

# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

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## Mystaraspace

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The fifteenth issue of the Mystara Magazine,  
piercing into the black void to explore  
the planets of Mystaraspace and beyond.

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# MYSTARA

THE PIAZZA  
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# THRESHOLD

## Issue # 15

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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

# Open Hailing Frequencies...

Captain's Log - Stardate ... *undetermined*

In this issue of Threshold we are going to explore one of my favorite regions of the setting, the dark void beyond Mystara's skyshield and everything that lurks within it. Having first seen Star Wars at the grand old age of 4, and being raised on reruns of Star Trek, D&D in space always felt very natural for me. That's why I devoured Spelljammer supplements almost as voraciously as I did those for Mystara.

Of course Spelljammer mechanics are fairly different from the original mechanics for Mystara's space system developed in *Up, Away, and Beyond* by Bruce Heard in Dragon Magazine 160, however fans of either mechanic should be excited about this issue of Threshold. Fear not! Though the vastness of space may seem incomprehensible, Sturm prepares the way with his Guide to Mystarospace. From there we'll start our journey by exploring Ancient Anomalies in the darkest regions of Mystarospace with Luca Pezzullo, and preparing for a journey to Spillworld to plumb the secrets of Mystara's past in an article by LoZompatore. Agathokles will take us to doomed Damoclese, explore pachydermions and their culture, and even lead us to a daring adventure on Myoshima, while Stefano Leonardi introduces us to the second planet in Mystara's solar system, Ishtar, and all of its wonders.

Those wonders and more await, but even as our odyssey through the dark takes us further and further away from Mystara, we won't lose site of the lands, the cultures, and the peoples we have grown to love. I hope you enjoy exploring the celestial realm as much as we have enjoyed creating it for you!

Also, for those of you who have read this far, Threshold is trying something a little new in this issue. We have two new interactive columns, a Q&A session as well as a coloring contest! Be sure not to miss these, and join us over at The Piazza to continue the discussions!

*John Calvin (Chimpman)*  
Issue #15 Editor-in-Chief

## This Issue's CONTRIBUTORS

**Giampaolo Agosta** (a.k.a. *Agathokles*) agrees with Schiller that "man is only completely a man when he plays". Therefore, he makes a point of taking gaming seriously, and real life casually. Besides Mystara, his gaming interests include (among others) Dark Sun, Planescape, Ravenloft, Birthright, Call of Cthulhu, Star Wars and Witchcraft RPG.

**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.

**Michele** "*LoZompatore*" C. played BECFI 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 he has away from Mystara he helps other guys in designing oil and gas pipelines around the (real) world.

**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

unbearingly cute. It's a pretty awful thing to do.

**John** "*Chimpman*" **Calvin** has been fascinated by the world of Mystara since he first opened the Red Box. The thing he is enamored most with is the tremendous amount of fan created material for the setting - the foremost among those being the Hollow Moon material developed by Sharon Dornhoff - which is where he spends most of his time lately.

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.

**Robert Nuttman** (aka *RobJN*) has been a Mystaraphile since before that world even had a name. When he is not busy untangling the skeins of [a certain Traladaran druid](#) or making sense of the cribbed handwriting in the diary of a teenaged wererat, he tries to write [honest-to-goodness adventures](#). This has only met with limited success. He also co-admins at [The Comeback Inn](#), where he hosts a science-fantasy magi-tech play by post set in Blackmoor just before the Great Rain of Fire.

**Stefano Leonardi** (*Polipone*) is a Master-level wizard specializing in illusion and

divination who, finding himself in our mostly non-magical world, ended up working in the field most similar to his specialty (computer technology). He is a D&D player and DM since 1992 and has played or DMed in most D&D settings.

DM. He is deeply fascinated by everything Glantrian and Shadow Elvish-ing, and loves high-level adventuring with complex political, managerial and multiplanar issues. In his spare time, he works as an emergency psychologist in Italy.

*Luca Pezzullo (Cedric)* began exploring Mystara, with the Red Box, in 1988, and hasn't stopped since, both as a player and



**FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS**

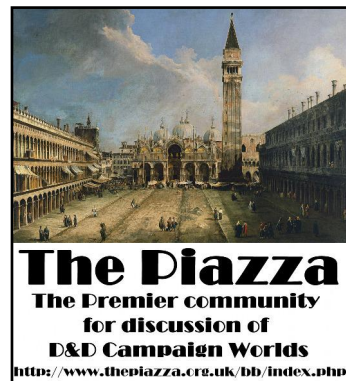
Some features in issues of Threshold carry a “From the Vaults of Pandius” tagline. As one of our stated aims is “to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there”, we hope you will enjoy these revised or extended treasures from that [website](#).



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](#).





## Previous Issues

Previous issues 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.

[#1 - "Karamaikos"](#)

[#2 - "Vaults of Pandius"](#)

[#3 - "The Sea of Dread"](#)

[#4 - "Return to Dread"](#)

[#5 - "Exploring Davania"](#)

[#6 - "The Northlands"](#)

[#7 - "Exploring Norwold"](#)

[#8 - "Warlords of Norwold"](#)

[#9 - "Hollow World"](#)

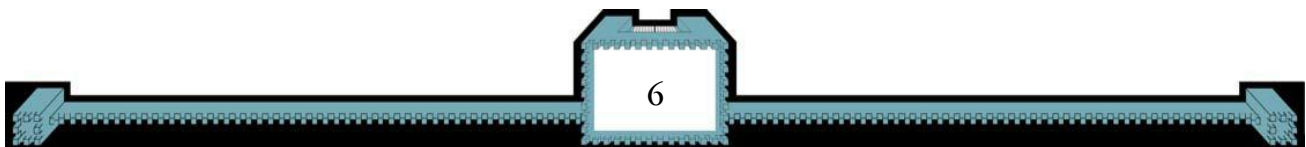
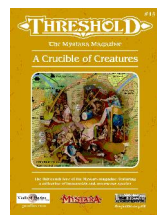
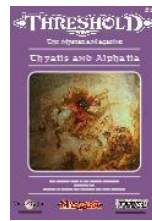
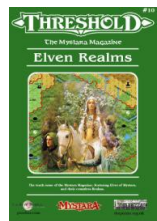
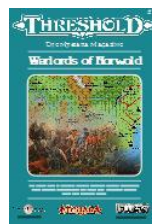
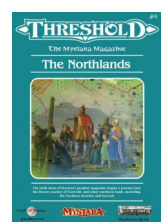
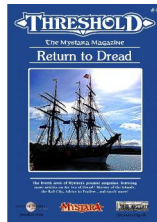
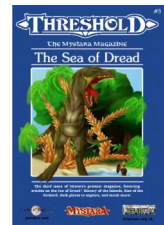
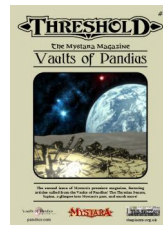
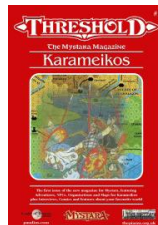
[#10 - "Elven Realms"](#)

[#11 - "Thyatis & Alphaia"](#)

[#12 - "Ages Past"](#)

[#13 - "A Crucible of Creatures"](#)

[#14 - "The Shadowdeep"](#)





## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Threshold editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the magazine's next issue. We are especially looking for contributions fitting the following themes:

### Issue 16 - Dwarves, Gnomes, and Hin

Anything of the short folk, their societies, weapons, items, cities, customs and anything else you wish to imagine for them!

**Proposal Deadline:** April 15th 2017,  
but proposal could still be submitted if the author is confident that the article will be completed by the below deadline

**Manuscript Deadline:** May 10th, 2017

**Issue Published:** By July 15th, 2017

Call for proposals for main themes of forthcoming issues (2017):

### Issue 17 - Western Brun

From Borea, along the Endworld Spine, and all the way to the tip of the Arm of the Immortals, the races, cultures, and nations of Western Brun are waiting to be brought to life!

**Proposal Deadline:** July 15th, 2017

**Manuscript Deadline:** August 10th, 2017

**Issue Published:** By October 15th, 2017

### Issue 18 - Skothar

The secrets of Skothar are waiting to be uncovered. Nentsun, Esterhold, the Lands of Jen and more! Help us unearth Mystara's mysterious continent!

**Proposal Deadline:** October 15th, 2017

**Manuscript Deadline:**

November 10th, 2017

**Issue Published:** By January 15th, 2018

*Articles about other topics are still welcome and the editorial team will evaluate their publication for any upcoming issue, taking into account available space and the issue's theme.*

Threshold accepts and invites submissions of extended or revised versions of works having appeared on The Piazza or Vaults of Pandius.

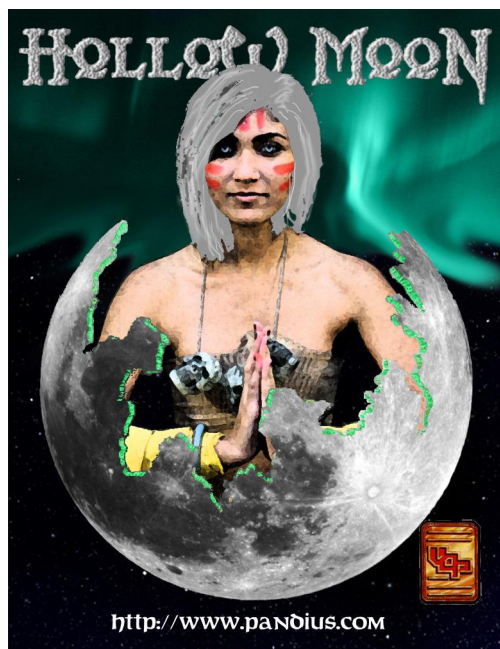
Contributions may include, but are not limited to: Articles-- short stories, short adventure modules, NPCs, historical treatises and timelines, geographical entries, new monsters and monster ecologies, etc.; and Illustrations-- portraits, maps, heraldry, illustrations, etc.

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, this material should be limited to a minimum. For most NPCs, it is sufficient to mention class, level, and alignment. For important NPCs, a one or two line stat block may be included.

## COMMUNITY INTERVIEW

# Sharon Dornhoff

Sharon, thank you so much for taking the time to answer questions for the readers of *Threshold*. Back in the days of the MML (Mystara Mailing List) your posts were always well thought out and very inspiring, from discussions of Outer Being dimensional mechanics, to an alternate version of the Ierendi Islands, and eventually the creation of the Hollow Moon sub-setting.



***Threshold Magazine:*** Can you share with our readers how you became involved in RPGs, and what specifically drew you to the world of Mystara?

***Sharon Dornhoff:*** I'm an "old school" gamer from the days of 1st Edition AD&D and the Basic/Expert boxed sets. I played my first

game with my babysitter and her boyfriend, cluelessly getting my paladin killed in an attempt to rescue my little sister's elf from a fire giant. After that, I felt like I owed it to my unlucky character to learn the rules, so I wouldn't make the same sort of boneheaded mistakes again. :-)

Back then, most adventure modules were pure dungeon-crawls - no story, no context, no objectives beyond "find treasure" and "don't get killed" - but *Isle of Dread*, the one that came packed with the Expert rules, was different. It had a map with whole countries on it, each with its own cultural flavor! It had native villages, villages that weren't just generic medieval ones, with practical defenses against all the big monsters running around! It had dinosaurs, and freaky killer plants, and all sorts of new critters that taught me you could make your own monsters, not just be limited to the ones from the rulebook! It had ruins that seemed like they'd had a purpose long ago, rather than just being plunked down on graph paper to lead 5-8 PCs through a designated gauntlet of traps, orcs and goblins.

Later, when the *Gazetteers* appeared, naturally I gobbled them up like candy. Getting to see all those countries from the *IoD* map brought fully to life was one of the most rewarding experiences of my early gaming days, same as reading a novel or watching a movie might've been. Likewise, the *Princess Ark* article series brought color

and activity to whole regions of Mystara that the modules had barely touched, and the Hollow World capped it off with an incredible depth of history. :-)

**You have mentioned before that you were inspired to create the Hollow Moon setting after seeing a detailed map of the lunar surface. Where did you draw inspiration from when deciding how to populate Matora's interior with Mystaran cultures?**

Partly I was inspired by books I've read: some of them shared with Mystara's own writers, like Alan Dean Foster's *Icerigger* series that plainly inspired the cryions' original description; some of them pretty obscure, like the reference works on New Guinea that I consulted for the Ur-Carnifex, or a weird, long-forgotten knock-off of *Gulliver's Travels* I found in the UMass library, from which I frankly stole the Cacklogallinians. (Hey, if Bruce Heard could import *Star Trek: Wrath of Khan* battle scenes and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, why not? ;-D)

More often, I seized upon it as an opportunity to expand upon cultures that seemed neglected or incomplete in the existing products, or to plug holes in the histories that had already been written for Mystara's lands, peoples, and artifacts. Why were there an isolated population of human albinos on a sunny tropical island, of all places? Were *all* the shadow elves willing to concede to Rafiel's doctrine of infant and elder abandonment? Were the Modrigswerg always as inherently-nasty as Northman and Rockhome rumors insist? What was Herathian culture like before the aranea mastered their shapeshifting powers? Did it

really take *that* many centuries for **anyone** to catch on that something as powerful as the freakin' Nucleus of the Spheres was down there? And what were those ruins on the Isle of Dread left over from, anyway?

Needless to say, I'd loved all the surprise revelations that the original Gazetteers' authors incorporated into their products, and had plenty of the same in mind. :-)

**During your work on the Hollow Moon you developed detailed entries for several of Matora's inhabitants including the desert ghosts of the crystalbarrens, the pteryx, ur-carnifex, and (in collaboration with Geoff Gander) the troglodytes living in the Marsh of Putrescence. Which race would you have developed next?**

I'd planned to address the various races in chronological order, so people could see the Hollow Moon's internal situation develop as new species and societies arrived. Because they weren't as isolated by geography, and because the Spell of Remembrance wasn't *nearly* as stringent as the Spell of Preservation, there'd be a lot more potential for interaction and cross-pollination, like the kind that produced the Hollow World's pirate culture or its unique Krugel Orcs.

Going by that standard, the next race out of the gate would've been the cryions: Matora's only *native* humanoid race. Created from bats by Seshay-Selene, to occupy a habitat - the crystalbarrens - that no endangered Mystaran race would ever find suitable, they're nomadic herders of reindeer and musk oxen, the only animals that can cross the frigid crystal without losing their feet to frostbite. The cryion clans roam between

patches of crystal-encrusting lichens and arctic grasses, following an 18-month cycle that carries them from their holy mountain, Mt. Copernicus, to the ice-rim of the central sea, to the far rim of the 'barrens where they harvest wood for their wind-powered sledges and skiffs. They've been feuding with the desert ghosts for millennia, because the ghosts hate the fire-poles they use to melt water for their herds, and the metal the cryions depend upon for tools and sledge-skates.

Incidentally, I'd made the Storm Cycle - the Materan year - an 18-month affair, specifically to accommodate the cryions. Their original description in the *Creature Catalog* says that they follow a 3-year migratory cycle, but the Mystaran races who think that's the case have only seen the half of it: the ones who migrated to Mystara wander back and forth *through the polar openings*, on the same 18th-month cycle as ever, so they spend half their lives in the Hollow World and half, in the outer. Which means all those explorers who've been struggling to get to the HW on foot **could** have caught a lift with the bat-folk, had it ever occurred to them to ask... ;-)

**For a time you became very involved in the Ravenloft setting. Is there a chance that the two settings (the Hollow Moon and Ravenloft) could cross over? Have any Materans ever been pulled into the Mists?**

There's actually a canon immigrant to Ravenloft who came from Mystara, although he's purely an invention of the Ravenloft writers, so isn't referenced in any Mystara products. He's a bitter, misanthropic

Alphatian necromancer named Meredoth, and he lives on a chilly deserted island called Todstein in a far corner of his rather large domain, the Nocturnal Sea.

In fact, when I was writing material for the Ravenloft fan group Fraternity Of Shadows, I was the one who compiled information on Meredoth and his domain for the fan-made *Nocturnal Sea Gazetteer*. (Yes, Mystara isn't the only setting to call its setting-books "gazetteers".) Anyone interested in the necromancer, his realm in Ravenloft, or the **loads** of Mystara-references I made sure to incorporate into his backstory and territory is welcome to stop by the [Fraternity of Shadows website](#) and download the pdf.

**Are you currently working on any RPG projects?**

I'm afraid not. My current work as a college anatomy & physiology instructor takes up far too much of my time and brain-space, and my interests have shifted away from gaming over the years. But I'm certainly pleased that others are still interested in my old Mystara projects; if anyone has expressed a wish to expand on Matera, I'd happily act as an adviser, and pass on information on where I'd meant to go with its various cultures and regions.

**Thank you Sharon! The Hollow Moon has been a source of inspiration to many Mystarophiles over the years (myself included)! We really appreciate you taking time out to answer all of our questions.**



## THE WORLDS BEYOND MYSTARA

by Marcus Ieros Tirrallos,  
University of Thyatis

Some wizards and sages say there are many other worlds around Mystara. The infamous Alpathian pirate Haldemar of Haaken described his visit to the supposed invisible moon, Patera, which was inhabited by rakasta and other animal beings. The Traladaran adventuress Claransa recently described the Hollow World beneath our very feet. Even the more well known moon of Matera is Hollow, with whole civilizations inside it!

I am not at this stage able to judge if such claims are true or not, but I have heard elven tales about the “seven worlds” which are a part of Mystara.

The first one would be the surface world we all know, vast as it may be.

The second one would be the world under the seas, inhabited by aquatic creatures.

The third one would be the world in the skies, above the clouds, inhabited by cloud giants, fairies and all manner of flying creatures.

The fourth one would be the world under our feet, the dark underground called Shadowdeep by the Shadow elves.

The fifth one would be the Hollow World.

The sixth one would be the invisible moon of Patera.

The seventh one the visible moon of Matera and its interior.

From this list it's easy to understand that Mystara alone has more worlds than anyone will be able to explore in just a lifetime, but beyond Mystara there are many others, probably infinite, worlds.

There are obviously the other planes of existence well known by magical studies. The Ethereal Plane, the Astral Plane, the Elemental Planes, the Outer Planes of the Immortals. Some sages also say that our Prime Plane and all these other Planes are just one dimension of the many that compose the Multiverse.

All this could be quite disorienting for anyone, but the purpose of this article is not to explore the seven "worlds" of Mystara nor the many worlds of the Planes, but "only" the

## Races of the Multiverse

Obviously, all the D&D campaign worlds share the same basic races, generally humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, humanoids, giants and dragons, and more. The same races appear in many other fantasy books, movies and worlds and were mostly introduced in the genre as we know it now by the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Despite the fact that the D&D worlds were connected by Spelljammer, through the Prime Plane Universe, and by Planescape, through the Planes, D&D never bothered to establish a common origin for the different races.

Moreso, often each campaign world has its own particular origin story for its races, incompatible with the stories of the other campaign settings. For example, in Mystara humanoids were supposedly created by the Immortal Hel just a few thousands of years ago, and in Dragonlance dwarves were supposedly gnomes mutated by the magic of the Graygem.

In order to use all the D&D campaign settings in the same universe, the DM could either assume a very strange case of parallel evolutions, or consider that all the local origin stories are false. This is not really so strange considering that on our Earth too, until a few centuries ago, the origin stories as presented in myths and religions were considered the truth, but now our modern understanding of the universe has disproven such stories or, at the very least, has forced religions to revise them or consider them only as symbolic narrations.

The same could be true for all the D&D campaign worlds or any other fantasy world the DM wishes to use in her or his campaign. In this case all the elves of the Multiverse must have an unique common origin, and the same goes for all the other races, including humans.

Either way, for a PC discovering that others of his/her race exist in the Multiverse should be quite a mind-shattering experience. A Mystaran dwarf discovering there are other, very similar dwarves on other planes and planets will either go into full denial (saying to himself/herself that “they must be descended from Mystaran dwarves, as we are surely the only original dwarves”) or accept that the Multiverse is much bigger and complicated than she/he thought, and grandmother’s story about dwarves being created by Kagyar from the stones of Mystara was not so truthful as she/he liked to think.

Obviously to begin a journey to discover the True Origin of the dwarves (or any other D&D race) could be a great adventure seed for any campaign set in the Multiverse.

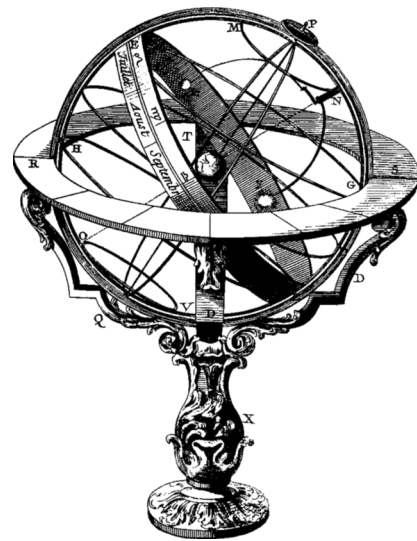
The same is also true for the many non-intelligent monsters usually shared by different campaign settings.

other planets which rotate in the sky beside the planet Mystara.

Indeed sages have discovered that Mystara is a planet which orbits around the sun, with its two moons that likewise orbit it. Some also say the planet is a living being, but a discussion about this is beyond the scope of this article<sup>1</sup>.

Our purpose here is to discuss the existence and the characteristic of other planets beyond Mystara, i.e. other celestial bodies which, like Mystara, orbit around the same sun.

We will see we have many reports on such celestial bodies, often conflicting with one another. The reader will decide which report he or she judges more trustworthy.



<sup>1</sup> See also Threshold magazine issue #9, [“Ecology of the Megaliths and the Norns Cycle”](#) by LoZompatore and the [“Megalith” post](#) on Robin’s blog.

## Recent sources

### Editor's Note:

Obviously all the source authors are real people who posted their own descriptions of Mystarospace previously on the Mystara Mailing List or the Piazza, and whose work is now stored in [the Vaults of Pandius](#).

Dating sources to the Mystaran calendar: see for example the first referenced source below by Joseph DuBois; as he originally posted it back in 1995, I have transformed the date into 995 AC in-world, as I have done for all the other sources.

This equating of authors to Mystaran characters and dating conversions are intended as a celebration of the work done by members of the Mystaran community in the last 20+ years. I think Mystarospace and its planets are big enough to have enough space for all the ideas developed by the fans until now, and more.

- *Sturm aka Francesco*

First, I will list all the sources I have found so far relating to "Mystarospace" (the name I will use for the solar system). This list may well be only a partial one. For all the research I have done I cannot obviously exclude that a more learned sage, or accomplished wizard, in Alpathia, Matera, Davania or any other place in Mystara knows much more than me of the planets of

Mystarospace, and yet his or her works may not be available in Thyatis, or in all the other places and nations where I found the below sources:

- **Joseph DuBois**, a mysterious wizard from Renardy or Glantri, published a small description (titled "[Mystara Space](#)") of some planets of Mystarospace in 995 AC, indicating the existence of water wizards on the fourth planet. I suspect however he may have confused our system's planets with those belonging to the ancient Alpathian solar system, which should be another one entirely and not the same solar system of Mystara.

- **Daniel Boese**, another sage of unknown origin, possibly Darokinian, who is famous as the author of other essays and a very detailed timeline of Mystara<sup>2</sup>, published published "[Mystaran Solar System](#)" giving some measurements of the planets of Mystarospace back in 996 AC. The only planet he briefly described is Damocles, fourth from the sun, which contained an undescribed civilization. He probably had the same mysterious Blackmoorian source of Mishler, see below.

- The notorious sage **James Mishler**, also known as Mystaros, who has published extensive and appreciated works on many topics, wrote "[Mystara solar system](#)" in 996 AC, a short description of the solar system listing the planets as Valerias, Mystara, Ares, Damocles-Vanya, Viudan, Khoronus, Protius, Razud and Thanatos. Inhabitants of such worlds were also listed. I have reason to believe the number of planets is correct and goes back to ancient Blackmoorian sources (indeed some say Mystaros himself is an

<sup>2</sup> Indeed he is, see [his works](#) at the Vaults of Pandius.



ancient Blackmoorian) compiled by a sage named Frank Mentzer<sup>3</sup>. The names of the planets however may not be correct, as we will see.

- A Thyatian general named **Agathokles** has published an extensive account, "[History of the Grens & the Emerondians](#)", in AC 1001 on the history of the planet Damocles, that he learned from the inhabitants of the remote Davanian nation of Emerond. He may also have utilized a previous account, "[Aliens In Mystarospace](#)" published in 999 AC by another Thyatian, **Marco Dalmonte**. [Also, see the article on this topic by Agathokles in this issue of *Threshold*]

- A Glantrian sage named **Kit Navarro** also published in 1001 AC a treatise "[Arcana Mystara](#)", on Mystaran astrology and astronomy which also contains a description of the planets and the solar system.

- Another sage or explorer named **Colin Davidson**, supposedly another Darokinian, published a "[Summary of the Mystaran Solar System](#)" in 1005 AC describing all the planets.

- The Thyatian **Giovanni Paniccia** published another short description of the planets of the solar system titled "[Mystarospace](#)" in 1006 AC.

- The Glantrian **Charles Taylor** wrote another account on the planets ("[Mystarospace](#)") in 1008 AC and a further description ("[Mystarospace and Charon/Asterius](#)") of the last planet, Charon, which he however calls Asterius, in 1009 AC.

<sup>3</sup> *Immortals Boxed Set*, DM's Guide to Immortals page 5 and 6.

Taylor published yet another account ("[Planets of Mystarospace](#)") in 1010 AC, leading me to think he could have really travelled the Mystaran solar system.

- A rather mysterious explorer or sage who just signs with the name **Cab** published an account titled "[Planets of Mystarospace](#)" in 1009 AC. His description of the planets is the same as Davidson, so they may well be the same person. However, Cab added more detailed descriptions of the planets "[Alphatia/Masauwu](#)" and "[Valerias](#)".

- Also in 1009 AC, a sage from the Northern Reaches named **Håvard** published a description, "[The Mystaran Solar System](#)", and a "[Map of Mystara's Solar System](#)" in 1010 AC.

- In 1010 AC a mysterious sage, maybe a Glantrian, known only by the pseudonym of **Ripvanwormer** published an extensive description of the 7th planet, Tarastiae<sup>4</sup>. He later also did research about the names the planets had at the time of Blackmoor<sup>5</sup>.

- In 1016 AC a Darokinian sage who signs himself **RobJN** published an extensive account, "[\[Thornspace\] TS1: Sarimaar, The Red Wanderer](#)" on the 4th planet, Vaniae, which he calls Sarimaar<sup>6</sup>.

- More recently a Glantrian sage named **Robin** is trying to compile the available

<sup>4</sup> In the "[\[Mystarospace\] Tarastia](#)" thread of the Spelljammer forum at the Piazza.

<sup>5</sup> In the "[Blackmoorspace Week](#)" thread in the Spelljammer forum at the Piazza.

<sup>6</sup> Note that RobJN has his own version of Mystara as explained in the article dedicated to "[Thorn's Mystara](#)" in *Threshold* issue #1.

information on Mystara's solar system, aided by others, such as Ripvanwormer<sup>7</sup> and Håvard.

- Finally a Thyatian named **Stefano Leonardi** has just published an extensive description of the second planet, which he calls Ishtar<sup>8</sup>

Some of these sources may be false, and certainly some may seem to contradict each other. Yet if we think how big a planet may be, such contradictions could be easily explained by the fact that different travellers landed in very different parts of the same planet. Just imagine a first explorer visiting the desert of Ylaruam, a second one visiting Thyatis city and a third one visiting the realms of the Undersea. The first one would leave a description about a desert planet, the second one would describe a planet full of wonderful cities, the third one a planet covered in waters and inhabited by undersea people. Yet they would have landed just a few hundreds of miles apart. Just imagine the same on an even larger scale. Therefore, even if we cannot exclude some of the information listed below as false, they may well be all true, as a planet is a very big place and few, if any, may be able to explore one completely.

I, Marcus Ieros Tirrallos, also have my very own source, a Thyatian rogue named **Mario Ferrer**, which claims to have visited the solar system with his own flying ship, investigating the truth of the reports of other explorers. As for all the other sources, I cannot guarantee

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<sup>7</sup> See the discussion by Robin, Ripvanwormer, Håvard and others in the [Mystara's Solar System](#) thread on the Piazza forum:

<sup>8</sup> See Stefano's article in this issue of Threshold magazine.

that his claims are true, even if he added several details to the descriptions of the planets, as you can read below<sup>9</sup>.

## MORE ANCIENT AND ALIEN SOURCES

Before the works done in recent years, previous sages and ancient civilizations wanted to explore the planets of Mystara's solar system as well. I will describe here what I have learned so far about these ancient explorers. The Blackmoorian sage **Frank Mentzer** has already been mentioned above, and the work of the mysterious Darokinian sage who uses the name of **Chimpman** is also fundamental, as he described several former Mystaran cultures who now live in outer space<sup>10</sup>. He writes that several cultures of Mystara's past, notably the saurian carnifex, the Blackmoorians and the Thothians<sup>11</sup>, were able to build flying ships and travel to other worlds. According to Chimpman these people now live mostly beyond Mystara's solar system, but some can also be encountered among the nearby planets. Other cultures too apparently have travelled among the stars, such as Alphatians,

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<sup>9</sup> This fictional character is the mean I have chosen to detail my own ideas about Mystara's solar system.

<sup>10</sup> See "The Exiles Campaign Setting" article by John Calvin in this issue of Threshold and other material at [The Exiles Campaign](#) website.

<sup>11</sup> Obviously John Calvin mentions the Nithians, but from a Mystaran perspective the Spell of Oblivion would prevent him from knowing of them, so I have substituted them with the Thothians. See also my articles in Threshold issues [#11](#) and [#12](#) for more about the topic.

arana, elves, lizardmen and humanoids, for various reasons. He also adds brief descriptions of the planets of Mystarospace, added below.

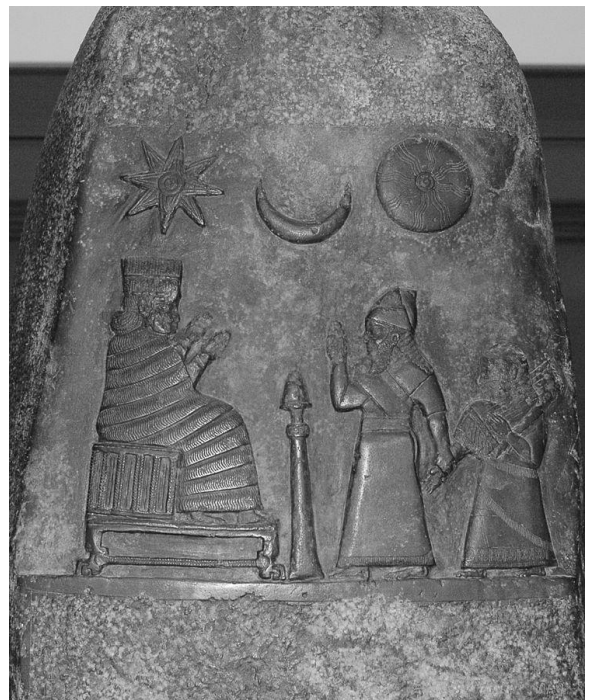
The Sheens are a race of intelligent constructs supposedly of Blackmoorian origin, described by Chimpman in his work<sup>12</sup>. They are not the only intelligent constructs known to roam outer space. The mysterious Oards, part humanoids and part machine, and the even more mysterious Meks<sup>13</sup>, have been spotted in Mystarospace and on Mystara itself several times.

Then there are other alien races, which are believed to be both planar and space travellers, such as the strange illithids, and the more known beholders, adaptors, along with many others<sup>14</sup>. All the people mentioned above probably have detailed and extensive knowledge of the planets of Mystarospace, but they have not shared such knowledge with us inhabitants of Mystara, at least as far as I know.

At the present status of my knowledge, I think there is no culture or nation in Mystarospace which is organized enough or advanced enough in magic to have explored it fully. However it is possible that ancient

Blackmoor was indeed so advanced to have done that. I have clues about Alphatians having small colonies on several planets, but apparently many of them are not in contact with their original empire anymore, either because they decided to leave it, or because they unwillingly lost any contact with it. The Heldannic Knights and the Myoshimans certainly have their flying vessels, and they may have explored parts of Mystarospace, but both cultures are notoriously secretive about their knowledge, so the general public does not know anything about the extent of their knowledge.

Travelling through the great expanse of space is not easy, and few cultures have enough resources to do it, let alone maintain steady connections. However some culture or nation of Mystarospace, maybe on a far away planet, could be advanced enough to explore the nearby worlds and maybe one day achieve contact with us.



<sup>12</sup> See also *Dragon Magazine* #258 pg 31 "Mage vs Machine" and *Dragon Magazine* #270 pg 34 "Revenge of the Sheens" by Bruce R. Cordell.

<sup>13</sup> Oards appeared in CM6: "Where Chaos Reigns" and AC9: "Creature Catalogue". The Mek appears in the *Rules Cyclopedia* and the *Mystara AD&D Monstrous Compendium Appendix*. More information about them are available at the Vault of Pandius.

<sup>14</sup> Such as [any race which appears in the Spelljammer setting](#). The adaptors are described in the *Rules Cyclopedia*.

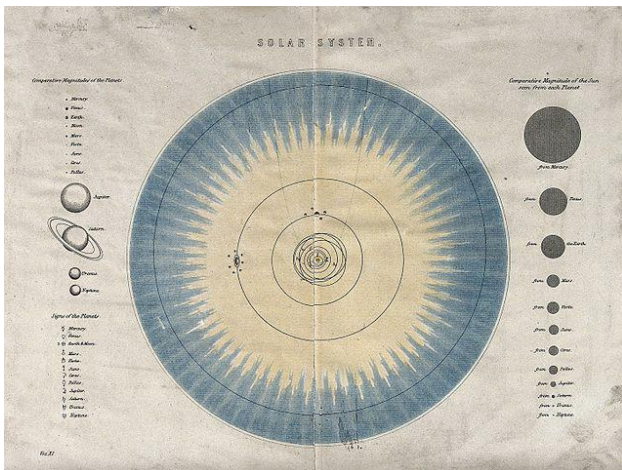
# THE SOLARIOS SYSTEM, OR MYSTARASPACE

## The Sun - Solarios - Ixion

Circumference at the equator: 2,714,336 miles<sup>15</sup>

At the current state of our studies, no sage worth his or her reputation doubts anymore that the Sun, or Ixion or Solarios as it is often called, is the center of our solar system, the fulcrum around which several planets and other celestial bodies, such as comets, orbit. Some say the Sun is the domain of the namesake Immortal, others it is just a huge portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Maybe both ideas could be true. It seems it has fire elemental inhabitants, but I have no reliable recounts of wizards ever visiting it.

Mario apparently did not dare to go near to the sun, so he has nothing to add about it.



<sup>15</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer, roughly the same as Earth's Sun.

## Alphatia - Masauwu Alphaksis - Asterius - Sin<sup>16</sup>

Supposed circumference at the equator: 9,520 miles<sup>17</sup>.

Kit Navarro and other sources mention this planet, while others deny it exists. A possible theory is that the planet was until recently an asteroid in the Asterius/Damocles belt which fell into another orbit during the Wrath of the Immortals. Some have named it Alphatia after the immortal, not the empire. According to Navarro the planet is bright as a diamond and has a rocky surface, inhabitants are not mentioned.

According to Davidson, it is a hot, almost molten planet, inhabited by efreet, fire elementals and other fire loving creatures. He also says that certain immortals of energy make bases there, but few travellers from Mystara visit this place, for obvious reasons. Cab, which may be an alias of the above, expanded this description, writing that the planet has a curious day and night cycle of 59 Mystaran days. During the long "day" the planet is hot and fire creatures can thrive, while during the long "night" only ice loving creatures can survive. Therefore the fire and ice creatures migrate constantly, some of them on true moving cities pulled by gigantic beasts of burden, following the day or the night, not even fully aware of the existence of the other people. Cab also writes that the poles have deep craters, probably inhabited by entropic creatures, and that some ice people have built stable residences in the

<sup>16</sup> Elven name meaning "The New One".

<sup>17</sup> Indicated by Frank Mentzer only after the possible destruction of Asterius/Damocles. Supposed circumference as Mercury.

depths of the crust, where they can avoid the extreme heat of the long days.

Håvard names this planet just the First, Alphaksis in his map, and says it is the home of fire creatures and a stronghold of red and ruby dragons.

Robin names the planet Asterius, and says temperatures are extreme, and the atmosphere very thin.

Chimpman only describes this planet as a harsh, sparsely populated place.

Mario says this planet was originally in the orbit of Damocles, and only in the last years it came to be here. He says all the reports of previous explorers have some truth in it: there is a region of crystalline and icy terrain, where creatures who follow Alphatia have built great houses and castles of crystal, able to withstand the extreme temperatures. There is a region of hot desert, inhabited by creatures who follow Alphaks. And there are

### **Air, Diseases and Food (mostly by Robin)**

Three major dangers for explorers of an unknown planet are:

1) the composition of the "air", which may be breathable only to the locals (adapted or by magic), 2) the local micro organisms (diseases) and 3) food. Explorers may find impossible or difficult to breath or become sick in another environment due to lack of exposure from birth to certain bacteria. Secondly explorers could also be appalled by the shapes, taste, source, cooking, way of eating (or drinking) of the local food.

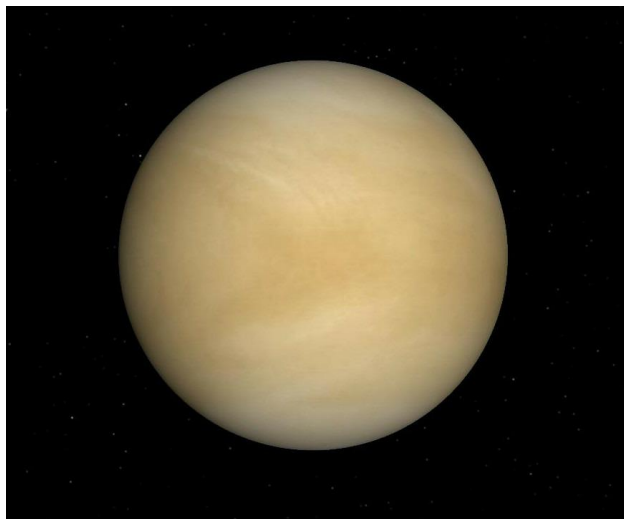
Spells such as "Air Breathing", "Protection from Disease", or "Adaptation" would be able to prevent the first and the second danger, and these would surely be available to travellers (be it on scroll/device or spell), but a disease could also be subtle and slow

enough to be very difficult to detect, or clerics could be unable to heal it fully. The third danger (food) however, must be overcome through trial and error as even a "Detect Poison" spell fixed to the caster's biology, could not reveal taste, way of preparation and other peculiarities. There are also poisonous plants which are very edible if rightfully prepared (for example Cassava, Acorn).

Some alien cultures could be used to eat specific rocks (or rock like plants), and be surprised to find non-edible rocks in other worlds, while vice versa human-like creatures could search for food and find nothing, not realizing they are standing on edible and alien rock like plants. The DM could also decide that a "Create Food" spell gives only the local edible foods, which could not be recognized as such by the PCs.

followers of Masauwu and Asterius who migrate all around the planet, to trade or, in some cases, pillage. And there are dragons and flying creatures. The planet is smaller than Mystara and has a lighter gravity, so visitors will feel lighter here and natives are often able to jump quite far. Valerias and Mystara are extremely bright from here and the natives have legends about them. The planet has many craters, as many asteroids hit it in the past, when it was in the same orbit of Damocles.

## Valerias - Telax<sup>18</sup> - Phellia<sup>19</sup> - Ishtar

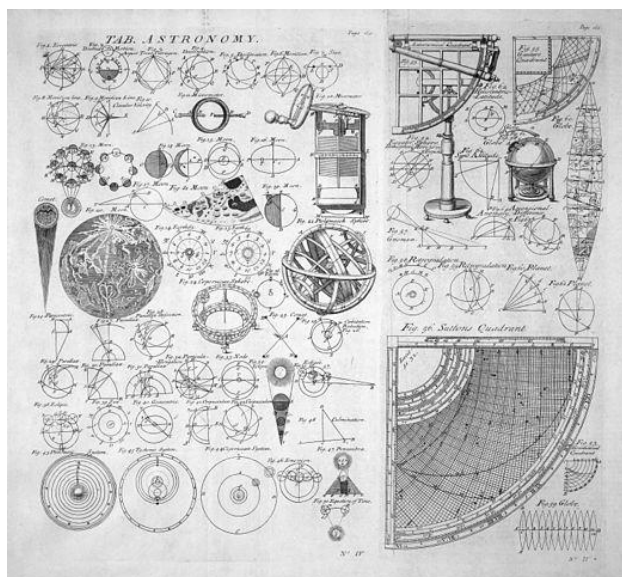


*The clouds of Valerias*

Circumference at the equator: 23,816 miles<sup>20</sup>.  
Mystaros indicates saurial cultures here.

According to Navarro the planet has an atmosphere of poisonous gasses and only gemstone dragons live here.

According to Davidson the planet is covered by swirling clouds, has a mysterious history,



<sup>18</sup> This would be the elven name as written in the starmap of the module CM7: "The Tree of Life". The correspondence between the planets and those names was discussed by Robin and ripvanwormer in the [Mystara's Solar System](#) thread on The Piazza. I have chosen to use Ripvanwormer's ideas, but Robin proposed alternative correspondences.

<sup>19</sup> This would be the Blackmoorian name as proposed by ripvanwormer. Phellia was the Thonian name of Valerias, see also "Immortals of Blackmoor vs ZGG Deities" by [Håvard](#) and [Marco Dalmonte](#).

<sup>20</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer, see note 4, Valerias is slightly larger than Venus.

and is inhabited by creatures such as spectral hounds, mujina, diaboli and other monsters of the dimension of nightmares.

Paniccia says only some sollux inhabit this hot planet, and some planar travellers occasionally visit it.

Taylor says this planet has a thick hot and acidic atmosphere, with permanent cloud cover. Most native animals are reptiles or dinosaurs, and black or onyx dragons are common. He also says the planet is Hollow, with small polar openings, and the insides would be a lot more temperate than the outside. In his later description, he says the polar openings appears as multi-mile wide whirlpools, and the outside is dominated by an alien race named the hurwaet, and by another race possibly related to the Mystaran carnifex. He adds that the inner world would be dominated by oceans, with dry land only on low-flying continents.

Cab describes Valerias as a hot world shrouded in clouds, where the day lasts for 117 Mystaran days but light is always scarce. Algae float in the upper atmosphere and the great forests are inhabited by diaboli, mujina and other nightmare dimension creatures, but also by gator men, cay men, lizard men and turtles, and whale like creatures in the seas. The planet is also frequently swept by massive vortex storms. Cab mentions also ancient abandoned pyramids on this planet. Håvard names this planet the Second, Valeriae in his map, and says it is misty, humid, dominated by dinosaurs and lizardmen. He attributes the ancient pyramids mentioned by Cab to the ancient civilizations of the Azcan and Oltecs, who supposedly reached the planet before the

Great Rain of Fire. He also confirms the planet is hollow as mentioned by Taylor. According to Robin the lower atmosphere is made of carbon dioxide, but the upper has oxygen and floating life forms.

The elven name would mean “The one beyond”, as the planet is nearer to the sun than Mystara. I believe the elves have explored the solar system much more than they would like other nations to know, or are in contact with some spacefaring culture<sup>21</sup>. Chimpman says this planet, overgrown with lush vegetation, could have been the original home of the carnifex, but now their once advanced magical civilization that spanned the whole planet has long disappeared.

A Thyatian explorer or sage named Stefano Leonardi has very recently described this planet in detail<sup>22</sup>. He writes that the planet is inhabited by descendants of Blackmoorians colonists and their slaves.

According to Mario, the 117 Mystaran days long night on Valerias is brighter than the day: while during the day only pale red light reaches the surface, during the night the clouds emit strange green lights creating fantastic auroras, perhaps caused by the algae mentioned by Cab. The seasons instead last only about 2 months each, but its temperature is hot almost everywhere due to the thick atmosphere, and snow can be found only on the highest mountains. This planet also has many volcanoes and frequent earthquakes, and lightning storms. Atmospheric pressure is higher than on

<sup>21</sup> See [“Elven Imperial Navy”](#) at Wildspace (the Spelljammer webzine).

<sup>22</sup> Check his article in this issue of Threshold magazine!

Mystara, so a visitor will feel slow and heavy on this planet, and the inhabitants tend to be stocky and strong. For the same reason, flying creatures are quite rare. Mario says Valerias is almost as big as Mystara and it is the home of many different people and cultures, including all the ones mentioned above by previous explorers. Curiously, the sun rises in the west and settles in the east.

### Days, Seasons, Gravity

The length of days and seasons on the planets and moons of Mystarospace could well be the first major cultural shock for visitors of an alien world.

A Mystaran would be very surprised by the long Valerian day, and Valerians would likewise be very unnerved by the quick and massive changes between day and night.

Gravity and atmospheric pressure will also be an immediate shock for outsiders, as the inhabitants of moons and other planet will feel the pressure on Mystara, Valerias and in the atmospheres of the gas giants crushing and insufferable. Visitors coming from Mystara and Valerias will instead feel very light on Vaniae, Damocles and many asteroids and moons and the native inhabitants too will be capable of fantastic jumps.

Some planets and moons, such as Valerias and the largest moon of Khoronus, may have an atmosphere so thick it can be almost impossible to see the stars from their surface.

All these variables will have huge societal and material impacts on the native inhabitants and cultures. In planets with very long days and nights, the inhabitants will have to sleep several times during the day, and the wake and sleep cycle will be quite different from that on Mystara. In planets with extreme seasons, the inhabitants will have to adapt to major changes, maybe living underground during the winter. In planets with low gravity but a normal atmosphere, flying and gliding could be quite convenient. On planets with low gravity but a rarefied atmosphere, jumping could be easier and even normal breathing could be a challenge. On planets with high gravity and a rarefied atmosphere flying may be impossible, while where both gravity and atmospheric pressure are high, only powerful or magical creatures may be able to fly.



## Mystara

Circumference at the equator: 24,900 miles<sup>23</sup>  
Mystara and its Hollow World will not be detailed here, but only the information written by explorers and sages about its two satellites.

Matera, the visible moon, has an equatorial circumference of about 6,785 miles while Patera, the invisible one, has a circumference of just 2,900 miles.

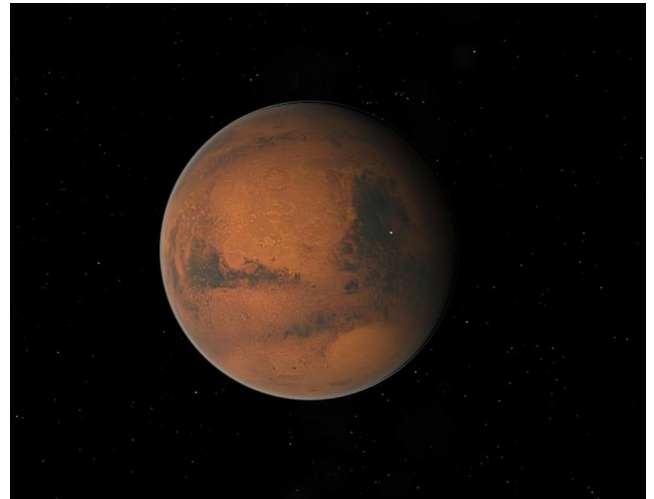
Taylor says the interior of Matera would be inhabited by many insect-like creatures, including hivebroods.

Mario has not much to add on the moons on Mystara, as he says other explorers have already published extensive accounts on them.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Thorfinn Tait here reached a similar value in [“Lining Up Mystara XIII”](#), while for the map [“Mystara Outer World 1000 AC, 72 miles per hex”](#) I calculated that Mystara could even be a little bigger. The circumference of 19,448 miles given in the *Hollow World Boxed Set* is clearly wrong as it does not fit with the other existing canon maps.

<sup>24</sup> See [“The Moons”](#) and [“Inside Matera: The Hollow Moon”](#) on the Vaults of Pandius about Matera and Patera and obviously the articles on the Hollow Moon by Chimpman in this and previous issues of Threshold magazine, as well as the articles on Myoshima and Patera by Agathokles in this issue for much more detail about Mystara’s moons.

## Vaniae - Ares - Rathanos - Sarimaar - Loth<sup>25</sup> - HENRIN OR ZUGZUL<sup>26</sup>



*Vaniae as seen from its farthest moon*

Circumference at the equator: 13,195 miles<sup>27</sup>.  
Vaniae has two very small moons with an equatorial circumference of less than 40 miles.

Each culture of Mystara has its own name for this planet.

Mystaros indicates unusual creatures and barbarian humans here.

According to Navarro the planet is subject to violent storms and has seasons of extreme heat and extreme cold, and is inhabited by frost and flame salamanders.

<sup>25</sup> See note 21. The elven name would mean “flower” for the bright colour of the planet.

<sup>26</sup> See note 22. Named after a the Thonian name of Ka or Zugzul, the Afridhi Fire God.

<sup>27</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Vaniae is a bit smaller than Mars.

Davidson describes the planet as a harsh, cold desert world, and he names it Ixion not for its heat but for its intense red colour in the sky. He says it is a world where water is scarce, inhabited by earth creatures.

Paniccia confirms fire and frost salamanders as the main inhabitants with an alternate lethargic cycle, as described by Navarro. He also specifies that Thyatians astronomers call it Vanya, because in winter it is cold and grey, while Ylari astronomers call it Rathanos, because in summer it is red and burning like the Lord of Flames.

Taylor says the planet is inhabited by four armed creatures which may be related to the sandfolk or ungolwaith of the Adri Varma plateau, and other strange monsters, but also by some humans. He later added that the northern hemisphere is filled with water, while the south is largely desert, with many canals.

Håvard says this Fourth Planet, Vaniae in his map, is a desert, and that is the original home of the sandfolk, who were brought to Mystara by the Blackmoorians. He also says that the ancient Thothians<sup>28</sup> also colonized the planet and built canals and pyramids. Besides the sandfolk, other native inhabitants would be insect men, earth creatures and brown dragons. He also says this planet is hollow too, but does not specify if its hollow world is inhabited.

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<sup>28</sup> Actually the Nithians, but the author cannot know this due to the Spell of Oblivion, check Gazetteer 2 the Emirates of Ylaruam or HWR2 Kingdom of Nithia.

A big asteroid named the Crown Rock passes near its orbit according to Håvard's map.

According to Robin, the two small moons may be artificial satellites built by an unknown civilization. The planet's ancient civilization would be in decline or disappeared entirely, and the atmosphere thinning.

According to RobJN, the planet would be called Sarimaar by the natives, who would be sandfolk and ancient Blackmoorian colonists. The planet's environment is unforgiving to humans, with extreme cold, even in the local summer. Supposedly the planet skyshield was heavily damaged before the Great Rain of Fire.

Chimpman says it looks like a cold, icy and dead world, due to a catastrophe which hit it. He however writes that some ancient inhabitants are hidden under the ice, such as creatures of air and water, while around the equator lives aranea, with cyclopean temples, and other spidery creatures. The aranea and the others living around the equator would be menaced by creatures of ice coming from the polar caps.

Mario says the planet has a low atmospheric pressure, allowing visitors to feel light here, but is often hit by sandstorms. The planet has also a huge volcano, that the natives think inhabited by the Immortals. There is also an enormous valley which is about 2500 miles long, 400 wide and 6 miles deep, once a big river. Mario thinks the planet had a huge ocean once on the northern hemisphere, now a great desert with few canals. He confirms this world is inhabited by sandfolk, intelligent insects, aranea, salamanders, rockmen, minotaurs, dragons and some

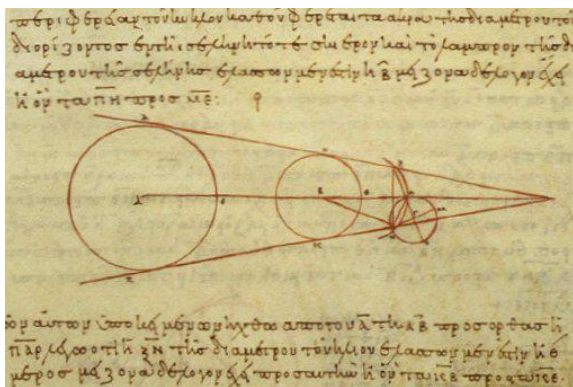
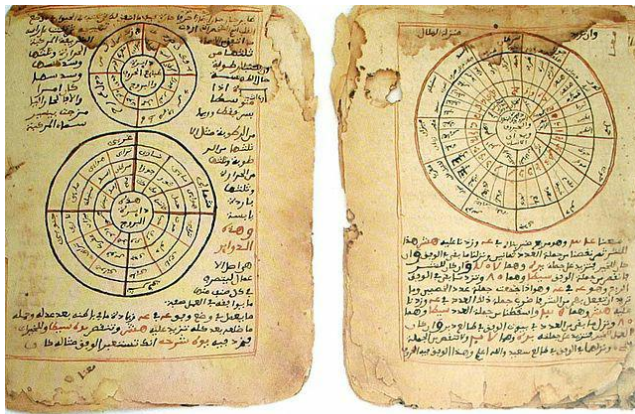
humans, whose original home could have been Mystara. Mario says the day on Vania is just a bit longer than on Mystara, but the seasons are longer, and so a Vanian year is almost two Mystaran years. In general, the climate in the northern hemisphere is more temperate than in the southern hemisphere. In the south, summers are hot and quick, winters long and cold.

### Damocles and its belt - Asterius - Alith<sup>29</sup> - Hersh<sup>30</sup>

Circumference at the equator: 19,173 miles<sup>31</sup>  
An advanced civilization is mentioned on this planet by several sources, Mystaros indicates an advanced inhuman race here. DuBois instead mentions an asteroid belt here. As written above, he may confuse this location with the original Alphatian solar system, which should be outside Mystarospace, but it seems indeed there are asteroids between Vaniae and Viudan and some are inhabited by wizards.

Damocles has a moon with an equatorial circumference of about 1,840 miles and three other irregular lesser moons with an equatorial circumference between 1,000 and 900 miles<sup>32</sup>.

Navarro mentions instead minor planets here called Razud, Koryis, Tyche, and Turmis<sup>33</sup>.



<sup>29</sup> See note 21. The elven name would mean “Fair” or “Beautiful”.

<sup>30</sup> See note 22. Named after the Thonian name of Korotiku or Tyche.

<sup>31</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. In the *Immortals box set* Damocles is supposed to be destroyed in a few or few thousands years by natural means or the actions of its resident. It is also said it may contain an advanced civilization. Damocles’ debris would create a Mercury-like and a Pluto-like planet in Mystara’s Solar System and an asteroid belt, and some of the moons of the gas giants. Fan speculated the meteor which hit Darokin in the canon events of the *Wrath of the Immortals boxed set* could have been from the destruction of Damocles, but here I will assume the planet as still existing.

<sup>32</sup> Inspired by Ceres and other asteroids of the asteroid belt.

<sup>33</sup> Ceres and the other asteroids in this case would not be moons of Damocles but would have their own independent orbits in the

Note that according to some reports (Agathokles and Navarro) Asterius/Damocles would not be a sphere like the other planets but a hemisphere inhabited on the flat side, or even a coin shaped object. I cannot comment on the veracity of such claims.

According to general Agathokles' report, it seems that among the more numerous races of Damocles there are some humanoid creatures with green skin with affinity to plants and insects, which have also founded the nation of Emerond in Davania, and pachydermions, intelligent elephants which also are known to live in some regions of Mystara. It seems the planet has also several other intelligent races<sup>34</sup>.

Some scholars, as Navarro and others, mention that the planet has been destroyed, but I have read conflicting reports on this. It is possible that some cosmic event or huge war has hit the planet recently, leading to the new orbit of the inner planet Alphaia.

According to Davidson, the asteroid field was formed by the destruction of the planet Arik. An ancient battle between Immortals and Outer Beings left this world shattered; various asteroids have been colonised over the years, but there is nothing substantial. Ghosts and spirits of the former inhabitants of Arik make their home here; the dark shadows hide beholders, fiends and undead. Paniccia says that this world was colonised during the Blackmoor era and Blackmoorian descendants still live there. Other inhabitants would be elves and the people related to the Emerondians described by general Agathokles. He also says the planet is flat and

these inhabitants are on the "top" side, while the "underworld" is inhabited by undead and plagued by some strange magical pollution. He also says that Blackmoorian ruins are to be found scattered across the planet.

Håvard confirms the Fifth Planet, Damocles in his map, is inhabited by the same people described by Agathokles, whom he names pyrithians, and they would be related to the Emerondians of Davania. He also says they originally came from a nearby solar system. Robin says the alien illithids, also known as mind flayers, inhabit sections of this planet and some of the nearby asteroids.

Chimpman says the asteroids are inhabited by pyrithian pirates, and the Alphantians recently tried to build a big magical weapon there.

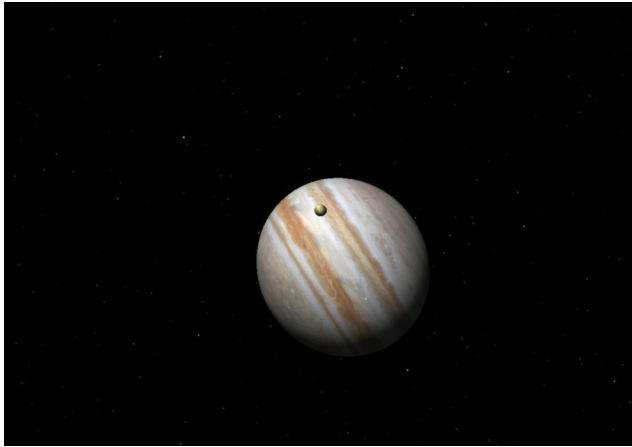
Mario says this planet was hit by some disaster twice, first around the time of the Great Rain of Fire, and the second time in recent years. However he maintains Damocles has not been completely destroyed and is still inhabited, as are many of the asteroids near it, some of which appear as small moons from the planet. The inhabitants are many, such as the pyrithians, Alphantians, visitors from other worlds, undead, intelligent insects, humans and pachydermions. Mario says that a day on Damocles last about 20 Mystaran hours and a season lasts about one Mystaran year, while on the asteroids the days last often much less, from 8 to 10 Mystaran hours. He says there are at least 40 asteroids with a circumference over 300 miles.

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same region of the system.

<sup>34</sup> See also "[Damocles Q&A](#)" by Giampaolo Agosta at the vaukts of Pandius.

**Tarastiae - Iuvis - Viudan - Ka -  
Landash/Watash - Zoar<sup>35</sup> -  
Odir<sup>36</sup>**



*Passage of Viuden over Tarastiae  
as seen from Noumena*

Circumference at the equator: 278,565 miles<sup>37</sup>  
This planet is the first of the gigantic ones. It appears to be composed of gasses and so it does not have a surface which could be inhabited by normal creatures, but it may have elemental inhabitants. It has however an unknown number of moons, the four largest with an equatorial circumference between 6,100 and 10,285 miles, therefore almost equal to Matera or bigger.

Viudan has at least 63 minor moons, with equatorial circumferences ranging from 485 miles to less than one (with only 7 bigger than 90 miles).

Navarro names the 10 biggest moons as Diulanna, Maat, Viuden, Noumena, the twin moons Fredar and Fredara, Tiresias, Ssu-Ma,

<sup>35</sup> See note 21. The elven word would mean "Splendor" or "Radiance".

<sup>36</sup> See note 22. Named after the Thonian name of the Immortal Odin.

<sup>37</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Viudan is slightly bigger than Jupiter.

Madarua and Patura.

Mystaros indicates that some moons are inhabited.

The world of Landash/Watash described by DuBois could be one of the moons, where a culture of water wizards has supplanted a previous earth-based culture.

A mysterious Alphatian wizard known by the pseudonym of Ripvanwormer<sup>38</sup> has published an extensive account on Tarastiae, as some Alphatian colonists would have named the planet. It is not clear if these Alphatians have contacts within the Alphatian Empire on Mystara. If they have, they are probably only secret contacts not widely known outside the empire.

Davidson describes a planet of grey clouds named Thanatos as the sixth, but I believe he could have inverted the position of Tarastiae and Khoronus, as his fifth planet is named Chronos. He describes this planet as a dark, almost black planet, a gas giant made up of swirling grey clouds. It is rarely visible from Mystara, but when it is it seems to gleam with a brightness that outshines the other planets; many cultures on Mystara view it as a herald of death to come. No explorers from Mystara have ventured there and returned, no scrying has yielded any information, so consequently nothing is known about the inhabitants of Thanatos.

Paniccia says that the inhabitants of this planet call it Eloysia and it has huge bubbles of breathable air in its atmosphere, with floating islands and human inhabitants.

<sup>38</sup> See the [\[Mystarospace\] Tarastia](#) thread in The Piazza's Spelljammer forum:

## Tidal Locking

Most of the moons of the solar system are tidally locked to their planet, so one face always looks at the planet, while the other never does. The only exceptions are normally the smaller and farthest satellites of the gas giants. This fact has interesting consequences on the inhabitants of the moon. Those living on the face looking at the planet, the gas giants in particular, have very bright days due to the light reflected by the planet, and may consider the planet more important than the distant sun in their myths. Those living on the other side instead may not even know they are orbiting a bigger planet. At night, those living on the face that looks at the planet may be unable to see the stars, or at least part of them, due to the mass of the gigantic planet to which the moon is tidally locked. Just think what kind of cultural shock an inhabitant of the far side may have if he/she travels to the near side, and vice versa.

Taylor says this planet has a huge floating continent in its atmosphere which appears as a red spot from a distance. He also says that one of the bigger moons is a water world, and another is a fire world, hot and volcanic, inhabited by efreeti, sollux and other fire loving creatures, including red, ruby and gold dragons. He later expanded this description adding that this world consists of a stack of huge plates, each about 1,000 miles thick and separated by about 5,000 miles. Each plate is distinctively-coloured giving the world its banded appearance. Each plate would have its own distinct

environment and ecosystem. The biggest reddish flat world floating in the upper atmosphere of the southern hemisphere would be bigger than the whole of Mystara. He also names the four major moons as Zugzul, a fiery world of sulfurous volcanoes inhabited mostly by fire creatures and dragons, Petra, a water hollow moon, frozen on the outside but warmed by a central sun on the inside, Halav and Zirchev.

Håvard says the Sixth Planet, Khoronis in his map, is an air world made up of breathable air, with 63 floating continents inhabited by various races. The planet itself would be inhabited by air creatures and some colonies of Alphatian wizards. He also adds that some of the moons are hollow.

Robin says the planetary atmosphere is dominated by eternal storms and the elves have named the main moons after humanoid races; Ogre, Troll, Goblin, Orc and Kobold. Ogre and Troll have many craters, with Troll capturing atmosphere inside the craters. Goblin is highly volcanic, while Orc is covered by ice, but with a warm ocean sustaining life inside.

According to Ripvanwormer, the atmosphere of the planet has storms but is also inhabited by floating plants, winged serpents and flying insect-like beings. The planet's major moons would be inhabited by dragons, stony giants and fiery creatures. A splinter group of Alphatian wizards, the Aurans, founded in the atmosphere of the planet twelve cities centuries ago, some of which were later invaded by archons. More recently, the Aurans were attacked by invaders from Khoronus, see below.

Mario confirms the atmosphere of this gigantic planet is inhabited by humans and flying creatures, and there are huge floating continents, one indeed almost as big as the whole of Mystara, about 20,000 miles wide and 10,000 miles high. A day on Tarastia is about 9.6 hours, while seasons last about 3 Mystaran years, but create little variations in temperatures, even if there are seasonal storms in the planet's atmosphere.

Mario says that the biggest moon, with an equatorial circumference of 10,000 miles, is called Diulanna, or Halav or Ogre and has indeed an hidden ocean beneath the surface, inhabited by water creatures and water wizards, while the surface is inhabited by rockmen and strange humans. Mario then identifies Diulanna with Landash/Watash. A day on the moon lasts 7 Mystaran days.

The second biggest moon, called Maat, Zirchev or Troll, has an equatorial circumference of 9400 miles and many craters, and is inhabited mainly by stony giants and rockmen. A day lasts almost 17 Mystaran days. It is the farthest of the major moons from Tarastia .

The third biggest has an equatorial circumference of 7,150 miles, is called Viuden, Zugzul or Goblin and is full of volcanoes, fiery creatures and dragons. It is the major moon nearest to Tarastia and a day lasts 42 Mystaran hours.

The fourth biggest, called Noumena or Orc or Petra, has an equatorial circumference of 6,100 miles, is solid ice on the outside but has a warm ocean with aquatic life on the inside. The surface is inhabited only by ice creatures. A day lasts about 3.5 Mystaran days.

Mario says the sun is small as seen from these moons, but Tarastia is much bigger and brighter, with the other major moons appearing as bright stars.

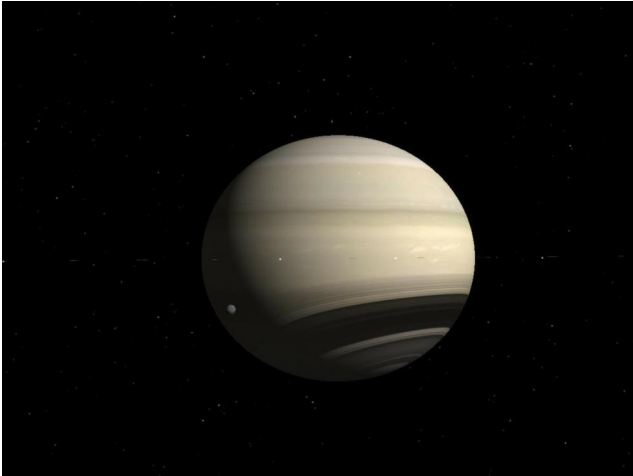
Tarastia appears even bigger from Fredar or Frey, which has an irregular equatorial circumference of about 400 miles and from nearby Fredara or Freya, which has 200 miles of irregular equator. Both are inhabited by colonists from the major moons or other worlds.

Tiresias, which has an irregular equatorial circumference of 335 miles, see Tarastia as small as Sol is seen from Mystara, and Sol much smaller. This world would be inhabited too.

Ssu-Ma has an irregular equatorial circumference of 170 miles and is so far that Tarastia appears smaller than Mystara's moon, but still brighter than the distant sun. Madarua has an irregular circumference of 120 miles and is so far from Tarastia that the planet appears as small as the distant sun. Patura has a circumference of 100 miles and is so near to Tarastia that the planet fills the whole sky on the side of the satellite which faces it.

Mario says there are six other major satellites ranging in circumference from 90 to 30 miles, and many more minor ones with a circumference from 16 to 2 miles. Many of them are relatively far from the planet, which they see as a bright star or a small moon, but almost everyone of them has or has had a base or a colony of some spacefaring culture, and most of them are often contested by people coming from Tarastia, its major moons or more far away places.

## KHORONUS - Mym<sup>39</sup> - TEMRIM OR PATHMEER<sup>40</sup>



*Passage of Petra over Khoronus as seen from Halav*

Circumference at the equator: 235,814 miles<sup>41</sup>  
Mystaros indicates a large draconic empire here and many lesser kingdoms. Khoronus is another gas giant with a ring of ice and asteroids around it. It has many moons, some as small as a few miles, but the biggest one has an equatorial circumference of 10,060 miles, so bigger than Matera and almost as big as Vaniae. Four other moons range in equatorial circumference from 2,985 to 2,075, similar to Patera or smaller, and two other moons have a circumference of less than 1,000 miles. Khoronus has 55 other moons, but only 6 of them have an

<sup>39</sup> See note 21. The elven name would mean "Bird".

<sup>40</sup> See note 22. Temrin was proposed by Ripvanwormer as corresponding to Thanatos, but the planet could have been named Khoronus, or to the more ancient Immortal Pathmeer/Fugit.

<sup>41</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Khoronus is just a bit bigger than Saturn.

equatorial circumference over 90 miles, ranging from 160 to 535 miles.

Navarro names the five biggest moons as Verthandi, Djaea, Petra, Taroyas and Halav, and says that Verthandi has its own skyshield and is possibly inhabited.

Davidson describes Chronos as a vast, ringed planet, with a rocky, windswept surface. The planet would have a dense, breathable atmosphere that encompasses dozens of moons, each itself habitable. Its heavy atmosphere retains heat well, making Chronos the ideal habitat for creatures native to the plane of air.

Paniccia says the atmosphere of the planet is poisonous, but the rings are inhabited, or at least several asteroids within them. He mentions dwarf mines and strange visitors from outer space, such as creatures called neogi, among the inhabitants of the rings.

Taylor says the atmosphere of this planet is made of habitable, solid clouds, while the rings are composed of crystalline shards. He describes three of the seven major moons: Kiranjo is a rocky world which suffered a cataclysmic impact from an asteroid of the Damocles belt; Djaea resembles a smaller version of Mystara, with a very similar climate; another unnamed moon has two halves, one light and one dark, with two very different ecosystems, the dark half covered with dense jungle, the light half a huge desert of pale sand.

Håvard says the Seventh Planet, Tarastiae in his map, is another air world with 27 floating continents. He says fierce storms rage across this world, but its atmosphere is nevertheless



inhabited by blue and gold dragons, faenare and sky gnomes who arrived from the mythical gnomish city of Serraine in Mystara but lost contact with their homeland.

According to Robin this planet too has eternal storms in its atmosphere. Its main satellites would be named by the elves Deth (which has an atmosphere, but none ever returned from it), Melin, Mear and Mass (which would have many impact craters), Mob (highly volcanic, and tectonically active, with surface renewed often), Mag and Marc. According to Ripvanwormer the planet is inhabited by colonists from the Nightmare dimension, diaboli, malferas and others who found the ruins of a lost carnifex colony on Khoronus.

Mario says the planet has indeed floating continents and many satellites. The great planet itself is inhabited by air creatures, dragons, gnomes and nightmare colonists. A day on Khoronus is just 10.6 hours long and each season is 7 Mystaran years long.

The biggest moon, called Verthandi or Kiranjo or Deth, has a dense atmosphere and from the inside even the big shape of Khoronus with its rings and satellites appears dim. It has a circumference of 10,060 miles but Mario confirms it has the fame of a very dangerous place from which none ever returned, mostly because it has been colonized by nightmare creatures and has its share of dangerous monsters. A day here lasts 16 Mystaran days, but a face of this moon always looks to Khoronus and receives reflected light from it, making the day extremely bright, while the other face receives light from the distant sun, and has a less bright day. Regardless, the atmosphere is

so thick that stars cannot be seen, even on the far side at night.

The second biggest moon has a circumference of 2,985 miles and is called Djaea or Mag, and it is overgrown with strange plants and full of fantastic animals. Its atmosphere is clear and Khoronus and its satellites can be seen from the surface in all their brightness and magnificence. A day on Djaea lasts about 4.5 Mystaran days.

The third biggest moon has a circumference of 2,870 miles and is called Taroyas or Marc, and has a dark half covered with dense jungle, and a light half with a desert of pale sand. It has also a strange equatorial ridge of mountains 12 miles high. Khoronus is like a big moon from here, and its satellites are the brightest stars. This moon has many different inhabitants, and colonizing diaboli. A day lasts 79 Mystaran days, and it is very hot, while the nights are very cold. The flora and the fauna have adapted to these particular circumstances.

The fourth biggest moon has a circumference of 2,190 miles and is called Halav or Melim, and is an icy world which nevertheless has native creatures and whole seas beneath the ice. A day on Halav lasts 2.74 Mystaran days.

The fifth biggest moon has a circumference of 2,075 miles and is called Petra or Mear and is another icy world with enclosed seas and native creatures. Khoronus is very big as seen from Melim and Mear, and its other moons appear as the brightest stars. A day on Petra lasts 1.9 Mystaran days.

Two other moons, Mass and Mob, have a circumferences of about 985 and 775 miles, the first one made of ice and rock, but with

active geysers and an enclosed, inhabited sea, while the second one is just a rock of stone and ice with a single colony of diaboli and some strange native icy creatures. Both moons are close to Khoronus, which appears as big as the whole sky from them. The days on them last respectively 33 and 23 Mystaran hours.

Khoronus has 55 other moons, but only 6 of them have an equatorial circumference over 90 miles, ranging from 160 to 535 miles. They are rocky asteroids, sometimes with colonies or at least sky ports, at various distances from Khoronus.

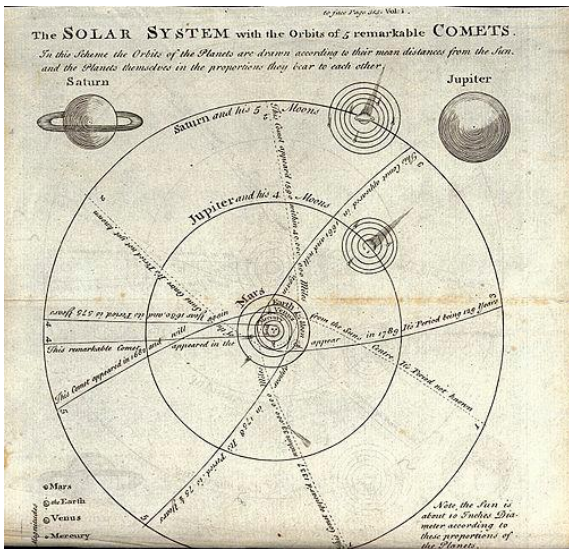
## Ordana - Razud - Eiryndul - Hak<sup>42</sup>



*Ordana and its moons as seen from Oberon*

Circumference at the equator: 92,918 miles<sup>43</sup>. Mystaros probably confuses Razud with Protius, as I believe his note about Protius only being known to Alphatians should instead refer to Razud. If the Alphatians indeed have secret bases there, the secret is well guarded. Razud does not have a solid surface but has several moons, the biggest five ranging in equatorial circumference from 3,080 to 1,130, so slightly bigger than Patera or smaller. Razud has at least 22 other minor moons, with an equatorial circumference ranging from 380 to 19 miles.

Navarro names this planet Ordana and says it has lush vegetation and a crystalline skyshield. The planet would have constantly changing seasons due to its peculiar rotation. Navarro also names the four biggest moons



<sup>42</sup> See note 22. Peshwa name of Simurgh or Odin.

<sup>43</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Razud is slightly bigger than Uranus.

as Terra, Ka, Wayland, and Faunus, and writes that Terra is believed to be home to many earth-based creatures.

Davidson names the planet Eiryndul, describing it as a gas giant which reflects a pale green light. He says it has special interest for the Elves of Mystara, who view it as a bringer of luck. The serene green beauty of the planet from a distance belies the truth beneath, which is that the clouds that make up the planet are cold, caustic, and so very turbulent that any mortal contact with the strange creatures scryed living there has thus far been impossible.

Paniccia says this planet is inhabited by Alphatians with a city named Kabarkhand as the main port of call. He names some of the moons as Belthar, Delthar and Gammar. Taylor names this planet Odin and says it is a huge water world with a hollow interior and five moons.

Håvard says the Eighth Planet is a water world, settled by Alphatian Followers of Water. Sea Creatures of all kinds, including Sea Giants would also live here, and he says the planet has 13 satellites.

Robin says this planet too has storms and the two major moons, Titania and Oberon, would be forested and inhabited by titans and fairy folks.

Mario says a day on Ordana is 17 Mystararan hours, but a season lasts for 21 Mystaran years, with huge springtime storms. He says the planet is very diverse, hence the different descriptions from many explorers. He confirms it has vegetation, seas, native inhabitants and Alphatian colonists. The

length of the day on this planet is strange, with short days and nights at the equators, but days and nights which can last up to 42 years at the poles. Mario also cannot say if the solid ground of this planet is really fixed, or if he landed instead on huge floating continents.

The biggest moon, named Titania or Belthar or Terra, is inhabited by giants, earth creatures and fairy folk and has a circumference of 3,080 miles. A day here lasts for 9 Mystaran days at the equator, but here too days and nights can last up to 42 years at the poles, and this happens on all the moons of Ordana.

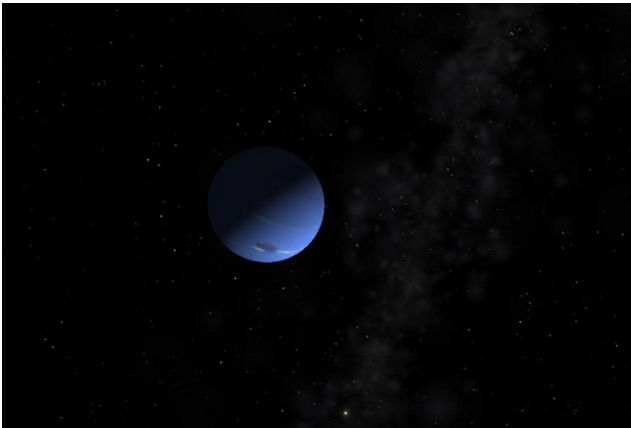
The second biggest, named Oberon, Delthar or Ka, has a circumference of 2,793 miles and a day of 13 Mystaran days. It has inhabitants similar to Terra, with many strange, big monsters.

The third moon, named Gammar or Wayland, has a circumference of 2,281 miles and a day of 4 Mystaran days. It would be mostly inhabited by giants.

The fourth moon, named Faunus, has a circumference of 2,258 miles and a day of 2.5 Mystaran days at the equator.

The fifth moon, so far unnamed by explorers, has a circumference of 920 miles and a day lasting 34 Mystaran hours. Ordana has at least 22 smaller moons ranging in circumference from 321 to 35 miles, some inhabited by colonists from the planet, the moons or other places.

## Protius - Ka - Mwajin<sup>44</sup>



*Protius and its moons  
as seen from Sinbad*

Circumference at the equator: 86,673 miles<sup>45</sup>  
Mystaros indicates sea creatures on Razud, but I believe they should inhabit Protius, given the name of the planet. Protius apparently has no surface, but several moons. The biggest one has an equatorial circumference of 5,280 miles, two have a circumference of about 750 miles and ten others range from 375 to 75 miles.

Navarro says the planet is made of water and inhabited by water creatures. He also names the three biggest moons as Sinbad, Polonius, and Tallivai.

Davidson names the planet Ka, and while he confirms water is abundant, he says it is mostly in the form of ice, and the planet is inhabited mainly by hydrax.

Paniccia says this planet is an ocean of salty water and the native inhabitants are

underwater creatures, but some humans and other air breathing races live here on artificial islands, and supposedly they came from other planets or they were the crew of flying ships which fell here.

Taylor says this planet is another water world, with only one major moon which he names Polonius.

Håvard says the Ninth Planet, Proteanis on his map, is a water world too, with many gates to the Elemental Plane of Water, water elementals and sea dragons. He also says the planet has 13 satellites. Some asteroids called the Three Sisters would also pass near its orbit.

Robin says that this planet also has eternal storms. Its three major moons would have been named by the elves Hot (which radiates warmth), Hel (dotted with craters) and Haven (which hosts an interior civilization of beholders).

Mario says a day on Protius is 16 Mystaran hours and a season lasts for 40 years, but seasonal variations are minimal. He says the atmosphere is thick and the planet has a huge ocean, with whole regions of ice, and is inhabited mostly by water creatures. There are however also floating and flying islands with air breathing races. The atmosphere is sometimes hit by terrible storms which can bring great destruction.

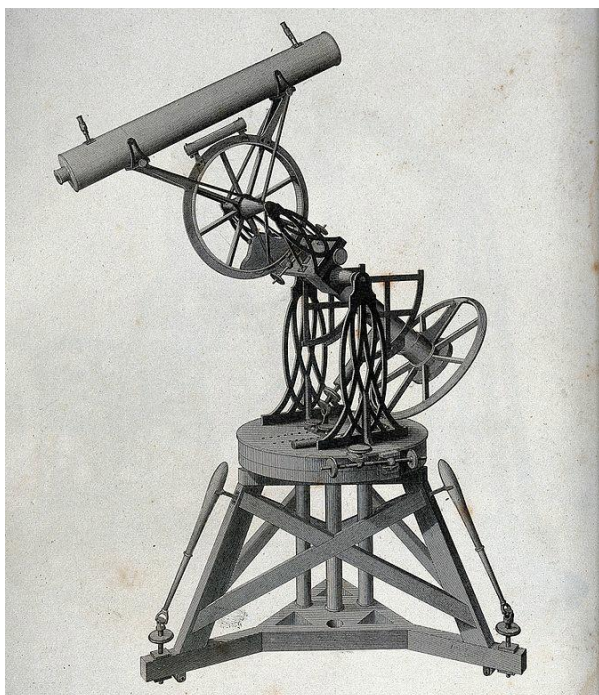
The first major moon, Sinbad, has a circumference of 5,280 miles and a day which lasts 6 Mystaran days. This moon has seas, ice, geyser and ice volcanoes<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> See note 22. Thonian name of Protius or Sinbad.

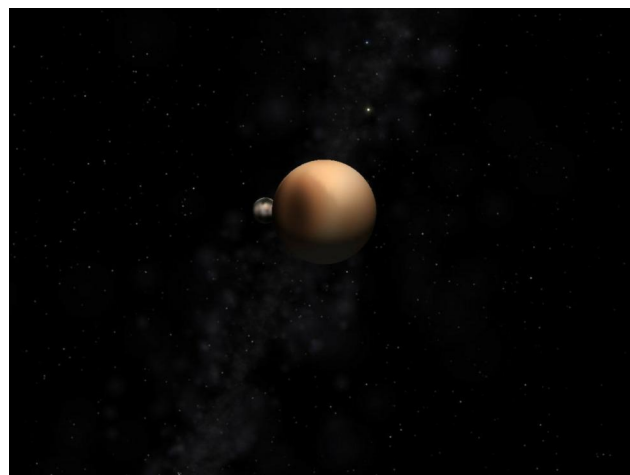
<sup>45</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. Protius is smaller than Neptune.

<sup>46</sup> See [Cryovolcano](#) entry on Wikipedia

The second major moon, Polonius, has a circumference of about 800 miles, and the third, Tallivai, about 700. They are also inhabited by water creatures. Protius has 10 other moons ranging in circumference from 400 to 40 miles.



## Helae - Hella<sup>47</sup> - Nyx



*Nyx passing beyond Hella*

Supposed circumference at the equator: 4,396 miles<sup>48</sup>.

This small planet is mentioned as Alphaks by Navarro, formed after the supposed upheaval which happened in the orbit of Asterius/Damocles. It could also be a lesser planet which came from the Comet Belt into this orbit.

Davidson describes this planet as Nyx, says it cannot be seen from Mystara without magic or technology. It is a small, bare planet, known to be made up of frozen poisonous gasses toxic to all known living things. According to Davidson, visitors have reported seeing some movement on the planet, and a race of metallic, spider like beings, rumoured to be the creators of the dreaded Meks, have been sighted.

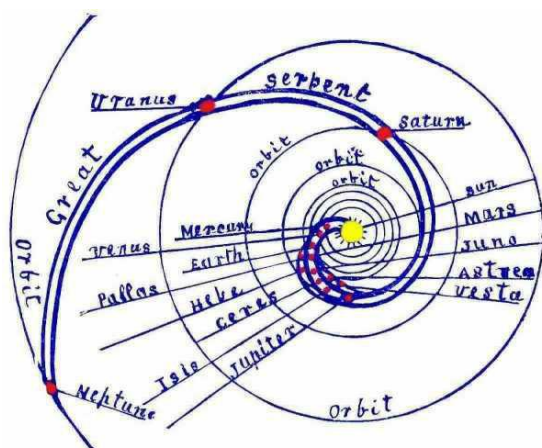
<sup>47</sup> See note 22. Thonian name of Hel.

<sup>48</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. M-Charon is much bigger than the real Pluto and Charon.

Håvard says the Tenth Planet, Helae on his map, is an ice world inhabited by various ice creatures and frost giants. White and crystal dragons also have major strongholds here and, according to him, Charon has become a satellite of this world. The asteroid Big Rock should have an orbit near here, according to him.

A day on Hel lasts about 6 Mystaran days and a season is about 62 Mystaran years, with the winters making the planet even more freezing. Mario says Nyx is instead a satellite of Hel with a circumference of about 2,400 miles. Being the two bodies similar in dimensions, both are tidally locked, so one face of Hel always looks at the same face of Nyx. Mario says Alphaks is not here at all, but rather a satellite of Charon (see below).

He says both worlds are inhabited by many strange creatures, apparently constructs, undead and strange insectoid creatures.



## Charon - Thanatos - Alphaks

Circumference at the equator: 16,713 miles<sup>49</sup>. Charon is a rocky, ice planet with five moons<sup>50</sup>. The biggest one has an equatorial circumference of 2,355 miles, two have a circumference of 300 miles and the smaller two of 35 miles or less.

Mystaros says Charon is known only to Alphatians.

Navarro says the planet is inhabited by undead and names the biggest moon as Marwdyn, and says it is formed of ice or the skull bone of some gargantuan space creature.

Taylor says Charon is hollow, and the cold surface is inhabited by fungoid trees and strange constructs known as meks. The inner world however has a central sun, seas and wooden lands. He says that a sargasso 'curtain' covers the entrance to the world interior, but in recent times a number of spaceports have grown up around the rim of the hole, and various beacons and warning lights have been built. The largest would be the city of Asterius' Boon, built on a river delta near the boundary of the sargasso. There is some evidence that the immortal Asterius himself had something to do with the founding of the city. The population of the inner sphere consists of the descendants of the crews of ships that crashed due to the entrance sargasso. He does not specify if the hollow world has native life.

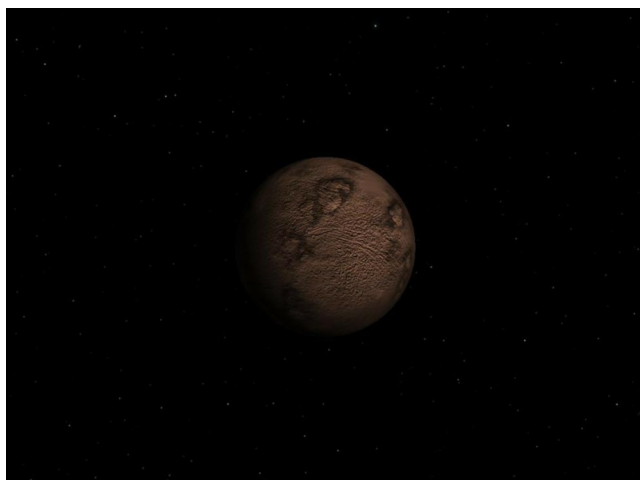
Håvard says the Eleventh Planet, Thanatoi in his map, is home to undead and other

<sup>49</sup> As given by Frank Mentzer. M-Charon is much bigger than the real Pluto and Charon.  
<sup>50</sup> Inspired by the moons of Pluto.

servants of Entropy. Night Dragons are believed to have a stronghold here. Robin says this world is called Chagas by the elves.

Mario says a day on Charon is 26 hours long but seasons last for 140 years. He reports that Charon has indeed a spaceport and many native inhabitants. Thanatos would be the biggest moon, and the two minor ones would be Alphaks and Marwdyn. He did not have much information on these worlds, so maybe they are really inhabited by entropic creatures.

## The Comet Belt and the dwarf planets



*Orcus, a dwarf planet  
on the border of the solar system*

This region at the border of Mystara's solar system is not only full of comets, which normally have very elliptical orbits bringing them near to Mystara and the other planets, but it also has several dwarf planets.

The nine biggest<sup>51</sup> have an equatorial circumference ranging from 4,550 to 1,646 miles, so about the dimensions of the inhabited Mystara moons. Yet in this region so far from the sun it is hard to imagine what kind of life forms could ever survive.

Navarro also mentions a comet named Hel with an orbit of 76 years.

## Beyond

Outer space is vast and sages and explorers say many worlds exist beyond the planets which circle the same sun of Mystara<sup>52</sup>. Knowledge of them is limited, but in some libraries of the Known World there are indeed reports of people who claim to have visited far away worlds. Tales which are hard to verify, unless you have a flying ship, or somehow you can board one, and go exploring the endless night.

<sup>51</sup> Inspired by Eris, Makemake and the other Kuiper belt dwarf planets.

<sup>52</sup> See for example "[Mystara related crystal spheres](#)" by John Calvin and his Exiles article in this issue of Threshold magazine, "[Adjacent Solar Systems/Crystal Spheres](#)" by Håvard and "[Adjacent Solar Systems/Crystal Spheres](#)" by Ripvanwormer

# A Training Day for the Thyphatia's First Wing

Preparations  
for a jump to  
a distant world

by LoZompatore

## INTRODUCTION

This article is an elaboration of mine of the adventure hook "*Journey to Spillworld*" described on pages 105 and 106 of *Dawn of the Emperors* (DotE).

Events of *Wrath of the Immortals* (WotI) for Thyatis and Alphatia will begin in spring, AC 1004 with an increase in troublemaking by rogue Thyatian warriors and Alphantian wizards and then escalate in the following months into a diplomatic crisis where Glantri is also involved.

The events described in this article happen immediately before this troubled period, at the end of a time of cooperation between the two empires following a peace treaty signed in the city of Helskir in AC 1002. The events leading up to this peace treaty are described in detail at the end of module *M5 Talons of Night* (M5) and are also hinted at in the adventure hook "*War hawks over Helskir*" on pages 105 and 106 of DotE DM's Manual.



## WAY ABOVE THE SCAR MESA, VATERMONT, 18TH, 1004 AC

### In the class: Scope of the Expedition to Spillworld

“...and this fairly well explains why the Effective Speed of the Magical Recipient in the Void equals the constant of Ruizawirri divided by the Arcane Entangling Parameter raised by the number of Hurdles to the Unimpeded Linear Travelling!

“And with this proof I conclude my little introductory lecture on the basics of void travelling<sup>1</sup>.

“I’m glad you listened with such an attentive disposition, I almost feel that the Encouraging Vines of Constriction I cast on the class were not actually necessary. Anyway I’ll dispel them in a moment, your next teacher told me that she prefers to keep you vigilant in other ways. Quite a singular approach, isn’t it?

“Well, I’d really like to enjoy your company further but I’m called to undelayable duties in my summer tower on Ambur. Lady Laryanna will take good care of you for the rest of your little excursion up to the Skyshield. Farewell, and do not forget my teachings.”

With a dazzling flash the old wizard Gallhenail the Restive disappeared and the vines slowly dissolved into puffs of smoke, leaving behind a quite shocked class. And the complaining from the class started almost immediately.

“This is an insult! An outrage! How could this crazy Alphatian ever be allowed to cast spells on us?”

“Hold your horses, sir! Lord Gallhenail honored us with his personal appearance and you - as a barely tolerated Thyatian guest on this ship - should only be grateful he did not use thorned vines to cover your body....”

<sup>1</sup> The magical-babble above actually summarizes the rules for magical movement in the Void described on page 33 of *Champions of Mystara: Designer's Manual* and also hinted at on page 35 of module M4.

"Grateful, is that so? Bah! You Alphatians are always ready to become the lackeys of any weirdo with flickering fingers, that's the truth! You lack the most basic sense of honour."

"By any chance, sir, are you talking about the same Thyatian honour that brings you so often to tear up the peace treaties you signed and to backstab the allies you don't need anymore?"

"Enough is enough! Just let me break these vines and you'll be challenged to the death, here, at once!"

But, faster than it sparkled, the quarrel was substituted by a sudden sense of calm and peace.

"Lord Aldawin of Pition and Etzera the Troubled, they told me you were among the hot-heads here, even if I must admit I placed my bet on Joli and Ulitius there. Oh, but I see both of you were gagged by the vines, I suppose you irritated your teacher, am I right?"

The speaker was a slender, yet muscular middle-aged woman dressed in the new green and yellow uniform of the Joint Fleet. She stood on the doorstep with a wry smile, a patch covering her left eye under a shock of raven-black hair. She casually held in her left hand a large amulet, as big as a fist, shaped like a white dove<sup>2</sup>.

Suddenly none of the audience felt any desire to further discuss and complain. They looked at the bitter enemies of four decades sitting there among them and, maybe for the first time in their lives, they felt no resentment at all.

The students, a score of Thyatian and Alphatian humans and demi-humans of the most diverse ages and lineages, were selected to become the bulk of the crew for the *Thyphatia*, the greatest voidship ever built on Mystara.

The woman on the doorstep exploited these moments of perplexed silence to continue her speech:

"So, let's forget about these petty squabbles. And do not worry, class, your colleagues on the *Dawning Dream* state that the marks

<sup>2</sup> The white dove amulet is the *Peaceful Periapt of Pax*, a Major Artifact of the Sphere of Thought described on page 44 of module *M5*. Among its powers there are the spells "*Calm Others*" and "*Mass Charm*" both of which were used on the class of restive Thyatians and Alphatians. The wielder (Lady Laryanna) already became Lawfully aligned as a penalty for using the artifact and the *Periapt* is currently draining a total of 10 years of life taken from some random subjects in the class to recharge from the use of its powers. Lady Laryanna was not of Lawful alignment before she became the keeper of the Artifact and so she did not turn into a rigid, fanatical Lawful paladin (which is another side effect of the *Periapt* specifically for Lawful keepers).

on your skin caused by the vines will vanish in a couple of days. Most of the marks, at least.

“Let me introduce myself. I am Laryanna of Apitah and I will be your commanding officer from now on. My full personal title is First Wing Captain Lady Laryanna of Apitah, Lady Knight of Eltima, which is the small estate in Hattias which I administer in the name of the Emperor. But you can just call me ‘boss’ and it will be okay.

“Please do not be misled by my Eastern appearance, by my Alphatian inflection and by the Thyatian gladius here on my side. I am a former decorated officer of the Retebius Air Fleet and now I am part of the Knights of the Air. And I am also an experienced War Mage of Alphatia from Eagret Academy. I was born in Thothia, then my family moved and I grew up not far from the Scar Mesa, during the interesting times of the Tylion IV campaigns<sup>3</sup>. Later on I found myself stranded on the wrong side of the front a couple of times too many - I guess you know the petty skirmishes at Nordmannvik and at the Ashton Woods<sup>4</sup> - and so I ended up seeing way more bloodshed than I like to remember. Oh, and I had the rare privilege to fight with and against both of you, Alphatians and Thyatians. And, also, from both of you I managed to earn favor and respect. There is a precise reason I was chosen to lead your group so, please, do not believe I will tolerate any disrespect based on lineage. Any questions on that?”

“Well, Lady Laryanna, with all due resp....”

“Ok, I’m happy this issue has been solved so quickly. Let’s go ahead with our lesson, then.

“As you know you have been selected by your commanders to form the First Wing of the Thyphatia, the main carrier vessel of our expedition to the many planets of Spillword. All of you are experienced veterans from the ranks of the two Imperial Air Fleets. Our expedition will not be able to field additional skilled air-knights, at least until the rookies get some experience.

“To you - to us - will be placed the burden of protecting our scouts and support ships from external aggression. We will also be asked to act as explorers, messengers and ambassadors, if

<sup>3</sup> Tylion IV is the father of the current Alphatian Empress and former Alphatian Emperor, as detailed in *DotE*. He managed to briefly conquer most of the Isle of Dawn during the Spearpoint Assault against Thyatis in AC 959 but was quickly forced to retreat by the lack of support among the Alphatians and by the Thyatian counter-attack.

<sup>4</sup> Both skirmishes are shown on *TM2 -Eastern Countries Trail Map* supplement. Nordmannvik battle was fought in the northern Isle of Dawn in AC 972, while the battle of the Ashton Woods was fought in the central Isle of Dawn in AC 991.

needed. Anw we must do it in an entirely new environment, as the astronomers of Ambur insist on telling us.

“Our fleet is going to cross the boundary of Mystara’s air shell and plunge into the cold, airless Void which stretches beyond, until after a few days we’ll reach a magical wormhole, a gate which shows the faraway crowded planetary region of Spillworld. Once there, we’ll explore it and establish outposts and colonies before coming back to the Scar Mesa with our load of glory, wealth, new alliances and information to be shared by the two Empires.

“We don’t know which kind of perils await us in the Void, inside the turbulent wormhole or among the floating celestial bodies of Spillworld. That’s why we need the most diverse competencies: from Thyatians, Alphatians, other human and non-human cultures. And that’s why we must work together to become a strong and unified team.”

“Ehm.. boss... which magical process is the origin of the wormhole? That wacky wizard who just gave us that wacky lesson was apparently in love with the sentence: *‘Master the causes of magic and you’ll master the consequences of magic!’* as he shouted it at us at least twenty seven times. So, who - what - created the wormhole?”

“Lady Timairie, I strongly suggest that you not explicitly insult the honour or the capabilities of Lord Gallhenail, at least not before the vines are fully dissolved. As you see their grip on your body has tightened and they are growing some nasty spines. Spell customization, a common hobby among Alphatian Archmages during the XIXth century<sup>5</sup>. Now you’ll probably be the last one to be freed and the whole class will have to wait for you.

“Anyway, as it seems we have some more time to spare, this is what I know about the whole matter. The gate opened seven years ago, the astronomers of Ambur discovered it almost immediately but the information was not deemed important by the Alphatian government until a couple of years ago. Norwold colonization, then the impending millennium, then the crisis with the Thyatians<sup>6</sup> and the peace conference<sup>7</sup>, you know.

<sup>5</sup> IX century AC according to the Thyatian calendar.

<sup>6</sup> Reference here is to the War of the Crown of Norwold described in modules *CM1 Test of the Warlords (CM1)* and *M2*. Here it is assumed the war ended in stalemate at the end of AC 999.

<sup>7</sup> Reference here is to the peace conference to be held between Thyatis and Alphatia after the War of the Crown to set the claims over Norwold by the two powers. The events connected to this peace conference are described in module *M5*. From information available in the *Poor*

“The sages of Ambur and of the rest of the Empire used these years of neglect to thoroughly study the wormhole and detail the worlds that were visible through this tear in the fabric of space. They provided us with a wonderfully coloured and annotated map of what was visible in the wormhole but, with respect to the real nature and origin of this phenomenon, their discoveries were close to zero.

“The truth is that no one knows how and why these wormholes form. Some sages believe that the magical tunnels are nothing but the way used by planets to communicate and exchange living species. Assuming that planets could be considered intelligent beings, of course<sup>8</sup>. Others believe that all the points of the Multiverse are connected by an underlying network of such wormholes which open and close with a predictable - albeit extremely difficult to calculate - periodicity<sup>9</sup>. Others relate the wormholes to the will of some superior being like the Immortals or the Elemental Masters. And, maybe, the truth is that all these mechanisms could be in place at the same time.

“Our knowledge about void travelling greatly increased in the last few decades, mostly thanks to Alphantian and Heldannic<sup>10</sup> explorers who - after many millennia - became the first who managed to venture into the empty space surrounding our world. But I must admit that the joint Thyatian - Alphantian expedition to the Arch of Fire in Norwold, well, this represented the major breakthrough. It happened almost exactly four years ago, and many things changed in the world since then.

“But , oh, I see that the last vines just dissolved right now. As the whole class is free now I guess we had better leave this room and move to where the real lesson will be. Please follow me as we reach the upper deck. I'll continue briefing you along the way. We'll also have a couple of educational stops along the way”

The class moved quietly along a winding set of rooms and corridors full of busy airmen and golems. None of them seemed to pay attention to the score of knights, orders to “prepare for the border approach” were shout across the ship, prompting people to secure goods and bring unknown equipment to the upper decks.

*Wizard's Almanacs (PWAs)* it is possible to infer that the conference itself is held in the city of Helskir at the end of AC 1002. The *Periapt of Pax* is used during the conference to assure a successful ending to the talks and an end to the war between the two Empires.

<sup>8</sup> Mystara is actually a huge intelligent living being (a megalith called Urt) according to *BECMI Immortal Set*.

<sup>9</sup> The Rainbow Path from *CM7 The Tree of Life* (CM7) could be part of this network, for example.

<sup>10</sup> Reference here is to the Heldannic exploration following the discovery of the *Star of Vanya* artifact around AC 950 (see [“Vanya's Artifact”](#) by Bruce Heard) and to the travels of Haldemar of Haaken into the Void in AC 965 described in the *Voyage of the Princess Ark* (VotPA) Parts 7 and 8.

## Moving to the upper deck: Composition of the Fleet

Laryanna continued her speech as they moved to the center of the ship.

“The fleet is close to completion down on the Scar Mesa, so the crash course on this support ship is all you’ll have before we’ll be on route to the wormhole that will lead us to Spillword. The *Voidpiercer* you are now on is the fastest flying ship of the fleet, it will always be in the vanguard of the formation and, likely, you’ll dock with it often. Please take advantage of the time you are spending on it to familiarize yourselves with its deck plans.

“We are currently moving to the central section of the middle deck, where your steeds are lodged. This ship is able to support a full wing of air-knights - twenty knights with their steeds. Please notice that only the *Voidpiercer* has such a large capacity after the *Thyphatia* herself. The other escort ships - The *Dawning Dream* and the *Pointless Titan* - are just two light Man-of-War vessels and can accommodate a maximum of ten mounted knights each, so be careful to home in the right ship after a mission.

“The *Thyphatia*, of course, will usually harbour our mounted Wing along with the Second and Third Wings and the Reserve Wing of the rookies. She is the largest carrier of her class in the whole Alphatian Empire, maybe in the whole of Mystara.

“The *Thyphatia* was hastily laid down two years ago to fight back the Thyatian invasion of Norwold but the Rapture<sup>11</sup> and the Treaty of Helskir came before her completion. Her role was changed after the opening of the wormhole to Spillword. Now the ship is undergoing the last adjustments before her official launch, scheduled within a couple of months. By that time we should be able to negotiate the void and maneuver as a single unit.

“The whole fleet of four ships will man around 2300 people among humans, demi-humans and, well, ‘others’ plus some 100 flying steeds and 200 common horses. Most of the crews will be made by people with multiple skills and at least some fighting or magical ability. We hope this little army will be enough to face most of the difficulties we’ll meet in the exploration of the flying

<sup>11</sup> Here and in the following the term ‘Rapture’ refers to the abduction of the Emperors of Thyatis and Alphatia and their retinues described in module *M5*. The abduction happened in AC 1002 at the hands of followers of the Immortal Night (Nyx), who wished to prevent the Emperors from attending the Peace Conference between the two empires in Helskir. During the

rocks of Spillword. And, when some obstacle show themselves as too hard to be overcome, let's just hope our ships are fast enough to flee."

"Excuse me, lady... ehm, boss! What is the proportion among Alphatians and Thyat..."

"Dear Sir Koath, I'm not going to reveal how many Alphatians, Thyatians, Thothians or Norsemen or Brunians are embarked on the fleet, discover it by yourself if you care. Anyway I assure you we have the right blend of people. We are going to represent the human race on alien worlds, hopefully this will be enough should the aliens try to destroy or enslave us.

"Well, as you see we have reached the stables of the ship. You'll recognize your personal mounts. Notice you all were selected among pegasus-riders or hippogriff-riders. There was simply not enough room on the ships for larger flying beasts - griffons, wyverns and dragons. If we manage to find some of them during our voyage we'll see if they may be enlisted into our fleet.

"Oh, I almost forgot. Here is Sir Dalpheus, our trusted Master Caretaker of the Mounts. You'll meet him more often than your comrades while on the *Thyathia*. As you see, he is a pegataur, a guarantee the basic needs of flying mounts and common horses are properly met. We'll have twenty of his race dispersed among the fleet, acting as messenger and caretakers for the mounts. In case of need they'll act as a supplementary Wing, one of the little tricks of our flexible force, but in normal operations please do not ask for assistance from them, we'll have to count on ourselves."

"Lady Laryanna, just let me add that we are also going to give your squires a proper training on how to look after the quadrupeds - some of them were in such an uncomfortable condition that I'm wondering how they managed to restrain themselves from unsaddling you knights and just enjoying your fall from the heights!"

"Please, Dalpheus, take patience, the knights come from years of wars and campaigning in Norwold and the Isle of Dawn. They were too busy covering themselves with glory to pay much attention to their faithful steeds. But don't worry, I'll take note of your complaint and I'll make sure that when you provide the

abduction the two Emperors were moved to another Plane of Existence, lived their whole lives together and died of old age while on Mystara just a few days elapsed (see below at the end of this article for details). Their remains were rescued and resurrected on Mystara. The whole experience was interpreted as a mystical dream by the two Emperors and that's why it was called the 'Rapture'.

training to the squires all my class will attend, too. Is it clear, ladies and gentlemen?" Again, the dove amulet swung swiftly in Laryanna's hand.

The class was silent; none uttered a word.

"No answers! Right, then we have an agreement. I'm so glad we are so close to becoming a real military unit of this expedition. Now, let's go to the upper deck, the mounts will follow you shortly but you have a very important meeting you cannot miss."

### Meeting with the Admiral: Properties of the skyshield

The class followed on the upper deck, the knights found themselves outdoors for the first time since their boarding on the Scar Mesa. It was late morning, but the *Voidpiercer* was floating in dark blue surroundings. Right above the deck the sky was black and, over the masts, some stars were faintly visible. Mystara was very far away below, covered in a blue glaze and the horizon was definitely round. Clouds and other ground features were barely discernible<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> This is a realistic depiction of the land and sky as seen from 80'000 feet altitude, where the Skyshield is located. For a view taken of the real Earth at a similar altitude see for example [this image](#) on the web.



*Beyond the Skyshield*

"First Wing, we are now at the very boundary between our world and the external Void. This is what the sages call the Skyshield. You are watching our beloved Mystara from a sheer elevation of



80'000 feet. I guess this is slightly more than your average cruise altitude, am I right?"

"This is simply not possible, Milady" Lady Chay spoke quietly and slowly in her typical Ochalean inflection but she intentionally avoided using the addressing term suggested by her officer "As we all experienced many times before, as soon as we reach one third of this elevation then strong, gusting winds will appear and force us to lower altitudes. Even magic starts behaving strangely and flying spells are not of much help<sup>13</sup>."

"Lady ebony-tresses here is right, 'boss'. Moreover it is a matter of fact that air at the 'buffering elevations' is already very cold, thin and turbulent, while here we are as comfortable as if suntanning on Bluenose Beach. I guess our surroundings are just an illusion! By chance, did you manage to hire the services of Sanruul of Hue<sup>14</sup>? I heard he was going to impress the world with his Persistent and Surrounding Omni-Sensorial Illusory Scenario of Astonishing Detail."

"Lord Ghendlir and Lady Chay, let me answer these questions for you" A short, almost diminutive, old man dressed in a high officer uniform of the Alphatian Navy entered the circle of knights assembled on the empty bridge. The man looked at every face, one by one, with a friendly smile on his tanned, wrinkled face. A pair of short moustaches and a hat too large for his head completed the image of a thoroughly inoffensive individual, someone totally unprepared for a risky and dangerous mission to the uncharted void.

"First Wing! Attention! Lord Admiral Cadman Mc Larseem on the bridge!" Shouted Lady Laryanna, surprised like the others by the sudden appearance of the officer. "Sir, we we expected your review at noon, but we are ready for the inspection right now, if you so like."

"At ease. There will be enough time for the inspection later, Lady Laryanna, I just wanted to see my crew on the job while it is still unaware of being scrutinized by a senior officer. I hope you'll forgive this little trick I set up with the approval of Captain Syldra. I'm really glad she agreed: a curious and inquisitive attitude is a

<sup>13</sup> As described in *Champions of Mystara (CoM) Designer's Manual* (page 30), the Skyshield slowly deflects any approaching vessel and most flying creatures, falling back to an altitude of 20'000 feet.

<sup>14</sup> Hue is a small village in the northern part of the Alphatian kingdom of Haven added by Bruce Heard shown in the map attached to his article, ["The Alphatian Province of Haven"](#)

must for the commander of the vanguard exploration ship of our little fleet.

“And now, back to the questions, I guess the best way to show you this is not an illusion is with a practical demonstration associated with a little of emotional content, which is always useful for a better memorization.”

While the Admiral was delivering this speech he calmly approached the balustrade of the bridge and, by his last word, he jumped outside with a single nimble movement.

The shocked knights and other alarmed airmen rushed to the balustrade but no trace of the falling body of the Admiral was found. Laryanna stood on the back, silently smiling. And then, suddenly, from the opposite side of the bridge, a roaring voice addressed the crowd.

“As I just proved to you by passing under the hull, the ship is truly suspended in air. And now, you’ll see the Skyshield from above. Commander Syldra! Full zenithal speed! Let’s jump into the Void!”

The ship started moving up and entered a strange region of glowing air, while the immediate surroundings of the ship seemed to be unaffected. But the attention of the knights and the rest of the crew was monopolised by the shape assumed by the Admiral: a fiery gold dragon was towering on the starboard. A mighty breath of fire at a safe distance above the masts stressed the real nature of the dragon.

“Behold Eodross, Champion of the Skies! This is the true nature of our Admiral!” participated Laryanna “and of the Captains of the ships of our fleet as well. They are all dragons. They accepted the challenge of guiding us through the void up to Spillworld, and to act as a neutral and respected authority over the endless squabbles of Thyatians and Alphatians.”

“Precisely, Lady Laryanna. Your Emperors put their trust in us and we are not going to disappoint such distinguished representatives of your race. Our experience of the Void is at your service and, while in human form, we will guide the ships as your commanding officers. Should the need arise, our true form will



*Eodross, Champion of the Skies*

act as a suitable backup to the military power we will be able to project. Another little secret of our flexible fleet.

“Anyway, as we are talking about tactics and dragons, we have already crossed the Skyshield. As you see the stars have become much more visible and the globe below us is dimly glowing with flickers of light. Now all the air of Mystara is below us, except for the sphere surrounding us. Because, you see, the *Voidpiercer* is now enclosed in a little Skyshield of its own, a bubble detached from the main Skyshield of our world which was ‘persuaded’ to surround our ship and wrap around it.

“A very special member of our crew is responsible for this effect, which grants us a safe and comfortable reserve of warm, calm, breathable air for the whole duration of our travel. A major breakthrough with respect to the inefficient and primitive systems of keeping a clean reserve of air which were adopted in the other voidships.

“But I’d really like Lady Laryanna to tell you the details of this story, as she had a pretty important role in uncovering the secret of this magic and bringing it to the humans. And now, if you will

excuse me, I have some navigational details to discuss with Captain Syldra. The knights have the rest of the morning to train on the first void maneuvering exercise, then we'll have the formal review at noon. Lady Laryanna, please inform the First Wing and the off-duty airmen on how we manage to create the air bubbles. So long, Void explorers!"

As the dragon approached the quarterdeck turning back into a human to talk with the waiting captain of the *Voidpiercer*, Laryanna assembled the crowd to provide the details requested by her Admiral.

### ON THE UPPER DECK: How the Skyshield was tamed

"Well, as we are waiting for the mounts to be brought on the upper deck by Sir Dalpheus and your squires, I guess the right thing to do is to tell the story from the start.

"While in class I was telling you about a joint Alphatian-Thyatian expedition to the Arch of Fire in Norwold, which happened on the year of the Millennium<sup>15</sup>. Actually, I was part of the Thyatian wing of Knights of the Air who took part in the expedition. Everything I saw is still clear in my mind as if it happened just yesterday.

"We left from the northern Isle of Dawn heading west from a place called Finnegar's Watch<sup>16</sup>, I guess some of you know about this golden throne at the top of a lone mountain. Our assignment was to explore the western slopes of the Icereach Range, just outside the claimed borders of the kingdom of Norwold, which we were forced to fly over.

"Once close to our destination, and not far from the Arch of Fire, our party got embroiled in a skirmish between a small army of fire giants and some barons of Norwold - including Claransa and Fergus and Broghann<sup>17</sup> and a few others.

"The barons were trying to clear out an endangered village sieged by the giants who apparently, were retaliating against the deeds of the local noblemen, a recently dead cleric called Kwyll<sup>18</sup>. Before you interrupt me again with the same old story of Alphatians and

<sup>15</sup> AC 1000 according to the Thyatian calendar, AC 2000 according to the Alphatians's.

<sup>16</sup> This is a reference to the adventure hook "Knights of the Air" described on pages 100-101 of *DotE DM's Manual*.

<sup>17</sup> Claransa the Seer, Fergus the Justifier and Broghann of the Steppes, the pregenerated PCs from *CM1* and other *CM* modules.

<sup>18</sup> Kwyll is a dead NPC cleric in the adventure hook of module *CM1* "The dungeon of Kwyll". As his dungeon

Thyatians: most people in Norwold do not have a single drop of Alphatian blood in their veins. They just swore their fealty and allegiance to the King of Norwold, a title more theoretical than real. All the barons involved in the fight were Brunians, and I do not have a clue about the birthplace of that Kwyll.

“All of this happened well before the Peace Conference of Helskir, our expedition was not obliged to intervene in any way but, hey, there were humans in the wilderness endangered by hostile humanoids. So we lent a hand to the barons of Norwold.

“Ok, we were grounded by bad weather. We also needed some supplies. And a guarantee for safe passage back over Norwold, but the barons were indeed really happy for our help!

“Once defeated, the fleeing fire giants retreated to a mountaintop closer to the Arch of Fire, in a place hitherto unexplored by Alphatians or Thyatians.

“There, on a barren cliff facing a full view of the majestic arch of lava connecting the two volcanoes, we found the ruins of an ancient Thothian temple. The fire giants fled close to the temple, close enough to awake the many undead guardians of the complex, and then they quickly fled jumping into a river of lava, where we could not follow. They set up a nice trap for us, I must say.

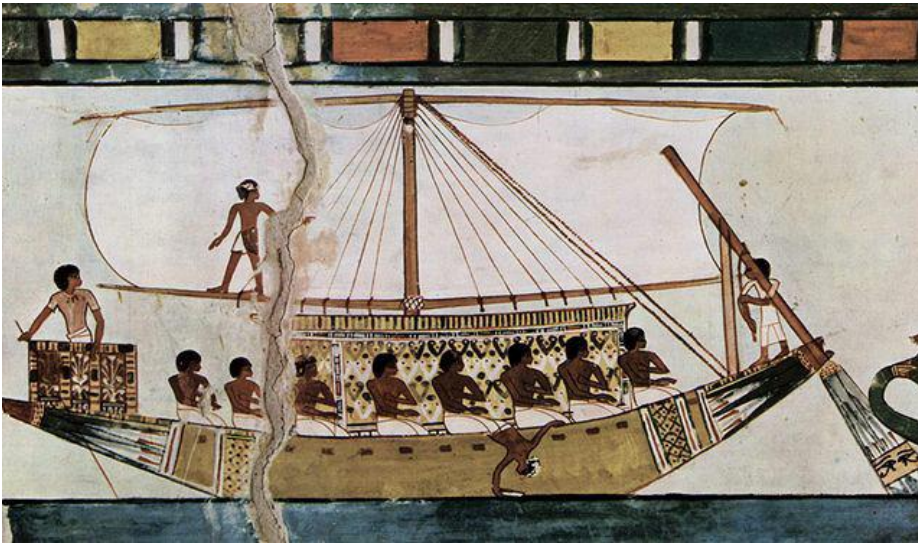
“A gruelling battle ensued, and I lost many friends and an eye there. But the combined martial and magical might of both groups proved enough to defeat those undead. Once the temple was free to be explored, my companions were able to decipher the name of this place as “Tokoramses’ Watch”<sup>19</sup>. It was some kind of observatory for fire-related phenomena built by the mythical Thothian<sup>20</sup> pharaoh Tokoramses V, the Far Traveller. Not that we know anything about him at that time.

“Well, there we found also a vast crypt enshrining an odd-looking ship and loads over loads of crumbling sheets of written papyrus. An ancient voidship and the captain’s log. Our group had an ‘agreement’ with the Norwold barons over the integrity of the sheets and the opportunity to make a copy of all the documents

is filled with fire-loving creatures it is assumed that the dungeon is located close to the Arch of Fire. In this article it is also implied that Kwyll received a dominion from King Ericall of Norwold but that he lost it pretty much as soon as his experiments enraged nearby giants and other monsters.

<sup>19</sup> The (fanon) location for Tokoramses’ Watch can be seen on the map by Zendrolion at the Vaults in the article, [“Norwold Region”](#) and also in [this updated version](#) of the map.

<sup>20</sup> Tokoramses V is actually an ancient Nithian pharaoh but, due to the effects of the spells the Immortals placed on the memory of the fallen Nithian Empire, Lady Laryanna (and pretty much anybody else) believes he is from Thothia.



*Thothian ship*

also for the Thyatians. We also took some parts of the ship with us, just in case.

“And so, in Thyatis and Sundsvall and Sclaras and Ar and in many other places a small army of sages, scholars, engineers, elementalists and astronomers studied all that could possibly be studied on these findings. A lot of information was lost, some was stolen, other bits mysteriously disappeared or turned into garbled scrawls before a thorough study could be performed<sup>21</sup>. But, in the end, we knew enough about the voidship to infer its working principle. It also explained why such voidships cannot be built by the Alphatians alone since their arrival on Mystara<sup>22</sup>.

“The reason was that, in order to properly fly into the Void, the cooperation of an air elemental and a fire elemental was necessary. The two beings had to stay together in the same engine room of the same ship and use the opposing nature of their very elemental essences as the motive power of the vessel. This cooperation grants extremely good speed rates in the void, is immune to mechanical wearing and is less affected by magic dispelling.

“Moreover the air elemental is able to easily persuade the Skyshield to bend forming bubbles around Skyships and creatures while the fire elemental provides additional - and literal -

<sup>21</sup> These are some of the effects of the curse the Immortals placed on the memory of the Nithian Empire, which always prevent mortals from knowing too much about this ancient civilization.

<sup>22</sup> Reference here is to VotPA Part 7 where Prince Haldemar explains that he is the first Alphatian able to reach the Void after a long time, as this science has been lost for a long time in the Empire.

firepower to the ships. The advantages of this method of propulsion are really too many to leave it untested.”

“This is unbelievable, boss! Both elementals will try to destroy each other at first sight. And with it, also the ship where they were summoned.”

“Sir Garisil, if someone told me this story a couple of years ago I would have agreed with you. But I actually saw the two elementals, acting as intertwined whirlwinds of air and fire, spiralling inside the large magical metallic shell that turns their energy into motive power. They do not touch each other and do not seem to show any wish to kill or destroy. Elementalists say that the magical energy released is so much that they have to damp it in many ways otherwise the chamber will explode. This very ship is powered by Wuuou and Karakt't, our esteemed Elemental Chief Engineers from the Plane of Air and the Plane of Fire. Their title was never used more appropriately, by the way!”

“Ok, I'm not questioning your words, boss, but how is it possible to put two opposing elements into the same box and expect they do not violently react? This is against the basic rules of elemental magic! Any seven-year-old student in any countryside school of magic knows this by heart!”

“Skepticism is a good thing, Sir Garisil, except when it become a nuisance to your superior officers. Anyway, the Thothians discovered a spell that can do the trick. I assume this is some kind of ‘elemental charm’ or ‘illusionary mask’ magic that masques the real nature of the other elemental being to the recipient, preventing it from attacking its companion. A copy of this spell was found in the ancient temple, and this revolutionized our understanding of the elemental worlds. The scroll with the original spell is still under intense study at the University of Aasla and in the city of Retebius.<sup>23</sup>”

“Yes, boss, but how is it possible to persuade such beings to stay in our world? Common lore is full of tales of dangerous elementals who escaped the bounds of their conjurers and started a bloody rampage against everyone and everything around them.”

<sup>23</sup> Both cities are going to be destroyed or heavily damaged during the war between Thyatis and Alphatia described in *WotI* so the knowledge of this spell could again be lost to the Mystarans within a few years, except for the people of the expedition to Spillworld.

“Lady Chay, this is because the elementals are not here against their own free will. We’ll leave these barbaric methods to rogue wizards without any sense of decency. Wuuou and Karakt’t are actually under regular contract for five years in our fleet. They will receive a regular ‘pay’ - at least, what could be considered a valuable thing in elemental terms - which is suitable to their senior officers’ rank. Moreover they will have maximum authority over their field of competence, they’ll have their rest turns and also the right to be addressed as Lord or Lady when spoken to. The same is true for the other elemental couples in the rest of the fleet. There is no reason not to be civil with people coming from different Planes of Existence.”

“Sorry.. ehm... boss, you said that our air elemental is able to bend the shield around the world to wrap ships and people and other things. How this is possible? Is the shield affected by air elemental magic? I guess it is so, as we are very high in the sky, but we aren’t in the world of the air elementals, right? This thing really puzzles me.”

“The Thothian papyruses explained that the Skyshield is actually a living thing. It is a layer of spherical creatures connected together - scholars call them air proteans<sup>24</sup>. Such proteans vary in size from as small as a grain of sand to as large as a horse or so but they are so transparent that is impossible to discern them from thin air without the aid of magical vision.

“This life form adapted to live both in our world and in the Elemental Plane of Air, and they are fairly common in both places. That’s why the air-proteans are affected by the magic from our Wuuou. I must admit that she - because Wuuou is a female elemental, and very touchy about this subject - became very skilled in convincing these runts into doing whatever she likes.

“We don’t know for sure if the proteans are intelligent beings, I believe their behaviour is close to that of a flock of sheep who stay together for protection, and maybe the elemental acts like a shepherd - or possibly, like his dog - but I might be utterly wrong on this. The air-proteans feed on the humidity of air and on energy from the sun and, indeed, they are magical creatures.

<sup>24</sup> Proteans (or amoeba) are described in *BECMI - Immortal Set (DM’s Manual*, pages 46 and 47) as an ubiquitous life form on the Prime Plane which is also very diffused on the Astral and Outer Planes. Proteans are extremely adaptable and resilient creatures and tend to colonize every Plane of Existence they happen to enter. Given the relatively frequent connections between the Prime Plane and the Elemental Planes, here it is assumed that Prime Plane proteans adapted long ago to the Elemental Planes, becoming the Air-proteans (and corresponding breeds



“They definitely prevent air from Mystara from dispersing into the Void and they also slowly purify it from toxic and poisonous substances. We noticed a limited ability for the proteans to move in order to close a rip in their layer or to merge with another layer of air-proteans. And, of course, if properly ‘persuaded’ they are able to wrap around a body trying to cross their layer and to keep winds, pressure and temperature at fairly reasonable levels inside the air bubble they create. Should we lose our air elemental’s conditions, the air inside the bubble would rapidly become uncomfortable for us, to say the least.

“So said, the important thing you must always, always keep in mind is this: as soon as you are in the Void, the air elementals in our ships will provide you with a shell of breathable air, even when you leave the fleet. The air reserve in these personal bubbles is not infinite but it should last for the tasks we are expected to perform.

“The personal bubble you are in will connect back to the bubble of the ship as soon as you come back. Special instructions could be sent to the proteans by the air elemental in case you wish to explore a world with an atmosphere, so that you will not lose your air shell when coming back to the ship. But such details can be handled at a later time should the need arise.

“Please do not ask me to further delve into the subject; the Elementalists of the fleet will be more than happy to provide other details once we have left for Spillworld. There will be plenty of time for theoretical discussions on the subject.

“I see your steeds were moved on the deck. Prepare yourselves for your first ride into the Void and listen to the recommendations of Master Dalpheus about the mounts. I’ll give you further instructions in a while but now I have to report to the Admiral. ”

### **Void knights: Thoughts from the quarterdeck**

As the knights reached their squires and the pegataurs prepared to saddle up, Lady Laryanna moved to the quarterdeck, where the Admiral was still talking with Captain Syldra - the gold dragon

on the other three Planes). A sort of “reverse-colonization” brought the Air-proteans to Mystara, where they can still thrive. Air-protean’s magical powers acquired during the adaptation to the Elemental Plane of Air are assumed to be the basis of the Skysshield properties.

Sheldrintel disguised as an elvish elder woman, slightly overweight. When asked to mask their real identity the dragons selected rather ordinary appearances, she thought. Nothing inspirational for the crew, indeed, but maybe they will compensate with their personalities.

“Sirs, the First Wing properly received the introductory instructions and, in a few minutes, they will be ready for their maiden flight. I gave order to the support officers to assist us in the training and they’ve already taken position outside the *Voidpiercer*. All potential quarrelling among the Knights were quelled by the magical charm that was assigned to me, as the Admiral correctly predicted.

“Excellent, Lady Laryanna, at rest. My personal launch will also assist you in the operations in the Void. Syldra, would you mind taking care of this matter? Thank you.”

“Of course, Admiral, it will be my pleasure to relate your orders to the *Glittergale* crew. Excuse me.” As Syldra left the quarterdecks Laryanna noticed both dragons were smiling. Almost immediately the Admiral came to the point.

“And so, Laryanna, what do you wish to ask me in private? One cannot become the admiral of an expedition to the uncharted Void without identifying when one of his officers is tormented by some inner conflict.”

“Uh...Sir... well... Thank you. I do not wish to waste your precious time but... er... as you know I was present at Tokoramases’ Watch: there I read about Nebta<sup>25</sup> and I was also among the members of the secret expedition of the *Pointless Titan* to these ruins. A whole Thothian complex of ancient temples built on a pitch black asteroid, hanging from a fixed point in the sky way above the sands of Ylaruam. And guarded by one of your kind. Nekapiroth the Atramentous would have never allowed free passage if Captain Terdienth did not vouch for us introducing our party as acting under the approval of Windreach<sup>26</sup>.

“Admiral, I am a Thothian, I can read the ancient inscriptions on our temples. Our visit in Nebta was reduced to the minimum time needed to take the missing information we needed about Void

<sup>25</sup> The ruined Nithian complex of Nebta - a temple on an asteroid hovering above Mystara and guarded by a huge onyx dragon - was first introduced at the end of the article “*Ecology of the Megaliths and the Norn Cycle*” by LoZompatore on *Threshold Magazine* - issue #9. The following information in this article slightly expands on this fanon location.

## COLONISTS FROM SPILLWORLD

According to module M5, page 22 (clues in the Great Library of Edairo, fragments #3 and #8) the Alphatians, the Proto-Thyatians and the Thothians (actually, the Nithians) come from the Void outside of Mystara. In particular, the Alphatians and the Proto-Thyatians were part of the same people from Old Alphatia, while the Nithians stayed in touch at least with the Alphatians (see notes below). From here comes the assumption that they all came from the same place and used the same method of travelling (the wormhole from / to Spillworld) in order to reach Mystara during different time periods (see Table 1 for a possible timeline).

See the supplement HWR2 Kingdom of Nithia (HWR2), DM's booklet page 2: "...other planes and planets were opened to the incursions of the Nithian mages and priests (Some of the most ancient Nithian scrolls hint that the Alphatians were invited to colonize the Known World by the Nithians. Others refer to the Nithians aiding the Followers of Air in the struggle that destroyed Old Alphatia)."

Whether the Nithians were just observers or took part in the war on Old Alphatia, the Hollow World (HW) set (DM's Manual, pages 13-14, BC 1000 entry) states that they definitely moved the Proto-Thyatians from their original location in the Northern Reaches to Davania around BC 1000.

This means that the Proto-Thyatians reached Mystara shortly after the Alphatians (just a few months or years later) and established a short-lived "Kingdom of Thyatis" in the Northern Reaches, close to the Nithian colonies. A good location could be the area around Landfall, whose name would then acquire a rather different meaning. This proximity could be a hint that the Nithians had a role in the Proto-Thyatian migration to Mystara, especially if we assume that Lord Thyatis repudiated his mentor Alphaks I after the fall of Old Alphatia and fled the dying world with part of his followers.

The Nithians would not have many reasons to let an enemy settle close to their borders. More likely, the Proto-Thyatian faction surrendered in Old Alphatia and were offered asylum by the Nithians who, at the same time, were helping the Alphatians settle elsewhere.

<sup>26</sup> The hidden mountain city of Windreach in the Wurmsteeth Range (Norwold) is the capital of the Nation of Dragons, the sum of all the dragons' dominions throughout Mystara, as detailed in the *Dragonlord Trilogy*. It is also the seat of the Parliament of Dragons, the "world government" of Mystaran dragons. Its location, even its very existence, is usually unknown to mortals, but high level characters should be able to get permission by the dragons to enter this place (see for example the *Dragonlord Trilogy* itself, or the mission to the Wurmsteeth by a group of adventurers looking for allies against the Heldannic Knight's invasion of Norwold in *PWAI* - events of Yartmonth 3 on page 194). Here it is assumed that Lady Laryanna is distinguished enough to know of this place.

Shortly after the arrival of the Proto-Thyatians, the Nithians decided to establish a colony on Davania, as per HW note. The young Kingdom of Thyatis was dismantled (either by Nithian aggression or in order to save the Proto-Thyatians from the increasing numbers of warlike gnolls infesting the region at that time) and its inhabitants moved to Davania, possibly as slaves or as free people shortly after being enslaved by the treacherous Nithians (in the latter case some Alphatian interference could be inferred).

The magical “fearsome chariot of fire” mentioned in fragment #3 and used by the Proto-Thyatians to reach Mystara could have been used also to easily move colonists to Davania, bypassing the extremely dangerous Sea of Dread where at that time the Behemoth who decimated the Traldars was lurking. Maybe the “fearsome chariot of fire” is still hidden somewhere in southern Davania, possibly inside one of the mythical “Mount Thyatis”, “Mount Kerendas” or “Mount Hattias” cited in DotE (page 4, DM’s Manual) as places on the far southern continent from which the three Thyatians tribes took their names.

As, according to M5, “Lord Thyatis” was apparently a leader of the refugees from Old Alphatia, so there could have also been a “Lord Kerendas” and “Lord Hattias” acting as his lieutenants during the migration to Mystara and leaders of their own sub-groups of refugees...

travelling but I managed to have a glimpse at the stories told by the hieroglyphs there. The Thothians knew of the wormhole, they *came* from the wormhole. And they helped the ancient Alphatians and even the Thyatians in crossing it and reaching Mystara.

“And then I talked with the Norwold barons who went to the great Library of Edairo shortly before the Rapture, the same that were involved in the rescue mission of the two Emperors<sup>27</sup>. We helped many of these barons at Tokoramse’s Watch and, since then, we... well.. stayed in touch. The nobles told me that in Edairo they read fragments of crumbling documents where the Alphatians, the Thothians and the Thyatians are collectively called ‘the Star People’<sup>28</sup>.

“Most surprisingly, the Thyatians came to Mystara through a magical chariot of fire, and they were welcomed by the Thothians! There are ancient legends about the early Thyatians who were enslaved by an unknown powerful enemy, who deported them from Norwold to Davania, many centuries before they reached their current homeland. I wonder if this enemy was actually Thothia, as if things got worse shortly after the initial welcoming of the Thyatians<sup>29</sup>.

“And then, Sir, I must tell you the part that mostly shames me, for I broke a solemn oath. I will accept any punishment you wish to deliver but I beg you to listen to my report until the end. I know very well that I was sworn to secrecy about my experiences in Nebta, but I had the sensation that the barons had something more to tell me. So I told them about the asteroid and the Thothian ruins. They were really impressed by the discoveries we made and started wondering about the use of such a facility and the powers of the ancient Thothians<sup>30</sup>.

“Then, three of the barons called Claransa, Fergus and Geoffrey asked for a private talk with me. I don’t know why they made this decision: maybe out of the same mix of guilt and curiosity I was feeling at the moment or, maybe just to return me the favour. Whatever their reasoning, they decided to break their own oath of silence and recounted a very strange journey they had a few years ago. Their fleet - common seagoing vessels, not designed for air or void travelling - was sucked into a huge maelstrom while sailing in Norzee<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Reference here is to the events of module M5.

<sup>28</sup> See module M5, page 22, clues in the Great Library of Edairo. Fragment #8 states: “*The Isle of Dawn has long been a nexus for contact with other worlds: first came the spider people to the high jungles and then the folk from the star kingdoms to form the dominions of Alphatia, Thyatis and Thothia (Visitors from the Beyond)*”

<sup>29</sup> The unknown enslavers were actually the Nithians, as per *HW boxed set (DM’s Manual, pages 13-14, BC 1000 entry)* but mortals have difficulty remembering all the information about Nithia due to the *Spell of Oblivion* which the Immortals cast on Mystara, preventing the rise of another Nithian culture on the world. Connecting to the previous notes, it is possible to assume that relationships between the Nithians and the Proto-Thyatians started well, but then deteriorated following some sort of conflict or,



*Meeting with the Barons*

“The maelstrom brought the ships into a huge bubble of space filled with air where they found the ruins of the ancient Alphatian homeworld. There they met the descendants of those who were left behind when Ancient Alphatia was destroyed.

“Comparing their tale with the available information about our destinations, my belief is that the maelstrom actually was connected to the wormhole, and it discharged the fleet somewhere into Spillworld, where the worlds of the mighty empire of Ancient Alphatia were located. Where the homeworld of the Thothians, the Thyatians, the Glantrians, the Ochaleans<sup>32</sup> and the Immortals’ know who else are located.

“Sir. I had the strong feeling that dragons already knew all of this. That’s why they guard the temple of Nebta. And somehow in Windreach the dragons decided to help us in this mission. You want us to find our ancestors, don’t you? If I am going to risk my life and that of all the knights under my command - provided you still want me as an officer in your fleet - I believe I need to know who I am going to fight, and why.”

The Admiral stood in front of Lady Laranna, his smile not diminished by a bit. His lips moved swiftly and subtly, pronouncing arcane words in the ancient language of dragons. When he switched back to the Alphatian language his words had an eerie metallic echo in Laryanna’s ears.

maybe, a turmoil in the ruling class of one of the two people - or possibly both. The Nithians were at the apex of their power and the Proto-Thyatians were no match for them, so they were defeated and enslaved.

<sup>30</sup> It could be assumed that the complex of Nebta was used by the Nithians as the main staging area for their exploration into the Void. The Nithians could also have gained control of both ends of the wormhole leading to Spillworld when it opened around BC 1000.

<sup>31</sup> The story told by the three barons summarizes the events of module *M1 Into the Maelstrom* (M1).

<sup>32</sup> According to *DotE*, the Ochaleans are nothing but another breed of Alphatian.

“Captain Laryanna, you will not be punished for your insubordination and you will be allowed to keep your position in the fleet. But, from now on, I will place a geas on you, and you will be magically forbidden to report in any way anything you learnt in Norwold, in Nebta and in this conversation with me. The geas will be relieved at the end of your mission in Spillworld.

“And now, about the scope of our voyage. The Emperors are aware of the information you so cleverly accumulated, as are the dragons. There is increasing evidence that the Alphatians and the Thyatians come from the same world. The proportion of magic users born in Thyatis City is not so different to that in Sundsvall, with the difference that such gifted people among Thyatians usually do not receive a formal training in the use of magic, or are intentionally moved to the fringes of the Empire to stay out of the way. Have you ever wondered why the top Thyatian archmages are encouraged to move to the island of Sclaras? If the population does not see them around and does not spot their towers dotting the countryside, then it could more easily be persuaded that martial and mundane skills are predominant among the Thyatians. And yet, I assure you that the proportion of top Thyatian archmages is identical to that of the Alphatians<sup>33</sup>.

“There is also an ancient human legend stating that the first Thyatians, Kerendans, Hattians were led by a commander named ‘Lord Thyatis’, whose mentor was Alphaks<sup>34</sup>. Alphaks I, the cursed last emperor of Ancient Alphatia who led his world to destruction. Apparently, this ‘Lord Thyatis’ disowned his old master following the war with the Followers of the Air and led a group of refugees to Mystara using the great chariot of fire you already mentioned. This happened two thousands years ago. There are more than a few living dragons who were young at that time<sup>35</sup> but, unfortunately, they have somewhat fuzzy memories of the event<sup>36</sup>. We only know for sure that the wormhole to Spillworld was open at that time, and that Nebta was still manned by the Thothians.

“Our theory is that the Thothians helped the Thyatians and, possibly, also the Alphatians, in reaching Mystara through the open wormhole. And they did so because, according to other human legends, they too were part of the same people! The Thothians just moved to Mystara from Spillworld a millennium earlier, at the previous opening of the gate<sup>37</sup>. We believe they

<sup>33</sup> Compare, for example, population figures for metropolitan Thyatis and Alphatia in *TM2* “*Imperial Geopolitics*” table and the number of 36th level mages in both empires from *DotE*. Metropolitan Alphatia has an official population of 5’800’000 people, but a note on *TM2* says that the real numbers are likely three times higher. A conservative guess would place the real figures at two times higher than the official population. This would mean a total population of 11’600’000 people. It is also well known that there are at least 1000 magic users of 36th level in metropolitan Alphatia, meaning at least one 36th level mage for every 11’600 people. Metropolitan Thyatis has an official population of 3’200’000 people and around 250 magic users of 36th level in Sclaras. This would mean at least one 36th level mage every 12’800 people.

<sup>34</sup> *Fragment 11 of module M5 page 22 states: “Although the*

could have been a splinter group of settlers from Ancient Alphatia who was left stranded on Mystara for some time, before they were able to develop powerful enough magic in order to recontact their homeworld.

“Then there was the Cape Alpha affair. Many of our people were alive at that time and the real course of the events can be retraced. The wormhole opened again one thousand years ago, bringing to Mystara a number of Void-faring pirates called the Pyritheans<sup>38</sup> and another group of human colonists likely related to the ancient Thyatians<sup>39</sup>. The Pyritheans were stranded in northern Davania, established a dominion there among the ruins of the Milenian Empire and slowly became the people of Emerond. The other settlers followed the same ancient route of Lord Thyatis’ migration and reached Norwold. There they established the colony of Cape Alpha, and looked for assistance from their kin in Thyatis City. Unfortunately, a treaty had already been signed with the Alphatians about Norwold’s neutrality, and the settlement of Cape Alpha was destroyed. Most of the would-be settlers moved to the Thyatian Empire, mixing with the existing populations.

“Our expedition is going to Spillworld to shed some light in all of this. Is Ancient Alphatia really a part of Spillworld? Were the Alphatians, Thyatians, Kerndians, Hattians, Espans, Thothians, Ochaleans, Yasuko, Emerondians, Pyritheans, Beltharians, Gammarians<sup>40</sup> and others all part of a unique people? It looks like the Immortals wished to fill Mystara with distinctive human stocks taken from the same part of the galaxy, maybe as an attempt to accelerate the repopulation of the world after the catastrophe of the Great Rain of Fire.

“If we do ever find any answers to these questions then the history of Mystara will take a different turn. If we can show that Thyatians and Alphatians are part of the same people maybe we could put an end to all of the wars.

“And that’s why we need a strong and competent escort for our mothership. Captain Laryanna, now that your curiosity has been satisfied, I guess it would be quite time to resume the training of your soldiers.”

*treachery of the Thyatians can be traced to king Thyatis’ mentor Alphaks, I believe that Alphatia first transgressed the treaty of Edairo by constructing a trading post for fur trappers on what they called Cape Alpha in the Great Bay (the testimony of Archduke Dugald, from the Trial of Norwold, dated after the crowning of the first Thyatian Emperor)”*

<sup>35</sup> According to the *Dragonlord Trilogy* (*Dragonking of Mystara* book) the oldest living dragon as of AC 500 is Saerna, who was born shortly before BC 3200. If 4000 years is the maximum age for a dragon then an event happened 2000 years ago would still be remembered by several middle to old age dragons as of AC 1000.

<sup>36</sup> This is another effect of the *Spell of Oblivion* cast by the Immortals on Mystara.

<sup>37</sup> According to *HW boxed set (DM’s Manual* page 12) Nithian civilization begin its rise after BC 2000. In this article it is supposed that the foundations of Nithian culture were established by spacefaring colonists who came from Spillworld through the BC 2000 opening of the



Table 1: Spillworld Wormholes

Some possible passages through the periodical wormhole linking Mystara to Spillworld			
Wormhole Opening Date	Wormhole Closure Date	Passage from Spillworld to Mystara	Passage from Mystara to Spillworld
AC 997	AC 1007	Alphaks' meteor to Darokin / Glantri	Norwold / Qeodhar fleet to Ancient Alphatia  Combined Alphatian / Thyatian fleet (Thypatia and support ships)
BC 3	AC 7	Raiders of the Pyrithian Archipelago (Emerondians)	Thyatian colonists of Cape Alpha  Dragons
BC 1003	BC 993	Followers of the Air (progenitors of Alphatians, Ochaleans and Yasuko)  Followers of the Flame led by Lord Thyatis (progenitors of Thyatians, Kerendans, Hattians)	Nithian explorers
BC 2003	BC 1993	Proto- Nithians	Dragons
BC 3003	BC 2993	Planar Spiders	Blackmoorish explorers (before the GROF)  Blackmoorish refugees (after the GROF)
BC 4003	BC 3993	FSS Beagle	

wormhole and then were left stranded on Mystara for the next 1000 years (establishing a unique civilization in the meantime) when the wormhole suddenly closed.

<sup>38</sup> The Pyritheans and the Emerondians were first introduced in *VotPA Part 13*. Pyritheans are space pirates based on an 'archipelago' of asteroids, while the Emerondians are a splinter group of Pyritheans who became stranded on Mystara long ago. In this article it is assumed that the Pyritheans came from Spillworld through the wormhole around AC 0 to prey on Mystara; some of them became isolated on the planet when the wormhole closed and became the Emerondians.

<sup>39</sup> This is to explain why the Thyatians established a trading post in the peninsula of Alpha in Norwold shortly after the peace Treaty of Edairo was signed. The idea is that these colonists actually came from Old Alphatia, where groups related to the Thyatians are still located as of AC 1000 (for example the Sky Raiders operating in Delthan air space described on pages 24 - 25 of module

The last few words of the Admiral switched back to the usual tone and Lady Laryanna suddenly woke up from her dazed state of conscience.

“Thank you Sir, I concur. Time to start the training in the Void. Excuse me but my duty awaits.”

“Turn them into a real team, Laryanna. Those cocky imperial troublemakers do not have a clue on the real perils of our long journey. And the safety of our expedition lays mostly in their hands. Good luck and teach them something they’ll remember!”

The Admiral stood on the quarterdeck, as Laryanna moved to the main bridge, shouting orders to knights and airmen alike.

“Ok, knights! Thanks to the air bubbles you’ll notice no big differences between the usual flight you are accustomed to. But this is a tricky feeling, as in the Void there are no air currents and there is no true ‘down’ to fall into. You cannot use gusts of wind to dive or dodge an enemy attack, there is no possibility to hide in the clouds or among the rocky spurs of a ridge.

“Oh and if, by chance, you lose grasp on your steed or if the steed dies, you’ll tumble forever in the Void with very little hope of being rescued before all breathable air in your bubble is depleted, or before dying of starvation. Assume your poor air-proteans will provide you with, maybe, a week worth of fresh air in the bubble but, as you consume it at a faster rate than they are able to purify it, and considering that very little water and food is available in the bubble, the end - *your* end - is already written.

“This is a way more agonizing death than splatting on the ground at terminal speed so, please, try at all costs to avoid this!

“But fear not! No one is going to lose their life this way during this training day: the Admiral’s own launch from the *Thyphatia* will act as a rescue vessel for the many knights I assume will get stranded today. Although I really beg you to surprise me by keeping the formation and by executing just what will be told to you.

M1, who were descendants of the followers of Alphaks).

<sup>40</sup> The Yasuko are apparently related to Ochalese according to *PWAI* page 26, while the Beltharians and Gammarians inhabit Old Alphatia as described in module M1.

“Now, a few words about communication. Words cannot travel the Void. You shout and not one of your companions will hear you. Some sound-based spells do not work either, but I’ll leave those to a later time in the training. You can speak with some hope of being heard only if you manage to touch the air bubble of your companion with your own air bubble. But, as you guess, this is not a common occurrence while engaged in a frenzied dogfight.

“The transmission of thought could be a brilliant solution to this problem but, unfortunately, we did not manage to find enough air-combat-trained telepaths on both Empires to fill the ranks of our Wings. That’s why we installed these fancy, colored, highly-reflective banners on your saddles. They represent common orders and replies such as ‘swoop’, ‘regroup’ ‘Yes’, ‘No’ and so on. We established a pretty nice code by merging Alphantian and Thyatian air navies’ signals that should do the trick. And that you must learn as soon as possible, starting from this very first lesson.

“And finally: always, *always* remember rule number one of mounted flight: The power to fly and establish the direction of movement lays in your steed, not in you. You can only persuade the mount to do what you wish.

“So, back in the saddle, knights! You’ll leave the *Voidpiercer* in groups of two, I’ll call your names from my list. Dame Ritayna and Sir Oxameron, the Captains of our Second and Third Wings, are here to assist us in the training. They are already placed outside the ship, you’ll easily spot them at the port and starboard bow. Approach the officer which shows you a raised banner. Your first exercise is to form a line between the two Captains. As we’ll still be inside the *Voidpiercer* air bubble this should not be a difficult task at all.

“As soon the line is completed we’ll move outside the air bubble and you’ll be enclosed by your own air-protean shield and we’ll get to the heart of our training.

“So let’s begin! First pair: Sir Kohat and Lady Timairie! Ready to leave the ship. Next pair: Lord Ghendlir and Sir Adra-Huti!”

## Epilogue: The secret of the Thyphatia

Admiral Mc Larseem - Eodross the Gilded - allowed himself some sharp freethinking while listening to the initial part of Laryanna's lesson. He watched the knights leaving the deck and then the air bubble, engaging in a set of predetermined maneuvers. The knights, the airmen, the pegataurs and, basically, everybody else in the fleet were preferably chosen from among those without a family of their own. If this was not possible, then the closest relatives were enlisted in the fleet, too. The *Thyphatia* was going to be crowded with children and maids and elder people.

Those who questioned the presence of such a large group of non-fighting personnel in a military expedition were told that this solution would give such a diverse crew a greater motivation to join forces for the protection of their loved ones.

An inquisitive soul would have also discovered that the proportion between males and females in the fleet was roughly equal, quite an odd thing for the standard composition of Thyatian and Alphatian ships. Other suspicious details could potentially include the large greenhouses and the thorough library of magical scrolls of the *Thyphatia*, the great number of masonry and carpentry equipment distributed among the ships, or the 'civil works specialization' of the dwarvish team of siege engineers led by Wulgum the Stonecrafter. In the organized chaos of the final preparations no one still managed to figure out the whole picture and place the right questions to the commanding officers.

For the Emperors expected the fleet to leave and never come back. The *Thyphatia* is nothing but a colony ship aimed to establish an independent settlement among the planets of Spillworld.

Dragons have a long memory and never forgot how to master the Void, so they know very well the nature of the wormhole leading to Spillworld. The gate is periodical, it stays open for no more than a decade every thousand years. Its closure is expected within the next three years; once closed, Spillworld and Mystara will disappear from each other's skies and the connection between them will be broken. Any attempt to cross the abyss of space

separating these worlds has failed, even with Voidships, even with teleportation magic. It looks like Spillworld is located very far from Mystara. The best estimates of the dragons evaluate an almost incomprehensible distance, perhaps a third of a galaxy away<sup>41</sup>.

Only very long lived beings such as dragons could reach Spillworld and then wait there for the next re-opening so as to come back to Mystara a thousand years later. Those who faced this ordeal brought back a description of what lies on the other side of the wormhole - remnants of civilizations who once were great on Mystara or on Spillworld and crossed the bridge across the Void to establish their forgotten colonies on the other side.

And now it was the time of the Thyatians and Alphatians. Mystaran dragons themselves would take advantage of this expedition to establish their own outpost: a warm and safe room above the *Thyphatia's* magical engine would provide shelter to more than two dozen dragon eggs of all colours. This was part of the agreement the two Emperors secretly established in Windreach in exchange for the help of the dragons in leading the fleet.

Eodross was among those who listened to the passionate speech by Emperor Thincol and Empress Eriadna at the Parliament of Dragons - an honour appointed to very few humans and that, most likely, represented the highest point of the life of the two rulers. Eodross still remembered the details of the dream the two Emperors had during the Rapture.

Both of them referred to the same experience: the dragons had their methods to verify it was not induced by magic and it was not a falsehood agreed to in advance in order to impress the audience. Instead, they discovered that the dream was more likely some kind of common mystical experience, maybe a warning sent by the Immortals themselves.

Immediately after the Rapture, the two Emperors and their retinue found themselves in a unknown nightmarish land where everything was dark and dead<sup>42</sup>. There they were forced to work together to survive. The place was definitely not on Mystara nor on the Prime Plane, for no sun, moon or stars were visible, only a perpetual dusk gave some light to the cold, black, rugged

<sup>41</sup> This is a hint to the approximate location of the Galactic Federation of *DA3 City of the Gods* (DA3) (page 3) from where the spaceship *Beagle* crash landed on Mystara. Maybe the *Beagle*, while exploring Spillworld at the time, accidentally crossed the open wormhole in BC 4000 (the 'freak energy vortex' cited on page 6 of *WotI: "The Immortal's Fury"* book) and entered the uncharted - and extremely remote - Mystaran space. This would explain the difficulties the *Beagle* met in trying to contact the rest of its culture for a rescue mission.

<sup>42</sup> See *M5* page 40 for further details on the Plane of Existence of the Isle of Night.

landscape filled with dead vegetation. The flesh of the stranded humans was rotting and worm-filled but all of them were nonetheless alive. Roaming monsters and other servants of Entropy harassed them aiming to destroy their souls or use them as slaves. Those entropic beings always referred to the place as to the Isle of Night, as Night himself was the master of that Plane of Existence.

In spite of the hardships and the impossibility to communicate with Mystara, the two Emperors joined forces and established a safe haven for their people against the evil beings. Early explorations showed that the island the humans were stranded on was shaped like a miniature version of the Isle of Dawn, a sign that in some way the place was connected with Mystara. So the Emperors instilled a seed of hope in the castaways by firmly stating that rescue missions would surely be attempted by their own people.

Moreover it was discovered that people could have children in that strange environment - rotting, zombie-like children like their parents, but life could indeed take roots in that wrecked place. The two emperors fell in love with each other, married, and had a numerous lineage. A town was established, then a city, then further settlements and, finally, the kingdom of Thyphatia took shape. Until the death of the long-lived Thincol and Eriadna, the kingdom was prosperous and vital, at least by the horrible standards of the place<sup>43</sup>.

After their death both Emperors found themselves in Helskir, raised back to life through two pounds of their own spiced flesh that were recovered by a rescue party of Mystarans. Surprisingly, the whole Rapture, which seemed to last for decades on the Isle of Night lasted only a couple of days on Mystara. Both Emperors fully kept their memories of the life they had in that nightmarish world and since then, they started looking at each other with a new sense of respect.

This is what they reported to the dragons. But it was not all. The Emperors told of the prophecies from the Serpent Peninsula<sup>44</sup>, something the dragons were aware of as well. Starting four years ago<sup>45</sup>, an increasing number of seers living in those tropical

<sup>43</sup> M5 does not say that the kingdom of Thyphatia on the Isle of Night flourished while the two emperors were alive, but this seems a reasonable assumption given the skills and powers of the two allied leaders. M5 describes the Isle of Night 400 years after the abduction of both Emperors, when the inhabitants of Thyphatia are enslaved by Night's minions and forced to build purposeless monuments (it is from here that one of the Voidships of the fleet to Spillword gets its name of "Pointless Titan").

<sup>44</sup> See CoM: "Explorer's Manual" for information about the seers of Yavdlom.

<sup>45</sup> Visions began in AC 1000 following the crisis among the Immortals in Pandius which starts the events of the Wrath of the Immortals as described in *WotI: the Immortal's Fury* pages 8-10.

swamps started having visions of doom and destruction for the two Empires.

The visions were not always coherent among themselves, but they all showed a great war among the human nations of Brun, Alphatia and other places.

Sometimes this war ended with the utter destruction of Thyatis, or of Alphatia. Sometimes the war engulfed most of the northern hemisphere, lasting for decades, until the human race in that part of the world was brought to the brink of extinction<sup>46</sup>. Sometimes great magical catastrophes suddenly destroyed prosperous cities and whole regions, leaving scores of dead behind<sup>47</sup>. Both Emperors independently embarked on a solemn pilgrimage to the most venerable seers of Tanakumba and were rewarded with a confirmation to the visions they had already received<sup>48</sup>.

Actually the content of these visions changed slightly when the Emperors were rescued from the Rapture and managed to attend the peace conference in Helskir. But then even the clerics of several Alphatian and Thyatian Immortals added their warnings of impending doom to the voices of the seers. Too many people were speaking about the same awful future awaiting most of Mystara, that they couldn't be ignored.



*Impending Doom*

<sup>46</sup> This is the possible ending of module M5 if the PCs fail to rescue the two Emperors in the Isle of Night or the Peace Conference in Helskir does not achieve an agreement. See M5 page 41 ("Endings" section for details).

<sup>47</sup> Reference here is to the catastrophic events of AC 1006 - AC 1009 hitting the Known World and Alphatia during *WotI*.

<sup>48</sup> The idea of the Emperors performing a solemn procession to Yavdlom to get information about the future of their empires was first introduced in the "[Mystara Reborn](#)" [Facebook group](#) (post of 24 September 2016 about Yavdlom started by Bruce Heard)

And so the Emperors devised their contingent solution: the expedition through the wormhole which, so providentially, opened not far from the Mystaran moons. Just when critical knowledge on void travelling became available to the humans, the mystical dream showed that the Alphatians and the Thyatians could prosper together. And a huge airship - a carrier swiftly renamed *Thyphatia*, like the kingdom on the Isle of Night - was already close to completion in the Alphatian shipyards. These were undoubtedly signs from the Immortals, not to be ignored. And the dragons agreed with the two human rulers.

The true scope of the Thyphatia's fleet - beyond all the exploration, the research on the origins of Thyatians and Alphatians and the test of Void travelling - was to establish a new, independent kingdom where the best traits of Thyatians and Alphatians could be preserved. A backup in case the feared war looming in the future would destroy one - or both - civilizations.

The Emperors were informed the gate would close soon and isolate the colonists so, they chose to give the recently rediscovered Periapt of Pax to the expedition, to ensure the Alphatians and Thyatians would work together to survive as a unified people in that faraway place<sup>49</sup>. They asked the dragons to select a suitable keeper for the amulet, and so Laryanna was chosen.

By recalling her name to memory, Eodross emerged again from his winding thoughts and, again, he became Admiral Cadman Mc Larseem. He concentrated back on the aerial exercise of the First Wing. There were still orders to be given on the *Voidpiercer* and then the official review of the Air Knights at the end of their training. Many little tasks to ensure the success of the expedition, and the survival of a common dream. Time to get back to work.

<sup>49</sup> The disappearance of the Periapt of Pax from Mystara could be among the causes contributing to the war between the two Empires during *WotI*. The assignment of the Periapt to the expedition to Spillworld could possibly be architected - or at least encouraged - by the Immortals of Entropy to accelerate the crisis on Mystara.



## APPENDIX: TRAVELLING IN THE VOID

Table 2: Travelling Speed in the Void

Speed in the Void using the combined Air / Fire elemental engine		
From	To	Speed
Ground level	Skyshield or uppermost air layer	Normal Speed
Skyshield or uppermost air layer	Planet Sphere of influence (see Table 3 below)	Normal Speed x 1000
Planet Sphere of influence	Sun Sphere of influence (100 times Mystara - Sun distance)	Normal Speed x 1 million
Sun Sphere of influence (100 times Mystara - Sun distance)	Galactic Disk or Central Bulge	Normal Speed x 1 billion
Galactic Disk or Central Bulge	Galactic Halo	Normal Speed x 1 trillion
Galactic Halo	Other Galaxies	Normal Speed x 1 quadrillion

Table 3: Celestial Body Sphere of Influence (SOI)

Celestial Body	Size of the Sphere of Influence (SOI) in miles	Time to be crossed (at 120'000 miles per day) from the external border to the inner Skyshield
M-Venus	380000	3 days and 4 hours
Mystara	570000	4 days and 18 hours
M-Mars	360000	3 days
Damocles	2,00,'000 (*)	16 days and 12 hours
M-Jupiter	30,000,000 (**)	250 days
M-Saturn	34,000,000 (**)	284 days
M-Uranus	32,000,000 (**)	267 days
M-Neptune	54'000'000 (**)	450 days
M-Charon	38,000,000 (***)	317 days

NOTES to Table 3:  
 (\*) Based on the assumption that Damocles is a semi-sphere approximately half the size of Mystara as described in "[Damocles Q&A](#)"  
 (\*\*) The entire system of moons of the gas giants is included into their Sphere Of Influence, so, even if crossing times are pretty large, there is still plenty of adventuring potential by stopping at the various satellites orbiting around the gas giants.  
 (\*\*\*) Although a rocky small planet, Charon's Sphere of Influence is very large due to its distance from the Sun. The long time needed to cross Charon's SOI in order to reach its surface could add to the risk and difficulties met in reaching this remote world.

## Example of a journey through the Void:

The *Thyphatia* has a nominal speed of 180' (60') so it may cover up to 120 miles a day while within the Skyshield<sup>50</sup>. As the Skyshield hovers at 80,000 feet (slightly more than 15 miles) above ground, it is reached in 3 hours. This figure could easily double to 6 hours if adverse winds and magical repulsion from the Skyshield (to be tamed by the air elementals in the fleet) is taken into account.

Once outside the Skyshield, its speed receives a sudden burst of a thousand times, being able to move at 120,000 miles per day. The burst itself is not perceived by the crew except for the increased movement with respect to reference points.

With this speed, the *Thyphatia* may reach the skyshield of Patera (at 51500 miles above the Skyshield) in approximately 10 hours and the surface of Matera (at 206,000 miles above the Skyshield) in approximately 41 hours. Travel within the skyshield of Patera and at a few miles from the surface of Matera happens again at the reduced speed of 120 miles a day.

The border of Mystara's sphere of influence (approx 570'000 miles from the Skyshield) is reached in 4 days and 18 hours from the departure of the Skyshiled. This is also where the wormhole entrance to Spillworld is located. By assuming a few lateral maneuvers to match the wormhole entrance, the whole journey from Mystara's Void to the magical gate could take around a week. This part of the travel is not free from risks as rakasta raiders from Patera, Heldannic Knights hidden in the asteroid fields surrounding Mystara<sup>51</sup>, and other foes could menace the fleet. The support ships and the Wings of Knights of the Air are supposed to protect the *Thyphatia* during this dangerous crossing.

Once in the wormhole the fleet will leave Mystrarspace and enter Spillworld, where worlds could be as close as the Mystraran moons are to their planet, or as separated as the planets of the Mystraran solar system.

Let's say the fleet chose not to enter the gate and aim for the external Solar System of Mystara, instead.

<sup>50</sup> Distance travelled every day is calculated as per page 21 of *Champions of Mystara: Designer's Manual*. The *Thyphatia* is not a fast vessel, its speed being 75% of the average Alphatian Yacht or Man-of-War, which usually have a nominal speed of 240' (80'). It is also way slower than an Heldannic Warbird, which has a characteristic speed of 360' (120'). The whole fleet of the *Thyphatia* will travel at *Thyphatia's* speed, except when single ships are dispatched to special missions alone.

<sup>51</sup> Rakasta raiders of the Void were introduced in *VotPA* part 7, while Heldannic Voidships among asteroid fields were introduced in *VotPA* part 8.

If so, another sudden speed burst would affect the ships as soon as they leave the outer border of Mystara's sphere of influence. Now the distance covered by the *Thyphatia* is 120 million miles per day.

Depending on the position of the planets with respect to Mystara, the border of their Sphere of Influence (where speed drops again to 120,000 miles per day and further days of travelling are needed to reach the Skyshield of every planet) can be reached according to table 4 below:

Celestial Body	Minimum time to reach the outer border of its Sphere of Influence (SOI) from Mystara outer SOI	Maximum time to reach the outer border of its Sphere of Influence (SOI) from Mystara outer SOI
M-Venus	5 hours 12 minutes	32 hours
M-Mars	9 hours 36 minutes	47 hours
Sun surface	18 hours 36 minutes	
Damocles	33 hours	3 days
M-Jupiter	3 days 6 hours	4 days 20 hours
M-Saturn	6 days 15 hours	8 days 4 hours
M-Uranus	14 days	16 days
M-Neptune	26 days	28 days
M-Charon	59 days	60 days
Outer limit of Sun SOI (100 times the distance between the Sun and Mystara)	77 days	

Table 4: Celestial Body Journey Times

Once the fleet reaches the outer limit of Mystara's sun's Sphere of Influence (approx.  $5 + 77 = 82$  days after the departure) then the real interstellar voyage begins. A third speed burst brings *Thyphatia's* movement to 120 billion miles per day.

From the sun's SOI external border, the fringe of the cometary cloud located at approximately 1 light-year from the sun can be reached in 49 days. The outer border of the SOI of the closest star, (M-Alpha Centauri, at 4.3 light years from Mystara) can be reached in 208 days.

The farthest known inhabited star - M-Altair - at 15.7 light years<sup>52</sup>, can be reached in 758 days (2 Mystaran years and 3 Mystaran months).

Total travel time from the surface of Mystara to the external border of M-Altair's Sphere of Influence is  $5 + 77 + 758 = 840$  days. Once there, movement drops again to 120 million miles per day and further time needs to be spent to reach the Sphere of Influence of the single planets orbiting this star.

An educated guess of a total travelling time of 924 days (33 Mystaran months) before reaching the surface of some planet in the M-Altair inner solar system may not be so far from the truth.

The use of wormholes may strongly reduce this time, instantly bringing the ship close to the desired destination, especially for faraway targets.

<sup>52</sup> See *BECMI Immortal Set*, DM's book page 6. There is a short list of the stars closest to the PCs homeworld (Mystara), which are identical to real world stars of some importance. It is not explicitly specified that such stars are inhabited but, as many more stars exist in the real world closer to the ones mentioned in the *Immortal Set*, then it is possible to suppose that the list on page 6 actually refer to stars where a civilization of some sort was established. Altair is the farthest star of this list.

# APPENDIX: SHIP STATISTICS

**The Thyphatia**<sup>®</sup>



® = Silhouette based on picture of Carrier  
Airship shown on page 106 of DoCE DM's book

LENGTH: 456'  
 BEAM: 145'  
 DEPTH: 52' (Main bridge)  
           95' (to Tower top)  
 TONNAGE: 5500 TONS  
 CARGO Capacity: 5200 TONS  
 Lift Capacity: 11000 TONS

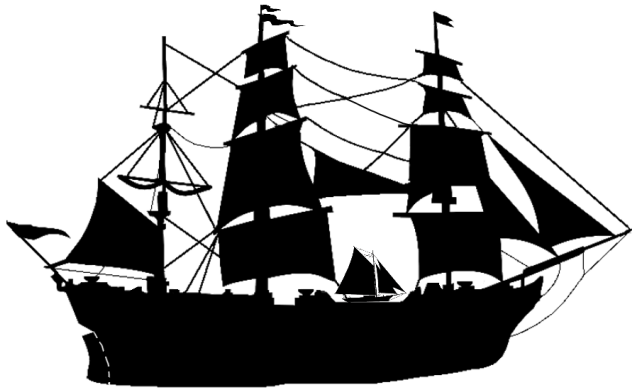
Vessel Quality: Excellent  
 AC: 0  
 HP: 2400  
 Air Speed: 180' (60')  
           120 Miles per day  
 MANEUVERING FACTOR: 0.25  
 CREW: 300 AIRMEN, 300 MARINES  
       400 Others



Scale: — = 10 feet

	<p><b>6 Launches:</b>                      (Cloudtopper, Spirit of Afotir, Vesma III,                      Honest Squire, Lucinius' Spear, Black Wind)</p>
	<p><b>Admiral's Launch:</b> Glittergale</p> <p>Admiral Cadman Mc Larseem                      (Eobross the Gilded - Large Gold Dragon)</p>
	<p><b>1st Wing</b>                      (Cpt. Lady Lar yanna)                      11 Pegasi, 10 hippogriffs</p>
	<p><b>2nd Wing</b>                      (Cpt. Dame Rita yna)                      10 Pegasi, 11 hippogriffs</p>
	<p><b>3rd Wing</b>                      (Cpt. Sir Oxameron)                      11 Pegasi, 10 hippogriffs</p>
	<p><b>4th Wing</b>                      (Cpt. Lord Foremil)                      10 Pegasi, 11 hippogriffs</p>
	<p>10 Pegataur Messengers                      (Cpt. Sir Dalpheus)</p>
	<p>Air Elemental (25 HD)                      (Stroomoros)</p>
	<p>Fire Elemental (25 HD)                      (PiryCOS the Burning)</p>

## The Pointless Titan



Scale: — = 10 feet



2 Launches:  
(Fiendscourage, Nightclipper)



COMMANDER Zastor Terdienth  
(Mellantanor the Brilliant - Small Gold Dragon)



3 Pegataur Messengers



Air Elemental (20 HD)  
(Shjash-oss)



Fire Elemental (20 HD)  
(Rubeurr)

Length: 220'

Beam: 70'

Depth: 49'

Tonnage: 1500 tons

Cargo Capacity: 1400 tons

Lift Capacity: 3000 tons

Vessel Quality: Good

AC: 1

HP: 580

Air Speed: 240' (80')

160 Miles per day

Maneuvering Factor: 0.5

Crew: 200 Airmen 300 Marines

100 Others

## The Dawning Dream



(\*) N.N. Mistrhaven = New New Mistrhaven, a Gnomish city cited on pages 49-50 of BOWI

Scale: — = 10 feet



Gnomish / Dwarvish Air Boat  
(N.N. Mistrhaven's Formidable Onager) (\*)  
(Cpt. Sir Wulgrum the Stonecrafter)



Commander Berithan of Deirdern  
(Tumbagar Sunstream - Small Gold Dragon)



3 Pegataur Messengers



Air Elemental (20 HD)  
(The Galebinder)



Fire Elemental (20 HD)  
(Aashhcaq)

Length: 180'

Beam: 59'

Depth: 59'

Tonnage: 1000 tons

Cargo Capacity: 900 tons

Lift Capacity: 2000 tons

Vessel Quality: Good

AC: 1

HP: 390

Air Speed: 240' (80')

160 Miles per day

Maneuvering Factor: 0.5

Crew: 150 Airmen 200 Marines

50 Others

## The Voidpiercer

(\*) Azlum II the Younger is the son of Azlum Swith, a famed explorer of Mystara detailed in CoM extra sheets



Scale: — = 10 feet



Azlum's Polyedric Probe (\*)  
(Cpt. Azlum II the Younger)



COMMANDER Sarrais Syldra  
(Shaelrintel - Small Gold Dragon)



5 Pegataur Messengers



Air Elemental (20 HD)  
(Wuuou)



Fire Elemental (20 HD)  
(Karak't)

Length: 145'

Beam: 50'

Depth: 59'

Tonnage: 700 tons

Cargo Capacity: 600 tons

Lift Capacity: 1400 tons

Vessel Quality: Good

AC: 2

HP: 280

Air Speed: 360' (120')

240 Miles per day

Maneuvering Factor: 1

Crew: 100 Airmen 150 Marines

50 Others

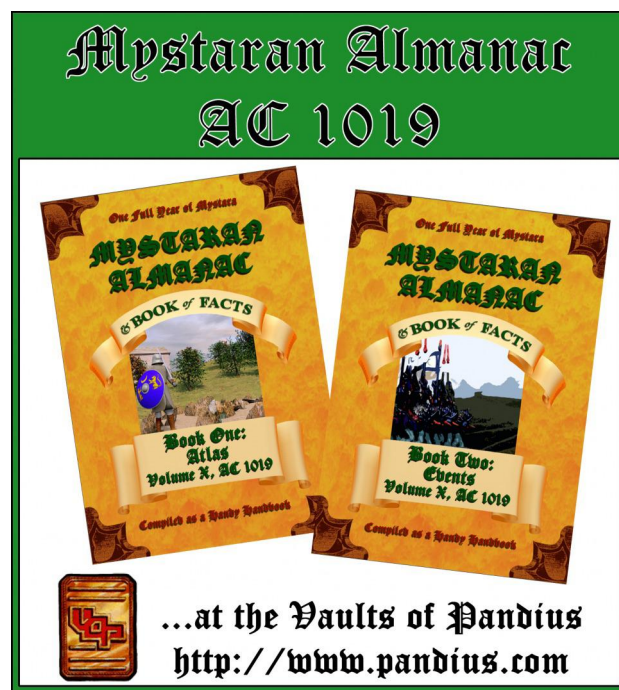


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by Aaron Allston

## EXTERNAL LINKS

- ["Damocles Q&A"](#) by Agathokles
- ["The Alpbatian Province of Haven"](#)  
by Bruce Heard
- ["Vanya's Artifact"](#) by Bruce Heard
- [Mystara Reborn Facebook discussion group](#)
- ["Norwold Region"](#) by Zendrolion



# A Tale of two Ancient Anomalies in Mystaraspace

By Luca Pezzullo, aka *Cedric*

## THE OBSIDIAN OBSERVATORY

There is a large obsidian asteroid orbiting a few thousand kilometers away from Charon, at the very edge of the Mystaran solar system.

It is very difficult to detect it from a distance, because its surface is deep black (and strangely non-reflective, for obsidian); it is located at a point far from any other planetary or asteroidal orbit, and is protected from mortal and immortal divination magic (Path, etc.)

The asteroid has an ovoid shape, with a main axis of about 600 meters and a diameter of about 200. The surface is rough, except on one of the long sides, that is flat and well-

leveled. On it, there is a clearly delimited ellipsoidal area (200 meters long, 50 meters wide).

This flat area, open to the void, is functionally divided in three parts:

### 1. The Central Observatory

At its center, there are 12 big "seats" of cubic shape, composing a semi-circle. They are two meters high, as to accommodate - for a meeting or a council - very tall beings.

In front of them, in another semi-circle, there are five, two meter-high, pedestals; suspended on each, is a half meter wide "glowing light disk". They glow and float in the air, emanating a strong magical energy. They seem to be a sort of magical lens, each oriented towards a different direction.

The lenses are indeed the main asset of the Observatory, and are of mortal and immortal interest alike.

Each lens has the capability to be independently aimed (focusing the desired target simply at will) at any planet or astronomical object in or around the Mystaran solar system, zooming at extremely high resolution and revealing details on their surfaces as minute as rat-sized beings. The Lenses pass through any normal (darkness, clouds, etc.) or magical cover, and allows a Wizard Eye-like vision of the focused details, with True Sight and unlimited Infravision.

Under each lens, engraved on five identical obsidian rectangular maps on the top of the pedestals, there are topological representations of the solar system; many other symbols, representing stylized creatures with 20 tentacles, are positioned in correspondence of various non-descript points of space. One last symbol, on the upper limit of the maps, represents a strange and isolated tetrahedron.

### 2. The Right Focus

In the ellipsoidal focus at the right of the Observatory, there is a sort of impressive big cage; it is a ten meter high black semi-sphere, composed of a very thick grid of a strange black material. It lies in ruins, with some pieces broken at its side.

A careful analysis by an immortal, or the use of *lore* or *wish* spells by a mortal, reveals that the cage is composed of bakaa.

What or who was entrapped inside it, and how it escaped, is unknown.

### 3. The Left Focus

In the left ellipsoidal focus, there is a big cubic block (two meters across), made of what seems to be lead.

A very subtle line divides it near the top; if the "cover" of the lead block is pulled away (a feat that only a giant or a very strong human-sized mortal could do), it reveals a little spherical cavity inside. In the cavity lies, perfectly inserted, a twenty centimeter-wide spherical core, made of an unknown silvery solid metal.

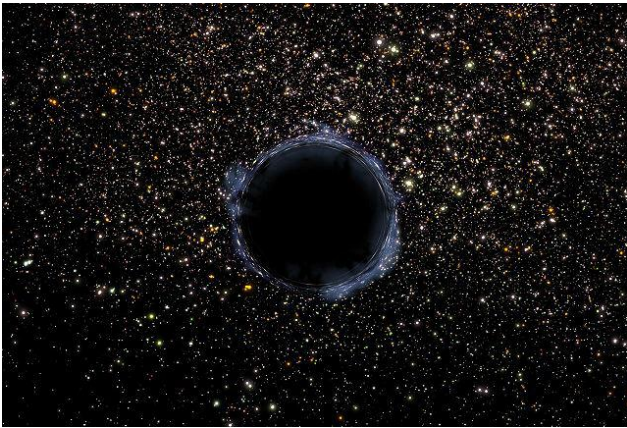
Each Radiance-involved immortal or mortal (high-level shadow elf shamans, a member of the Brotherhood of Radiance, etc.) immediately recognizes a strong flow of Radiance-type magic emanating from it. Other high level wizards/clerics (level 26 or higher) or immortals feel the presence of an alien and unknown form of magic.

Each attempt to remove it, by physical or magical means, seems ineffective, and immediately activates the "Defense System".

### The Defense System

When mortal or immortal beings remain on the asteroid for more than an hour, or they try to remove the silvery core, an ancient and extremely powerful defense system, created eons ago, slowly activates.

At the center of the Observatory, a blackball materializes just before the lenses, and immediately attacks the invaders. If disposed of, new blackballs will arrive once a turn, progressively increasing the force of their reaction.



*Blackballs*

On the second turn, another blackball materializes. The following turn, 2 blackballs materialize, and on subsequent turns 3, 5, 8, 13 and finally 21 blackballs materialize.

At this point, if every blackball is eliminated, the core emits a violent silver light (if it was opened): the strong flow of rads emitted in the next few seconds causes the death of every mortal being under 200 hp, and inhibits any form of mortal magic for a day on the asteroid.

A round after this raw flow (or immediately, if the core was still enclosed), a wave of invisible energy shakes the asteroid, paralyzing every mortal or immortal being: an Old One entering the Prime Plane, to eliminate any surviving presence. What happens next is up to the DM: surviving mortals would be killed or transposed to another plane with their memories erased; immortals could find themselves bound in a bakaa chain inside a pocket dimension.

## The Remains

At the extreme edge of that side of the asteroid, interspersed in the irregularities of the surface, there are ancient metal wreckages. It seems that something (a spaceship of some sort) crashed on the surface a very long time ago. A thorough search reveals metal pieces, shards of enigmatic alien equipment, and traces of molded magic weapons.

## DM Notes and Adventure Hooks

The Observatory was created and used, eons ago, by since forgotten agents of the Old Ones (and maybe by the Old Ones themselves...) during the apocalyptic "Draeden Wars", soon after the creation of the Multiverse. The Mystaran solar system in the Prime Plane was an essential battlefield, and the Observatory was a strategic observation and coordination post.

The lenses were used to observe and direct the battles; the core was one of the first experiments that the Old Ones made with what would in the future become the Radiance, and was used to produce the powerful magical energy necessary to activate the lenses. The stylized creature symbols represented on the maps symbolize the main areas in space in which draeden forces concentrated through powerful permanent gates; the isolated tetrahedron is the Gray Pyramid (described in the next part). In theory, the draeden gates were closed or destroyed, but exploring the locations of the gates could be a good adventure hook for

very high level or immortal players as some of the gates could be re-opened, or in use.

The Bakaa Cage was used to imprison and interrogate ancient draeden-allied immortal beings. It has the characteristics of a Faraday Cage, isolating and sealing off the imprisoned immortal creatures from any form of immortal and draeden magic; how it was broken and opened is unclear. More unclear is the question: "What" was inside it? Did it escape such a unique trap or was it released by something else? Which powers it has, and where it is now are also unknown, but it appears that it is roaming free somewhere in the Multiverse.

The Observatory was abandoned at the end of the Draeden Wars, but the agents of the Old Ones decided to maintain it, activating an automatic Defense System (note: the rhythm of the appearing blackballs is based on the Fibonacci sequence).

The Observatory was found three times in recent millennia:

1. In ancient times, Blackmoorian astronomers investigated it using technological astronomical instruments; their observations were recorded on long-forgotten metal tablets, which were lost during the Great Rain of Fire.
2. A spaceship of unknown origin (possibly Blackmoorian) crashed on it some millennia ago: the metal shards and molten magical equipment found near the edge of the asteroid are what remains of it, after that the activated blackballs destroyed the surviving members of the crew.

3. In the Hollow World, at the Nithian Tarthis Library of Mysteries, there are some very ancient stone tablets, bearing astronomical observations of the Mystaran solar system and representing the orbits of its planets; but these Nithian tablets are themselves only ancient copies of older documents, of unknown origin. In one of these, mysterious symbols are reproduced next to the exact point in space of the Observatory, associated with pictograms of a big open eye paired with a strange creature with 20 long tentacles. Other ancient writings on the tablet, in Nithian, declare:

*"Here lies the All-Devourers, the Night of Creation; Here lies the Observers, the Sentinels of Creation".*

A final detail: the central lens of the Observatory, when found, is already aimed exactly at a specific point on Mystara. If a creature looks through it, without focusing on another target, he will immediately see a little town in Northern Karameikos: *Threshold*.

Why that very specific area on the surface of the third planet from the Sun was of special interest for the latest Sentinels, is shrouded in mystery...

## THE GRAY PYRAMID



### Story

Some decades ago Khoronus began having strange dreams, concerning the need to explore a remote area of space at some distance from the Mystaran solar system.

The strange vividness of those mysterious dreams and their repetition prompted him to send some magical servants to explore that area of space. After several months, they informed him that something very strange had actually been found.

He was amazed at what he saw: materialized on the Prime Plane, in a remote area of deep space was a giant gray object with a pyramid-like shape, about 30 meters high suspended

in the black void of space, floating there apparently undetected and undisturbed for millions of years.

The "Pyramid" seems to be built with an unknown material, a very polished and cold metal; the surface consists of millions of tiny black dots, that turn on and off continuously in an unpredictable pattern. The object emanates an extremely powerful and archaic magical energy, of utterly alien nature: no human or immortal magic resembles it.

The four sides of the tetrahedron seem almost alive: their ever-changing surfaces continuing to create incomprehensible, extremely complex patterns, with an incessant activation and deactivation of the tiny black dots.

Khoronus was immediately, deeply, fascinated by the object; but his first attempts to understand the nature of the object, or the meaning of the visual patterns on its four sides, were completely unfruitful.

After many days of patient observation, Khoronus deduced that the patterns - that kept changing every few seconds on each of the four sides, in a very complex fashion - could represent a form of extremely complicated "code", sometimes showing what resembles a long sequence of forgotten symbols crossing across the surfaces. But he could not understand how to interpret or decode them; his Communication immortal power, his extensive multi-planar languages knowledge, and all the powerful *read magic*, *read languages*, *lore* and *wish* magic he used for days on the Pyramid did not produce any result: the object appears to be inert and



*Khoronus*

unresponsive to any form of immortal magic used on it.

Very frustrated, after leaving some of his magical servants (jumpers) to observe, monitor and record in a detailed manner the patterns appearing on the Pyramid, Khoronus returned to his own plane, where he continued to reflect on the strange object, discreetly looking for information on similar objects in many human and immortal archives and knowledge repositories, but without any results.

Then, after some months, he was alerted to the sentinel jumpers of something extraordinary happening. Arriving on the Prime Plane, he learned that four blackballs recently materialized at the four vertices of the Pyramid, and then flew away towards an undefined target, in the general direction of

the Mystaran solar system. It was the first time ever that a blackball, to Khoronus' knowledge, materialized from a cosmic structure different from the Vortex.

Confused, but feeling that he was a short distance away from a key to understand the Secret of the Vortex, he ignored his duty to activate the Council of Intrusions, and personally contacted, in the most reserved and private way, Odin and Korotiku from the Sphere of Thought, to share with them the information about the existence of the Pyramid, and to involve them in the efforts to decode it.

He involved Odin for his intelligence, power and wide knowledge of the Multiverse, as Full Hierarch of the Sphere of Thought; and Korotiku for his very brilliant and original mind, and his deep understanding of Planar issues. Odin was deeply disturbed and intrigued by the object, Korotiku enthusiastic; but their combined, prolonged efforts were vain. The three immortals vowed absolute secrecy about this, and also Korotiku seemed to be more disciplined than usual, in relation to such a special issue. In the following years, the three immortals kept meeting before the Pyramid regularly, in the utmost secrecy, to study and discuss it.

Khoronus, after decades of regular and careful study of the patterns recorded day by day by his jumpers, has deduced that the Pyramid Code seems to be composed of four sub-Codes: each one of the four Sides showing patterns with slightly different behaviors.

There is a strange feeling that one of the surfaces is more "attuned" with Khoronus,

and another one with both Odin and Korotiku; the three immortals deduced that each Side of the Pyramid is "somewhat related" to a specific Sphere of Power. And sometimes, a strange "chaotic wave" confuses the whole Pyramid for a few seconds; Khoronus understood that this effect is strictly related to Entropy, so giving the Pyramid unexplained connections with each of the Five Spheres: four directly, with Entropy occasionally traversing all of them.



Sinbad

In recent months, Khoronus has a new worry: the mysterious immortal Sinbad, also of the Sphere of Thought, seems very interested and insistent to know if Khoronus is working on something "important". His casual remarks seem to be too specific, and Khoronus began asking himself if Sinbad is more knowledgeable about the existence and function of the Pyramid that he could imagine....

## DM Notes

The Pyramid is indeed an artifact of the Old Ones. It was placed in Mystaraspace an extremely long time ago, as a Key to pass through the Vortex for Old Ones at the time of the Prime Plane's creation. It could be also used by Old Ones, in special circumstances, as a "conduit" to send blackballs into the Prime, instead of the Vortex.

The Code is of the utmost complexity, and could be decoded only by the most brilliant immortal minds, working on it for centuries. Any form of mortal and immortal magic is useless if used on or against the Pyramid; some vague hints could be derived only if extremely well-worded immortal *wish* and *lore* spells were used to enhance the involved immortals' \*own mathematical knowledge\*.

The three immortals will guard the secret and the object with their full, unrelenting, power. High level mortals finding it by chance will be immediately attacked by the four sentinel jumpers positioned around it (which instantly alert Khoronus on his plane); after one turn, Khoronus will materialize and firmly deal with (as per DM choices, and PC alignment/intentions: killing, relegating them to a pocket dimension, erasing their memories...) the surviving mortals: this is one of the most important secrets of the Multiverse, and Khoronus doesn't intend to take any risks about it (an exception could be made only for immortal candidates of the Time or Thought Spheres, that in exceptional cases could be "enrolled" to help the decoding effort).



Time or Thought immortals eventually finding it will be confronted by Khoronus and Odin, and sworn to the utmost secrecy by their respective Full Hierarchy; low and medium level Entropic immortals will be vigorously attacked by the three immortals together, and then enclosed in bakaa chains in a special pocket dimension created by Odin. The three don't have yet a clear strategy to cope with an Energy or Matter immortal, or a high level Entropic immortal, eventually finding it, and are discussing these risks and their consequent options.

## The Code

From a mathematical point of view: each side's pattern is an ever changing series of results that represent the nonlinear output of four different generating functions, each one tied to a specific Sphere; the "entropic wave" seems a to be a sort of "white noise" effect, but strangely interwoven with the behavior of the generating functions.

To understand the Code, it is necessary to reconstruct the generating functions from their complex nonlinear outputs, composing

them together and managing the error derived from raw entropic data (an extremely difficult feat). The resulting "function" could be used to prepare a special, extremely powerful, immortal level gate spell, which allows the user to finally transit the Vortex.

Sinbad is in effect the only immortal that, finding the pyramid by accident thousands of years ago, decoded it after many centuries of intensive mathematical studies (using a great score of mathematical lore, collected through many planes and civilizations), just before the Blackmoor era. Unlocking the Code allowed him to pass through the Vortex and to meet the Old Ones; what happened to him after this encounter is shrouded in mystery.

But he returned after a while, and his knowledge of the fact that Khoronus is aware of the Pyramid, opens up different possibilities; as well the fact that - in the first dreams pointing him to that far away point of deep space - Khoronus remembers well to have dreamed also about a white sail blown by the wind, the symbol of Sinbad...

# The Pachydermions

Elephant-people from  
the Land of a Thousand Pagodas

By Giampaolo Agosta (Agathokles)



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS



*Ssu-Ma as Ganetra*

## INTRODUCTION

Pachydermions are a race of large, heavy, elephant-like humanoids. Pachydermions have grey skin, covered with patches of coarse grey hair. There are several different breeds, which share similar base characteristics, but differ physically and culturally. They are mostly vegetarians, and only a few Maelephant-blooded individuals<sup>1</sup> can stand the taste of meat, or gain any nurture from it.

The Pachydermion societies are generally theocratic, though more primitive Pachydermion cultures exist, especially among tribes of Mammoth Pachydermions - an arctic, nomadic breed. Most Pachydermions are followers of Ssu-Ma (also known as Ganetra among them).

<sup>1</sup> Maelephants are a planar race of elephantine humanoids, described in the *Planescape Monstrous Compendium Appendix*.

## A Brief History of the Pachydermions

While several breeds are found on Mystara, Pachydermions originated on the planet Damocles, where they first developed space travel through clerical magic.

### Mystara

While the space-faring Pachydermions discovered Mystara during the Blackmoorian Age, their colonies there soon failed due to the presence of aggressive native cultures, as well as to the rise of Blackmoor and the Great Rain of Fire. The Pachydermions of Mystara regressed to nomadic lifestyle and primitive technology, although they have better memories of the past than other races who have recovered more quickly from the technological and magical point of view. In modern times, Pachydermions are mostly found in Arypt, and to a lesser extent in Sind.

### Patera

On the other hand, the Pachydermions managed to colonize the invisible moon of Patera, which was inhabited by few other intelligent beings, around 4000 BC. Protected by the invisibility properties of Patera's core, the Pachydermions survived undisturbed until the Rakasta arrived on Patera, fleeing the onslaught of the goblinoid invasions on Mystara. The belligerent cat-like near-humans forced the Pachydermions to retreat to the mountain valleys of Komporthap, which remains their largest nation. Pachydermions are also found in the Empire of Myoshima and in other nations of the invisible moon.

### Damocles

On Damocles, the Pachydermion civilization declined sharply after the war with the Pyrithians around 1000 BC. The Pachydermions lost much of their space travel magics, among other knowledge, and remained isolated for centuries due to the presence of space pirates. In 500 AC, they had already declined so much that they controlled little more than one fourth of the planet. When the treachery of the mad Dark Pyrondian, Pheazar, became clear, the Pachydermion theocracy joined the other nations of Damocles in a doomed attempt to save the planet, which finally exploded in 1010 AC, destroying the original source of the Pachydermion race and culture.



*Damoclean Pachydermion*

## THE AD&D 2E PACHYDERMION CHARACTER RACE

While their powerful physiques allow them to become good warriors, most Pachydermions share a pacifistic philosophy. They often become priests or craftsmen. Due to their bulky body, to their clumsiness in moving, and to their lawful and good tendencies, they never become thieves. They make mediocre wizards or bards, too, as they have little magical talent.

## Racial Abilities

**Ability Scores:** Pachydermions are very strong, and more resilient than other races. Their meditative and philosophical bent also provides them with a Wisdom bonus. However, they are clumsier than smaller humanoids, and they often seem aloof to other races.

Table 1: Pachydermion Ability Scores

Stat	Min/Max	Adj
Str	11/18	+1
Int	3/17	
Wis	6/18	+1
Dex	4/17	-2
Con	10/18	+1
Cha	3/18	-1

### Alignment:

Pachydermions are rarely, if ever, Evil. Many are Lawful Neutral, although individual breeds show specific tendencies (see below).

### Prehensile trunk:

A Pachydermion's trunk is prehensile, and can perform simple to medium manipulation. In particular, Pachydermions can swing light melee weapons with their trunks.

### Distance communication:

Through trumpeting and emitting low-frequency sounds, Pachydermions are able to communicate at great distances, much like lupins using their howling ability.

### Senses:

Pachydermions have Infravision, with a range of 60'.

### Extra Hit Points and damage:

Pachydermions fall in the range of Large creatures, therefore they suffer damage from weapons as Large opponents. However, a Pachydermion receives 7 extra hit points at first level.

### Height:

7' to 11', depending on the breed.

### Weight:

from 500 lbs for short females to up to 1000 lbs for a very large male specimen.

### Eyes:

usually dark (chestnut to black).

### Hair:

short and coarse, various shades of grey, only for Mammoth and Oliphant. Hollyphant-blooded sport patches of light, golden fur on their chest and back. Other breeds have a grey, leathery skin, with little, if any, body hair.

## BLOODLINES

There are several breeds of Pachydermions, not all of which are found on Mystara -- some breeds are unique to Myoshima and Damocles.

The most common breed takes from the common Elephant, and is less biased or specialised than the others. Its members are especially good at crafts and make powerful priests of lawful good Immortals.

Maelephant-blooded Pachydermions are outstanding guardians. They make powerful warriors, and only rarely choose other careers. They are extremely loyal, and never betray an employer. However, they are quite

Table 2: Pachydermion Bloodline Diffusion

Breed	Freq.	Climate	Location
Elephant	40%	(Sub)Tropical Jungle	Myoshima, Damocles
Maelephant	6%	Any	Myoshima, Damocles
Good Baku	8%	Tropical Jungle	Myoshima, Damocles
Holy Baku	2%	Tropical Jungle	Myoshima, Sind, Skothar
Mammoth	10%	Subarctic Plains	Myoshima, Damocles, Hollow World
Oliphant	8%	Temperate/Subarctic Plains	Myoshima, Damocles, Hollow World
Hollyphant	2%	Any Temperate	Myoshima, Sind, Skothar
Aryptian	20%	Savannah	Aryptian Savannah
Sindhi	6%	(Sub)Tropical Jungle	South-Western Brun, Sind, Skothar

aggressive, and especially nasty, by Pachydermion standards (they are still generally not evil, but they often walk quite near the border).

Baku-blooded Pachydermions (if psionics are allowed) make extremely powerful psionicists, and can be good priests too. They are among the less common subspecies, and are usually travellers, wandering alone or in small family groups. Holy Baku are very intelligent, and are the best Pachydermion wizards.

Mammoth and Oliphant Pachydermions are stronger and tougher than their cousins, and also more aggressive. Mammoths are quite primitive, by Pachydermion standards, and live in subarctic regions, in small clans.

Oliphants are the warriors and soldiers of the Pachydermion nations. They are more mercenary than most Pachydermions, with the exception of the Maelephant-blooded.

Pachydermions with the blood of Hollyphants are a fairy people, weaker and

gentler than the other subspecies, but strong supporters of Good.

Sindhi and Aryptian Pachydermions are the most common races on Mystara. They are large (especially the Aryptian breed), and have a nomadic culture. Sindhi Pachydermions still maintain some hidden cities, where they come back for great gatherings of their race. Both breeds are known for their great intelligence and wisdom, and for their great knowledge of history. This knowledge is always oral, and is taught to the young by the elders, so that it is preserved through the generations. Their memory is faultless, to the point that they never forget an experience or information. Therefore, they are sometimes sought after for their information, but they require large payments to share it.

### Character Classes and Skills

Pachydermions cannot become Thieves, due to their bulk and clumsiness. They make effective Clerics (or Specialist Priests) and Fighters, and can also access the other

## The Pachydermions



Table 3: Pachydermion Bloodline Qualities

Bloodline	Avg. Ht.	Align.	Special Abilities
Elephant	8'	Any	Bonus Skill: 1 craft skill at +2
Maelephant	9'	LN	+2 against surprise, can use Alarm spell 3/day
Good Baku	8'	NG	Trumpet (as Rakasta Roar) vs Evil opponents
Holy Baku	8'	TN	+1 Int
Mammoth	10'	CG/NG	Bonus Skills: Survival (Subarctic Plains), Orienteering
Oliphant	9'	LN/TN	+1 Str, -1 Cha, can use tusks in combat for 2d4 damage
Hollyphant	7'	LG/NG	+2 bonus to ST vs Poison, Cure Light Wounds 1/day, -2 Str, +2 Cha
Aryptian	10'	Any N	Infallible Memory
Sindhi	8'	Any N	Infallible Memory

Table 4: AD&D 2e Classes & Level limits

	Fighter	Ranger	Paladin <sup>1</sup>	Wizard	Priest	Psionicist <sup>2</sup>	Bard <sup>3</sup>
Elephant	12 <sup>4</sup>	8	15	6	15 <sup>5</sup>	10	8
Maelephant	15	--	--	--	10	10 <sup>6</sup>	--
Good Baku	10 <sup>7</sup>	12	--	--	15	U	--
Holy Baku	10 <sup>8</sup>	12	--	12	15	U	--
Mammoth	12	14	--	4	12	8 <sup>9</sup>	6
Oliphant	U	8	--	4	8	12 <sup>10</sup>	4
Hollyphant	8	--	12	8	15 <sup>11</sup>	12	--
Arypt	12	8	--	12	12	8	8
Sindhi	10	8	--	12	15	8	10

<sup>1</sup> This class is optional.

<sup>2</sup> This class is optional.

<sup>3</sup> Pachydermion Bards use the Trader kit, so they cast priest spells; Sindhi Bards may use the Loremaster and Riddlemaster kits instead, and gain wizard spells.

<sup>4</sup> Fighters with Defender kit can reach level 15

<sup>5</sup> Unlimited advancement for LG Priests

<sup>6</sup> Must choose Psychokinesis or Psychometabolism as primary discipline

<sup>7</sup> Fighters with Defender kit can reach level 12

<sup>8</sup> Fighters with Defender kit can reach level 12

<sup>9</sup> Must choose Psychokinesis or Psychometabolism as primary discipline

<sup>10</sup> Must choose Psychokinesis or Psychometabolism as primary discipline

<sup>11</sup> Unlimited advancement for LG Priests.

standard classes, although some classes are only open to specific breeds, and some breeds are more effective in certain classes. For example, Oliphant Pachydermions make superior fighters, whereas only the Elephant and Hollyphant Pachydermions can access the Paladin class.

Although Pachydermions cannot be Thieves, a Thief skills modifiers table is provided for Pachydermion Rangers and Bards.

Table 5: Thief Skills Modifiers

Skill	>9' tall	9'+ tall
Pick Pockets <sup>1</sup>	-10%	-15%
Move Silently	-15%	-25%
Hide in Shadows	-10%	-20%
Climb Walls	-15%	-15%
Detect Noise	+10%	+10%
Read Languages	+5%	+5%

Due to breed specialization, some Non-Weapon Proficiencies are available at the standard cost even when taken by a Pachydermion character which has no direct access to them due to class restrictions.

**Elephant, Maelephant, Good and Holy Baku, and Hollyphant:**  
Religion, Ceremony, Reading/Writing.

**Mammoth, Oliphant:**  
Blind-Fighting, Tracking, Survival.

**Aryptian, Sindhi:**  
Ancient History, Local History, Sage Knowledge.

## Troubleshooting

### What if I don't use Damocles?

In case the background of Damocles exposed in the companion article appearing in this issue of Threshold Magazine is not used in the campaign, the best option is to modify the history of the Pachydermions and make them a native Pateran race. No changes are necessary to the history of Pachydermions on Mystara.

### What if I don't have access or interest in the AD&D bloodlines?

Several bloodlines are based on AD&D monsters, such as the Maelephant, Baku, and Hollyphant. They can be easily ignored in a BECMI campaign. Just use Aryptian and Sindhi Pachydermions on Mystara, Elephant Pachydermions on Patera, and Mammoth Pachydermions in the Hollow World.

### But I don't use BECMI either!

You can use the Loxo in *D&D 3e*, possibly with modifications to take into account the fact that Pachydermions have a single trunk, whereas the Loxo have two.

If using *Pathfinder*, you can create a Pachydermion race. It is a Monstrous Humanoid, has Large size, standard Speed and Languages, and the Multi-armed trait (to cover the trunk). Ability scores modifiers are +2 Str, +2 Wis, -2 Dex. It has the Skill bonus and Skill training traits for two skills, depending on the bloodline, choosing from Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), and Survival.

In *D&D 4e*, you should likely tailor the Goliath, and create a "prehensile trunk" racial feat.

## THE BECMI D&D PACHYDERMION CLASS

Pachydermions can be used in BECMI D&D games as well. They are typical creatures, albeit large sized. They receive a +1 bonus to Strength, to a maximum of 18, and have minimum scores of 11 Strength and 9 Wisdom.

Pachydermion characters can become Shamans or Wicca up to level 12. As Pachydermion Shamans from Kompot-Thap or Damocles use the full Cleric spell list rather than the Shaman list.

Pachydermion warriors often wield multiple weapons. As other characters, they wield a secondary weapon at one level of Weapon Mastery less than their actual training. They can also wield a third weapon in their trunk, although it must be a light melee weapon, and it is used at two levels of Weapon Mastery less than their actual training.

Table 6: BECMI Pachydermion Player Creature

Level	XP	HD	AC	Size
Whelp	-32,000	4d8	9	M
Youngster	-24,000	5d8	9	M
Teenager	-16,000	6d8	8	L
NM	0	7d8	7	L
1	32,000	8d8	7	L
2	96,000	9d8	7	L
3	224,000	-	7	L
4	480,000	10d8	7	L
5	780,000	11d8	7	L
6	1,080,000	12d8	7	L
7	1,380,000	-	7	L
8	1,680,000	13d8	7	L
9	1,980,000	+2 hp	7	L

All Pachydermion characters must acquire

Table 7: Pachydermion Cultural Skills]

Breed	Skills
Elephant	Religion, Ceremony/Mysticism
Maelephant	Alertness, Religion
Good Baku	Religion, Ceremony/Mysticism
Holy Baku	Religion, Ceremony/Mysticism
Mammoth	Tracking, Survival
Oliphant	Blind-Fighting, Survival
Hollyphant	Religion, Ceremony/Mysticism
Aryptian	Ancient History, Local History
Sindhi	Ancient History, Sage Knowledge

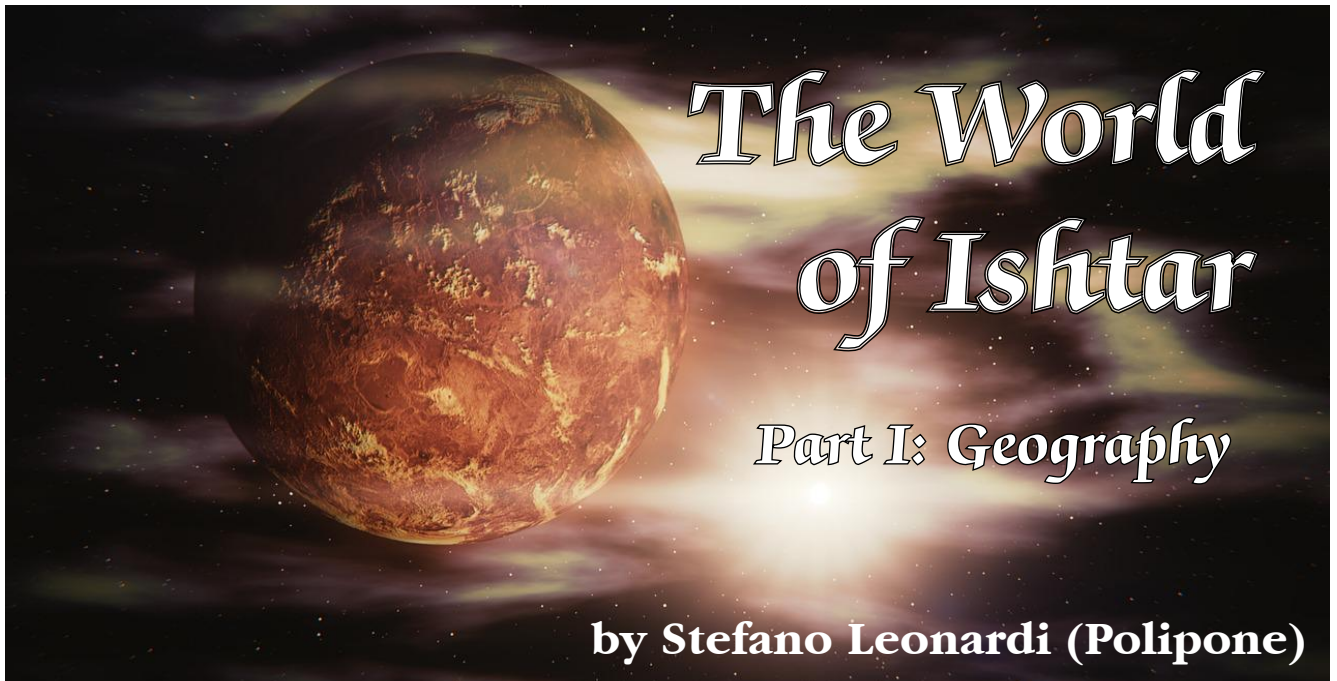
two breed-specific skills.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pachydermions first appeared as monsters in AC9 Creature Catalog. If the present write-up is used, the Pachydermion race described in the Creature Catalogue is an average of the Aryptian and Sindhi breeds, the only ones common the Outer World of Mystara.

Several people contributed ideas to the original version of this work, including Cobra CAO, Michael Diehm, Christopher Cherrington, and Thibault Sarlat.





### Author's Note:

The World of Ishtar is my personal campaign world. I started working on it in the 1990s, inspired by the articles about fantasy Africa published in Dragon Magazine. From the beginning I set it into Mystarospace, occupying the "Venus" position. It started as a standard 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition AD&D game world (possibly using Spelljammer rules for interplanetary travel, since Mystarospace hadn't been developed for 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), later partially converted to 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition D&D. With the development of the fanon Mystarospace setting, all of the pieces can be put together to allow its use with BECMI rules too. (The "official" World of Ishtar interpretation is that Mystarospace lies in a peculiar point of the multiverse which marks a transition between a BECMI-style universe with galaxies and BECMI-style planes, and a Spelljammer-style universe with crystal spheres and (A)D&D-style planes. If you leave Ishtar and Mystara, the type of space you find depends on the

mode of travel you use: if your ship is powered by a spelljamming helm, you will encounter a crystal sphere and pass through it to the phlogiston, while if it is powered by other means of propulsion, you will travel the galaxy.)

The world is obviously inspired by the planet Venus (the topography is based on that of the real planet, with the continents located where the highest elevation areas lie), but I developed it to be habitable (so it is hot but has no runaway greenhouse effect; the seas are slightly acidic, but the atmosphere is breathable, etc.).

The first part of this article will focus on a geographical description, while the second part will detail the history of the world, as well as the main powers and characters shaping it, and the third part will detail monsters and races.



## INTRODUCTION

"Ishtar" is the local name of the world occupying the "Venus" position in the Mystarospace solar system (and thus the first planet before WotI or the second planet after WotI). The name comes from the northern continent of the planet, which in turn comes from an ancient name for the Immortal Valerias. It is a hot world, whose sky is dominated by a large sun (its apparent size is about double the apparent size from Mystara), and whose environment is different and dangerous, yet teeming with life and resources.

Ishtar is slightly smaller than Mystara (its radius is about 6000 km) and orbits at 100 million kilometers from the sun. The Ishtarian day is the same as the Mystaran day (24 hours), but the Ishtarian year is only 224 days long (two Mystaran years correspond exactly to three Ishtarian years). All references to years in this series of articles will be to Ishtarian years. The planet has no moons, so there is no such concept as a standard "month": each culture has its own subdivision of the year, if any (seasons, "months" based on constellations, named weeks, or nothing of this). Like other bodies in Mystarospace, Ishtar is also hollow, but there are no polar openings and the interior of the planet is completely filled with water (the interior side hasn't been explored yet, possibly only the Immortals know what lies there).

The planet has three main continents and one minor continent. The continent of Ishtar lies in the northern hemisphere, near the northern pole. The continent of Pharodeti

(an anagram of another ancient name of Valerias) stretches across the equator, while another continent (still unexplored) lies around the southern pole. The minor continent of Betaland (actually a large crater left by an asteroid impact millions of years ago) lies southwest of Ishtar<sup>1</sup>.

Like Mystara, Ishtar has climate zones, but they are generally hotter than their equivalents on the other planet. The zones around the poles have a temperate climate, with warm summers and cool winters. The "subarctic" zones are subtropical instead (summers are hot, winters are tepid). The middle latitudes have a climate similar to tropical zones of Mystara, except that the yearly temperature excursions are much wider. The "subtropical" zones are actually "super-tropical" with Furnace temperatures, while the tropics have Inferno temperatures (description of these heat levels can be found in the Dark Sun supplement DSR4 Valley of Dust and Fire: if you don't have this supplement, simply assume that humans without magical protection can not survive for longer than a number of days equal to their Constitution divided by 2, except for Furnace zones in winter when the heat is equivalent to a normal tropical climate).

Ocean water on Ishtar contains poisonous mineral substances which make it slightly acidic. This does not affect the continents or the ocean floor, since these are made of rocks resistant to this specific type of acid, but does dissolve wood in a matter of days and metals in a matter of weeks, making oceanic travel generally impossible. Some rivers also contain acidic waters in their

<sup>1</sup> [Editor's note] Only the continent of Ishtar is detailed within the scope of this article.

lower courses. Unprotected characters immersed in ocean water take 1 point of damage every 10 minutes, while characters actually drinking it must save against poison (Fortitude save in 3E), taking 3d6 damage in case of a failed save and still 1d4 in case of a save (1d6 primary/secondary Constitution damage or 1 primary Constitution damage, respectively, in 3E). As a general rule, creatures indigenous to Ishtar are immune to this poison (PC races are *not* indigenous to Ishtar, except lizardmen).

The main races of Ishtar can be divided into three groups:

**Humans and their allies:**

These races originated on Mystara and colonized Ishtar during the Blackmoor age. Besides humans, this group includes dwarves, gnomes, halflings, minotaurs, and orcs. (Actually, minotaurs on Ishtar are descended from cursed humans, whilst orcs, like other humanoids, are descended from beastmen).

**Firenewts and their allies/minions:**

Firenewts from the plane of Fire colonized the continent of Pharodeti long before humans ever came to Ishtar. They also established colonies on the cold (for them) continent of Ishtar: these colonies came into conflict with humans when the latter colonized the planet. Some goblinoid races descended from beastmen were enslaved by firenewts (notably gnolls, trolls, hobgoblins, and ogres). In addition, there is a small number of efreet who are willing allies of the firenewts.

**“Neutral” races:**

this is a rather heterogeneous group, since it comprises both natives of Ishtar and newcomers. The lizardmen (similar to the Malpoggi of the Hollow World, but more civilized) and the tasloi are natives, while the rakasta are recent newcomers. Several other races exist on Ishtar.

Since the planet has no moons, there is a special rule concerning lycanthropy. Some of the humans who colonized Ishtar were lycanthropes, but with no full moon, the curse never manifested itself here. If lycanthropy were a disease, Mystaran lycanthropes could be considered its virulent form, since they tend to live short and violent lives. On Ishtar, on the other hand, lycanthropy remains latent: a lycanthrope could live a long life without ever knowing that they have the ability to transform into a beast. As a result of this, the curse has spread and it is now not uncommon, but normally has no effect on the life of an affected human (as on Mystara, demihumans or goblinoids cannot become lycanthropes). For each human character, the DM should secretly roll percentile dice: a result of 01-20 means that the character is indeed a lycanthrope, but the player should remain unaware of this until some exceptional event triggers the transformation (DM's choice, but only special circumstances should do it, like witnessing a particularly bloody massacre, or naturally traveling to another world with a moon). If using the rules in PC4 Night Howlers, the lycanthrope class shouldn't get any XP until it triggers (with 2E or 3E, the character will gain the appropriate lycanthrope template upon trigger). If a PC is a lycanthrope, roll 1d100 on Table 1 to determine the actual type (subtract 10 if the PC is Lawful, add 10 if the PC is Chaotic).

d%	Type	Alignment – BECMI (AD&D)
01-10	Werelion	Lawful (LG)
11-20	Wereraven	Lawful (NG)
21-30	Werbear	Neutral (CG)
31-40	Werepanther	Neutral (LN)
41-50	Weretiger	Neutral (N)
51-60	Wereboar	Neutral (CN)
61-65	Wrecrocodile	Chaotic (LE)
66-75	Wererat	Chaotic (LE)
76-80	Werejackal	Chaotic (NE)
81-95	Werewolf	Chaotic (CE)
96-98	Werhyena	Chaotic (CE)
99	Wereraptor	Chaotic (CE)
00	DM's choice	

Table 1: Lycanthropic Strains on Ishtar

Other lycanthropic strains are possible (even were-T-rex, but this strain only affects giants!).

## THE CONTINENT OF ISHTAR

This continent is located in the northern zone of the planet, across the polar circle (which is located at 66 degrees of latitude). Map 1 shows the continent at the scale of 1 hex = 72 miles: the polar circle is not drawn but is located roughly at the latitude of the volcanoes in the western plateau (Lakkar region). On this line there is the phenomenon of the midnight sun on the day of the summer solstice, while north of it the periods of continual light (and conversely those of continual darkness on the winter solstice) become progressively longer.

The maps show several new types of terrain not found on Mystara, which are explained in the next subsection.

### Terrain types



**Acidic water:**

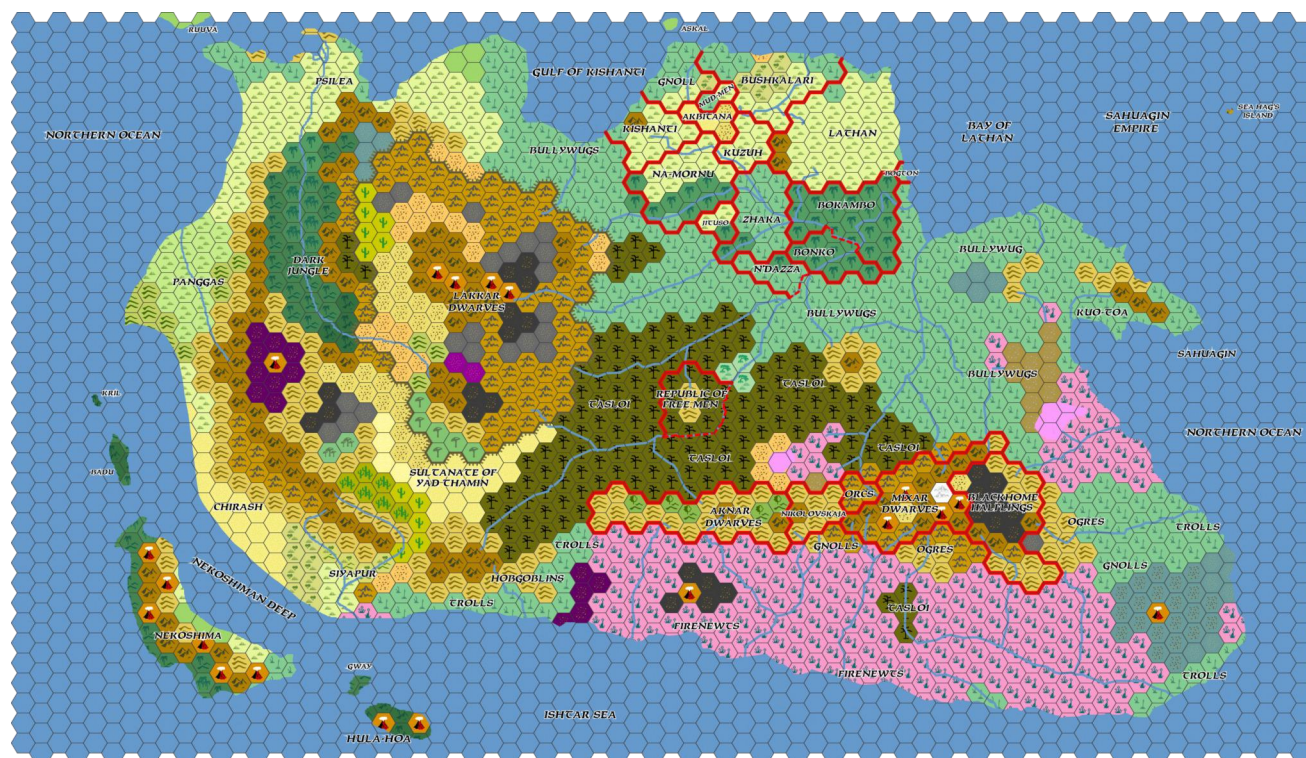
Ocean water hexes (and some river tracts) have this darker shade, which does not indicate depth but means that the water is acidic (see the introduction).



**Fungal forest/swamp:** These terrain types occur on Mystara only in the Shadowdeep, but here on Ishtar fungi grow to prodigious sizes even on the surface.



**Glass desert, rocky:** In these areas the ground consists of an expanse of glass, sometimes more or less transparent, but more often opaque.



**Map Key** 1 Hex = 72 Miles

Baablands	Glacier	Hot Swamp	Mud	Sandy Metal Desert	Volcano
Beach	Grassland	Jungle	Rocky Desert	Sandy Obsidian Desert	
Broken Lands	Grassy Hills	Jungle Hills	Rocky Glass Desert	Sea	
Cactus	Grazing Land	Jungle Mountains	Rocky Metal Desert	Shrubland	
Farmland	Heavy Cactus	Light Jungle	Rocky Obsidian Desert	Shrubland Hills	
Forested Hills	Heavy Fungal Forest	Marsh	Sandy Desert	Swamp	
Fungal Forest	Hills	Mountains	Sandy Glass Desert	Creepfern Forest	

Map 1: The Continent of Ishtar

This is not a crystalline substance like that found in Mystara's hollow moon, but rather some silica-containing rock which was erupted by some volcano and cooled rapidly, preventing the formation of crystals. The resulting material is very hard but brittle, so no caverns are possible in these areas. If struck, it breaks easily, forming shards and glassy dust (see Glass desert, sandy). No life can thrive in such an environment, so encountered monsters will always be traveling through the area.



**Glass desert, sandy:** Where the forces of nature have eroded a patch of rocky glass desert, sandy glass is the result. These areas are generally distant from where they originally formed, since they are easily transported by the wind. The sand itself spans a wide range of sizes, from microscopic dust particles to large shards that will easily cut exposed skin (even halflings are known to wear boots when traveling in these areas). Sandstorms in these areas are extremely deadly. Hardy creatures may make their lair in these zones.



**Metal desert, rocky:** The world of Ishtar is metal-rich, so finding an open vein of metal is not uncommon. These veins are almost never of precious metals: they generally consist of iron, aluminium, tin, or lead. Since metals conduct heat, these areas are generally very hot during the day and quite cold during the night. No normal creature can live here.



**Metal desert, sandy:** Powerful forces can sometime grind even metallic terrain to dust. These zones are the result of such transformations. As in the glassy desert, the size of the metal bits can range from fine dust particles (that can find its way everywhere, even polluting food or water) to pebbles and large chunks. These areas are not suitable as lairs except, maybe, for dragons.



**Obsidian desert, rocky:** Similar to glass desert, with the difference that the glass is jet black here. As such, it absorbs a great quantity of heat, so the temperatures are unbearable during the day (treat it as an Inferno condition). By night the terrain cools slightly, but can still be too hot to touch. Only fire creatures can survive here for long.



**Obsidian desert, sandy:** Sandy version of the previous terrain, this combines hot temperatures with foot-cutting shards. The main source of worry in these areas will be the

terrain itself, not the monsters which will probably be absent.



**Treefern forest:** These are forests or jungles, where the trees are actually giant varieties of the little treeferns common in other worlds. Aside from the appearance, they are similar to normal forests or jungles and are generally teeming with life (including dinosaurs!).

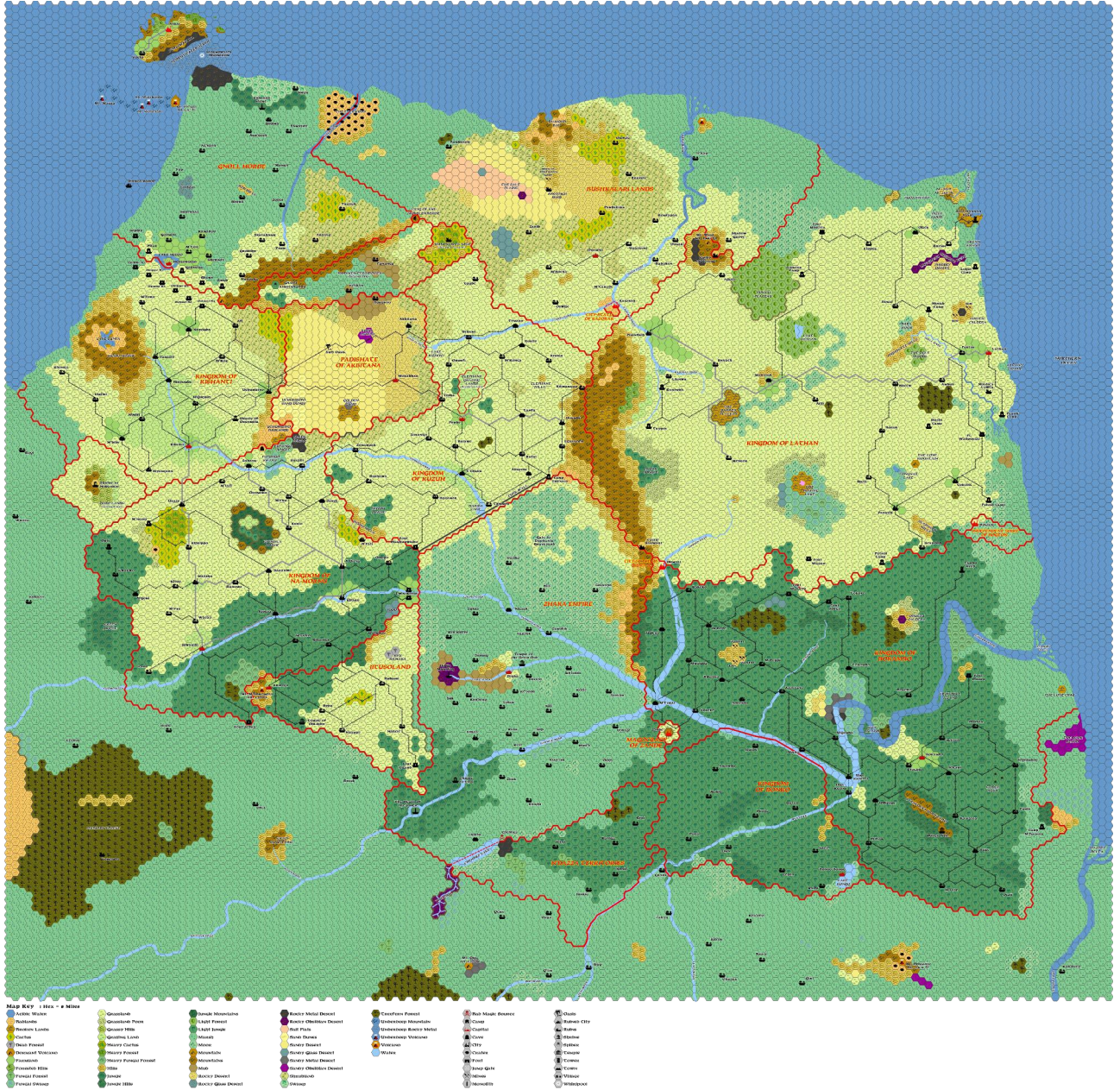
## Lathan region

Map 2 shows in greater detail the northern area of the continent, named the Lathan region from its most powerful nation.

**Akbitana:** The Padishate of Akbitana is named after its old capital city, but when the original ruling faction was wiped out in a civil war about 200 years ago, the new rulers chose to rule from their base in Mokabbar, and that city became the new capital. The culture of this country is similar to that of Ylaruam on Mystara. The population is mostly composed of humans, but dwarves, gnomes, orcs, and even lizardmen are not uncommon in the two main cities. Akbitana has no allies in the surrounding realms, but no enemies either, since its lands are arid and uninteresting for would-be conquerors.

**Åskal:** This island in the far north is separated from the mainland by the Stormywater Strait. The ocean bed in this area is rich in metal (mostly iron), and this is the cause of the continual thunderstorms that plague the area. In the center of the strait, a great whirlpool threatens to sink anybody foolish enough to brave the waters

Map 2: Lathan region (8mphex)



(even using wooden boats, the storms and the maelstrøm would destroy them long before acid damage becomes a concern). The island has therefore had no contact with the surrounding lands for centuries, giving rise to a distinct culture: the humans living here are fair-skinned, fair-haired, and more similar to Vikings than to the other humans living in the continent. Unlike Vikings, however, they are land-lubbers, since sea travel is nearly non-existent on Ishtar. Small clans of Mixar dwarves live in the mountains.

**Bogton:** This halfling city-state claims a portion of the neighboring moor as a "shire", but actually controls only the city. The inhabitants are insular, paranoid, and just want to be left to themselves, maintaining a strict neutrality with the other nations.



*Jungle Realm of Bokombo*

**Bokambo:** This jungle realm is home to the most renowned hunters in the region. Before the unification of the kingdom, the tribes living in this area survived mainly by hunting; when the realm was formed and the level of civilization increased, many citizens turned to agriculture or crafts, but the hunters retained great prestige, and they are

still needed when some isolated community is menaced by monsters or famine. Despite Bokambos best efforts, the relations with their neighbors are a source of concern. The lizardmen of Zhaka are aggressive expansionists, and the halflings of Bonko are not to be trusted; with Lathan there is currently a fragile peace, but border incidents are not uncommon. The only true allies of Bokambo are the Zande witches.

**Bonko:** The "Kingdom" of Bonko is the home of the dark-skinned halflings with the same name. The term "kingdom" is an exaggeration since no village chieftain recognizes any authority higher than his own: the chieftain of Bongo Bongo actually fancies himself as the king of all Bonko halflings, but no other chieftain takes him seriously. The society of these halflings is extremely chaotic (although they are not actually evil as a race), and they don't seem to understand the concept of private property. In their language, the word for "to need" is the same word used for "to take". Like kender from the Dragonlance setting, they tend to "borrow" items they need from others, so they have a reputation as thieves that they don't even understand, since they don't understand private property (but if they are told that a thief is one who takes things, they readily admit that they *are* thieves, since they *do* take things whenever they need them). The inhabitants of some villages have been known to eat people they don't like (although they absolutely refuse to eat their own kin): this practice is rare, but has contributed to the negative reactions these halflings get in other realms.

**Bushkalari:** This vast arid expanse is thinly populated by the Bushkalari people. These



diminutive people (subtract 6 inches or 15 centimeters from calculated height for Bushkalari PCs) are adept at survival in their inhospitable lands and live simple lives in close contact with nature. They share territory with another sentient race, the kreen (identical to thri-kreen from *Forgotten Realms* or *Dark Sun* settings), which they consider to be emissaries of their god Krensh and obey implicitly (the kreen are generally not concerned with securing the humans' obedience, and they resort to giving orders only in particular situations). Locations where kreen are known to live (or have lived in the past) are considered sacred by the bushmen and defended fiercely against intruders, especially from the Lathan given the colonizing attitude of the white nation. Relations with Kuzuh are much better since the two peoples simply ignore one another.

**Crag of the Mokelembembe:** This location is generally given a wide berth since it is known to be the lair of a large clan of mokelembembe dragons<sup>2</sup>. While generally good-natured, they are still dragons and don't appreciate intruders treading on their territory.

**Dismaal:** This tiny city-state at the corner of Lathan, Bokambo, and Zhaka is a haven for cutthroats, riff-raff and ne'er-do-wells from all over the region. Unlike Kazorak, which accepts all races but maintains a strict internal order, Dismaal is only friendly to normally accepted races (humans, dwarves, halflings, minotaurs, and orcs, with the occasional rakasta or centaur) and doesn't

<sup>2</sup> [Editor's note] Mokelembembe dragons will be described in an upcoming issue of *Threshold*. Look for continuing articles on *The World Ishtar*!

even try to enforce respect of the law: even worse, no law is recognized here, so the strongest get away with what they want and the weak usually end up dead. If you can brave the danger, this is the best spot to find assassins for hire, slaves, and illegal goods.

**Gnoll Horde:** In this area live the majority of the gnolls in the continent of Ishtar, a force of chaos that destabilizes the entire region. Unlike those found in southern regions, these gnolls appear to have little or no contact with the firenewts, but it is rumoured that their leaders are in league with fiends, and these "fiends" may actually be the firenewt leaders. The border with Kishanti is especially fortified on both sides, and the gnolls are currently preparing a great invasion.

**Jitusoland:** The Jituso are a subrace of humans known for their great stature. They are like other humans in all aspects, except that their height is  $195+5d6$  cm ( $78+4d3$  inches if you are using Imperial units). Their weight is normal for humans, so they generally have a very slim appearance. In game terms they are like normal humans, but with a +1 bonus to Strength and a -1 penalty to Constitution (+2 and -2, respectively, if using 3E rules; for BECMI, Strength cannot exceed 18, while for 2E the bonus should be applied *after* possibly rolling exceptional Strength, so 18 becomes 18/50, 18/50 becomes 18/75, etc. – only a natural 18/00 actually becomes 19). Their society is unsophisticated but by no means primitive: they are very good at herding animals and have a surprisingly high percentage of spellcasters, both sorcerers and clerics/druids. Jituso is allied with Na-Mornu due to necessity, since all other borders are with hostile creatures.

**Kazorak:** This small city-state at the confluence of the Bisch and Kazorak rivers is a community where members of every race are welcome, as long as they do not disturb the delicate balance. Here you can find hobgoblins living near dwarves or ogres sharing courtyard space with gnomes. Many humanoids unwelcome in neighboring lands can find a safe haven here, from which they can raid Lathan or Kuzuh lands with impunity: the enclave is in fact completely surrounded by Bushkalari territory, and the bushmen discourage open passage through their lands by foreign armed bands so retaliation is unlikely (the Kazorak goblinoids make sure to cross Bushkalari lands by night and out of sight).

**Kishanti:** This realm is on the verge of civil war. The ruling family's power is waning and their popularity is low, even if their rule isn't particularly harsh. The only things that keep them on the throne for now are the support of the army (Kishanti cavalry is considered the finest in the world) and the loyalty of the citizens of the capital Kiboko: in the other towns, especially in the north, the rebellion is open, kindled by agents of the opposition. The leader of the opposition has not yet revealed himself, but is said to be allied with the gnolls in the north; those supporting the change of government are probably being manipulated or blackmailed, so the situation is very chaotic. This isn't a novelty for this realm, though, as its history is full of revolutions, coups, and regime changes. The current ruling dynasty has held the throne for 100 years, which is a record. In case the war actually breaks, Na-Mornu and maybe Kuzuh will intervene to aid the legitimate government, the gnolls will aid the rebels,

and the actions of Akbitana can not be predicted at the moment.



*War Elephants of Kuzuh*

**Kuzuh:** The Kingdom of Kuzuh is notorious for its war elephants. Pachyderms are very common in this region (nearly all savannah, with good grazing territories) and are used for a variety of tasks, ranging from construction (in the great city of Pembe, magnificent buildings too tall to be true have been built with elephant-moved cranes) to transportation (elephant caravans are a common sight on most roads and trails), from agriculture to war. Kuzuhites are loosely allied with Na-Mornu and neutral towards Bushkalari and Akbitana, but wary of the expansionist Zhaka lizardmen, to the point that they have erected a wall of elephant tusks on the border to discourage aggression.

**Lathan:** Unlike its neighbors, this large and powerful kingdom is inhabited by light-skinned humans (although they are often tanned due to life in the open) similar to the inhabitants of Karameikos or Thyatis on Mystara (many of their names are similar to those found in the Isle of Dawn, suggesting a

common origin). They are descendants of the original dominant population of colonizers coming from Mystara before the Great Rain of Fire. Their kingdom is large and thriving, although in the largest cities corruption runs rampant and the power is often in the hands of thieves' guilds or secret cabals. Demihumans and goblinoids (limited to orcs and minotaurs) are relatively common here compared to other lands: orcs are generally considered inferior people but tolerated, while minotaurs are valued for their fighting skills and often find work as mercenaries. The relations with neighboring lands are very variable since some nobles are peaceful and open-minded, while others see any culture different from theirs as inferior and are likely to attack foreign communities to raid or get slaves.

**Manticore's Nest:** A stretch of unclaimed territory. The ruins in the middle of the cactus shrub are rumored to host several manticores that roam the surrounding area.

**Mud-Men Territories:** This area is actually a wilderland, with no community extending control beyond the immediate proximity of a village. The most common inhabitants are mud-men (there are other villages besides those marked on the map, but their location is unknown), but the western woods teem with spiders and even host a tiny community of aranea.

**Na-Mornu:** The Kingdom of Na-Mornu may be the most civilized nation in the region. The humans of Na-Mornu are black-skinned and tall (but not as tall as the Jituso), have built great cities and roads, and are renowned all across Ishtar for their mounts, both horses and zebras. Horses come in

every variety and are ubiquitous, but the sign of distinction in this country is the zebra. Normally more similar to a donkey than to a horse, in the hands of one of the expert Na-Mornu trainers a zebra can become a superb mount (treat as a heavy warhorse). The fascination with zebras permeates every aspect of Na-Mornu life: even the clothes of the people tend to be most often black and white. Na-Mornu horsemen are the best on Ishtar, with the possible exception of the Kishanti. Yet while nearly everyone can ride a horse (they often learn to ride before learning to walk), only the knights of the realm can ride zebras. The knights are an elite force (they wear chain mail, virtually unknown in other realms since the omnipresent heat forces warriors to wear lighter armor) and are highly respected everywhere. The stability of Na-Mornu owes much to them: no foreign army has ever won a battle against them on Na-Mornu ground. The society is very Lawful and follows a code of chivalry. Horse theft is punished with loss of a hand, while zebra theft is punished with death. Na-Mornu acts more or less as the regional power in the western area of the greater Lathan region (in the eastern area, obviously, this role is taken by Lathan) and has good relations with its neighbors (except Zhaka), but a cold distant relation with Lathan.

**N'Dazza:** These tasloi are more civilized than usual for their kind. They have copied some behaviour and customs from humans and halflings and are as likely to raid their neighbors as they are to trade peacefully with them. They are even known to launch expeditions deep into the southern wetlands on behalf of the Zande witches to procure rare spell components.

**Pride Lands:** This is an area interdicted to humanoid and populated by large herds of animals, including predators like lions and leopards. It is rumored that the most powerful specimens of these animals are actually sentient and act as leaders for their kind, but no one can confirm or deny these rumors since intruders are attacked on sight and eaten.

**Zande:** This great city is built atop a high plateau with smooth vertical cliffs (rumored to have been created with powerful magic). The vast majority of its population is composed of spellcasters (mainly sorcerers and wizards, but all spellcasting classes are represented; if you use psionics, psionic classes are present as well). The rules of citizenship are very simple, and Zande residents often boast that their city-state is very democratic: anyone who is able to climb the plateau by any means can apply for citizenship. This of course includes spellcasters with access to spells like *fly* or *levitate*, but any character with a *flying carpet* or flying vessel (or the ability to sneak aboard one) can apply. Even the political system is very simple: access to public offices is open to anyone who *wishes* it (in fact this only applies to powerful sorcerers or wizards with access to the *wish* spell). The city is also home to the Zande witches, a powerful cabal of female sorceresses with the mission of eradicating users of prohibited magic wherever they find them (their concept of "prohibited" magic includes necromantic magic related to undead, demon summoning, and other inherently chaotic magic: evilness is not a factor, since this is Mystarospace, after all, and the main conflict is Law-Chaos, not Good-Evil).

**Zhaka:** The empire of the lizardmen. They are surprisingly civilized, using even metal weapons and armor, and their capital is said to be a jewel of architecture. However, they are exceedingly warlike, viewing all other races as inferior (and potential food). They are generally in a state of war with all their neighbors: sometimes one of them manages to secure a peace treaty, but such agreements are temporary at best since the slightest incident can enrage the lizardmen and return to a war condition.

## Other Lands

This section describes briefly the other areas shown in Map 1.

**Aknar:** These hills are home to the Aknar, one of the three subraces of Ishtarian dwarves. They share the love for work and riches with their cousins, the Mixar, but they are more open toward other races, viewing them as potential customers to be befriended. In fact, many of them take this concept to an extreme, viewing other races as potential victims to be robbed or swindled. Their neutrality in foreign relations (and alignment) and dedication to trade have made them a mercantile power: even those who don't actually trust them (i.e. everyone else) are willing to trade with them, as long as they believe they are getting an advantage (which is generally not true, but the dwarves won't tell you).

**Badu and Kril:** These two minor islands north of Nekoshima are mostly covered by jungle. Badu is home to a small population of wild gnomes, while Kril is home to a large green dragon.

**Blackhome Halflings:** This territory is named after the huge obsidian waste in its center. The halflings obviously don't live in the obsidian, but in the hills and mountains around it, and due to proximity to Mixar dwarves (and the hardships of life in this inhospitable area) the halflings have adopted an outlook similar to the dwarves. Instead of outgoing and jolly like other halflings, they tend to be dour, gruff and isolationist.

**Chirash:** An arid region on the southwestern coast just across Nekoshima, Chirash is the place where the peaceful inhabitants of Siyapur exile criminals and other undesirable characters. At first the exiles fought among themselves for the scarce resources, but then they learned to cooperate to better survive the adversities, giving birth to a peculiar society that mixes strict laws with anarchy. In Chirash it is acceptable to kill other people for a trivial slight, but theft of food or water is a crime of the utmost gravity.



*Jungle Monster*

**Dark Jungle:** A large valley covered with heavy jungles, where few dare to tread since the region is home to powerful monsters, including sentient apes (if the DM uses psionics, su-monsters are present as well).

**Hula-Hoa and Gway:** These two minor islands east of Nekoshima are inhabited by peaceful humans, but the western island (Gway) has been conquered by a minor clan of Nekoshiman rakastas who have enslaved most of the natives forcing them to mine gems, of which the island is particularly rich.

**Lakkar:** This plateau in the western portion of Ishtar is dominated by the great civilization of the Lakkar dwarves. Unlike the other dwarven subraces, the Lakkar dwarves live mostly on the surface of the plateau. Their realm is dominated by the priests, who rule with an iron fist over the rest of the population. Their culture resembles that of the humans of Thothia on Mystara (or Nithia in the Hollow World), including the pyramids and a morbid fascination with death. In Lakkar lands, undeath is seen simply as another stage of life, so the use of undead guardians or servants is widespread. The worship of entropic Immortals is present, but is still illegal and does not dominate the society.

**Mixar Dwarves:** These dwarves are similar to normal dwarves of the Known World. Their realm is large and sparsely populated, but fiercely defended when necessary (the ogres to the south periodically try an invasion but are regularly rebuffed). Here are located the highest peaks of Ishtar (more than 10,000 m above sea level), including the only glacier of the planet.

**Nekoshima:** This large island has been settled by rakastas from the Mystaran moon of Myoshima. The cat people are the only nation on Ishtar that possesses skyships and have frequent contact with their original world, but for now they have not tried to

conquer the rest of the continent, content to make border skirmishes among the domains of the various daimyos. The territory is extremely volcanic (due to the large scale of the map, each "volcano" hex is actually a volcanic region where even dozens of individual volcanoes can lie), which has forced the rakastas to build most of their homes with wood and paper only, to facilitate reconstruction in case of a violent eruption or an earthquake.

**Nikolovskaja:** The Tsardom of Nikolovskaja is allied with the Mixar dwarves to the east and trades freely with the Aknar dwarves to the west, and as such acts as a buffer between the two dwarven nations, who don't like each other very much. The realm is not very large but has very rich mineral deposits.

**Panggas:** A region of rich grasslands on the western coast, Panggas is inhabited by fierce orc tribes that survive by hunting the plentiful wild animals. Their number is kept low because they continually war amongst themselves.

**Psilea:** This grasslands region near the delta of the Psi River is peculiar because most of the people living here possess latent psionic powers (if you don't use psionics in your campaign, just select one random 1<sup>st</sup>-level spell for each PC or NPC native of Psilea: this spell can be cast once per day as a spell-like ability). The realm is quite civilized but warlike, loving the fine arts as well as the martial arts.

**Republic of Free Men:** The name of this country is quite misleading, since it can make you think that only humans are welcome here. In fact, there are no race restrictions:

nonhumans are present too, although in small numbers. The peculiarity of the Republic is its government system, or lack thereof. The only limit to individual freedom is that you cannot use it against someone else. When there is controversy, it is settled by wise people whose judgement is generally accepted, or as a last resort, by public vote. There are no rulers, only administrators who manage public resources for the common good. As simplistic as it can look, it works here. The population is composed of people who fled other nations in search of more freedom (and their descendants).

**Ruuva:** A large island off the extreme northwestern tip of the continent, Ruuva extends north nearly to the pole and is part of an archipelago that extends to Åskal in the Lathan region. The northern islands have a cooler climate than the continent, but are sparsely inhabited since the polar region is said to be haunted.

**Sahuagin Empire:** These evil aquatic humanoids are indigenous to Ishtar and thus immune to corrosion by the ocean water. They have a vast empire in the depths of the sea, but have little or no contact with other societies, except when they come out of the sea to raid the lands of Lathan or Bokambo (this explains why these kingdoms maintain watchtowers and keeps near the sea).

**Sea Hag's Island:** According to legends this tiny remote island is the lair of a powerful hag who has the power to move it around as if it were a ship, and thus raids the coasts of the continent with her small but powerful army of monsters. No one remembers the last time she was seen, though, so this could indeed be only a legend.



*Sea Hag's Island*

**Siyapur:** A powerful kingdom in the southwestern region of Ishtar, Siyapur has a society similar to Sind on Mystara. There is a considerable population of demihumans and humanoids, but little contact among them, since the races have the same role in Siyapuri society that the castes have in Sind. The order from the highest race to the lowest is as follows: humans, dwarves, gnomes, minotaurs, and orcs (strangely the same as in the unrelated society of Lathan, although in the latter these are only social classes and contact is not forbidden).

**Yad Thamin:** This desert realm exists only because of the cooperation of djinns. The air genies are staunch allies of the sultan and of the court archmage Balthazar, and have

helped build great cities in one of the most arid lands of Ishtar. The sultanate is a model of enlightenment and tolerance, but it too has internal conflict since there are factions that are opposed to the rule of the current sultan.

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# Damocles

## Mystarospace's Fourth Planet



*FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS*

by Giampaolo Agosta (Agathokles)

### INTRODUCTION

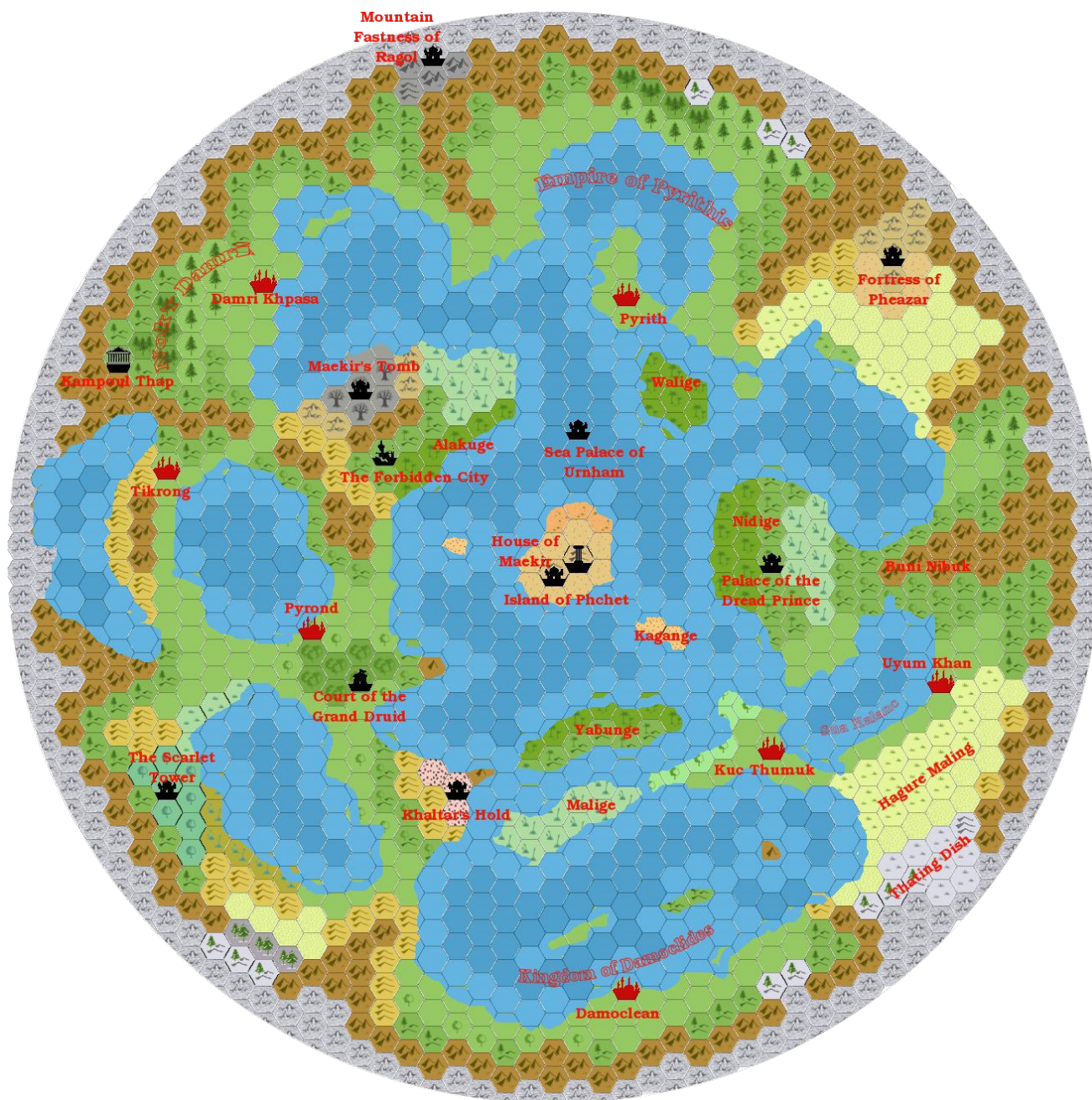
Damocles, the fourth planet of the Mystaran solar system, was not covered in “canon” source beyond passing mentions, and even Threshold Magazine and other non-canonical sources are scarce. The goal of this article, which collects and revises some previous work from the Vaults of Pandius, is to use Damocles as a sub-setting where elements from AD&D 2e, which are usually not found in Mystara, such as the tiefling race, Broken Ones, or tasloi can be used.

The article assumes that the Pyrithians from the asteroid belt, the Emerondians found in Davania, and the Federation aliens from the FSS Beagle are all related, and that they are related to the main inhabitants of Damocles.

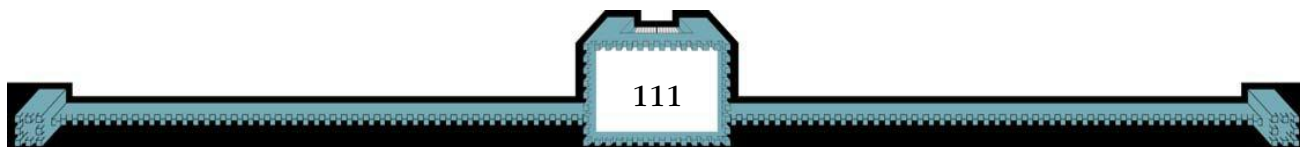
The destruction of Damocles in 1000 AC conveniently removes the planet and most of its inhabitants (save for the Pyrithian space pirates) from the setting, thus leaving more freedom to design the subsetting.



# Damocles - Mystaraspace's Fourth Planet



Map of Damocles, 144 miles/hex



## Generalities

Damocles is the fourth planet of the Mystaran solar system. It is inhabited by the Pyrithean Races, descendants of the Grens from the alien Federation. The name Damocles itself is an evolution of the name given to the planet by the FSS Beagle captain Bork Riesling, "DMK-3". As the language of the stranded grens evolved, the name was pronounced "Damok-Tres", which later became Damocles, and finally reached its standard form some 500 years ago. The original name was meant to show the galactic sector where the planet was found (Sector D, though actually this was wrong, as the Beagle had unknowingly entered some kind of portal, and shifted to the Mystaran Milky Way). M and K designated the Mystaran Solar System, in a base-32 code. Three was the number of the planet (Mystara was DMK-2, the numbers were given in order of exploration).

## Astrography

Damocles is a flat world, a semi-sphere whose flat surface is inhabited. It is slightly smaller than Mystara in equatorial diameter (around 6,500 miles), so its inhabited surface is nearly 80 million sq km.

Damocles has no moon. There is an asteroid belt around the planet. The planet is far from the sun, but it receives additional light and warmth from the giant gaseous planet Tarastia. Due to the strong influence of Tarastia on Damocles' climate, the seasonal patterns are very different from those of Mystara. Damocles experiences a very cold winter when Tarastia is farther, while it is warmer when the giant planet is nearer.

The surface of Damocles is encircled by the Outer Ring, a circle of tall, unbreakable mountains that prevent water, air, and people from leaving the flat area. On the outer side of the Barrier, and on the curved face of Damocles, the atmosphere is thin, and only simple lifeforms -- or those who do not need air -- can survive. Within the Outer Barrier, there is an ocean and several major seas.

Gravity is very low (natural gravity of a small planet like Damocles). On the flat side, gravity is magically enhanced, up to Earth-like values near the ground.

## Climate

The climate on Damocles is influenced by its distance from the sun, and only the strong emission of warmth from the very heart of the planet allows life to thrive here. Due to these emissions, the earth is often warmer than the air, so there are accessional currents that make flight easier even to larger flying creatures.

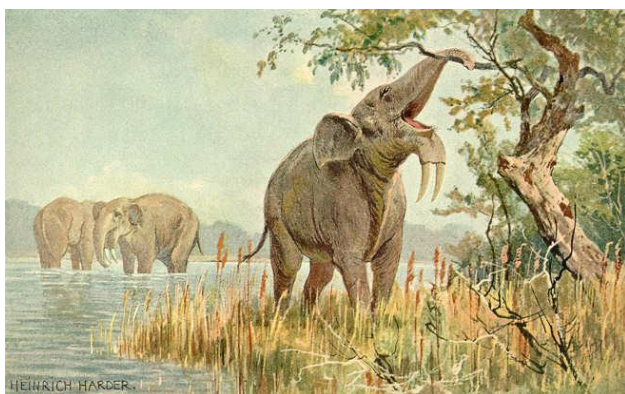
Another effect of these emissions is that warmer regions are found near the center of the planet -- deserts, then steaming jungles, and finally temperate regions. The coldest climates are found on the Outer Ring, a chain of tall mountains that encircles the planet. Rain patterns are based on the circulation of air, which gets warmer near the center of the planet, creating ascensional currents, and colder near the Outer Ring.

The influence of Tarastia provides additional effects, not unlike those of the moons on Mystara.

## Atlas of Damocles

In this section, the foremost nations of Damocles are briefly described. Much like the world map in the Master Set, the map of Damocles is not exhaustive. There are countless smaller or larger states, more or less independent of the main powers described here.

### Nok'r Damri



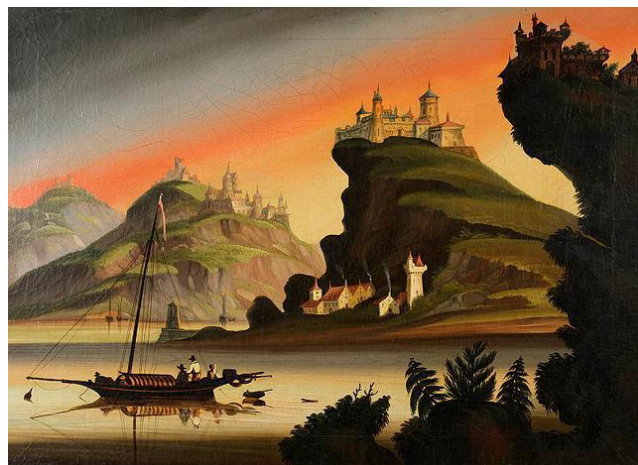
The Pachydermion homeland, Nok'r Damri is a theocracy. The pachydermions of Damocles worship a triad of Immortals: *Amt Knes* (Ssu-Ma), *Amt Dei* (Land), and *Amt Pel* (Fugit). *Amt Knes* is also known as Ganetra among the Pyrithians, *Amt Dei* is known as Damocles, and *Amt Pel* as Tempus. The pachydermions also respect the Elemasters, *Pbleung* (Fire), *Pbendei* (earth), *Tuk* (Water) and *Kbyal* (Air). An evil pantheon composed of *arok* (demons), is seen as presiding over Hell: Hel, Stodos and Demogorgon. Stodos is the demon in charge of the Outer Ring monsters, Demogorgon of the inner sea monsters, and Hel of the underground monsters.

While all pachydermions bow to the rule of the High Trunk in Kampoul Thap, their land is actually fractionated into many smaller principalities, each ruled by a warrior dynasty.

### Pyrond

Pyrond is the homeland and major nation of the Pyrondians. Powerful life-shapers, the Pyrondians have modified their own stock extensively, and their most powerful life-shapers have achieved powers not unlike those of human or demi-human rangers (in AD&D, use the Greenwood Ranger). However, their powers are drawn from life-shaped mutations rather than from magic. In more modern times, the Pyrondians of Pyrond have discovered Druidic magic, and have established a full Forest Druid circle. Ancient Pyrondian druids transform permanently into tree-like beings (equivalent to Treants).

### Empire of Pyrithis



The most important Pyrithian nation, the Empire of Pyrithis is the major naval power. However, its territory borders the hostile

lands of the Dark Pyrondians Pheazar and Ragol. Thus, much of Pyrithis' military might is locked guarding the borders against the gibberling hordes of Ragol and the more insidious demons from Pheazar's deserts domain.

Pyrith, the Imperial capital, is the largest city on Damocles, and holds many relics of the Federation aliens, the ancestors of the Pyrithians. Besides Pyrithians, also Dark Pyrithians, Broken Ones, and pachydermions live in the Empire. The official religion is a variation on the Nok'r Damri cult, except that the most prominent Immortal is Tempus (the preserver of the imperial line) rather than Ganetra.



*Pyrith*

### Kingdom of Damocles

The second largest Pyrithian nation, Damocles is a federal monarchy. The five kings owe allegiances to the High King, who resides in the city of Damoclean. Dark Pyrithians are quite prominent in the region, in part due to the machinations of the Dark



*Kingdom of Damocles*

Pyrondians Khaltar and Cortal Ihetarm, and pyrondians are also found in good numbers.

The relative distance from the dark pyrondian territories has made Damocles less directly involved in their conflicts, so that the kingdom focuses more on trade than war, with respect to the Empire of Pyrithis. Damocles has a strong merchant marine, and is the major mercantile power of the planet.

The Damoclideans are not especially religious, although pyrondian druidism and some Dark Pyrithian cults of Demogorgon and other Immortal Fiends are found in the area.

### Sua Halanc

The "Beautiful Crescent" is a temperate land outwards from the tasloi mainland, bordering the Sea of Pearls (*Mukaince Chil*, in the local language). It is inhabited by a pyrithian folk, the *Yase Naslucum*, or "Progeny of the sky". They are divided into many petty kingdoms, of which the foremost two are centered around the cities of Uyum

Khan and Kuc Thumuk. The Daltas Silizin ("Beautiful lady"), a powerful warrior queen, reigns in Uyum Khan, whereas the Asquringe Tham ("King of Flowers") controls a nomadic army in the horselands of Hugure Maling. Kuc Thumuk is led by the homonymous council of elders and is an oligarchic republic.

The Juke Guspur (Dread Prince), one of the dark pyrondians, has been a longstanding threat to the region, sending his tasloi armies to plunder the land in their war canoes. In spite of this, no alliance among the Pyrithians of Sua Halanc has held for long.

### Nibage

The tasloi inhabit a set of islands and coastal regions around the inner sea. A jungle folk, the tasloi are mostly fishermen, hunters and fruit gatherers. They call themselves *gininiba*, that is the "later people", in reference to their ancestors, the "first people" (*taatniba*), or simply "the people" (*niba*). The islands of Yabunge, Walige and Malige, as well as the coastal regions of Nidige and Alakuge, compose the "land of the people", or Nibage.

A primitive, tribal folk, the tasloi do not have a central government or a unified religion. They live in small tribes, and worship their ancestors, the *walaga*.

## TIMELINE

### The Beagle's Shipwreck

**BC 4000.** The FSS Beagle shipwrecks on Mystara. A number of scouting parties which had landed on Damocles are stranded on the surface of that planet, as their "Flying Eggs" are unsuited for star flight.

The Eggs' crews are mainly composed of experienced scouts and biologists, sent to Damocles to analyse the local lifeforms and capture interesting specimens. There are a number of e-bots on Damocles, too. Damocles is a verdant planet, inhabited by the pachydermions, an advanced, philosophical civilization with limited space-faring capabilities, and by other, less advanced races, among which are the ancestors of the tasloi.

The officers in charge of the Eggs contact the Beagle, and are ordered by Capt. Riesling to avoid contact with the locals and wait the rescue teams from the Federation. However, the officers are both removed from the control of Capt. Riesling and unable to adopt his policy of reducing the impact on the local environment by sending the crewmen to the stasis pods. In a few weeks it becomes clear to all that survival will become impossible unless some means of gathering food is obtained.

The Federation aliens use their technological skills to modify the e-bots programming to change them into useful hunters-gatherers, while a small number of e-bots is reserved for the exploration of the planet.

In the next year, it becomes evident that the Beagle is unable to leave Mystara, that Bork Riesling is losing his sanity, and that Damocles does not have a good supply of metallic minerals. The stranded aliens are locked in a stalemate, as they have the knowledge and tools, but not the materials, to start building a self-supporting village, and are forced to rely on their battery-powered tools and weapons instead.

In the following years, things only worsen as the Eggs' batteries are drained to recharge those of the commonly used tools and weapons. The alien crew is now unable to leave the surface, and most e-bots are inactive.

## Rise of the Life Shapers

**BC 4000-3800.** At last, the alien biologists manage to achieve a degree of success in a project they have been working on during all of these years: they have modified one of their Eggs to work as a bioengineering laboratory, and have modified some native creatures of Damocles to become producers of useful tools like arrow heads. During the next decades, most technological items are replaced by bio-engineered creatures or tissues. Blasters, medkits and the like are now kept locked in one of the three surviving Eggs (the other having been dismantled and cannibalised for replacement parts).

Meanwhile, a new generation of aliens grows and is taught in the techniques of bioengineering more than in any other branch of Federation's science. During the next few generations, electronics, computer science and astrogation become "sage knowledge" limited to the few keepers of the Eggs.

The need for the Egg-laboratory ends as soon as fertile life-shaped creatures and mother-creatures for tissues are created. The keepers, knowing that the batteries are now able to power only one Egg, store all of the remaining energy in one of the Eggs, and lock all of them in a secret underground room in their compound.

## The Pyrithians

**BC 3500.** The aliens start losing their historical memories, having already forgotten all of their scientific knowledge, save for life-shaping. Contact with the Beagle has been lost after only two centuries, and the historical records in the Eggs' computers are not accessible, as even the Keepers' lore is no longer clear enough to make them work.

The nebulous remains of the Federation's history and the early settlers history merge into a corpus of legends. The descendants of the Beagle crewmen call themselves "Pyrithians," as they believe their ancestor have arrived on the planet riding a flaming meteor. They have built an ancestor cult, and their cultural level has dropped dangerously, as they have been unable to write properly, deprived of their technological devices. They have slowly developed an alphabet of rough, geometric symbols which they carve on bark.

The Pyrithian population has risen from the original 50 or so to a nation of 100,000, growing around the capital city, Pyrond. The nation of Pyrith is ruled by a council of elder life-shapers who decide over internal matters, as no contact has been established with the other sentient race of Damocles.

## The Great Rain of Fire

**BC 3000.** By this time, the Pyrithian civilisation has grown so much that it is no longer united in a single nation. The Keepers' Council still rules the old Pyrond, but a number of warlike kingdoms have been created at the border of the Pyrithian lands.

A catastrophic event on Mystara is witnessed by the Pyrithian life-shapers. They consider Mystara the land where their ancestors went when they left Damocles, so the sudden increase in apparent magnitude of the planet is subject to all kinds of interpretations. Many link the celestial event with the recent discovery of other civilisations on Damocles, or with the divisions among the Pyrithians, starting a time of conflict both internal and with the bordering Damoclitean nations.

**BC 2700.** The life-shapers start creating grafts, in addition to the other kinds of life-shaped items.

## Birth of the Pyrondians

**BC 2000.** By this time, Damocles is evenly divided between the Pyrithians and the other surviving races. Thanks to their life-shaped equipment, the Pyrithians have slowly gotten the upper hand and are dislodging the other sentient species, conquering them. Their march is hindered only by the internal struggles, as warrior-princes fight among themselves for power.

Meanwhile, the Keepers have worked to widen the genetic pool of the Pyrithians, who all descend from a small number of individuals. At the same time, they are trying

to induce useful mutations in their own race. Their main concerns are the side effects of grafts, which limit their usefulness. To overcome them, the Pyrithians of Pyrond life-shape themselves, adding plant-like physiologic traits.

## The Pachydermion Wars

**BC 1000.** By this time, the Pyrondians have gone a long way from their ancestors: they are now solid green in colour, and have pointed ears; moreover, they now reproduce by planting a cutting into a "mother". They are rather different from the common Pyrithian of the colonies, which now extend over more than three quarters of Damocles.

The other civilised races of Damocles have mostly died out, save for the pachydermions. This ancient species had already reached pinnacles of culture and clerical magic far before the Pyrithians managed to contact them. They had established a number of large extra-planetary colonies, reaching the asteroid belt around Damocles first, and Mystara's invisible moon, Patera, next.

When the pachydermions finally realised the extent of the Pyrithian expansion, they were almost alone in their defensive war. But they had the resources to fight against the invaders, who were forced to bring the war to the asteroids in order to block the influx of resources to the mainland.

## Age of the Pirate Kings

**BC 900.** The Pyrithian civilisation suddenly starts its decline. The war with the

pachydermions has been short but very intense by Damoclitean standards, consuming much of the resources of both nations. The pachydermions are unable to take advantage of the Pyrithians' retreat from the border lands, and a wide buffer zone is formed around the pachydermion land.

The Pyrithian space troops, mostly hailing from the ranks of mutated pyrondians, start a new life as pirates in the asteroid belt, depleting it from its already scarce resources, and forcing the local pachydermions to flee for Patera.

**BC 800.** A new sub-race emerges from the piratical pyrondians, as power-hungry pirates use dark magics to contact outer planar beings. The new race has darker skin, and bright silvery hair, combined with sharp features and shining red eyes.

The main evolutionary step is actually a "regression" to the animal realm, justified by the need to survive in the deep space for long times. These Dark Pyrondians conflict with their cousins for supremacy.

Also, their ability to influence living creatures is stronger, and they become adept at extracting the quintessential qualities of the living and absorb them for their use, or to bind them to life-shaped items. The process is always lethal for the subject, unfortunately.

**BC 500.** By this time, Damocles is nearly isolated. The space pirates are now forced to search for plunder in their own homeland, causing the tensions between Pyrond and the other nations to grow. Pyrond's leadership has been taken by the Pirate Kings since the

time of the Pachydermion War, and Keepers have nearly disappeared.

The Dark Pyrondians are defeated, and most leave with their dark knowledge, reaching the region of Mystara that would become the Northern Reaches. The imperfect mutation processes and the fiendish blood have by now given a long life span to the race, at the cost of a much reduced fertility. A few Dark Pyrondians remain on Damocles, working secretly to bring the downfall of Pyrond.

## The Civil War

**BC 400.** A civil war, engineered by the Dark Pyrondians, destroys Pyrond, marking the end of the Pyrondians. Barbaric kingdoms ruled by the descendants of the generals of the Pachydermion Wars continue the fight for control of Damocles. The Pyrithian civilisation falls completely within a few generations.

The last three Keepers gather a small flotilla of like minded individuals and leave Damocles, trying to reach the Ancestors' Land. The refugees make landfall in the northern Davanian jungles and start establishing a new colony.

**BC 200.** The Dark Pyrondians on Damocles are by now reduced to a handful of individuals, mostly powerful life-shapers, whose unnaturally long life span brings to them great knowledge, but induces mental imbalance.



## The Kingdom of Emerond

**B150.** The Mystaran colony founded around BC 400 is now large enough to be considered a kingdom. The political structure is formalised by the first three Protectors, who name the first King of Emerond. A policy of isolation is established and stubbornly kept for the next millennium.

The Protectors are the direct descendants of the Keepers, and have changed their names to signify their modified goals, as they are now going to protect not only their nation's culture, but also the nation itself and its land.

**BC 50.** On Damocles, the Pyrithians are reduced to a cultural level varying from Stone Age to Bronze Age.

**AC 1.** Each of the nine surviving dark pyrondian on Damocles has established himself as a powerful, nearly immortal "sorcerer". Some retreat to hidden refuges, creating servant races or attempting experiments with their techniques to increase their personal powers.

Pheazar, one of the dark pyrondians, a master of life-binding rituals, manages to contact his Mystaran relatives. They have by now established a mostly subterranean culture and a kingdom.

The Dark Pyrondians are in contact with the Modrigswerg, a clan of exiled Dwarves in the Northern Reaches, and have had some encounters with Schattentalfen or Shadow Elves. Noticing the similarity of their likenesses to legends of the Modrigswerg about a mysterious elven people, the "Svartalfen", they start naming themselves

"Dark Elves", in order to establish a false history of their race on Mystara and achieve some degree of respect among the Modrigswerg, whom they see as suitable allies or minions for their plans.

## The Dark Elves

**AC 100.** By this time, the Dark Elves have assumed a complete "elven" façade when dealing with native humans and humanoids. Pheazar, now known as Feasar in the Elven tongue, guides them from his refuge on Damocles.

A number of cultists of an Entropic Immortal reach the Dark Elven court -- possibly Alpathian renegades or an offshoot of the Nithian followers of Thanatos. The Dark Elven King Heltharm, or Eldalomë in Elven, allies with them, in an effort to dominate the world by summoning a number of fiends, binding them to powerful constructs created by the Modrigswerg, and using them to conquer the neighbouring nations.

In future Antalian legends, these cultists will often be confused with the followers of the "Father of Demons" from the Modrigswerg legends.

**AC 140.** Pheazar comes to Mystara, thanks to the sacrifice of a captured creature endowed with natural teleport ability, perhaps a fiend of some kind.

**AC 150.** An Antalian army, alerted by omens from the Norse Gods, storms the fortress of the Dark Elves, destroying it before the summoning ritual is completed.

The attack is successful only because of the help of the Modrigswerg, Brokk and Sindri, who take advantage of the turmoil to sacrifice Pheazar, Heltharm, and seven other Dark Elven sages to create their masterwork, the Ring of the Nine Svartalfen.

On Damocles, a clone of Pheazar becomes active as the safeguards set by the dark pyrondian sorcerer are triggered by his death.

**AC 200.** On Damocles, the Pyrithians have recovered to a Medieval cultural level, though many regions are still in a Dark Age.

**AC 300.** By this time, Pheazar is back in control of his powers and resources, and has discovered what has happened on Mystara more than a century ago. Enraged, he strives to find a way of avenging his previous defeat. Luckily, the Dark Elves are now so few that they cannot be of any use, so Pheazar must search for more suitable allies.

**AC 400.** Pheazar discovers that part of his spirit is bound to the Ring of the Nine Svartalfen, as the "Feasar" command word is used by a power-hungry frost giant wotan. During the next century, he is slowly driven mad by the telepathic link with the bound spirit.

Since he is unable to travel to Mystara, Pheazar cannot destroy the Ring. He focuses his efforts on gaining more power, by gathering knowledge and life energy from any source.

**AC 500.** Currently, on Damocles the Pyrithians are the dominating race, making up more than 70% of the sentient population. The few remaining

pachydermions (an insular, semi-nomadic culture devoted to religion and clerical matters) and pyrondians (now deprived of their cultural heritage and reduced to a race of druidic woodland beings) are tolerated by the dominant cultures.

The fiendish servant races of the Dark Pyrondians, more than a dozen in total, make up the remaining 20% of the population.

Pheazar has by now a complete knowledge of magic, though he is unable to use it himself (except for powers deriving from his demonic ancestry), a heritage of the Federation Aliens blood and the mutations induced in order to control life-shaping powers.

Since the Ring of the Nine Svartalfen is lost, and cannot be used, the telepathic link is somewhat disrupted by the dormant state of the Feasar spirit Pheazar is able to recover some degree of sanity and accomplishes great feats of life-shaping.

## AGE OF WIZARD-LORDS

**AC 600.** Pheazar creates a life-shaped head graft, which can confer to a Pyrithian the ability to learn wizardly magic. Up to three grafts can be used by a single Pyrithian, each allowing three levels of spellcasting power.

Pheazar begins a campaign of conquest, sending his wizards to subjugate Pyrithian nations. The pachydermions and the Pyrondians are the strongest opposition to Pheazar plans, as they are to everything done by the Dark Pyrondians. Nations fallen under the sway of Pheazar outlaw and prosecute

the two races, and welcome the servant races of Pheazar in their armies.

**AC 700.** Wizard servants of Pheazar storm the fortress of the Dread Prince, one of the other Dark Pyrondians, capture and sacrifice him in order to create a powerful device that will allow Pheazar to acquire wizardly powers.

**AC 800.** Pheazar is nearly ready to come back to Mystara, when five of the remaining Dark Pyrondians ally against him, drawing with them two powerful Pyrithian nations. However, Pheazar's new magical power grows fast and proves decisive.

The conflict lasts nearly half a century, leaving three more dark pyrondians dead, and Pheazar severely weakened.

**AC 900.** Pheazar has recovered his power. This time, no one is going to attack him while he teleports to Mystara, since he has allied with two of his former enemies, revealing to them the secret of magic-endowing grafts.

Meanwhile, on Mystara, the Ostman jarl Storverk recovers the Ring of the Nine Svartalfen, and uses it in an attempt to wrest power from the House of Cnute. As a consequence, Pheazar suffers of violent crisis of madness, and causes much destruction in his own lands.

**AC 920.** Storverk is killed by Hord Dark-Eye's father, and his treasure is confiscated by the King of Ostland.

Pheazar begins recovering from his madness. He is even more enraged, and starts a new plot. He starts collecting life energy, in order

to cast an extremely powerful enchantment that will power him so that he will dominate the Ring, and its user. To do so, he is required to reach a power level equal to that of demigods.

## The Last War

**AC 960.** The four surviving Dark Pyrondians meet with the Grand Druid of the Pyrondians, the High Trunk of the pachydermions, the Emperor of Pyrithis, and the High King of Damocles --- all the major pyrithian nations. They ally to counter the mad actions of Pheazar, who is going to sacrifice the entire population of Damocles in his bid for power.

A great war begins between the Damoclean Alliance and Pheazar.

## The Doom of Damocles

**AC 1000.** Alliance intelligence reports that Pheazar is ready to cast his spell. The clergy is convinced that he will ultimately fail, not having gathered enough life energy. However, his power is sufficient to destroy the whole of Damocles. They propose that all resources are pooled to create a sphere of protection that will preserve the planet and limit the power of Pheazar's enchantment. The Dark Pyrondians do not trust the priests and instead decide to attack Pheazar and stop him, but utterly fail.

As Pheazar loses control of his own spell, the magical energies that held Damocles together are released, and the planet explodes, resulting in complete destruction.

On Mystara, the Ring of the Nine Svartalfen is affected by the destruction of the Damoclitean part of Pheazar, so that the Pheazar spirit bound to the ring is now completely insane, and quite dangerous, if invoked. Luckily, the Ring is hidden in King Hord's treasury, so there is no immediate effect on Mystara.

**AC 1005.** A fragment of Damocles crashes on Mystara, destroying the Principalities of Caurenze and Silverstone in Glantri, and creating the Great Crater. The two largest fragments become the innermost and outermost planets of the Mystara solar system by AC 1010.

## DENIZENS OF DAMOCLES

### Pyrithians

The Pyrithians are the base race, replacing humans in this setting, and share all the main characteristics of that race except for the fact that they cannot use wizardly magic. The Pyrithians are descendants of the grens, the aliens from the galactic Federation that arrived in the Mystara solar system on the FSS Beagle. The grens are a race of human-like beings, whose skin takes a green tint under the rays of the Mystaran sun. The inability to use wizardly magic was already a characteristic of the grens. Due to the life-shaping technology of Pheazar, in modern times Pyrithians can become wizards by adopting specialized grafts that bypass the natural limitations of the Pyrithean races in perceiving magic, or by channeling magic from external sources (e.g., via Warlock pacts in later D&D editions).

Dark Pyrithians are fiend-blooded Pyrithians. They use rules for tieflings from Planescape's "Planewalker's Handbook" in AD&D 2e, or the tiefling race in other rules sets. In BECMI D&D, Dark Pyrithians follow the rules for human characters, but have a 20% XP penalty and the following additional abilities: infravision 60', base AC 8, +1 bonus to unarmed damage, a randomly chosen Saving Throw bonus, and a randomly chosen special ability. NPCs react with unease to the Dark Pyrithians, causing a -1 reaction penalty.

*Table 1: Dark Pyrithian Saving Throw Bonuses*

Roll (1d6)	Ability
1	Charm Person 1/day
2	Darkness 1/day
3	Cause Fear 1/day
4	Detect Magic 1/day
5	ESP 1/day
6	Mirror Image 1/day

*Table 2: Dark Pyrithian Special Abilities*

Roll (1d8)	ST Bonus
1	+2 vs Fire
2	+2 vs Cold
3	+2 vs Acid
4	+2 vs Electricity
5	+2 vs Poison
6	+1 vs Fire and Cold
7	+1 vs Acid and Poison
8	+2 vs Mind-affecting spells

### Pyronidians

Pyronidians are a humanoid race descended from the Pyrithians. They have engineered themselves through life-shaping techniques, adding plant-like physiological traits. They are solid green in colour, and have pointed

ears. They reproduce by planting a cutting into a "mother".

The Pyrondians' unusual physiology grants (in the AD&D 2e rules) them a +1 bonus to Constitution and a -1 penalty to Dexterity, as they are very resilient but somewhat sluggish. They have the ability to Speak with Plants once per day, a -2 penalty to ST vs Fire attacks and a +2 bonus to ST vs Cold attacks. Pyrondians have a minimum starting Constitution score of 6. They can access all character classes (although they suffer the same limitations as the Pyrithians with respect to wizardly magic), progressing to level 12 in most classes except Fighter (15), Ranger (15), and Druid (U). In newer rules sets, it is possible to use the killoren<sup>1</sup> or wilden<sup>2</sup> races as a substitute for the Pyrondians.

In BECMI D&D, pyrondians follow the rules for human characters, but have a 20% XP penalty, as well as the same abilities as in AD&D 2e.

Dark Pyrondians are to Pyrondians what Dark Pyrithians are to Pyrithians. Dark Pyrondians are limited in number, so they are unavailable as PCs -- all nine Dark Pyrondians are NPCs.

## Pachydermions

In this setting, pachydermions are one of the "native" races of Damocles. This means they either arrived on Damocles before the grens,

<sup>1</sup> See *Races of the Wild* for this D&D 3e race.

<sup>2</sup> See *Player's Handbook 3* for this D&D 4e race.

or that they evolved on the planet. The Mystaran and Pateran pachydermions are very old colonies. The pachydermions settled Patera and Mystara because they have atmosphere and gravity that allow pachydermions to survive without magical support. Although there were nearer planets and asteroids to Damocles, none was as easy to settle. See the pachydermion article in this issue for a complete coverage of the race for both AD&D and BECMI, as well as suggestions for other rules set.

## The Broken Ones

The Dark Pyrondians relentlessly pursue experiments in life-shaping on sentient beings. The results are sometimes viable races, but many more failed experiments happen than successful ones. These failed experiments are generally referred to as "Broken Ones". They are available as player characters, as well as appearing as monsters.

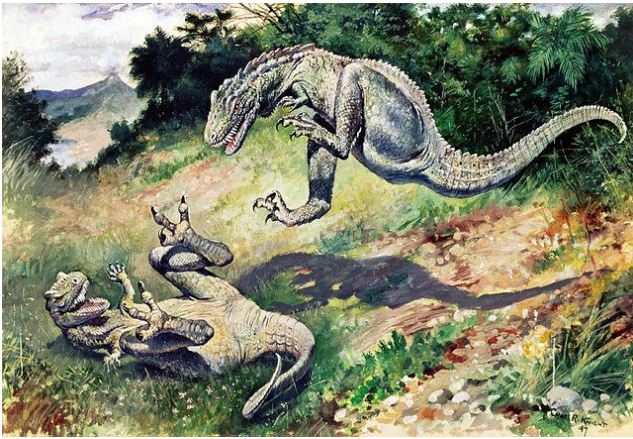
In AD&D, *Broken Ones* use the rules from "The Making of Men" by the J. W. Mangrum<sup>3</sup>. Alternately, the *mongrelmen* can be used, following the rules in the Complete Book of Humanoids or the Player's Option: Skills & Powers book. In BECMI, the beastmen rules from the Hollow World campaign setting can be used instead.

## Damoclean Bestiary

The Dark Pyrondians have created many servant races, often getting the design from their lower planar allies. While many of these

<sup>3</sup> The article appears in "The Book of Souls", edited by the Kargatane.

creations end up as broken ones, some successful designs became true races in time.



*Wildernesses of Damocles*

Some AD&D monsters that could be used for servant races are:

- **Ettercaps** were designed to hunt the Pyrondians. They live in wooded wildernesses, and train various types of giant hunting spiders.
- **Gibberlings** are a servant race engineered to serve as shock troops for the dark pyrondians. They are only found in dungeon complexes designed and constructed by them, in particular in the sprawling fortress of Ragol in the Outer Ring mountains.
- Some types of **golems** were designed, serving as guards or specialist troops. Dark pyrondians favor life-shaping, thus golems fashioned using organic materials are most likely, resulting in straw, wood and flesh golems<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See *Van Richten's Guide to the Created* for a coverage of unusual Golems.

- The winged **urd** were engineered from the same ancestors as the tasloi to serve as airborne soldiers. Cortal Ihetarm and Khaltar employ most of urd wings.
- **Mould men** resulted from early experiments in life-shaping humanoids from plants. They have spread beyond the territories of the Dark Pyrondians, who have no use for them.
- **Tasloi** are one of the most successful creations of the dark pyrondians, a race of jungle guerrilla fighters. They are based on an extinct race native to Damocles. The tasloi are found in many jungle areas near the center of Damocles.
- **Undead** were not created by the Dark Pyrondians, who for the most part have no ability to wield magic, but dead bodies animated by life-shaped grafts with characteristics identical to those of undead zombies do exist.
- **Yuan-ti, Histachii** were created from Pyrithian prisoners, splicing them with reptilian genes. They were originally minions of the Dread Prince, but after his demise they are found everywhere on Damocles as mercenaries, assassins, and hired spies.

Some outer planar monsters can be found on Damocles as the result of the dark pyrondians' summonings and deals with the lower planes. Although dark pyrondians do not normally use magic, they often ally with evil outer planar entities who can provide such powers. Baatezu only appear if Baator is used in the campaign cosmology. All lesser fiends are considered mortal in BECMI,

although they do not age. Thus, they have no power points. Greater fiends are not normally found, since these are Immortal-level beings on par with the titans, or even the true Immortals. Typically, a dark pyrondian has a single, relatively powerful fiend as an "advisor", and may also have a demonic "familiar", such as an **imp**, **quasit** or **spinagon**. Wizard minions of the Dark Pyrondians, who start appearing after Pheazar develops magic-enabling grafts, also gain such familiars. Advisors are most often **nabassu**, **maurezhi**, **erinyes** and other fiends that typically travel to the prime material to corrupt or devour souls. These advisors then summon reinforcements, including the following monsters:

- **Mephits** are messengers from the lower planes. Their elemental nature makes them less conspicuous than lesser fiends.
- **Lesser baatezu**, such as the **sbishai** or the **barbazu** appear as spies, bodyguards and other specialised roles.
- The **Least tanar'ri**, the **manes** and **rutterkin** are expendable infantry in the Dark Pyrondian armies, summoned by more powerful tanar'ri.
- **Alu-fiends** and **cambions** are half-tanar'ric Pyrithians. They are bred late in Damocles' history in an attempt to increase the magic potential of the Pyrithians.
- **Bar-igura**: rare, scouts and spies.

Other creatures from the Outer Planes or Space can appear as mercenaries or envoys, but even the Dark Pyrondians are relatively

cautious when dealing with summoned fiends, so most of these fiends belong to the lowest tiers.

## The Dark Pyrondians

The Dark Pyrondians are fiend-blooded Pyrondians from the Pirate Age. There are two types of Dark Pyrondians. The more common kind is also known as "Dark Elves", and existed in the Mystaran Northern Reaches centuries ago, but their civilisation was destroyed by Antalian tribes.

The remaining Dark Pyrondians, who exist on Damocles, are a handful of powerful, nearly immortal life-shapers. The most important and powerful is Pheazar, also known as the Dark Elf Feasar on Mystara. There are nine Dark Pyrondian "sorcerers" on Damocles.

In AD&D (and possibly in newer rules set), these Dark Pyrondians have abilities equivalent to those of high level Psionicists. These are brought by their use of life-shaping to enhance their mental powers. Also, some Dark Pyrondians have discovered a way to enable their kind and other Federation alien-descended races to perceive and manipulate magic.

In BECMI, Dark Pyrondians are handled as monsters. They have 11-20 HD, AC 5, and save as Clerics of the same level as their HD. They attack with weapons, and have equivalent skill to a Master in the short sword, dagger, staff, or club. They also are able to cast a number of spells (replacing their psionic powers from AD&D). These spells work only on themselves, or, if they

are attack spells, on a single target. They can cast spells of level lower than 4 at will, but they can only maintain 2 effects active at any time (regardless of the duration of the spell). They can cast spells of level 4 or higher only once per day. Their spells are grouped in four categories. All Dark Pyrondians have full access to the Defenses category, as well as to one other (called their primary discipline). They also access spells of level lower than 4 from a third category. Depending on their primary discipline, they also get a special bonus.

**Defenses:** Mindmask, Confuse Alignment, Mind Barrier.

**Telepathy:** Charm Person, Cause Fear, Sleep, ESP\*, Hold Person; Charm Monster, Confusion, Hold Monster, Feeblemind, Power Word Stun. Special: Iron Will (+2 ST vs mind affecting magic).

**Psychometabolism:** Resist Cold, Resist Fire, Cure Light Wounds, Water Breathing, Protection from Poison, Protection from Lightning, Polymorph Self, Clone, Heal, Shapechange. Special: Biofeedback (-1 damage from all physical attacks).

**Psychokinesis:** Floating Disk, Levitate, Heat Metal, Protection from Normal Missiles, Striking, Telekinesis, Dimension Door, Teleport, Disintegrate, Sword. Special: Deflection (-1 AC bonus).

### Pheazar

The most powerful of the Dark Pyrondians, *Pheazar* (AD&D: male dark pyrondian Psionicist 20, CE; BECMI: 20 HD, Telepathy/Psychokinesis, C) holds a vast

dominion in the north-east of the planet. Pheazar visited Mystara at great risk due to his psionic signature, which would have attracted the attention of the mujina<sup>5</sup>. He is reputed to possess powerful magic items which allow him to masquerade as a dark-skinned elf.



*Pheazar's Domain*

Pheazar is unique in that he also has powers as a 20th level Wizard (Magic User in BECMI). He develops these powers at the beginning of the Age of the Wizard-Lords. Initially, he develops life-shaped grafts that confer the ability to cast spells of level 1-3. Then, through various rituals, which include harnessing the life-force of the Dread Prince (another Dark pyrondian) he develops full wizardly powers, up to level 20, which he reaches during the Last War.

<sup>5</sup> According to the *AD&D 2e Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, a Mujina's true form can be detected by psionics. Thus, the Mujina hunt down psionicists to avoid discovery.



### The Dread Prince

The *Dread Prince* (AD&D male dark pyrondian Psionicist 17, NE, BECMI: 17 HD, Psychokinesis/Telepathy) was killed by Pheazar and his wizardly minions around AC 700, in order to harness his life-force to power Pheazar's experiments with magic.

### The Lost Three

The war against Pheazar saw an alliance of five Dark Pyrondians, of whom three died in the conflict. These were:

*Gheertibz* (AD&D female dark pyrondian Psionicist 14, NE, BECMI: 14 HD, Psychometabolism/Psychokinesis),

*Maekir* (AD&D male dark pyrondian Psionicist 15, NE, BECMI: 15 HD, Telepathy/Psychometabolism),

*Scarlet Sorcerer* (AD&D male dark pyrondian Psionicist 16, CE, BECMI: 16 HD, Psychokinesis/Telepathy, C). All three were killed by Pheazar between 835 and 840 AC.

### Khaltar

*Khaltar* (AD&D female dark pyrondian Psionicist 13, NE, BECMI: 13 HD, Psychokinesis /Psychometabolism, C) was part of the first alliance against Pheazar. She survived the war, but grew to envy Pheazar's powers. She eventually allied with him, and was given two magic-enabling grafts. Therefore, she acquired spellcasting powers as a 4th level mage. Later, she turned once more against Pheazar, allying with the other four Dark Pyrondians to stop his final bid for power. She likely died in the destruction of Damocles.

### Urnham the Deep

An expert in marine lifeforms and related life-shaping, *Urnham the Deep* (AD&D male dark pyrondian Psionicist 19, NE, BECMI: 19 HD, Psychometabolism/Telepathy) participated in both wars against Pheazar. He disappeared after the war in AC 800-850, and was rumoured to live in the deep sea. He wears conchshell life-shaped armor, giving him AC 0, as well as life-shaped gill and fin grafts. Like Khaltar, he likely died in the destruction of Damocles.

### Cortal Ihetarm

The only Dark Pyrondian with an interest in space exploration, Captain *Cortal Ihetarm* (AD&D male Dark Pyrondian Psionicist 18, CE, BECMI: 18 HD, Psychometabolism /Psychokinesis, CE) is a space pirate, leader of a Pyrithian fleet. He has a haven on one of the asteroids, and did not participate in the first war against Pheazar. He is rumored to have survived the Last War and the destruction of the planet, fleeing beyond Damocles' atmosphere in his ship. He may be the only surviving Dark Pyrondian after 1000 AC.

### Ragol of the Ring

*Ragol of the Ring* (AD&D male dark pyrondian Psionicist 12, NE, BECMI: 12 HD, Telepathy/Psychometabolism, C) gained the moniker from his lair in the Outer Ring, a foreboding region where the extreme cold of outer space freezes most lifeforms. As a life-shaper, Ragol specialized in creating devices and servants adapted to this environment. He is covered in a full-body graft that confers cold-resistance. Ragol did not oppose Pheazar until the last war, and actually allied

with him after AC 850. He has acquired spellcasting powers as a 5th level mage from Pheazar's grafts. Ragol likely died in 1000 AC during the destruction of Damocles, although his specialized grafts and powers may have kept him alive, perhaps in hibernation, on some asteroid.

## LIFE-SHAPING

Life-shaping was developed within the Dark Sun setting. It is fully described in "Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs" and "Psionics Artifacts of Athas". Basically, life-shaping is a sort of genetic engineering, allowing the operator (*nature master*) to create new animals or plants that can duplicate the effects of technological or magical items.

There are three classes of life-shaped items: creatures (plants or animals); tissues (raw living matter); and items produced by life-shaped creatures (silk, scales, etc). Life-shaped items and creatures can serve different purposes: tools (weapons, clothes); producers of other life-shaped items; replacing domestic animals; and, finally, grafts. A graft is a life-shaped items that binds to the flesh of an host, allowing him to access its powers. Note that the pyrondians are themselves life-shaped creatures.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is based on a set of discussions which started from Marco Dalmonte's work on the Kingdom of Emerond and Andrew Theisen's the Patera Files. James Ruhland (aka Porphy/Evil Genius) helped in brainstorming the use of Dark Sun's "life-shaping" as Emerond's "biotech". Jacob Skytte pointed out the inconsistencies between this timeline and Northern Reaches canon history. Finally, Giulio Caroletti revised the whole timeline, and pointed out many confusing or inconsistent points. Remaining inconsistencies are, of course, the author's fault.

The languages of Damocles have been designed starting, as usual for Mystara, from real world counterparts. In particular, the pachydermion language is inspired by *Khmer*, the tasloi language is inspired by the *Iatmul* language from Papua New Guinea, and the language of Sua Halanc is inspired by *Burushaski*, a language isolate from Pakistan. Note that such derivations are ridden with heavy handed simplifications, and names are not meant to be correct in the source language - merely to present a relatively coherent set of patterns. However, the source languages can be used to derive more place and personal names, to create more detailed maps of Damocles. These choices are in part related to pre-existing affinities -- Kompor-Thap, the pachydermion homeland on Myoshima, is supposed to mirror real-world Cambodia. In the case of Sua Halanc, an isolate has been chosen to stress the alien nature of the Pyrithians with respect to

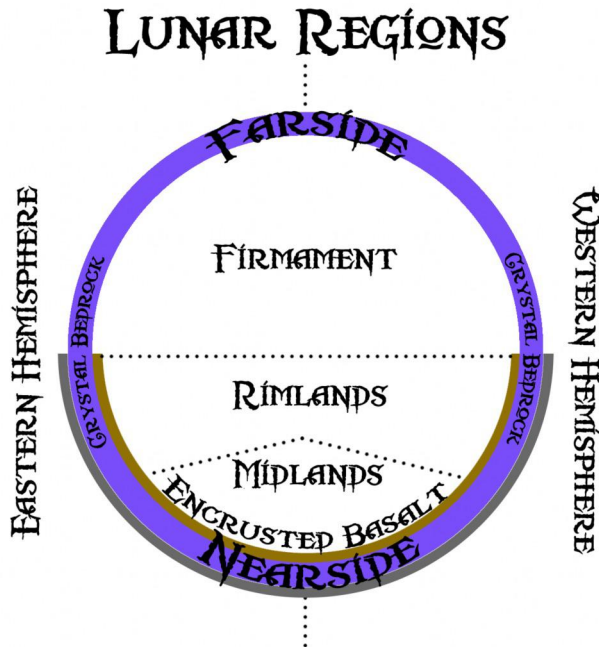
[\*\(Continued on page 189\)\*](#)

# HOLLOW MOON

## A Quick Reference Guide

The following quick reference guide lists important terms and concepts relating to the Hollow Moon setting.

### LUNAR GEOLOGY



### LUNAR CRUST/Crystal Bedrock

The lunar shell is composed of a bluish, magical, nearly indestructible crystal. The crystal is cold to the touch and prolonged exposure will lead to hypothermia and death, preventing most life from living directly upon it.

### Nearside

The hemisphere of the moon that faces toward Mystara, the Nearside of Matera (both inner and outer) is covered in a layer of encrusted basalt, out of which volcanoes, mountains, hills, and plains are formed. It is only on the Nearside of Matera that life can be supported<sup>1</sup>.

### Rimlands

The outer region of the encrusted basalt “bowl” that forms Nearside’s interior, the Rimlands abutt the crystal firmament along Matera’s equator.

### Midlands

The center region of the encrusted basalt “bowl” that forms Nearside’s interior.

### Crystalbarrens

The portions of the Nearside that remain exposed crystal bedrock are called the Crystalbarrens. Most of the oceans in the Hollow Moon cover such areas, but some remain completely exposed, including Mare Procellarum (the largest such area).

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information about Hollow Moon geography see [“Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon - Lunar Geography”](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius

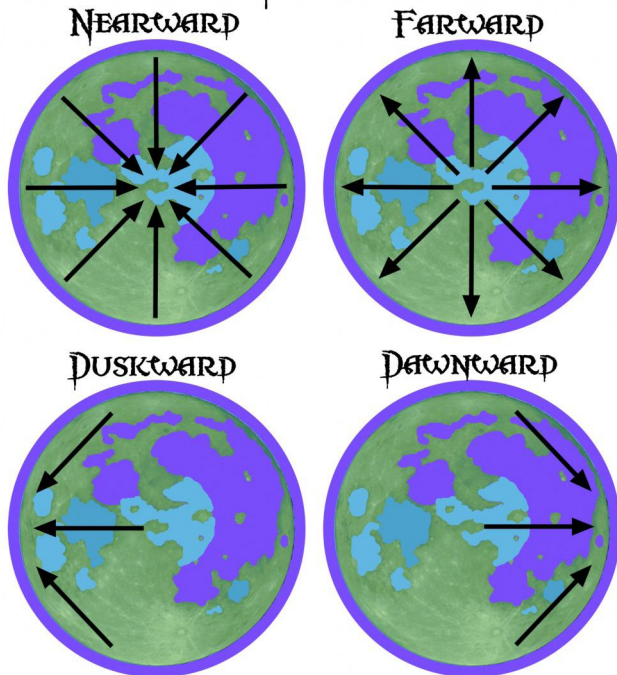
## Farside/Crystal Firmament

The hemisphere of the moon that faces away from Mystara, is called the Farside, or the Crystal Firmament. Fully 80% of the Firmament (both inner and outer world) is exposed crystal bedrock, with very few encrusted basalt islands to support life.

### Crystal Fractures

Fractures in the Crystal Firmament caused by a prehistoric comet crashed onto the outer surface of Matera, which are used by Materans as constellations to mark the passage of time throughout the lunar day.

## LUNAR DIRECTIONS



## LUNAR DIRECTIONS

### Cardinal Directions

The terms east and west are reversed inside of the Hollow Moon, since like in the Hollow World, the inhabitants are on the inside of the moon's shell. Likewise the directions north and south hold little meaning for Materans, who are more concerned about how close or how far one is from the center of the Nearside.

### Nearward/Spinward

This describes the direction one would take to travel toward the center of the midlands. Also sometimes referred to as **Spinward** - as the Great Spindrift Sea lies at the center of this region.

### Farward

This is the direction one would travel when heading toward the rimlands and the Firmament.

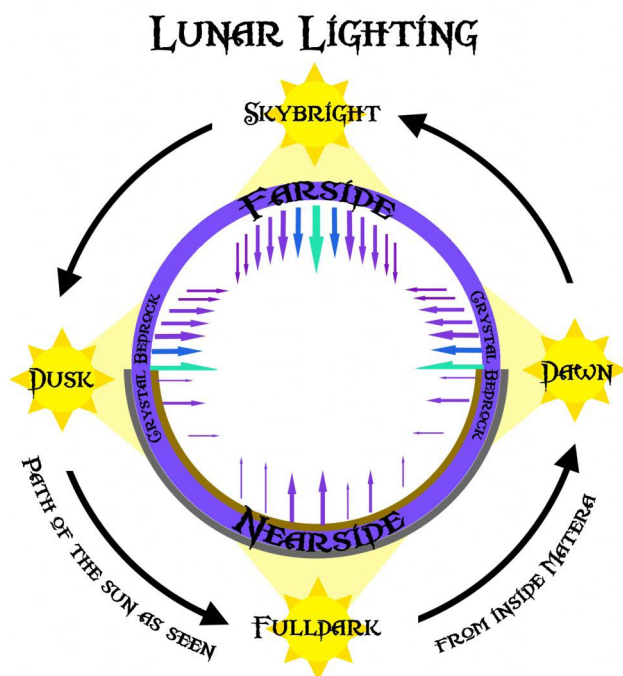
### Dawnward

This is the direction toward the location of the rising sun in the Materan west, over Mare Procellarum. Travelling farward to the west is the same as travelling dawnward.

### Duskward

This is the direction toward the location of the setting sun in the Materan east, over the rimlands past Mare Fecunditatis. Travelling farward to the east is the same as travelling duskward.

## LUNAR LIGHT



### Sunlight

Sunlight entering the Hollow Moon is filtered by the crystal firmament and is not the white light common on the surface of Mystara, but rather a muted bluish green color at its brightest. During skybright, sunlight shines down upon the nearside from the crystal firmament, while during fulldark, it passes up through the crystalbarrens and seas of the Nearside.

### Volcanoes

The Hollow Moon's many volcanoes provide localized lighting, as each cycles through constant and predictable stages of activity. While the crystal firmament filters out most light in the red-orange-yellow spectrum, volcanoes produce this color of light internally, and so are one of the few

locations where such colors can be seen naturally.

### Bioluminescence

Much of the flora and fauna of the Hollow Moon have been altered by Ordana to produce bioluminescent light. This is especially true in sea life, but land based flora and fauna may also sport luminescent patterns across their bodies which may aid them in finding prey and mates.

### Artificial Light

Artificial light may be produced to varying degrees in many of the cities in the Hollow Moon, often used to light streets or to aid with reading. Cooking fires are also common, but generally kept small and hidden when necessary, as artificial light can draw unwanted attention from predators adapted to the dark.

## LUNAR TIME

### Lunar Day

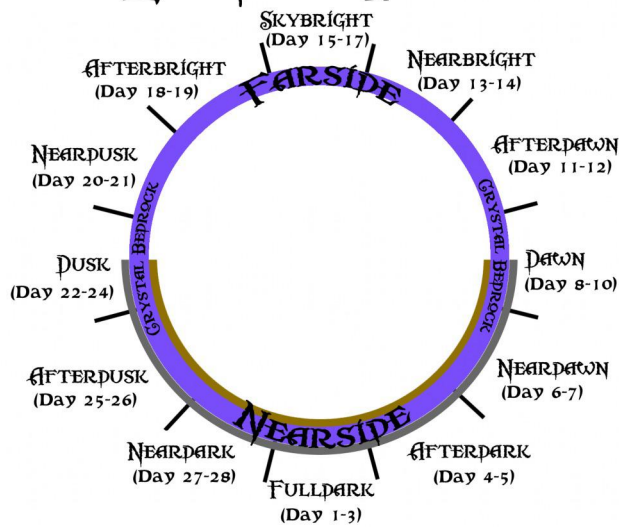
A lunar day, from one fulldark to the next, lasts 28 Mystaran days. During the first 14 days light increases, finally reaching its height at skybright. During the last 14 days, light begins to diminish until the sun sets at dusk and eventually returns to fulldark.

### Skybright

Skybright is midway between dawn and dusk and is the brightest period of the lunar day producing a bluish green lighting equivalent in brightness to twilight on Mystara. This is the time of a New Moon.



## LUNAR TIME



### Fulldark

Fulldark is midway between dusk and the new dawn and is the darkest period of the lunar day, though not completely lightless. Light shines upward through the crystalbarrens and most of the Hollow Moon's seas. This is the time of a Full Moon.

### LUNAR Year

The Hollow Moon year is 18 months long, each of which corresponds to a single lunar day, and is governed by Patera's orbit around Mystara and its proximity with Matera. Patera's orbital period controls the tidal cycle inside of Matera, which shifts from north to south during lunar night and south to north during lunar day.

## LUNAR SEASONS

### Storm Time

Temperatures fluctuate throughout the lunar day creating weather patterns in conjunction with the tides. These storms range from mild to severe, but occur on a predictable schedule. Storms that form during dark periods tend to bring snow, while those that form during light periods bring rain, sleet, or ice.

### Fire Time

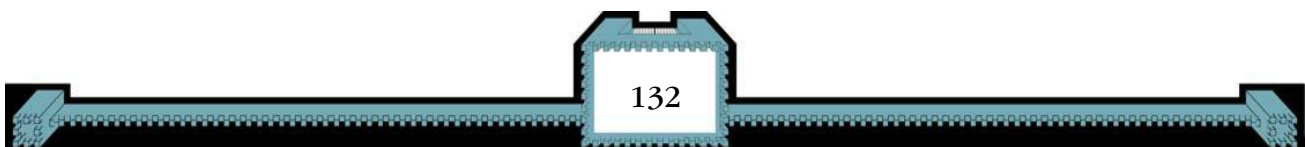
Several times per year, Patera passes close enough to Matera to induce periods of intense geothermal activity causing volcanic eruptions throughout the Hollow Moon which are referred to as Fire Times by Materans. Individual volcanoes erupt according to a predictable schedule ranging anywhere between 1 and 100 Materan years.

### Circle tides

These are three-and-a-half day tidal phenomena in which all tides, winds, and cloud formations circulate around Nearside in the same spiralling pattern. During the month of Itiukkin the tides spin counterclockwise, and during Itinissatu they spin clockwise.

### Doom Times

One event in the Hollow Moon can never be predicted, and scares most Materans to death - a lunar eclipse. On those rare occasions when Mystara fully eclipses the moon, volcanic activity (and the utter destruction caused by it) reaches its zenith.





# Nations of the Midlands

by John Calvin

## FOREWORD

Eerie and alluring, the dark interior world of Matora that Sharon Dornhoff, Geoff Gander, and others, envisioned almost 15 years ago continues to fuel my imagination even to this day. In this issue of *Threshold* we will explore the Hollow Moon's Midlands region, a heavily forested area south of the Spindriff Sea, and delve into the nations and cultures that thrive therein.

As a special note, I would also like to bring to your attention, that while Sharon Dornhoff (especially), Geoff Gander, and others, have written extensive materials on the Hollow Moon, we are now treading into areas that are considerably less detailed. Although the initial seed for the nations and cultures detailed below was pulled from Sharon's original work, you will find that I have largely

injected my own thoughts, preferences, and ideas in fleshing them out ... and we are still only scratching the surface.

I would like to encourage anyone reading these articles, who may be interested or inspired by their material, to contribute to the continued development of the Hollow Moon setting by participating in discussions on The Piazza forums. I hope to see you there!

## REFERENCES

Sharon Dornhoff's [Hollow Moon series](#)

GAZ8: *The Five Shires*

*Champions of Mystara* box set

## LUNAR PROPERTIES (GETTING RE- ACQUAINTED)

The Hollow Moon is a vast and strange setting, and many of its properties are quite alien when compared to a world like Mystara. This section will help readers become acquainted with all of the bizarre characteristics of the moon that inhabitants of the interior of Matera take for granted. In addition to the material presented here, the readers may also wish to revisit the “*Once in a Blue Moon*” articles in Threshold Magazine issues [#2](#), [#4](#), [#9](#), [#10](#) and [#13](#), all of which are available at the Vaults of Pandius website.

Matera’s interior is a dark and mysterious world and the links back to Mystaran cultures are undeniable, however cultures living inside of Matera are very different from their ancestors. When first envisioning the Hollow Moon, one of Sharon Dornhoff’s original intentions was to create a setting that matched the classic noir environment she was building, in which wit, deception, and subtlety could triumph over more brute force methods of play. One way to ensure this, and to distinguish the Hollow Moon from other game settings, was to alter the way that magic works.

### LUNAR MAGIC

Magic functions differently inside of the Hollow Moon for two main reasons; the crystal firmament which comprises Matera’s shell, and the Spell of Remembrance which was placed upon the Hollow Moon after the catastrophe of the Sauro-lunarian Conflict.

#### Crystal Firmament

The blue crystalline shell of the Hollow Moon is unlike any other material found in the Mystaran solar system, though certain immortals speculate that it may have a connection with Mystara’s own World Shield ore. Unlike Mystara’s World Shield, the crystal firmament has long since cooled and hardened. Light passes through it, but little else. Heat is siphoned away from anything touching its surface, and its arcane nature prevents any magical travel, either through the Prime Material, or by other planar means, from piercing its surface.

#### Spell of Remembrance

Early in Matera’s history, back when the Hollow Moon contained only a handful of cultures from the Carnifex Era, the antics of Demogorgon, a crazed Entropic immortal, nearly destroyed everything that the other immortals had built in the dark world. A pteryx<sup>1</sup> in her mortal life, Demogorgon and her people had been plagued by the constant brutality of the carnifex nations. After attaining immortality, she sought her revenge. Goaded on by her patron Thanatos, Demogorgon spurred her people into a genocidal frenzy that nearly resulted in the extermination of the ur-carnifex tribes of Matera’s Jura Peninsula.

While the immortals did want a dark world sanctuary for their favorite nocturnal cultures, they did not want to impose the

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<sup>1</sup> The pteryx were intelligent pterosaur contemporaries of the carnifex in the ancient past of Mystara, and now serve as one of the primary antagonists in the Hollow Moon. For more information of the pteryx see [Threshold Issue #2](#) and “[Hollow Moon Cultures: Pteryx of the Apennines](#)” by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.



strictures of the Hollow World's Spell of Preservation on Matera. As a compromise, they developed the Spell of Remembrance<sup>2</sup>, which allows societies to evolve and grow, but ensures that they will never forget their cultural identity.

In general there are two types of magic that do not work within the Hollow Moon; spells that tap into other planes or dimensions, and spells that affect mental capacity and memory. The former are blocked by Matera's crystal bedrock, and the latter are restricted by the immortal magic of the Spell of Remembrance.

#### Non-functioning Magic<sup>3</sup>

- Spells of Memory
- Spells of Holding
- Spells of Spiritual Inquiry
- Spells of Extraplanar Summoning
- Spells of Instantaneous Travel
- Spells of Command at a Distance

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Spell of Remembrance (and the Sauro-lunarian conflict), see ["Background on Hollow Moon Magic"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius, and ["Once Upon a Blue Moon"](#) in Threshold Issue #2.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description of non-functioning magic, see ["Spellcraft and Moonfire: Useless Spells"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

#### Altered Magic<sup>4</sup>

- Spells of Earthly Summoning
- Spells of Mass Destruction
- Spells of Illumination
- Spells of Charming
- Spells of Mind Reading
- Spells of Invisibility
- Spells of the Spectrum

#### Materan Monsters and Abilities

While the properties of Matera's crystal bedrock and the Spell of Remembrance may wreak havoc with the abilities of spellcasters, they do not hinder the natural special abilities possessed by magical monsters<sup>5</sup>. Kopru for example, still maintain the ability to manipulate and control the minds of their opponents, despite the fact that a spellcaster in the Hollow Moon can't cast spells that charm or read minds.

## REGIONS OF THE MIDLANDS

The following regions and features of note can be found within the Midlands.

#### Margastan Tri-Isthmus

The Margastan Tri-isthmus rests directly in the center of three of the largest seas in the Hollow Moon: Mare Fecunditatis, Mare

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed description of altered magic, see ["Hollow Moon Magic: Altered Spells"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on magical abilities possessed by monsters see ["Monsters' Abilities and the SoR"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

Tranquillitatis, and Mare Nectaris. Storms occur frequently here, drenching the Hollow Moon's only temperate rainforest<sup>6</sup> in a constant downpour. The Tri-isthmus holds the further distinction of being one of the brighter places in Matera's interior, especially during fulldark when sunlight pushes its way up through the ocean depths.

### Altai Scarp

A vast ridge that spans all the way from Mount Piccolomini in the southern highlands downward to Mount Catharina in the northwest. The broken lands formed from the scarp are rife with canyons, ravines, and gullies creating a maze of stone and rock morphed into every size and shape imaginable.

### Mare Fecunditatis

Mare Fecunditatis<sup>7</sup> is the first eastern sea to catch the warming light of true dawn every month. Fecunditatis lies directly over the equator, and although technically the sea reaches all the way to the crystalline firmament of the Hollow Moon, Fecunditatis is so overgrown with coral that it is one of the shallower seas in Matera's interior. The silicate based life forms covering the seabed have been specially designed by the immortals to transmit light through their skeletal systems, making Fecunditatis nearly as bright as the other nearby seas during

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the Margasta Tri-isthmus and surrounding areas see ["Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon - Climate & Weather"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>7</sup> For more information about Mare Fecunditatis (sometimes also spelled Foecunditatis) and the other seas of Matera, see ["Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon - Seas & Tides"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

fulldark, and teeming with just as much, if not more, sea life. Atolls and reefs abound throughout the sea, making its traversal quite dangerous by any other than seasoned sailors, or those who have detailed navigational charts at hand.

### Mare Tranquillitatis

In comparison to Mare Fecunditatis, Mare Tranquillitatis is much deeper with a sandy sea floor. Its darker, glassy, waters are rarely broken by island or wave, and its murky depths remain a mystery to those sailing above. Many who sail its waters claim that an eerie silence belies their calm nature. Those who tarry on the sea for too long are never seen again, though whether their fate was sealed by internal madness or some dark force upon the sea, none can say.

### Mare Nectaris

Mare Nectaris is classified as one of the Hollow Moon's six seas, or bodies of water that directly cover the crystal firmament. As such, light does pass through its waters during fulldark, illuminating surrounding regions in a dim, diffuse, blue-green glow. True to its name, Mare Nectaris is a freshwater sea<sup>8</sup>; the only one<sup>9</sup> existing in the Hollow Moon.

<sup>8</sup> Although there are countless freshwater lakes, none of them reach the crystal firmament. See ["Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon - Lunar Geography"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>9</sup> Mare Frigoris and Sinus Roris are composed of fresh water, however both are permanently frozen over.

## NATIONS OF THE MIDLANDS

- Aran
- Cynidicea
- Graakhalia
- Margasta Tribes
- Maskelyne
- Shaergarde

### ARAN



*Aranite Aranea*

#### Arrival Date

BC 2000

#### On Mystara's Outer World

Circa BC 2000, the aranea of the Savage Coast begin to experience an ever increasing strain with their neighbors, even as a small group of refugees from far away Taymora seek shelter in nearby lands, bringing with them the dreaded affliction of Mythic Lycanthropy<sup>10</sup>. The increasingly paranoid

<sup>10</sup> Mythic lycanthropy was a virulent early strain of lycanthropy created by the

aranea see a silver lining in this new threat. With their magic, they mold the curse to their own purposes, creating the perfect disguises for themselves ... humanoid forms. These new shape shifting aranea call themselves Herathians, and seek to hide their entire race from prying eyes by infecting them all with the strain of Herathian Lycanthropy<sup>11</sup>.

Pockets of uninfected aranea attempt to resist the zealotry of their brethren, but with little success. It is apparent to the immortals that soon all aranea in the region will be Herathian shapeshifters, and in order to preserve the pure aranean culture, they decide to move some of the last resistance fighters and their phanaton servants to the Hollow Moon.

#### In the Hollow Moon

Their memories removed and altered during their transport from Mystara to Matera, the surviving groups of aranea began associating themselves in nine "tribes"<sup>12</sup>, each lineage being traced back to their distinct city of origin on their old world. Being few in number, all of the tribes banded together to

Taymorans. For more on Mythic lycanthropy see ["A Treatise on Lycanthropy"](#) by John Calvin at The Vaults of Pandius and the expanded article [A "Treatise on the History of Lycanthropy in the Known World"](#) in Threshold Issue #13

<sup>11</sup> Also detailed in the Treatise on Lycanthropy articles, Herathian Lycanthropy allowed araneans to take on a humanoid form. Before this araneans on Mystara only had a single shape (that of a spider).

<sup>12</sup> Aranean tribes are derived from several major spider taxa and include Argiop, Baghe, Cteniz, Hepta, Liphis, Saltic, Taran, Tetrag, and the lost tribe of Nephil.

create the Holy City of Aran on the ridge of Altai Scarp, where they dwelled for centuries while their numbers increased.

In time, the population of Aran grew, and tribes began to bicker and fight amongst themselves. Fearing the wrath of the immortals, should the aranea of Aran once again fall into civil war, the leaders of the nine tribes instigated the "Diaspora," splitting the tribes from the City of Aran across the empty territory surrounding their new home. The nine tribes set out, from the Altai Scarp to Mare Nectaris, each founding a city of their own, all except the ninth tribe of Nephil, which disappeared into the darkness, never to be seen again.

Modern Aranites are renowned throughout the Hollow Moon, both for their magical prowess, as well as their shipbuilding skills. Silken windships float from the cliffsides of Aran duskward toward Cacklogallinia and Vedal, as well as dawnward to the distant shores of Mare Humor and the Outland Forests.

### **Culture**

Tradition governs every aspect of life for the Aranite Tribes. Each of the eight remaining tribes are known for specializing in a particular craft and the role that it plays in their greater society. The tribe of Cteniz is famed for the silken structures they hang on cliffsides and steep mountainous slopes. Aranea of the Hepta tribe know few equals in the arts of hunting and trapping, while those of Taran field the best soldiers in the country. Argiop and Tetrag both are masters at windship crafting, and their vessels ply the windways of Aran across the interior of the Hollow Moon.

Regardless of their specialization, all the tribes of Aran share one thing in common, their devoted fanaticism to the arcane arts. Aranea are magical creatures by their very natures, with even the most unskilled of them able to cast simple spells. Those who show true mastery of the arts become revered teachers, and quickly rise up as leaders to their people. In fact Aran society tends to be very fractured, with many competing sects, each purporting to follow the teachings of a specific master. When irreconcilable disputes arise, Aranites turn to the Baghe tribe, mystical philosophers and the undisputed masters of magic within Aran.

Because of the vast amount of arthropoid life in the Hollow Moon, few cultures within Matera feel the same kind of visceral aversion to aranea as did those on Mystara, and because of this the aranea are widely accepted, and even valued by others. Phanatons, brought from Mystara to the Hollow World with the Aranites so long ago, are completely integrated into Aranite society. They find labor in Aran as fishermen, insect ranchers, and laborers, generally gravitating toward tasks that the aranea can not be bothered to do for themselves.

### **Fire Times**

While most Aran cities are built far from any active volcanoes in the Hollow Moon, a few rumbling peaks still make their presence known. Mount Madler in the north erupts every 7 years, spewing fire and stone over both Mare Tranquillitatis and Mare Nectaris. Mount Piccolomini and Rothmann Ridge just beyond Aran's southern borders erupt every 72 years and 3 years respectively. While Mount Piccolomini covers the land in smoke

and ash, Rothmann Ridge ejects waves of fire that cascade through its desolate domain.

Fracastorius Crater, the ominous caldera where the Nephil tribe purportedly disappeared, is avoided by most. It periodically spews forth multicolored gasses which can have unpredictable effects on those who breath the fumes. Once every 167 years, Fracastorius Crater opens up and belches forth lava and ash that can reach all the way to the Altai Scarp.

#### Adventure Ideas

- An ancient artifact has just been unearthed by Aranite scholars in ruins on the outskirts of Aran. The artifact, thought to hail from the Aranites original homeworld, is presumably tied to the Lost Tribe of Nephil which practiced dark arts and harbored the worship of Aracnhe Prime. All who come into contact with the artifact seem cursed, for it leaves a trail of death and destruction in its wake. In actuality, these tragedies are being perpetrated by a small group of Nephil who have skittered back up from the depths of the world to reclaim their lost treasure.
- Silken airships have always been attacked by dark forces over the waters of Mare Tranquillitatis, but now those attacks have expanded beyond the coasts of the tranquil sea. The Shadows of Maskelyne have not forgotten the role that aranea played in their culture's downfall before being moved to the Hollow Moon and have taken the next step in their war with the aranea. Unless the PCs can intervene and broker a deal between the shadows

and Aranites, windship travel will be disrupted across Matera.

- A rash of attacks by giant wasps, natural deadly spider-hunters, breaks out in the west. When elves are seen in their presence, the Aranites assume that the Vesperlands are preparing for war, but the truth is even more disturbing. It is not the elves attacking Aran, but elven hivebrood aberrations from Pynar. The hivebrood hope to add the Aranites' distinctive magical abilities into their hive.

## Cynidicea

### Arrival Date

AC 311

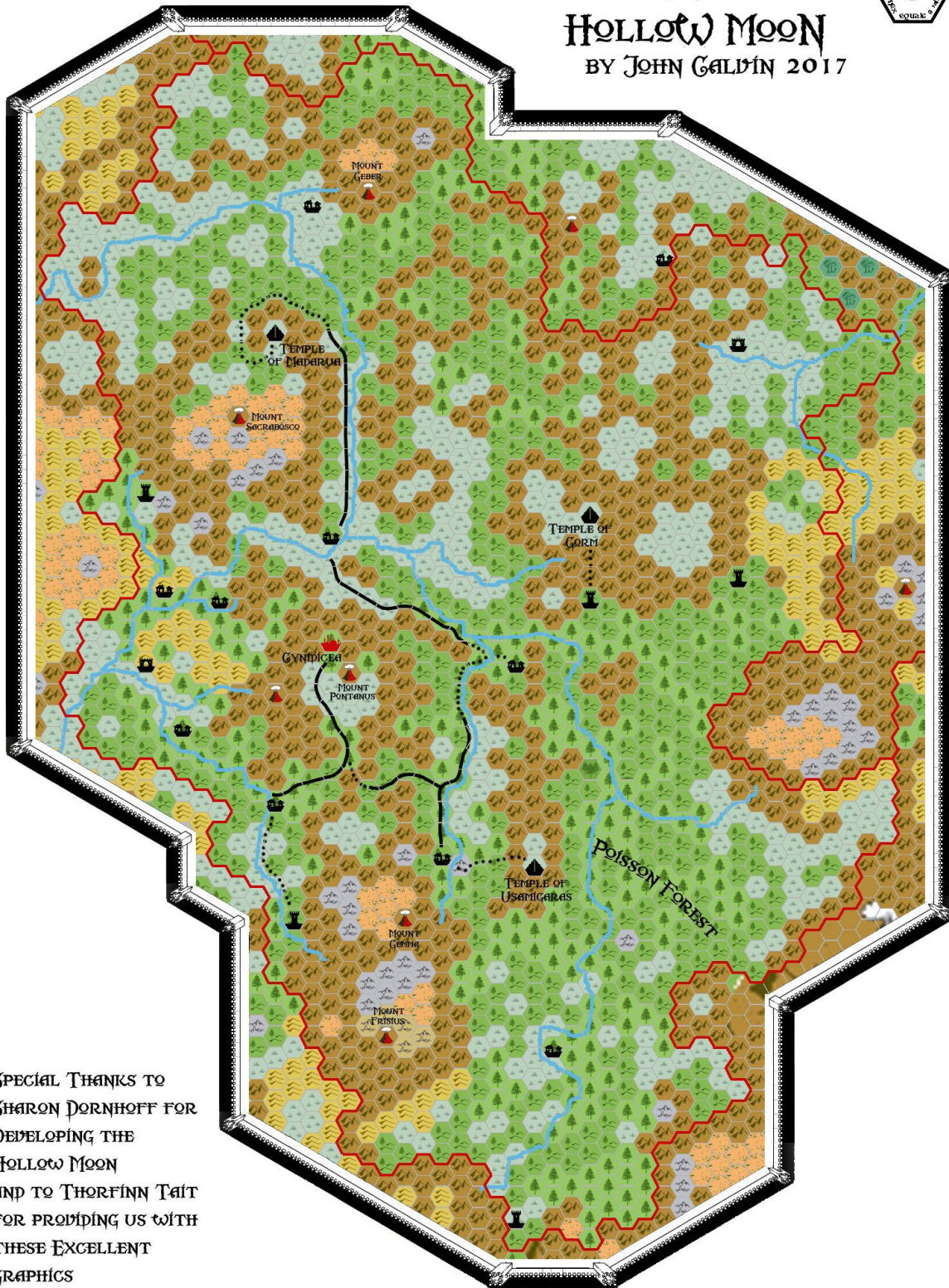
### On Mystara's Outer World

With the decline of Nithia, a small but powerful nation begins to rise near the modern day city of Parsa in the Emirate of Makistan. These are the Cynidiceans, a group of Doulakki that have seized a new home for themselves from goblinoid infested wilds. Throughout the eighth century and beyond, they defend their homeland from encroaching goblinoids, degenerate Nithians, and all manner of hostile neighbors. Unfortunately for the Cynidiceans, it is the internal insidious threats from within their own culture that will eventually be their undoing.

Plagued by Zargonite cultists, and overwhelming bands of Antalian raiders from the north, the Cynidiceans finally falter circa BC 50. Rather than leave their homeland however, they retreat inward, to hidden caverns under their once great civilization,

# GYNIDICEA HOLLOW MOON

BY JOHN GALVIN 2017



SPECIAL THANKS TO  
SHARON DORNHOFF FOR  
DEVELOPING THE  
HOLLOW MOON  
AND TO THORFINN TAIT  
FOR PROVIDING US WITH  
THESE EXCELLENT  
GRAPHICS

where they rebuild their great city of Cynidicea in the darkness. Yet even this brief respite will not last. After centuries of living underground the Cynidicean culture slowly begins to collapse. Their restricted living environment coupled with an ever growing influence of Zargon worship and drug use, cripples this once great people, and in AC 311<sup>13</sup> their patron immortals whisk them away to Matera's interior.

### In the Hollow Moon

Sheltered from their neighbors and left in relative isolation, the Cynidiceans are finally able to grow and develop free from the constant attacks suffered when they lived on Mystara. They rebuild the city of Cynidicea under the dim light of Matera's interior, and then quietly begin to expand, subjugating much of the alpine territory in the southern Midlands.

As the nation expands, each of the three original factions grows, increasing their power base outside of the capital city. Cynidicean expansion comes to a halt once they encounter their first neighbors from Adhuza. Skirmishes with the Dominarchy are frequent, however unlike back on Mystara, the Cynidiceans have enough resources to maintain the struggle. With ever increasing aggression, the Cynidiceans clash with Adhuza to the west, Shaergarde and Vedal to the north, and Aran to the east.

Not all interactions between the Cynidiceans and their neighbors are of a violent nature. Cynidiceans are known far and wide as experts in herbal poultices and balms. The remedies they supply are both potent and

<sup>13</sup> See the ["The Dungeon Master's Guide to Cynidicea"](#) on The Vaults of Pandius

effective, though sometimes too much so. Rumors persist throughout the Hollow Moon that once you taste the nectar of Cynidicea, you will crave it forevermore. Less savory and less scrupulous folk are often willing to pay premium sums for Cynidicean drugs and poisons.

### Culture

When the Cynidiceans were originally moved to the Hollow Moon, the immortals took care to include representatives from each of the major factions in their society, the Brotherhood of Gorm, the Magi of Usamigaras, and the Warrior Maidens of Madarua. As Cynidicea proper expanded, so too did the power and influence of each of these factions, each of which controls some portion of the nation.

The western borderlands from Fairfields to the Apianus Mountains are dominated by the Brotherhood of Gorm, a society of chauvinistic warriors that often clashes with the forces of Adhuza. Not only are they renowned for their prowess as warriors, but also for the giant bees<sup>14</sup> that they tend, some varieties of which have been domesticated as mounts<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Cynidiceans brought giant honey bees with them when they were transported to the Hollow Moon, but other solitary varieties (less valuable as honey makers) existed prior to their coming. See ["Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon -- Animal Life"](#) by Sharon Dornhoff on The Vaults of Pandius.  
<sup>15</sup> Bees used as mounts are of the Huge variety, from pre-existing breeds within the Hollow Moon. For more information on giant insects appropriate for use in the Hollow Moon see ["MMMC \(lowlife\)"](#) article by Robin on The Vaults of Pandius.

In eastern Cynidicea, the Warrior Maidens of Madarua are just as accomplished, and fanatical, as the Brotherhood in the west. Clashing with the hin of Shaergarde just as often as they do with the armies of Aran, the Maidens are a force to be reckoned with. Further from the borderlands the Magi of Usamigaras hold sway. They tend to be more introverted than the other factions of Cynidicea, focusing on the mystic arts and the immortal will of their patron. Many can be found wandering through the Poisson Forest<sup>16</sup> searching for arcane herbs and preaching the wisdom of Usamigaras.

Not all the people of Cynidicea subscribe to one of the three main factions. Many remain unaffiliated with the zealotry that the factions espouse, content to pursue the activities of daily life, but there are darkneses that lurk from within. Drug abuse is rampant, as well as lycanthropy<sup>17</sup>, especially in the population of unaligned people. Meanwhile, the Cult of Zargon works tirelessly to circumvent the Hollow Moon's strictures on summoning magic, researching for ways to bring their patron into their new dark world and overthrow the other three factions. To this end they have ties with several goblinoid

tribes in Stygia who also remember and worship the tentacled terror.

### Fire Times

Mount Gemma and Frisius erupt every 2 and 3 years respectively. Whenever the two erupt simultaneously, a thick, dark, poisonous cloud flows through the Poisson Forest. While dangerous, there are few large Cynidicean settlements nearby.

The peaks of Mount Pontanus erupt less frequently, every 13 years, however they cause more disruption for the Cynidiceans who often have to move or rebuild in the aftermath of the lava flows. Mount Geber and Sacrobosco in the north cause a commotion when they erupt as well. Mount Geber throws flaming stones across the countryside every 52 years. Sacrobosco fumes constantly, spitting large clouds of ash out every 7 years and unleashing pyroclastic explosions every 238 years.

### Adventure Ideas

- The Brotherhood of Gorm begins marshalling its forces, but turn their attention to the east toward the Warrior Maidens of Madarua. As tensions rise between the two factions darker forces are at work outside of the nation. A small group of korpru has dominated the Brotherhood's leadership and turned them against their own. With all of Cynidicea distracted by the threat of civil war, Adhuza sits poised for invasion. The PCs must ferret out the kopru deception before it is too late.
- Traders from the village of Garua haven't been seen in over a cycle. When the PCs go to investigate their disappearance,

<sup>16</sup> The name for the Poisson Forest was taken directly from the Lunar Atlas, where there is a region of the moon named after [Siméon Denis Poisson](#). Strangely enough there are several fungi and trees in this region that produce a strange scent faintly reminiscent of fish.

<sup>17</sup> Some of the first were-foxes in the Hollow Moon were introduced through Cynidicea by the Polymath Leo Variantia on his quest for immortality. See "[Lunar Lycanthropy and PCs](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff on The Vaults of Pandius



they find a community that has apparently succumbed to a zombie plague. In fact the villagers are not undead, but are instead being controlled by a crazed Magi of Usamigaras and her specially brewed hypnotic potions. Once the Magi is dealt with, the PCs will have to visit the Poisson Forest, and retrieve an assortment of rare herbs in order to cure the villagers.

- Cynidicea's devoted have been receiving dreams from Gorm, Madarua, and Usamigaras, all pointing them to explore the ruins beneath the most ancient city in Cynidicea. What they find is a portal to another world<sup>18</sup> ... perhaps the very world that their ancestors were taken from.

## Graakhalia

### Arrival Date

AC 920

### On Mystara's Outer World

Gruugrakh gnolls first arrived in the Pains of Fire circa BC 1000, after fleeing their Nithian masters. There they made an unlikely home, not upon the inhospitable surface of the Plains, but deep beneath it, in a dark and dangerous territory they called Graakh. Centuries later, newcomers discovered their home. Sheyallia elves migrating across the Serpent Peninsula also decided to take shelter in the deep caves of Graakh and claim

<sup>18</sup> This could be the very portal used by the were-fox Leo Variantia (a Modern Lycanthrope according to the lore introduced by the Treatise on Lycanthropy) when he entered the Hollow Moon. The requirements to find and activate the portal are left up to individual DMs to determine.



*Graakhalian*

it as their own. For nearly a century gnolls and elves fought, battling at the same time the fungoid terrors that infested dark caverns around them. The struggle proved too much for both people.

In order to survive the perils of their chosen home, both elves and gnolls needed to set aside their differences and work together to survive. At first the groups exchanged hostages in order to keep the peace, but with that exchange blossomed greater

understanding between the two cultures. Gradually gnollish and elven cultures came together, solidifying into a unified people, the Graakhalians.

For nearly a millennium the Graakhalians existed in peace in their deep abode, but their tranquility was interrupted by yet another group of newcomers, elves fleeing the fall of the Sylvan Realm. Welcomed at first, these new elves were distrustful of the gnolls and plotted to eliminate them. Their insurgent nature was quickly discovered and the rebels were exiled, but the damage had already been done. Tensions between the gnolls and elves continued rising.

What prompted the Immortals to move the Graakhalians to the Hollow Moon is unknown, but several factors likely played a role. The Graakhalian elves were near to achieving the long-term goal of bringing more water into the subterranean caverns. Immigrants from southern Brun began to explore the region while at the same time forces of the Master bolstered themselves preparing for a war still decades away. Any one of these factors could threaten to destabilize the delicate balance of Graakhalian culture enough to destroy it.

### **In the Hollow Moon**

The Janssen Badlands, where the Graakhalians were placed, combines aspects of both the Plain of Fire and the caverns of Graakh beneath it. While the plains themselves are barren and desolate, territory near the two lakes, Metius and Fabricius, flourishes with a plethora of dangerous fungal life. Just as it did deep in Graakh, the fungal life cycle around the lakes fluctuates according to both the lunar season and day.

For Graakhalian gnolls it has only been one or two generations since their arrival in the Hollow Moon, though for the elves memory of their old home is still fresh. Elven numbers since their arrival 80 years ago haven't grown, although the gnollish population has grown significantly. Few nations are near enough to the fledgling Graakhalians to have persistent contact with them, although bands of curious gnolls have traveled as far as Aran, Cynidicea, and even duskward to Vedal.

### **Culture**

While Graakhalian culture in the Hollow Moon is essentially the same as it is on Mystara, the very nature of their existence inside Matera has created some differences. The expansive nature of the Janssen Badlands has allowed the Graakhalians to spread out more than they ever did in their underground homeland of Graakh. Clans in the Hollow Moon consist of a core of elven elders surrounded by a cadre of gnollish warriors and artisans. Small elven numbers combined with a low fertility rate, make elves a rare commodity in Graakhalia. They are often viewed as benevolent elders by the gnolls and vehemently protected for their knowledge, wisdom, and arcane prowess.

In turn the elves view gnolls as the rambunctious and eager youth that form the backbone of Graakhalian society. Being far more numerous and fecund, Graakhalian gnolls have prospered in the short time since their arrival in the Hollow Moon. Because of the disparate differences in elven and gnollish population numbers, outsiders observing the Graakhalians may never even realize that the society is integrated.

Several distinct clans have formed in the decades since their arrival, most of which claim territory around the two lakes in the Janssen Badlands. Once per lunar year, these clans all gather in the middle of the badlands to trade, socialize, and discuss common threats. One of them, led by an elven sage and gnollish warrior, has even lifted the ban regarding intermarriage between the species and currently counts over a dozen half-elves among their clan. Only time will tell how this new experiment will play out.

### Fire Times

Mount Fabricius is the only active volcano in Graakhalian lands. It erupts once every lunar year<sup>19</sup> in conjunction with the spring season (between the months of Itinissatu and Itisattu) which helps disperse the fungal life across the region. This is a dangerous time for those in the area, due mostly to the infectious nature of the spores, more so than the activity of the volcano itself.

### Adventure Ideas

- Fungal monsters have been venturing forth from the lakes at odd seasons throughout the lunar year. Several clans have been decimated by the creatures and the remaining clan elders have gathered in order to discern the true level of this new threat. In fact, several rogue fungal druids from the Vesperlands have recently discovered the nearby territory and have vowed to master its secrets.

<sup>19</sup> The Materan calendar is detailed in [Threshold Magazine issue #2](#). It consists of 18 months that are governed by the tidal patterns created by Patera's (Mystara's second moon) orbit and distance from Matera.

Their experiments with the local fungal life forms<sup>20</sup> has gone terribly wrong.

- Many elven clan members have gone missing overnight, spirited away by some dark force. Unless the PCs can track them down and return them to their homes, the clan is likely doomed to fall apart and disperse. In truth only half the elves have actually been kidnapped. The other half are part of a radical faction that wants to eliminate all gnolls from Graakhalian society.
- A small hunting party composed of young gnolls has disappeared in the Janssen Badlands. The PCs are sent out to determine their fate, and bring them back to the clan if they are still alive. The hunting party has been detained and is being studied by a small group of pteryx archeologists. The PCs will have to save the gnolls before they are dissected by the curious pteryx. Harming the pteryx in the process could be disastrous, for their species is known for periodically decimating entire nations.

## Margasta Tribes

### Arrival Date

BC 2850

### On Mystara's Outer World

Before the rise and fall of Blackmoor these small and primitive rakasta roamed through the forests of Mystara. One of the more primitive forms of rakasta, the margasta<sup>21</sup> are

<sup>20</sup> For potential fungal monsters to introduce here, see the [MMMC \(lowlife\)](#) article by Robin at the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>21</sup> The margasta were created by Sharon



*Margasta*

small and lithe, and spend much of their time hunting tree bound fowl and small mammals, and fishing in nearby streams and lakes.

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Dornhoff as a primitive form of rakasta based on the real world [margay](#) of Central and South America. More information about the margasta can be gleaned from the [Hollow Moon articles](#) at The Vaults of Pandius. Additional rakasta breeds may be found in “Rakasta of Mystara” by Bruce Heard in Dragon Magazine #247.

Climate changes brought on by the axial tilt after the Great Rain of Fire, did nearly as much to bring about margasta extinction on the Outer World, as did increasing competition from neighboring species, especially the larger modern rakasta breeds. The last remaining clans were moved through Immortal power from northern Davania and Brun, along the Savage Coast, to the Trifold Isthmus between the Tranquillitatis, Fecunditatis, and Nectaris maria.

**In the Hollow Moon**

Thriving in their new dark environment, the margasta quickly spread from the Trifold-Isthmus across much of the Midlands and Dusklands. In those early centuries very few other creatures roamed the dark interior of the moon, save for the troglodytes and occasionally their pteryx overlords. Soon however, the margasta encountered other folk and were slowly pushed back into the darkest forests of the Hollow Moon.

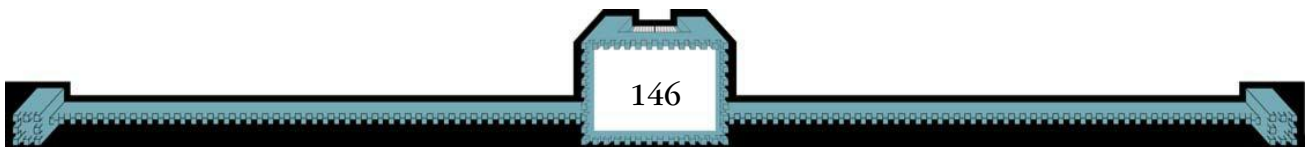
As the folk around them grew more powerful, the margasta tribes became more insular. Mistrustful of others, they retreated back the isthmus between the three seas where their ancestors had first arrived. Though a few of their clans were lost in the larger world, integrated into other societies or else exterminated completely, the margasta of the Isthmus remained true to their way of life and their ancestors.

**Culture**

Margasta clans are a warrior society, led by the greatest warrior among them<sup>22</sup>. The

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<sup>22</sup> There was very little information to be found on the margasta, so I decided to draw inspiration for their culture from another



young and elderly typically remain sheltered while margasta warriors roam their territories in search of game, defending their borders from neighboring clans as well as outsiders. A few in margasta society forsake the path of the warrior, choosing instead to follow the immortals as 'medicine' cats. Though respected by their peers, and often sought after for their wisdom, these rakasta may not start families, nor may they take positions of power in their clan.

Kits are given names by their parents shortly after they are born. Upon attaining adulthood, and performing the rites of passage to become true warriors, each young margasta takes on a new name, one that personifies their skills and temperament. Those margasta who attain the rank of clan leaders append the honorific "skull" to their names, as tribute to all of their ancestors who have walked before them and are now a part of Skullclan, the clan of the afterlife.

Mummification<sup>23</sup> of the dead is one of the most sacred duties for the margasta, who believe that only those warriors who have lived according to the Warrior's Code and are laid to rest with the proper ceremonies, will be able to join Skullclan. While the ancestors of Skullclan lay in rest, entombed deep in Ancestor's Cavern, the margasta of Boneclan see to their needs in the lands of the living. Generally clans are very territorial, however Boneclan allows passage through their lands

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source - some of my daughter's reading material. For more information see the [Warriors novels](#) published by Harper Collins (and written by various authors).

<sup>23</sup> See "[The Spell of Remembrance: Recursive history](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius

for pilgrims, burial parties, and those wishing to speak with their forefathers.

### Fire Times

Mount Gutenberg erupts annually, releasing slow moving lava flows that march southward toward Mare Nectaris, building up a long ridge of volcanic rock<sup>24</sup>. Seldom are the eruptions powerful or fast enough to endanger those living nearby. Smaller volcanoes dot the landscape all the way from Mount Gutenberg to Mare Nectaris, including Mount Capella and Mount Isidorus.

Looming above the ancient margasta burial grounds is Mount Torricelli, a violent and angry mountain that grumbles constantly. Every 23 years the volcano erupts. Despite the danger all of the margasta tribes gather under its angry light to commune with their ancestors.

### Adventure Ideas

- Indigents from Savageclan, a rabid and lawless clan who have forsaken the Warrior's Code, have fallen under the sway of a new leader, Blightclaw. A small and scrawny specimen even by margasta standards, Blightclaw grew up fending for himself on the outskirts of the Trade Cities. Now come into power through treachery and bullying, Blightclaw intends to punish both the citizenry of the Trade Cities and the warriors of the margasta clans for their mistreatment of the northern outcasts.

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<sup>24</sup> See "[Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon - Natural Disasters](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius

- Blackskull, the clan leader of Fireclan, has decided that the time is right to purge the land of his enemies. In secret he has made alliances with warriors in Darkclan, promising them positions of power once the neighboring clans are under his control. Blackskull has no intention of honoring any of his deal however, and will soon double cross all his erstwhile supporters. Once in power Blackskull's reign will be brutal and unmerciful.
- As Mount Torricelli rumbles, the entrance to Ancestor's Cavern collapses just before Stormclan is about to lay their deceased leader Waveskull to rest. Clan society may be about to change forever, as Crackedskull the Usurper challenges the other members of Skullclan within the crystal halls of the ancestors deep below the surface. If Crackedskull is successful, he will abandon the Warrior's Code, and lead an army of mummified ancestors to rule over the margasta clans above.



*Shadow*

## Maskelyne

### Arrival Date

BC 800

### On Mystara's Outer World

Fleeing the destruction of the Great Rain of Fire, a small group of Blackmoorians found a home on a remote island off the southern coast of Brun, and using their extensive powers of Fleshcrafting, managed to steel themselves against the aftermath of the Wasting. For hundreds of years these technomages thrived on their island home, slowly but steadily changing their own flesh so that eventually they were no longer

recognized as human. Their neighbors began to call them the Makers, for they seemed to possess the power of the immortals themselves, that which enabled them to make, and unmake, life.

Fairly insulated from the rest of the world, the Makers created servants for themselves, creatures which could till their fields, build their cities, and even wage their wars. In BC 1300, one of these creations, the kara-kara, turned on their masters, decimating the island of Teki-nuri-ria where they lived, and driving the surviving Makers into long forgotten Lhomarrian ruins. It was there that the Makers mastered the arts of Shadowcraft,

transforming themselves into living shadows<sup>25</sup>. Even this could not save them, when an alliance of aranea and other magically inclined creatures determined to take the Lhomarrian ruins for their own. For nearly one hundred years the shadows did battle with the aranea and their minions, finally succumbing to their depredations in BC 800.

### In the Hollow Moon

Not all was lost for the shadowy remnants of the Makers, for some unknown immortal removed the last remnants of their population from the dark caves of the Shadowdeep and placed them on a quiet island amidst the placid waters of Mare Tranquillitatis. Through magic, they rebuilt their city in the open darkness and named it Maskelyne. Over the centuries the city-citadel of Maskelyne has grown sporadically. The shadows have neither the desire nor the need to expand their territory, and are content instead to turn their pursuits to arcane research.

For many cycles the shadows of Maskelyne believed themselves to be the only inhabitants of their new, dimly-lit world, however intrepid explorers do occasionally brave the waters of Tranquillitatis to explore the lonely island. When the first silken ships from Aran were spotted, the shadows flew into a frenzy and with a fervor built up defenses around the island. After decades of

<sup>25</sup> In Robin's "[MMMC undead](#)" pages 1113-1115 I would classify the Maskelyne Shadows as Greater Shadows. There are also probably lesser shadows living on the island serving them (along with other shadow creatures/animals/monsters). I'd also probably say that Maskelyne Shadows definitely remember their past lives.

aggression between the two peoples, the Silken windships of the spiderfolk actively avoid the island, and indeed few sail over Mare Tranquillitatis for any reason.

### Culture

On Mystara, the Makers were fleshcrafters, taking other living beings and remolding them for special purposes. As shadows in the Hollow Moon, their interests remain similar, although they no longer work at crafting flesh but instead manipulate shadowy creatures.

Acclaim and prestige is earned based on the number of unique shadowy creatures the mages of Maskelyne create.

Inside the Shadow Citadel the shades of Maskelyne operate under a strict hierarchy, overseen by the Shadow Lords, masters of arcane shadowmancy<sup>26</sup>. Most of the Lords were once flesh and bone Makers, with memories of their time on Mystara. Beneath the Lords are Adepts, Apprentices, Servants, and finally Slaves, which are mostly shadowy creatures of little more than animal intelligence<sup>27</sup>.

The Shadows of Maskelyne don't reproduce like other creatures in the Hollow Moon, but when a new shadow is created they have one of two choices; join the ranks of Shadow Servants and serve out a term of indentured

<sup>26</sup> For those wishing to further investigate and develop the arcane shadowy crafts, see the "[Secret Art of Shadowmastery](#)" by Shawn Stanley at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>27</sup> Animal and monster versions of shadows exist in the Hollow Moon as well as the standard version. See "[Monsters' Abilities and the SoR](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

servitude to one of the Shadow Apprentices, or flee Maskelyne. Those shades who show some capability in the arcane arts may be able to ascend the ranks, becoming Shadow Apprentices when their term of servitude is up.

### Fire Times

The caldera surrounding the Shadow Citadel bubbles and boils constantly, but only truly erupts once every 256 years. When it does, the plume of fire can be seen from every shore of Mare Tranquillitatis.

### Adventure Ideas

- Portals are opening up and whisking the shadow folk away from the Shadow Citadel. A crazed mordrigswerg dwarf is summoning an army of shadows for some nefarious purpose, and now even one of the Masters has gone missing. Not only must the dwarf be stopped, but the Shadow Master found and returned to the Citadel.
- A shadow monster<sup>28</sup> has escaped from the island and is causing havoc on the Margasta Tri-isthmus. When the Shadow Masters cannot regain control of the creatures, they send a small force from the Citadel to either capture it and bring it back, or destroy it. Unfortunately the creature is not operating under its own influence, but is being controlled by three rogue ancients from Skullcaln. The mummies have discovered a way to control the shadow beast and are using it

<sup>28</sup> The Shadow Creature Template in *Lords of Madness* may be applied to normal animals and monsters in order to create a shadow version of the creatures.

wipe out the descendents of their ancient enemies.

- A small cabal of shades within the Shadow Citadel is building an army to attack Maskelyne's neighbors. Should such a rash of shadow monsters emerge from the island, all of the Hollow Moon might join forces to destroy the shadows.

## Shaergarde

### Arrival Date

BC 806

### On Mystara's Outer World

Ever since the disappearance of the Gentle Folk from Faerdinel, the hin (halflings) living in southern Brun struggled even to survive. In BC 938 they could no longer hold back the tide of darkness assailing them and orcs poured forth from the mountains to burn the Elderhall. When a dwarven army under the leadership of Loktal Ironshield opposed the orcs, the hin of Hindon believed that they had been saved, but those brief thoughts were shattered when Loktal executed the remaining Elders and crowned himself king of the Glittering Land.

For twenty years the hin lived as slaves to dwarven rule, until orc, human and gnoll invasions finally weakened the dwarves. The hin revolted in a Second Rising, overthrowing the tyrannical dwarves and founding the realm of Shaerdon, ruled over by a Council of hin clan lords and heroes. Shaerdon's prosperity was not to last however, as within a hundred years of its founding the hin were plagued by internal rivalries and corruption in the Clanstrife,





*Shaergarde Hin*

allowing outside forces to once again destroy their nation. Before Shaerdon was lost for good, the Hin Heroes moved their most loyal supporters to the Hollow Moon.

**In the Hollow Moon**

Hin heroes quickly set to mapping their new lands and marking out their territories, fast to lay claim to the most productive western shores of Mare Tranquillitatis. Few hin make their homes in the northern highlands between the Darrest Plateau and Delambre Ridge, though the heroes patrol the region constantly, using it as one of their major proving grounds.

Monsters constantly creep into Shaergarde from the nearby Valley of Horrors in Vedal, and the hin stationed at both Fort Andel and Icas Keep have honed their skills battling them. Further north, in the fortress of Dar's Rest they skirmish with their elvish neighbors. Dwarves, either from Mordrigswerg or Kogalor, are rarely seen in these lands. Though the hin are not overtly violent toward them, dwarves are mistrusted at best.

Not all interactions with the hin of Shaergarde are violent in nature, for most who visit these lands find a good natured people, willing to trade textiles, agricultural merchandise, and even stories. Hin sailors often brave the waters of Mare Tranquillitatis to do business with Cacklogallinia, the Trade Cities, and even occasionally with Vesper elves and the folk of Albarendi.

**Culture**

Shaergarde hin are extremely individualistic with attitudes often bordering on rebellious. Most are content living normal lives as farmers, merchants, and tradesmen, but the most revered calling in Shaergarde is that of the hero and adventurer. Many hin, at some time of their life or another, venture downward into the wilds of the Midland forests to test their mettle. Those that take to the life, patrol the forests on giant flightless cassowaries<sup>29</sup>, intent on keeping their kin to the duskward safe.

Clan Lords lead the hin communities, each tracing their lineages back to ancient heroes on a distant world that freed their people

<sup>29</sup> See "[Hollow Moon Planetology: Blue Moon -- Animal Life](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff at The Vaults of Pandius.

from hated dwarven overlords and first established the nation of Shaerdon. Each Clan Lord sits on the Hero's Council, a ruling body that meets regularly to insure that law and order preside over the land and that no foreign powers will ever again hold sway over the hin.

An undercurrent of intrigue and politicking permeates clan relationships. Age old disputes are rarely forgotten, often blooming into outright feuds lasting decades or centuries. Despite this most hin pull together during times of strife, especially when confronted by outside forces.

#### Fire Times

The fires of Dionysus are enough to light the skies a dull red every 4 years, but they do very little real damage. When Mount Delambre erupts every 17 years, the sludge that spews forth poisons the Delambre river for several seasons. Crops die and many hin living along the river must leave their homes or risk becoming deathly ill.

Theo's Hollow rumbles and shakes, sending shockwaves felt throughout southern Shaergarde and as far duskward as the Margasta Tri-isthmus. Every 33 years the small cone that has built up in the center of the caldera shatters explosively, scattering shards of heated rock across the countryside. Further inland lava flows from the slopes of Mount Kant once every 89 years though it rarely causes major disruptions for those living in the lowlands beneath it. Mount Alfraganus and Mount Dolland are more violent, though there are fewer permanent settlements near them.

#### Adventure Ideas

- Riderless cassowaries returning to Icas Keep signal that something has gone terribly wrong during the latest patrol mission. PCs are sent out to discover the fate of the hin involved and must determine if the patrol was ambushed by monsters from the Valley of Horrors, or if they were waylaid by elven forces from Hyccal. The unfortunate truth is that clan rivalry is involved. One of the hin on patrol, determined to settle old clan debts, attacked one of his fellows. Distracted by this betrayal, the patrol was caught off guard by a monster attack and scattered.
- Hin adventurers are called to the base of Mount Delambre, which has been spewing forth gobs of magma lit by a "black fire". The PCs must brave the perils of the volcano's lava filled chambers to find an ancient artifact, before it is recovered by a band of deep glaurants from Stygia. Rescuing the artifact is not the only peril the PCs must face, for long ago the Hin Heroes hid the artifact from their followers in order to avert the jealousies and rivalries that brought about their downfall on Mystara.
- A large band of Kogalor dwarves from Adhuza has been spotted in the southwestern lands, and it looks like they mean to stay, having established a small mining community near Abulfeda. PCs are tasked with infiltrating the community, finding out what the dwarves want, and discovering a means to drive them away.

## Threshold Coloring Contest

Come participate in Threshold's first ever Coloring Contest! Participation is easy.

1. Copy or print out the Graakhalian Gnoll illustration found in this issue of Threshold.
2. Color the illustration using any medium you prefer - pencils, pens, paints, even electronically!
3. Submit your finished work at The Piazza in the [\[Threshold\] Mystaraspac Coloring Contest thread](#).

The top contestant entries will be entered into a poll and judged by members of The Piazza forum. The winning entry will receive a custom character portrait from I. Calvin, drawn in the same style as the Graakhalian Gnoll! All entries must be submitted to this thread by **June 10th, 2017** in order to be eligible, and the winner will be announced in the next issue of Threshold (Threshold Issue #16, Dwarves, Gnomes & Hin).

Don't miss out - submit your entry today!



# Shikugawa

## Myoshima NO MONOGATARI - A Tale of Myoshima

By Giampaolo Agosta  
(Agathokles)



### INTRODUCTION

The text presented in this article combines a classical D&D adventure, drawing from the sources that inspire the Gazetteer of Myoshima, with a modern investigative adventure framework such as those found in recent GUMSHOE games by Pelgrane Press. In particular, the adventure draws inspiration from Pelgrane Press' "The Armitage Files" and "Dracula Dossier: Director's Handbook", from which the ideas for multiple motivations for each NPC (villainous, innocent or stalwart) and multiple natures for each object (major, minor, or fraudulent) have been adapted.

In the adventure, set in the province of Sebei in the southern reaches of Myoshima, a group of mercenaries investigates the presence of bandits in a fief, at the request of the local vassal or his subjects. Some elements of the plots and NPCs are inspired from Akira Kurosawa's period films starring Toshiro Mifune, such as Seven Samurai.

### Target party

The adventure is designed for a party of 4 adventurers of level 4, or, more generally, for 3-5 PCs of levels 3-5, for a TPL of 15-16. Note that in BECMI, Rakasta start as NM with 2 HD, so their actual TPL level should be computed including 2 additional HD (so actually Rakasta PCs will be of level 1-3). In other rules sets, Rakasta are a typical character race, so no special adjustments are needed.

The player characters (PCs) are assumed to be mercenary troubleshooters, or else retainers of **Seibe Nekokichi**, a local nobleman whose fief includes the village of **Shikugawa**.

## Plot overview

- The PCs are hired by **Kohei**, the Village Elder of **Shikugawa**, or by **Seibei Nekokichi**, the local jugo<sup>1</sup> (or are dispatched from the Samurai's Castle, if they are retainers of that nobleman) to vanquish a group of **bandits** led by the ronin **Ushitora**, who have been harassing the villagers and stealing their wealth. The PCs can question Kohei and the other **rice farmers** to find out about the bandits. The villagers accuse the bandits of killing one of their own, Tadashi. Eventually, they should track the bandits down to their hideout, a nearby **Cave** in the mountains.
- While tracking the bandits or exploring the area, the PCs may meet a hermit called Gonji who has taken residence in a roadside **Shrine**, and a **Monkey Folk tribe** who are living in a **mountain village** called Yamamura. These encounters can provide additional information, or raise some suspicions, as the hermit is a former barbarian (Mountain Rakasta), and the Monkey Folk do not appear to trust the Rakasta farmers.
- In the end, the PCs may choose to clash with the bandits and defeat them, or parley with them to learn their side of the story. If they fight, the PCs can still interrogate a captured bandit afterwards -- the bandits have no interest in getting killed, and will surrender if overwhelmed. The bandits claim to have been wronged by Seibei or Kohei -- according to their tale, they were formerly in service to

<sup>1</sup> Local noble ruler, typically in charge of a few villages. Equivalent to a Landed Knight.

Seibei, but have been accused of robbing and murdering a villager, Tadashi, and then hiding the corpse, without proof, and were forced to flee. They claim the witness, Kitaemon, another villager, is lying.

- The PCs can simply complete their job, capturing the bandits, or they can go back to the village or castle to further investigate the bandits' claims. In either case, they (or the bandits earlier on, or one of the other NPCs) trigger the reaction of a **greater evil**, a monster that suddenly appears in the vicinity of Shikugawa.
- Although the PCs do not know it yet, there are three other hidden players in the village area: a **Shapechanger** (Futago<sup>2</sup>), a **Sorcerer** (a Hakomon, locally known as an Onmyonji) and a **Shinobi** (Ninja). Each has its own goals (not necessarily evil, but possibly opposed to each other and to the PCs). Their activities, like those of the bandits, are clearly affected by the appearance of the PCs and the **greater evil**, and they will react accordingly, possibly helping or hindering the PCs.
- The PCs can now investigate the origins of the **greater evil**, and possibly find ways to contain it. Some of the NPCs they have already met may know something, either about the history of the village, or about the nature of the **greater evil** and the magics that can help against it.

<sup>2</sup> Myoshiman Doppelganger, see page 9 of the 1993 D&D module "Rage of the Rakasta" by William W. Connors.

- In the end, the PCs discover the entrance to the **Dungeon**, which is the lair of the **greater evil** or the location of the tool for destroying it. At the end of the dungeon itself, besides the resolution of the adventure, is a portal, rumored to be the entrance of Hell.



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

As a general consideration, note that the actual nature (innocent, villainous or stalwart) of each of the NPCs or NPC groups is not predefined. Each DM may create their own version(s) to suit the story they want to tell, and one that the players will enjoy the most.

## The Greater Evil

The **greater evil** is a dangerous monster. It has a relatively straightforward goal, but may be controlled by Villainous NPCs for their own purposes. There are two choices for the **greater evil**:

- An **Oudokuro** (*Bone Golem*), created in ancient times by the Shikken, can be controlled with a magic item (a fan). The Bone Golem is almost mindless, but is still going by its original orders, suitably degraded and misinterpreted by the passage of time. If not controlled, it will attack the nearest settlement -- likely Shikugawa or the Monkey Folk village. If controlled, it will serve the purposes of its controller.
- A **Kyousoku** (*Wraith*) ghost. The Wraith is susceptible to being controlled with the Control Undead ability, and can be affected by two magic items, the jar and scroll. The wraith arises when a dead body has not been properly buried -- ideally the victim of one of the Villainous individuals or groups, but not the one who is trying to control it. In this case, it could be Tadashi, the villager allegedly killed by the bandits. The wraith is intelligent, and wishes to take its revenge, but will bide its time and serve an individual who threatens it with one of the magic items.

In both cases, the **greater evil** is awakened by the bandits who stumble through sigils confining it somewhere in the Cave, or by the PCs as they break into the Cave, or disturb the Shrine or the village well in Shikugawa.

## NPC Groups

Each NPC group (and their leaders) can take one of three different interpretations, which lead to them taking different roles within the story. **Villainous** NPCs are self-serving and generally evil. They are likely to oppose the PCs. **Stalwart** NPCs are heroic or at least well-intentioned and may be able to provide help to the PCs. **Innocent** NPCs are typically just what they appear -- they may be well-intentioned, but have no major help to offer, or they may be completely clueless bystanders.

### Kohei and the Shikugawa rice farmers

*Kohei*, village elder: Rakasta NM

**Apparent nature.** The people of Shikugawa are rakasta commoners, mostly rice farmers. The village is led by an elder, Kohei, advised by the leaders of the more affluent families. See the entry for Shikugawa for a full list of the families and their leaders. The villagers accuse the bandits of having killed Tadashi, a son of the farmer Manzou, and of having hidden or otherwise disposed of the corpse. One other villager, Kitaemon, saw Unosuke, one of the bandits, striking down Tadashi with a sword on the road to the Shrine. He then fled before the bandit could pursue him.

**Innocent.** The villagers are ignorant peasants, mere victims of the events. They know nothing of the **greater evil**, although they may have clues about the other groups, which they generally fear.

**Villainous.** The rich farmers are hoarding grain in order to raise its price and sell it at a greater price when military campaigns will reprise, causing widespread poverty.

**Stalwart.** The villagers are good, hard-working folk. The elders have memories passed down from generations about the **greater evil**, which may help the PCs.

### Ushitora and the bandit gang

*Ushitora*, Bandit leader: Rakasta Samurai (Ronin)/Fighter 3

*Nui*, Female bandit: Rakasta Bushi/Fighter 1

*Unosuke*, Bandit scout: Rakasta Nobushi/Thief 2

*Tokuemon* and *Tazaemon*, twin bandits: Rakasta Nobushi/Thief 1

**Apparent nature.** The bandits are Rakasta ronin, disgraced and masterless samurai who have turned into common brigands to survive. Or at least that's what Ushitora claims to be.

**Innocent.** These impoverished mercenaries have turned to banditry, but only because they have no job. They are not willing to cause serious harm or incur in the wrath of authorities, and will flee if allowed to. They may even be persuaded to turn from banditry if offered a job.

**Villainous.** These are violent, roguish mercenaries who have turned to banditry after being dismissed by their employer (another Samurai from a nearby domain). They are coarse bullies, willing to ruin the village to fill their pockets.

**Stalwart.** These are former retainers of the Samurai (or Ronins, followers of another Samurai whose downfall was caused by one of the villainous NPCs) or inhabitants of the

village who have turned to banditry after being accused with false charges due to the acts of one villainous NPC. They want revenge, and may have clues to the identity of the villain.

### The Samurai and his retinue

*Seibei Nekokichi*, jugo of the area including Shikugawa: Rakasta Samurai/Fighter 4

**Apparent nature.** Nekokichi is a Rakasta samurai who commands a small group of ashigaru retainers. They live in a small castle, with the samurai's family. The samurai oversees several villages, one of which is Shikugawa, as the jugo (a title not unlike that of a Landed Knight in Karameikos), and owes fealty to the local daimyo (who in turn is the equivalent of a Thyatian count or duke).

**Innocent.** The Samurai is an indifferent ruler, and leaves all decisions to the village elders, as long as they pay the required taxes. He does not care about the greater evil, but may pay a reasonable sum to be rid of it.

**Villainous.** This harsh warrior heavily taxes the village to keep his retainers well fed and equipped. He aims at eradicating the sasquatches to exploit the mountains through mining prospectors.

**Stalwart.** This valiant warrior was an adventurer in his youth, and still has the will to fight for good. He is sincerely preoccupied by the **greater evil**, and will personally take action if he hears about it.

### Orin and the Monkey Folk

*Orin*, Monkey Folk tribal chief: Sasquatch 2/Shaman 2

**Apparent nature.** The Monkey Folk are a primitive people that lives in forested mountains. They have a simple hunter-gatherer culture. They are led by a female shaman, Orin.

**Innocent.** The tribe is primitive but peaceful and shy. Their druidic shaman wishes to keep her people out of the struggles of civilized folks.

**Villainous.** The tribe is barbaric and hostile to both the villagers and the bandits. The shaman does not follow the teachings of the Monkey King, but those of an evil spirit from Hell.

**Stalwart.** The tribe is savage but honorable. The teachings of the Monkey King are strong, and the tribesmen honor the daring of adventurers.

### The Hermit

*Gonji*, knowledgeable hermit monk: Rakasta Biku/Monk (spellcasting) 6

**Apparent nature.** Gonji is a Mountain Rakasta (a barbarian, from the point of view of the Myoshiman Rakasta) Biku, that is a wandering monk follower of Shima-do.

**Innocent.** This hermit is just as he appears, a retired warrior, formerly a mercenary, whose tribe has been displaced or died out. A cranky old cat, he cannot provide much help beyond the occasional cure light wounds spell.

**Villainous.** This hermit is actually a cultist of the **greater evil**. He receives spells from it or from Hel (same as a standard Biku, but uses reverse spells).



**Stalwart.** This hermit is a former barbarian adventurer turned to religion. He has knowledge of the **greater evil** and how to fight it.

## The Hidden Players

The three hidden players also have the same options to be **Villainous**, **Stalwart**, or **Innocent**. In this case, however, the “Innocent” version merely means the NPC is not likely to interfere in favor or against the PCs. They will stick to their own agenda, but may still attract the attention of the PCs. The hidden players have no predefined apparent nature. They are masquerading among one of the other groups, and take that apparent nature.

### The Shapechanger

A *Futago* (Shapechanger): Doppelganger NM

There may be several Doppelgangers, especially if they have infiltrated the village. They are part of a small clan, and share the same motivations and outlook.

**Innocent.** Only desires to be left to his own devices. He has found a good life in this village, but will put his own survival before that of the village, and leave if exposed or threatened.

**Villainous.** Aims at taking control of the area by causing other leaders to be falsely accused of crimes by impersonating them. He is unconcerned by the **greater evil**, and plans to use it to further his plots by blaming others for its appearance.

**Stalwart.** Has discovered this village as a haven against his enemies, but has grown fond of it and can be convinced that it is morally wrong to leave it in the current straits.

### The Sorcerer

An *Onmyonji* (Sorcerer): Rakasta Wu Jen/Hakomon (Shintenshin no Jutsu secret craft/Enchantment specialist) 4

In all incarnations, the Sorcerer is aware of one of the *magic items*. He’s looking for it, either because it is a threat to his work, or because he needs it to further his research.

**Innocent.** The sorcerer is a reclusive hermit, and a bitter exile. He has political reasons for his isolation, and will not side with the authorities, even if the threat is exposed.

**Villainous.** The sorcerer is able to control others via charm spells. He is a follower of the Shikken, and aims at corrupting the village to use it as a power base for his master’s plans. He has created or unleashed the **greater evil** as part of his plot.

**Stalwart.** The sorcerer is secretive, but honorable. While his primary interest is his own research and survival, he perceives the **greater evil** as a threat, and is willing to counsel the PCs to help defeat it.

### The Shinobi

A *Ninja* (or Kunoichi): Rakasta Ninja/Thief (Genjutsu specialist) 4

**Innocent.** The Ninja has a mission to murder either the Sorcerer, the Shapechanger, or the Samurai. He does not care about the **greater evil** or the other PCs or NPCs, unless his mission is threatened.

**Villainous.** The Ninja aims at controlling the **greater evil**, to increase the power of his clan. He has a way to control the **greater evil** (one of the *magic items*), and is testing the extent of this ability before returning to his village.

**Stalwart.** The Ninja is a member of a clan that serves the local daimyo. He may provide unofficial help, although he does not want to blow his cover until his target (either the

Sorcerer or the Shapechanger) is brought down.

**Who are the Hidden Players?**

The Shapechanger, Sorcerer, and Ninja are hiding, likely among three different groups. The following table shows what place each of them will take among the infiltrated group. Note that different assignments may lead to the main hidden player having some followers or not.

**Table 1: The Hidden Shapechanger**

Village Elder/Rice farmers	Doppelgangers have replaced the elder and possibly other key villagers.
Samurai/Ashigaru	A Doppelganger has replaced the Samurai.
Bandit chief/Nobushi	One of the bandits is a Doppelganger, and can use his power to spy on the village or castle. The other bandits are not aware of this, believing the information comes from magic or skill.
Monkey Folk chief/tribe	The Monkey Folk chief has been replaced by a Doppelganger.
Hermit	The hermit is actually a Doppelganger.

**Table 2: The Hidden Sorcerer**

Village Elder/Rice farmers	A sorcerer controls the village by charming its leaders. The sorcerer himself (or herself) is an otherwise unassuming inhabitant of the village.
Samurai/Ashigaru	The Samurai has been charmed by his concubine, who is the sorcerer.
Bandit chief/Nobushi	One of the bandits is a sorcerer, who has a different agenda from the others.
Monkey Folk chief/tribe	The Monkey Folk chief has been charmed by the Sorcerer.
Hermit	The hermit is actually a sorcerer rather than a monk.

**Table 3: The Hidden Ninja**

Village Elder/Rice farmers	The village is actually a Ninja village. None of the other parties are aware of it, except perhaps the Sorcerer or the Shapechanger.
Samurai/Ashigaru	One of the retainers or concubine of the Samurai is the Ninja.
Bandit chief/Nobushi	One of the bandits is actually a Ninja in disguise. He has a different agenda from the others, and is manipulating them.
Monkey Folk chief/tribe	The Monkey Folk tribe is actually a mysterious group of Ninja using genjutsu to appear as Monkey Folk.
Hermit	The hermit is the current cover for the ninja.

## Magic Items

The following objects appear during the adventure. They may be actually found, or they may only be rumors. Each object may be **Major**, **Minor** or **Fraudulent/Rumor**. In the first case, the object is a permanent or charged magic item. In the second, it is a single-use (or few uses) magic item, a permanent magic item of limited power, or just a high-quality non-magical item (still valuable, but not a game changer in the context of the adventure). In the latter, it is non-magical (but could still be valuable), or it is merely a rumor, and the object does not actually exist.

Of the four magical objects, one (the sword) has a fixed location, while of the others one should be found at the end of the dungeon, and one might be in the hands of an appropriate NPC. The remaining object might be just a rumor, or it may be hidden somewhere -- either in the village or among the bandits' loot.

### **Seibuzou no Kei (Sutra of the Pachydermion Priest)**

An ornate scroll, attached to a short wooden staff for rolling it. The wooden staff is also painted in bright colours with scenes of Kompore-Thap life. This object may be found in the dungeon, or in the possession of one of the NPCs.

**Major.** The scroll can be used to paralyze any undead or demon (ST vs Paralysis at -8). The effect is permanent until the scroll is removed, but to activate it the scroll needs to be attached to the entity with an attack (the Scroll acts as an unarmed attack at +5). By reading the contents, a Turn Undead effect

can be achieved (once per week) as if the reader was a priest of 5 levels higher (count  $\frac{1}{3}$  levels for Paladins and Biku, and 0 for non-clerical readers). This effect requires literacy in the Kompore-Thap language.

**Minor.** As per the Major version, but the paralysis effect wears off in one week, and the Turn Undead effect is only achievable by a character that has the Turn Undead class ability, and even then it only increases the power of the effect by 2 levels.

**Fraudulent.** The scroll merely confers knowledge of the Kompore-Thap exoteric branch of the Shima-do faith. It can be used as an instructor to learn the Religion (Shima-do) and Ceremony (Ssu-Ma) skills, but has no magical powers.

### **Tamashi no Hyoutan (Calabash of Souls)**

A calabash, emptied to form a wine container, provided with a stopper inscribed with a sigil associated with the magic schools of conjuration and abjuration. This object may be found in the dungeon, or in the possession of one of the NPCs.

**Major.** The bottle can be used to contain an evil spirit, genie, or ghost. A command word must be read for this purpose, and the entity will be drawn into the bottle, which then must be stoppered. A Saving Throw vs Spells at -8 is needed to avoid the effect.

**Minor.** As per the major item, except that the item cannot be reused. Once stoppered, its magic dissipates if it is ever unstoppered.

**Fraudulent.** As per the major item, but the bottle lacks a stopper, and is therefore unusable.

### Tenkai no Tessen (War fan of deployment)

A folding fan built with metal slats and magically strengthened paper, upon which are painted scenes of undeath rituals and a series of command words. This object may be found in the dungeon, or in the possession of one of the NPCs.

**Major.** The fan was created to direct an undead construct, a war machine devised by the Shikken. It is still functional, and can be used to control the greater evil (which in this case should be a bone golem).

**Minor.** As major, but the fan is brittle and its magic is almost exhausted. It can be used to hamper the bone golem, which will not attack the holder of the fan. Actively using it causes a “confusion” effect on the golem, after the end of which the fan shatters, having finally exhausted its magic.

**Fraudulent.** The fan is merely a reproduction of a period objet d’art of the Shikken era. It has no magical value.

### Ineko no Tachi (Sword of the Grasshopper)

This ancient sword is the heirloom of the Seibei samurai family. It is held in the throne room of Seibei’s castle.

**Major.** The sword was used in battle against the Shikken. The spirit of Seibei “Ineko” Katsuyori, who died in battle holding the sword, resides in the blade, making it a sort of intelligent sword. The sword operates as a sword +1, +3 vs undead, with Int 8, Ego 9, and the Detect Undead power. However, it can be shut down or even destroyed by an

application of the Turn Undead power (against a Wraith). If the spirit of Seibei Katsuyori is destroyed, the sword turns into its minor version.

**Minor.** The sword used to hold the spirit of the Seibei ancestor, Katsuyori, also called Ineko for his ability to burst in sudden action, but the spirit has passed on to the Outer Planes, either naturally or because it has been exorcised. The sword is still magical, but merely a +1 blade.

**Fraudulent.** The sword is actually a replica. The real sword of Katsuyori was lost on the battlefield. It is a well-forged weapon, but no better than any ordinary sword. It has still a sentimental value for the Seibei clan.

## LOCALES

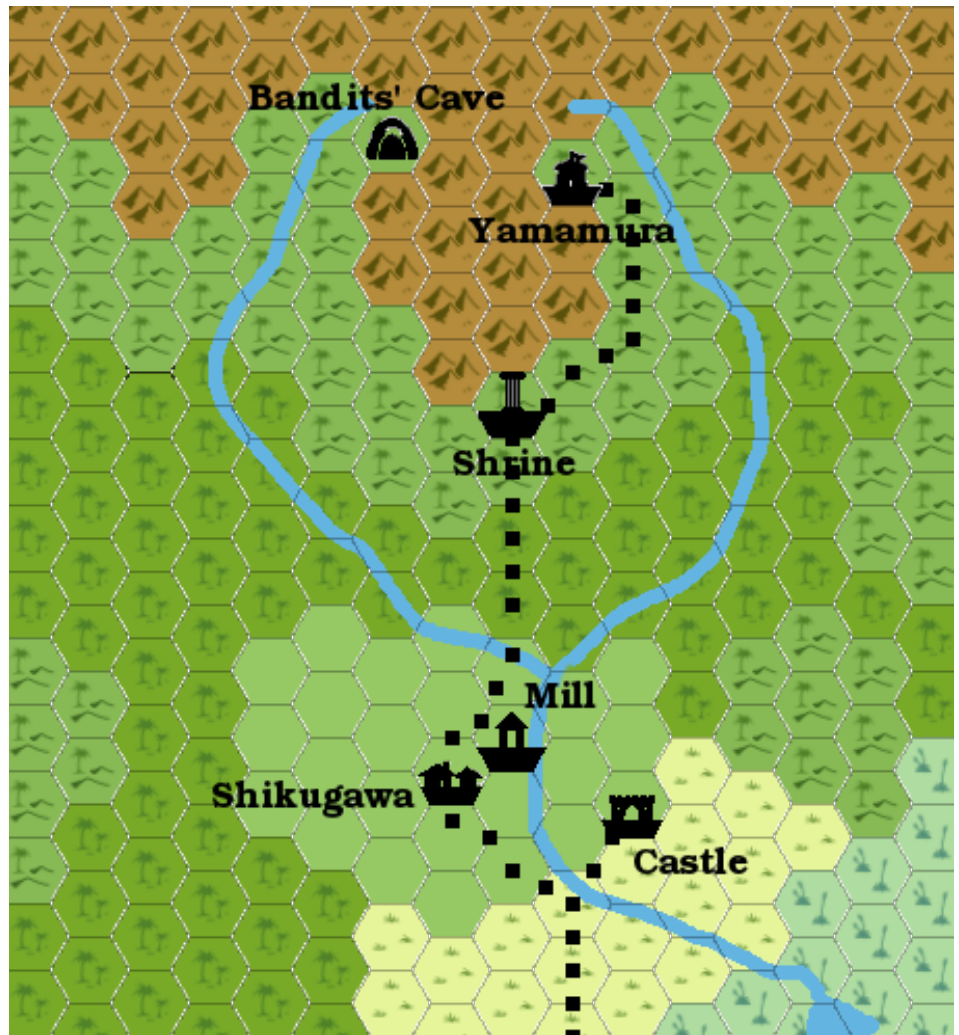
The following locales appear in the adventure: the Seibei **Castle**, the rice farmers’ **village** of Shikugawa, the bandit’s **cave**, the hermit’s **Shrine**, the Monkey Folk **mountain village**, and the **dungeon** where the final showdown of the adventure takes place. The first two are known initially, the others can be investigated.

### Samurai’s Castle

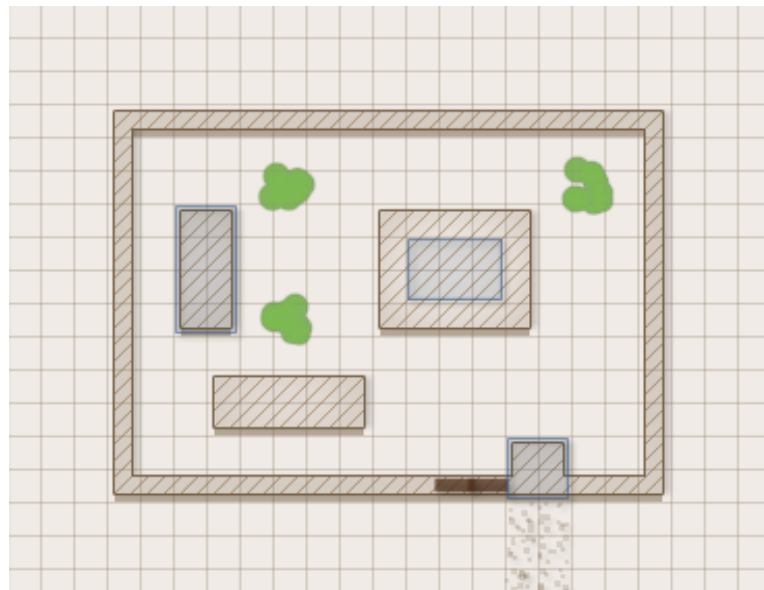
Seibei Nekokichi lives here with his wife, Yuki, his son Izumi, eight ashigaru guards and their captain, Yaemon (Rakasta Ashigaru/Fighter 2), and a couple of servants, as well as a concubine, Nei.



*Overland Map of Shikugawa*



*Map of the Samurai Castle*



The castle is composed of a single-floor wooden building within a courtyard. A small watchtower, a barrack for the ashigaru retainers, and a stable housing the Samurai's sabretooth tiger are located around the courtyard, which also features a well-kept garden. Typically, two of the ashigaru are on guard at any time -- one in the watchtower, the other patrolling the garden, and four more are sleeping or otherwise off-duty in the barracks. The two remaining ashigaru sit in the porch in front of the hall, playing chess or drinking tea.

## Shikuḡawa

The Rice farmers' **Village** (population: 70 Rakasta), contains the following buildings.

1. A sake brewery, owned and managed by *Mosuke* and his family. The brewery is composed of a single, large building, to which are attached the family house and the warehouse, forming a small compound.
2. A small Izakaya, owned and managed by *Yohei*, with a single serving boy. The Izakaya has a single rectangular hall, with small tables and benches set along the wall. A bar is set on the opposite side of the room, and the small kitchen, storage area, Yohei's bedroom can be reached from doors behind the bar.
3. Several farmhouses, belonging to *Kobei*, *Rikichi*, *Manzou*, *Tabei*, and *Matashichi*. Each is the patriarch of a relatively large family (5-15 Rakasta NM). The farmhouses are bamboo buildings, with internal walls replaced by paper screens.

They are quite simple, but most have additional buildings for housing chickens, rabbits, and other small animals, as well as granaries.

4. The village well, near *Kobei's* house and the Izakaya. The well is likely the oldest construction in the village, and may predate the arrival of the current families.
5. The mill, owned by *Gisaku* and his family. This building stands a bit aside from the village proper. The mill is a one-story, single room building with a wheel powered by a small water stream.

## Bandits' Cave

The five bandits, Ushitora, Nui, Unosuke, Tokuemmon and Tazaemon camp in this cave. The cave entrance is not guarded, but a clever pit trap has been installed. If not detected, the first PC entering the cave will fall in the pit, which is not very deep but has nasty spikes on the bottom, which inflict 1d4 HP on a failed ST vs Wands. More importantly, the noise of people falling into the trap warns the bandits of the presence of intruders.

From the entrance, the cave splits in two branches, which later join in the main cavern. Ushitora and Nui have claimed the main cavern, while Unosuke, Tokuemmon and Tazaemon camp in the left branch, which opens up in the middle, providing enough space for them.

A more dangerous trap has been set in the right branch, a set of sharp blades attached to a large plank hinged to the ceiling. When



*Map of the Bandits' cave*

activated (a well-hidden cable detaches the far side of the plank when tripped upon), the plank swings down, shredding the first two rows of intruders for 1d8 HP. A ST vs Wands allows a victim to halve the damage. Once more, activating this trap warns the bandits of the presence of intruders. The two groups of bandits will then attack from opposite sides.

## Hermit's Shrine



The shrine is composed of a single room, built around four posts and surmounted with a multi-tiered, sloping roof covered in black tiles. The wooden walls are painted bright red, while the post are painted in a golden yellow. Inside the shrine is an altar, and a time-corroded wooden statue. It is almost impossible to say which entity it depicts (a *difficult* skill check in Religion will identify the statue as Abbot Shingen, if the hermit is stalwart or innocent, or as the Shikken's Rakshasa father otherwise). A fountain is located outside the shrine, to be used for purification rituals, and a ceremonial *torii* gate signals the way to the shrine from the main road.

Only the hermit, Gonji, lives here, in a small hut near the shrine itself.

## YAMAMURA

This is the Monkey Folk's **Mountain Village** (population: 20 Monkey Folk). Yamamura is located above the Shrine, near to the Cave. It is composed of six simple huts built around large trees, each inhabited by two to five Monkey Folk individuals, usually a couple with younglings. A fire pit is located in the center of the village. Orin, the village shaman and leader, lives in the smallest hut with her grandniece, who is also her apprentice.

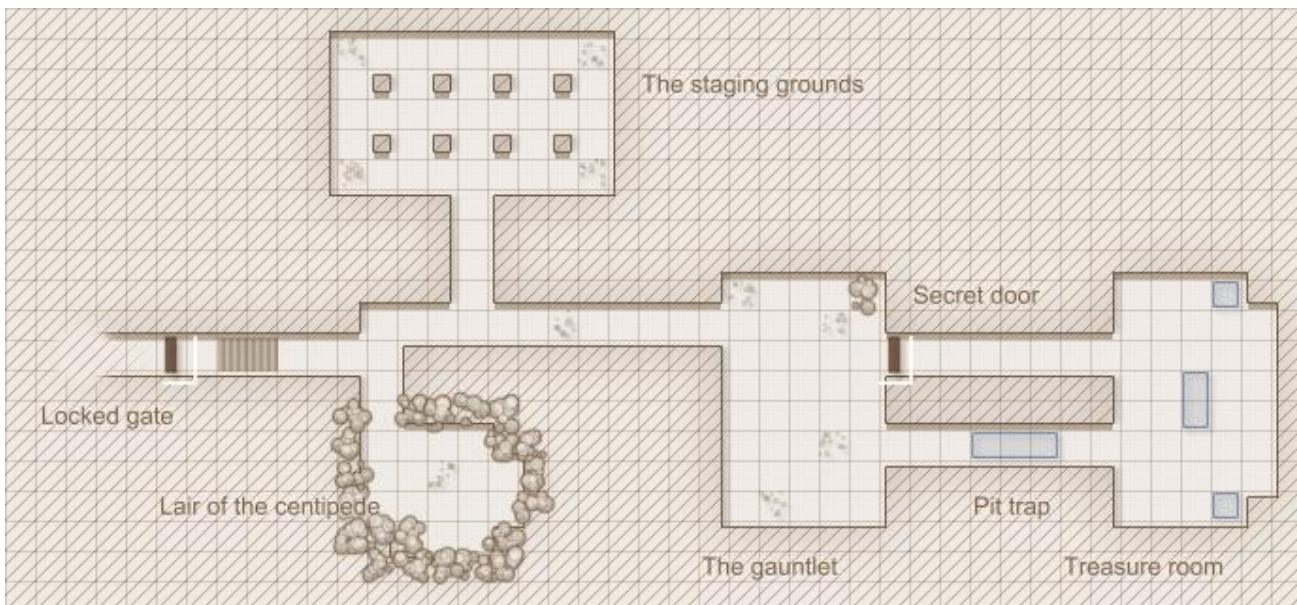
Around the village there are a number of non-lethal traps, chiefly nets or rope hoops attached to bent trees, which snap back into their natural position when the trap is triggered, capturing the triggerer on a failed ST vs Wands (at -4 for net traps). These traps have been set for defensive purposes by the Monkey Folk. Captured being will be spotted by a party of Monkey Folk within a few hours, and brought to Orin. PCs snooping in the woods around the village have a 1 in 4 chance per hour to approach one of the traps.

## THE DUNGEON

The Dungeon's position is not predefined. Depending on the nature of the various players, it could appear in several locales:

1. Under the cellars of the Castle;
2. Accessed via the well in the Village;
3. Under the altar of the Shrine;
4. Under the Cave;
5. Hidden by Genjutsu in a tree of the Mountain Village.

Note that some choices may be more conducive to a given nature of the portal that is found at the end of the dungeon itself. For example, if the dungeon is accessed via the village well, the portal might be similar to the Well of the Moon from X5, which allows access to Matera from Mystara's surface, whereas a dungeon entrance hidden in a tree may lead to a portal to some outer plane, and may imply that the Monkey Folk are actually Ninja (if they have used Genjutsu to



*Map of the Dungeon*



hide it). Positioning it under the castle implies the Seibei ancestors might have set the castle as a watch post over the Shikken's dungeon, or maybe they played the part of double agents, harboring the Shikken's troops, but then keeping them from joining the battle. Similar considerations may be done for the Shrine.

### Entrance

The entrance of the dungeon is locked. The rusty padlock can be opened with an Open Locks check at +30%.

### Lair of the centipede

A giant centipede lairs in this room. It hides on the ceiling, dropping on the last PC to enter the room, unless spotted with a successful *Alertness* check.

### The staging grounds

A large underground cavern where a number of skeletons armed with spears are set in neat rows. There are 18 skeletons disposed in three rows of six each. This squadron of undead foot soldiers have been left behind by the Shikken, or more likely one of his followers, after their defeat centuries ago. The magic that supports the skeletons has deteriorated, so not all the undead are still functional. They activate when disturbed by the PCs' entrance, but only 2 skeletons per each PC (three if the party includes one or more clerics) actually manage to reach attack range -- the others fall in pieces right after they start moving. Also, a successful Turn Undead destroys these skeletons, even if the result is just "turn."

### The gauntlet

Two corridors lead out from this room, one hidden behind a secret door, the other

immediately visible, but protected by a deadly pit trap with poisoned spikes at the bottom. The spikes cause 1d6 hit points of damage, and the poison causes 2d6, which can be halved with a successful Saving Throw vs. Poison, or entirely avoided if the Saving Throw succeeds at -4. The trap activates a couple of seconds after the first PC steps onto the pit section of the floor, so up to four PCs can fall into the trap. The last two can jump back with a successful Dexterity check, whereas the first two need an *Acrobatics* skill check (or equivalent ability, such as a Mystic's acrobatics ability).

### Treasure Room

This circular room contain a large octagonal altar, upon which rests a porcelain urn richly decorated, and sealed with scrolls and wax. A pair of brightly-painted, demonic-looking statues loom above the altar. These statues are magically animated, and defend the altar at all costs.

The statues have similar statistics to Crystal Living Statues, but are made of painted wood.

One of the magic items, either the scroll, the war fan or the calabash, is stored inside the urn.

### The portal

At the end of the Dungeon, hidden beneath the altar, is the rumored "portal to Hell." It is not literally a portal to the Outer Planes. Its nature must be determined by the DM according to the needs of the campaign. Options include:

1. A passage leading to the Myoshiman version of the Kingdom of Ghouls (Gaki no Oukoku);

2. A portal to Dravya on Mystara's surface (this option may actually be seen as a portal to Hell in the Myoshiman cosmology, as Mystara is seen as the "lower world" and the realm of the Oni, the Ogre Magi);
3. A transition to Limbo (an actual afterlife option);
4. A passage leading to some abandoned stronghold of the Shikken (a less supernatural but more concrete threat -- the Bone Golem version of the **greater evil**, if not used earlier, may appear here, or an entire army of them may be waiting in the depths of Matera for the Shikken to return).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The adventure ends when the PCs manage to drive away, exorcise or destroy the **greater evil**. At that point, the villainous NPCs may still be plotting against the PCs and the village, but they will lay low for a while to let any suspicion fall away from them.

### Experience

At the end of the adventure, the DM should assign an XP reward to the PCs for solving the case, in addition to whatever monetary reward they get from the jugo or the village elders.

This reward should be similar in amount to the total XP award for the monsters present in the adventure, if the villainous NPC(s) responsible for the events have been

identified. If the villainous NPCs are still at large, the reward should be reduced by one half.

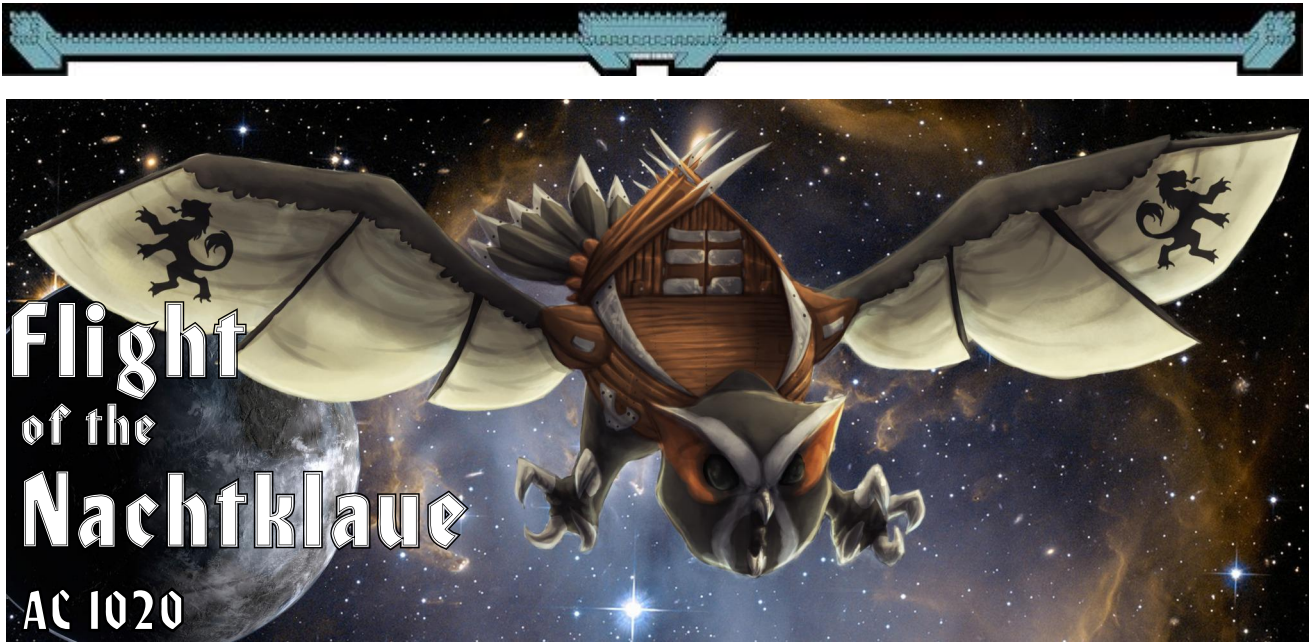
### Converting to other rules sets

For use with the Pathfinder RPG, use the Bone Golem or a Dread Wraith as the **greater evil**, Scarecrows statistics for the two wood statues in the dungeon, and a Giant Whiptail Centipede. Increase the level of all the Rakasta NPC by 2, using the Catfolk race.

For use with AD&D 2e, use the Rakasta of Mystara article to build Rakasta PCs. Since Rakasta in AD&D are a standard race, the adventure is suitable for characters of level 3-5. Most encounters can be used without modification.

### Playing Solo

The adventure offers some support for playing solo (ideally as a ronin named Sanjuro). You'll need to adapt the monsters and NPCs, or you can use Kevin Crawford's "Scarlet Heroes" rules, which provide a variant way to compute damage in BECM and similar games, which allows lone heroes to replace a party of similar level. If playing solo, you can randomly roll for the various secrets when the PC attempts to uncover them -- e.g., the PC starts the investigation by interrogating the murder witness, Kitaemon. He suspects that Kitaemon is not what he seems. Make a *Detect Lies* skill roll (or simply a Wisdom check, depending on the rules). If successful, the character is identified correctly -- each suspect NPC has a 1 in 3 chance of being one of the hidden players. Otherwise, his identity remains unclear. Also randomly roll for the NPC nature, and progress from there, building the story as the PC progresses in the investigation.



by John Calvin

with contributions  
by Håvard and RobJN

## INTRODUCTION

From the time that the Heldannic knights found the Star of Vanya and began producing skyships of their own, captains like the famed Wulf von Klagendorf, Gretchen von Straus<sup>1</sup>, Friedhelm von Donnerschlag<sup>2</sup>, and others have explored nearly every mile of Mystara, both on the surface and in the Hollow World. Now they turn their eyes to the black void, and they mysteries that lay beyond Mystara's skyshield.

This article introduces the Nachtklaue and her crew. Commissioned in AC 1018, the Nachtklaue is the new flagship leading the Heldannic Knight's space exploration program.

<sup>1</sup> See "[Kriegwind \(Warwind\)](#)" by John Hare at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>2</sup> See "[Sturzhahn](#)" by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius

## HISTORY

The Order of the Heldannic Knights is officially founded in 952 AC, by a sect of Hattians who follow the teachings of Vanya and who have begun to chafe under the strictures of Thyatian Imperial law. From the time of its founding until the present day, the Order is very active both on the Outer World, as well as the Hollow World, and even in the space around Mystara. The following is a short history dealing with the Heldannic presence in space. For a more detailed history of the Heldannic Knights see Bruce Heard's timeline articles *Heldannic Knights - Historical Timeline: [AC 313 - AC 1000](#) and [AC 1001 - AC 1020](#)*, located on The Vaults of Pandius.

**AC 952:** The Heldannic Order is founded by Hattian followers of Vanya.

**AC 961:** Luftkapitän Franz Eindecker flies a new warbird equipped with breathing devices to outer space and begins exploring. The polar entrances to the Hollow World are discovered.

**AC 963:** Myoshiman rakasta hail a warbird traveling near Patera, an invisible moon. First contact is established. The existence of the invisible moon is discovered<sup>3</sup>.

**AC 964:** Heldannic knights seize some land on Patera, outside the Myoshiman Empire. The rakasta emperor is offended and the knights are expelled. Both sides suffer heavy losses.

Prince Haldemar of Haaken arrives in Myoshima, and enters into diplomatic relations with the Empire. Myojo Katamura joins the crew of the Princess Ark. Lady Abovombe is held prisoner.

**AC 965:** Alphatians discover the Order's secret warbirds, Vanya's Rest, and how to reach outer space. They hold a Heldannic hostage on board one of their ships, the Princess Ark. Hochmeister Stamhoffer orders the Alphatian pirate, Haldemar and his band, to be destroyed by any means and as soon as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> This differs slightly from Andrew Theisen's accounting of first contact happening in AC 961 as listed in his "[Patera Timeline](#)" article at The Vaults of Pandius. This article will assume that contact was made in AC 963, and that war was declared a year later (in AC 964) as is detailed in Bruce Heard's Heldannic Timelines.

**AC 968:** The Heldannic Warbird Adler, under command of Luftkapitan Kauser' reaches the surface of Matora<sup>4</sup> after traversing the cold void for 58 days. They find little more than dirt grade quartz on the surface, however Herr Kaupf the geologist does find fragments of Krystall in the moon's highlands.

**AC 993:** Alphatian wizards teleport to Freiburg and wreak havoc on the warbirds and the surface fleet. The docks, warehouses, and the entire Freiburg fleet are engulfed in flames when the Alphatians depart. The illustrious "Adler" is among the destroyed skyships.

The prototype Uhuboote-class ship Nachtritter<sup>5</sup> is commissioned. It is a stealth ship designed to operate in the void of space beyond Mystara's skyshield.

**AC 995-997:** The Nachtritter spends the following two years on reconnaissance missions beyond the Skyshield, including a careful surveying of Myoshima.

**AC 999:** The Nachtritter was dispatched on an exploratory mission, again concentrating on Matora. Shortly after piercing the

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from "[Hollow Moon Exploration: 3... 2... 1... LIFT OFF!](#)" by Sharon Dornhoff, located on The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>5</sup> The Nachtritter is a unique Uhuboote-class shyship created by James Ruhland in the article "[The Nachtritter](#)" located at The Vaults of Pandius. The date of construction of the Nachtritter in AC 993 conflicts with the date of AC 1016 given by Bruce Heard as the first time Uhuboote-class ships see service in the Heldannic fleet. To reconcile these dates, this article assumes that the Nachtritter was a unique prototype ship (the first of its class).

Skyshield, all communication with the Warbird was cut off. The Vessel, and its crack crew, has not been heard from since. More remarkable even than this is the fact that even the most powerful of divinatory magics have failed to uncover any information about the fate of the ship, its crew, or their whereabouts.

**AC 1000:** A strange, yet unknown skyship is sighted on the Savage Coast. It appears to be under the command to the Alphatian pirate Haldemar, thought to have disappeared in outer space some 35 years earlier. Several warbirds give chase. Two are destroyed, others are damaged in combat. The Alphatian pirates escape.

**AC 1003:** The existence of Vanya's Grave is revealed to the faithful through the Churches of Vanya in the Heldannic Territories and Hattias.

**AC 1006:** Troubling news of the Myoshiman Empire reach Freiburg. There are indications they might be planning a military move against objectives on Mystara. Freiburg suspects they may be a target. The majority of the warbirds are ordered into space as a first line of observation and defence. Remaining warbirds are stationed at Vanya's Rest to patrol the region and protect the Holy Citadel. Their mission is to prevent foreign ships from following the regular pilgrim flotillas and discovering the location of Vanya's Rest.

**AC 1007:** Warbirds skirmish with Myoshiman scout units near Patera.

**AC 1010:** The Myoshiman skirmishers return to the surface of Patera. A few warbirds stay

behind to keep an eye on Myoshima while the others return to Freiburg. Heldannic forces turn their attention to Alphatia's presence in the Hollow World.

**AC 1013:** The Heldannic Inquisition under the command of Manfred Himmelbrand begins. Unusual lion-like rakasta, the Simbasta, are sighted in the vicinity of Vanya's Rest.

**AC 1014:** The entire Heldannic fleet of warbirds sails to Davania. They find Vanya's Rest abandoned. They attack the Simbasta in the open. Soon all the warbirds crash land as the Simbasta's Great Shaman finds out how the artifact works. Severely outnumbered, the Heldannic expeditionary force surrenders. Seeking merely to establish themselves as the knights' overlords in Davania, Chief Ikwanza convinces the Hochmeister to swear fealty to the Simbasta in exchange for the return of the artifact and the prisoners. For the permission to occupy Vanya's Rest, the Order also must pay a yearly tribute to the Simbasta.

**AC 1015:** Myoshima invades the Heldannic Territories. Secure with the knowledge that they can stop the Heldannic warbirds, the Myoshimans launch a massive assault on Freiburg's Great Fortress from the air. Heldannic warbirds, filled with knights and Simbasta nonetheless arrive from Davania and threaten to tip the scale in favour of the knights. Manipulated by Pyre, the dragons of the Wurmsteeth Range join with the Myoshimans, inflicting staggering damage to the warbirds. Wulf von Klagedorf challenges the King of the Dragons as the fortress goes up in flames. Kindling saves the day and reveals Pyre's plans to the king. Pyre escapes.

The dragons leave the battlefield. The Myoshimans, believing the knights defeated the dragons, are terrified at the awful turn of events and surrender. Forgiving and eager for peace, Wulf allows them to retreat to Myoshima. He then vows to restore true faith in Vanya among the knights and rebuild the Order, free of Thanatos' corruption<sup>6</sup>.

**AC 1016:** Uhubootes (Owlships) are recent additions<sup>7</sup> to the Heldannic fleet, and are otherwise used as long range recon and spy ships. They sometimes act in owl packs when a specific target needs to be dispatched rapidly.

**AC 1020:** Nachtklaue launches after two years of construction efforts have been completed. Under the command of Leeradmiral Graustehlen, its mission is to explore the planets in the void beyond Mystara's skyshield.

<sup>6</sup> For a full accounting of the Knight's struggles from AC 952 until AC 1015, see Bruce Heard's "*Heldannic Knights -- Historical Timeline* articles" ([AC 313 - AC 1000](#) and [AC 1001 - AC 1020](#)) on The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>7</sup> See the article "[Heldannic Warbirds: Uhuboote](#)" by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius for more information on the Uhuboote class of Heldannic warships. Although a prototype Uhuboote-class ship, the Nachtritter was in service in AC 993, additional ships were not included into the fleet until AC 1016.

## THE SHIP

The Heldannic voidship differs from the normal class of airship warbirds. It is a modified Uhuboote class vessel modeled after a Great Grey owl<sup>8</sup>, rather than an eagle or hawk. Its upper decks are fully enclosed, to help protect from the rigors of void travel.

Larger than a standard warbird, the Nachtklaue was designed for long term operation and self sufficiency on voyages through the void. The flagship of the Heldannic Voidfleet has the firepower and crew capacity to stand toe to toe with Alphatian Man of War ships, but because of its unique design it is equally adept at performing stealth missions, especially in the cold dark of space.

## Ship Statistics

The Uhuwaffen class of vessel combines the stealth features of a standard Uhuboote ship with the size and capabilities of a larger Sturmkondor class ship.

### Shore Boats

Nachtklaue also contains 4 ship to shore boats that attach to its sides. The capacity of these vessels is not enough to evacuate the entire ship. Each shore boat can accommodate a single squad of marines (10 to 20 individuals), and are often used to

<sup>8</sup> The scientific name for the Great Grey owl is *Strix nebulosa*, something that seems fairly appropriate for a voidship in the service of the Grey Lady.

### Uhuwaffen-Class (Man-o-War) Warbird

**Tonnage:** 1300 tons

**Hull Points:** 420

**Armour Class:** 1

**Lift Capacity:** 1900 tons

**Cargo Capacity:** 200 tons

**Air Speed:** 180' (60')

**Void Speed:** 360' (120')

**Mov. Factor:** ½

**Length:** 200' (incl. tail)

**Beam:** 275' (incl. wings)

**Depth:** 50'

**Hull:** Wood

**Crew:** ~100 sailors, ~350 marines

**Weaponry:** Blight Belchers (1 heavy, 4light), 2 ballistae, 1 light catapult, War Talons

**Defences:** Globe of Darkness.

transport soldiers and dignitaries to planetary locations while Nachtklaue remains in orbit.

#### Blight Belchers

**Heavy:** The heavy blight belcher<sup>9</sup> may be fired once per 24 hour period, and acts as a disintegration ray that can strike targets up to 400 feet away for 40d6 points of hull damage. Heavy belchers are designed to target enemy vessels rather than crew, although any crew member caught within its area of effect must make a Save vs Death Ray or suffer 10d6 points of damage. Targets

<sup>9</sup> More information about blight belchers can be found in the article [“Blight Belchers”](#) by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius. The properties of blight belchers in the article have been slightly altered from the original ideas presented by Bruce Heard.

further than 400 feet away may still be affected by the blast, however the potency of the ray diminishes by 1d6 for each additional 10' of distance. Nachtklaue's heavy belcher is located in its forward beak.

**Light:** Light blight belchers are designed to target crew on enemy vessels during close quarter combat. They fire a 60 feet long by 30 feet wide cone of energy causing all living flesh to suffer a withering effect. Living creatures within the blast radius must make a Save vs Death Ray or suffer 4d6 points of withering damage. A second Save vs Death Ray must be made in order to avoid a lingering Wasting Disease that may lead to loss of limbs and abilities. Light belchers are powered by a charged cylinder that can be fired 12 times before it needs to be replaced. Nachtklaue mounts two light belchers fore and two aft, and carries enough charges cylinders to reload each belcher 10 times.

#### War Talons

Nachtklaue's war talons are mounted on the underside of the ship and are powered by complex clockwork machinery derived from Snartan<sup>10</sup> Earthshaker technology. The war talons can operate in several configurations. It takes the war talon crew 6 rounds to change from one configuration to another.

**Grappling:** By extending and retracting the claws, Nachtklaue can attempt to grasp onto the hull of enemy vessels. Enemy ships successfully hit suffer 10d6 points of hull damage and are grappled. Once grappled an enemy ship may make an opposed attack to

<sup>10</sup> See the article [“Snartopolis”](#) by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius.

break free, but suffers an additional 5d6 points of hull damage upon succeeding.

**Slashing:** In this configuration the talons may be used to slash at enemy sails and rigging. Successful attacks will reduce the maneuvering class of an enemy vessel by 1.

**Landing:** Whenever Nachtklaue lands on a planet (or other solid object large enough to support it) its war talons must be set into their landing configuration. Unlike other configurations it takes the crew a full turn to manipulate the talons so that they can support the weight of the entire vessel.

### Globe of Darkness

Like other Uhuboote class ships, Nachtklaue may shroud itself in a globe of darkness once per 24 hour period. The darkness lasts for 6 hours or until a physical object passes through the boundary of the globe (from either direction). The darkness is one way, blocking the vision of those outside the globe while allowing those inside to see normally. This ability is typically used during reconnaissance missions or to facilitate Nachtklaue's escape.

### Ship's Power

Most Heldannic skyships are powered by the Star of Vanya, an artifact located in the Holy Citadel on Davania. The power granted by the Star has limitations in both scope and range, restricting the Heldannic Knights early attempts at space exploration to Mystara and its two nearby moons.

## Star of Vanya

The Star of Vanya, which the Heldannic Knights found when they discovered the earthly remains of their patroness Vanya, is a telekinetic artifact that allows them to create and power their skyships. Telekinetic force is channeled from the artifact and through a "skygem" which is housed in a small chapel on each Heldannic skyship.

In actuality, the Star of Vanya is more than any of the Heldannic Knights suspect, although Vanya herself does have an inkling into its true nature. It is an artifact created by the Old Ones, and its powers go far beyond simply keeping skyships afloat. The Old Ones created the Star as a test to the immortals. As more and more mortals come to rely upon it, the Star will continue to increase in power until finally it is able to reproduce itself. At this point, should more than two thirds of Vanya's followers begin worshipping the Stars instead of her, the Immortal will be consumed by the artifact. This process will continue until either the Immortals discover the threat and end it, or the Multiverse is cleansed of all current Immortals and the Old Ones can start over again afresh.

For more information about the Star of Vanya and the Old Ones' plot see Bruce Heard's article [\*"Vanya's Artifact"\*](#) at The Vaults of Pandius.



In AC 1016, the Star of Vanya created a nearly identical duplicate of itself, and the Heldannic space program was born. Slightly smaller than the original Star, the new Star, aptly dubbed the Celestial Star of Vanya, was earmarked to support an entirely new brand of flying ships. These new skyships, or voidships, were designed to operate in the cold dark of Mysteraspace, so that the Heldannic Order could continue to expand its influence across the stars.

Rather than risk both artifacts falling into enemy hands it was decided that the Celestial Star would be moved from Vanya's Rest and installed in a new location, one more befitting its new role. To that end, the Celestial Star was ensconced aboard the Nachtklaue and secreted away to the vastness of open space.

The Celestial Star currently only powers a handful of ships which includes the Nachtklaue and a few other smaller vessels designated to support the Heldannic space effort. For now the artifact remains aboard the flagship of the voidship fleet, but once a secure location is found it will be moved to a more permanent home.

### Celestial Star of Vanya

Having just been created by the "mother Star" two years ago, the Celestial Star of Vanya is still growing and has not yet reached its full potential. As the Heldannic Knights continue to acquire territory in space and gain new followers, the Celestial Star will continue to grow. Currently it is capable of supporting a total of 2000<sup>11</sup> tons of material

<sup>11</sup> The original Star of Vanya is capable of supporting 5000 tons of material, however



*Celestial Star*

telekinetically. Once the Celestial Star reaches its full potential, that capacity will double.

### Voidgems

Like its terrestrial counterpart, the Celestial Star of Vanya can redirect its telekinetic powers to another ship, as long as there is a remote vessel designed to receive its energies. Normal skyships use an item called a skygem<sup>12</sup> to harness this power, however the leeradmiral and her crew discovered that a more potent form of skygem could be created by infusing a magical jewel with shards of moon rock called krystall<sup>13</sup>. These

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the Celestial Star of Vanya will never be as powerful as its mother artifact. For more information see ["The Warbirds' Propulsion"](#) by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius<sup>12</sup> For more information on skygems see ["The Skygems"](#) by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>13</sup> Krystall is a sharp, nearly indestructible crystal that comprises most of Matora's solidified mantle crust. See more on krystall

krystall infused jewels, called voidgems by the Heldanners, are capable of doubling the Celestial Star of Vanya's carrying capacity. While a 30 carat skygem could provide lift to a 300 ton vessel for a day, a 30 carat voidgem could provide lift to a 600 ton vessel for a day (or to a 300 ton vessel for two days). This unique property of voidgems only functions in space, outside of a large gravity well such as that produced by a planet or planetoid. If operating within an atmosphere on a planet, the voidgem's power is reduced and it behaves exactly as a similarly sized skygem would.

## CREW

As the flagship of the Heldannic voidship fleet, Nachtklaue supports a large crew complement<sup>14</sup>. The brother knights and brother squires serve as ship sailors as well as soldiers when called upon.

- Leeradmiral Wilda Graustehlen
- Leerekaptain Kass von Himmelsturm
- Prior Nkiruka
- 20 brother chaplains
- 3 Knight Bannerets
- 16 Knight Bachelors
- 175 brother knights
- 250 brother squires
- 10 simbasta

## Officers

These are the officers that serve on the ship. Many have been hand picked by the captain herself for their dedication and loyalty. There are 3 Knights Banneret on the ship, each commanding one squad of marines. In addition, each Knight Banneret has 3-4 Knights Bachelors serving them as sub-commanders.

### **Dame Leeradmiral Wilda Graustehlen**

Thief 18 / Fighter 8, AL: L;  
Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10,  
Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 17;  
Hp 68, AC 7

Wilda Graustehlen has served in the Heldannic Order nearly since its founding.

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and the Hollow Moon at the Vaults of Pandius, or in previous articles of Threshold.

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<sup>14</sup> For more information about Heldannic military organization see the article [“General Organisation of the Order -- 2. The Military”](#) by Bruce Heard at The Vaults of Pandius

She first saw action in the second siege of Torgsdal where her sharp thinking and brutal efficiency brought her to the attention of her superiors. Rapidly rising through the ranks she felt her true calling as an agent in the Eyes of Vanya, proving instrumental in establishing their dominance.



*Leeradmiral Graustehlen*

Her crowning glory was championing the Uhuboote program and in the winter of 998 AC Wilda, along with several other members of the Eyes of Vanya served under Knight Banneret Zimmerman, luftkaptain of the Nachtritter during its fateful flight to Patera. She is one of the few people alive that knows of that ship's true mission, and what happened to it after it was lost.

Now well into her 80s, Dame Leeradmiral Wilda Graustehlen has resurrected the Heldannic voidship program, and is literally sitting at its helm. She is stern, uncompromising, and used to getting her way. Little on board escapes her eyes, and one of her favorite pastimes is pitting the crew against one another. She feels that such a spirit of competition brings out the best in her subordinates... and proves to her which of them is truly worthy of her attention.

### **Herr Leerekaptain Kass von Himmelsturm**

Cleric 22, AL: N;  
Str 14, Dex 11, Con 10,  
Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 9;  
Hp 64, AC 4

Kass von Himmelsturm served as a Prior aboard the Nachtritter along with, then Knight Banneret, Wilda Graustehlen. Advancing to Abbot in the Heart of Vanya after his mysterious return, Himmelsturm was sought out by the leeradmiral to captain her newest void ship, Nachtklaue.

A bristly perfectionist, Himmelsturm's seething hatred of Leeradmiral Graustehlen is a secret kept from none. Though his distaste of his superior is palpable, even to the leeradmiral herself, the leerekaptain obeys her commands without debate or hesitation. Himmelsturm's apparent respect toward the leeradmiral is actually little more than a patient psychosis. He believes that the voice which speaks to him from the Celestial Star is that of his patroness Vanya, and that for now the leeradmiral is acting according to her will. Should he ever feel otherwise, Kass von Himmelsturm would not hesitate to remove Leeradmiral Graustehlen from command.

The captain also has direct control over the Rear Guard, who serve as ship security.

**Knight Banneret Nadine Jodel**

Fighter 15, AL: L;  
Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13,  
Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14;  
Hp 60, AC 6

Always one to lead the charge regardless of the odds being faced, Knight Banneret Nadine Jodel is greatly respected and admired by the troops she leads. Although this boldness has served Nadine well in battle, it was not that quality that brought her to Leeradmiral Graustehlen's attention, but something much more discrete. Behind a loud and boisterous nature Nadine hides that fact that she is a leading operative in the Eyes of Vanya<sup>15</sup>, a Heldannic sect that recruits and controls mercenaries and spies in cultures outside of Heldannic territories.

Since her return from a brief expedition to the surface of Ishtar<sup>16</sup>, Jodel has been behaving rather strangely. While on the surface of Ishtar, the Knights encountered and destroyed a band of roaming spirits. Unbeknownst to all, one of the unclean spirits possessed Jodel to escape destruction, and now it is hiding out in her body, plotting revenge on the knights and an escape back to its home planet. To avoid detection the spirit has kept Jodel in her quarters and attempted to steer clear of other crew members. For now the leeradmiral assumes that Jodel is working on a mission for the

Eyes, but once her duties begin to lapse, the spirit will have very little time left before being discovered. If exposed, Jodel may yet be freed of the spirit. Prior Nkiruka, Leerkaptain Himmelsturm, and the Heldanner's new guest Darzayitr all have the power to exorcise the spirit, but the small fey creature may also be able bind it to an inanimate object, preventing it from possessing others.

Knight Banneret Jodel commands the Main Battle force, many of whom are also secretly members of the Eyes of Vanya.

**Knight Banneret Fritz "Schatzy" Schotts**

Lupin 10, AL: L;  
Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13,  
Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8;  
Hp 37, AC 6

Fritz is a constantly bristling lupin (of the Doggermen<sup>17</sup> breed) from Hattias, who spent his early career with the Knights in various campaigns to conquer and suppress the Heldann territories. Those who make the mistake of using his sobriquet only do so once, rarely getting away with less than unbridled snarls and a swift thrashing. The only person on board who does not receive this treatment is the leeradmiral, who succeeds only in raising the hackles on the back of his neck whenever she uses his moniker.

<sup>15</sup> For information on the Eyes of Vanya and other sects within the Heldannic hierarchy, see "[Heldannic Sects and Groups](#)" at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>16</sup> See the article *The World of Ishtar* by Stefano Leonardi in this issue of Threshold. The knights visited the region of Ruuva which is known to be haunted.

<sup>17</sup> See the article "[Lupin Breeds](#)" by Átila Pires dos Santos at the Vaults of Pandius, and the article "[History of Lupins](#)" by Átila Pires dos Santos (and Giampaolo Agosta) in *Threshold Issue #2*.

Short on temper and long on memory, Fritz is nonetheless an exemplary Knight of the Order. He demands perfection in himself, as well as all of those in the Vaward force reporting to him. Among his peers, Fritz is standoffish. He shares a love-hate relationship with Prior Nkiruka, and while he admires her abilities and accomplishments, he is also extremely jealous of the time she spends with the leeradmiral.

### **Knight Banneret Gerhold Nashorn**

Fighter 17, AL: N;  
Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14,  
Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 11;  
Hp 71, AC 6

A lumbering mass of sinew and muscle, Gerhold spent five years in the steamy lands of Vulcania operating a Heldannic schreckmaschine<sup>18</sup>. His campaign in the southern lands consisted of mounting periodic border skirmishes with a number of gnomish clans in the area, most notably against the Empire of Snarta. Gerhold's ability to keep his schreckmaschine operational, as well as his tenacity and dedication to Vanya, were what caught the leeradmiral's eye while she was putting her crew together. Now Gerhold, along with much of his former team, toil with the inner workings of Nachtklaue, operating the clockwork mechanisms in both the ship's wings and claws.

In addition to Nachtklau's gearworks, Gerhold is also responsible for commanding the Reward company, which is composed of

<sup>18</sup> See the article [“Heldannic Schreckmaschine Mk.I”](#) by Bruce Heard at the Vaults of Pandius.

his brutish compatriots from his time in Vulcania, as well as several stray ruffians picked up from across Mystaraspace. Although gruff, and often crass in demeanor, Gerhold is extremely loyal, especially to those with whom he has a shared combat experience.

### **Prior Nkiruka**

Simbasta Shaman of Vanya 12, AL: L;  
Str 16, Dex 11, Con 13,  
Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 11;  
Hp 37, AC 7

Nkiruka first met the leeradmiral at Vanya's Rest, shortly after the return of the Nachtritter. She took it upon herself to become the stern woman's personal overseer, but was quickly won over by Dame Graustehlen's strategic mind and warrior's heart. In the short years that followed, the young simbasta was enthralled with Heldannic traditions and has come to believe that The Grey Lady speaks to her. She is the first of her kind to ever take the Oath of Service and become a full member of the Order.

A consummate warrior, Nkiruka spends her days drilling with her fellow simbasta and the few knights who have the courage to spar with her, and her nights discussing strategy with the leeradmiral. She has taken a special liking to Trebouxior, who Nkiruka sees as a kindred spirit. Himmelsturm hates her, and she avoids him as often as possible, though her duties as a prior bring the two into regular contact. Nkiruka is itching to test her skills in combat and dreams of the day when she can lead the forces of Nachtklaue to conquer Myoshima and its upstart rakasta.

Until that day comes, she remains prepared, and tries her best to practice the leeradmiral's patented brand of strategic patience.

## Enlisted Crew

Unlike most Heldannic warbirds which only allow those who have taken the Oath of Service to serve aboard as crew members, Nachtklaue's crew roster is slightly more flexible. Leeradmiral Graustehlen herself has authorized several non-commissioned crew members onboard.

### Bazyli

Gnome 5, AL:  
N; Str 7, Dex 13, Con 11,  
Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 10;  
Hp 24, AC 8

Bazyli and a few dozen of his Snartan brothers were lucky enough to escape the purge of male clones from their home city of Quelquarun<sup>19</sup>. For years these poor gnomes lived their lives on the run, constantly hunted for by the moving city's reigning Warmaster, Azonia. As the fates would have it, Bazyli and his brothers were rescued by a Heldannic warbird exploring the region, and have since then been instrumental in the Heldanner's schreckmaschine program.

Far from a young gnome when he first fled his home city, Bazyli has nonetheless aged gracefully, and is still happiest when climbing amongst his machines despite the amount of white hair now atop his head. His last years

<sup>19</sup> See the article "[Earthshakers](#)" by Ethan Deneault at The Vaults of Pandius.

in Vulcania were spent serving with his friend Gerhold Nashorn as chief engineer of their schreckmaschine unit, but the old gnome nearly lept at the chance to serve aboard Nachtklaue when he heard the offer. Bazyli is close to the men of Rearward company, many of whom he served with in the past, though somewhat distant with other Heldanners on board.

### Darzayitr ("Darzy")

Soulbound-construct 7, AL: N;  
Str 8, Dex 12, Con 6,  
Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 16;  
HD 7-14 (Hp 16),  
AC 9 (4/2 when *bracers* activate)



*Darzayitr*

Only a little taller than the ship's halfling cook, the elfin girl Darzayitr is frail to the point of being almost bird-like. Due to the strain of the Nachtklaue's gravity, she usually spends her time in her water-filled crystalline sleeping-cylinder. If she needs to go anywhere else on the ship, her warforged companion carries her while she keeps herself submerged in one of Morpho's cauldrons (much to the halfling cook's consternation).

When she bothers to dress (an odd custom the ship's crew is constantly reminding her about), she wears a simple, floor-length, long-sleeved robe of a gray wool. The sleeves hide the intricately twined bracers of platinum, each of which wind from wrist to elbow, very nearly blending in with her alabaster skin. A tiara of the same metal weaves through her jet-black hair, adorned with a single, flawless sapphire. Almond shaped, slightly up-turned eyes the same deep blue never seem to blink.

She can imitate and interpret Raksakra's mechanical language, (her own voice, though, being silvery and musical, particularly her laughter when rattling off jokes with the hulking warforged).

**Possessions:** Vara-candra beacon stone, capacitor staff, platinum *Val'kiran bracers of defense*, *Val'kiran circlet*. Spells commonly memorized: L1: *Read Magic, Light, Locate*; L2: *ESP, Locate Object*; L3: *Create Water, Clairvoyance*

## Darzy's Equipment

### BEACON STONES

A beacon stone is an ovoid-cut blue dragonstone<sup>1</sup>, specially attuned to the Keysong siren of a Blackmoor military base or facility. Normally, they merely function as maintenance and service Specialty AIs, coordinating service of hardware and upkeep of a facility and its complement of vehicles, as well as the garrisoned flights shrieks and choirs of sirens.

Because Darzy is only the Second Voice of the Vara-candra facility, she does not have access to the Mind Bridge feature.

While wearing the Val'kiran circlet, Darzy has full access to the records stored within the beacon stone. These include comprehensive maps of Colonial Void Expeditionary Service travel lanes and

charts, the captains' logs, as well as Colonial Ministry of Research & Development plans for ships hulls, weaponry and propulsion systems. The extent of these charts and plans is left up to to the DM.

### Magic Item: Capacitor Staff

Composed of rare Sarimaarian wyftwood, this six-foot length of coppery-veined gray wood is tipped at one end by a metal sleeve, and the other with a slotted cylinder. Twisting the grip of the staff aligns the copper veins, closing the circuit, and allows the latent electricity held in the lightning-enhanced wood to build up in the metallic ends of the staff, to be discharged on the next successful hit within three rounds. The target takes an additional 2d4 electrical damage and is stunned for the next round. On a successful save vs paralysis, the target only takes 1d4 damage and loses initiative the next round from the jolt.

<sup>1</sup> Thorn's Mystara incorporates dragonstones (and elements from other campaign settings. For more information about Thorn's Mystara, see RobJN's blog.

**Morpho Heartwood; Ships Cook**

Halfling 5, AL: N;  
 Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12,  
 Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15;  
 Hp 25, AC4

This peg-legged halfling from Heartshire in the Five Shires serves as a the crew's chef. He is a somewhat somber halfling, but is well liked among the crew for his excellent food and his penchant for telling grim tales that always have horrific endings. Morpho is also in charge of administering the ship's alcoholic beverages, tobacco, herbs and medicine as he also serves as the ship's surgeon. Secretly, Morpho is actually a secret agent of Alphatia (He switches allegiance to Thyatis after the Wrath of the Immortals) and reports back on all discoveries made by the crew whenever he can. In spite of this, he has gotten rather fond of the crew and will fight to the death to protect his fellow crew members. As reporting back to Mystara becomes increasingly difficult, he keeps his notes in a secret compartment in his wooden leg.

**Possessions:** "Fillet Master" (Short Sword +1, +2 against Aquatic Creatures), Ring of Teleportation, Leather Armor, Shield, Healing Potion, Pipeweed, Carved Meershaum Pipe.

As long as Morpho serves on The Talon, all crew members recover faster from rest as they are under the care of a proper Halfling cook. Some optional rules for this can be found in the thread ["Natural Healing and Halfling Cooking"](#) in the Piazza Forums.

**Raksakra ("Rocky")**

Warforged 9, AL: N;  
 Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16,  
 Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 11;  
 HD 9+8 (Hp 60), AC 5

Thought to be a decommissioned iron golem, the knights brought the hulking warforged from Vara-candra onto the Nachtklaue as scrap. They may well have had most of him melted down, had he not reactivated on the knights' tampering with the other treasure they'd plundered: a crystal and metal coffin containing what appeared to be a sleeping faerie child.

Raksakra's speech is a wheezing click-clack that often sounds like loose bolts being dropped down the waste-chute, but the marines been teaching him the hand-talk usually reserved for silent boarding missions, and they are finding him to be quite the punster.

**Possessions:** Cydonian warblade+2, +3 vs. elementals, tower shield, lightning-shroud docent, self-repair kit (treat as either a use of the Healing skill or a half-strength potion of healing)

**Trebouxior**

Pyrithian Fighter 4, AL: N;  
 Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12,  
 Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13;  
 Hp 24, AC 4

Trebouxior belongs to the same race as the people of Emerond (see Dragon #166). This green skinned, silver haired humanoid warrior comes from an asteroid field known



as the Pyrithian Archipelago. He was part of an exploration mission in search for the lost Emerondian Colony that left for Mystara. Pyrithians are much more warlike than the Emerondians and look with scorn on their betrayal. It is also believed by many Pyrithians that the Emerondians brought with them to Mystara some secret treasures that the Pyrithians treasure. Unfortunately, the Pyrithian expedition was attacked by Myoshiman Void Riders and all but destroyed. Trebuxior was the sole survivor of the attack and was stranded on Patera until he was captured by The Talon. Gradually, he has earned the trust of the crew and now serves as a fellow crewman. He has even been allowed to keep his loyal mount Buzzer, a Pyrithian War-Hornet (See below).

Trebouxior suspects Morpho might be up to something, but since Trebouxior himself has been trying so hard to prove his loyalty to the captain, he feels like he cannot risk voicing his suspicions without solid evidence.

**Possessions:** Thorn-Steel Spear, Thorn Steel Banded Armor

*Table 1: Pyrithian War-Hornet*

Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	2 (M)
Move	30' (10')
Attacks	1 Sting
Damage	1d10
No. Appearing	1d6
Save As	F2
Morale	7 (12 when mounted)
Treasure Type	Nil
Intelligence	2
Alignment	Neutral
XP Value	850

These insects are magically enlarged so they can be used as mounts by the Pyrithian Warrior Caste. They do not die when they sting and can sting multiple times. Pyrithians attack from their backs using spears and lances made from Thorn-Steel.

**Monster Type:** Insect (Rare)

**Load:** 500 cn at full speed,  
1000 cn at half speed

Barding Multiplier x 1

**Ulfir**



Lupin 8, AL: L;  
Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13,  
Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 13;  
Hp 27, AC 7

A Heldann Shepherd, Ulfir serves as Knight Banneret Schott's personal squire. Larger and more imposing than

the other lupin, Ulfir nonetheless defers to his superior in all things, and is extremely loyal. He was little more than a pup when Vanya's knights conquered the Heldann Freeholds, even then living on the outskirts of society. Never fully accepted by his own pack, Ulfir found kindred spirits among the Hattian lupins that liberated his homeland.

Ulfir dreams of one day becoming a Knight of the Order, and believes that his commander and mentor, Fritz, is personally grooming him to take up that mantle. Ulfir gets along well with most of the lupins on board, and many of the humans as well, but has had

several confrontations with the simbasta, whom his has an innate distrust of.

## Marine Companies

There are several marine squads on the ship, each tasked with specific duties while onboard.

### Simbasta (Nkiruka's Pride)

10 warriors (simbasta F6 - F9)

This group of elite female warriors is completely loyal to Prior Nkiruka, and by extension the leeradmiral. Though none of these simbasta are dedicated enough to the Order to have taken the Oath of Service, they are consummate warriors who embody the teachings of Vanya, and are therefore respected by many onboard Nachtklaue.

A petty rivalry exists between members of the Pride and the Void Hounds, though so far none of their confrontations have resulted in real bloodshed. Nkiruka and her pride serve as unofficial bodyguards for the leeradmiral, and always accompany her on any mission planetside.

### Vaward Company (Void Hounds)

4 Knight Bachelors  
40 brother knights (lupin F5 - F8)  
60 brother squires (lupin F1 - F3)

The Vaward Company, lovingly known by those onboard as the Void Hounds, is composed mainly of Hattian lupins. Hardened veterans all, the lupin soldiers in Vaward Company have seen campaigns in

Heldann, Norwold, and Ethengar, were many served as forward scouts and trackers in the Heldannic army. On Nachtklaue the Void Hounds perform much the same purpose, with at least one or two being assigned to every away team where their heightened senses can be put to best use.

While manning the ship, Vaward Company is responsible for port side defenses and weapons installations. The company falls under the command of Knight Banneret Fritz Schotts.

### Main Battle Company (Jodel's Banshees)

4 Knight Bachelors  
40 brother knights (F5 - F9)  
60 brother squires (F2 - F5)

The Main Battle Company is composed of battle tested knights and squires from across every Heldannic territory, from the Heldann Freeholds to Hattias, and even the far reaches of Davania. While some of the strongest and most skilled warriors on board, they are also the most travelled, and the most at ease with blending into native populations. Many of Jodel's Banshees are also secretly members of the Eyes of Vanya, and are always actively looking to recruit more agents into the fold.

Before battle these soldiers perform a hauntingly eerie chant culminating in a high pitched war cry (something their commander taught them), for which their company gets its nickname. The Main Battle Company falls under the command of Knight Banneret Nadine Jodel, and is charged with leading most assaults and holding the forward defensive positions on the ship.

**Rearward Company (Gerhold's Brutes)**

<p>4 Knight Bachelors  40 brother knights (F4 - F10)  60 brother squires (F2 - F3)</p>
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Rearward Company is comprised of equal numbers of shipwrights and veterans of campaigns against the Snartans in Vulcania. Most are thick-armed and barrel-chested, proudly sporting the wounds and scars received in previous campaigns. While more than competent warriors, Gerhold's Brutes are also engineers and mechanics, a good portion of whom have seen action from inside a Heldannic schreckmaschine. Their skills and experience are put to good use operating Nachtklaue's War Talons and mechanized rigging, and many carry large "war-wrenches" which double both as weapons and as tools to operate the ship's machinery.

Commanded by Knight Banneret Gerhold Nashorn, the Rearward Company is charged with defending Nachtklaue's starboard side and with keeping all of the shipborne weapons and machinery in working order.

**Rear Guard Company**

<p>4 Knight Bachelors  40 brother knights (F4 - F6)  60 brother squires (F1)</p>
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The Rear Guard Company reports directly to Leerkaptain Himmelsturm. Most new recruits accepted onboard are brought into this company for training. In addition to learning the ropes, the Rear Guard is responsible for maintaining Heldannic order on the vessel.

**PORTS OF CALL**

While one of Nachtklaue's primary missions is one of exploration, there are several locations that the ship visits on a semi-regular basis.

**Materan Mines**

Very near the original landing site of the Adler<sup>20</sup>, the Heldannic Knights have built a prison mining facility. An early survey by the Nachtritter during one of its shakedown flights revealed something near Mare Orientalis that the Adler's crew never saw... signs of an ancient civilization. Little has been gleaned about who originally built the now shattered outpost, though based on artifacts found throughout the site, the inhabitants were probably humanoids of some type living inside of a magically protected environment. Whatever safeguards once existed are now long gone, and the ruins of this ancient site are just as exposed and deadly as the surrounding Materan terrain.

Cursory exploration by the Heldannic Knights did however reveal a shallow cavern system, which they have since secured and made marginally habitable. From this small refuge the Knights mount mining expeditions across the nearby highlands, where fragments of krystall can be found in profuse quantities. The outpost is

<sup>20</sup> See the article "[Revamping Matera](#)" by LoZompatore at The Vaults of Pandius. The Materan Mines can be found very near the marker for the Blackmoorian Outpost #9, B.O. #9 on the "[Matera: Full Settlements Map](#)" at the Vaults of Pandius.

maintained by a small, dedicated cadre of Knights, and a slightly larger prison workforce, made from some of the most hardened criminals in the Heldann Freeholds; heretics, apostates, and rebels.

Nachtklaue visits the prison on a semi-regular basis, bringing in new prisoners, refreshing the guard, and transporting the gathered stockpiles of krystall off the moon. This is a very important operation for the Heldannic Knights, as the krystall is a crucial component in the creation of the void gems that will help power the Order's new generation of void ships. Despite this, the Knights have been relying on secrecy rather than defensive fortification to keep the site safe.

### Port Klagendorf

Originally founded as Mondorf in AC 963, this small military outpost has been razed and rebuilt several times in the half century since it was first established<sup>21</sup>. It was last destroyed in AC 1015 during the Myoshiman first assault wave against the Heldanners. They attacked the outpost, setting fire to the three warbirds stationed there before proceeding with their invasion of Freiburg. In the aftermath of that conflict, the outpost was rebuilt a final time and renamed in AC 1017 to honor their recently departed leader. Recent years have seen an influx of simbasta colonists along with a bolstering of the Heldannic Order's troops, enough so to turn

what was once a lone military fortress into a small fortified village.

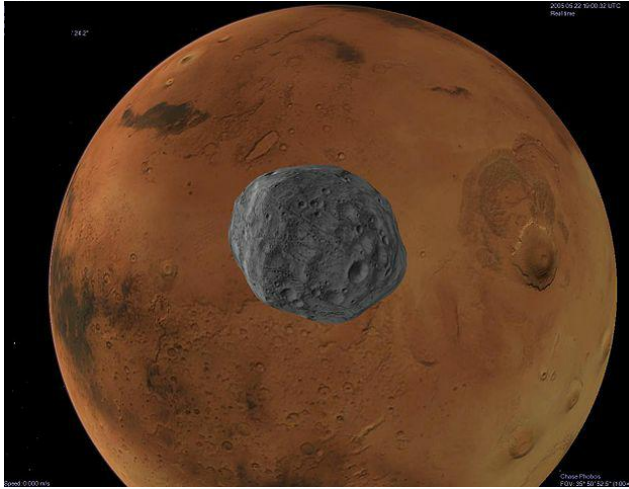
A cordial relationship exists between Port Klagendorf and the country of Selimpore<sup>22</sup>. The Knights trade off world goods and in exchange the Matriarch of Selimpore recognizes their sovereignty and has agreed to offer aid in the face of Myoshiman aggression. Indeed the Knight's plans for this area run much deeper. Heldannic advisors can be found throughout Selimpore, providing that nation with council regarding military tactics, weapon and armor manufacturing, and even shipbuilding techniques. The Heldannic Order intends to prop Selimpore up as a buffer state between themselves and Myoshima and use it as a beachhead to invade that nation once their forces are fully prepared.

In the meantime, Port Klagendorf is the primary shipyard for the construction of voidships in Mystaraspace. The Nachtklaue and her crew berth here regularly, bolstering the outpost with supplies, simbasta colonists, and rotating crew and personnel for the fortress and accompanying voidships. Leeradmiral Graustehlen considers Port Klagendorf as a potential candidate to house the Celestial Star of Vanya, once that artifact achieves its full power and potential. Of course the outpost is far from being secure enough for that honor at the moment.

<sup>21</sup> Port Klagendorf can be found on the southern polar peninsula 4 hexes southwest of Jorung in Selimpore. See the article ["More details about Patera"](#) by LoZompatore and ["Patera World Map with Political Borders"](#) at The Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>22</sup> For more information about Selimpore see the article ["Patera Project: Selimpore"](#) by Andrew Theisen at The Vaults of Pandius

**Vara-candra, near-side of Amiva, first moon of Sarimaar**



Located on the edge of the near- and far-sides of Sarimaar's first moon Amiva, the site called Vara-candra is incredibly ancient, dominated by a huge stone monolith towering nearly 300 feet over the desolate moon's surface. There are signs that other buildings might have once been part of a larger temple complex, but most have either been blasted to rubble by impacts, or buried in the gritty sands that cover much of the moon's surface.

The monolith is not of any stone native to Sarimaar, Amiva, or her smaller sister moon Sadara. Slick, smooth, but not reflective, if anything, it seems to absorb light, and the shadow it casts is somehow darker than the others cast by Ixionis over the moon's surface.

The Heldannic crew discovered the means of entering the seamless, featureless monolith quite by accident, when they flew into the stone while in its shadow, to find themselves in what looked to be something of a sky-port: aerial berths for at least half a dozen ships

even greater in tonnage than the Nachtklaue, as well as what looked to be resupply and cargo hoists, warehouses, barracks and offices.

On initial exploration, the entire complex appeared abandoned, though signs of battle — an unknown number of years, decades, or even centuries past — were evident: scorch marks, smashed and broken furniture, wrecked machinery.

The Knights have since marked the site for further exploration and retrofitting for use as a resupply station and garrison.

## MISSIONS

Nachtklaue and her crew have several missions to accomplish while traveling the void lanes in Mysteraspace.

## Exploration

One of the ship's primary missions is that of exploration. Although the Heldannic Knights are well aware of the invisible moon Patera and its inhabitants, there are several other nearby planetary bodies waiting to be explored.

### Matera

When prisoners break free of the krystall mines and flee over the crystalbarrens of Matera, the crew of Nachtklaue is in close pursuit. They track the prisoners over the barren sea of Mare Orientallis, but when the trail leads to an unexplored cave, the Heldanners discover more than they bargained for. Following the labyrinthine

caves deep underground for several days the party finally emerges in a world of constant twilight. Whether or not they are able to apprehend their former prisoners, the Heldannic Knights have an entire new world to explore... one that was literally under their feet.

### Ishtar

Only two planets lie in the direction of the sun, but one of those, Ishtar, is nearly as large as Mystara itself. Damaged in battle the Nachtklaue finds itself flying low over the caustic northern seas of Ishtar when a strange and ominous island<sup>23</sup> drifts into view. Having little choice but to land and make repairs the crew is beset by one mishap after another, until inexplicably the Celestial Heart of Vanya disappears. The party must track down the Star, and retrieve it from the Hag who took it before they can leave the deadly island.

### Sarimaar

A band of pyrithian pirates flee the Nachtklaue after an ill fated attack in the asteroid belt, seeking shelter on the nearby planet of Sarimaar<sup>24</sup>. Unable to catch them in time the crew nonetheless tracks them to the frozen northern polar region where the pyrithian's ship darts into a glacial tunnel. Following their prey the crew finds a lush land hiding beneath the icy crystal dome of

<sup>23</sup> This is the Sea Hag's Island. See the article on "*The World of Ishtar*" by Stefano Leonardi in this issue of Threshold for more information.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on Sarimaar, see the "[\[Thornspace\] TS1: Sarimaar, The Red Wanderer](#)" thread by RobJN at The Piazza

the north pole. Who or what awaits them should the venture further is unknown, but it is clear that the pirates have friends nearby.

## CONQUEST

At their core, the Heldannic Knights, just like their patron Immortal, are conquerors, and are constantly on the lookout for their next military challenge. Not only concerned with expanding their territory across the stars, the Knights are also driven to bring the worship of Vanya to like-minded souls.

### Myoshima

For nearly 80 years the Knights and the rakasta of Myoshima have been at odds with each other, but the balance of power may be about to shift. In the past decade an increasing number of simbasta have been immigrating to Port Klagendorf, and they and their Heldannic allies are itching to test their mettle against the Myoshiman samurai to the north. The nation of Selimpore, another ally of the Knights, launches an invasion fleet to storm the island nation, and Nachtklaue is tasked with leading the battle.

### Tarastria

Beyond the reaches of Sarimaar, or even the Pyrithian Asteroids, lies the gigantic planet of Tarastria<sup>25</sup>. Essentially a large ball of air, Tarastria nonetheless is capable of supporting life. Nachtklaue, while exploring the upper atmosphere near the violent weather pattern known as The Blood Storm,

<sup>25</sup> For more information on Tarastria see the "[\[Mystarospace\] Tarastria](#)" thread by ripvanwormer at The Piazza forums.



stumbles upon an ancient floating fortress of known design. Ancestors of the Alphantian Followers of Air colonized this region of Tarastria centuries ago. The crew of Nachtklaue must decide whether to attack or befriend the inhabitants of the fortress before otherworldly beings pouring forth from The Blood Storm descend upon them all.

## Star of Vanya

As the Heldannic Knights expand their influence into space, other nations of the Known World may take notice and begin to enter a larger arena... but the mortals of Mystara are not the only ones to take notice. From their city of Pandius, the Immortals may begin to stir and feel the ripples of energy radiating from the Stars of Vanya as the Heldannic Knights grow in power.

Even as the crew of Nachtklaue searches for a safe haven for their new Celestial Star, minions of the other Immortals move to block them. Whether the crew falls under the influence of the Star, or begins to understand its true nature, they will be faced with deadly opponents and nearly insurmountable odds.

## Damocles - Mystaraspace's Fourth Planet

*(Continued from page 128)*

Mystaran cultures. The tasloi language has been modeled on a jungle culture, once more with few linguistic ties to cultures already mapped to Mystaran civilizations.

Finally, the map of Damocles in this article contains a reference to the "Forbidden City". This is a reference, of course, to the classic AD&D adventure, "Dwellers of the Forbidden City" by David "Zeb" Cook. The adventure does not have a place on Mystara, as it includes many non-BECMI monsters. However, it feels very appropriate for Damocles, so a good placement is provided.



<http://spelljammerblog.wordpress.com/>

# The Exiles Campaign Setting

## A Spelljammer Campaign in Mystara



*FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS*

by John Calvin

### INTRODUCTION

The Exiles Campaign Setting is derived from both the world of Mystara and the Spelljammer setting, and is intended to be an epic space adventure series in the same vein as Star Trek, Star Wars, Firefly, and other “space opera” settings. In the Exiles Campaign Setting, Known Space is a place where magic and technology meet. It is a place of ancient wonders and long hidden secrets... and it is populated by all of those who have been cast out by the immortals.

On Mystara, throughout the ages, great civilizations have arisen and grown in power... some of them powerful enough to travel the void and visit other worlds... some nearly powerful enough to challenge the immortals themselves. Each in its turn was punished for their ambition. These nations of upstarts were all defeated, but not

completely destroyed. Instead they managed to escape from their home sphere and their planet of origin, Mystara, spreading out across the rainbow seas. Now they have grown strong again and the immortals should be fearful.

Likewise, the peoples of Mystarospace should count themselves lucky that the ancient exiled races have never been able to find their way back to the sphere. Even those few Mystarans that remember the myths, have little comprehension of the terrible power that the exiled races wield. If they did, spacefarers would never journey past Mystara’s crystal shell, for should they ever be discovered, the outcome would be inevitable... the exiles would be coming home...

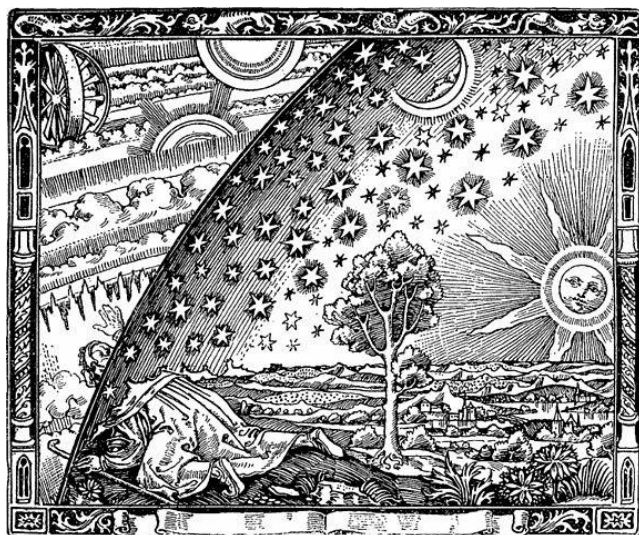


## OVERVIEW

The Exiles Campaign Setting combines aspects of both Mystara and the Spelljammer Campaign<sup>1</sup> setting in order to create a new and unique spacefaring environment for PCs to explore.

### Crystal Spheres

In the Spelljammer universe, campaign worlds and their solar systems are encapsulated within gigantic crystal spheres. The sizes of crystal spheres vary, with the general rule being that their radius equals twice the radius of the furthest planet orbiting the central star of the system. Wildspace, the void within a sphere, and the planets that traverse it, are all governed by the specific rules and properties of that sphere, though different spheres may abide by different physical laws.



<sup>1</sup> For more information see the Spelljammer Campaign setting, the [Spelljammer wiki](#) pages or visit the [Spelljammer forums on The Piazza](#) website.

The outer shell of the sphere is an opaque crystal, indestructible and impenetrable, except through specific magical means. Those who travel between spheres are able to open temporary portals in the shell, large enough for spelljamming vessels to pass through.

### Phlogiston



*Flow River over a Crystal Sphere*

The phlogiston, an infinite plane filled with magical rivers of a colorful and explosive gaseous element, connects all of the crystal spheres in the multiverse. The phlogiston, or flow as it is sometimes called by spacefarers, can be traversed by spelljamming ships, allowing travelers to visit far away crystal spheres<sup>2</sup>. Phlogiston rivers (also called flow rivers) can be one-way only, or allow travel in both directions. The magical properties of the phlogiston allow vessels traversing it to attain unthinkable speeds, however ships that leave the flow slow down, and may end up trapped;

<sup>2</sup> This is the mechanism by which the Spelljamming Campaign Setting connects all of the different D&D campaign worlds.

essentially “stilled in calm waters”. The distances between spheres is vast, and typically measured by the number of days it would take a spelljamming vessel (travelling at spelljamming speeds) to travel from one sphere to the next.

## Spelljamming

Spelljamming vessels, essentially naval ships in space, make use of a magical item called a helm. Oftentimes shaped as a large chair, the helm siphons off all magical energy of the person or creature sitting in it and converts that energy into a motive force for the ship. For this reason spelljamming vessels require a magic user, cleric, or similarly empowered individual to act as the ship’s navigator, and many ships employ multiple such individuals.

A ship’s helm must be firmly attached to the hull of the ship, and when powered provides motive force both when traveling through wildspace within a crystal sphere as well as through the phlogiston.

## The Lost Sphere

Within the Mystaran Cluster of spheres, Mystaraspac<sup>3</sup> is unique in that it is not permanently attached to the phlogiston. Rather it bobs up and down in the flow, coming into contact with nearby flow rivers for brief periods of time before once again passing through them entirely. It is because

of this unique property that Mystaraspac has remained hidden from the cultures inhabiting nearby spheres for millennia. Even races which were spawned within the sphere, including the carnifex, Blackmoorians, and Nithians, have no way to return home unless the timing is right. Though they may not know how to return home, many of those races still keep the memory of Mystaraspac alive in their tales and legends.

Finding the Lost Sphere again, could be the ark in a major plotline centered around the races and cultures of the Mystaran Cluster. The ramifications to native Mystarans could be astronomical should any of those ancient races find their way back home again.

### IMMORTALS vs. GODS

These are rough notes, and as yet many of the details are not finalized. Since I’ve never actually ran an Exiles Campaign, I’ve never needed to do this. The words “god” and “immortal” are used interchangeably (rest assured I am talking about Mystaran immortals when you see either word). The terms “Known Space” and “Known Spheres” describe the same thing (this campaign setting) and can also be used interchangeably. The Known Space of this setting is not the same as the Known Space of the classic Spelljammer setting.

<sup>3</sup> Mystaraspac is the name spacefarers use to refer to the crystal sphere containing Mystara. Generally crystal spheres are named for the primary (campaign) world inside of them.

## Campaigning in Exiles

The power level of the Exiles Campaign can range from that of first level characters all the way to immortal level, and a campaign in this setting could unfold in several different ways:

Characters could be natives of Mystara who have just found passage out of their own crystal sphere. They would be thrust into the turmoil of the spheres surrounding them and would soon learn that their origins could cause them to be hunted down ruthlessly.

Characters could be natives of any of the Exiled Nations. They would soon hear rumors of a ship traveling through their space that claimed to hail from the mythical home world. The characters would have to track down this ship and take its secrets before their enemies had a chance to do the same.

Characters could be immortals set with the task of combating the Exiled cultures. This could either be played out as a series of war games with armies of the Faithful pitted against the Exiles, or as immortal level encounters. In the latter case the players will match up against Blackmoorian Hierarchy lords and the Outer Beings.

## HISTORY

Thousands of years have spanned since the first culture, the carnifex, left Mystaraspaces to traverse the spheres. Although too many events to chronicle have happened since that time there are several incidents that have shaped space in the Mystaran Cluster over the eons, foremost among them, the exile of three of Mystara's most powerful cultures.

### Carnifex Exile

The carnifex are an ancient saurian race (very similar in appearance to a velociraptor) that lived on Mystara over 15,000 years ago. There their culture saw its height as the race gained mastery over the entire world and developed magic and technology to rival the immortals themselves. And rival the immortals they did. Many of the carnifex turned from their worship of the immortals to worship of the Outer Beings, vast and disturbing entities. With the help of their new servants, the Outer Beings wished to overthrow their immortal brethren and win control of the multiverse. The immortals proved too strong for the Outer Beings however, and both they and the carnifex who served them were sealed into a prison plane.

**14,000 BC:** The Carnifex are driven from Mystaraspaces and begin to explore and colonize the Inner Spheres.

**13,000 BC:** Remnants of Outer Being worship begin to slowly work their way back into Carnifex civilization.

**12,000 BC:** Carnifex civilization thrives across all of the Inner Spheres, although it is not monolithic. Various carnifex empires rise and begin to compete with one another. They also begin to explore and colonize Core and Elemental Spheres.

**11,000 BC:** The first Outer Being purge begins. Carnifex society is torn in half and civil wars rage across their space. Followers of the Outer Beings make their bid for power, but are eventually put down.

**10,000 BC:** Carnifex interests begin to invade the Core and Elemental worlds in earnest. They make war with any native species that they encounter.

**7500 BC:** The Carnifex are now well established throughout the Inner, Core, and Elemental Spheres. They spend most of their time waging war upon one another.

**7000 BC:** The second Outer Being Purge begins. Once again the Outer Being cultists try to seize power. After centuries of bloody conflict they are driven to the dark corners of space.

**6500 BC:** Elven ships first make their way into Known Space. First contact with the Carnifex does not end well and the two cultures are plunged into conflict. Unfortunately for the elves their presence in the area is not strong, and there are no reinforcements forthcoming. [This may have been due to the fact that the Mystaran Cluster is relatively isolated from the crystal spheres that the elves hailed from.]

## CARNIFEX DOMINANCE

One concern regarding the Exiles Campaign setting is the vast amount of time between the original carnifex exile and the introduction of any other Mystaran culture into space. Given the power of the carnifex, and the amount of time they had to establish themselves in space, it may be hard to believe that any other culture could have dislodged the carnifex enough to establish a hold in their territory.

The time between Carnifex exile and Blackmoorian exile is roughly 11,000 years; more than enough time for the carnifex to solidify their control of all of Known Space. There are however, several factors which might explain how the lesser (mammalian) races would have been able to carve out their own domains from carnifex territories.

**Carnifex Corruption:** Carnifex society has always been plagued with the cancer of Outer Being worship. This provides a source of constant conflict within carnifex cultures and may help to keep carnifex interests turned inward rather than outward. Several times throughout their tenure in space, the carnifex have instituted purges on a stellar scale to rid themselves of these vile cultists.

**Sheen Life:** Once they were exiled, it didn't take the Blackmoorians long to deduce that they were greatly outnumbered by their enemies. Both the carnifex and the immortals wanted nothing less than to wipe the memory of Blackmoor from Known Space permanently. Desperate, to turn the

tides, the Blackmoorians fell back on old crafts they had developed on Mystara and created the sheens, sentient machines, as the vanguard of their armies. Despite the fact that they ultimately lost control of their creations, the end result still proved beneficial as carnifex resources were squandered on removing sheens from territories that they had invaded.

**Saurian Plague:** The third exiles from Mystara, the Nithians, brought with them a deadly plague... but one that only infected saurian life. As the ancient Malpheggi lizardmen of Mystara discovered, the Nithian plague was epidemic, decimating all saurian life that it encountered. In the wake of Nithian expansion, entire carnifex populations were removed from the spheres, leaving their cities and structures to waste in eerie silence.

**6000 BC:** Some elves stumble upon Mystarospace and land on Grunland. They are the ancestors of all elves on Mystara.

**5900 BC:** Elves in Known Space (outside of Mystarospace) are crushed. They are relegated to slave species status within Carnifex space. Their numbers will dwindle to near extinction over the next few centuries.

**4000 BC:** On Mystara, the culture of Blackmoor rises.

### Blackmoorian Exile

Blackmoor was a small feudal nation on Mystara over 4000 years ago. In a short period of time that small nation rose up to be the dominant power on the planet, and they did so because of a freak accident. A starship crash landed on Mystara and soon the Blackmoorians were recovering technology from it. They used this "new magic" to conquer their neighbors and eventually venture into Mystarospace. Unfortunately for them, magic and technology don't mesh well together. Some claim that it was an accident. Some claim that it was hubris, and still others claim that it was an attack on Blackmoor by its rivals. The only claim that can be for certain, was that it was bound to happen sooner or later. 4000 years ago a catastrophe occurred when Blackmoorian technomancy caused the Great Rain of Fire and nearly destroyed all life on the planet.

The Mystaran Blackmoorians were doomed. Only those that were off world survived. The immortals however were horrified. Whatever the cause of the Great Rain of Fire, the immortals were determined to never let such an occurrence happen again. They sought after the Blackmoorian remnants, determined to destroy them and their hated technology. The Blackmoorians did not wish to die, and they were powerful enough to defend themselves. The immortals however had the upper hand, and like the carnifex before them, the Blackmoorians were driven from the sphere.

**3000 BC:** The Great Rain of Fire occurs on Mystara devastating the planet and destroying most of Blackmoor. The immortals drive the rest of the Blackmoorians out of the sphere with the intent of destroying them utterly. The Blackmoorians fight back turning some of the Inner Spheres into what are today called the Shattered Spheres. Several immortals are subsumed into Blackmoorian Furnaces creating the first Hierarchy lords. The immortals do not press the attack and the Eternal War is born.

**2999 BC:** Blackmoorian refugees begin to explore their surroundings and find a multiverse populated with hostile saurian creatures.

**2950 BC:** Remnants of Blackmoor find refuge in the sparsely populated Fringe Spheres and some of them begin to put down roots. Others maintain a nomadic lifestyle.

**2100 BC:** For the third time in 12000 years carnifex society is infected by Outer Being worship. This time the cultists manage to take control of several nations, and the Carnifex culture as a whole is weakened. Those territories seized by the cultists transform into dark and foreboding places.

**2000 BC:** Blackmoorian elements in Fringe space have become strong once again. They begin to push their way into more desirable space, dislocating the Carnifex already established there. In order to help them combat these fearsome foes the Blackmoorians begin to develop sheens, which are self-replicating constructs designed for war.

**1950 BC:** Permanent outposts are built by the immortals on several of the Inner and Shattered Spheres, and the first waves of the Faithful are sent to occupy them.

**1500 BC:** The nation of Nithia is born and begins its rise to power.

Blackmoorian incursions into Carnifex space have begun to isolate their colonies in the Inner Spheres.

**1000 BC:** Sheens and sentient Blackmoorian constructs rebel from their masters and the Sheen War starts. Blackmoorians begin to purge their territories of all artificial life.

**900 BC:** The first Nithian colonies are established in some of the nearby Inner Spheres. The local inhabitants (mostly carnifex) do not view them on friendly terms and hostilities begin. Due to their relative isolation (thanks in part to the Blackmoorians) these carnifex holdings are in a weakened state<sup>4</sup> and are hard pressed to keep the new invaders out.

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<sup>4</sup> It is unknown exactly when the Nithians brought the Saurian Plague (the very disease that also destroyed the Malpheggi lizardman culture on Mystara) to the spheres. It is quite possible that the plague co-existed with the Nithians from their very first forays into space. For one possible theory of how the plague developed, see [“The Undead of Elegy Island”](#) and the entry for Jaime “Honey-Creeper” Ahuain Threshold Issue #13.

## Nithian Exile

The Nithian culture arose on Mystara nearly 1,500 years after the Great Rain of Fire and was the last major culture to be exiled from Mystarospace. They built unparalleled monuments around their world and eventually built great pyramid ships that would take them to others. Although technologically primitive compared to the Blackmoorians before them, the Nithians developed magic that none on Mystara had ever seen before nor since.

Unfortunately the age of Nithia was not to last.

Dark immortals desired the downfall of the culture and worked hard to bring it about. Many of the pharaohs turned from their immortal patrons to worship other things (some even say that they began to worship the Outer Beings). They began to rain destructive magic upon the face of the planet that would have rivaled the catastrophe caused by Blackmoorian technology, had not the immortals opposed them. Nithia was destroyed and all memory of it was erased from mortal minds... at least on Mystara. Planar and planetary colonies did survive, although greatly reduced in power once support from their homeworld was removed.

**500 BC:** The Nithians have turned from the worship of the immortals and are expunged from Mystaran history. A handful of Nithian colony worlds in the Inner Spheres are spared.

**450 BC:** Nithian colonies, newly cut off from their home world (and each other) begin to struggle for survival. Surprisingly resistance from carnifex neighbors has died down considerably, and the carnifex threat has all but disappeared.

**300 BC:** Carnifex civilization has disappeared in nearly all of the Inner Spheres. The Nithians now have enough space to stabilize their positions. Even with the carnifex threat gone, this is not an easy task, and many of the colonies die out due to other factors. The few that manage to survive will require centuries before attaining their former glory.

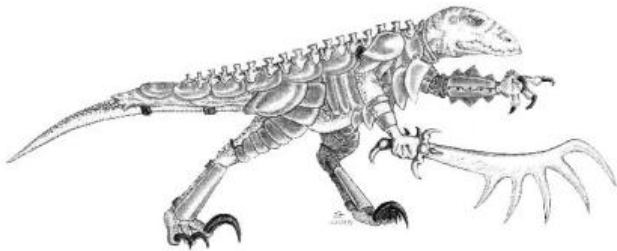
**500 AC:** Most sheens have been driven from Blackmoorian and Carnifex held spheres and are relegated to inhabiting the Shattered Spheres.

**1000 AC:** The current era. The Carnifex continue to hold most of the Core Spheres as well as all of the Elemental Spheres. Blackmoorian culture thrives in Fringe Space and has managed to expand into former Carnifex Core territories as well. Nithian culture is once again on the rise and the immortals are gaining more influence throughout Known Space.

## CULTURES

This is a listing of the major cultural groups that can be found in the Known Spheres, and to a lesser extent in the Shattered Spheres. It is not a comprehensive list by any means, and all of the names and titles are subject to change.

### Carnifex



Those carnifex escaping the Immortal's purge fled to the far reaches of the Mystaran Cluster, but their resilience and aggression helped them to conquer nearly every sphere they encountered. In a few millennia after their exile, the carnifex became the dominant life form throughout the region.

Blackmoorians entering their space proved the first real threat that the carnifex had faced since the Immortals drove them from Mystarospace. Though battles between the two cultures were fierce, the carnifex never really lost much territory until the Nithian Plague. Despite this, the carnifex are still a major power in the region, firmly in control of the Elemental Spheres and with a strong presence in both the Inner and Core Spheres.

While the carnifex culture still dominates many spheres, it is far from monolithic. Over thousands of years, and across multiple spheres that they control, the carnifex culture has continued to fracture and evolve.

#### Carnifex Clans

The Carnifex Clans are the most prolific group of carnifex roaming the spheres. There are countless clans, each controlling anywhere from two to thousands of ships. Many of the clans are semi-nomadic. For the most part they roam across the spheres in search of game or battle and make camp at semi-permanent way stations and compounds along the way. A few of the clans are more sedentary and have built up larger settled communities on several planets and planetoids. Any single clan is rarely organized enough to control more than one such of these communities.

#### Degenerate Outer Being Worshippers

These carnifex practice the "New Ways." They worship entities known as the Outer Beings. This is the same worship that their Mystaran bound brethren were punished by the Immortals for. Now these corrupted creatures slink through dark places in the spheres.

#### Dragon Ruled

Several dragons have taken it upon themselves to rule over the carnifex and have carved out kingdoms of their own, both minor and major. The dragons maintain a more orderly society than exists in the free clans, but even so there are numerous disturbances. Many of the dragons fight



amongst themselves for ultimate supremacy over their carnifex subjects. In order to better maintain control several dragons have taken to breeding with their subjects to create half-dragon/half-carnifex offspring. These creatures become trusted advisors and generals.

### Dragon Spawned

Some carnifex spurn the rulership of their dragon overlords and have set out on their own paths. Ironically, many of them claim to have some dragon blood in their ancestry and they are often just as cruel and power hungry as the dragons that they shun.

## Blackmoor

The Blackmoorians that escaped the initial onslaught of the Immortals found themselves in a multiverse of little mercy. Their early years outside of Mystaraspace were fraught with peril, and oftentimes death. With most of space being dominated by the carnifex, there were very few footholds for the Blackmoorians to claim. For centuries they were relegated to the Fringe Spheres, and to other hidden backwater refuges.

In an attempt to turn the tides of their fortune, the Blackmoorians created sheens, a fighting force of intelligent machines that could help them wrest territory from the carnifex, but it wasn't until the Nithian Plague struck that they finally managed to gain the upper hand against the reptilian races.

Now there is a strong Blackmoorian presence in the Core Spheres, and they continue to expand from there into the Elemental and

Inner Spheres. Like the carnifex, Blackmoorian culture has fractured over the millennia giving rise to several different societies.

### Hierarchy / Immortal Slayers

The Hierarchy Lords are the very same individuals who fought off the immortals millennia ago. Each managed to slay one or more of the immortals and assume some of their powers. Now the Hierarchy Lords are themselves like unto gods, and they rule their minions with an iron fist. Their only desire is to return to their home sphere and exact revenge upon those that rule it.

Hierarchy members are organized into a pyramid type structure with Radiant Lords (those who have built and powered their own Furnace<sup>5</sup>) at the top, and those of lesser powers, who are reliant on somebody else's Furnace, trickling down to the bottom.

Each Hierarchy Lord is semi-nomadic. They spend most of their time traveling throughout the spheres searching for immortals to slay. During their travels they may demand services and resources from local populations, and may use force to acquire them. Occasionally they will conquer native populations but their nomadic nature means that they never stay long enough to exert their control.

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<sup>5</sup> Radiant Lords build a device called a Furnace, which is able to control and manipulate the radiance in a fashion similar to that of the Nucleus of the Spheres (see GAZ3: "The Principalities of Glantri"), or Chamber of the Spheres (see GAZ13: "The Shadow Elves").

The Hierarchy Lords meet infrequently in order to discuss tactics, and organize larger assaults against their immortal enemies.

### **Technological / Imperial**

This technologically advanced culture is composed mainly of humans, emerondians, and dwarves. They have used their vast abilities to build a small empire that spans across several spheres (although they don't dominate any of the spheres completely).

The Empire is very structured and is essentially the force holding human (and demi-human) society together in the Known Spheres. They are constantly at war with their carnifex and Sheen neighbors. These Blackmoorians especially despise sheens and other artificially constructed life forms (they fear that their ancestors created the first sheens by accident – which is correct) and seek to eradicate them at every opportunity.

### **Free Cities**

These territories are located at the fringe of Imperial Blackmoorian space. Although they conduct trade with both the Imperium and the Hierarchy, they rule themselves independently. Many of the free cities are friendly with the various sentient constructs as well (although not with sheen life) and this is the one place where they can be found in abundance.

Most of those who live in the Free Cities live a more sedentary lifestyle. Spelljamming is known to them, but they rarely journey far from their homes.

### **Progeny of the Frog**

This group is composed of those emerondians that are directly descended from Saint Stephen's<sup>6</sup> Cult of the Frog. Although they have several small bases throughout Blackmoorian space, they rarely take open control of planetary systems and prefer to work behind the scenes. Their goal is to transform Blackmoorian society into something more to their liking.

### **Sheens**

The result of Blackmoorian technology run amok, the sheens<sup>7</sup> are a semi-sentient race of constructs that have overrun vast portions of known space. They are a scourge to everything that lives, for their appetites (for raw materials and resources) know no bounds and empathy is not within their programming.

Sheens are the only major race that came into existence outside of Mystaraspaces, although they were created by the exiled Blackmoorians.

### **Construct Controlled**

Several small groups of sheen cysts are controlled and led by ancient (and quite sentient) Blackmoorian constructs. These creations fled the Blackmoorian Imperium

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<sup>6</sup> Saint Stephen was one of the Federation aliens who survived when their ship crash landed on Mystara.

<sup>7</sup> The idea for Sheens was borrowed from Dragon Magazine. More information on Sheens can be found in Dragon Magazine issues #258 and #260.

during the machine wars and went to live among their non-biological brethren. The centuries since then have fostered a deep seated hatred for all things Blackmoorian (and to a lesser extent, all things living).

The Empire hunts these groups most vigorously, and the constructs return the favor whenever they can. They also battle with the pure sheen cysts over resources and sometimes are able to supplant the machine mind with their own rulership.

### **Pure Sheen**

Pure sheen cysts are the scourge of the known spheres. Nearly every sentient creature is their sworn enemy, for they ravage any environment they enter in order to gather raw materials for their own replication. Indeed replication seems to be their only goal.

The one factor that keeps these cysts in check is their inability to produce spelljamming equipment (namely helms). Their only way of traveling throughout the spheres is to acquire spelljamming helms from others (by force...they know no other way). The Empire will often try to eradicate any sheen cyst that they come upon before it has the chance to acquire a helm and spread.

### **Nithia**

Unlike the great cultures that had come before it, Nithia's space exploration was in its infancy when the Immortals decided to purge them from history. Despite this, a few off world colonies did exist, mostly in the Inner Spheres, and managed to escape the

fate of their motherland. Those that did not starve due to lack of infrastructure and support, managed to expand and thrive.

Whether the Nithians developed a biological weapon to combat the carnifex, or unknowingly brought a reptilian plague with them when they first colonized the spheres, the resulting decrease in saurian populations is what allowed them to establish their power base. Soon after the arrival of the Nithians, the carnifex and their saurian allies fled the Inner Spheres and to this day continue to avoid them.

Since their founding, and the subsequent destruction of Nithia, the isolated Nithian colonies have had to rely on their own self-sufficiency to grow and thrive. Over the centuries this has caused their societies to evolve in very different ways.

### **Eb-Or (Entropy worshippers)**

Not all Nithians ventured into space in stone pyramid ships. Many made use of magical gates crafted by planeswalkers. After contact was lost with the mother world, the lore required to operate the gates quickly faded from the minds of the Nithian colonists, causing them to turn toward the worship of dark immortals in order to sustain themselves. Most of these populations now live in abject terror while their rulers practice dark rituals that will grant them everlasting life...as the living dead.

### **Menkor-Thoth**

This offshoot of the Nithian culture shuns worship of the immortals and instead focuses their energies on arcane learning. Many of

their leaders are powerful wizards who spend their time creating magical servitor races. Just as their ancestors created the gnolls on Mystara, these wizards vie to create the best servitor race that they can. In fact, the number of servitor races that one has created is seen as a sort of status symbol.

### Gate Masters

Like the Eb-orians, these people have forgotten all about their spelljamming past and have focused instead on planar travel. They have succeeded in re-opening several gates to other lost Nithian colonies. Plagued by ambition, paranoia, and infighting, the pharaonic leaders of these people spend much of their time plotting against one another. Battles near ancient portals are common, whether the Gate Masters currently claim such land or not, as their armies are known to pour through the portals at the drop of a pin.

### World Builders

These Nithian descendants control a dying sphere. Its once hot sun is growing dimmer and dimmer and all of the planets in the system grow cold. In order to survive the Nithians are using their pyramids to build a habitat nearer to the sun. In time they hope to encircle the entire sun with a sphere of their own... one made from the stones of their own pyramid ships. Each of the planets is filled with slaves who work desperately in the quarries mining stone to build more ships. Eventually nothing will be left of the frozen planets.

## MINOR CULTURES

There are several minor cultures that inhabit known space along with the Exiled Nations. These are either natives to the area, or else they were brought to the area by one of the Exiled. Rarely do they control more than a single planet, and most often they survive by keeping themselves hidden from their neighbors.

### Aranea

It is unknown whether or not the spider people are natives of this space or of Mystara space, but small pockets of them exist throughout the Known Spheres. Other spidery creatures can also be found in or near these communities. Phase spiders often serve as allies or servants, as do ettercaps. Dokufu<sup>8</sup> can be found in some communities as leaders.

### The Faithful

Communities of those who still worship the immortals are interspersed throughout Known Space. Most of them are strongholds set up by their immortal patrons to do battle against the Blackmoorians.

The Faithful can be members of any race and creed. Most of them hail directly from the plane of their patron immortal, and their only purpose in being in known space is to fight against the Blackmoorians.

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<sup>8</sup> Dokufu are evil shape changing spiders found in the *Oriental Adventures* setting.

## Elves

Elves are a rare species in most of Known Space, although there is evidence that the elves journeyed through this area in the distant past (some 7000 years ago). Most of the elves in Known Space now are either Nithian slaves, or followers of The Faithful. The Blackmoorians despise elves (blaming them for causing the Great Rain of Fire), and the carnifex see most mammal life as a source of food, so elven populations don't last long in either territories.

## Lizard-kin

Lizard-kin<sup>9</sup> cultures are numerous throughout Known Space due to the fact that their species have been in the area for over 14,000 years, brought here by their carnifex masters. Most still serve as servitor races to the carnifex and the dragons, but a few scattered colonies have managed to gain their independence.

## Goblin-kin

Goblin-kin are rare in Known Space, having never ventured out into the void on their own. The majority of them were brought as slaves by the Nithians, and so they are most numerous on the few Nithian home worlds. Several populations have managed to win their freedom, and some are also known to offer their services as mercenaries to any who can afford them (and can afford to trust them).

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<sup>9</sup> The term lizard-kin includes lizardmen, troglodytes, siss'thik, caymen, gatormen, ophidians, and many other reptilian species.

## Aberrations

Although they do not have a culture of their own, aberrations are common among communities of Outer Being worshippers.

## FEATURES OF THE FLOW

The crystal spheres of the Mystaran Cluster<sup>10</sup> are not the only features of interest in the region. The vast phlogiston expanse that connects the spheres holds just as many, if not more secrets<sup>11</sup>, waiting for explorers brave enough to find them.

### Mystara Flow

Connecting the southern spheres in the cluster, Mystara Flow enters the region through Thanatos' Sickle, and flows eastward passing through Bugspace, Webspace, Bluespace, and Coldspace before finally exiting the cluster. Passage through the Sickle is slow and arduous, but the flow speeds up between Bugspace and Webspace.

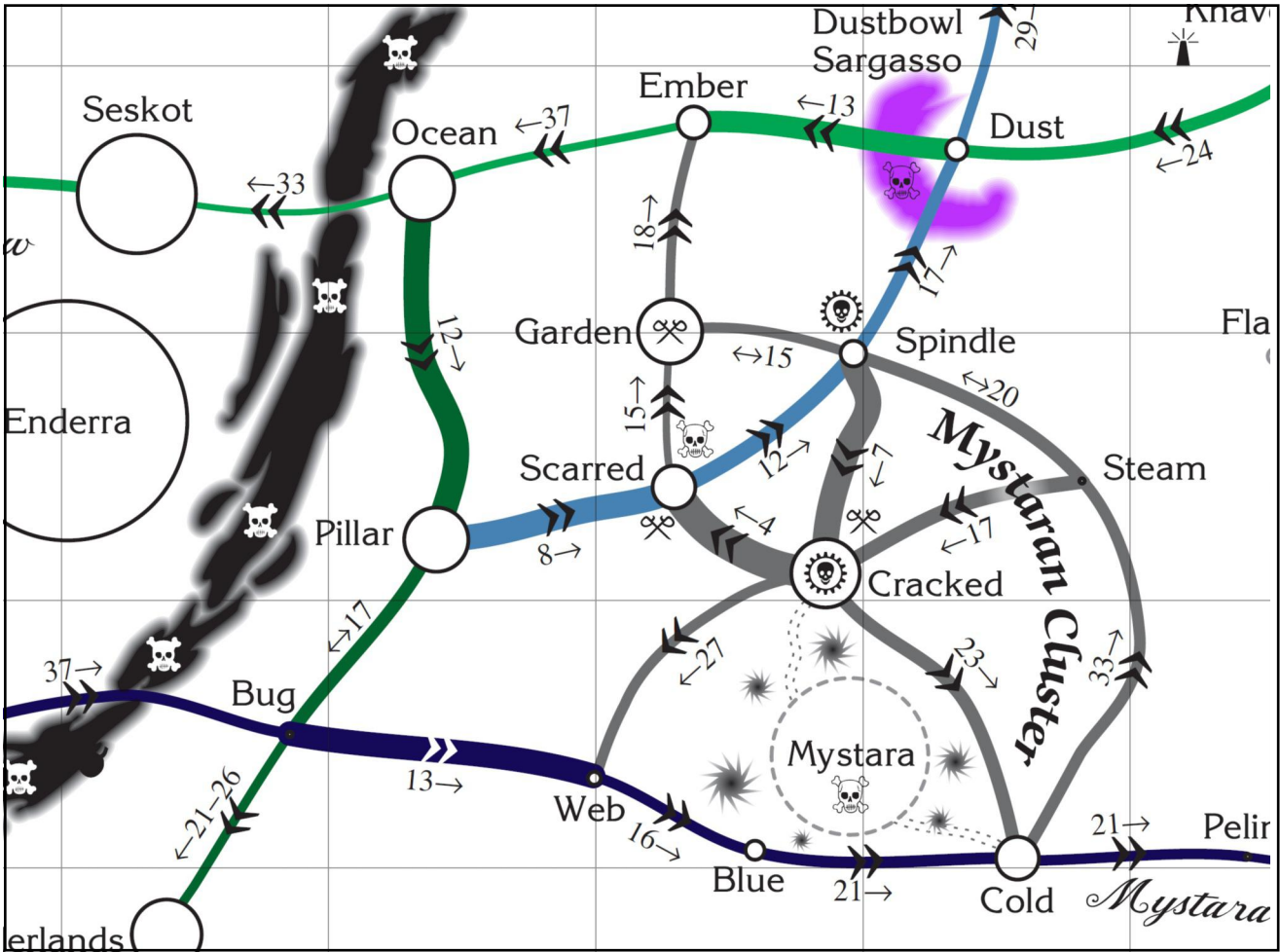
East of Webspace, Mystara Flow becomes more turbulent, and is plagued by phlogiston eddies and vortices that can send ships off course for days. Unlucky travelers may even be pulled out of the flow by such phenomenon, becoming stranded in the void

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<sup>10</sup> The map of the Mystaran Cluster of spheres is an extract of a much larger flow map created by nerik. See the [\[Mapping\] That's a lot of Spheres!](#) thread at The Piazza for more information. The full map can be found here ["Flow Map"](#) document.

<sup>11</sup> For more discussion of such secrets, see the [Features of the Phlogiston](#) thread on The Piazza

# Mystaraspace Sphere Cluster



Phlogiston Phenomena	Phlogiston Rivers	Crystal Spheres	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beacon</li> <li>Dark Region</li> <li>Pyroclastic Flow</li> <li>Pulsing Phlogiston</li> <li>Shadow Cloud</li> <li>Phlogiston Vortex</li> <li>Flow Reef</li> <li>Sargasso</li> <li>Chaos Rift</li> </ul>	<p>(Width is proportional to speed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known Flow River</li> <li>Unknown Flow River</li> <li>Predominant direction</li> <li>Unidirectional direction</li> <li>Tidal Flow River</li> <li>Cycle (active/total)</li> <li>Erratic Flow River</li> <li>Chance of occurring</li> <li>Route off flow river</li> </ul> <p><b>Travel Times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>↔12 both directions</li> <li>←18 one direction</li> </ul> <p>(Times in days unless suffixed; y: years, c: centuries)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 days travel across</li> <li>20 days travel across</li> <li>50 days travel across</li> <li>Known Sphere</li> <li>Unknown Sphere</li> <li>Erratic Sphere</li> </ul> <p><b>Drift Direction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very Slow</li> <li>Slow</li> <li>Medium</li> <li>Fast</li> <li>Very Fast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notable Port Facilities</li> <li>Notable Trading Port</li> <li>Dangerous</li> <li>Deadly Danger</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>War Zone</li> <li>Pirates</li> <li>Beholders</li> <li>Clockwork Horrors / Sheens</li> <li>Flowfiends</li> <li>Humanoids</li> <li>Illithids</li> <li>Imperial Elven Fleet</li> <li>Neogi</li> </ul>

between the rainbow rivers of the phlogiston. Offshoot rivers sporadically form in this flow, but wary travelers assiduously avoid them, for their destinations are unknown, and their existence is temporary.

### **Casa Flow**

Casa Flow enters the Mystaran Cluster from the east, meandering westward through Dustspace and the Dustbowl Sargasso, to Emberspace, Oceanspace, and then leaves the sector as it passes through Thanatos' Sickle. It intersects with Pillar Flow near Dustspace, and passes near the head of Eadhel Flow at Oceanspace, but despite this, Casa Flow is considered to be a relatively calm flow to travel.

### **Eadhel Flow**

The headwaters of Eadhel Flow spring forth at Oceanspace, and move southward from there to Pillarspace and Bugspace, before exiting the Mystara Cluster. Most of the flow is unidirectional, however backwater currents travel northward from Bugspace to Pillarspace regularly enough to be traveled by spelljammers in the area.

Although the flow parallels Thanatos' Sickle, it never actually crosses through that dark region of the phlogiston. Despite that, the flow comes close enough to the Sickle that flowfiends often enter the river making the journey from Oceanspace to Pillarspace especially dangerous.

### **Pillar Flow**

Pillar Flow springs forth from Pillarspace, the phlogiston river is thick and turbulent from

that sphere to Scarredspace. From there it flows to Spindlespace, and then passes through the Dustbowl Sargasso and beyond Dustspace to regions unknown. Phlogiston storms are common along this route and when they occur next to a crystal sphere ships may be blown off course or even smashed against the outer shell of the sphere. Despite this Pillar Flow is widely traveled by most races in the region, since it is the gateway to the inner spheres of the cluster.

### **Lost Flow**

A myth to most space travelers in this region, the Lost Flow is a transitory river that leads the way back to Mystaraspace. Speculations for where this river exists run high among believers, though none who have ever found it (if any have) ever return to tell the tale.

In fact the Lost Flow is real, and forms at specific times over the eons between Crackedspace and Coldspace in an area plagued with phlogiston vortices and other perils that scare away most sane space travelers.

### **Asterius' Bazaar**

Several large asteroids, made of solidified phlogiston, float in the phlogiston river between Gardenspace and Spindlespace. Seven of them are large enough to have settlements built on them and are referred to collectively by travelers as Asterius' Bazaar.

Due to the often volatile nature of the phlogiston, violence of any kind is expressly forbidden in The Bazaar, making it one of the few places in the Mystara Cluster that all races and creeds can come together. The Bazaar is

used as a sanctuary by those fleeing persecution, a meeting place for those who have little faith in their business partners, and in general a refuge for lost souls.

### **Dustbowl Sargasso**

Phlogiston rivers in this region become very thin and slow flowing. Despite this, vessels traveling through the Dustbowl Sargasso are often coated in a fine granular material very similar to dust, from which the sargasso gets its name. Those lingering in the area for too long may find their ships buried in flow dust and risk being mired in the Dustbowl Sargasso forever.

The flow dust gradually clears and dissipates once the region is exited, allowing ships and other vessels to resume normal operations again.

### **Maw of Crakkak**

An immense flow maelstrom, with Spindlespace at its heart, the Maw of Crakkak, is the doom of even the most experienced spelljammers. Formed by the merger of Pillar Flow and three other rivers around Spindlespace, the Maw of Crakkak is a roiling cacophony of phlogiston that buffets and blasts ships of all sizes. Navigating near the crystal shell is extremely dangerous. Ships entering and exiting the system are always in danger of being smashed to pieces against the sphere.

Expert navigators can use the Maw's power to their own advantage. By skirting along the edges of the maelstrom, skilled spelljammers can reduce their travel times by days, by using the power of the massive storm to

slingshot their vessels into one of the intersecting flows. Such maneuvers are still dangerous however, as less skilled navigators have crippled their ships attempting to ride the violent currents.

Ravagers, wild bands of carnifex pirates, often frequent this region in the hopes of finding disoriented vessels ripe for pillaging.

### **Thanatos' Sickle**

This dark expanse of the phlogiston nearly spans the entire western border of the Mystaran Cluster and beyond. Though rivers of phlogiston still flow through the region, their normal inner glow is greatly dimmed, and the entire region appears as if bathed in continual twilight. Crews who remain in the area for extended periods begin to hear voices calling them to jump overboard into the darkness, and those who succumb are never seen again. Even those who manage to stay aboard their vessels do not come away from the experience unscathed, and many suffer from pallid humours and reduced constitution.

Even more pressing dangers lurk within, as the region is rife with flowfiends, evil creatures living in the dark phlogiston waiting to waylay and spirit away unsuspecting travelers. Especially large and powerful flowfiends may even journey some distance from Thanatos' Sickle and into intersecting flow rivers, making neighboring areas nearly as dangerous as the dark region is itself.

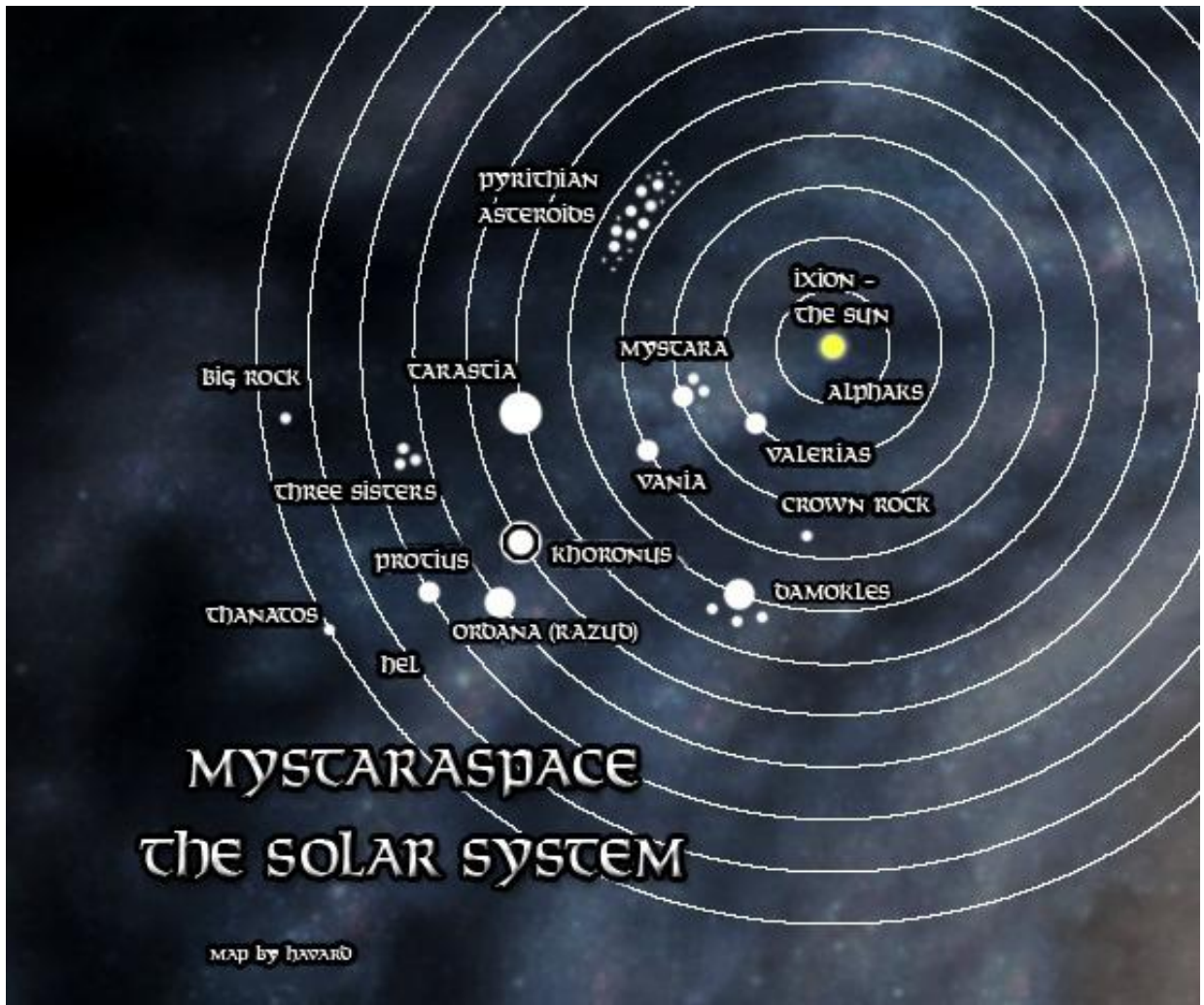


## SPHERES

The exiles campaign uses the classic Spelljammer cosmology in which crystal spheres (each encompassing a separate star system) float in a medium of flammable, rainbow colored gasses, called the Phlogiston (also sometimes referred to as the rainbow seas). The Known Spheres are grouped into several broad categories, each of which will be described below.

## Mystaraspace

This crystal sphere gets its own grouping because it is unique among all of its peers. Although most crystal spheres bob gently up and down in the rainbow sea, Mystaraspace's crystal sphere behaves more violently. It travels up and down in a great arc, sometimes coming into contact with the phlogiston, and sometimes leaving contact with it. It is only during these periods of contact that ships can enter and leave the crystal sphere freely. Each of the above mentioned Exiled cultures happened to leave the sphere at a time when it was in the



rainbow sea, but none have ever been able to find it again because of its highly variable location.

There are also several phlogiston vortexes near the Mystara crystal shell that can confuse and confound space travelers. These are areas of intense storms where the flow just roils with activity. Ships entering the storms can be thrown off course, damaged, and sometimes even destroyed.

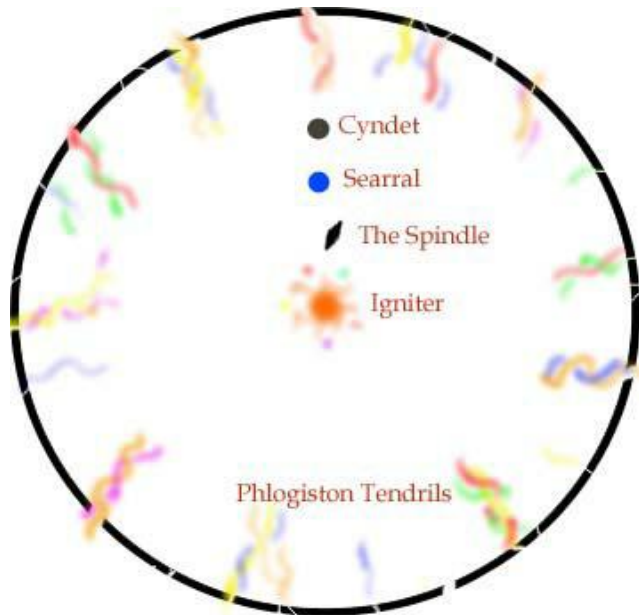
### Shattered Spheres

The Shattered spheres all have one thing in common: they are all battered, blackened, and nearly destroyed by the ravages of war. Not any normal war, but a war against the gods themselves. It is in these spheres that the Blackmoorians made a stand against their immortal pursuers. Very few creatures live here now, but the systems still see much activity.

Sheens dominate these spheres, constantly searching for spelljamming helms that they can hijack. Some aranea manage to eke out a living here, as well as small communities of escaped slaves (elves, lizard-kin, goblin-kin), or stranded ship crews.

Blackmoorian incursions into the area are frequent, as this is one of the major battlegrounds against The Faithful. The carnifex also come here, although slightly less frequently, searching for treasure and ancient artifacts. Both the carnifex and the Blackmoorians attack sheens on sight. They clash with each other as often as not.

### Crackedspace



The crystal shell of this sphere is cracked in several places. Phlogiston actually leaks into the sphere and makes its way to the central sun. Once the phlogiston makes contact with the sun it ignites and creates a fiery inferno across the sphere, burning itself out until the entire process begins again.

Long ago the sphere was controlled by the carnifex and several of the charred planets still hold crumbling carnifex strongholds. Near the sun hovers an obsidian spindle the size of a small moon or large asteroid. It is rumored to be the ancient stronghold of carnifex Outer Being worshipers. Few dare to access its reaches for it is constantly bathed in the fire brought by the phlogiston explosions.

Sheens dominate this space now. They are fairly impervious to the firestorms that rage across the void. The sheens have mining operations on many of the charred worlds

here, and are ready to pounce upon any unwary travelers in the area in order to acquire more spelljamming helms. The sphere also sees many confrontations between the Blackmoorians and The Faithful.

### Scarredspace

The inner and outer layers of this sphere's crystal shell sport severe craters, as if violent explosions had marred their surfaces.

The Ring of Asterius is located here, a giant stone ring floating in the void. The Ring is a portal to the home plane of Asterius, and the immortals use it as a staging ground from which to send their troops into Known Space.

There are a half dozen worlds in this sphere, all of them pock marked with black craters, and all of them completely devoid of native life. Those who spend too much time in this sphere find that they have contracted a strange wasting<sup>12</sup> disease. Only the magic and protection of the immortals can ward off the disease and sustain life in this sphere.

### Spindlespace

The crystal shell of this sphere is flaking away, producing vast shard spindles that float off into the void of space (and sometimes collide with the planets therein). Over the years, the spindles have collided with each other, as well as with the planets of the system, and have destroyed nearly everything within the sphere. Now the sphere is an obstacle course of death. Those who cannot

<sup>12</sup> This wasting disease is very similar to the effects suffered by those who come into prolonged contact with the Radiance on Mystara.

avoid the quickly moving spindles are doomed.

Its sun, if there ever was one, is now dark and lost to the reaches of time and space, leaving this shell without any natural light source. There is illumination however, provided solely by the sphere's multitude of sheen inhabitants.

Spindlespace also conceals an abominable new form of sheen life in the artificial planetoid called Lattice near the center of the sphere. Unique from their brethren across the spheres, these sheens are amalgams of biological and metallic life. They scour Spindlespace for spindles to continue building Lattice, and also journey beyond the sphere in search of other resources, both organic and inorganic. Unlike other sheen ships that leave their home cyst, these sheens are programmed to return to the cyst with their prizes.

## INNER SPHERES

This grouping of crystal spheres also has a highly variable location in the Phlogiston. Each of the spheres bobs with a noticeable movement in the rainbow sea, though few of them actually leave it. These spheres are the closest to Mystaraspace (when it is in contact with the phlogiston).

The Nithian culture is dominant in these spheres, but theirs tends to be a very fractured existence. Most nations only control a portion of the world that they inhabit, and none are world spanning. These spheres also hold the highest concentrations

## Elves in the Exiles Campaign

Elves play a large role in the Spelljammer Campaign Setting, and are one of the few races powerful enough to have a unified, multi-sphere nation. Assuming that the DM wishes to run a Spelljammer campaign from Mystarospace, one of the questions they may need to answer is how Mystaran elves relate to other elves in the setting. Ultimately it is up to the DM to decide this issue, however we present three different options below.

**Elves Evolved on Mystara:** If you choose to go this route, then any elf met outside of the Mystarospace system would be the descendant of some elf that at one point in time left the system to travel the multiverse. This option works fine, especially for a Mystara-centric campaign, where discovering other RPG worlds (like Krynn, Greyhawk, or Faerun) is not an option. Going with that option however, almost defeats the purpose of using Spelljammer, since those rules were intended to tie multiple RPG campaign worlds together.

**Elves Migrated to Mystara:** Elves first appeared on Mystara about 7000 years ago (circa BC 6000). One way to integrate Mystaran elves with other elves across the spheres is to assume that at some point in the past an elven expedition stumbled upon Mystarospace, and decided to colonize it. This explanation may not fit with other Mystaran creation myths (that the elves were created by Ordana, or the elven mythology of the Dragonlord series).

## Elves Evolved in Multiple Locations:

One of the unexplainable mysteries of the multiverse (especially in a magical multiverse) may be that elves evolved in multiple locations independently. Perhaps elven life was seeded in these areas by elven gods or immortals. Perhaps the magical nature of the multiverse itself shapes these beings in very similar ways. The truth may never be known, but despite this, elves from different systems still share a feeling of kinship with one another.

of aranea, elves, free living lizard-kin, and goblin-kin.

There is also evidence throughout these spheres of more ancient cultures. The oldest structures here are believed to have belonged to the carnifex forefathers who journeyed out from Mystara during the First Exile. Younger structures (nearly 7000 years old now) are believed to have been built by the elves on their migration<sup>13</sup> through this area.

Carnifex and Blackmoorian incursions into this area are rare, although they do happen. A handful of The Faithful's strongholds can also be found in these spheres, many of them

<sup>13</sup> DMs may decide to handle elven history as best fits their own campaigns. It may be that elves originated in Mystarospace, or perhaps they migrated to the region from other crystal spheres. See the sidebar on Elves in the Exiles Campaign for several different options. Regardless, elves were not exiled by the immortals as the other races in the Exiles Campaign were.

containing portals directly to their patron's home planes.

### Bluespace

This is a small sphere with several planets orbiting a blue sun. The Nithians colonized one of the worlds in this sphere when their empire was still strong on Mystara. Just before the immortals took revenge upon their nation a group of dissident Nithians (those who worshiped darker forces) fled to this place. Here they have seethed for centuries. Their domain has increased and they now control the entire planet.

The Nithians who live here live under the rule of dark necromancer kings. Many of those who serve the kings willingly are lycanthropes, but most of the population lives in abject terror of their masters.

These clerical orders are most like their progenitor culture. The Eborian culture dominates one entire planet, with several small colonies on different planets. Eborians keep in contact with their colonies in two ways. First, they still heavily use the ancient Nithian practice of spelljamming pyramids. This form of communication is very slow however. The second is by using the portal system. Eborian portals are not as powerful as those of their Menkothian cousins. People looking at the portal can see and hear the other side, but can not physically pass through.

Eborian clerics can send their spiritual force across the portals to inhabit the body of a specially prepared mummy (usually a former cleric of their order). In this way, the clergy can maintain a firm hold on their colony states.

It is rumored that a lone Eborian pyramid ship crashed somewhere on Mystara<sup>14</sup>. All aboard the ship perished, but a working portal survived the crash. The Eborian priests have been trying to make contact with suitable receptacles (mummies) on the other side of the Portal. If the pyramid crashed anywhere near an ancient Nithian outpost, the priests may just be able to accomplish their goal.

Bluespace also contains a large number of lycanthropes. Undead and lycanthropes in various states of interaction (allied, at war, master and slave) dominate this sphere. For normal humans who exist here, this is a living hell. For them the struggle is over, and they are little more than domesticated cattle for their vicious masters.

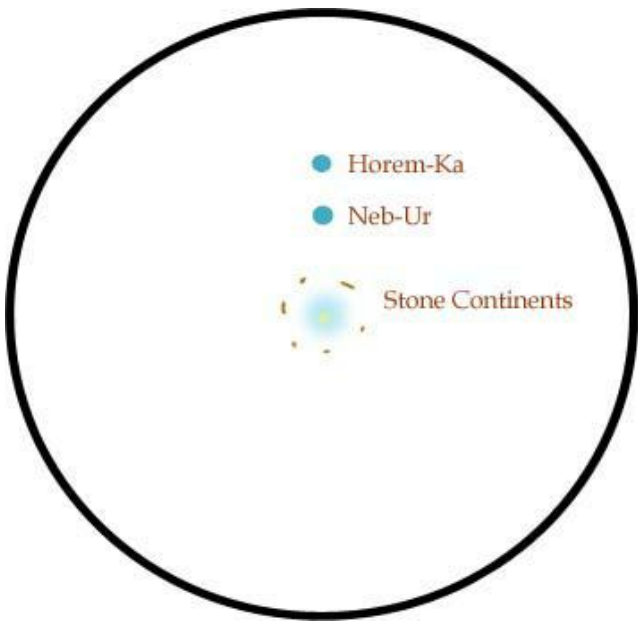
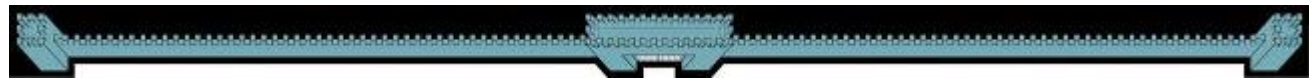
### Coldspace

This sphere's sun is dying. Once a strong and vibrant fire body, the sun has decreased in size. The amount of light and heat that it puts out has decreased as well, turning once living worlds into cold, frozen wastelands.

The Nithians first colonized this sphere when their empire was at its height on Mystara, but since that time the sphere's sun has grown smaller and colder. Now the Nithians left here have turned the worlds orbiting their star into vast slave labor camps. They intend to disassemble the planets and use the materials to construct another sphere around the star. This sphere will be made of stone, and much closer to the star so that the

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<sup>14</sup> See *The Tome of Mystara* Issue #1, "[Pyramid Down](#)" and *The Tome of Mystara* Issue #2, "[Night of the Blue Sun](#)" by John Calvin for adventures based on this idea.



Nithians might once again feel its heat. They have already constructed several small continent sized land masses that orbit the star. They do this by creating pyramid ships, flying them into orbit, and then slowly but surely connecting them together.

**Webspace**

This small sphere is composed of a warm central sun, several spherical planets, and an asteroid ring. The two inner planets are small, desolate but life sustaining earth worlds. The third world from the sun is an asteroid ring full of small debris. Next from the sun is a spherical earth planet with several concentric water rings around it. The last planet in the system is a large air planet with water and fire bodies inside of it.

The first planet, and large portions of the asteroid ring, is dominated by the Gate Masters, a Nithian offshoot culture. The second planet is dominated by the civilization of Menkor-Thoth, more Nithian

descendants, and all of their magical creations. The Menkothians keep many servitor races including humanoids, elves, dwarves, halflings, and many creatures never before seen.

Aranea share portions of the asteroid ring with their Nithian neighbors. The spider people use their silk webbing to tether several asteroids together to form a larger world. The aranea go to great lengths in order to protect these communities from fire and other attacks. The spider people are also known for traveling through the sphere on giant balloon webs that they spin to catch the solar winds. Ships traveling through the void often come into contact with hibernating aranea or their old web remnants.

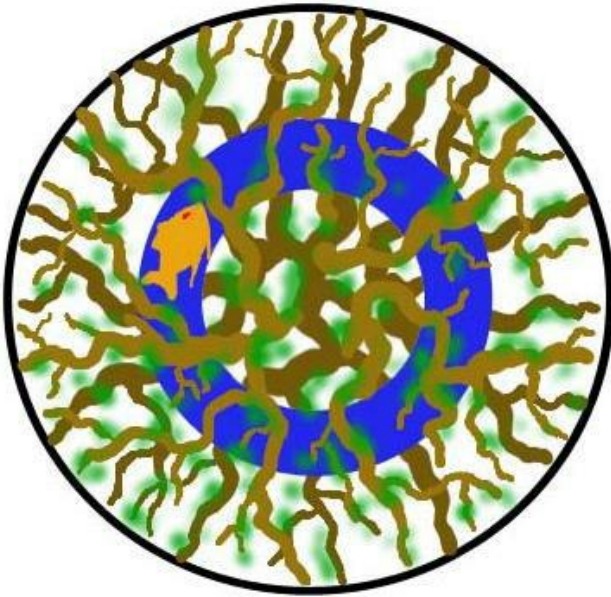
**Core Spheres**

The worlds of the Core Spheres are the most inhabited in all of Known Space. Roughly 70% of the worlds are controlled by the carnifex clans and dragon emperors, while 20% are controlled by the Blackmoorian Imperia. The rest of the worlds are either free states or native populations. Many of the planets here are lush, green worlds, although many of those occupied by Blackmoorians are still recovering from the scars of war. At one time all worlds were controlled by the carnifex, but the Blackmoorians managed to wrest control of some of them.

Blackmoorians and the carnifex clash often in these spheres as they try to maintain or expand their territories.



## Bugspace



Bugspace is a small crystal sphere with two main worlds inside of it. The first is watery toroid that cuts across the center of the sphere. The radius of the toroid is half of the radius of the sphere. From the center of the sphere extending outward, completely encompassing the toroid and growing all the way to the crystal shell, grows the second planet of the system, the World Tree. Portals through the shell only open up along the shell's equator where the World Tree attaches to the shell.

The sphere is lit from within the toroid where a fiery colossal fish constantly swims in circles. Its passing brings light and warmth, for the fiery body, whatever it may be, heats the oceans that it swims through and causes gouts of steam to issue forth from the toroid. It takes the fish an entire month to complete a full circuit around the toroid. Two days of "dawn time" herald the fish's approach, followed by three days of "full

light" and another two days of "dusk time" as the fish leaves. Night times are variable, lasting anywhere from 18 to 24 days long.

Even though Bugspace is a relatively small sphere it is not well explored. Spelljammers rarely have enough space to reach spelljamming speeds because the world tree branches all about them. Ships entering this sphere must travel at tactical speeds (which means that it can take years to actually reach the toroid sea). In addition to the impediments of travel, this sphere poses other threats. Ships traveling through the sphere are constantly beset by swarms of insectoid pests. The humid weather also causes most organic materials to rot very rapidly, affecting both personal equipment and wooden ships.

## Gardenspace

This sphere is replete with vibrant, living planets. The void itself is teeming with life, filled with kindori, scaver, krajen<sup>15</sup>, and a handful of radiant dragons. Gardenspace is under the control of the Carnifex, and several distinct Carnifex cultures dwell there. At least one of those is devoted to Opal, and that immortal counts them among the number of Faithful that serve her. Lately she and her Faithful have had to turn their attention from combating the Blackmoorians to repulsing the Outer Being worshippers that have been infiltrating the system.

<sup>15</sup> Kindori, scaver, and krajen are all Spelljammer creatures that live in the void of wildspace. Kindori are huge creatures akin to seagoing whales, scaver are cyclopean shark-like creatures, and krajen are colossal squid shaped horrors (the kraken's of wildspace).

## Spiralspace

This is a large sphere dominated by a spiral structure that bisects the inside of the shell. Once a carnifex stronghold, the sphere has recently (1500 years ago) fallen under the control of the Blackmoorians. Although the carnifex frequently mount campaigns into this sphere to regain it, the Blackmoorians are well entrenched and the sphere is now one of their prime holdings.

The spiral is a cluster of small, flat, water worlds, many still ruled by the kopru, a carnifex servitor race with mental domination powers. Many earth bodies lie embedded in the watery spiral, with sides exposed to each hemisphere.

A different Blackmoorian Imperia controls each of the hemispheres of the sphere. Hierarchy ships frequent the area, providing services for the local warlords and receiving resources in payment. Once the two empires worked together to wrest control from the carnifex, but now there is unrest. The Cult of the Frog has taken hold in the eastern hemisphere and they work to spread their ideologies across the entire sphere.

Kopru control the center of the sphere (from within the spiral), and several of the dragon spawned have moved in to try and gain some kind of advantage here. The kopru also have some dealings with the Cult of the Frog, with whom they share several ideologies (control of the weak, creation of servitor races, etc..).

## Elemental Spheres

The Elemental Spheres are composed of planets, many of them irregularly shaped, that are strongly aligned with each of the four elemental types. Rarely is there a planet with a balance of the four elements, and when there is, it is strongly contested. Trade is very important to the communities that live in these spheres because rarely does one community have all of the resources necessary for survival.

The carnifex dominate these spheres, with the dragon emperors maintaining control on the core worlds. Carnifex clans roam on the outskirts of space, basically leading the life of pirates. Some communities of freed slaves (mostly lizard-kin) exist here and there, but their freedom is tenuous and can end as soon as the next carnifex overlord rediscovers them.

Sheen incursions are frequent here. The constructs have learned that these inhospitable spheres are packed with the resources and raw materials that they so desperately need. Blackmoorians often send well armed forays here as well, and there are several permanent strongholds that they have been able to maintain despite carnifex aggression.

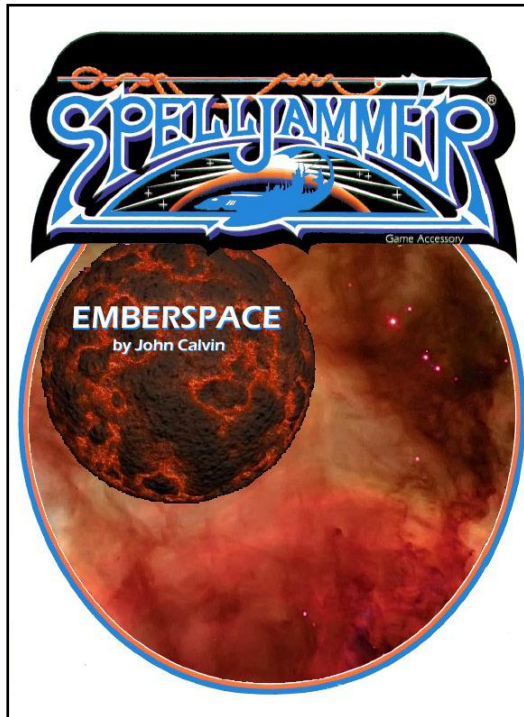
## Emberspace

Emberspace<sup>16</sup> is a dark sphere populated by many small earth bodies (referred to by travelers as the “embers”). Each of the earth bodies is heated from within, and fracture

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<sup>16</sup> For more information on Emberspace see the [\[Sphere\] Emberspace](#) thread at The Piazza.





lines across their surfaces glow red with volcanic activity. Clouds of soot and smoke permeate the sphere, some of them hiding electrical storms.

There are unique gemstones that can be found in this sphere. Called smolder gems, these jewels constantly emit a stream of smoke and ash. They are highly sought after by fire loving creatures, as well as communities living in Bugspace.

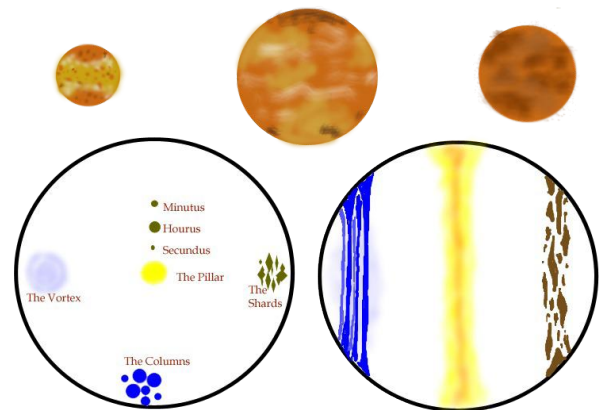
Two competing dragon ruled empires operate here, as well as one free carnifex clan, a renegade dragon spawn and its followers, and the remnants of the sphere's native life forms – efreet. The efreet live in brass citadels, many connected to the fabled City of Brass<sup>17</sup>, and travel through the sphere in brass ships. Though marginalized for

<sup>17</sup> For more information on The City of Brass see the [The City of Brass](#) thread at the Piazza.

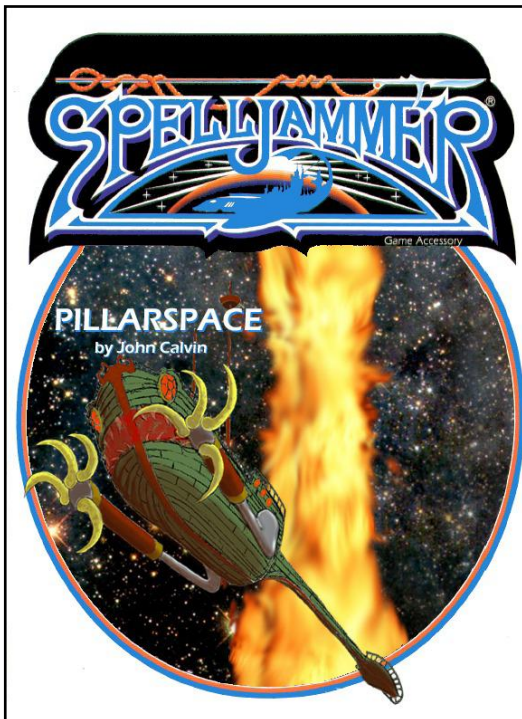
millennia by the carnifex, the efreet and their elemental allies are beginning to take back the sphere. Fellxixaari, a carnifex dragonspawn, is currently negotiating an alliance with the efreet in order to carve out an empire form himself, however the efreet have other ideas and are preparing the way for a full scale elemental invasion of the sphere.

### Pillarspace<sup>18</sup>

A pillar of flame extends along the inner axis of the sphere to form this shell's sun. Three planets orbit the pillar along the innermost orbital paths. They are all geo-synchronous orbits which means that the same face points toward the pillar at all times. Each planet orbits at a different speed, with the innermost planet having the fastest path, the outermost the next fastest, and the middle planet the slowest path. These planets are inhabited by dragon ruled carnifex and are constantly either warring or trading with one another. Alliances shift furiously as the dragon lords vie for dominance.



<sup>18</sup> For more information on Pillarspace see the [\[Sphere\] Pillarspace](#) thread at The Piazza.



### Steamspace

This is a small sphere with a large amorphous water body in its center. Inside of the water body are half a dozen fire bodies which both boil the oceans around them, and light up the sphere. Steam clouds boil up from the surface of the water body filling the void between it and the crystal shell. As the steam gets closer to the crystal shell, it begins to cool down and condense into clouds which eventually release downpours of rain back into the ocean planet.

Upon entering Steamspace a ship has an equal chance of being engulfed by either a column of steam or a thunderhead ready to burst.

Dozens of small earth bodies, little more than large asteroids, are affixed to the ocean world's surface, and they drift along with the

currents often coming into areas of intense heat. The earth bodies are made up of extremely light and porous rock, and contain hardly any heavy ore deposits. Some sages theorize that at the center of each earth body is a large cavern filled with air that keeps the continent sized rocks afloat.

Life teams in the seas, but only in the cooler surface regions between the submerged fire bodies. Elemental life also abounds deeper in the core of this sphere. Sometimes the native elementals come into contact with the carnifex who have taken up residence near the surface. This contact is nearly always violent and bloody.

The Carnifex control much of this sphere, although Blackmoorian incursions are frequent. Both cultures harvest the abundant water from this sphere and ship it to their more inhospitable domains throughout known space.

### The FRINGES

These spheres see little trade for the simple fact that they have little of value in them. A few planets will support life (barely) and these are inhabited by the misfits, some would say scum, of Known Space. The Blackmoorian Free Cities are all located in these spheres, as are several colonies of freed slaves. Construct controlled sheen enclaves also have strongholds here, as does the Progeny of the Frog. Several Dragon Spawned carnifex have also carved out small domains for themselves.

There is little reason to journey into these spheres, unless you have illicit business, or you just want to be left to your own devices. None of the major powers in Known Space bother with establishing permanent bases in the area because they would just be too expensive to maintain. Occasionally either the carnifex or the Blackmoorians will conquer some small community for strategic purposes, but after their tactical objectives are achieved they simply leave the area.

### Dustspace

A large red sun rests at the center of this sphere, with several thousand island sized asteroids orbiting it in various patterns. There is little here that would make life easy, but enough to make it livable.

Dustspace was one of the first spheres that the Blackmoorians were able to colonize after their exile. Several Blackmoorian Free Cities still exist here, having staked a claim to some of the asteroids and setting up permanent settlements on their surfaces. In the early days of Blackmoorian colonization, when the human populations were smaller and more unified, this sphere was the pinnacle of their society. Now it is a haven for outlaws and corruption, where rules are only enforced by the strong.

Multiple construct ruled sheen enclaves exist here as well. Some of them interact with the Free Cities, while others maintain a lower profile. Asterius also has some of his Faithful in this area.

### Rustspace<sup>19</sup>

Violent storms frequent this sphere, powered by a sickly orange sun at its heart. Pockmarked asteroids of all sizes tumble erratically throughout the system, though rarely do they ever collide with one another.

Upon first entering the sphere, the ancient Blackmoorians found several large and fertile oases tucked away in deep cratered planetoids, and quickly flocked to such sanctuaries. Their thrill at finding these bountiful refuges quickly soured when they realized that all metal within the sphere slowly but steadily degrades, leaving only a fine red powder in its place.

### Scuttlespace

Seven small planets<sup>20</sup> orbit the dim red dwarf that barely illuminates the sphere of Scuttlespace<sup>21</sup>, and beyond them shards of rock and ice careen in scattered orbits reaching all the way to the crystal shell. A pervading feeling of dread assaults any who enter this system, and many claim that the central sun is watching them, as if it were a gigantic red eye in the void of wildspace.

When the Blackmoorians first discovered the sphere, they found signs of an ancient and

<sup>19</sup> Rustspace does not appear on the map of the Mystaran Cluster, but can be placed by DMs anywhere in the vicinity of the Dustbowl Sargasso.

<sup>20</sup> Scuttlespace and its planets were inspired by the discovery of the [TRAPPIST-1](#) system.

<sup>21</sup> Scuttlespace does not appear on the map of the Mystaran Cluster, but can be placed by DMs anywhere in the vicinity of the Dustbowl Sargasso.

ruined cyclopean civilization littering the system. Abandoned planetary structures are just as common in the sphere as is wreckage of massive fleets floating in the darkness. Who or what built the ancient structures is unknown, for no trace of the original architects has ever been found.

## NPCS

Following are some of the more powerful and influential NPCs in the Mystaran Cluster.

### Artor Fell

Captain of a Blackmoorian Kennel ship operating in Emberspace, Artor is tasked with discovering the secrets of this sphere as well as keeping an eye on Carnifex and efreet activities. Captain Fell is a hard and unforgiving man who will brook no disobedience from his crew. However he is also resourceful and looks for the same qualities in those who serve him.

After several initially disastrous encounters with the environs of this sphere, Fell has had his ship plated in brass. This has offered the ship and its crew a modicum of protection from the environment. Fell acquired the brass from several carnifex and efreet ships that he happened upon, and he would not hesitate to acquire more if given the chance. This has not made him popular with the local inhabitants.

### Delya Hunt

Delya is a rogue and one of the Faithful devoted to Asterius in Scarredspace. She is in command of a small but elite task force conscripted from Asterius' home plane in order to perform precision "jobs" against his Blackmoorian enemies. She is a veteran of the Eternal War, having traversed through a handful of the spheres in Known Space and completing several missions. Currently she and her team are on shore leave on Charr.

### Erek Treid

Treid is a fastidious, thin, spindly man, apparently of Blackmoorian ancestry. His gray hair is balding and his thick rimmed spectacles distort the vision of his face giving the impression of large frog like eyes bulging from beneath his brow. Few ever see this vision however, because Treid keeps himself sequestered away, living at the very heart of Lattice in Spindlespace.

A devoted follower of the immortal Rafiel (or perhaps even a mortal identity of Rafiel), Erek Treid journeyed to Spindlespace decades ago in the hopes of founding a Chamber<sup>22</sup> for his patron immortal. So far he is accomplishing his task, although the sheen cyst he took over has been twisted in ways not even Treid ever dreamed of. Still, the details are inconsequential to Treid, as long as the results are favorable.

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<sup>22</sup> See the article "[Rafiel's Home Plane](#)" by John Calvin at The Vaults of Pandius, for more information about Rafiel and his plans for constructing multiple Chambers across the multiverse.

## FENGRISS

A half carnifex, half dragon offspring of the emperor Haugrissyl, ruler of nearly a third of the planet Secundus in Pillarspace, Fengriss is a creature of much ambition. Over the past several decades he has been recruiting Carnifex from the free clans into his own personal army. He plans on using this army to conquer territories outside of Pillarspace.

Unlike his father, Fengriss shuns the Outer Beings. He subscribes to the philosophy that the Carnifex (himself included) are the most powerful force in the multiverse and so should not bow down before any other entities. Once he can build up a power reserve he will turn against his father and try to wrest control of the Secundus territories from him.

## KAL-2

After millennia of existence, KAL-2 is little more than a disembodied head. Still, it is one of the founding members of the Cabal and arguably one of the most powerful mortal entities in all of the Known Spheres. It was KAL-2 who devised the plan to create a machine god in the heart of Crackedspace, and KAL-2 who personally designed the form and function of Funnel, a colossal structure designed to harness the power of the sphere to give the machine god sentience. What the other members of the Cabal do not suspect, is that KAL-2 has no intention of creating a new god. Instead, it plans to ascend past the mortal planes itself.

## Menketh

The captain of a small spelljamming vessel in Coldspace, Menketh leads a band of mercenary hobgoblins. He and his crew spend much of their time outside of the sphere gathering slaves for the massive projects undertaken by the pharaohs in the area. Menketh always makes a point of returning to the sphere with a full hold of slaves, lest his employers lose faith in his abilities and find “other work” for him to do (in the frozen quarries of that sphere).

## Xanthesis

Few carnifex travel down the path that Xanthesis has, the path of their ancestors, the path that led to their banishment from the home sphere. Xanthesis worships the power of the Outer Beings in Bugspace. Several carnifex journeyed deeper into the World Tree shortly after the sphere was colonized, around 11,000 BC, during the time of the second Outer Being purge. Xanthesis and his band of followers are all descendants of that original expedition. Other carnifex have tried to retrace their steps throughout the millennia, but the crazed Outer Being worshippers make sure that they are never heard from again.

Xanthesis is obsessed with the fish that travels the toroid sea, which is actually the physical projection of an imprisoned Outer Being. As his forebearers before him, Xanthesis worships the fish as a god, and is granted limited powers for doing so. Each year of worship weakens the bonds of the Outer Being’s prison and brings it one step closer to escaping.

## CAMPAIGN ARCS

The underlying themes and structure of the Exiles Campaign can lend themselves to several overarching plots and campaign arcs.

### The Eternal War

From the instant the Great Rain of Fire devastated ancient Mystara to the present day, the Immortals and Blackmoorians have been locked in a deadly conflict known as the Eternal War. Those Blackmoorians who escaped Immortal reprisals after the catastrophe, though few in number, grew very powerful. The most powerful among them were the Radiance Lords, Blackmoorians who were able to build and harness the power of devices known as Furnaces. Similar in power to the Nucleus of the Spheres below Glantri, these Furnaces were able to manipulate the radiance.

When the immortals first chased Blackmoor from Mystaraspaces and into the Known Spheres, a catastrophic accident occurred. During a confrontation between an immortal and a Blackmoorian spelljammer something went terribly wrong. The spelljammer, powered by a Furnace, malfunctioned and absorbed the immortal's life essence. Although not killed, the immortal was trapped, and its power was made to serve another. Thus the first Hierarchy Lord was born. Only a handful of the creatures exist, but with them resides the knowledge of consuming immortal souls.

This secret is one that the immortals are loath to allow, though few are willing to risk

their own essence to destroy those possessing it. Instead the Immortals have unleashed their Faithful upon the spheres, devoted mortal worshippers, many from the home planes of the Immortals themselves. The Eternal War will not end until one side or the other is eradicated, and the threat of being drawn into the conflict is high for unwary travelers of the spheres.

### Outer Being Escape

Eons before the first mortals ventured into the void, unknowable, stygian entities drifted through the dark reaches between the spheres. Since time immemorial, or at least for as far back as the oldest Immortals can remember, these Outer Beings have wrought havoc upon the Prime Material Plane, and any mortals who were unfortunate enough to discover their existence. For millennia, the Immortals and Outer Beings contested the fate of the multiverse, with neither side gaining the upper hand... at least until the age of the carnifex.

During the height of carnifex power on Mystara, the saurian culture fell victim to rampant Outer Being worship. Carnifex mastery of the arcane arts, combined with the dark lore of the Outer Beings, threatened to end Immortal rule of the Multiverse once and for all. In desperation the Immortals set a plot in motion to capture and imprison their foes in a pocket universe. Though the cost was high, the Immortals ultimately prevailed, sealing both the carnifex and their dark patrons away in a prison plane.

The power of the Outer Beings however, cannot be contained forever. There are

*(Continued on next page )*

## Threshold Q&A

We wanted to try something a little bit different with this issue of Threshold, by asking our readers to answer a question.

This issue of Threshold, *Mystaraspace*, details several of the planets within the Mystaran solar system, each of them unique from Mystara, but still supporting a myriad of races, cultures, and nations... and all of them

ripe for adventure. As a DM, if you were to run a campaign on one of these planets, which would you choose, and why? As a Player, which of these planets would you most enjoy having your DM send you to explore?

Visit [The Piazza](#) to answer these questions and interact with other readers of Threshold in the [\[Threshold\] Mystaraspace Q&A](#) thread.

- *The Editorial Team*

## The Exiles Campaign Setting (Continued from previous page)

places among the spheres, where the bonds separating the prison plane from the rest of the multiverse are thin, and the Outer Beings can still be heard through these cracks in reality. Dark cultists, never fully expunged from carnifex culture, still seek to free their ancient patrons. Should they succeed, the multiverse could be plunged once again into an epic struggle between titanic powers.

create a god of their own. Should they succeed, a new power may arise in the multiverse, one that could rival the Immortals or even the Outer Beings.

### Rise of the Sheen God

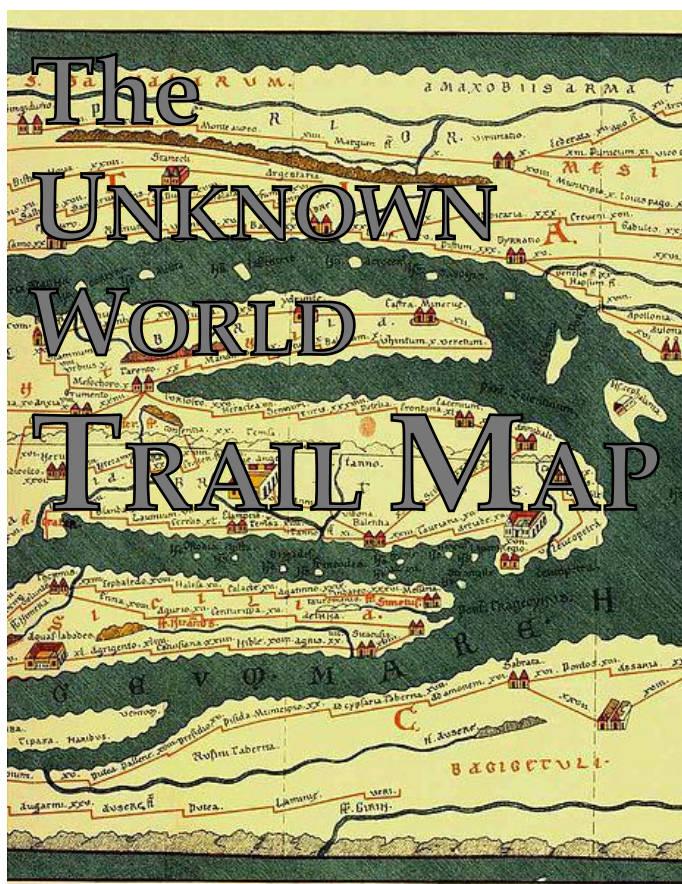
Not all threats to the multiverse are old. A new form of life is stirring from the ashes of the Shattered Spheres. Originally created by the Blackmoorians as a mechanical weapon against their foes, sheen life has grown in complexity over the millennia. Ever expanding, these evolving constructs have come to dominate huge regions in Known Space, and threaten every culture they come into contact with.

### FINDING THE WAY HOME

While most Mystarans continue through their existence, blissfully unaware of the larger multiverse around them, the exiled cultures in the Mystaran Cluster are all too cognizant of their place in the cosmos. So too are they painfully aware of their past, and the homelands they were driven from.

The mortal races are not alone in facing the sheen threat. Deep in the heart of Crackedspace, the sheens are attempting to

Though most living amongst the spheres know the tales of their ancestors' exiles, few would ever dream that they could find their way back to the Lost Sphere of *Mystaraspace*. Should travelers from the Lost Sphere find their way into the greater reaches of arcane space, then all life in *Mystaraspace* may be put at risk. If the path of *Mystaraspace* natives can ever be traced back to its origin, the Exiled races would surely attempt to return home.



## Part III - The Central Lands: Darokin, Alfheim, Ethengar and Glantri

by Francesco Defferrari  
(Sturm)

### A guide to the wilderlands of the KNOWN World

This article follows the first installment detailing the south east of the Known World in [Threshold issue #13](#) and the Broken Lands and Shadowlands in [issue #14](#). See the introduction of the first article of this series for a full explanation of the population maps and the purpose of these articles.

### KNOWN World Populations

**Yellow:**

“Civilized” lands, high human (or halfling) density, average 75 humans (or halflings) per square mile.

**Orange:**

Borderlands, low human or halfling population, average 25 people per square mile. May also contain other races, average 2.5 people per square mile.

**Purple:**

Humanoids, giants and others, average 25 per square mile. May also contain small numbers of humans, average 1.2 per square miles.

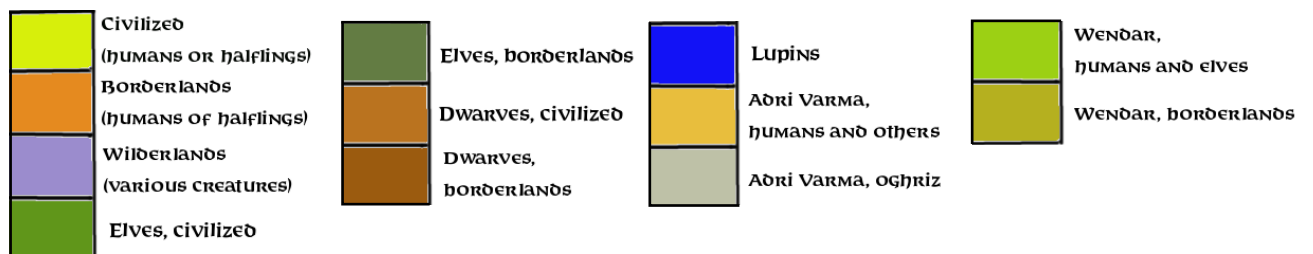
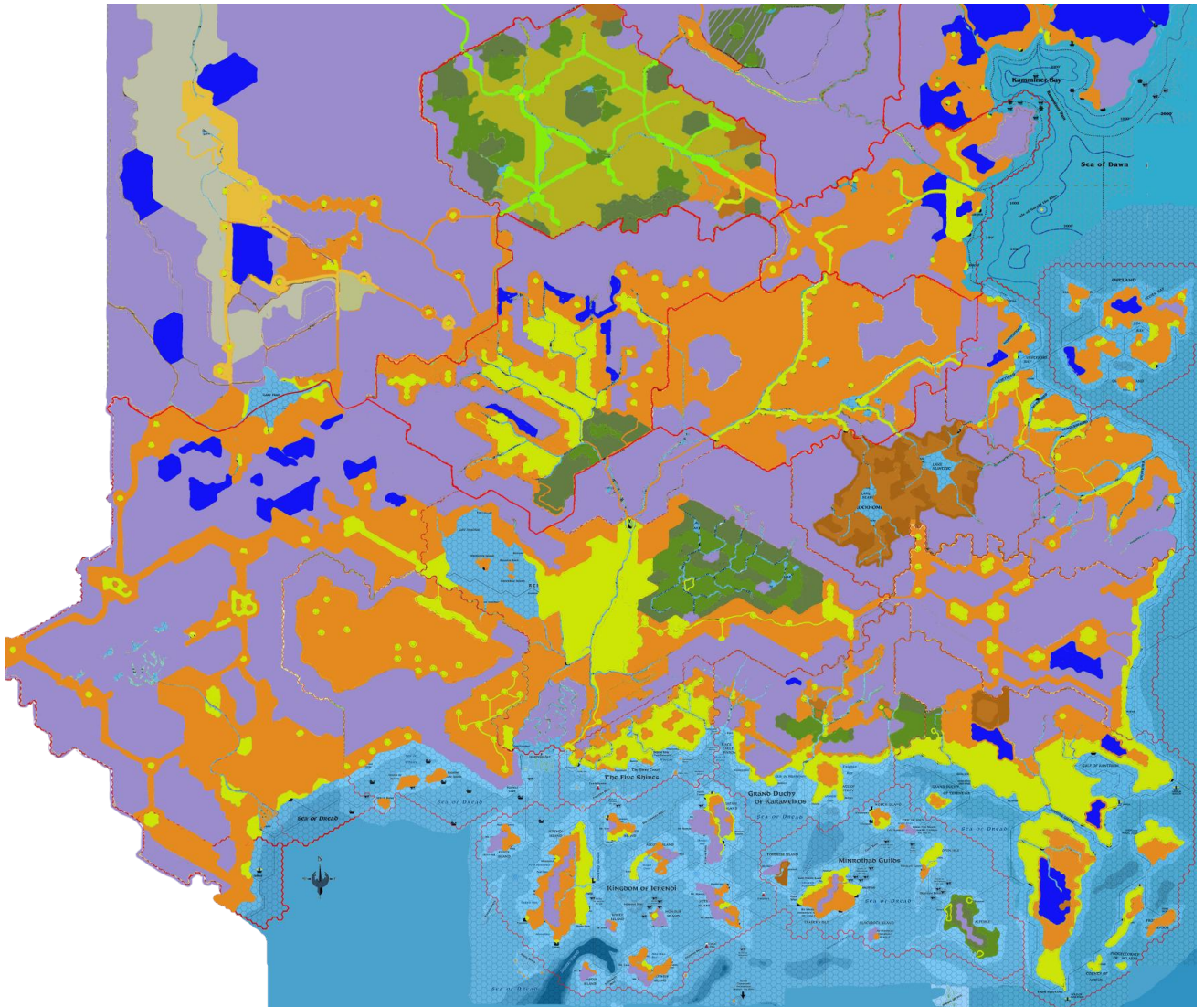
**Green:**

Elves, average 20 per square mile. May also contain small numbers of fairies, average 2.5 per square mile.





## Map of KNOWN World Populations



**Dark green:**

Elven borderlands, average 10 elves per square miles. Should also contain fairies, average 10 per square mile.

**Brown:**

Dwarves and/or gnomes, average 70 per square miles. Each hex should be inhabited by 4,000-5,000 dwarves with very low numbers of other creatures, if any.

**Dark Brown:**

Dwarven borderlands, average 15 per square miles. Should also contain humanoids and other races, average 15 per square mile.

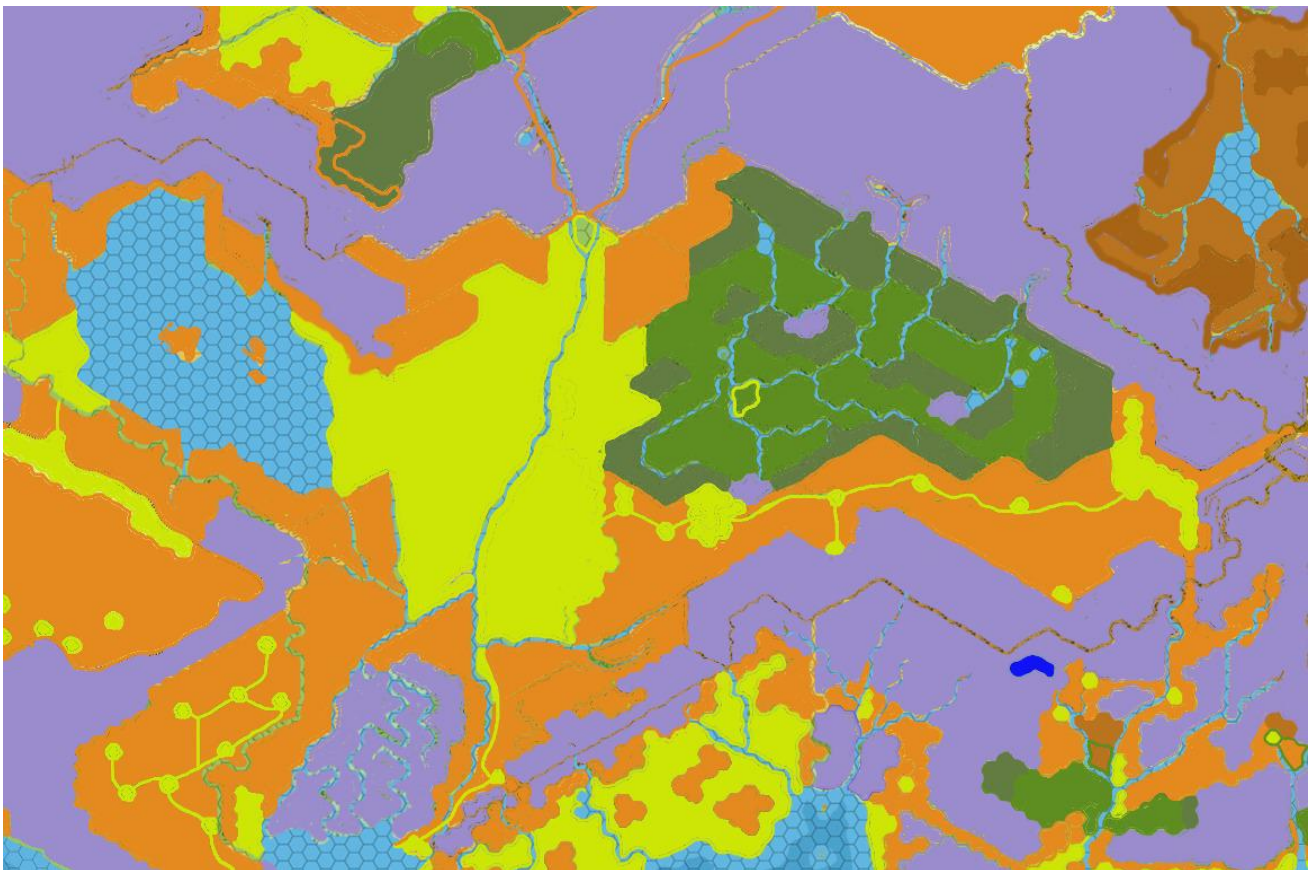
**Blue:**

Lupins or Rakasta, average 40 per square mile.

## Darokin

### Populations and density

In Darokin I have depicted as yellow hexes all the central land of the country, which should be extensively farmed and settled. Monster incursions in those regions should be quite rare, and great predators almost completely absent, yet werewolves, undead, brigands and underground ruins could be present as well. The total populations of these more than 430 hexes should amount to more than 2 million people, mostly humans with minorities of elves, halflings, dwarves, gnomes, lupins and humanoids.



*Darokin Populations Map*

There are also more than 400 orange hexes of borderlands with a human population of about 640,000 humans with some elves and 80,000 humanoids and other intelligent inhabitants.

There are more than 450 purple hexes of wilderlands which should support a population of 770,000 humanoids and other intelligent beings and 40,000 humans and elves.

The territory of Darokin should be able to support more than 850 dragons in the wilderlands and the borderlands, and probably some also living in disguise in the civilized lands.

Therefore my final estimation of Darokin's population would be of 2,700,000 humans and demihumans, normally living as citizens, and 850,000 other intelligent races, generally not recognized as citizens of the Republic. My estimation is higher than the number given in the Poor Wizard's Almanac of 1,260,000 people plus unknown humanoids and higher than the figure of about 2,000,000 people including humanoids given by Simone Neri in his demography work<sup>1</sup>. The minorities should include at least 25,000 elves, 15,000 dwarves, 15,000 lupins, 10,000 halflings and 5,000 gnomes, and possibly also some half orcs and half elves if the DM allows them in his or her campaign<sup>2</sup>. Among the unrecognized populations, probably 550,000 are humanoids, 100,000 are

<sup>1</sup> Available as "[Demografia Mystariana](#)" in Italian only, but part of it was updated and translated in English in Threshold magazine issues [#1](#) and [#3](#).

<sup>2</sup> Half breeds were not originally included in BECMI or the Mystara Gazetteers, but later some appeared in canon products.

lizardmen of the Malpheggi swamp and about 150,000 are fairies, centaurs, brutemen, giants, harpies, troglodytes, faenare and other minor races.

## The Wilderlands of Darokin

### I - AMSORAK MOUNTAINS / Southern Silver Sierras

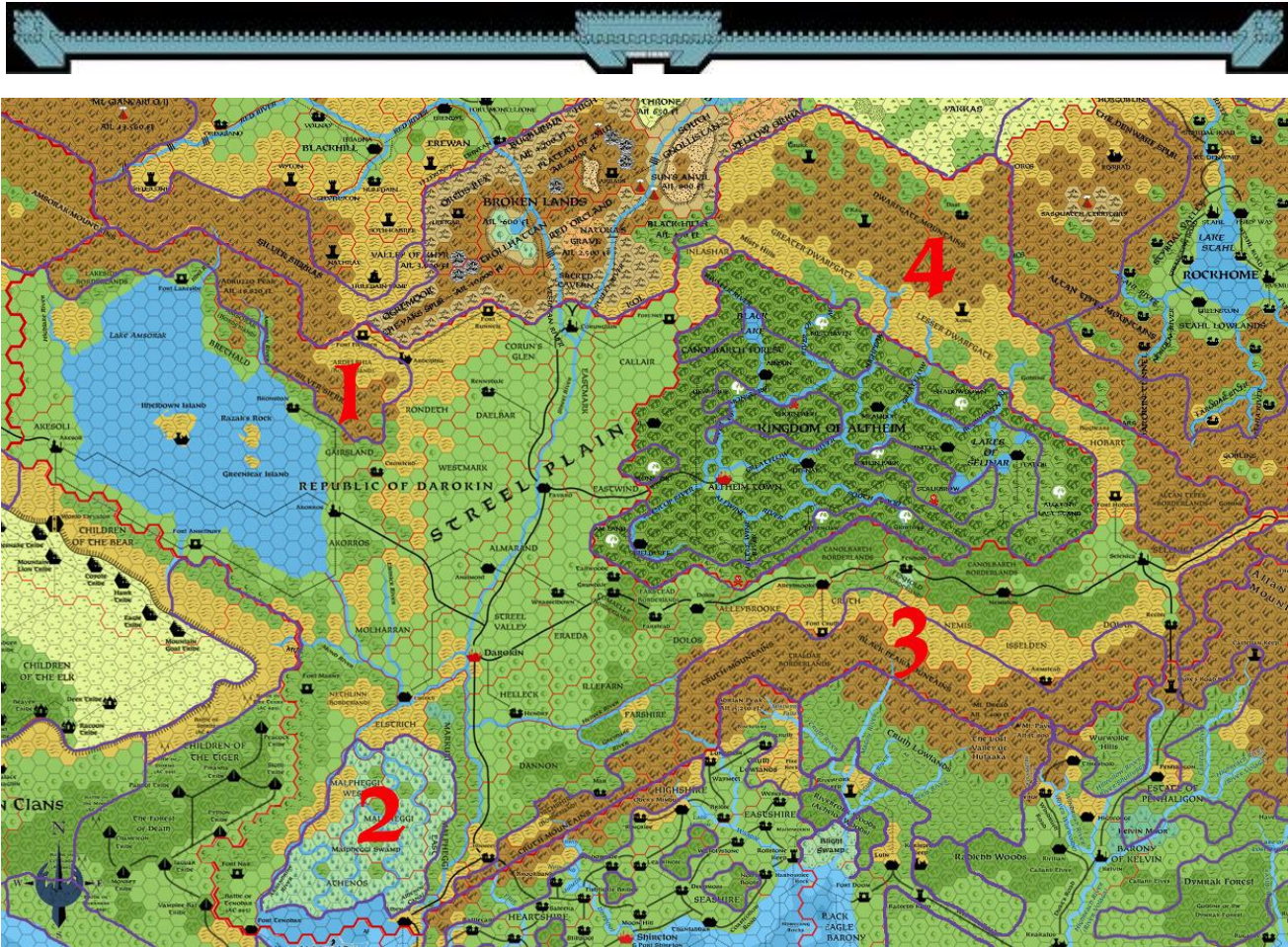
"Orcs, ogres, giants, dragons, rocs, harpies... there are rumours about many creatures dwelling in this region, but we are rarely attacked. Still, the mountains are unmapped territory, so dwell there at your own risk"

*- Caeris, soldier at Fort Lakeside, speaking to travellers*

Area: 220 x 25 miles, or 5,500 square miles.  
Days to cross<sup>3</sup>: 55 days east-west or 7 days north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 145,000 (giants, bugbears, gnolls, orcs, ogres, faenare, harpies, werecreatures and at least 80 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

<sup>3</sup> By foot with light encumbrance. However as this refers to difficult wilderlands, often without trails, the movement rate on horses should not be much different. Note also that the chance of getting lost in these areas, unless the PCs have a good map or a good guide, should be very high, so the actual travel time could easily double.



*Wilderlands of Darokin*

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ11 - *The Republic of Darokin* the region is briefly described on page 7 and 8 of the DM's guide, while Fort Lakeside is described on page 41. The medium height is given at 12,000 feet (3,658 meters) but in the Trail Map 1 Aduzzo Peak is indicated as the tallest mountain at 18,820 feet (5,736 meters).
- A Master level adventure on page 58 deals with the demon Razrog who now occupies the abandoned Itheldown island in Lake Amsorak. The other two islands are described on pages 45 and 50 of the DM guide. A detailed view of the islands is also included in Thorfinn Tait's [replica map](#).
- Part of the adventure *The Immortals' Fury*

- takes places in Corran keep, built on the mountains of this region and pillaged by monsters long ago. The PCs encounter intelligent Lightning zombies and retrieve the Shield of Benekander. After the adventure, it is suggested that Jeddarin Corran will rebuild the keep, while the zombies may be helped by Nyx to establish a home elsewhere.
- The adventure in *Dungeon magazine #51*, *The Witch of Windcrag*, against an harpy, could be set here or near one of the other mountain chains of region 3 and 4.
- According to the *Dragonlord Chronicles* by Thorarrin Gunnarsson, the renegade black dragon Murodhir had a kingdom in the mountains north of Lake Amsorak before he was killed by the Dragonlord around 500 AC,

see also [“Dragonlord Chronicles - Detailed Summaries”](#) by David Keyser: .



*View of Bronsdale on the northern shore of Lake Amsorak*

### In Fan productions:

- The [replica map of Darokin](#) by Thorfinn Tait gathers all the available canon geographical information on the Republic.
- The Republic is described in the [fan almanacs from 1015 AC](#) and there are events set in the nation, see also Harri Maki's [“A geographical/political index for the almanacs AC 1014 to AC 1018”](#) and the 1019 AC Almanac, featuring [peace talks with the Shadow elves](#)
- The [“Codex Immortalis Book Two”](#) by Marco Dalmonte deals with the Darokin pantheon on page 84.
- For a list of monsters, check Sheldon Morris' [“Monstrous Atlas”](#).
- Mike Phillips produced [a 2 2/3 miles per hex the whole of Darokin](#) including wilderlands and borderlands.
- The extensive work done on the [History of Darokin](#) by fans, particularly Geoff Gander, John Calvin, Greg Weatherup, Sheldon Morris and Aaron Nowack, published in the Vaults is often relevant for most of the wilderlands of Darokin. A summary can also

be found in my article [“Past Ages of the Known World”](#) in Threshold issue #12. Maps of Darokin in [300 BC](#), [685 AC](#), [700 AC](#) and [800 AC](#) were also made by Geoff Gander and others. (Note: the 300 BC and 700 AC maps adapt AC 1000 and AC 1010 titled maps ).

- [“The lost elven realm of Brethilad”](#) was created by Geoff Gander north of the lake.
- Several [Darokian NPC's](#) were developed by fans and are published in the Vault of Pandius. Some of them, particularly werecreatures, are particularly useful as inhabitants of borderlands and wilderlands.

## 2 - The Malpheggi Swamp

“People who mount expeditions into the swamp have serious mental problems. Everyone knows that in Athenos. Tenobarians, on the other hand, are known to be crazy people”.

*- Keilyn, ship captain in Athenos*

Area: 80 x 88 miles, or 7,000 square miles.  
 Days to cross: 25 or more days east-west or north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 3 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.  
 Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 200,000 (lizard men, trolls, ogres, orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, kobolds, nuckalavee, frogfolk, sprites, nixies, skitterlings and at least 100 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

### In Canon products:

- In GAZ11 the region is briefly described on page 7 of the DM's guide. The description of Tenobar on page 44 is also relevant and the

swamp is further described on page 45 and 47, where it is described as inhabited by lizard men, ogres, orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, kobolds, trolls, human bandits and cultists, and many monsters, and considered an extremely dangerous place.

- The adventure Action on the Athenos on page 55 of the DM's guide is set in this region.

- In the article ["Who's Who Among Dragons"](#), written by Bruce Heard in Dragon magazine #171, the swamp was revealed to be the domain of Thalkor, a powerful black dragon. About these powerful dragons, see also my article ["Who's Who in the Wyrksteeth part 2"](#) in Threshold issue #9.



Flamingoes in the swamp

#### In Fan productions:

- Mike Phillips made a map of the region called ["Westerlands"](#) with details on the borderlands and the swamp populations, later detailing it further in [a 22/3 mph map of the swamp area](#), and describing some ["Villages around Malpbeggi Swamp"](#). Mike also described his campaign in the region in ["The Darokin Campaign Chronicles"](#), which

started with an expanded version of Action on the Athenos.

- Morphius Shadowleaf made [a detailed map of the Malpbeggi Swamp](#) (available at the Vaults of Pandius) and also detailed some dangers of the area in his article ["Malpbeggi Swamp"](#).

- Carl Quaif created ["The Sisterhood of the Fens"](#) for this region

- Sheldon Morris made a ["Monstrous Atlas"](#) also for the swamp.

### 3 - Cruth mountains, Black Peaks and Canolbarth borderlands

"It is a borderland with its share of dangers. Some of the inhabitants are surprisingly friendly, some just mind their own business if you leave them alone, some are hungry, and will eat you".

*- Jillin, halfling guide and adventurer*

Area: 430 x 10-40 miles, or 9,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: 100 days east-west or 7 days north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 235,000 (giants, bugbears, gnolls, orcs, ogres, faenare, harpies, wercreatures and at least 130 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In Gazetteer 11 the region is briefly described on page 7 of the DM's guide.

- According to Karameikos Kingdom of Adventure and the Trail Map 1, the tallest mountain on the Darokinian side should be Mount Dread at 5,400 feet (1,646 meters) while the slightly taller Mount Pavel is on the Karameikan side, northwest of Threshold. Adrian's Peak is instead on the Shires side, and slightly shorter.

- The adventure "*The Wanderer's Grave*" on page 55 of the DM's guide is set in this region, against goblins (the adventure was greatly expanded by Geoff Gander and is [published on the Vault of Pandius](#))

- The adventure "*The Eagle's Talons*" on page 57 of the DM's guide is set in this region.

- The adventure B8: "*Journey to the Rock*" should be set in this region on the border with Karameikos. The modules B1 and B5 could also be easily set here, or in region 1.

- The module CM9: "*Legacy of Blood*" and the supplement PC1: "*Tall Tales of the Wee Folk*" deal with Fenhold and the woods south of the Canolbarth forest.

- The adventure in Dungeon magazine #5, "*The trouble with Mylvin Wimbly*", could be set on the border with the Five Shires.

- The adventure in Dungeon magazine #15, "*In Pursuit of the Slayer*" could be set near this region.

- The adventure in Dungeon magazine #26, "*Caravan Guards*", takes places on the road to Selenica, against bhuts.

- The Kingdom of Azemur the Gold in the Five Shires, described in the article "*Who's Who Among Dragons*" by Bruce Heard, see above, reaches up to the mountains on the border with Darokin.

#### In Fan productions:

- "[Tuma](#)" by Matthew Levy is relevant for this region. More on Tuma was also written about by Giampaolo Agosta and myself in [Threshold issue #12](#), and see also "[Thoughts](#)

[on Tuma as City of Followers of Earth](#)" by Joaquin Menchaca

- "[Darokin Locations](#)" by Simone Neri is relevant for this region and the others, and his "[Central Altan Tepes Mini Gazetteer](#)" is relevant for wilderlands areas 3 and 4.

- See also "[Armstead suggestions](#)" by Jesper Andersen



*Forested hills near Fort Hobarth*

## 4 - Broken Lands border and the Orclands

"Orcs, goblins, and all the other humanoid. This is not Darokin, the Republic claims this land just to pretend we will eventually civilize it in front of the other nations. The Ethengarians, the Elves and the Dwarves do not want it. Well, the Dwarves would like to have it, probably, but the humanoids are unwilling to give their lands to them, or to us. They also do not welcome human travellers. Savages you say? Did you ever see what happens to an orc travelling the Streel plains? The same that will happen to you if you are caught in the Orclands"

*- Delwyn Machos, sage in Selenica*

Area: 330 x 25-120 miles, or 30,000 square miles.

Days to cross: 80 days east-west or 15 days north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 750,000 (giants, bugbears, gnolls, orcs, ogres, faenare, harpies, werecreatures and at least 400 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ11 the region is briefly described on page 7 of the DM's guide. The ruins of Ardelphia are described on page 33. The Orclands and the humanoid fortresses are described on the following pages.

- The altitudes of these mountains are not indicated in canon sources, but as Mount Tarsus in Thyatis is 11,380 feet (3,469 meters) and the Makkres in Rockhome are up to 15,000 feet (4,572 meters), probably the tallest mountains here would reach up to 10,000 feet (3,048 meters).

- The adventure "Orclands" on page 56 of the DM's guide is set in this region.

- The adventure "The Hand of Thar" on page 57 of the DM's guide is set in this region.

- The adventure DA1: "Adventures in Blackmoor" starts along the border to continue in the Broken Lands and to ancient Blackmoor.

- The adventure in Dungeon magazine #46, "Dovedale", could be set in borderlands north of Selenica, or in region 3.

- The AD&D adventure "Janx's Jinx" in Dungeon magazine #56 is meant to be set in the same area as the above.

- "The Tower of Doom" videogame begins in this region and continues in the Broken

Lands, and the sequel Shadow over Mystara is partially set in the Orclands.

#### In Fan productions:

- "[The Voyage of the Discovery](#)" by Robin takes place in this region: and she also made a [1mph map of Ardelphia to Corunglain](#) and obviously her ongoing 1mph map of the Upper Broken Lands, already mentioned in [Threshold issue #14](#), touches and details this region as well.

- Geoff Gander wrote an adventure titled "The Secret of the Callair Hills" available for sale on DriveThru RPG, which can be easily set in this region as he explains in his "[Conversion Notes](#)" for the module in the Vaults of Pandius

- A [geographic entry for the Orclands](#) was included in the 1015 fan almanac and all those following, and is published at the Vaults of Pandius

- Possible new developments for the Orclands humanoids were imagined by Gordon McCormick in "[The Vision of Truth and Light](#)" and by me in "[The Tale Bringer \(A Kingdom of Humanoids\)](#)"

- Sean Meaney developed the "[City State of Xorg](#)"



## ALFHEIM

### Populations and density

In Alfheim the green hexes are those inhabited by elves with a density of 20 per square miles, along with some fairies. The dark green hexes are instead borderlands, inhabited by 10 elves per square miles or less, and the same number of fairy folk. The purple hexes are true wilderlands inhabited only by monsters or other races. The area of Alfheim town has a yellow border meaning it is a region more similar to the human ones, with a sizable population of humans, halflings, gnomes, dwarves and even some peaceful humanoids.

The population of Alfheim town in Gazetteer 5 is given at 15,000 people, and the total population approximated at 75,000 inhabitants. Simone Neri in his Demografia estimates about 205,000 inhabitants. My calculation as usual is higher. The region around Alfheim town should have a higher population, with a density of more than 75 people per square mile and about 25,000 inhabitants, of which are 15,000 humans, 5,000 elves, 1,000 halfling, 1,000 dwarves, 1,000 humanoids, 500 gnomes, 500 lupins, and 1,000 fairy folk most of which are centaurs.

There are 215 green hexes that should contain a population of 275,000 elves and



*Alfheim Populations*

35,000 other creatures including brownies, centaurs, chevalls, dryads, faenare, hsiao, leprechauns, metamorphs, nixies, pixies, pookas, satyrs, sidhes, sprites, treants, wood drakes, and wood imps.

There are 197 dark hexes that should contain a population of 125,000 elves and 125,000 others, mostly the creatures listed above but with additional minorities of aranea, gremlins, harpies, humanoids, nuckalavee, werereatures and undead.

Finally the 13 purple hexes contain a population of 20,000 inhabitants, probably aranea, gremlins, harpies, humanoids, lizardmen, nuckalavee, troglodytes, werereatures and undead.

The Canolbarth forest should be able to support at least 400 dragons.

The total population of Alfheim should therefore be 405,000 elves, 15,000 humans, 1,000 civilized humanoids, 1,000 halflings, 1,000 dwarves, 500 gnomes, 1,000 lupins, 130,000 fairy folk of various races and about 30,000 other intelligent creatures not integrated in the elven society (i.e. reclusive or hostile).

## The Wilderlands of Alfheim

### I - North Eastern Alfheim

“The only problem with this region is that humanoids and many other monsters live nearby, and when they visit the forest they do not always have harmless intentions. Sometimes we also get dwarves. It is a fun place, all thing considered”

- Selivyn, Mealidor sentinel

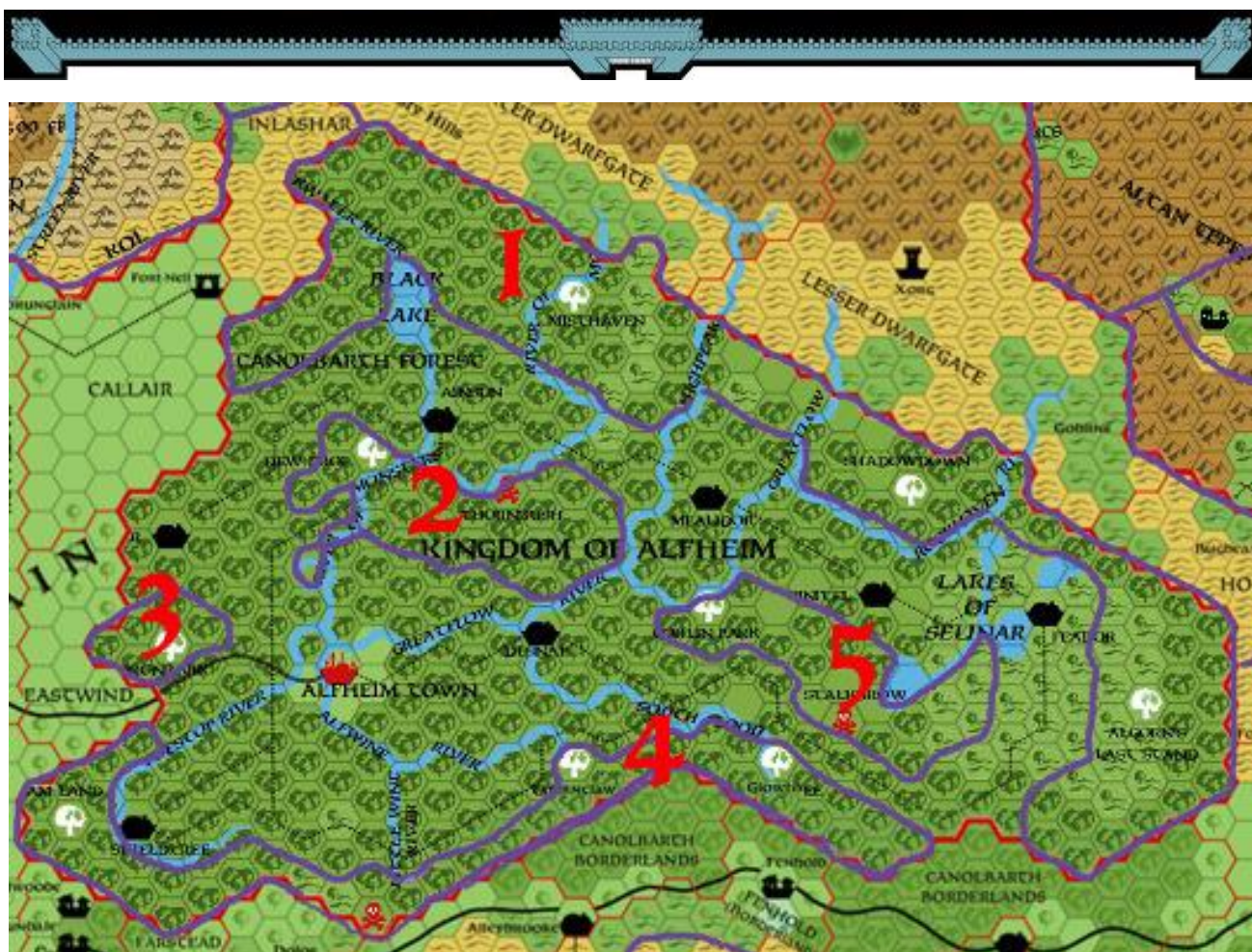
Area: 30 x 300 miles, or 9,000 square miles.  
Days to cross<sup>4</sup>: About 7 days east-west or 60 days following the border, normally it is possible to cover only 5 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 200,000 (elves, fairy folk, faenare, humanoids, aranea, gremlins, harpies, werereatures and at least 120 dragons), possibly with underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ5: “*The Elves of Alfheim*” the good magic points of Mithaven, Shadowdown and Algorn’s Last Stand are described, as the nearby clanholds. According to Bruce Heard’s answer in Dragon magazine #189, the good magic points will go dormant after

<sup>4</sup> By foot with light encumbrance. However as this refers to difficult wilderlands, often without trails, the movement rate on horses should not be much different. Note also that the chance of getting lost in these areas, unless the PCs have a good map or a good guide, should be very high, so the actual travel time could easily double.



*Wilderlands of Alfheim*

the Shadowelf conquest of Alfheim (described in the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set), while the bad magic points will remain active.

- The adventure *"The Grand Tour"* on page 80 of the DM's guide starts near Shadowdown, then moves to all the clanholds of Alfheim.
- The adventure *"The Nithian Lich"* on page 91 takes places in the town of Shadowtree near the lakes of Selinar in the east of Alfheim.
- The Expert adventure *"Rough Play"* on page 95 of the DM's guide deals with the Dwarven organization The Thorns active on this border of Alfheim.
- In the module O2: *"Blade of Vengeance"* the Emerlas, the northern region of Alfheim,

is described in detail with a family of red dragons as the main antagonist.

- The module CM7: *"The Tree of Life"* starts in the forest of Selinar in Eastern Alfheim.
- The module B7: *"Rabasia"* could easily be set in this region of Alfheim.
- In the *Dragonlord Trilogy* by Thorarinn Gunnarsson, near Shadowdown there is the monastic community of Silvermist, apparently inhabited by elven priests of Terra, but in reality also a meeting point for dragons and followers of the Great One.
- The Dungeon Magazine #1 adventure *"The Elven Home"*, featuring a treant and stirges, could be set in this region or in other borderlands of Alfheim.

### In Fan productions:

- The [replica map of Alfheim](#) by Thorfinn Tait gathers all the available canon geographical information on the Realm, and the same for [Aengmor](#).
- Aengmor is described in [the fan almanacs starting in 1015 AC](#) with events set in the nation. See also area 1 of Darokin above and 1019 AC events, including [the Ceremony of Reconciliation](#)
- The [“Codex Immortalis Book Two”](#) by Marco Dalmonte, deals with the Alfheim pantheon on page 82.
- For a list of monsters, check Sheldon Morris’ [“Monstrous Atlas”](#)
- [Threshold issue #10](#) was dedicated to elves and contains articles on the Elven Calendar and Elven Migrations, by me, Elven Class Variants, by Craig Antoun, and the Fall and Rise of Canolbarth, by Robin, detailing the fate of the forest after the Shadowelves’ conquest.
- [“The Demise of the Great Canolbarth Forest”](#) by Robin is also published on the Vaults of Pandius, as is her [detailed 1 mile per hex map of Alfheim](#) which has a lot of locations and ideas about the Elven Kingdom.
- More discussions and contributions to the future of Alfheim and Aengmor can also be found in the [“Campaigning in Alfheim and Aengmor”](#) section of the Vaults of Pandius.
- See also [“Elven Language”](#) by Jonathan Nolan, [“Trees of Life in Mystara”](#) and the article [“The Lost Origins of the Elves”](#) in Threshold issue #12 by LoZompatore.



*Deer in the forest*

## 2 - Thornbush and the River of Monsters

“Thornbush has to be guarded constantly because a lot of interesting creatures always come out of it, and some also end up in the river, hence its name. This is the place to be if you want to have a reputation in Alfheim”

*- Endoric, Grunalf forester*

Area: 25 x 80 miles, or 2,000 square miles.

Days to cross: About 14 days east-west or 4 days north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 6 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 35,000 (elves, fairy folk, faenare, humanoids, aranea, gremlins, harpies, wercreatures and at least 30 dragons), with possibly underground areas.

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ5: *"The Elves of Alfheim"*, the good magic point of Dewdrop is described, as is the bad magic point of Thornbush, which constantly produces monsters. The Sump, a mile wide and thousand feet deep depression that drains water, is described on page 23, as is the Weir, a two mile long fence to keep inhabitants of the River of Monsters out of the Sump.
- The adventure *"The Great Hunt"* on page 77 of the DM's guide is related to Thornbush.
- The Basic scenario *"Defend the Weir"* and the Master adventure *"Into the Bad Magic Point"* on page 95 of the DM's guide take place in this region.
- In the module X10: *"Red Arrow, Black Shield"*, the Alfheim mission, which liberated the tomb of King Alevar from a red dragon, is located in the "denser part of the forest", which could be this area or one of the other wilderlands.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1

### 3 - IRONBARK

"This region is not really wild but is lightly inhabited because it is a favorite place for battle magic and army training, due to historical and magical reasons. Therefore foreigners are kindly asked to stay away, unless they have permission to go there"

- *Cyrivil, cleric in Elleromyr*

Area: 16 x 32 miles, or 400 square miles.

Days to cross: About 8 days east-west or 4 days north-south, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day due to the difficult terrain. The region also has traps.

Intelligent inhabitants: Less than 8,000 (mostly elves, fairy folk, faenare and at least 10 dragons in the service of the army), with possibly underground areas.

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ5: *"The Elves of Alfheim"* the good magic point of Ironbark is described as the site of an elven victory against Darokinians and a site favourable to reversal and defensive magic.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1

### 4 - SOUTHERN ALFHEIM AND DRAGONTREE

"The border with Darokin is normally peaceful, at worst we could have some bandits or small humanoid bands. But travellers in this region should be wary because there are quite some number of fairy folk, dragons and wercreatures here, and not all are peaceful. Also dinosaurs, hydras and wyverns are common in Dragontree"

- *Temilyn, guide from Alfheim town to Shieldtree*

Area: 10 x 240 miles, or 2,900 square miles.

Days to cross: About 2 days north-south or 50 days following the border, normally it is

possible to cover only 5 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 60,000 (elves, fairy folk, faenare, humanoids, aranea, gremlins, harpies, werereatures, beastmen and at least 45 dragons), with possibly underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ5: *"The Elves of Alfheim"* the good magic points of Dream Land, Glowtree and Turnclaw are described, as is the bad magic point of Dragontree. The beast men invasion of the wizard Illodius of 550 AC started in Turnclaw. Beastmen and werereatures could still be present in the region. According to a Bruce Heard's answer in Dragon magazine #189, the Dream Land will be removed from Mystara after the Shadowelves conquest of Alfheim.

- The module CM9: *"Legacy of Blood"* takes place in Fenhold, near Alfheim's southern border.

- The supplement PC1: *"Tall Tales of the Wee Folk"*, describes in detail the region of Dream Land

- The Dungeon Magazine #26 adventure *"Caravan Guards"*, featuring bhuts, is set in the Darokian road near the southern border of Alfheim.

#### In Fan productions:

- See area 1



*Deep of the woods*

### 5 - Stalkbrow and the Selinar hills

"Stalkbrow is considered very dangerous by elven wizards, and Goblin Park too, even if it is not a bad magic point, sometimes has hostile humanoids nearby. Travellers are advised not to dwell in this region, unless they have some good reason to do so, or love danger"

*- Sillyra, merchant in Pinitel*

Area: 16 x 80 miles, or 1,500 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 4 days north-south or 20 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day due to the difficult terrain.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 30,000 (elves, fairy folk, faenare, humanoids, goblins, aranea, gremlins, harpies, werereatures and at least 20 dragons), with possibly underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ5: *"The Elves of Alfheim"* the good magic point of Goblin Park is described, as is

the bad magic point of Stalkbrow. The alien goblins which invaded in 700 AC could still be present or reappear in the area. Undead, nightmare creatures or fiends could be appropriate for Stalkbrow.

- See area 1 about the module CM7 and the Gazetteer adventure "*The Nithian Lich*", set near this region.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1, also in Threshold issue #10, DesertNomad wrote the article "[The Stalkbrow Bad Magic Node](#)", describing the area and proposing to place there the module CM5: "*Mystery of the Snow Pearls*". Gyerians are present in the module, so a population of them could live in Alfheim.

**ETHENGAR**

**Populations and density**

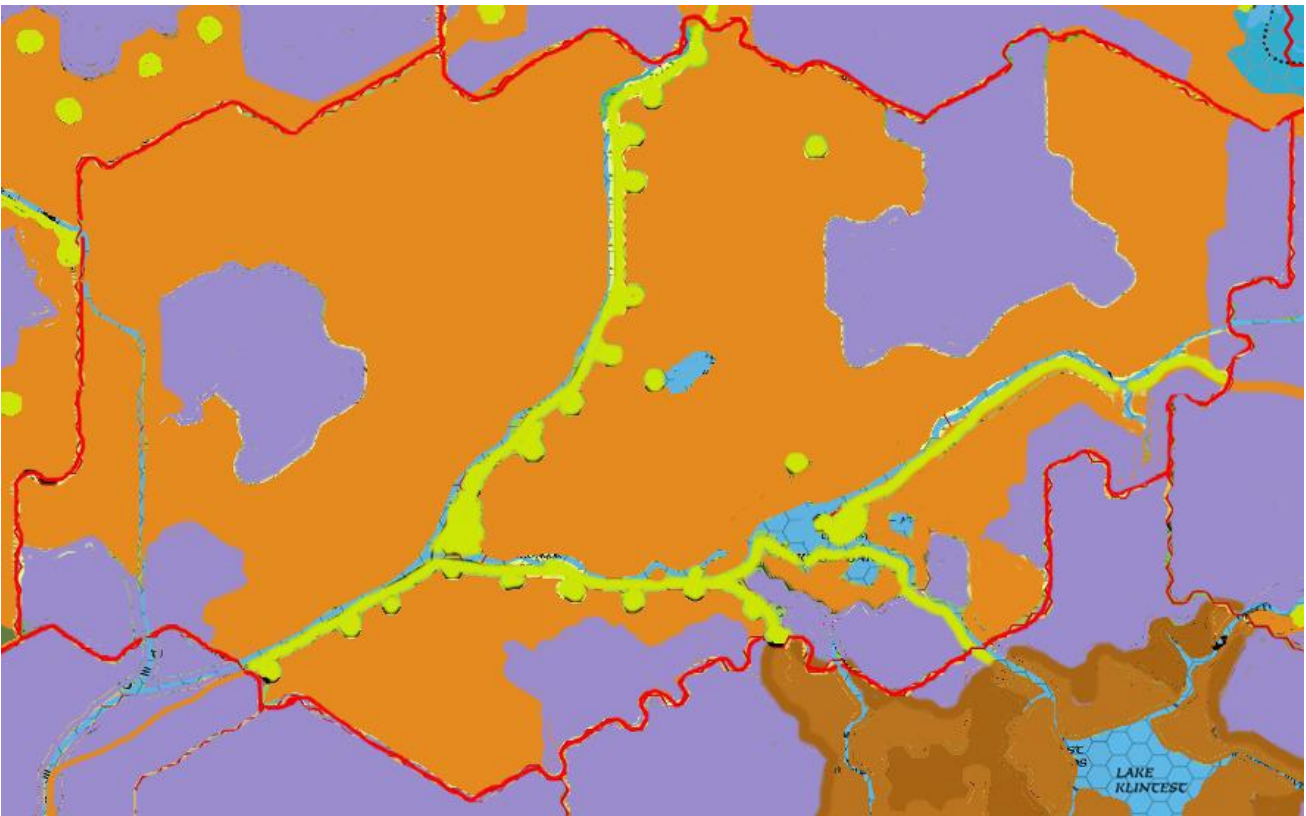
I have depicted most of Ethengar as borderlands, 840 orange hexes, an enormous territory claimed and inhabited by the nomadic Ethengarians, but shared with other intelligent creatures and wild animals, monsters and spirits. I have considered civilized areas in yellow to only be the trade road that goes to the Heldann territories, Vestland, Rockhome and Darokin, for a total of 75 hexes. The Ethengarians patrol it in force, making it one of the safest routes of the Known World. There are five big wilderlands for a total of 330 hexes, depicted in purple. Estimations of the Ethengar population in the Poor Wizard's Almanac and in the Demografia Mystariana of Simone Neri give a figure of slightly more or slightly less than 300,000, with a very low density. I disagree because Ethengar is one of the most ancient nations of the Known World, so even if the Ethengarians have maintained a traditional nomadic lifestyle, I expect them to be highly organized in their environment, and therefore with quite advanced magic, defensive systems, and medicine, making it unlikely they would have a very sparse population.

My estimation therefore is a relative high density along the trade roads, with about 200,000 people, almost all humans except for some dwarven or elvish visitors. The density of this area is still quite lower than the other civilized areas of the Known World, at about 40 people per square mile. The borderlands should have a density quite lower than other similar regions with

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*Ethengar Populations*

substantial populations, but still with only 15 people per square mile they should be able to support at least 800,000 inhabitants, mostly humans with about 50,000 other intelligent creatures, mostly humanoids, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or gyerians, wercreatures and undead.

The wilderlands should have a similar density, but humans should be almost absent and the 400,000 inhabitants should be composed entirely of humanoids, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare, wercreatures and the Spirits of the Ethengarian traditions. These spirits could be pookas or fairy folk, as the DM prefers. In total the steppes should be able to support 1,000,000 Ethengarians or slightly less, and 450,000 other intelligent inhabitants, with about 1,200 dragons.

## The Wilderlands of Ethengar

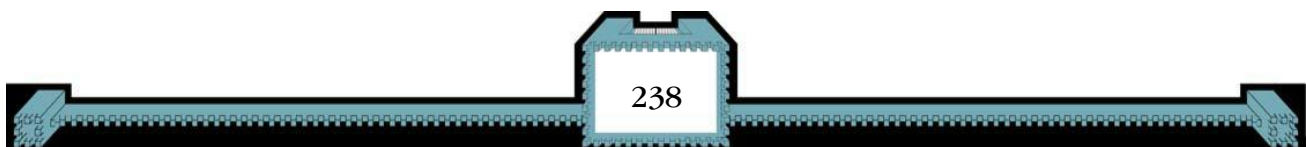
### I - Tangut orcs territory

“We cannot guarantee safety of travellers outside the road. Orcs live to the west, hidden below the ground, even if we do our best to keep them at bay, and we’ve had no raids nor attacks for years. The Yakkas instead seem unable to defend their yaks.”

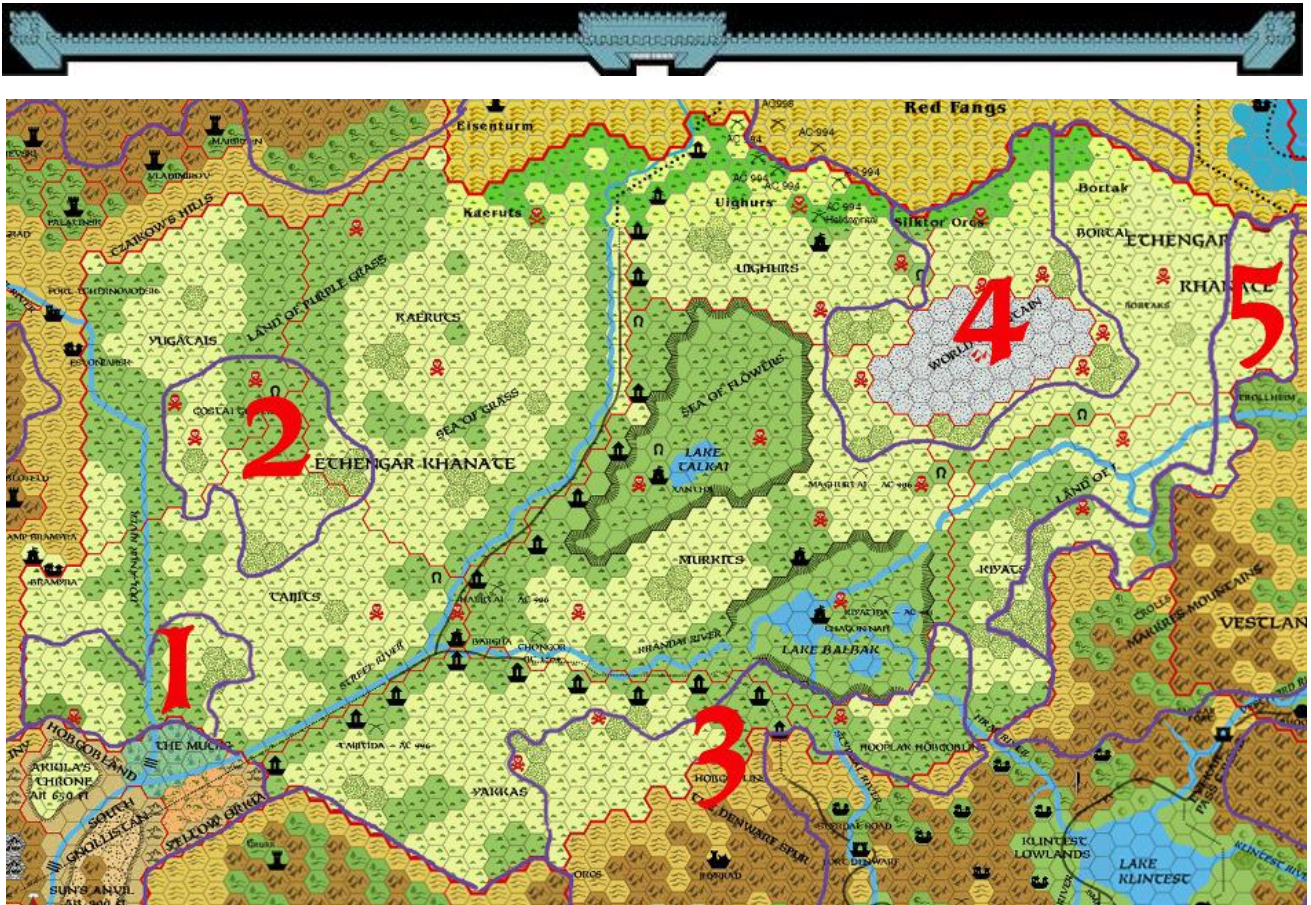
*- Makbai, Taijits warrior*

Area: 32 x 80 miles, or 2,500 square miles.

Days to cross: About 4 days north-south or 10 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 8 miles per day on foot, with high







*Wilderlands of Ethengar*

chances of getting lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 50,000 (orcs, trolls and other humanoids, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies or gyerians, wercreatures and at least 20 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ12: *“The Golden Khan of Ethengar”* the Tanguts are said to inhabit a tunnel system, and are allied to Moghul Khan of Yellow Orkia. Taijits pay Moghul Khan to attack the Yakkas. Their number as given is only 240, but I would raise it considerably.
- On page 43 of the DM’s guide the animals common in the steppes are bear, camel, wild cat, chameleon lizard, dog, eagle, falcon,

giant boar, gerbil, wild goat, hawk, horse, lion, monkey, owl, sheep, snake, swan, tiger, wolf, and yak. Spirits or pookas in the humanoid shapes of these animals are therefore appropriate for the wilderlands.

- The adventure *“Welcome to the Lands of the Ethengars”* on page 51 could begin near this region.
- The module BSOLO: *“Ghost of Lion Castle”*, is set in Ethengar and could be appropriate for this region.
- Dragon Magazine #237 does not mention any specific lupin breed in Ethengar, but as there are several in Glantri, Heldann and Norwold it is likely some also live in the steppes. A lupin similar to the [Tibetan Mastiff](#) would be appropriate. Rakasta could also be present in the steppes.

**In Fan productions:**

- The [replica map of Ethengar](#) by Thorfinn Tait gathers all the available geographical information on the steppes
- See also the [“Monstrous Atlas of the Ethengar Khanates”](#) by Sheldon Morris
- The [Ethengar Khanates](#) are described in the fan almanacs from 1015 AC and there are events set in the steppes, see also Harri Maki’s [list of events](#) linked in the first area of Darokin and the 1019 AC Almanac, featuring a raid on the Heldannic lands
- The [“Codex Immortalis Book Two”](#) by Marco Dalmonte deals with the Ethengar pantheon on page 86.
- Sean Meaney imagined an [“Ethengar Invasion”](#) of insects carrying fungus from Glantri
- Centaurs in Ethengar are described by [Lost Woodrake](#) and by [Christopher Richard Davies](#) in the Vaults of Pandius.
- [Development of an Ethengarian air force](#) of pegasus and other flying creatures is imagined by Sharon Dornhoff and by John Hare in the Vaults.



*Ethengar grassland*

**2 - Gostai goblins territory**

“We have won great victories against the Gostai, who enslaved us and tormented us in the past. Now they are losing against our might, and the Yugatais attacks and if it was not for the necessity to fight also the Glantrian and Heldannic dogs, we could already have destroyed them”

- *Kogotal, Kaeruts bakomon*

Area: 64 x 64 miles, or 4,000 square miles.  
 Days to cross: About 8 days north-south or east-west, normally it is possible to cover 8 miles per day on foot, but it is very easy to get lost.  
 Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 80,000 (hobgoblins and other goblinoids, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies or gyerians, werecreatures and at least 60 dragons), with possibly underground areas.

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ12: *“The Golden Khan of Ethengar”*, on page 35 of the DM’s guide, the Gostai are depicted on the verge of extinction, numbering about 600. I prefer them much stronger and more numerous.
- The mini campaign *“In the Service of the Golden Khan”* from page 58 of the DM’s guide features Gostai goblins and other humanoids.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1 above.

### 3 - Hooplak hobgoblins Territory

“The Hooplak somehow have survived despite the rise of the Great Khan, and the combined attacks of Murkits, Kiyats and us Yakkas, and the help we have received also from the dwarves. We are certain an evil Spirit is aiding them from a ruined city in the dwarven mountains”

- *Arika, Yakkas shaman*

Area: 175 x 30 miles, or 5,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 4 days north-south or 22 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 8 miles per day on foot, but it is very easy to get lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 100,000 (goblins and other goblinoids, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies or gyerians, wercreatures and at least 75 dragons), with possibly underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ12: “*The Golden Khan of Ethengar*”, on page 35 of the DM’s guide, the Hooplak are depicted on the verge of extinction, numbering only 300, and willing to ally with the Ethengarians. If the latter is true, I prefer their numbers to be much higher. As their territory borders Amburyr, the domain of the red dragon Ambur which rules from the ruins of Jhyrrad (see [“Who’s Who Among Dragons”](#), written by Bruce Heard in Dragon magazine #171 and available also in the Vaults ), I suppose they could be under his control.

#### In Fan productions:

- Mischa E Gelman created the [Hooplak NPC Hargul](#) in the Vaults of Pandius , plus [2 additional NPCs](#)

### 4 - Sliktor orcs territory and the Land of Black Sand

“We have won a great battle against them and now they are not a menace anymore. Soon we will completely destroy them. Or we will drive them into the Land of the Black Sand, and the spirits will devour them all ”

- *Barka, Uigbur dagam commander*

Area: 88 x 104 miles, or 9,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 11 days north-south or 13 east-west, normally it is possible to cover 8 miles per day on foot, but it is very easy to get lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 185,000 (orcs and other humaooids, spirits, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies or gyerians, wercreatures, undead and at least 140 dragons), with underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ12: “*The Golden Khan of Ethengar*”, on page 36 of the DM’s guide, the Sliktor are described as having suffered a big defeat, and almost starving. The evil spirit Jaku the Render would soon push them to attack.  
- The Land of the Black Sand is described on

page 7 of the DM's guide and later in the Adventures section. In ["Who's Who Among Dragons"](#), written by Bruce Heard in Dragon magazine #171 and available also in the Vaults, it is also the domain of Khanistar, a powerful blue dragon.

- In the *Dragonlord trilogy* by Thorarrin Gunnarsson the World Mountain is inhabited by spirits and they appear in the form of yakmen. The three Yak brothers are also described on page 39 and 40 of the DM's guide of GAZ12.

- The adventure *"Box of Rain"* on page 51 of the DM's guide features the Land of Black Sand and undead.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1 above.



*Ethengar horse*

**5 - Trolls corridor**

"Trolls and gnolls come often from the Makkres mountains. It is good training for Kiyats warriors and occasionally even the Bortaks find the guts to fight them."

- *Orkajin, Kiyats warrior*

Area: 15 x 240 miles, or 3,500 square miles.

Days to cross: About 2 days east-west or 30 days following the border, normally it is possible to cover 8 miles per day on foot, but it is very easy to get lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 70,000 (trolls, gnolls, centaurs, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies or gyerians, werereatures, and at least 50 dragons), with underground areas.

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ12 this region is not described in detail, but on page 11 of the DM's guide is written that the Bortaks Khan is paying gnoll raiders to go against the Kiyats.

- The module X3: *"The Curse of Xanathos"* deals with an Ethengarian cult of Cretia in Rhooona, Vestland, near this region.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1 above.

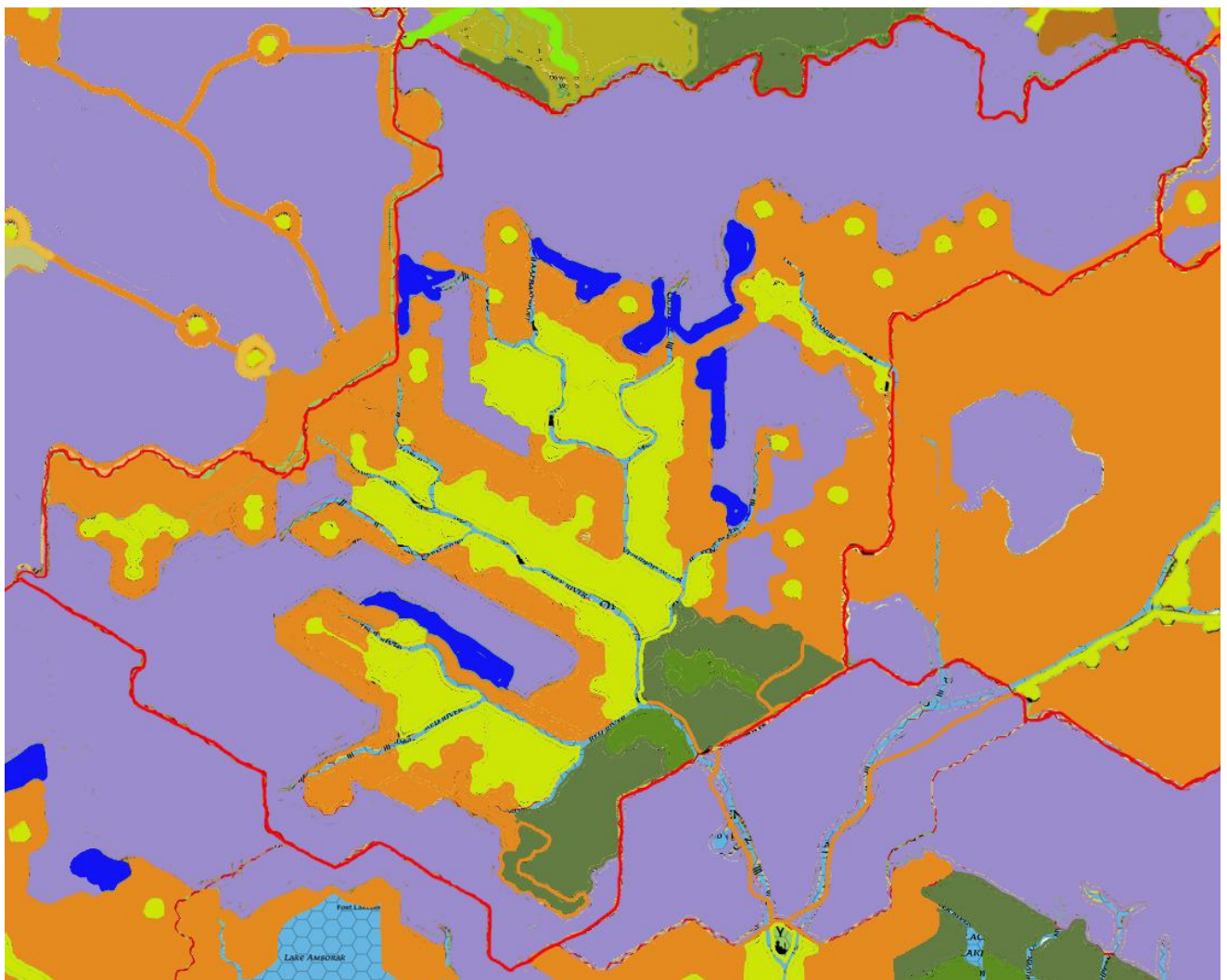
## GLANTRI

### Populations and density

In Glantri I have depicted as yellow hexes only the central regions and the areas around the main cities and town. There are in total 300 yellow hexes that should have an average density of 70 inhabitants per square mile, for a total of 1,350,000 people, mostly humans with some elves and lupins.

There are about 400 orange hexes of borderlands that should support about 640,000 humans and 65,000 other intelligent beings. The purple hexes of wilderlands number about 960 and can be easily inhabited by 1,000,000 intelligent non human inhabitants and about 75,000 humans.

The hexes in green are settled by elves with an average density of 40 per square mile, meaning a population of about 50,000



*Glantri Populations*

Belcadiz and Erewan, plus 110,000 more in the lightly settled dark green areas, which should contain also 20,000 humans and about 20,000 fairy folk of various races. The hexes in blue are inhabited by lupins, and should have about 150,000 inhabitants (130,000 lupins and 20,000 other intelligent beings).

The total population of Glantri should therefore amount to more than 2 million humans, 210,000 elves, 140,000 lupins and 1,100,000 other intelligent inhabitants that should include werecreatures, orcs, trolls, ogres, other humanoids, rocs, sasquatches, snow apes, frost giants (all mentioned in Gazetteer 3), aranea, beholders, brownies, bugbears, centaurs, chevalls, dryads, faenares, gargoyles, giants of all kinds, deep glaurants, goblins, gnolls, gremlins, harpies, kobolds, leprechauns, nixies, pookas, rakastas, shapeshifters, sidhes, skitterlings, sphinxes, sprites, thouls, troglodytes, undead, woodrakes (mentioned in Sheldon Morris' Monstrous Atlas, see below) and about 1,500 dragons. Indeed the wilderlands of Glantri are so vast and unexplored that virtually any creature could live there, including small groups of dwarves, gnomes and halflings which have stayed hidden, despite the past persecutions. Probably the Principalities have about 2,500,000 official inhabitants, and 1,500,000 unofficial inhabitants in the wilderlands. My figure is obviously much higher than the 780,000 pre-plague inhabitants mentioned in the Poor Wizard's Almanacs, and the 836,000 inhabitants calculated by Simone Neri in his Demografia, for the reasons already explained in the previous nations.

## The Wilderlands of Glantri

### I - Kurish Massif and Glantrian Alps

"The Alps are dominions of giants and faenare, while the Massif has also ogres, cat men and volcanoes. And obviously dragons. Tales of ancient ruins and treasures have lured many adventurers, like me. The mountains are a fascinating place, but I have lost some rash companions in them"

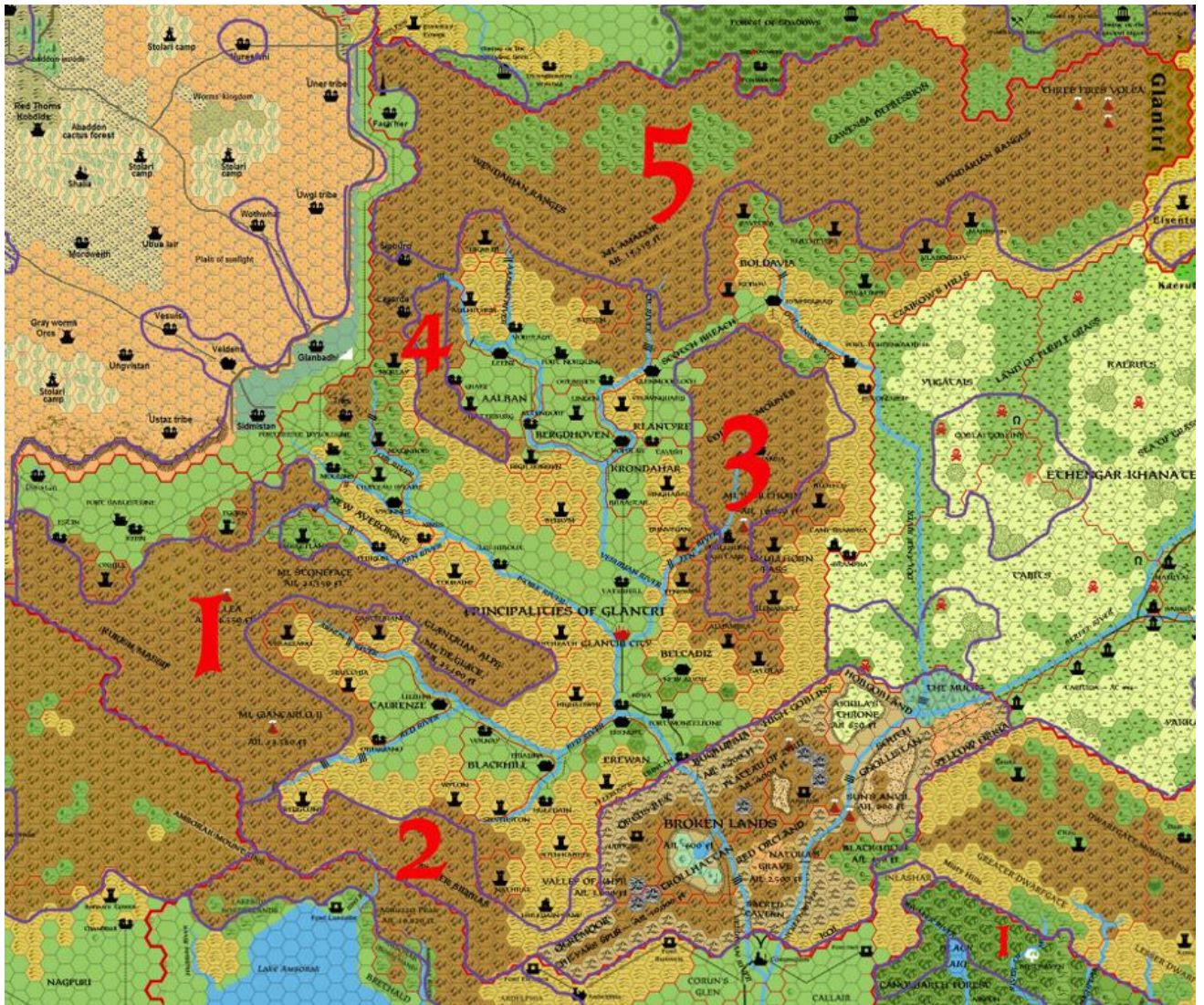
- Giovanni Marolo,  
adventurer in Sirecchia

Area: 125 x 120 miles, or 15,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 30 days north-south or east-west, normally it is possible to cover only 4 miles per day on foot, with high chances of getting lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 300,000 (ogres and other humanoids, giants, fairy folk, harpies, rakasta and at least 200 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

#### In Canon products:

- In GAZ3 the mountain are described on page 7. The Alps are said to have glaciers with mysterious crystal "snowtrees" and 3,000 feet high cliffs towering over the Arnus river. The Kurish is said to have many dyeing and medicinal plants. Common trees in all mountain chains are pines, yews and larches at higher heights. Vampire roses, archer



*Wilderlands of Glantri*

bushes and grab grass are common in the hills. Common animals are wild dogs, foxes, bats, wolves, bears, mountain lions, wild horses, goats, wild cats, yaks, condors, rocs, griffons, and hippogriffs. The Kurish also has relevant populations of ogres, trolls, humanoids, dragons, chimeras and manticores. The Alps and other higher mountains are also said to be inhabited by snow apes, sasquatches, frost giants, frost salamanders, white bears, ice toads and the ice horrow worm, a local variation of the purple worm.

- Principalities are also described on page 10 of Gazetteer 3 and in the boxed set Glantri Kingdom of Magic, but with little details about the wilderlands.
- In the *Trail Map 1* Mount De Glace and Mount Stoneface in the Glantrian Alps are given heights of 25,100 and 24,350 feet (7,650 and 7,422 meters), making them the highest mountains of the Known World. Mount Lea and Mount Giancarlo II of the Kurish are instead 16,550 and 13,560 feet (5,044 and 4,133 meters).
- Glantrian lupins are described in Dragon

Magazine issue #237, in the article “*Lupins of Mystara*” by Bruce Heard. The Glantrian Mountaineer inhabits the Alps. The Hairless lupins are said to live north west of the Broken Lands, see areas 4 and 5 about the other breeds indicated in fan works by Giampaolo Agosta and Átila Pires dos Santos.

- Mountain rakasta are mentioned in the Kurish in Dragon Magazine issue #247, in the article “*Rakasta of Mystara*” by Bruce Heard.
- See also [Glantri map geographic references](#) by Simone Neri for a list of canon adventures and resources set in Glantri.



*Trail leading to the Mount de Glace*

#### **In Fan productions:**

- The [replica map of Glantri](#) by Thorfinn Tait gathers all the available geographical information on the Principalities.
- See also the “[Monstrous Atlas of Glantri](#)” by Sheldon Morris
- The Principalities of Glantri are described in the [fan almanacs from 1015 AC](#) and there are events set in the nation, see also Harri Maki’s list of events linked in the first area of Darokin and the 1019 AC Almanac. See also “[Geology of the Known World](#)” (anon).

- The “[Codex Immortalis Book Two](#)” by Marco Dalmonte, deals with the Glantri pantheon on page 87.
- More resources are available in the [Glantrian section](#) of the Vaults of Pandius, including 1 mile per hex maps of southern Glantri by Robin. See also [this thread on The Piazza Forums](#) where Micky is detailing dominions, partially stored at the Vaults , and creating more 1 mile per hex maps.
- Robin did a 1 mile hex map of [the region near Hightower and Mount De Glace](#).

## **2 - The Silver Sierras**

“The Sierras are fascinating for their richness in plants and minerals. And they also have ancient elven ruins, and more. But they are dangerous, as humanoids trespass often from the Broken Lands and the native inhabitants should not be taken lightly either”

*- Serivil, Erewan warrior in Natbrat*

Area: 24 x 160 miles, or 4,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 6 days north-south or 40 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 4 miles per day on foot, with high chances of getting lost.  
Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 80,000 (orcs, ogres, trolls and other humanoids, giants, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies and at least 70 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

#### **In Canon products:**

- In GAZ 3 the mountains are described on



page 7. The Sierras are said to be reddish despite their name, and the newest mountains (1,700 BC), with frequent earthquakes and floods, and mines of silver, sulphur, coal and gems. There are forests of rhododendrons and bizarre mushrooms in the deepest canyons where the sun doesn't shine. The most common trees are cedars, aspens, plus some myrtles and balsam in the more secluded areas. Some stonewood can also be found, and oak forests in the lower elven lands.

- The adventure *"Quest for the Lizard Tail"* on page 82 and the adventure *"Dirty Half-Dozen"* on page 86 are set in the Silver Sierras.

- The adventure in Dungeon Magazine issue #22 *"Rank Amateurs"* is meant for humanoid PCs trespassing in Glantri, and the adventure *"Manden's Meatbooks"* in Dungeon Magazine issue #28 is set likewise on the border with the Broken Lands.

- The adventure in Dungeon Magazine issue #39 *"The Fountain of Health"* could be set here or in the other wilderlands.

**In Fan productions:**

- See area 1 of Glantri and area 1 of Darokin above for more on this region.

**3 - The Colossus Mounts**

"We can deal with mountain lions, mountain tigers, even griffons and manticores, but when it comes to rocs, dragons and giants the situation can become very dangerous quite fast. So we try not to anger the big ones"

- Allen Breac,  
*Guide of the Monster Hunters' Union*

Area: 60 x 120 miles, or 5,000 square miles.  
Days to cross: About 30 days north-south or 16 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 4 miles per day on foot, with high chances of getting lost.

Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 100,000 (humanoids, giants, lupins, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies and at least 80 dragons), with extensive underground areas.



*The monastery of Lhamsa*

**In Canon products:**

- In GAZ3 the mountains are described on page 7 as among the highest, and the glaciers should also have the mysterious "snowtrees". The adventure *"To the Peak of Wisdom"* on page 81 is set in the Colossus.

- In the *Trail Map 2* Mount Skullhorn height is given as 18,530 feet (5,648 meters).

- The Hound of Klantyre is a lupin breed described in Dragon Magazine issue #237.

**In Fan productions:**

- See links in area 1 above and also ["Free Province of Tchernovodsk"](#) and ["Free Province of Skullhorn"](#) by micky.

#### 4 - Les MONTAGNES NOIRES

“Werereatures of all kinds dwell in the mountains, and worse. Still getting merchandise to Aalban through the pass is far quicker and cheaper than taking the long road around the Noires. Yet it is also far more dangerous”

- *Albin Plourde merchant in Malinbois*

Area: 16 x 88 miles, or 1,500 square miles.  
 Days to cross: About 20 days north-south or 4 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 4 miles per day on foot, with high chances of getting lost.  
 Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 30,000 (werereatures, lupins, brutemen, humanoids, fairy folk, faenare and/or harpies and at least at least 25 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

##### In Canon products:

- In GAZ3 this area is not described, but in PC4: “*Night Howlers*”, the region is detailed. The mountains and hills are said to be inhabited by undead, humanoids, neanderthals (brutemen) and sasquatches, and to reach an height of 16,000 feet (4,877 meters). Some small swamps (marais) are inhabited by lizardmen.  
 - The adventure “*The Silver Quarrel*” on page 84 of GAZ3 is set in Morlay.

##### In Fan productions:

- Thorfinn Tait made a [replica map of the Valley of the Wolves](#) from PC4 now stored in the Vaults of Pandius.  
 - Some Blue Bandit lupins should live in this region according to the work on the topic by

Giampaolo Agosta and Átila Pires dos Santos (see links below). See also “[Saimpt Clébard](#)” by Giampaolo Agosta . Átila also supposes the Bloodhound breed exists in this region too. As it is likely that Renardy in the Savage Coast has a cultural link to Glantrian lupins, other Renardois breeds are appropriate here, as the Bouchon, Neo-Papillon and Renardois Folk.

- See also “[Free Province of The Black Mountains](#)” by micky.

#### 5 - The WENDARIAN RANGES

“People think Glantri has no King or Queen but they could not be more wrong. The High Queen rules in the northern mountain and pulls her strings, and woe to anyone who crosses her.”

- *Marc, adventurer and warrior of Uigmur, the night before his disappearance*

Area: 85 x 400 miles, or 35,000 square miles.  
 Days to cross: About 20 days north-south or 100 days east-west, normally it is possible to cover 4 miles per day on foot, with high chances of getting lost.  
 Intelligent inhabitants: probably up to 700,000 (humanoids, giants, fairy folk, faenare and harpies, troglodytes, werereatures and at least at least 500 dragons), with extensive underground areas.

##### In Canon products:

- In GAZ3 the mountains are described on page 7, the range is said to be ancient and eroded. The range is also known for its blue



View of Mount Amador

piners.

- In *Trail Map 1* Mount Amador height is 14,550 feet (4,435 meters). In the article [“Who’s Who Among Dragons”](#), written by Bruce Heard in *Dragon* magazine issue #171 and available on the Vaults of Pandius, the mountain is the seat of Amanth, a powerful and ancient red dragon who dominates the range.
- The adventure *“Some Old Vampire’s Story”* on page 82 is set in the mountains of Boldavia. The adventure *“Apocalypse Then”* on page 88 could be also set in the range.
- The first book of the *Dragonlord trilogy* by Thorarrin Gunnarsson is partially set in Torkyn Fall, a gnome city in the Wendarian

Ranges later abandoned due to attacks of renegade dragons.

- The module CM8: *“The Endless Stair”* could be set in the Wendarian ranges or in other mountain chains.
- The adventure *“At the Spottle Parlor”* in *Dungeon Magazine* issue #12 is set in the Wendarian ranges.

**In Fan productions:**

- The Heldann or Flaem Shepherd is a common lupin breed in this region according to the articles [“History of the Lupins”](#) by Giampaolo Agosta and [“Lupin Breeds”](#) by Átila Pires dos Santos . See also their article [in Threshold issue #2](#), where it is also said some Hairless lupins are enslaved by Boldavian barons. Das Hund and Doggermann lupins could also be appropriate in Aalban.
- See also micky’s descriptions of the [“Free Provinces of Eastern Wendarian Ranges”](#), [“Nordling”](#), [“Three Fires”](#), [“Central Wendarian Ranges”](#), and [“Western Wendarian Ranges”](#).
- The adventure *“Forestkiller”* [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) by Rodger Burns is partially set here, and in Wendar.

Table 1:  
Total Populations  
for the Central  
Lands

Nation	Darokin	Alfheim	Ethengar	Glantri	Total
Humans	2,630,000	15,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	5,645,000
Elves	25,000	405,000	1,000	210,000	641,000
Dwarves Gnomes	20,000	1,500	5,000	0	26,500
Hin	10,000	1,000	1,000	0	12,000
Lupins	15	1,000	5,000	140,000	161,000
Humanoids	550,000	5,000	300,000	500,000	1,355,000
Giants	50,000	0	0	100,000	150,000
Others	250,000	155,000	150,000	500,000	1,055,000
Total	3,550,000	583,500	1,462,000	3,450,000	9,045,500



# *Ixashira, the Dream of Fire*

by Francesco Defferrari  
(Sturm)

*Asbira sleeps and time does not dare to touch her. The most beautiful princess cannot be awakened by the kiss of a man, but only by the willing sacrifice of a woman. Only someone willing to forfeit her life to avenge a great wrong can unleash the Dream of Fire. But if you are a woman, and you are willing to die for your cause, you should ask yourself: do you have the right to change Time itself? Do you have the right to damn millions to save millions? The Dream of Fire will consume you, as it consumed Asbira.*

Secret teachings of the Church of Ixion,  
only known by the High Priest and the  
Inner Council.

*Daughter, beloved, you do not know  
How many sacrifices were made  
to save this world*

*How many suffered and struggled  
to mould its Time*

*This is the reason why  
I could not let you Dream*

*But if someone will reach you  
I will let her free you*

*I will let the world burn with your Dream*

The so called "Poem of Ixion",  
unknown date.

## SECRETS OF KOSKATEP, LEVEL 13

This level cannot be reached either by mundane or magical means. The only ways to arrive here are through a direct call from Ixion in the temple of Level 10 (see [issue #12 of Threshold magazine](#)) or breaking through the beastmen tunnel as explained in Level 11 (see [issue #13 of Threshold magazine](#)) or if, eventually, the inhabitants of this level decide to reveal their existence. In this latter case, the beastmen tunnel will be collapsed, and another way to arrive here, magically sealed, will be in area 8 (see below).

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 THIRTEEN, THE DREAM OF FIRE

It is impossible to reach the Inner Temple of Ixion, except as a consequence of the actions of Hel's beastmen (see Level 11), or if the Temple is voluntarily opened from below by Ixion's followers -- which may happen if Quehuar revolts against The Last One or attacks the Darkers before their ceremony in 1031 AC. Attempts to reach the Inner Temple with gates, teleport, or other magical means will fail, even if the PC's somehow know about it -- note that only a few powerful individuals from the levels above are aware of the Temple's existence at all and none of them would willingly share this information.

### The levels of KOSKATEP in issues of THRESHOLD Magazine

- #1: [“Mirror of the Eternal Night”](#) (Overview)
- #2: [“The Debris”](#) (Level 1)
- #3: [“The Akropolis of Kotesh”](#) (Level 2B)
- #4: [“The Lower Ruins of Kotesh”](#) (Level 2A)
- #5: [“Ranesh, city of four people”](#) (Level 3)
- #6: [“Karrast, dwarven gold”](#) (Level 4)
- #7: [“Dark secrets of Ieronyx”](#) (Level 5)
- #8: [“Shadows of Kundrak”](#) (Level 6)
- #9: [“Signs of the Universe”](#) (Level 7)
- #10: [“Mokrath, serpent eye”](#) (Level 8)
- #11: [“Krystallac, Crystal Heart”](#) (Level 9)
- #12: [“Intitepetl, Gem of the Sun”](#) (Level 10)
- #13: [“Kalasah, The Black Hearth”](#) (Level 11)
- #14: [“Koskatepetl, The Wasted City”](#) (Level 12)

This level is a huge compound dedicated to Ixion, and is home to thousands of people who have chosen to become its guardians over the millennia. There are Sollux, brutemen, Hutaakan and human priests, and warriors living here under the earth from innumerable generations.

Obviously If the PCs have arrived here as enemies they will be fought to the bitter end, but a small group of people will never be able to conquer the temple, as it's heavily guarded and there are very powerful priests among the guardians. Only an organized army of Hel's, Nyx's or Thanatos' followers could do it, or a large number of fairies and giants. If the PCs arrived here as followers or allies of Ixion, however, they will be welcomed as the temple is preparing to reveal itself to the world and the inhabitants very much need information about the land in which they will emerge - and they could use the PC's as emissaries and ambassadors to the Karameikan court. The priests will not

hide the fact that they guard a powerful artifact, but will not explain the details of its nature and powers.

**The secrets:** The most sacred place is indeed the Inner Temple. Here is a huge chamber with a crystalline sarcophagus where Ashira, daughter of the Sun, has slept since the dawn of Time with the Dream of Fire. The artifact appears as a bronze box she keeps at her side, with her left hand over it. Several Sollux priests and warriors are always here, guarding her resting place, and the Dream. If the PC's have managed to arrive here, either by stealth or by violence, Ishan, the highest priest, will not immediately attack them, but will warn them against the dangers of the artifact and will beg them to renounce the idea of using it.

Even if PC's are able to defeat the guardians, "only someone willing to forfeit her life to avenge a great wrong" will be able to break the sarcophagus. That's also written on the base of Ashira's resting place, but in a language so ancient only an Immortal could read it. Only a woman, or a female being of any other race could open the sarcophagus, and only if she is willing to die to avenge a great wrong done to her people. Such a woman would be able to awake Ashira, and the Daughter of the Sun would grant her desire, and literally change the world. Thus, if Lady Sonya of the Darkers ever manages to arrive at The Dream, she would be able to undo the destruction of Taymora. If a Traladaran freedom fighter makes their way here, she would be able to undo the Thyatian invasion. If a Sidhe priestess could do it, she would be able to bring back the Fairy Golden Age, and so on, effectively erasing the

existing timeline and supplanting it with another one.

If anyone ever manages to penetrate this far and is ready to awaken Ashira, Ixion himself will appear in his corporeal form of a sollux with burning hair. He cannot prevent the willing sacrifice of someone who wants to awaken his daughter, but he will plead for them not to do it.

"Everyone would like to live forever. Everyone would like his or her family, his or her people, to live forever. This place could do it, it could give eternal life to you and your people. Have not the fairy folk who once ruled the world the right to bring back their days of glory? Have not the massacred Tal people the right to be avenged? Have not the Traladarans the right to be free? And the dragons, the giants, the brutemen, the lizard men? All were once proud and strong people that time devoured and other people conquered and destroyed. They all have the right to return and live forever, but should that happen, the future will never come to be. That is why we guarded this place and that is why we tried to prevent anyone from using its power".

If the PC's ignore Ixion's plea and do it anyway he will not attack them, he will try to integrate the temple into the rest of the world anyway - whatever world it has now become. He will also ask his daughter to come with him, but she will refuse and will decide to remain on the prime plane. PC's will have to live in a new world and will have to chose whether or not to help Ashira. Ixion will not persecute them. The Dream of Fire will become only a normal bronze box, its power forever expired.

After the Darkers take control, the danger for the temple increases considerably as The Last One has learned of Hel's plan and would like to use it for his own ends. Ixion and his priests do not know yet about this, but regardless they wish to destroy The Last One, and they will try to do so with the aid of Quehuar's rebellion. Even if they manage to destroy The Last One before he can enslave Hel's beastmen, they would still risk a fight on two sides at once -- with Nyx's followers above and Hel's beastmen below, which could lead to their defeat. If PCs are not aligned with Hel or Nyx and are willing to help the Church of Ixion, they could be a decisive element in the oncoming struggle for control of Koskatep.

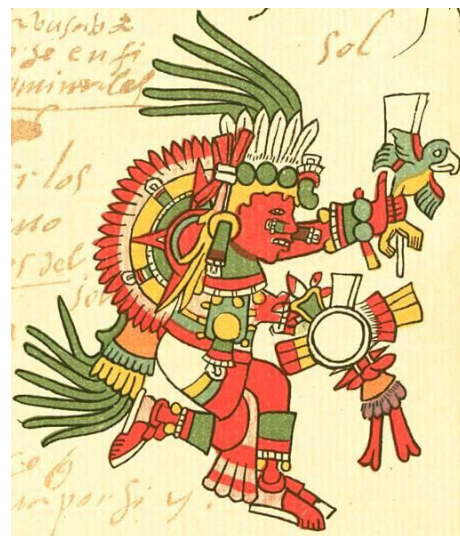
For the DM there are several possible events and consequences to consider: The Last One could be defeated but not killed, and could then hide in Level Twelve. Fairies and giants could intervene in the struggle. And obviously, PCs, or any of the several sides involved in this struggle, could manage to awaken Ashira, using the Dream of Fire to change reality according to their own wishes.

## TIMELINE

In the Dawn of time: Ashira betrays Ixion and creates The Dream of Fire. Ixion cannot bear to destroy his beloved daughter and puts her in stasis along with the powerful artifact she created. A chosen corp of Sollux priests, wizards and warriors is put in charge of guarding the temple. Groups of dragons, giants and fairies discover the existence of the place several times during the millennia, but the Church of Ixion always manages to stop them before The Dream of Fire can become common knowledge.

**11000 BC:** A bruteman shaman tries to use The Dream but the sollux convince him to stop, and Ahyar and his tribe become additional guardians of the temple.

**10000 BC:** Oltec men are drawn to the area and begin to worship the place, building a temple above ground. Ixion intends to use them as more guardians, as the existence of The Dream is no longer a secret among Immortals.



*Azcan depiction of Ixion*

**5100 BC:** Precious and semi-precious gems are found in the area and the local people, ancestors of the Azcans, build mines nearby. Slowly the temple becomes a town, and later a city, that falls under the influence of the Oltec empire and is named Koskatepetl, the Gem of the Mountains.

**3525 BC:** The Azcan empire is formed, and Koskatepetl becomes not only a source of gems but also of metals to build new lethal weapons for the war.

**3057 BC:** The Azcan emperor declares that the underground, secret temple of Ixion has to be opened to share its secrets with the people. The priests refuse, and destroy the city to seal the temple. A revolt of the Church of Ixion throws the empire into civil war and chaos; the site of Koskatepetl is abandoned and for several years infested by bandits and monsters that try in vain to occupy the place.

**2998 BC:** Human refugees hide from the Great Rain of Fire in the ruins of Koskatepetl, but are soon slaughtered by a group of beastmen that take residence among the ruins. The inner temple survives the cataclysm and the invasions unscathed. In time the beastmen cover the ruins and create a complex cave system

**2504 BC:** The Inti, led by the church of Ixion, occupy the ruins and rebuild the city of Koskatepetl. The beastmen who survive the conquest hide in a remote part of the cave and are not detected. The Inti explore briefly Level 12, but realize it is poisonous and abandon Levels 11 and 12, building their new city over them. Only a part of Level 11 is occasionally used as storerooms. Inspired by Hel, the beastmen seal a part of the caves (sublevels 1-4) to hide there.

**2379 BC:** The Troll Queen of Grondheim conquers the city, renaming it Krystallac. Just a few years later sidhe priests discover the existence of the inner temple of Level 13 and begin a century long negotiation with the sollux and the brutemen below to gain access to the artefact. They communicate through the temple of Ixion in Level 10 and do not settle Level 11. The beastmen thrive in their new hidden cave system.

**2282 BC:** As the Queen grows impatient about the unwillingness of Ixion to compromise, she sends her best troops to open the temple, digging a magical tunnel from Level 10 to 13. As this affects only the abandoned part of Level 11, the beastmen do not even notice. Inti troops soon attack the place, and Taymora intervenes shortly thereafter. This is the beginning of the War of the Empires, or the Twilight Wars, or the War of Southern Grondheim, that will last decades and will devastate the region. Mogreth intervenes as well a few years later.

**2170 BC:** Some fairies of Krystallac turn to the Unseelie, and decide to tell Elienor about Ashira's tomb. The Troll Queen discovers them and exiles them, and manages to scatter the essence of Elienor after a terrible magical battle near the Crystal Lake. But she is gravely wounded by Elienor's magic, and will never be able to recover. The Crystal Lake is also damaged and its capacity as a portal greatly reduced.

**2080 BC:** In a time of crisis in Grondheim, due to the Troll Queen's malady, Taymora and Intua, lizardmen and troglodytes, escaped from Mogreth, occupy Krystallac and keep it for a hundred years. As the lizardmen cannot locate all the portals left by the fairies



in Level 9, they try to seal it completely, and likewise they ignore Level 10 and below.

**1976 BC:** After a long siege Taymora conquers Krystallac and renames it Kosmoteiros. Nyx knows about Ixion's artefact, but rather than try to steal or destroy it, she decides to exploit the magical aura of the place to build her own, stronger artefact that will bring about the fulfilment of her Dream. The followers of Nyx leave the levels below alone.

**1777 BC:** To prevent Kosmoteiros from falling into the hands of Thanatos, the priests of Nyx destroy the city with a terrible earthquake. Thousands die and the place is abandoned for many years as seismic activity increases in the area. The earthquake opens the Chasm down to Level 12.

**1664 BC:** After the destruction of Taymora, fairies of the Unseelie court, former exiles of Krystallac, take possession of the place and try to use the Starlake, but do not discover Ashira's burial and are not able to reach Elienor until much later. The dark fairies of Kundrak do not reach Level 10 and below.

**1597 BC:** Lord Keiros, a Tal<sup>1</sup> nosferatu and follower of Nyx, conquers Koskatep from the dark fairies. Vampiric followers of Thanatos attack several times but are defeated. Lord Keiros briefly explores Level 10, 11 and 12, but does not use them.

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<sup>1</sup> The name I gave to the Taymoran descended population that lived in Karameikos before the arrival of the Traldars, see my "[History of Traladara](#)" in the Vaults of Pandius

**1412 BC:** Hutaakans conquer the site for Ixion and Pflarr; a seriously wounded Lord Keiros is forced to hide, and his followers are exterminated. The Hutaakans slowly explore the levels below, reaching Intitepetl and its mummies, and succeed in communing with them. They explore Level 11 and 12 also but, finding them empty, leave them alone.

**1021 BC:** Orcs sack Koskatep. Some hutaakan priests survive hiding in the lower levels, and will become more guardians for the hidden temple of Ixion, teleported from the temple in Level 10 by the will of the Immortal.

**954 BC:** After several battles, a dwarven army defeats the orcs and conquers Koskatep, but they are soon in constant warfare with the gnolls that rule over the region. They do not fully explore the lower levels.

**912 BC:** The dwarves are finally defeated by the gnolls, who build their own city over the ruins. Shamans of Ranivorus and Thanatos begin to study the Starlake. The Gnolls do not reach Level 10 and below.

**841 BC:** Followers of Nyx, aided by ogres and giants, attack Koskatep but are unable to conquer it from the gnolls, though they succeed in killing the most powerful shamans of Thanatos in Level 7, and burning their notes.

**603 BC:** The ogre king Kulfan conquers Koskatep in the name of Nyx; ogres rule over the area for centuries. Human priests of the Lady of the Night live in the city along with them. They have some contacts with Level 8 and 9, and reach Levels 10 and below, but do not use them.

**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 priests of Ixion, who drive out the ogres and occupy Koskatep for years. The priests of Ixion occupy all the levels down to the 10th, while they briefly explore Levels 11 and 12, soon abandoning them.

**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 a very powerful and ancient vampire sent by Thanatos, The Last One. Some priests of Ixion escape to the lowest level and become defenders of the inner temple, teleported from the temple in Level 10. In the following centuries ogres, giants, followers of Nyx, and even adventurers sent by Ixion try to reclaim Koskatep, but The Last One destroys them all. However, he fails to control completely Level 9 and 10, and so is unable to fully settle the empty Levels 11 and 12 with his minions.

**912 AC:** Traladaran freedom fighters hide in the ruins for some time, but are destroyed by the Thyatian army. The Thyatians soon leave the place.

**998 AC:** (or later if the DM prefers): Lady Sonya, the Grand Daughter of the Night, a powerful priestess of Nyx, and her followers, are able to defeat The Last One and reclaim Koskatep. The Last One is not destroyed, but escapes to Level 10 with some faithful followers, to plan his revenge. However, Quehuar has his own plan to stab The Last One in the back and destroy the Darkers, too, with the aid of the followers of Ixion in Level 13.

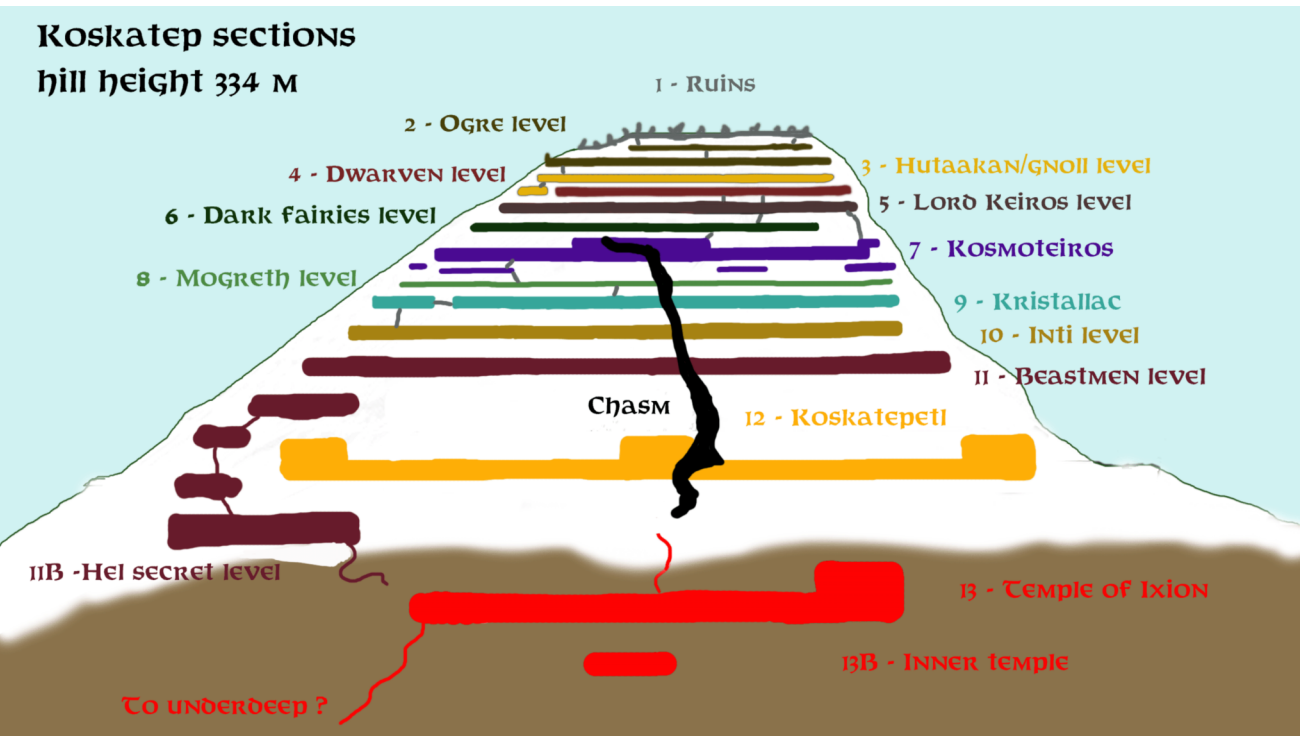
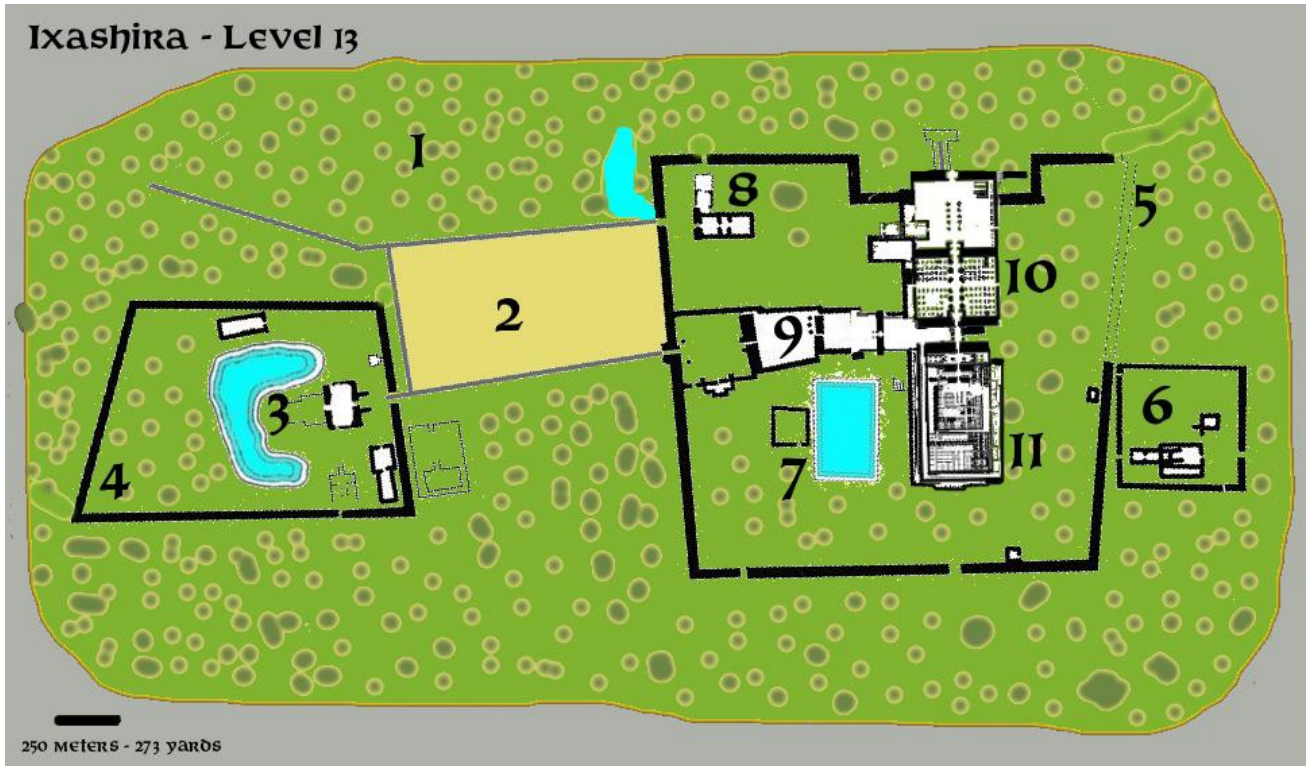
**1031 AC:** The next alignment. On this date, the Starlake could be used to bring forth The Eternal Night. Shortly before this date at the latest, the beastmen of the hidden level will attack Level 13. If The Last One is still alive and hidden in Level 12, he will stage his final attack at this time. See also "The Battle on this level" paragraph at the bottom of the previous levels of Koskatep in Threshold issue [#12](#) and [#13](#).

#### Notes on this Level

Unlike all the above levels, this lever has neither any Random Critters nor Wandering Parties. The Followers of The Last One encounter table of level 1 likewise does not apply and, even after the Darkers take control of Koskatep, no party of them will be encountered in this level. However if this level has been breached by the beastmen tunnel in Level 11 and somehow all the Followers of Ixion have been defeated, any creature or group may be present here.

Spells that provide magical transportation, such as teleport, passwall, dimension door, magic door, travel, gate and spells such as clairvoyance and find the path do not work on this level due to powerful wards placed by Ixion himself, so it is Immortal level magic that cannot be bypassed nor dispelled, except by the will of the Immortal. His clerics indeed can cast such spells normally while in this level.

# koskatep, level 13



## The map and the inhabitants of this Level

The area in dark grey on the map is solid stone, impossible to dig due to Immortal level magic, so it does not contain any tunnels dug by critters and wandering monsters. The area in green is covered by low grass as in a well tended garden, while the dark green spots are trees. The area in yellow is a field of clay and sand. The structures in black are the walls of the ancient temple complex, while those in white are the standing buildings, all at least two stories high, and some higher as described below. This level is well lit by a magical light which appears as sunlight, even if there is no

apparent sun. There is also a night cycle during which a pale light similar to the light of the moon comes from area 8. There is no access to this level, unless the beastmen of Level 11 have opened an access with their Machine , near area 4, or the priests of Ixion have decided to open a passage above area 8, (see below). The level is also guarded as described in each area. However PCs aligned with Ixion and transported from Level 10 will appear in the Halls of Purification (area 9, see below), and therefore will not be attacked by the guardians, unless they come as invaders with the beastmen of Level 11 or with The Last One or the Darkers through the beastmen tunnel.

### 1 - The Garden of Plenty

A great magical garden surrounds the temple complex, lit by the invisible sunny light of the day or by the pale light of the artificial moon above area 8 during the night cycle. The grass is short and well tended, a great number of fruit bearing trees lay around and many **animals** graze, eating the grass and the fruits. The diversity of fruits and animals is impressive, and even if the cavern is almost 8 km long and 4 km wide (5 x 2.5 miles) it may seem even bigger due to the amount of animal life and vegetation present. The animals include anything from mice to elephants, but only two of any specie are present. Not even the inhabitants of this level and the priests of the temple know if there is really a couple of animals for every species present in Mystara, but they suspect so. The animals have changed over the course of time. The oldest priests recall that there were more reptilian creatures and dinosaurs in the past, while now only a few can be seen.

(1) - All the animals, the trees and, if necessary, the priests, are the external guardians of the temple. If invaders, such as the beastmen or the minions of The Last One, come, hundreds of animals, from the smallest to the biggest, will attack them. The trees will also animate, attacking as treants. The garden is truly an army of thousands.

Some trees also have magical properties and bestow magical abilities (as spells, potions or magical objects), and the priests know which ones.

The priests too often walk among the trees, therefore sollux, brutemen, fairies, hutaakans and humans can be encountered here too, of both sexes and any age. Even the children on this level have some basic training in defending themselves, and often they also know some clerical magic. Many trees of the garden have edible fruits which can be eaten and are eaten both by the animals and by the people.

The Darkers will not arrive here unless somehow Ixion and Nyx agree on a temporary truce (see previous levels of Koskatop). Even if they would be able to defeat the Church of Ixion they will not destroy the Garden, nor will they try to occupy the Temple or use the Dream in area 11. The Last One obviously is another matter entirely. Should he be able to use the beastmen tunnel and defeat the many guardians of this level, he will turn this place into a dark sanctuary to Thanatos, and try to use the Dream to his purposes.



*The Garden full of animals*

## 2 - The Great Plaza

This area is used by the residents of Ixashira for sports and games. From **10 to 30 people** of any race are normally present here, including children, playing any possible sport or game known in the past or the present of Mystara. Obviously all of them will turn into fighting guardians if invaders arrive.

Anyone coming here without the permission of the Church of Ixion will have to face the guardians of this area.

(2) - The road surrounding the plaza has statues about 2 meters (7 feet) tall. They are crystal, iron, jade, silver, steel, and rock statues that will animate to attack intruders.



*Statue of Ixion  
in Thyatian style*

### 3 - The Corral of the Animals

This area is where several **brutemen and hutaakans** live with their families, in the three three story high buildings around the lake, and where all kinds of domestic animals are kept. This includes fish, turtles and other aquatic creatures in the lake. Some animals at night are kept in fenced areas. The animals are kept both for company, milk, eggs and food. Yet no animal is really killed here. Every now and then, one falls asleep and does not awake, and is gathered for consumption by the people working here. The brutemen and the hutaakans of this area also cover the role of rangers for the garden of this level. Mostly they gather the wild animals which have peacefully died in the garden. The wall around this area is decorated with bas reliefs depicting the Immortal Ixion and the sun. Originally built in ancient times when the temple was not underground, it has been kept and preserved for defensive purposes. All the people

(3) - The three buildings of this area obviously contain many personal objects, including magical possession and some gems, of the brutemen and hutaakans living here. There is no money of any kind on this level, as the residents have no use for it, but artistic objects in precious metal can be occasionally found.

living here indeed can fight back any possible intruder and seal the doors to resist a siege. They are also able to control most of the animals here to send them against intruders as well.

Should the Darkers arrive here as a conquering force, they will try to capture the residents (both humanoids and animals alike) rather than kill them. However, they could also settle for offering them intelligent undeath. Should the Last One attack here he will not be so merciful and will probably try to slay anything living to turn them into undead under his control.

#### 4 - The Secret Passage

In this area, magically concealed and invisible, there is a trapdoor on the ground leading to a cavern. This is a base for exploration of the Shadowdeep below this level. Only the higher ranking priests and warriors of this level know of this location, i.e. many sollux and a few of the other races present. From here they have prepared careful explorations of the nearby territories of the Shadowdeep<sup>2</sup>. The residents of this level have done so in secret and so far they have not been discovered by any creature or people of the Shadowdeep.

If the beastmen successfully arrive here they will attack area 3 immediately, trying to slay any opposer they may encounter, then they will try to secure the wall to use it as a fortress to prepare another attack against the other walled compound which contains the temple (areas 7-11).

<sup>2</sup> See my articles in the previous issue of Threshold for more details on the creatures and the realms they may have encountered underground.

(4) - Due to a curious coincidence, the tunnel that the beastmen are secretly excavating for the hidden sublevels of level 11 (see Threshold issue #13) will eventually lead them above this area, if successfully completed. So far the residents of level 13 do not know of the tunnel, but **Korak**, a bruteman warrior tasked with the surveillance of the Shadowdeep cavern, has felt some tremors under the earth, and informed some of the priests. Their investigations could allow the residents of Ixashira to discover Hel's plot before it happens.

### 5 - The Wall of Commemoration

This wall was destroyed by the earthquake of 3,057 BC, when the priests of Ixashira destroyed Koskatepetl (see level 12 in previous issue of Threshold) to prevent an invasion of the Azcan emperor's troops. It has been left down to remind the residents about the danger of trusting outsiders, even supposedly followers of Ixion, who may wish to take control of The Dream for their own purposes. Often residents of any race take a walk here to meditate, so about **10 people** can be encountered here during the day cycle, but maybe only a couple or none during the night cycles.

Any invading force will have no luck trying to pass through this area. But they could try and, being unaware of the magical effect, some invaders could be caught inside, separated from their companions and easily dispatched by the defenders of the compound.

### 6 - The Tower

This is a seven story tall tower that reaches up to the ceiling of the big cavern of Ixashira. The tower is always full of guards and houses one of the main fighting forces of Ixashira. About **200 warriors, 20 priests and 10 wizards** are always here, watching Ixashira from above, and ready to rain devastation over any invading force. They belong to any race present in the cavern. The DM may choose what power level to assign them, but the common soldiers should be no less than 5 level warriors and some 30+ level priests and wizards should also be present. **Kitlan**, a 33 level Azcan warrior, is the commander here. He is proud to be the descendant of a group of Azcan warriors who

(5) - The collapsed wall is not as defenseless as it may seem. A wall of force 500 meters (547 yards) long will spring up to seal the temple compound should it be menaced by any external threat. The wall is an Immortal level spell and cannot be dispelled by mortal magic.

(6) - There is a treasure trove of magical objects in the tower, mostly military oriented, so magic weapons and armor from a variety of time periods, the occasional wand, and a stockpile of healing items. In the middle levels of the tower there are also the residences of many officers, including their families. Even children in Ixashira are trained in self defense from a very early age, or/and possess magical objects to defend themselves, or are guarded by golems, animated objects or living statues.



disobeyed the Emperor's order to take the Temple of Ixashira by force, more than 4,000 years ago.

Any invading force will have a very hard time neutralizing the Tower, as the defenders will be entrenched here with powerful magic, and will have the advantage of attacking from above.

## 7 - The Pool

This great pool is a favourite place to rest and relax for the residents of Ixashira, and also the home of several **nixies** who have allied with the church of Ixion many centuries ago, former agents of the Troll Queen of Grondheim who betrayed her when she tried to conquer Ixashira back in 2282 BC.



*The Temple reflected on the Pool during night cycle*

If an invading force comes and manages to enter the temple compound, the nixies would choose to hide their presence to stab the enemy in the back at the most favourable time.

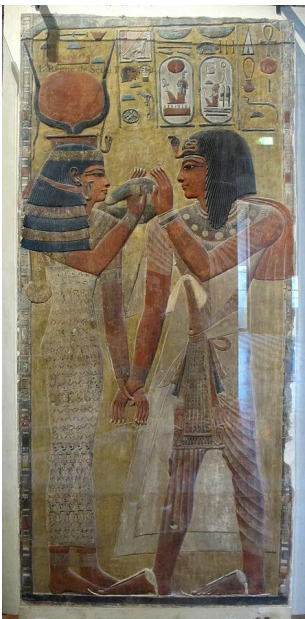
(7) - Inside the pool it is also possible to open gates to the Plane of Water and the Fairy Realms. Only the highest ranking nixies and some powerful priests of the temple know how to do this, and have used the magic of the pool sparingly during the centuries.

## 8 - The Temple of the Moon

This small temple resembles a very high tower which reaches almost to the ceiling, and is inhabited mostly by hutaakan **priests**, with some humans. It is a temple dedicated to other Immortals which receive some veneration in the community. The Immortals are those considered allies, or at least not enemies, of Ixion, such as Valerias, Ilsundal, Alphatia, Pflarr, Zirchev. Some of them know what is hidden here in Ixashira, others only that something is hidden there, but they have agreed to support Ixion in keeping the place safe. The temple is also another place from which defenders could attack an invading army from above.

Above the temple, on the ceiling of the cavern, there is a magical silver disk 200 meters (219 yards) wide, which simulates the light of the moon during the night cycles of the cavern.

**Pshesham**, a female hutaakan priest of Pflarr, 32nd level cleric, is the main commander here, and **Ictiotl**, an Oltec priest of Valerias, 25th level cleric, is her second in command.



*Painting of Valerias and Ixion  
in Nithian style*

(8) - There are magical objects, weapons and armor everywhere in this tower, but each room is defended both by the inhabitants and by constructs that will come to life to fight any intruder entering the tower.

From the upper room of this tower there is also a secret teleporting spot, which can be activated only by words known to Pshesham, Ictiotl and some other priests, and by a Moon silver medallion always worn by Pshesham. The spot leads to a chamber and a tunnel above the ceiling of the cavern, which leads up almost to the bottom of the Chasm in level 12 (see issue #14 of Threshold and previous issues). These tunnels were partially created in origin by the Troll Queen of Grondheim when she tried to enter Ixashira by magical force, but were maintained by the residents even after she failed, to have a possible connection with the outside world. If Ixion chooses to reveal the existence of this temple to the world, the tunnels will be used by the residents to exit the cavern and by outsiders to come in, but in any case access will be granted only to priests of Ixion, and the medallion will remain the only way to access the passage.

Any invading force will have a hard time conquering this tower just as in area 6. Even if a conquering army wins, they probably will not be able to use the magical spot in the upper floor to access the tunnel, and will instead use the access opened by the beastmen tunnel in area 4 to enter and exit the cavern of Ixashira.

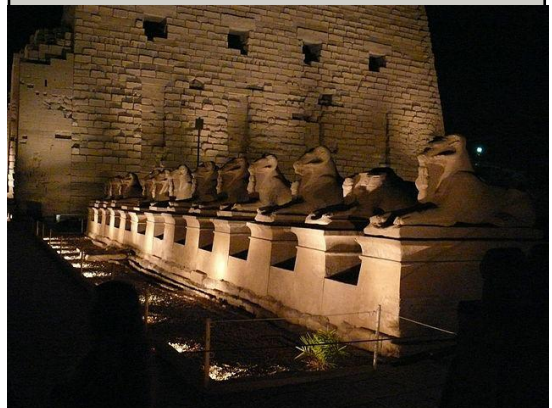
### 9 - The Halls of Purification

This area was and is the main access to the temple complex, where the pilgrims were supposed to go through four different halls, the first one open to the sky, the other three on the inside, and meditate before accessing the temple grounds. Now the Halls are four stories high, and the upper floors contain mainly the workshops and laboratories the community may need, from artisans to kitchens to production of clothes, tools, magical objects and weapons.

The ground floor is now mostly a sort of market, meeting area and children's playground, but still guarded by soldiers, priests and wizards, at least 30 of them at any time. **Edkinar**, the commander here, appears as an Oltec warrior in full armor but is in truth a gold dragon. He will revert to his true form, if necessary to defend the temple. **Sikanira** and **Kelisia**, his mate and daughter, appear as unremarkable Oltec women, but will likewise return to their dragon forms if the temple grounds are threatened.

Any invading force reaching as far as here will find a nasty surprise in Edkinar and his family, more so as the dragon will collapse the Halls over his enemies if he thinks he cannot contain them, to seal the temple proper and give the defenders more time to resist.

(9) - Many of the statues in the Halls are decorated with precious metals, semi precious stones and gems, but several are also golems and constructs that can be animated to defend the temple. The upper floors also contain all kinds of mundane and magical objects.



*Avenue of Rams at the entrance of the Halls, during night cycle*

## 10 - The Hall of the Thousand columns

These two halls are spectacularly decorated with statues and columns. While the ground floor had mostly ceremonial purposes when the temple was built, and is now used mostly as a school and laboratory by the priest, the three upper floors are now the main residential area of the community, with many rooms inhabited by brutemen, Oltecs, sidhe, elves, Blackmoorians, Nithians, hutaakans, Thyatians and Traladarans, the many people which over the centuries entered Ixashira by the will of Ixion to become its residents and defenders. **Cain**, a 36th level wizard, is the informal community leader here. He is also called "The Blackmoorian" because he descends from some refugees that arrived at the temple just after the Great Rain of Fire. Even if the human communities have intermingled to a certain degree over the centuries, they have mostly tried to maintain their old cultural identities.

There is a smaller, four story building on the left side of this area which is the home of two families of **ogres** and one family of **giants**, numbering about 25 people, who have reached the temple in recent centuries. They normally perform any heavy repairs the temple and the cavern may need, and can double as shock troops if needed.

Any invading army will have to face quite a number of opponents here. The Halls of the Columns can also be turned into a deadly trap, as half of them can be collapsed over enemies, should the temple be in serious danger. Cain and his assistants are in possession of a magical rod to activate the trap.

(10) - Hundreds of people live in this area of the temple and most of them are fully capable and willing to fight in defense of the temple, their lives and possession. And in this area too many of the apparently inanimate statues are golem which can attack any invading enemy.



*Statue of Ixion in the Hall*

## 11 - The Great Temple of Ixion

This is the main temple of Ixion, probably the most important sacred place of the Immortal on Mystara, if not in the Multiverse. A gigantic statue of him decorates the southern side, and many more paintings, bas reliefs and statues of archons or ancient priests decorate the rest of the ground floor. Every statue can rise as a golem or a living statue, and every decoration contains a magical effect to harm or kill enemies and intruders. There is an impressive amount of gold and gems in the temple, but any thief would have a hard time taking any of it. The ground floor is exclusively a ceremonial area, and the main priest here is **Ashea**, a female sollux 36th level cleric. She is not however the most important priest of the temple, as the highest one is the sollux Ishan in the Inner Temple (see below).

Above the ground floor there are four more levels which contain mostly the sollux population and the residences of some high ranking priests of all the other races living in Ixashira. Statues and golems are abundant also in the levels above.



*Painting of Ixion leading the carriage of the Sun*

(11) - All the sollux, even most of the children, are able to fight in self defense and possess several magical objects, weapons and armor. Indeed the temple is a treasure trove of clerical magic, but only a very strong invading army could hope to pillage it.

The entrance to the hidden Inner Temple (area 11B below) is concealed under a statue of Ixion on the left wall. The statue moves only if two priests with two different sun medallions touch it and pronounce two different special spells. Asheia and his second, a brutemen named Wak, have now the medallions. Any attempt to steal the medallions or force the priests to reveal the special spell will automatically trigger an alarm throughout the temple. However, the statue will open automatically for a female willing to sacrifice her life to save her people, as told in the prophecy of Ashira (see below). An hostile invader such as The Last One could come to know this with magical intrusion in the minds of the priests, but he would still have to trick a willing female sacrifice to gain access to the Inner Temple. Or he could simply find a way to destroy the statue, but he would need an artifact with Immortal magic to do so.

Any intruders will face a very hard fight here as the number of sollux, priests and constructs here is quite huge, measuring in the hundreds. The DM should adjust the actual number to his or her preference, but anyway war machine rules or any other mass combat rules could be advisable if such an invasion takes place. The sollux and the priests should be treated as an elite unit with a war machine BR above 156.

### 11B - The Inner Temple

Here is the most sacred place of the church of Ixion, a huge chamber with a crystalline sarcophagus where Ashira, Daughter of the Sun, has slept since the dawn of Time with the Dream of Fire. The artifact appears as a bronze box she keeps at her side, with her left hand over it. At least **20 sollux** priests and warriors are always here, guarding her resting place, and the Dream. If someone manages to arrive here, either by stealth or by violence, **Ishan**, the highest priest, will not immediately attack them, but will warn them against the dangers of the artifact and will beg them to renounce the idea of using it.

If the intruders do not listen, Ishan and his sollux will fight to the death, as is their duty. There are no statues to animate here, but the sollux have several magical objects and weapons on them.

If the Darkers somehow manage to arrive here they will not use The Dream, as they do not consider changing time a justified course of action. They would instead use the Starlake on level 7 to open a permanent gate to Nyx's home plane. If eventually the priests and followers of Ixion here try to stop them, as it is likely, the Darkers will try to defeat them and will offer them intelligent

**(11B)** - If an intruder is able to defeat the guardians, "only someone willing to forfeit her life to avenge a great wrong" will be able to break the sarcophagus. That's also written on the base of Ashira's resting place, but in a language so ancient only an Immortal could read it. Only a woman, or a female being of any other race could open the sarcophagus, and only if she is willing to die to avenge a great wrong done to her people. Such a woman would be able to awaken Ashira and the Daughter of the Sun would grant her desire. This would literally change the world, effectively erasing the existing timeline and supplanting it with another one in which what went wrong (at least in the perspective of the person sacrificing herself) did not occur.

If anyone ever manages to penetrate this far and is ready to awaken Ashira, Ixion himself will appear in his corporeal form of a sollux with burning hair. He cannot prevent the willing sacrifice of someone who

undeath as per Nyx's precepts. Even if all the followers of Ixion are killed, defeated or exiled, the Darkers will not destroy this temple, nor they will awaken Ashira.

The Last One will obviously behave very differently as he will try to kill everyone here to turn them into undead under his control. Should he discover the true power of The Dream however he could have serious doubts about continuing his servitude to Thanatos. He may realize that with the Dream, he could undo everything that made him fall. He might be able to convince Louma or Asteria (see area 9 and 10 in Kosmoteiros, level 7, in Threshold issue #9) to turn back the events of 1421 BC, when the The Last One and the other Tal nosferatu dominating ancient Traladara were defeated and massacred by Traladaran crusaders. This could also have unexpected results depending on what Louma or Asteria really believe went wrong, and The Last One might be unable to control the outcome.

Any other powerful female NPC of Koskatep, or any motivated female PC coming this far will be really tempted to sacrifice her life to avenge a great wrong done to her people, creating a new timeline in which her people has not been defeated, but are instead alive and strong. An undead female hutaakan from the levels above could be tempted to undo the gnoll invasion, creating a new timeline in which the hutaakans still dominate Karameikos. An undead female gnoll instead could create a new timeline in which Halav was defeated and a gnoll kingdom dominates Karameikos. Enialee (see level 3 and 6) could try to undo her undeath, unwillingly preventing the conquest of the dark fairy's city of Kundrak by Lord Keiros in 1597 BC. Gilas (see area 28 in level 4) could undo the fall of the Glittering Realm of Loktal, making Karameikos and the Five Shires part of a great Dwarven Kingdom. The lizardwoman Shaga (see level 8 in

wants to awake his daughter, but he will plead for them not to do it.

*"Everyone would like to live forever. Everyone would like his or her family, his or her people, to live forever. This place could do it, it could give eternal life to you and your people. Have not the fairy folk who once ruled the world the right to bring back their days of glory? Have not the massacred Tal people the right to be avenged? Have not the Traladarans the right to be free? And the dragons, the giants, the brutemen, the lizard men? All were once proud and strong people that time devoured and other people conquered and destroyed. They all have the right to return and live forever, but should that happen, the future will never come to be. That is why we guarded this place and that is why we tried to prevent anyone from using its power".*

If the PC's ignore Ixion's plea and do it anyway he will not attack them, he will try to integrate the temple into the rest of the world anyway - whatever world it has now become. He will also ask his daughter to come with him, but she will refuse and will decide to remain on the prime plane. PC's will have to live in a new world and will have to chose whether or not to help Ashira. Ixion will not persecute them. The Dream of Fire will become only a normal bronze box, its power forever expired.

Threshold issue #10) could prevent the fall of Mokrath, leading to a timeline in which Karameikos, and maybe all the southern Known World, is dominated by lizardmen.

Elienor of the dark fairies (see level 6 and 9) will obviously awaken her daughter, thus unraveling most of Mystara's history, to return to a time in which fairies and chaos dominated the planes. Some of the other fairies in level 6 and 9 may have similar agendas.

The beastmen of level 11 obviously have the use of The Dream as their main purpose, to create a timeline dominated by them and Hel --- maybe one in which the Blackmoor crusades against them failed, the Great Rain of Fire never happened, and they dominate the world.

The followers of Ixion will not use The Dream in any case, and some of the people above (particularly Gilas and Shaga) could eventually decide not to use it, as they would be aware of the extreme consequences. However some followers of Ixion, and even the Immortal himself, could consider awakening Ashira and using The Dream if something goes very wrong, such as a triumph of Thanatos, Hel or Nyx. In this case they would likely use The Dream just to undo such a victory. This outcome would be very ironic for Ashira, who would find herself in a timeline in which the original purpose of her Dream has been effectively defeated. Ixion will still offer her a return to his home plane, but she will refuse to remain on Mystara, maybe allying with her mother Elienor, or perhaps starting her own path to Immortality.

## THE BATTLE ON THIS LEVEL

There will be no initial battle on this level, but as explained above and in the previous issues of Threshold, some parties may wish to try to take control of Ashira's Dream eventually, leading to a great battle that could even involve the Immortals themselves in manifestation form. Even if this does not happen and the Church of Ixion wins, conquering Koskatep fully and making it a public location of the cult, the presence of

Ashira's tomb and its power will still be a secret for most of the world, but some of the Immortals will know it, and they will not stop their plotting to conquer the place, particularly Thanatos, Hel and Nyx. Therefore some years after an eventual victory of Ixion in Koskatep, a new struggle or attack could well take place, with new battles and adventures.



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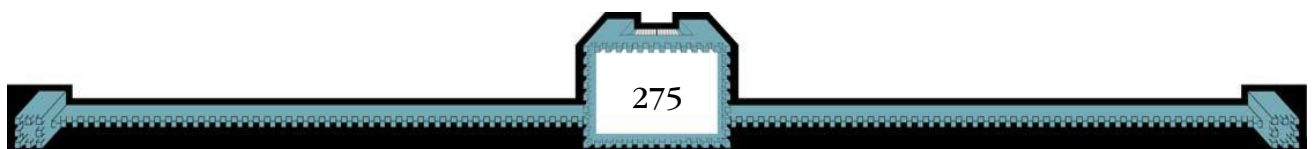
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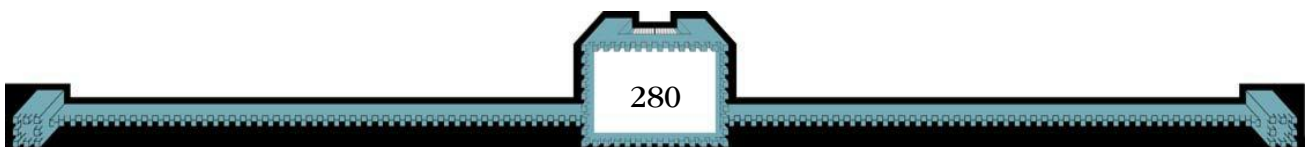
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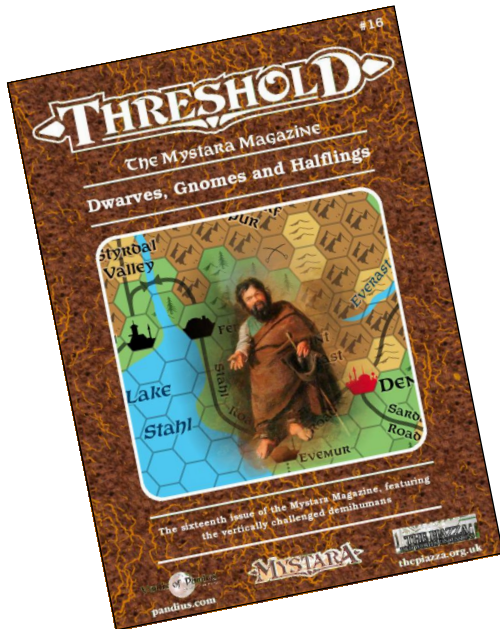
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## NEXT ISSUE



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The short folk are not numerous, but still prominent in Mystara. Industry and ingenuity are hallmarks of the Rockborn race, while the freedom Hin folk is known for its resilience in face of adversities. Since the time of Blackmoor and beyond dwarves, gnomes, and halflings have been an integral part of Mystaran communities. The editorial team is accepting proposals on dwarves, gnomes, halflings and the cultures and kingdoms that they have built throughout the history of Mystara.

### DWARVES, GNOMES, AND HIN

Anticipated contents include:

- Updates to your Rockhome Campaign
- History of the Dwarves Part II
- Dwarven Mine of Kurest Hurgon
- The Cavern of Darmouk
- Map of Highforge
- Twin Soul Rocks
- The Great Crater

...and much much more!

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All proposal submissions can be sent by mail to the editors at the following address [Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com](mailto:Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com), and must be received by the proposal deadline†. The Threshold editorial team will contact you within 7 days of the proposal deadline regarding the status of your proposal.

Submission proposals should be sent inline in the mail, using the following subject format: [ISSUE#][Proposal]<title of your article>

The mail content should include the following:

- Proposed article title
- The type of article being proposed (short story, adventure, geographical location, organization, etc...)
- A one paragraph description of what the article is about.
- An estimated word count of the article (articles should range anywhere from 1000 to 7000 words, depending on the type of article submitted).

### Manuscripts

Manuscripts should only be submitted after you proposal has been accepted by the Threshold editorial staff, and must be received by the manuscript deadline†. When submitting a manuscript file, please use the following naming convention:

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(extension: see below for recommended file formats)

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The mail content should include the following:

- The article title.
- An attached document containing the article contents.
- The final word count of the article.

Other types of contributions: the editorial team will consider on a case by case basis other types of contributions. Please contact us to inquire if and how we can accommodate unusual contribution formats.

The following guidelines apply to different types of submissions:

*Illustrations:* please submit art and maps in lossless format (e.g., PNG).

*Articles:* manuscript submissions can be sent by mail as plain text, doc(x) or odt, or shared as Google Doc. The issue editor will create a shared document (for each article) to allow the author and editorial team to work on it. Articles can be as short as a single page, or as long as 6 pages, depending on the specific content. The editorial team will do its best to accommodate the contributions, but especially long works may be split over several issues.

*Tables:* Tables should be numbered (Table X: Name of Table), and any references in the article should refer to that table number (and not to "the table below," for example).

*Author Bios:* Please include a short blurb (one or two sentences) biography/blurb about yourself for our "contributing authors" section. It can be serious or silly, but don't get too carried away with it, please.

*Other types of contributions:* the editorial team will consider on a case by case basis other types of contributions. Please contact us to inquire if and how we can accommodate unusual contribution formats.

†Refer to "Call for Contributions" (page 5) for next issue deadline dates.

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The Mystara Magazine

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**Neither the Heldanners, nor the Alphasians, were the first to delve into the blackness of the void. The Nithians sent their seed out to the stars, as did the Blackmoorians before them... Follow the journey of Mystara's ancestors, but beware! There are things lurking the dark that even the Immortals may fear to confront!**

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