenerate a charge. After that it will start to recharge as normal.

The powers that are available and that depend even by the caster level listed in the following table:

Table 5: Fire Opal Eye Powers

<p>At 1st level the Eye of Traldar has 4 charges and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Detect Evil and Good (1 charge)</p> <p>Detect Magic (1 charge)</p> <p>Identify (1 charge)</p>
<p>At 2nd level the Eye of Traldar has 6 charges and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Augury (2 charges)</p> <p>Detect Thoughts (2 charges)</p> <p>Locate Object (2 charges)</p>
<p>At 3rd level the Eye of Traldar has 8 charges and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Clairvoyance (3 charges)</p>

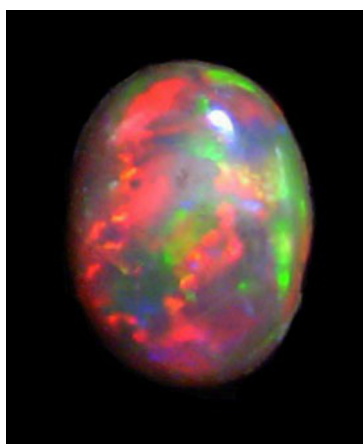
Also according to legends, when used in conjunction with the gem mate known as the Black Opal Eye, other powers are activated (see following pages).

Black Opal Eye

Wondrous item, legendary. Requires attunement by an arcane caster.

The Black Opal Eye is a gem almost as big as an ostrich egg, with a deep black color and dark blue lapels.

The Black Opal is a magical object surrounded by a powerful aura of enchantment.



The gem has up to ten charges that are temporarily consumed when used to activate a power.

The object regains 1d4+1 per caster level charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1 the gem loses all its powers and it will take one year to regenerate a charge. After that it will start to recharge as normal.

Table 6 lists the powers that are available depending on the caster level of the user.

According to legends, when used in conjunction with the gem mate known as the Eye of Traldar, other powers are activated.

In fact when the two gems are together and the spellcaster who uses them has achieved the necessary power (experience level), he has access also to the spells listed in Table 7.:

Furthermore, the two objects, through a ritual similar to the attunement, are able to locate the Blackmoorian stations, originally created to collect data sent from the "Eyes". They can even be used as passes to get inside of them.

Other powers can be available through their use at the DM's will.

Table 6: Black Opal Eye Powers

<p>At 1st level the Black Opal Eye has <u>4 charges</u> and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Charm Person (1 carica)</p> <p>Command (1 carica)</p> <p>Heroism (1 carica)</p>
<p>At 2nd level the Black Opal Eye has <u>6 charges</u> and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Calm Emotion (2 carica)</p> <p>Suggestion (2 carica)</p> <p>Zone of Truth (2 carica)</p>
<p>At 3rd level the Black Opal Eye has <u>8 charges</u> and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Confusion (3 carica)</p>

Table 7: Combined Opal Eye Powers

<p>At 5th level each Eye has <u>9 charges</u> and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Divination (4 charges)</p> <p>Dominate Person (4 charges)</p>
<p>At 9th level each Eye has <u>10 charges</u> and the spellcaster has access to the following spells:</p> <p>Commune (5 charges)</p> <p>Geas (5 charges)</p>

NEW MONSTERS

SISWA GUARD (High Elf)

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good (neutral evil)

Armor Class: 15 (elven chain shirt)

Hit Points: 13 (3d8)

Speed: 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON
12(+1)	14(+2)	10(+0)
INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	11(+0)	11(+0)

Skills: Perception +2, Nature +3

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: Elvish, Common (Thyatian), Traladarian

Challenge: ¼ (50 XP)

Fey Ancestry: The Siswa has advantage on saving throws against being charmed. He cannot be put to sleep by magic.

Innate Spellcasting: The Siswa can cast the ray of frost cantrip. The Spell Attack Modifier is +3 [Intelligence].

ACTIONS:

Longsword: Melee weapon attack: +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d8+1) slashing damage

Shortbow: Range weapon attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage

SISWA ACOLYTE (High Elf)

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral good (neutral evil)

Armor Class: 15 (elven chain shirt)

Hit Points: 9 (2d8)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
10(+0)	14(+2)	10(+0)
INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	WIS 14(+2)	11(+0)

Skills: Perception +4, Insight +4 Religion +3

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages: Elvish, Common (Thyatian), Traladarian

Challenge: ¼ (50 XP)

Fey Ancestry: The Siswa has advantage on saving throws against being charmed. He cannot be put to sleep by magic.

Innate Spellcasting: The Siswa can cast the ray of frost cantrip. The Spell Attack Modifier is +3 [Intelligence].

Spellcasting: The Siswa acolyte is a 1st level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The Siswa acolyte has the following clerical spell prepared:

Cantrips (at will): light, resistance, sacred flame

1st level (3 slots): bless, cure wounds, sanctuary

ACTIONS:

Longsword: Melee weapon attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 4 (1d8) slashing damage

Shortbow: Range weapon attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage

BONE GOLEM*Large construct, unaligned*

Armor Class:	12 (natural)	
Hit Points:	81 (9d10+36)	
Speed:	40 ft	
STR	DEX	CON
18(+4)	11(+0)	18(+4)
INT	WIS	CHA
6(-2)	10(+0)	5(-3)

Special:

Damage Vulnerability: Bludgeoning

Damage Resistance:

piercing, bludgeoning and slashing from non magical weapons

Damage Immunities: poison

Condition Immunities:

charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses:

darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages:

understand the languages of its creator but can't speak (Traladaran)

Challenge: 3 (700 XP)**Magic Resistance:** the golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects**Magic Weapons:** the golem's weapon attacks are magical

Special Ability 3:

ACTIONS:**Multiattack:** the golem makes four melee attacks with its one-handed weapons or two attacks with pole arms or two-handed weapons. It attacks up to two opponents each round.**Scimitar:** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage**Shortbow:** Range weapon attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage

ULAR-TAMAN*Medium monstrosity, lawful neutral*

Armor Class (AC):	12 (natural)
Hit Points:	66 (12d8+12)
Speed:	30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
16(+3)	14(+2)	3(+1)
INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)

Skills: History +5, Religion +5, Nature +5**Damage Immunities:** poison**Condition Immunities:** poisoned**Senses:** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11**Languages:** common (Thyatian), draconic**Challenge:** 5 (1.800 XP)**Shapechanger:** Ular-Taman can use its action to polymorph into a giant constrictor snake (MM pag. 324).**Innate Spellcasting** (5th level cleric):1st level spells (4 slots): animal friendship, speak with animals, cure wounds, sanctuary2nd level spells (3 slots): barkskin, spike growth, hold person, spiritual weapon3rd level spells (2 slots): plant growth, wind wall, create food and water, dispel magic**Channel Divinity** (1/rest):

Turn Undead

Charm animals and plants

ACTIONS:**Multiattack:** Ular-Taman makes two ranged or melee attacks but can constrict only once.**Bite (snake form only):** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage**Constrict:** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit 10 (2d6+3) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and Ular-Taman can't constrict another target.**Scimitar:** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage**Longbow:** Range weapon attack: +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage

NON PLAYER CHARACTERS

ALKI (High Elf Eldritch Knight)

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic good

Armor Class (AC): 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points: 22 (3d10)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
14(+2)	12(+1)	10(+0)
INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	11(+0)	11(+0)

Skills: Athletics +4, Religion +3, Insight +2, Perception +2, Survival +2

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 12

Languages: Elvish, Common (Thyatian), Traladarian

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Fey Ancestry: He has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and magic can't put him to sleep

Innate Spellcasting: He has fire bolt cantrip. The Spell Attack Modifier is +3 [Intelligence].

Fighting Style: Archery (+2 to attack with ranged weapon)

Second Wind: Heal 1d10+3 (once between rest)

Action Surge: Take an extra action once between rest

Spellcasting: Alki is a 3rd level Eldritch Knight. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +3 to hit with spell attacks). Alki has the following wizard spell prepared:

Cantrips (at will): true strike, dancing lights

1st level (2 slots): detect magic, magic missile, shield

ACTIONS:

Longsword: Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 6 (1d8+2)

Shortbow: Range weapon attack: +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage

The Rahib (Cleric of Talitha, Patroness of Betrayal)

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil

Armor Class (AC): 16 (chain shirt +1, ring of protection)

Hit Points: 45 (7d8+7)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
12(+1)	13(+1)	12(+1)
INT	WIS	CHA
11(+0)	16(+3)	17(+3)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +7, Charisma +7

Skills: Deception +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Religion +3, Persuasion +6

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Languages: Common (Thyatian), Alphatian

Challenge: 4 (1,100 XP)

Magical Items & Weapons: chain shirt +1, ring of protection (A), battleaxe +1

Weapon Proficiency: Clerics of Talitha are proficient with all simple weapons and battleaxe

Spellcasting: The Rahib is a 7th level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): light, mending, sacred flame, thaumaturgy

1st level (4 slots): charm person, disguise self, bane, command, shield of faith, cure wounds

2nd level (3 slots): mirror image, pass without trace, blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon

3rd level (3 slots): blink, dispel magic, animate dead, spirit guardians

4th level (1 slots): dimension door, polymorph, banishment

Divine Domain: (Trickery) Blessing of the Trickster: when the Rahib touch a willing creature (action) other than himself, he gives it advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. This bless last for 1 hour or until he use this feature again.

Channel Divinity (2/rest): Turn Undead, Invoke Duplicity, Destroy Undead and Cloak of Shadow

ACTIONS:

Battleaxe: Melee weapon attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 7 (1d10+2)

Dagger: Range weapon attack: +4 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage

KARELENA (Warlock, Thrall of Orcus)*Medium humanoid (human female), chaotic evil*

Armor Class (AC): 13 (16 with Armor of Shadows)

Hit Points: 43 (5d8+15)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
14(+2)	16(+3)	17(+3)
INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	8(-1)	18(+4)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +2, Charisma +7**Skills:** Arcana +4, Athletics +5, Intimidation +7, Religion +4,**Senses:** Passive Perception 9**Languages:** Common (Thyatian)**Challenge:** 2 (450 XP)**Magical Items & Weapons:** ring of free action**Weapon Proficiency:** Karelena is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor**Otherworldly Patron:** (Fiend): Orcus. **Dark One's Blessing:** when Karelena reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, she gains 9 temporary hit points.**Pact of Magic:** (Cantrips): Blade Ward, Eldritch Blast, True Strike**Spell Known (2 slot / 3rd level):** 1st – Armor of Agathys, Hellish Rebuke, Hex; 2nd – Mirror Image, Misty Step; 3rd - Fear**Spellcasting:** Karelena is a 5th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks).**Eldritch Invocations:** Agonizing Blast, Armor of Shadows, Repelling Blast**Pact of the Blade:** Karelena favorite pact weapons are the Mace or the Whip**ACTIONS:****Mace:** Melee weapon attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage**Whip:** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit 5 (1d4+3) slashing damage

SOLORENA (Warlock, Thrall of Orcus)*Medium humanoid (human female), chaotic evil*

Armor Class (AC): 13 (leather armor +1)

Hit Points: 43 (5d8+15)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
11(+0)	12(+1)	13(+1)
INT	WIS	CHA
14(+2)	13(+1)	20(+5)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +4, Charisma +8**Skills:** Arcana +5, Deception +8, Insight +4, Intimidation +8, Persuasion +8, Religion +5,**Senses:** Passive Perception 11**Languages:** Common (Thyatian)**Challenge:** 2 (450 XP)**Magical Items & Weapons:** leather armor +1 (AC 12), spell scroll: Levitate**Weapon Proficiency:** Solorena is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor**Otherwordly Patron:** (Fiend): Orcus. **Dark One's Blessing:** when Solorena reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, she gains 10 temporary hit points.**Pact of Magic:** (Cantrips): Chill Touch, Friends, Minor Illusion**Spell Known (2 slot / 3rd level):** 1st – Command, Hellish Rebuke, Witch Bolt; 2nd – Invisibility, Suggestion; 3rd – Vampiric Touch**Spellcasting:** Solorena is a 5th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks).**Eldritch Invocations:** Beguiling Influence, Eldritch Sight, One with Shadows**Pact of the Tome:** Solorena has a Book of Shadows that allows her to cast at will: Eldritch Blast, Shillelagh and Ray of Frost**ACTIONS:****Quarterstaff (with Shillelagh):** Melee weapon attack: +3(+8) to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 3(9) (1d6 [1d8+5]) bludgeoning damage

TRILENA (Warlock, Thrall of Orcus)*Medium humanoid (human female), chaotic evil*

Armor Class (AC): 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 38 (5d8+10)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON
8(-1)	11(+0)	14(+2)
INT	WIS	CHA
13(+1)	14(+2)	18(+4)

Saving Throws: Wisdom +5, Charisma +7**Skills:** Arcana +4, Deception +7, History +4, Stealth +3**Senses:** Passive Perception 12**Languages:** Common (Thyatian)**Challenge:** 2 (450 XP)**Magical Items & Weapons:** dagger +1**Weapon Proficiency:** Trilena is proficient with all simple weapons and light armor**Otherwordly Patron:** (Fiend): Orcus. Dark One's Blessing: when Trilena reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, she gains 9 temporary hit points.**Pact of Magic:** (Cantrips): Eldritch Blast, Poison Spray, True Strike**Spell Known (2 slot / 3rd level):** 1st – Burning Hands, Charm Person, Expeditious Retreat; 2nd – Cloud of Dagger, Ray of Enfeeblement; 3rd – Stinking Cloud**Spellcasting:** Trilena is a 5th level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks).**Eldritch Invocations:** Agonizing Blast, Devil's Sight, Fiendish Vigor**Pact of the Chain:** Trilena has learned the find familiar spell: her pet is an imp.**ACTIONS:****Dagger +1:** Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage

The Reunited Trio.

When the three sisters are free from their prison and together, through the use of the **Black Opal Eye** (which in this case takes on the role of a spell focus), they will have access to many other powers, granted to them from their master Orcus. In fact, in the years in which the Black Opal Eye was kept by Trinkla, the Black Seer worked to change the nature of the Opal, partially converting the magical orb into an Entropic tool.

When they are all alive and know where the Black Opal Eye rests, they can communicate telepathically with each other and with their panthers. They also gain a +3 AC bonus.

They also have access to the following powers that every witch can use once between a short or long rest: False Life, Blindness/Deafness, Bestow Curse, Blight and Contagion. All spells prepared in this way are cast like using a 5th level spell slot.

CONCLUSIONS AND AFTERMATH

At the end of the module there will be many choices in front of you. If the story is a stand alone module or is just the sequel of Eye of Traldar, the story ends there.

When I first thought of this story I imagined a larger and more expansive sequel for it. For me the end of Rahasia is only the beginning of a campaign that will take the heroes from Karameikos to unexplored lands in far off Skothar.

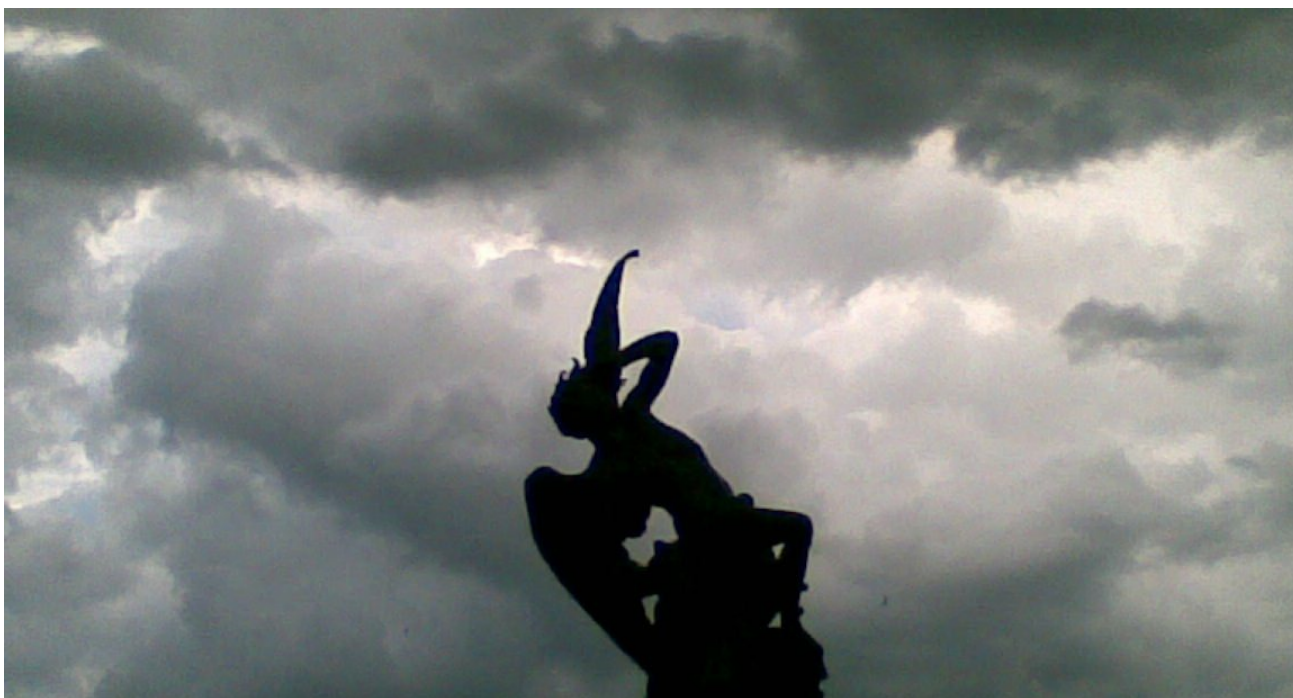
But before that happens and the characters embark for the long journey, the story needs an epilogue. When the party finds the second opal the hero attuned to the magical gems will start to dream of a mysterious place. He sees the same door that they had to find before to face Rahasia that looked like a dead end. The door is that of the Arrow Station, the forgotten Blackmoorian lab buried under the Dymrak Forest.

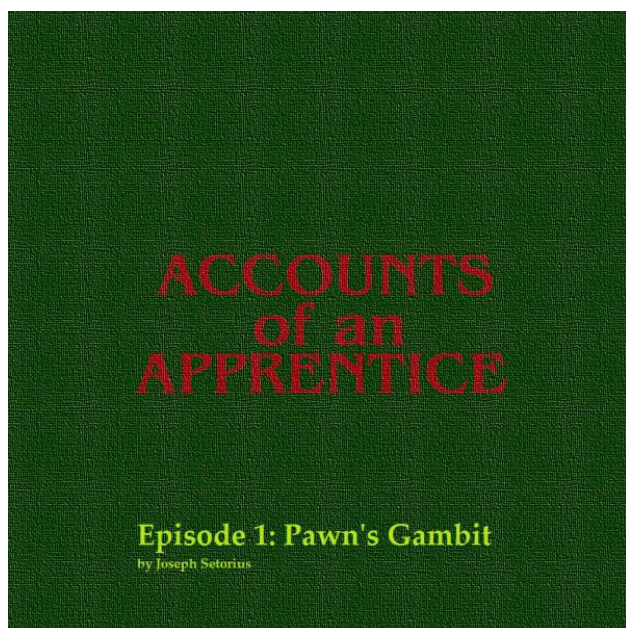
In the dreams the PC sees the door open to reveal the power of the orbs, leaving no doubt that the next step for the party will be to return to the mysterious door. The journey to the door could be a side adventure or can be uneventful according to the tastes of the players.

When the players get inside the Station it is highly probable that they will find a lot of strange objects. Things like random high tech items like tools that would be incomprehensible for them. In the chambers that form the Arrow Station they can even find strange weapons and equipment - it is up to you!

In my version they faced an hologram (described more like an ethereal duplicate of a person) that taught them the properties of the lab and part of the world's history, in particular Blackmoor. The hologram was that of Rafiel of course! It warned the heroes of an upcoming horror that has awoken in the far east, on the continent of Skothar. An

ancient enemy not only for Blackmoorians but for the whole world! This will be the starting point for the epic campaign for D&D 5th edition **Princes of the Apocalypse**. For details on the changes and hooks for that campaign, and the specific adjustments to bring it in the Mystara setting, stay tuned for my next article.





from the diaries of
 palzac of daggenskjold
 neophyte schemer in ever bureaucratic glantri
 young student of the most-glorious
 great school of magic
 pawn, scapegoat, etc. etc.

Palzac's footsteps clomped against the cobblestones, echoing off the buildings and reverberating down the length of the Street of Wounded Warriors.¹ It was late. Too late for anyone wandering the streets to be engaged in honest activity. Palzac's only consolation being the Street of Wounded Warriors was a narrow twisted back-alley in this city of mages. There had been a break in the weather this week, and melting snow ran towards a shallow swale in the centre of the street, eventually finding its way into one of the city's numerous canals. Late as it was, the still-evaporating snow compounded the air's already frigid bite; the moisture slowly seeping through every layer of Palzac's clothing, wetting skin and chilling his bones. A condition not unfamiliar to him, hailing from the small fjord-side village of Daggenskjold, located in the Kingdom of Vestland. It seemed a long way from here, and the current circumstances in which he found himself.

Author's Note: *The following story begins during the first week of 998 AC. Each future episode will cover roughly the span of one week. Allowing a greater amount of description to be revealed about life in Glantri City, and the School of Magic. Not all of the current episode's tale is described in detail as I wanted to get to the "heart" of the story, which is Palzac's current dilemma. Hopefully at a later date I will have time to go back and illustrate the backstory; giving it the same treatment I plan to use with future episodes. I hope you enjoy it at least half as much as I laboured over it!*

Daggenskjold sat at the terminus of NordesFjord, the Northernmost sound of Vestland.² Palzac could still picture the clinker constructed longships lying along

¹ The Street of Wounded Warriors winds its way through the buildings of the Middle Class Quarter, and connects the West End to The Rim, and Tulip Gate.

² Daggenskjold was founded in 600 AC, and currently has a population of 384 people. While "dag" means day in Swedish, "skjold" means shield. Yet "daggen" really means "week's end", so I've taken some creative liberty here.



Glantrian Skyline

the shore, or laid up on the pebble beach. Founded just fourteen years before Ottar the Just's victory over King Finnbogi of Ostland at the Battle of Bridenfjord; though many of Vestland's towns and villages had since modernized, adopting square grids for their streets and avenues; Daggenskjold remained in the past. Its defensive palisade formed of a circular earthen enclosure topped with sharpened timber poles, which in turn was surrounded by a shallow muddy ditch trickling down to the fjord. During the short summer months, mosquitoes found this mucky trench amenable, adding to the village's many woes.

The Longhall of Kolskegg Aethelson dominated the centre of the fair sized village, and featured an elevated walkway leading to

the jarl's Main Longhouse behind.³ Eight octagonally arranged lodges encircled the Longhall, each occupied by prominent members of clans swearing allegiance to Aethelson. Ringing this inner stronghold lay the accommodations of the artisan class. Palzac's kin cohabitated with three other families in an oversized hut, sporting a tented roof. Yet Palzac did not mind the confines of the smaller sized dwelling. During the long, dark, cold winter months, less heat escaped out the rooftop vents than in the larger longhouses; and tallow candles reflected light off the converging rafters, keeping the cabin cheerful and well-lit. Palzac felt the residence's most redeeming quality; however, was its location farther up the slope, and thus farther from the dampness of the shore.

³ Kolskegg Aethelson has petitioned Harold Gudmundson, King of Vestland, to award him a dominion in the area.

Though Daggenskjold did produce significant trade goods commanding higher prices on foreign shores, the village's main export remained raiding. Its longships trolling the Northern shores of the Isle of Dawn, and the coastal settlements of the mainland as far North as The Prow.⁴ Unfortunately, many of the communities which Daggenskjold's vikings preyed upon, held similar vocation, often launching retaliatory attacks. Daggenskjold's one advantage lay in its often veiled location. The village had taken its name from the fog fortuitously rolling in each evening; obscuring the village from unfamiliar eyes seeking revenge upon the raiders to their home shores. The enveloping fog frequently helped set foreign ships upon the fjord's treacherous seamounts, sending them to a watery grave. Since its founding, a "daggenskjold" or "day's end shield" was seen as an auspicious event. Yet Palzac found it materialized so often, it couldn't be bringing too much fortune to the downtrodden settlement, for little luck ever passed Daggenskjold's way. Additionally it did not just confine itself to appearing in the evenings, and was so ever-present Palzac found it downright depressing. Palzac often wished a party of overseas crusaders had avenged their kin long ago; thus perhaps preventing anyone, though mainly himself, from having to suffer a life upon NordesFjord's gloomy inland shore.

Palzac's father, though well respected in the community, was an artisan of modest means. Yet one holding knowledge of how the world works, without possessing any of the tools to join. Money, power, connections. A

⁴ The Prow is also known as Raider's Point. Seeing as how I christened this feature back in 1984, I was reluctant to change it.

cordwainer by trade, the family constantly struggled to survive each passing year. Palzac struggled just to become a passable apprentice, possessing none of the dexterity or skill of his father. Shortly after turning age five, his parents gave birth to a second son, and after aged nine was soon surpassed in skill by his younger brother. His brother having a knack for manual tasks, where Palzac held none. Taking what little savings they had acquired, and wanting more for their son, Palzac was at that early age apprenticed to a man, said to possess an expertise of the arcane powers.

This man, Eilif the Learned, had come from somewhat similar, although more affluent, circumstances. Youngest son of a Norrvik mercantile family, the ambitious Eilif knew he would never be kingpin among his kin. A trade expedition to cosmopolitan Glantri convinced a young Eilif, the Great School of Magic is where he belonged, and seven years hence had completed his studies and overcome the Dungeon of Aces to undistinguished accolades.⁵

Five years after, while researching an inter-dimensional spell capable of transporting him to the Plane of Fire, he happened upon obscure references to a great and powerful force, able to permanently take him to a higher one. Yet Eilif was too eager to learn more, and strove forward without necessary caution and reserve. Several powerful associates, considering themselves the keepers of this unique force quickly became aware of his advances. Fortunately, he also became aware of their suspicions, and attempted to allay their fears. But his initial

⁵ The Dungeon of Aces is described on Pages 90-93 of Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri.

negligence had convinced the clandestine organization, he was not to be trusted. Realization he would likewise never be recognized among Glantri's favoured sons, Eilif returned to Vestland, accepting being a big fish in a small pond was where he belonged; and infinitely safer.

Eilif's proficiency with fire, having been a Fire Elementalist of the Third Circle, proved indispensable; dispatching countless troll bands roaming the hills above Sudorn and Daggenskjold. He quickly earned reputation as a formidable mage, and the troll's greatest foe. Kolskegg Aethelson and Rurik Sturlason both embraced Eilif's construction of a spire, which he built immediately below the divide between the sea and the Streel, and appropriately named Trollbane Tower.⁶⁷

Though only eighteen miles further inland, life at Trollbane Tower was worlds away from life upon the gloomy shore. The wind often blustering down from the heights, bringing with it the invigorating chill of snow-packed mountains, and the pungent aroma of Vestland Fir. Although over the course of the first several months, Palzac felt he had simply traded one kind of servitude for another, receiving little instruction in the magical arts. Instead he was consigned to carry out the everyday household tasks of the tower. Having not had an apprentice or steward in quite some time, there seemed an endless list of tasks and travails his new Mästare set upon



Trollbane Tower

him. Yet Palzac remained diligent and tireless in his duties, hopeful he might eventually be shown the door to higher power. After eight months of continuous toil, he finally found he had outdone his catalogue of assigned chores.

The following day, pleased with the positive progression of his secluded spire, Mästare Eilif at last relented, beginning Palzac's instruction in earnest. Yet just as he had possessed no aptitude for manual trades, Palzac initially appeared to have none for cerebral pursuits either. It seemed the harder he strove to succeed, the more complete his failure. At last he had been

⁶ Trollbane Tower lays just below the divide between the coastal drainage systems and the Streel River, and just above one the springs that is the Streel's source. From the top floors it is possible to gaze the sea to the East and the edge of the steppes to the West.
⁷ Rurik Sturlason is listed as Jarl of Fynmark on Page 14 in the Player's Guide of Gaz. 7, The Northern Reaches.

shown the door, and yet held no key to enter. At the end of another day of abundant disappointments, Mästare Eilif at last realized the solution to Palzac's quandary.

"Your concentration is too intense. To master the enchanted arts, you must let go your logic, and embrace the impossible! Only when you have shed reason and rationality can you hope to thread the strands of celestial energy, meshing the fiber of forces emanating from unseen planes. Your mental focus and determination moulding them into spells of your desire."

"How can I focus without concentrating?" Palzac asked, somewhat skeptically.

"Focus is not the same substance as concentration. Focus is life-force, essence, the paths to your soul. Find it, and you may find the solution to your woes!"

Though this instruction did not immediately bear fruit, Palzac persisted, undaunted by past failures. Gradually he began to harness the wild energies, focusing them into recognizable designs. At long last, he found his focus; and after, his determination discovered the hidden paths to power. Though Mästare Eilif judged Palzac was progressing at a snail's pace, eventually light appeared from darkness, as Palzac completed his first spell.

Occasionally he was sent on errands to Sudorn. A slightly larger settlement south-east of Daggenskjold in the dominion of Fynmark. These trips were a welcome respite, and besides Palzac's initial journey between Daggenskjold and Trollbane Tower, his first glimpse of a world beyond the one he knew. The isolated ruins of monasteries, temples, and clan halls dotted the hills along hunting trails leading down to Sudorn.

Palzac supposed the inhabitants had been victim to roving bands of trolls.⁸ Besides having the liberty to wander Sudorn's streets, Mästare Eilif regularly gave Palzac more coin than was required, allowing him to purchase something for himself. Palzac never abused this privilege, always returning with what was wanted, alongside some of the remaining currency.

His internship with Mästare Eilif persisted nearly a year when another youth of similar age and circumstance, carrying a full purse and signed letter of intent from some well-connected patron, appeared upon Trollbane's threshold. Initially Palzac deemed this a fortuitous turn of events. Someone to share the burdens of labour and exaltations of study. But it quickly became apparent, the aspiring novice bore more ambition than he, and possessed a competitive streak that prevented friendship. His initial elation quickly soured. Ten months later, Palzac found himself slowly being supplanted under the Mästare's watchful eye. Increasingly he was relegated to mundane chores, as the maestro fawned over his more promising apprentice.

Until at last a new idea took shape in his Master's mind...

One evening while perusing the modest library he had acquired over the years, Mästare Eilif thoughtfully paged through the few books he had attained vaguely intimating probable paths towards Glantri's greatest power, and lamented abandoning his quest for true knowledge and power. Mästare Eilif

⁸ A probable cause for the abandoned ruins are hinted at under Sudorn's entry on Page 16, column three, Gaz. 7, The Northern Reaches.

had all but given up hope of returning to Glantri, his face well known among certain members of the Glantrian elite. But what if he were to send someone in his stead?

“Palzac?” He shouted down the winding stair.

“Yes Mästare Eilif.”

“Please come here a moment.”

As Palzac entered the cramped circular chamber atop the lonely tower, Mästare Eilif instructed “Shut the door.”

Palzac could hardly contain his excitement. Months had passed since his master wished speak to him behind closed doors. Perchance Mästare Eilif had at last sussed out the conundrum behind his inability to quickly grasp arcane concepts. Perhaps he had grown suspicious of this new apprentice, fearing the ambitious lad would eventually try and usurp his power. Or maybe the youth had reached his potential, burning out in a blaze of mediocrity. Palzac could only hope.

“I need you to do something for me,” he started.

“Yes, Mästare Eilif.”

“I am sending you away...on an important errand.” Palzac at once looked dejected, figuring the Master had at last tired of him, and was sending him back to Daggenskjold. “No need to be discouraged. The...mission...shall we say, I have for you will take considerable time, and will require your utmost discreet talents.”

Palzac was perplexed. He was unaware of possessing any discreet talent. In truth he was nearly sure he retained no talents whatsoever beyond dusting, sweeping,

mopping, cataloguing...and changing the chamber pot. His competence at cooking was so awful in fact, Mästare Eilif had retaken responsibility of preparing meals himself. Though Palzac derived the least bit satisfaction when it was declared his peer possessed no culinary skills, either.

“You will travel to the Principalities, and attend the Great School of Magic. Consequently, this will allow you to continue your studies. Perhaps under another master, you might unlock hidden power within you.”

Mästare Eilif paused, gauging Palzac’s initial response. Palzac was so bewildered and mystified; however, he didn’t know rightly what to say. Could he have heard correctly?

“As payment for your tuition, room and board; you will instigate a secret investigation for me.”

Now Palzac understood the heart of his master’s stratagems. Palzac was to cease being his Mästare’s apprentice, and start playing his pawn. Palzac was resigned to cooperate, after all it wasn’t much less a demotion than the one received ten months past. “What’s the mission?” he inquired, anxious to learn of his accepted fate.

“This is where your discretion will be paramount. Handle this wrong, and you will wind up dead. Your conduct must remain free of suspicion. The assignment may take years to complete, but this will allow you to continue your schooling. I have a contact, an old friend really, still living in Glantri. You must first contact this Master Van Dyke.⁹

⁹ Richart Van Dyke is an ally and representative of House Linden in Glantri City. He is an 11th level mage, and 3rd Circle

Give him this letter, and my regards.” Mästare Eilif handed him the bound dispatch, sporting his master’s seal. A dark grey spire fashioned as a torch, from which blazed a dark blue flame.¹⁰ Mästare Eilif continued on, “He will set you upon the correct path. Once commencing upon your journey; however, there will be no turning round.

You must *never* mention my name. I still have foes there who would see me finished. Nevertheless, learn what I need, and it may open doors for both of us.”

Palzac very much doubted that. Yet instead he asked, “When do I leave?”

“You will depart with the first Klarmont caravan, which you must catch in Sudorn. Convoys don’t often stop for wayward travellers along Vestland’s backwoods roads. Though you are often known to make the trip in a single day, I would not tarry. Better to arrive early. As soon as you have your possessions packed, we shall leave. I will accompany you as far as the southern ridge. I am giving you fifty gold,” Mästare Eilif tossed Palzac a weighty velvet pouch. “The rest of your expenses will be taken care of with this usury note. *Do not lose it!* Show it to Master Van Dyke when you arrive and he will suggest a reliable moneylender with which to deposit it. Now...hurry along to bed. We’ll start off tomorrow.”

The next morning Palzac was up early, and by mid-morn they were off toward Sudorn. Upon reaching the ridge, cresting the hills falling to the coast, Mästare Eilif and his

Fire Elementalist.

¹⁰ Though Eilif’s seal/coat-of-arms is a dark grey spire fashioned as a torch from which a dark blue flame blazes, the blue wax seal on the letter is simply a monochrome impression of the same.

understudy headed back toward Trollbane, while Palzac travelled on.

His knapsack shouldered, the rest of his possessions were secured in a small chest which rested upon an opaque floating disc. Mästare Eilif had given him a simple wand which directed the disc, but cautioned the device, and disc, would last only so long. Palzac deemed he had better make it to the village before the spell expired, for lugging the small chest down the steep hilly slopes and gullies would take great pains, possibly leaving him in the dark before reaching Sudorn.

As his master departed he offered good fortune, and a stern reminder to conduct constant correspondence. Even the little brat had offered sympathy, but Palzac had not been impressed by his parting words. What risk lay in offering good fortune, when the bestower was already secure in his own? Perhaps they already knew he was heading toward his doom. Making the village before nightfall, Palzac did as he was told. He let a room for the night, and as the procession rolled into the village late the next morning, he at once located the caravan master, securing a berth on one of the elaborate coaches.



Klarmont Caravan

The next morning, after belongings were lashed taut to the hood, he climbed aboard. Though joining the caravan midway through its journey from Thyatis City, Palzac was able to find a forward facing seat, as his coach currently had only one other occupant; an older, overweight, perfumed and powdered envoy from Darokin, who abhorred passage by sea. The Broken Lands were restless as of late, and the longer road seemed the safer. Not many folks followed the Overland Trade Route this far North. She was even kind, offering Palzac confections and candied treats along the way. Both had never been to Glantri and casual conversation concerning their prospects spattered the journey.

Besides the caravan captain and two lieutenants, the caravan consisted of twelve coaches and twenty wagons, with double the number of coachmen and waggoneers respectively. Twice that number of mercenaries and mounted henchmen completed the caravan. Even the stylish coachmen looked coarse, giving Palzac some suggestion as to the route's security. Immediately, after all personal effects and products were loaded, the caravan was underway.

It was just after first light as they passed high above Daggenskjold. The cross-country trail hugging the ridge rather than descending into the valleys. Though the weather was more severe, the route still saved time, not having to ascend the steep slopes of the coastline. Palzac was seated on the coach's right side, enabling him to gaze down into the fjord, but unsurprisingly, a fog hung over the village. It was the last time he lay eyes on his hometown, or its apparent location, before leaving country; and Palzac supposed

it would be some time before he lay eyes on it again.

Palzac's overland journey took him across the Southern territory of the Heldann Freeholds. A passage not without its travails. The Freeholds were amidst an internal political and philosophical struggle, pitting the lords of the Freeholds against an unknown and elusive foe. Crossing the Glantrian border did not assuage Palzac's misgivings, for the first region they traversed were the destitute lands of Boldavia. The forested Western hills of the region were so lawless and impoverished, only the caravan's substantial mercenary force kept the belligerent inhabitants at bay. Palzac wondered how great the Glantrian magocracy could be, if it had so little control over its own border regions. If Daggenskjold was the ass end of the world, Palzac was convinced his master was sending him to the other side of the crack. Upon ascending the pass between the Wendaran Ranges and the Colossus Mounts, he thought surely he was being relegated to a dispiriting confinement worse than the one he had left in Daggenskjold.

Once entering the Flaemish Highlands; however, his spirits rose. The second morning, a stark brilliant blue sky greeted the dawn, more vivid than anything Palzac could have imagined. The contours of the clouds shone silver in the rising sun, their distinct outline against the azure sky a complete contrast to Daggenskjold's hazy skies. From this moment on, his prospects appeared more promising. Each mile travelled toward the capital, the land grew progressively productive, and its inhabitants increasingly cheerful. Upon bursting through the Northern Tulip Gate, the noise,

smell, and bustle of Glantri City overwhelmed him.¹¹

Glantri City was twenty-five times larger than any settlement Palzac had seen, and although having heard tales of magnificent cities, nothing prepared him for the wonders of Glantri. His initial passage through the city was as if in a waking dream. He was barely aware as his scant belongings were unloaded from the coach and placed in an elaborate gondola. Palzac had spent his whole life looking at boats and ships at sea, but here in this inland nation was the first time he had ever been a passenger on one. Mooring poles in a multitude of colours were sunk beneath the murky waters, unevenly placed along the perimeters of the channels, several striped like candied canes. Blue marble towers overshadowed carved wood onion domes. Plastered palazzos in earthen tones either sporting gambrel or mansard roofs were the predominant structures of the city, yet marble towers of every size, shape, and colour sprang from the canal or rooftops of larger townhouses. Still all buildings flaunted elaborate balconies and windows, with flowers of every species sprouting from the sills, though Flaemish grown tulips were most accessible in the city. Every architectural style seemed represented in Glantri. As he was staring at the buildings, people seemed to be staring at him. With his platinum blond hair and sky blue eyes, he didn't exactly blend with the copper complexioned Flaems.

Rounding Manor Row, Ambassadors Canal came into view. Embassies of various countries dominated the canal, each built

¹¹ The "Tulip Gate" is the non-canon name I have given the city's Northern Gates.

along the traditions of their representative nations. One building, looking more diminutive than the rest, displayed a tented gambrel roof, with a dormer window rising from each face. Orange Prince's Tulips grew in flower boxes beneath windows of the estate. Palzac guessed this must be Master Van Dyke's Palazzo.¹²

Palzac gave the gondolier a few extra ducats to wait while he made contact with Master Van Dyke. Van Dyke's palazzo lacked its own landing, but the neighbouring townhouse's levee boasted a walkway leading between buildings to The Rim, whereupon Palzac could access Van Dyke's front entrance. Boldly banging on the door, it was punctually answered by an attractive solidly built young woman with flaxen coloured hair. She scolded Palzac for pounding on the door, directing his attention to the knocker. He was then directed to take a seat on a wooden chair in the foyer. Her common was incomprehensible, having a thick Flaemish accent; nonetheless her commanding manner made it clear how she expected him to comply. Palzac unshouldered his knapsack, setting it upon his chest, which he left sitting next to the chair.

Palzac waited for what seemed like hours. Finally an inner door opened and two gentlemen exited, boisterously guffawing at some jest. Palzac could not tell what was being said, as they spoke in Flaemish. The larger gentlemen with flaming red hair headed out the door without so much as

¹² Palzac had been told by his master what would set Master Van Dyke's Palazzo apart from the other townhouses on the block. Orange Prince's Tulips are a symbol of House Linden.

glancing at Palzac. The other man reentered the study, the young woman following. Shortly thereafter he reappeared in the lobby, and proceeded toward Palzac.

“Goede Dag. You must be young Palzac?” he inquired in curt common. His kind brown eyes at once putting Palzac at ease.

“Wha...a...yes. How did...?”

“Mästare Eilif sent vord by red-tail...hawk that is. It is said pigeons bring vords of peace, and hawks bring vords of var. You veren’t planning on invading vere you?” Van Dyke’s thin pink lips curled upward, obviously delighted by his own wit.

“Ah...I was hoping to attend the School of Magic.”

“Yes, of course; and locate a reliable usury if I’m not mistaken?”

“Yes.”

Van Dyke headed back to the study, and Palzac supposed he should follow. As Van Dyke sat at his desk he motioned for Palzac to have a seat.

Vell let us see here...” Master Van Dyke began ruffling through a drawer and pulled out a thin black book. He then thumbed through the pages, pedantically perusing his directory.

Palzac studied his new patron. Coffee coloured hair splotched grey betrayed his age, yet he retained a fit figure. A tan waistcoat covered a darker brown doublet with stiff pointed collars, which Palzac later learned he had designed himself. He wore silver rimmed spectacles, which fascinated Palzac, never having seen such a thing before. Palzac had noticed earlier Van Dyke

wore trousers matching his doublet, and russet leather clogs with square silver buckles.

“Aha! Here is vhat ve desire. Silas Silverberg. He runs the eponymous Silverberg’s. An elegant establishment, yet often overlooked. Seeing as how it sits next to the ostentatious Builder’s Consortium. The man is parsimonious vith his sovereigns. But I suppose that is an advantageous trait in a moneylender, no?”

“I guess.” Palzac really didn’t know what the man was talking about. Parsimonious? Was that some kind of fruit?

“Nevertheless, you vill first need to register at the school. I vill hold onto the usury note for now. It is not the kind of thing you vant to carry around in this city. Ve then later travel there together, yes?”

Palzac was actually quite unsure, and it showed on his face. Was this man just going to take his money... well his master’s in truth, and dump him in the canal?

“No reason to be frightened.” Van Dyke reassured. “I am an old friend of your Mästare Eilif, and rest assured, ve vant no harm come to you. Leave your things, go and see the Registrar, then return here. This pass vill allow you to pass over the pons.” Van Dyke handed him a vermilion dyed slip with his signature and seal. “I vill put you up ‘til you find a place of your own. Tis best though for a young man to be independent. Now off vith you!” he announced with a cheerful smile, standing to indicate the meeting was at an end.

“Thank-you,” was all Palzac managed.

Heading out the door, the flaxen haired girl gave him suspicious stares as he walked past and out the entrance.

Returning to the quay, he noticed the gondola was gone. Yet fortuitously, another was across the channel, unloading its passenger and contents. The passenger, struggling to rise from the boat, wore an indigo coloured gabardine adorned with waves and clutched an intricately carved staff crested by a seahorse. A matching skullcap decorated with crescent moons, suns and stars sat atop his head. His left arm was bound in a sling.

Upon unloading his cargo, the gondolier pushed off into the channel, and Palzac flagged him down.

“My good fortune to gain another passenger so soon.” He said, biting down on the ducat Palzac proffered.

Turning toward Manor Row, the City Belfry loomed over the horizon. As the expansive Alexander Platz and towering Great School of Magic at last came into view, Palzac became completely buoyant. Surely his miserable master had crueller plans in mind than internment in this shining city?

Upon mooring at the quay, Palzac leapt from the gondola, at last anxious to learn of his appointed fate. The city guards directed him toward Pons Sapientia and the School of Magic.¹³ Once inside an overeager youth exiting with a group of friends, directed him

¹³ Pons Sapientia is the covered bridge separating Alexander Platz from The Great School of Magic. “Pons” means bridge in Thyatian.

to a large set of stairs, ascending out of sight. Palzac’s climb up the innumerable steps took a rather chaotic course, often doubling back on themselves or heading off in irregular tangents. After what seemed like nearly an hour, at last he reached the rooftop gardens, at the edge of which he surmised stood the administrative offices. Palzac made his way over to the hexagonal tower dwarfed only by the observatory and Grand Master’s Tower, and proceeded inside.

“May I assist you?” A balding man wearing white gloves and eyeglasses immediately enquired.

“I wish to enrol for the current trimester.” Palzac voiced with exuberance.

“Well you are certainly not in the right place!” The man sunk his thumbs into the pockets of a black waistcoat worn over a white doublet, and advanced upon him.

“Where am I?” Palzac obviously seemed quite confused.

“This is the Tower of Archives. Hopefully nothing of yours will wind up here for a long, long time. I am Archibald, Chief Archivist. Yes you may laugh, or snicker as is your wont, at the name. Given my current vocation it seems quite absurd. Little did my mother know...”

“My name is Palzac,” Palzac offered.

An awkward moment of silence passed between the pair.

“Yes, well in any case, you will need to be heading downstairs. If you follow me out onto the terrace I will show you where.”

Palzac followed Archibald outside, where the proper tower was pointed out. Bounding down the stairs with considerable agitation, Palzac made his way toward Administration. At least the trip down was substantially



School Administrator

easier. So...the little shit had sent him on a wild goose chase. Unfortunately, in his exuberance Palzac hadn't bothered to commit the boy's mug to memory. Payback was in order. Arriving at length to the lowest level of the Administrative tower, he addressed the nearest occupant.

"Hulloh?"

"What might I help you with?" Offered a haughty curly-haired character in slashed red and plum doublet with reticella lace collar and cuffs. Scrolling flower embroidery in a vertical pattern containing fleurs-de-lys decorated front and back. Had Palzac been a veteran student, he might have realized this hinted the man had ties to House Amberville. He wore long square-toed shoes with a low heel and oblong sterling silver buckles. Umber coloured breeches above white hose completed his stylish ensemble. Never

having seen someone so elaborately attired, Palzac had difficulty not gawking.

"I was instructed to report here. I wish to enrol for the current trimester."

"Who are you?"

"Palzac of..."

"Yes...Well first you will have to purchase your Right to Reside Certificate. In order to accomplish this you must first report to the Citadel and present your credentials. Whereupon they will direct you to the Bureau de Clinique in the House of Ministers, where you will be examined for infection or disease. Plague has been a problem in the past. You are not a carrier of the plague are you?"

"NO!" Palzac was immediately overwhelmed at the instructions being levelled at him.

"Good. Then you will have perhaps cleared your first hurdle. Once being cleared by the Clinique, be sure and mention your intention to attend school. Otherwise they will only give you one Authorization and Licensing Leaflet, instead of the necessary two. I will then give you a temporary pass to wander the city, but this will expire at midnight tomorrow. Next you will need to head to the Rosapietra Tabbacchi near Ambassadors Row.¹⁴ There you will purchase

¹⁴ Rosapietra Tabbacchi; in addition to being a tobacco shop; sells stamps, quills and ink, cheap glass jewelry, candy, and inferior hourglasses. Recently there has been a push to allow them to sell salt, pepper and other spices. They also sell "Books of Passage", containing tickets for gondola passage, for those wishing to not carry cash. Gondoliers may then turn in the tickets to the House of Ministers when paying taxes. As the tickets cost more than actual average fares, the profit from the service benefits both the state, and the gondoliers. When turned in they receive half profit value of the ticket against their taxes.

two entry visa stamps, and have them affixed in the top right square.”

“Is that all?” Palzac’s head was beginning to spin.

“Not in the least. Then you must head to the House of Ministers, with a usury note, stating you have at least 600 ducats, which should easily cover your rent, and enrolment at the school for the current trimester. They will then impress your Right to Reside stamps. Be sure to get both impressed. This will allow you to wander the streets unhindered. Afterwards you will return here, where you will pay for the current trimester. The fee is 480 ducats.¹⁵ We will then provide you with a list of possible tenements for lease. Under normal circumstances you might find residence at the school; however, yet being a foreigner your name will appear further

¹⁵ Tuition is described as costing 5 ducats per day, per level of the student on Page 58, column two, Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri. It further states that tuition may also be paid in advance for one or more weeks. This seemed ridiculously tedious to figure out in game play, and somewhat unreasonable given the nature of study and Glantrian bureaucracy. More likely the School of Magic and House of Ministers would want their gold promptly.. Also, as in real life, most professions require a minimum period of constant study, rather than a day here a day there. Using the eight month minimum for child spellcasters, it seemed reasonable that three “trimesters” a year existed. Given classes are six or seven days a week...everybody needs a day to rest and take care of laundry...at 5 ducats per day, this would amount to 30 ducats per week. Or 120 per month, and thus 480 per trimester. The 600 ducat requirement is to insure students are able to pay not only for tuition, but additional supplies. The House of Ministry is interested in knowing that should a student fail in his studies, or drop out, there will be ample gold left to see him out of country.

down the lists. Currently, the school dormitories are full up. It is unlikely you will find residence here. Though you needn’t pay for board if you wish to take your meals at the school.”

“After that?” Palzac was quickly realizing, registering for school might be as difficult as navigating the NordesFjord.

“Next you will need to locate your patron, and have him prepare three marques of commendation. These must first be taken to the Watermark Parchment and Scroll Company in the merchant’s quarter, and watermarked. The area is constantly crowded. Paying a gondolier an extra ducat to dock on the back pier is best. Thereafter they must be signed by one of the ruling Princes, or their representatives at court. One signature, per letter. Citizens usually complete this step before stepping foot in the building!” the Grand Registrar remarked reproachfully. “This will need to be completed promptly, as classes are filling up quickly.”¹⁶

“Next?” Palzac asked in an acquiescent and compliant tone, hoping to the Immortals the next step would be reiterated after completing the previous.

“You will finally reappear at the school, ready to register for classes. I will hand you one...and only one, schedule form. Do not lose it! There has been an outbreak of irresponsibility running round this academy, and I will no longer tolerate it! If you wish to attend, be attentive. Spend an entire day tracking down your prestidigitators...”

“My what!” Palzac’s complacency was beginning to fade.

¹⁶ The Grand Registrar is a non-cannon position in charge of registering students and collecting tuition fees, answering to the High Secretary of the School of Magic.

“Prestidigitator.¹⁷ Professor is such a mundane profession. We like to think of our masters as instructors in the arcane and esoteric; and not surprisingly, so do they! Anyway, track them down and obtain their signature on your schedule form for the appropriate class. Once this form has been completed, you will bring the document here! I will at once sign it, then you will sign it. I will then take your schedule to the High Secretary for approval.¹⁸ It will then be placed in this bureau until the trimester is completed. At which time, assuming success in your classes, I will place your marks upon an official transcript. Of which one copy is kept in the school vault, with the other residing within the Citadel.”

“Are we finished?” Palzac inquired in an even and polite tone, mustering the last of his meagre patience.

“Lastly”, the encumbering administrator plowed on, “I will affix the school’s stamp and seal for the current trimester next to your Right to Reside stamp; and at last, ‘Immortals assist us’, you will be an undergraduate of Glantri’s Great School of

Magic. Further, the stamp and seal will also attest to your ability as an Arcaner, affording you all the rights and privileges of our class.”

Had Palzac not thought it might have prevented his inclusion into the school, he might have fainted on the spot. Before more orders were dispatched, he darted out the door, bound for the Citadel.

“Oh, and one other thing!” the academic bureaucrat called out while Palzac was still within earshot, “if you are smart, you will deposit one of your Leaflets with a reliable usury. For if you should lose them...”

Despite the extensive obstacles of bureaucracy, and the laborious chore of appeals, within the day he had acquired his Right to Reside, and by the following week’s end, Palzac had become a *bona fide* scholar at the Great School of Magic.

With the trimester not beginning for another week and a half, Palzac was unsure of what to do with himself. No shoes to mend or construct. Not a chore to be completed, nor a book to be read and memorized. After his starting expenses had been paid, Palzac had little left for frivolous pastimes, yet until now neither had he any time or money to ever develop a hobby or interest. Life without supervised regulation had been an unknown up to this point. What was he supposed to do with himself? Freedom, even with few ducats to spend, was going to take some getting used to. He decided the best use of his time would be wandering the streets of his newfound city.

Palzac learned there were seven major quarters within the city proper. Though usually not outgoing, being lost and

¹⁷ Though Bruce hints a “Prestidigitator” is simply a mundane sleight of hand artist; under location 34. Magic for Sale, located in the Business Quarter [Page 42, column three, Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri.]; I liked the term, and thought it might be better suited as an often unused an obscure word to describe teachers at the Great School of Magic. Professor seemed more a profession rooted in science and reason than the arcane. However, “Prestidigitator” is a title, not an address. Students still call their instructors “Master”. Though perhaps a new word combining prestigious and prestidigitator would be better? “Prestigio”, “Prestigitator”, “Prestigigator”?

¹⁸ The High Secretary is mentioned under the heading “Private Spell-Casting”, Page 50, column two, Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri.

desperate sometimes makes you bold. Accosting strolling residents, he learned each quarter was devoted to either a particular activity or class. All were obviously named, immediately indicating their occupants or function. Palzac was thoroughly enjoying all the atmosphere a city had to offer. Constant noise and activity; streets lined with lights and people; and gondolas crowding the canals. It was in great contrast to the life he had lived. However; there were two things he could do without. The first being, thieves were constantly about. Van Dyke had a lanyarded pouch sewn for Palzac to be worn around his neck, and under his shift. He was told to keep his Leaflet and money there. If Palzac was to take anything out, he should find a secluded spot. "Thieves can't steal what they cannot see," he was told. The other was the smell. Though in a land of fantastic thaumatology, utilitarian magic suppressed most of the stench, the Vesubia and Isoile Rivers doing the rest, their currents slowly drawing the water through channels and canals of the city's streets, out of the capital. Much to the chagrin of settlements downriver.

Although Glantri was a nation of magical wonders, Palzac later found it was not an unlimited well of magic from which to draw, it only sustained so much magic at any given time. Given the finite amount of power in Glantri, Palzac suspected likely there was much competition for what was present; and perhaps explained why different crafts drawing on different energies had developed.

By sundown each day, both his head and eyes were sore. So much to take in. Returning to his tenement, where he had leased a decent single-sized room for two ducats a month, he retrieved his pump key

and headed to the square.¹⁹ A long line of residents formed a queue along the exterior. After a sun filled day traipsing through the city, he was covered by dust and sweat. But he did not relish waiting just to pull a pail of water from the pump. Crowded conditions



A Tenement in the West End

had their own downside he supposed. He also thought he had been swindled on rent, but the proprietor had promised the building was free of bugs. Additionally, a new immigration wave had overtaken the city, and business was booming. Perhaps he had been lucky just to find a room at all.

The final few days before class, Palzac decided to see what surrounded the city. However; what lay beyond the walls, was not

¹⁹ Pump keys are provided to tenement landlords by the House of Ministers, and thus distributed to tenants of their buildings. They only work the pumps of any given district, thereby preventing residents from drawing water in "prohibited" areas. Merchants often have two keys. One for home, and one for their business location. As there often isn't a shortage of water in Glantri City, most residents have accepted this minor inconvenience.

nearly as interesting as what lay inside. Nondescript sprawling suburbs sat Northeast and Northwest of the city, surrounded by endless muddy fields growing a wide range of crops. Northeast, expansive tulip fields littered the countryside, and immediately North of the suburbs a caravansary rested along the road to Taterhill.

Returning to his tenement well after dark on the last day, Palzac climbed into his pallet soiled and mud-spattered. Sore, soaked, and exhausted; he quickly fell into a restless sleep of disturbing visions. First drowned at sea, then burned alive by the ambitious apprentice. Worst among his nightmares, he was committed to mopping an endless chamber seeming to grow ever more cavernous just as he was nearing completion.

Consciousness came creeping back in intermittent waves. The sight of cracked plaster on the wall. A grey woollen blanket pulled over his head. Sun slanting through cracks in the door. Sun...sunlight...day. Complete awareness came rushing back.

“Black Abyss!! I’m going to be late for the first day of classes!”

Immediately propelling himself from his pallet, grabbing pails and pump key, he rushed out to the square. Miraculously no one was at the pump. Quickly he filled his pails. Scurrying back to his bedsit he doffed his nightdress, dumping a pail of ice-cold water over his head. He was too panicked to notice the chill, yet was keenly aware of his absolute sobriety. Opening a box of charcoal and talc he scoured the previous day’s muck from his hide, afterwards pouring the other ice cold bucket over his head. Digging in his

chest he found fresh jonnins, his best shift, and favourite trousers.²⁰ Brown with green piping, his most prized purchase from Sudorn. Throwing on a light smock-frock Palzac raced out the door, away from the tenement toward the nearest quay; hailing the closest gondola, proffering a raised ducat to demonstrate he was quite able to pay.

A dilapidated gondola promptly appeared. Despite Palzac’s misgivings concerning its seaworthiness, anxious urgency overrode his apprehension. Throughout the trip, Palzac made all kinds of verbal exhalations and physical gesticulations to impress time was of essence, but the languid gondolier leisurely poled the boat, unconcerned with the impatience of his passenger. All the while humming a repetitious refrain. Palzac was quite certain it was the only melody he knew. He began nervously tapping his feet in an effort to hasten the journey. Nevertheless, throughout the entire trip, the gondolier never sped up. Finally they reached the elongated jetty abutting Alexander Platz.

Launching himself from the vessel, he shot across the Platz, bounding over Pons Sapientia and up the stairs, holding his Leaflet aloft to prevent any obstruction to his rapid passage. Breathlessly he burst through the classroom door...only to trip upon the master’s staff, which was being used to demonstrate a proper gesture. Palzac flew across the room, arms outstretched, as his knapsack and all its contents wound up strewn across the front of the room. Without

²⁰ Jonnins are equivalent to “small cloths” or underwear. Jonnout, on the other limb, serve the same function as woollen or long underwear.

missing a beat the master continued on, as though the incident were part of the lecture.

“Coincidentally, Grand Master Flash has shown us the correct gesture for fly!”

The entire classroom erupted in laughter. Red-faced and abashed, Palzac quietly took his seat. The Master was evidently satisfied with Palzac’s level of mortification, and let him slink into studious obscurity throughout the rest of class. Though afterwards a stern reprimand of “Don’t let that happen again!” made a positive twofold impression. Palzac appreciating the prestidigitator letting him off easy. However; his given handle: “Grand Master Flash”, eventually shortened to just “Flash”; stuck. Though escaping further discipline, Palzac owned it amicably.

On the whole, the rest of the term passed uneventfully. Though Palzac learned little of thaumatology that first trimester. He, along with the rest of the students in his circle spent their days acquiring mundane knowledge in geography, history, economy, general law and philosophy. Of course the Principalities were the principal subject of most these topics. By the end of the trimester, he could confidently recite the names of every prince, duke, or minor lord, and their appointed dominion within the Principalities; perhaps even listing what products each produced. Every student knew the exchange rate between a daro and a ducat, and not one was unaware of the minute details of Lord Glantri’s life and achievements. There was not a law, common or otherwise, Palzac was unfamiliar with. He applied himself conscientiously on this subject, figuring this would prove advantageous in the future. To end the term’s lectures, they discussed magical

theory, the master even hinting of Glantrian secret crafts.

They even received instruction in what was known as the three “Rs”. Which coincidentally, past midpoint of the trimester, seemed to take up three hours. But again, by trimester’s end they could accurately proportion components; read Glantrian, Darokinian and Common; and most importantly, read and write magical runes and symbols.

They participated in exercises upon Alexander Platz, and received spiritual guidance in hours long meditations; sitting cross-legged atop the Great School among the rooftop gardens. Learning to harness something called chi. Though Palzac kept confusing this word with a popular tea served at the Mages’ Hostelry.²¹

Initially Palzac loathed this inert quiet time, harkening memories of the long winter nights in Vestland. Eyes were to remain shut, yet the mind open. Instead, Palzac would often peek out under his eyelashes, gazing at the lofty towers and rooftop patios and ice gardens. Feeling the warmth of the winter sun, the stark blue atmosphere broken by herds of cumulous clouds slowly migrating across the pristine sky. Yet after a while he began to find the sessions enlightening. Clearing all thought from his mind, attaining ascetic contact with his focus. Its first occurrence since casting light so long ago. Perhaps this is what was meant by chi. But

²¹ The Mages’ Hostelry is the Great School of Magic’s practical “laboratory”, putting the school’s experiments to test. It is described as location 54. Mages’ Hostelry, located in the Entertainer’s Quarter. [Page 43, column three, Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri.]

his connection was more lucid and coherent than before. Perchance chi was a more powerful form of focus?

Even as all these talents were acquired, still lacking the social skills and courage to befriend any of his classmates, Palzac was usually left to his own devices. Occasionally he would drop obscure allusions concerning Glantri's ultimate power; yet nothing was ever revealed of this enigma, or the clandestine organization said to preserve its secrets. In fact, most students seemed not even to know what he was talking about. This suited Palzac just fine. Still furtively he feared his newfound life and education could be stripped from him if he did not produce some evidence of its existence or invention. As the trimester came to a close, he was no closer to obtaining any proof one way or the other. During the final week of classes, another more confident youth approached Palzac offering casual invitation to a Year's End party being thrown by his older brother and some flat mates. Perhaps here at last was his chance to mingle with a more advanced group of knowledgeable enchanters.

Yet acumen and alcohol seldom mix, especially for someone unaccustomed to either. Palzac originally planned to remain sober, but unfamiliar with peer pressure, he was persuaded into having a drink...or two. As the night wore on, intoxication fostering his confidence, he at last proclaimed an enthusiasm for the night sky. Vocalized with such brash bravado, and thoughtless presentation, there was little doubt behind his *deux entendre*; and an uncomfortable hush fell over the room. As the cacophony recommenced, he slunk outside to the

balcony. Gazing at the night sky, even in his sozzled state, he was greatly aware of the gaffe. However; little did he know, in addition to his academic records; living arrangements, leisure activities, and nocturnal amblings had been documented along with most of his other unusual endeavours.

Knowledge and privilege being well regulated in Glantri, a common jest amongst its citizens is you even need a license to shit. Yet through the various boards of records and licensing, and the School of Magic, these institutions exist to serve another function; showing all moving through various circles, whose company they keep, and perhaps what knowledge they possess. It is said a lone individual sits at the head of these numerous boards. Known only as The Engineer or "Keeper of the Watergates", this figure maintains tabs of all knowledge flowing through the city streets, keeping continuous contact with the Council of Princes.²² Whether this soul indeed exists is the source of much speculation among residents of Glantri City, asserting he gains secret knowledge from an ability to communicate with the city's rodent population. Despite the validity of this ability, until now, Palzac had always been cautious; aware of where and what he said, acutely conscious of rats lingering about... whether on two legs or four.

Which made his current predicament ever so disheartening. Palzac was terribly aware of his inability to weave the complex webs of

²² As "The Engineer" is non-canon, I left his existence a mystery. Perhaps at a later date, Bruce Heard or the Mystara community can decide if they like the idea?

deception and duplicity the Glantrian lords employed so proficiently. But he later found it somewhat incredulous, that such an apparently insignificant phrase blurted out at one of a hundred plebian Year's End parties, to an inebriated crowd no less, could have led so quickly to his current questionable intent. Possibly putting him in the crosshairs of one or more powerful figures in Glantrian society. The pinnacle consisting of the ruling princes of Glantri, and although a forum leading to true power, it was an arena Palzac knew he had no business entering. Had the Bells of Fate already rung?²³

What if after seeing the price of power you no longer wanted power? Was it possible to step back from the intricately woven stage and withdraw unnoticed? Initially wanting only to view what lurked beneath the ocean of knowledge without drowning below, Palzac had waded too deep to turn back without first learning to swim these dangerous waters. Yet the more Palzac gleaned from whispered half-truths, it was the entire ocean they were trying to protect, and he had already seen the shore. He knew of its existence, and that alone was danger for those wishing to protect the knowledge leading to Glantri's greatest power. One said to have the power of opening doors toward Immortality... if such a thing were even possible. Palzac had not believed so, until witnessing the fervour of those striving to protect the path.

An older student also attending the party, and assistant to one of Palzac's

²³ The Bells of Fate is a national Glantrian holiday taking place at midnight on the last day of the year. It is described on Page 55, column three of Gaz. 3, The Principalities of Glantri.

thaumaturgical prestidigitators, propitiously overheard his blunder. This pedagogic progeny of his professor recounted what he had heard to his Master. This Master, taking special interest in Palzac's education, now struggled to set him upon the path of societal redemption, and hopefully, restored standing at school. How Master Krollnar had conceived of sending him to this ostensible minor lord Palzac couldn't be sure.²⁴ He had heard only whispers of Stein, and knew nothing of his allegiances.²⁵ Though his name was scarcely mentioned in class when discussing ranking nobility, it was often cited when discussing diplomacy. Could this conservative conjurer row him safely back to shore?

Though he could not be sure, Palzac had little choice. After leaving the Street of Wounded Warriors and walking across the plaza, he handed a city guard the vermilion slip allowing him to enter The Rim.²⁶ Making

²⁴ Master Julius Krollnar 12th level mage, is Lady Rowena Krollnar's uncle, and quite possible Lady Juliana Vlarroden's namesake. A childhood friend of Prince Vlaardoen, and instructor at the School of Magic, he is also a 2nd Circle Fire Elementalist, and a 3rd Circle Cryptomancer.

²⁵ Nikolaus (Nikolaas) Stein 12th level mage, is liaison between houses Linden & Ritterburg. Of Aalbanese and Bergdhoven descent, he quite possibly the best man for the job. Stein has acted as foreign diplomat in matters of extreme delicacy. His interest in entomology is restricted to beetles and butterflies. He also is a 2nd Circle Water Elementalist, and a 4th Circle Cryptomancer.

²⁶ The Rim is the far Eastern walkway in the city, with access being denied to the lower class and beggars. It is described as location 9. The Rim, located in the Noble's Quarter. [Page 55, column three of GAZ3: "The Principalities of Glantri".] The vermilion slips may only be acquired from parliament, and are purported to have magical

his way along The Rim, passing Prince Innocenti di Malapietra's white marble Mansion & Dona Carnelia's pink marble and mountain cedar Estate, over the Duke of Hightower's low Townhouse, Stein's Estate at last came into view.²⁷ The structure seemed less imposing than some of the surrounding townhouses, despite having a lofty Flaemish gable, and did not possess much of an overhanging eave. The rooftop gable was replaced by a small clerestory window from which emanated a faint golden light. Not surprisingly, the structure's exterior brickwork was composed of a diagonal Flaemish bond, and oriel windows frequently protruded from its face. Rounding the townhouse's West wing, an imposing crimson entrance exhibited itself, conversely facing the city's outer wall.

A gulp of acidic anxiety travelled down Palzac's throat, depositing butterflies in his stomach. An unfortunate turn of events, as

Stein was purported to be an entomologist of some repute. Hopefully, in trying to extract the insects of his conscience, dissection was not on the evening's agenda. Yet here before the door to deliverance, there was nothing left to be done. Palzac advanced toward the entry. Under his present suspicion, Palzac was now faced with performing the most unpalatable task for any young man. Trying to convince the world he knew nothing.

Ω

To be continued...

properties. One might grasp the reason behind this by learning the other name for Vermillion is Cinnabar/Cinnabryl. In ancient times, both these hues were derived from the same sources.

²⁷ Townhouses here refer to the urban Great House equivalent, and not modern varieties having common walls and condominium rights. When referring to a Townhouse, Mansion, Palazzo, etc.; whatever most accurately describes the structure being discussed; if the building in question is being described as belonging to someone; for example, Lord Beaumarys-Moorkroft's Townhouse; I have chosen to capitalize the term, as it is an extension of their greater estate or dominion; and thus, part of their title/titled "lands". However when one of these terms exists by itself, it should be written in lowercase.

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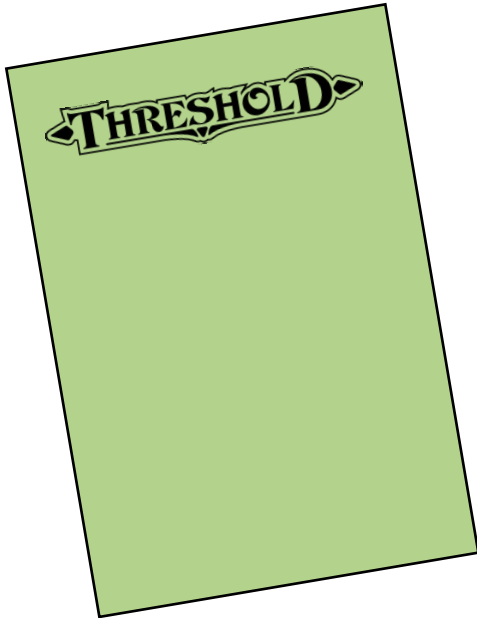
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- The Elven Calendar and Holidays
- Trees of Life & Elven Rituals
- Elven Demography & Class Variants
- More Background on the Icevale Elves
- A Possible Alfheim Future Timeline
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