

# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

## The Sea of Dread



The third issue of Mystara's premier magazine, featuring articles on the Sea of Dread ! History of the Islands, Rise of the Firelord, dark places to explore, and much more!

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# MYSTARA



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# THRESHOLD

Issue #3

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**On the Shores of the Island of Dread** (by I. Calvin): This piece was commissioned several months ago from my daughter, who up until that point had never seen the cover of X1 (either version). I gave her a vague description about a knight fighting a T-Rex on the shores of a jungle island, and this is what she came up with. Only after the piece was completed, did I show her the originals. I think she's done them justice!

*John Calvin*



## Of Pirates, Merchant-Princes and Sea Monsters



The Sea of Dread. For those living on or near the coastal waters off the shores of southern Brun, the name evokes darkness, danger, and terrors unknown. The Sea of Dread is treacherous, and vast... and even those of us who only write tales about it have experienced its terrible grandeur.

Although I have been a fan of Mystara for as long as I can remember, and even contributed to fanzines like the Tome of Mystara in the past, nothing could have prepared me for traversing these uncertain waters in Threshold Issue #3. When I began my journey in November by asking the community for contributions, I wasn't sure we would have an issue at all. My fear was that the grand onslaught of holidays fastly approaching would drown out anyone's time, enthusiasm, and energy to prepare an article for submission, and when I had to extend the proposal deadline by two weeks in December, my fears seemed to be proving true. As we approached the final deadline in late January, still with no manuscripts submitted, I was very worried indeed. I was sure we wouldn't have more than 20 pages to put in this issue.

That couldn't have been further from the truth. When storms hit in the Sea of Dread, they hit hard, and final manuscripts began to pour in just as I had lost all hope. Instead of the drought I feared however, I was presented with a maelstrom of biblical proportions. It soon became clear that we had too much material to fit into a single issue. In fact we may have too much material to fit into two issues... but we are going to try to do it!

In this issue we'll sail through the waters of Minrothad and Ierendi, delving into their past and exploring how those two countries developed into the nations they are today. We will set foot on the strange shores of the Thanegioth Archipelago meeting some of their twisted inhabitants, cross swords with pirates and catch glimpse of the dangerous game they play. Well discover plots in Minrothad, see the rise of the Firelord, and much, much more. But our adventures won't end there. The Sea of Dread will return in Issue #4, where our adventures across these treacherous waves will continue.

I think when all of this is over, I'm going to need a vacation. Hmm... I hear Bararna Island is nice this time of year.

*John Calvin (Chimpman)*  
Editor-in-chief, Threshold Issue #3

## Editorial Credits

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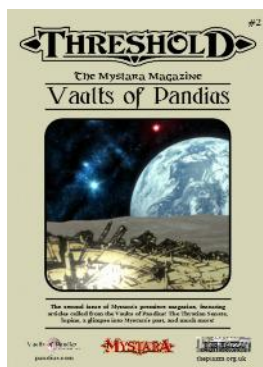
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Thanks To: The Mystara Community, for your support, hard work, and dedication to Mystara.

### 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



Issues #1 and #2 of THRESHOLD - the Mystara Magazine, is 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.

## This Issue's Contributors

**Colin Wilson** was introduced to Mystara by his elder brother at around the age of eight. Due to an unhealthy desire for minutiae he fell in love the Gaz series and so developed an unfortunate habit of worldbuilding in his spare time. Colin continues to develop Mystara articles in between publishing articles on Doctor Who, raising two children, acting, singing, tap dancing and, very occasionally, turning up for work.

**Simone Neri (Zendrolion)** teaches history and philosophy at secondary school in Florence, Italy. He has mastered Mystara campaigns since 1987, his favourite settings being Thyatis, Norwold, Karameikos, and Glantri. He is an active member of The Piazza community with the nickname of Zendrolion - but don't fear backstabbing from him!

**Jesper Andersen** (a.k.a. *Spellweaver*) has been a fan of the Known World and Mystara since his first D&D game in 1991. He enjoys creating new adventures, stories, characters and monsters, much of which can be found at the Vault of Pandius. His latest personal adventure, however, is the launch of his own RPG publishing company called Blood Brethren Games.

In his house at The Piazza, **Ctbulbudrew** (a.k.a. **Andrew Theisen**) waits, dreaming. "That campaign world is not dead, which can eternal lie; and with strange aeons, Mystara shall once again rise."

**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, and Witchcraft RPG.

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

**John Calvin** has been fascinated by the world of Mystara since he first opened the Red Box. He also has several boxes full of LEGOs, which he still pulls out and plays with on occasion.

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.

**Giulio Caroletti** started playing in Mystara with the old red box in 1992, and hasn't stopped since. He went "internet" on the MML as Captain Iulius Sergius Scaevola in 1999, and has since written mostly about Thyatis and Dwarves. When not busy pretending to be a Thyatian officer, he lives a boring life as an atmosphere physicist from Rome, Italy. His main interests are light-eyed girls, soccer (he's an AS Roma fan) and rock music (especially 70s progressive rock).

**Geoff Gander** has been heavily involved in the Mystaran community for longer than he cares to remember. He has since been



## This Issue's Contributors

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

**Ville Lähde** is an author and a journalist specializing in environmental issues, philosophy and politics - and lately also food and gardening. He has been DMing in Mystara since 1988, and his first campaign is still going strong after a quarter of a century. In the 80's and 90's he published a host of modules and articles in Finnish RPG zines.

**Maxime Beaulieu's** first roleplaying session was literally on a dark and stormy night; July 14th 1987. A few years later he discovered Mystara (The best Gazetteers? The Five Shires and The Principalities of Glantri!) and he has since DMed his friends in the different incarnations of D&D as well as many other games (Mage and Warhammer among others). His dream? Actually getting to PLAY in a Mystara campaign.

**Troy Terrell (CmdrCorsiken)** has regularly adventured in Mystara for thirty years. He occasionally joins the struggle against the Galactic Empire (Star Wars) and explores new worlds in the Frontier (Star Frontiers). Beyond roleplaying, he enjoys a variety of table and board games, including Dominion, Lords of Waterdeep, and Munchkin.



### FROM THE VAULTS OF PANDIUS

A number of features in this issue 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](#).

## YOUR OPINIONS?

The Editorial Team welcomes your feedback on this issue of *THRESHOLD* are welcomed. Please post your comments either by posting in [The Piazza Forums](#)

Or by email to the Editorial address:

[Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com](mailto:Threshold.Mystara@gmail.com)

Please begin the subject line with the tag "[LETTER]"

# REMEMBERING AARON ALLSTON

Aaron Allston was a fundamental part of the world of Mystara as we at Threshold have come to know it, in addition to being a great creative mind and prolific writer outside of the RPG industry. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

Allen Varney originally shared some thoughts about Aaron on [Google+](#) and was kind enough to allow us to reprint them

Novelist and game designer Aaron Allston has died in Branson, Missouri, age 53. Cause of death is currently unknown, but Aaron suffered a massive heart attack in March 2009 and bouts of poor health thereafter. Aaron was an endlessly inventive creator, one of the best roleplaying gamemasters ever, a mordant authority on bad films, and a rare wit.

Though he later became well known for his many licensed tie-in novels for *Star Wars*, *Terminator*, and other franchises, Aaron started in the plantation fields of gaming, editing *Space Gamer* magazine for Steve Jackson Games and writing a lot for *Car Wars*. He achieved early stardom in roleplaying games with his standout work for *Champions* and the Hero System; his *Lands of Mystery* lost-worlds supplement for *Justice Inc.* pioneered the idea of tailoring rules and setting to match genre conventions. Aaron's *Strike Force* remains, after decades, one of the most engaging and thoroughly grounded treatises on the development and maintenance of a long-term campaign. He wrote from experience, having refereed three different

years-long Hero campaigns with months-long waitlists.

Equally recognized for his extensive contributions to BECMI-series *Dungeons & Dragons*, Aaron wrote hugely for the Known World (later christened "Mystara"), and he edited the fondly remembered *Rules Cyclopedia*. His AD&D *Dungeon Master's Design Kit* was an amazing toolbox, one of the first of its kind, and his *Complete Fighter's Handbook* set the tone for the long-running AD&D 2e "Player's Handbook Reference" series.

Aaron also contributed to several computer RPGs from Origin Systems, including the "Worlds of Ultima" games *Savage Empire* and the primordial steampunk precursor *Martian Dreams*. He brought his highly developed sense of genre conventions to a company best known for open-ended worlds. The combination was an artistic success but a financial disappointment. Though he worked intermittently in computer games throughout the '90s, Aaron seldom played them himself and never really warmed to the field.

In 1988 Aaron turned to novels with *Web of Danger*, a tie-in for TSR's *Top Secret S.I.* RPG line. A decade later he started writing for the *Star Wars X-Wing* novel line almost by accident. His *X-Wing* predecessor, Michael A. Stackpole, recommended Aaron to his Bantam Books editor as a likely candidate to continue writing the series. After Mike and the editor both left the line, the next editor saw Aaron's name and assumed he had already been chosen. Months later the new

editor called Aaron's agent and asked "How's Aaron coming along on the new *X-Wing* book?" Huh, what? In two days Aaron put together an outline for his seventh novel, *Wraith Squadron*, and then wrote the book at speed against a ferocious deadline. He went on to write a dozen more.

Aaron enjoyed a high reputation among connoisseurs of *Star Wars* fiction. He once told me he seemed to be everyone's third-favorite *Star Wars* author -- every reader had two top faves, always different, but they all had Aaron in the #3 spot.

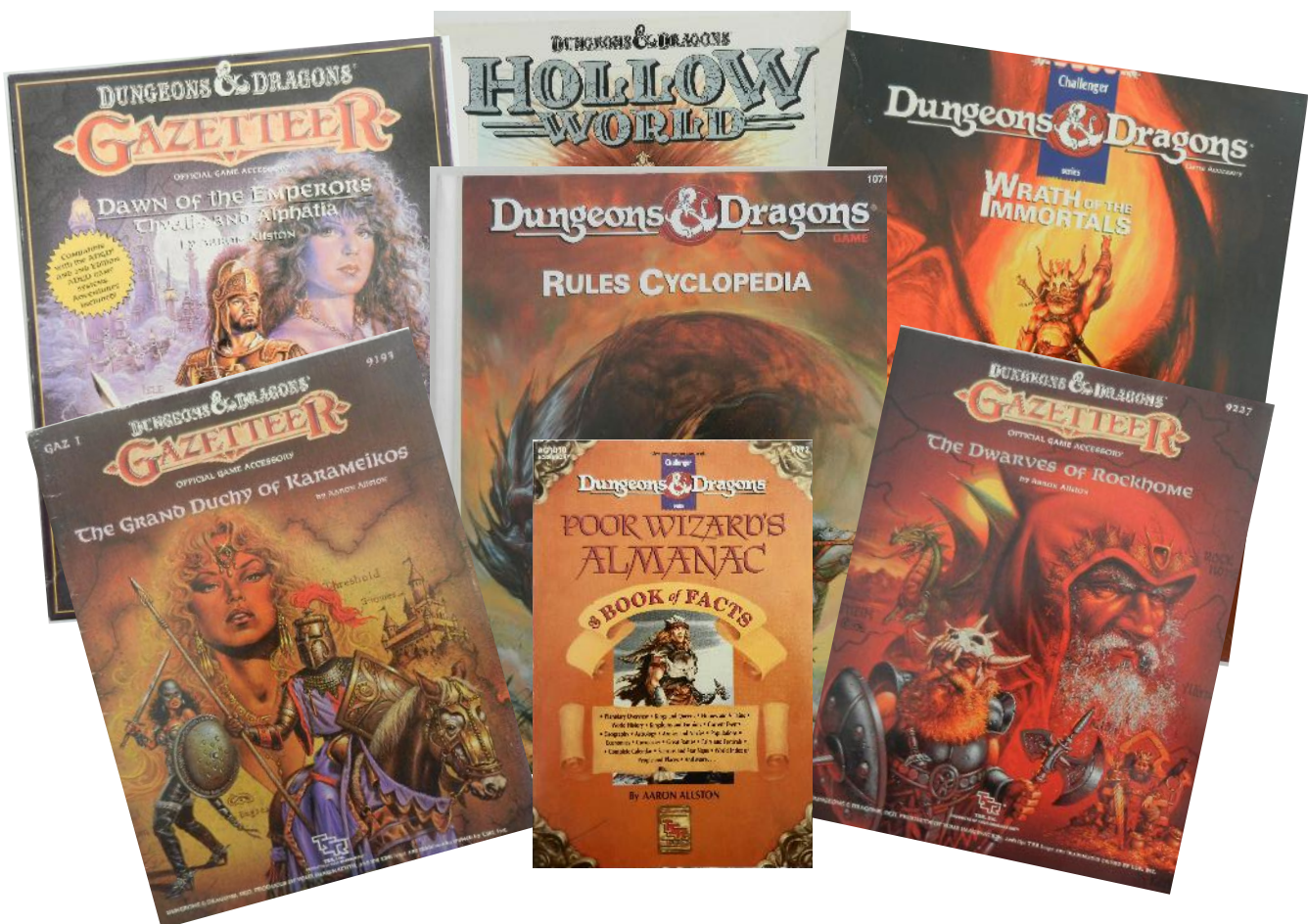
Aaron's non-licensed novels include *Galatea in 2-D* and a delightful pulp-faerie mashup, *Doc Sidhe*. (The sequel is *Sidhe-Devil*.) In recent years Aaron had turned to short fiction and was excited with the success he'd found

contributing to several high-profile small-press anthologies.

A lifelong lover of genre film, Aaron made a foray into screenwriting and directing in 2005 with the zombie rom-com *Deadbacks*. He assembled dozens of friends and local actors as a full-on low-budget indie production company, and they filmed for a couple of months of weekends on a friend's farmland in Lockhart, Texas. He completed production, but the project died in editing. It would be nice to think that fun and funny film, like its ever-hopeful undead farmhand characters, might rise again. It is so sad Aaron won't.

*Allen Varney*, Feb 27, 2014

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron\\_Allston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron_Allston)





## THE HISTORY OF

# Ierendi and Minrothad

## Part One: From the Great Rain of Fire to the Middle Centuries

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion)

### THE AGES BEYOND MEMORY

Thousands of years ago, the island nations of Ierendi and Minrothad didn't even exist; they were not islands at all, but emerged lands, part of the southeasternmost coast of the continent of Brun. Before the Great Rain of Fire, however, the whole area sat inside the Arctic Polar Circle<sup>1</sup>: it was a cold, barren and inhospitable land, devoid of any true settlement or civilization, and only occasionally crossed by the sparse Beastmen survivors of the Blackmoorian crusades, by Oltec or Azcan pioneers coming from the south, or by the very rare explorer from Blackmoor itself. Frost giants and dragons from further north made short forays into this area from time to time.

The Great Rain of Fire changed all this, pushing the Known World from the arctic latitude into the temperate one. Northern glaciers began to melt, giving birth to ponds and rivers, and the country where the later archipelagos of Ierendi and Minrothad would later be found was slowly carpeted with forests and vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> For an understanding of the author's position about precataclysmic Mystara, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 1, page 37.

### THE TAYMORAN AGE

After the cataclysm, the coast of southeastern Brun continued to be rather sparsely settled. Its most numerous dwellers were the lizardmen – perhaps fled from the fall of one of their ancient realms further north<sup>2</sup> – and groups of copper-skinned humans called Oteino, whose origin is uncertain; they might have been the descendants of the late Azcans, migrated in the Sea of Dread area starting from BC 2800, after their homeland further west had been ravaged by the cataclysm and by the final war against their long-time rivals, the Oltecs, or they could even be the descendants of a much older Oltec migration predating the Great Rain of Fire. Whatever the Oteino's origin, in this age they carried on (or had reverted to) a mostly simple and primitive lifestyle<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This is a reference to the lizardman Empire of Mogreth, a fan creation of G. Gander; the empire was found in present day Ylaruam, and would be the so-called "Second Empire" of Mogreth (the first would have been the reptilian civilization mentioned in GAZZ The Emirates of Ylaruam as the source of the ancient lizardman tombs found beneath Alasiyan sands).

<sup>3</sup> The Makai are considered a Neathar-descended people (actually, one of the original tribes of the Neathars) in Hollow World Campaign Setting, whereas the Poor Wizard's Almanac books say they have an Oltec ancestry. Thus, the best solution seemed to make them a mix of Neathar- and Oltec-descended peoples (also because they should represent Mystara's Pacific

Increasingly numerous was instead a second human race of Neathar stock, the Eokai. Centuries before the Great Rain of Fire, those humans lived in the Serpent Peninsula; from there, perhaps pushed away by other peoples or by overpopulation, starting after BC 3500 they had slowly migrated on board their boats to the northern coast of Davania and to the islands and archipelagos of what would be later called the Sea of Dread. By BC 2500, many tribes of those humans had also settled on the southeastern coast of Brun, in lands alongside those of the Oteino and the lizardmen. They were a peaceful people of gatherers and fishermen, friendly with outsiders.

A third human people, started to migrate in the Sea of Dread area from the southeastern regions of the Jungle Coast, the Pearl Islands, and Cestia from BC 3000 on. They were the Mawa, a branch of a much older people of

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islands' peoples). So, the migration of some Oltec-blooded refugees in this area serves to the purpose. The proper Makai would be born out of the cultural union between (a) these Oltec peoples, (b) a Neathar-descended people (the Eokai listed below) who dwelled in northern Davania before BC 3000, and who moved north through the Sea of Dread and toward the Known World after that event, and (c) an additional Oltec-blooded people (the Mawa also listed later) who migrated in the Sea of Dread area much later (after BC 2500). The Mawa have been introduced to establish a link between the Austronesian/Pacific-like cultures of Cestia and the Pearl Islands, and the Hawaiian-like culture of the Ierendi Islands. The whole development of the Makai origins has been extensively discussed with F. Defferrari and is indebted to many of his ideas.

Basically, the Mawa's ancestors already inhabited the area around Cestia and Davania's Jungle Coast before the Great Rain of Fire; then, from BC 3000 to BC 2500, they expanded in the islands of the southern Sea of Dread (including the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago), and after that date northwards up to the coast of Brun. The peoples' names of the Oteino, Eokai, and Mawa are creations of F. Defferrari.

Oltec or mixed Oltec-Tanagoro stock who had lived in the myriad islands of Sea of Steam centuries before the Great Rain of Fire. Their language had strong similarities with the tongue of some Rakasta breeds (such as the Harimau-Belang Sherkastas, and the Cloud Pardastas), which could hint to an ancestral relation between those peoples in Skothar<sup>4</sup>. At BC 2500 the Mawa had already settled many islands of the southern Sea of Dread, and continued their expansion northward, establishing settlements on the southern coasts of Brun already in BC 2000.

### The Migrations of the Taymora and the Elves

In BC 2500, a fourth human people came in southeastern Brun from the north, crossing modern Darokin. They were the Taymora, a Neathar-descended people who had originated in central Brun, and who now settled in the coastal lands of southeastern Brun<sup>5</sup>. The Taymora warred against and traded with the indigenous Eokai, Oteino, and lizardmen, managing to carve a land for themselves where they built an agricultural civilization of bronze-age city-states. In a short while, the Taymora became the most powerful culture of this area, absorbing or influencing the native ones. Nevertheless, little is known today about the Taymora, and what knowledge has been gathered about them comes from the ruins of their settlements, buried in the Ierendi and

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<sup>4</sup> See also note 3. The Rakasta connection is included to explain similarities between the language of some Skotharian Rakasta breeds and the family of Austronesian-like languages of Mystara, to which the Makai tongue should belong.

<sup>5</sup> About the origins of the Taymora, see Threshold no. 1, *The History of Karamaikos*, note 4, page 37.

Minrothad islands, or hidden under the waves of the Sea of Dread.

Elf travelers and colonists coming from the Serpent Peninsula began arriving in Taymoran lands around BC 2250<sup>6</sup>. They established friendly relations with the humans, who employed them as mercenary troops in exchange for territory. Centuries later (BC 2100), a larger group of elves who had split from Ilsundal's migration toward the Sylvan Realm, came to the Taymoran lands; they were mostly divided among two clans: the Verdiers (wood and fair elves) and the Meditors (water elves)<sup>7</sup>. The Taymora allowed them to settle in the forests north and east of their city-states, in the areas now occupied by modern Karameikos and Minrothad: the water elves mostly settled in the southern area, near the sea coast, while the wood and fair elves moved to the forests in the north.

Another race of elves came in the area shortly after the migration of the Verdier and Meditor clans: they were the aquatic elves, or Aquarendi as they called themselves<sup>8</sup>. These sea elves had grieved for many centuries after the Great Rain of Fire, because they thought that their land brethren had wholly perished in the cataclysm. They were overjoyed when they discovered that some clans of land elves had survived, and migrated to the sea region surrounding the southeastern coast of Brun to live side by side with them, but mostly kept their presence secret from other land dwellers.

In the following decades, Taymora's power expanded, and some of their cities grew rich

<sup>6</sup> About the elves' arrival date on Brun, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 5, page 39.

<sup>7</sup> For an understanding of my distinction of elven subraces, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 6, page 39.

<sup>8</sup> The history of the Aquarendi was introduced and quite well detailed in PC3 *The Sea People*.

and powerful. They pushed their influence far beyond their borders, successfully waging war against the giants still lurking north of their realms, and against the resurgence of lizardman power in modern Ylaruam<sup>9</sup>. They traded with most other cultures of the Known World, and also with the humans belonging to the Eokai, Oteino, and Mawa cultures who lived in the islands of the sea to the south, in the myriad small isles and atolls scattered around what would become the Sea of Dread.

### The Taymoran Civil War

However, evil and corruption were soon to take their toll on the flourishing Taymoran culture<sup>10</sup>. Before BC 2000 some cities of the Taymora began worshipping the powers of Entropy, and parts of the country slowly became dark places whose rulers were devoted to gruesome bloody and necromantic practices. Undead creatures, such as nosferatu and vampires, made their appearance at this time in Taymora, as well as the first recorded lycanthropic bloodlines, likely created by Taymoran experiments. The Taymora were also responsible for the breeding of a servant race of albino humans, whose descendants still survive to this day<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> For the wars between the Taymora and the giants, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, page 39 and note 7, and also [Lords of the Cruth Lowlands](#) (by G. Agosta)]; about the struggle between the Taymora and the lizardmen of Mogreth, see the [page on Mogreth at the Vaults of Pandius](#) (by G. Gander and J. Calvin)].

<sup>10</sup> About the Taymora's entropic worship, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 8, page 39.

<sup>11</sup> The albino humans of Utter Island were introduced first in GAZ4; fan material explaining their origin as a Taymoran servitor race include [Taymora, Land of the Dead](#) (by G. Agosta)], [Timeline of the Taymoran Age 2800-1700 BC](#) (by G. Agosta)], [Taymoran Timeline v2.2](#) (by G. Caroletti)], and [Alternate Setting for](#)





*Taymoran Civil War*

At last (BC 2000), a great civil war between followers of rival entropic Immortals ravaged the country, while at the same time a long period of seismic instability hit the southern Known World, which was shocked by recurrent earthquakes over the course of the next three centuries<sup>12</sup>. Many people perished, and many cities were destroyed by the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, or by the civil war itself. Gradually, many Taymora began to migrate northward hoping to find shelter in the forested country at the foothills of the mountains<sup>13</sup>.

### The Time of Cataclysms

By BC 1750, a series of earthquakes had broken some parts of the Taymoran lands off the coast of the Known World and had plunged many regions beneath the sea. Indigenous lizardmen, Mawa, Eokai, and Oteino, most of whom had slowly retreated into the wilderness when the Taymoran civil war had begun, were quite untouched by the cataclysms. The Taymora, instead, were heavily hit by the war

[Ierendi v2.0](#) (by S. Dornhoff)].

<sup>12</sup> About seismic events of the BC 2000-1700 period, see Threshold no. 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 10, page 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> See PC3 («the few surviving Taymora fled the area and settled farther north in the present day lands of Karameikos»).

and the earthquakes: many vestiges of their civilization had already been destroyed by BC 1750, and the last remnants of the southern Taymoran cities and lands disappeared under the waves in the devastating volcanic explosion of BC 1720, when the dome of the Kikianu Caldera, a huge island the size of the modern Five Shires, collapsed over its subterranean magma chamber, and was thus plunged under the sea, leaving only three rugged islands to testify its existence (the modern Alcove, Aloysius, and Utter islands in the Ierendi archipelago), as well as a single volcanic cone at their center (Mount Kala on today's Honor Island)<sup>14</sup>. This terrible event was recorded by all Known World cultures of that time, when huge waves battered the coasts and the sky was darkened with ashes for months. The seismic instability which climaxed with the Kikianu Caldera event finally gave the southern coast of the Known World the appearance it has today, with the creation of the modern archipelagos of Ierendi and Minrothad.

<sup>14</sup> In a couple of passages (pages 6 and 60), GAZ4 says that the Kikianu Caldera's surviving vestiges are the islands of Elegy, Fletcher, Roister (which would have been part of the Caldera's borders), and Honor Island (whose Mount Kala would be the Caldera's surviving volcanic cone). This is an obvious mistake, because joining the three islands surrounding Mount Kala we do not come out with the shape of a crater at all (also, Ierendi Island is found between the three islands which would make up the Caldera). Looking at GAZ4's poster map, it is quite clear that the surviving islands which actually formed the Kikianu Caldera were Utter, Alcove, and Aloysius – and maybe even White Island, but this is not needed, as GAZ4 mentions three islands besides Honor Island. Moreover, GAZ4 (page 60) says that the Kikianu Caldera event happened in the second century BC, but this is clearly another mistake if confronted from informations from the rest of the supplement.

While the Eokai, Oteino, Mawa, and the lizardmen survived in some of the eastern islands (the modern Ierendi archipelago), elves were also spared by the catastrophe, but they were now separated by the newly-created sea. The Meditor water elf clan was stranded alone on one of the recently-formed islands south of the new coastline (the one later called Alfeisle, in Minrothad), while their wood and fair elf brethren had survived on the new coast of the continent to the north. Fearing further seismic activity in their land and willing to reunite with the water elves, in BC 1720 the Verdier wood elf clan, also at the urging of the Aquarendi<sup>15</sup> – who had been hit hard by the catastrophe in their underwater homeland – obeyed the omens sent by their Immortals and crossed the dangerous seawaters, migrating to Alfeisle as well. The rest of the Verdier fair elves, instead, preferred to continue living in their mainland forests, in relative tranquillity; they were the ancestors of the Vyalia clan of Karameikos and Thyatis.

It was after this fearsome age of cataclysms had ravaged the southeastern corner of Brun that the elves of Alfeisle started to call the sea which extended around their newly-created island the “Sea of Dread” and the archipelago west and north-west of Alfeisle the “Isles of Dread”<sup>16</sup>. In fact, even if no seismic event of

the proportions of the Kikianu Caldera’s explosion ever happened again, seismic activity in the form of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes of varying strength continue to fill the lives of the peoples who lived in the islands of this region with fear and anguish.

As if the aftereffects of the volcanic and seismic activity in the southern Known World were not enough, another catastrophic event happened in the north: in BC 1700 a local elven clan of the region later known as the Highlands tinkered with a buried Blackmoorian device, causing its explosion with devastating effects – a whole mountain range was destroyed, creating the Broken Lands, and debris and dust lifted by the explosion darkened the skies for years, plunging the Known World into another brief ice age.

It was also around this time, after the worst volcanic activity had ended, that another underwater race, that of the merrow, discovered the newly submerged lands of southeastern Brun<sup>17</sup>. Finding the region of their liking – bright, mostly shallow waters heated by the underwater volcanic activity and bountiful with sea plants and animals – they migrated here from the seas around the Thanegioth archipelago, and called this area the Sunlit Sea. The merrow didn’t keep their existence secret from land dwellers as the Aquarendi had done; also, unlike them, they chose not to pursue a settled lifestyle, but led a semi-nomadic existence based on the movements of the great shoals of fishes, and

<sup>15</sup> See PC3 The Sea People, where the Aquarendi’s role in the Verdier wood elves’ migration to Alfeisle is made clear.

<sup>16</sup> See *Historical Synopsis of the Minrothad Isles*, Dungeon Master’s Booklet, GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds. It seems that the name “Isle of Dread” in particular referred to Trader’s Isle, perhaps due to the fact that at that time it might have housed the worst volcanic activity, maybe including some dramatic elf-killing event (like destruction of an important city, or tragic widespread mass destruction); obviously this “Isle of Dread” has nothing to do with the isle of the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago which has the same name. Nevertheless, other theories abound about the origins of

the names “Sea of Dread” and “Isle(s) of Dread”; one of those is linked with the tale of the Thyatians’ migration from Davania to Brun, while another more sinister theory is exposed in *Darkness Beneath*, by F. Defferrari, in this number of Threshold.

<sup>17</sup> Again, information about the merrow’s date of arrival in the Sunlit Sea come from PC3.

on the resources they gathered from the kelp forests.

## The Birth of the Makai Culture

In BC 1700, at the worst peak of the seismic activity, the modern Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos had seen most of their settlements wiped out by the catastrophes and their aftereffects. Only a scattering of Taymoran survivors inhabited the eastern islands, among which Alfeisle alone saw a relevant water and wood elven population; in the western islands, besides a very few surviving Taymora, there still dwelt the sparse remnants of the more ancient cultures of the Eokai, Oteino, Mawa, and the lizardmen, and a very small population of human albinos – the surviving descendants of the Taymoran servant race – lived on Utter island.

The more numerous Mawa, however, in the turn of a century, became the prevailing culture of the western islands, gradually absorbing the few surviving Taymora, the fair-skinned Eokai, and the copper-skinned Oteino. This was also due to the steady immigration of Mawa peoples from the overpopulated islands of the Sea of Dread in the newly formed and available islands of the modern Ierendi and Minrothad regions<sup>18</sup>. Intermarriage between the Mawa on one side and the Eokai and the Oteino on the other, and cultural predominance of the Mawa over the other two peoples, gave birth to the Makai people around BC 1600, a mixed-heritage people who preserved most traits of the Mawa culture but whose customs were heavily influenced by the Eokai and Oteino. The Makai

endure to this day and represent the main culture of the Ierendi islands<sup>19</sup>. In the following centuries, the Makai built villages and lived a primitive lifestyle based on agriculture, hunting, fishing, and gathering. From time to time they clashed against the lizardmen tribes, while they preferred to leave the albino humans alone on their island.

The Makai continued to live peacefully and flourish on their islands for the next centuries, troubled only from time to time by clashes against the lizardmen and – starting from BC 1300 – by the raids of Traldar galleys which swiftly hit the islands' coasts to plunder booty and capture slaves. With time, the Traldars even established a handful of colonies and pirate dens on the modern Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos, fighting against the Makai who dwelt on the coasts, but also helping to bring them even more in contact with the outside world. As today, Traldar remains – even if overlapped by later cultures' ruins – have been found on Trader's and Open Isle in Minrothad, and on Safari and Fletcher islands in Ierendi<sup>20</sup>.

Yet in BC 1300 the Sea of Dread was crossed by another migrating people, the halflings. This race had left the Brasol region in Davania some centuries before, moving through the Adakkian Sound region and crossing the Izondian Deep to reach Thanegia Island, and the southern end of the Serpent Peninsula.

<sup>18</sup> It may well be that the Mawa's migration was a consequence of the rise of the merrow realm of Twaelar in the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago around BC 1700.

<sup>19</sup> See notes 3 and 4, above, for the reasoning behind this development.

<sup>20</sup> According to Hollow World Campaign Setting, the Traldar were quite adept seafarers and sea raiders: «Their war-galleys [...] once dominated the region of the Sea of Dread»; their expansion in the southern archipelagos, while not strictly canonic, is meant to underline this trait of them. For a picture of the Traldar age in the mainland, see also Threshold issue. 1, *The History of Karamaikos*, pages 40-44.



They had settled there in BC 1500, but unfavorable environment and climate, along with unrest among natives, persuaded them to move on to search for another land. Their flotilla passed through the western islands of the archipelago, stopping briefly in Elegy Island; then they landed on the mainland at Cape Faerdinel in BC 1300. A couple of halfling clans decided to settle on Elegy Island and northern Ierendi Island alongside the local Makai tribes, and those islands saw the growth of a relevant halfling population in the following centuries.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, the water and wood elves on Alfeisle kept to themselves on their island, practicing a variety of crafts based on the island's local products, shielding themselves from outside eyes thanks to the water elves' weather magic. Around the island, the Aquarendi continued to live under the waves, as friendly as ever toward their land cousins. In fact, the very existence of Alfeisle and of the Aquarendi was a mystery to the world.



*Makai Canoes in the Ierendi Islands*

<sup>21</sup> The tale of the halflings' migration was never told, and their movement from Davania to the Known World are only arguable from the Hollow World Campaign Setting (in *Dungeon Master's Sourcebook, Timeline of History*, and in the poster map "Local Migration History") and *Champions of Mystara*. The halflings' date of arrival in the modern Five Shires comes from GAZ8. The halfling settlement in Elegy Island has been inserted by the author, and is linked with the origins of Leeha, in Norwold.

## THE NITHIAN AGE

Soon, however, even the Traldar would have succumbed to a much more powerful outside force. Toward the end of the second millennium BC, the Nithian Empire turned its greedy eyes toward the southern Known World, the area where the Ptahr-al-Dar expedition had headed to some centuries before<sup>22</sup>.

### Minroth's Expedition

Nithians were attracted to the eastern islands by their natural resources; in BC 1100, under the leadership of the hero-adventurer Minroth, the Nithians quickly took possession of most of the islands of the modern Minrothad archipelago, easily overcoming what little resistance the indigenous (Taymora-descended) population and the Traldar colonies tried to put up. They founded the city of Horonak<sup>23</sup> (on the site of the modern Harbortown) on the largest of these islands, and named the whole archipelago Colony Islands in their tongue.

Minroth was a prophet as well as a warrior and wise leader; he taught his followers a philosophy of hope, self-reliance, and hard work needed to climb to happiness and greatness. Actually, "Minroth" was the last reincarnation of a Nithian hero who was on the way of completing his Path of the Polymath under the patronage of Immortal Maat; after having led the Nithians here and having seen them prosper, he left them suddenly in order to bring his quest for

<sup>22</sup> About the name "Ptahr-al-Dar", see Threshold no. 1, *The History of Karameikos*, note 12, page 40.

<sup>23</sup> The name "Horonak" for the ancestor city of Harbortown was created by J. Mishler in [History of the Isle of Dawn](#)

Immortality to a successful end<sup>24</sup>. The people of the Colony Islands began to worship him as an Immortal prophet who one day will return to bring eternal happiness to his followers; the cult quickly spread and became known as Minrothism.

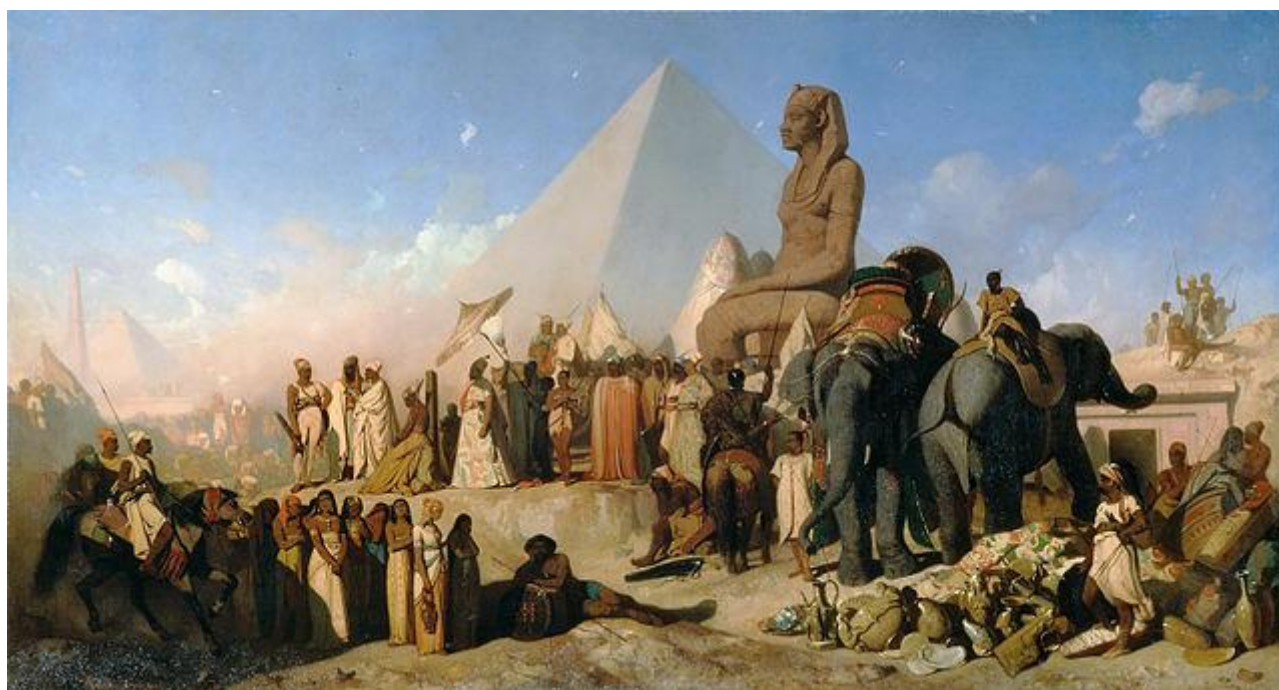
Following Minroth's departure – about fifty years or so after the founding of Horonak – the Colony Islands saw a steady immigration of Nithians from the continental area of their empire: settlements were built, trade with the motherland increased, and the islanders' trade network within the empire grew – as did the shares they derived from it. Their prosperity was further helped by the destruction of rival coastal Traldar cities after BC 1000, due to the Great Beastmen Invasion.

<sup>24</sup> This expanded background for Minroth was created in [Codex Immortalis, Book I: Guide to the Immortals](#) (by M. Dalmonte)].

## The Conquest of the Makai Isles

Around BC 1000, the Nithians began to look at the archipelago which lay west of the Colony Islands as the next target of their expansionism. The peaceful local population, the Makai, represented an attractive source of slaves, and some of the islands were also rich in deposits of precious metals. Nithian armies easily subdued the coastal communities of the Makai, and absorbed the handful of Traldar settlements which existed in the region, claiming dominion over this archipelago also<sup>25</sup>. The halfling clans of Elegy

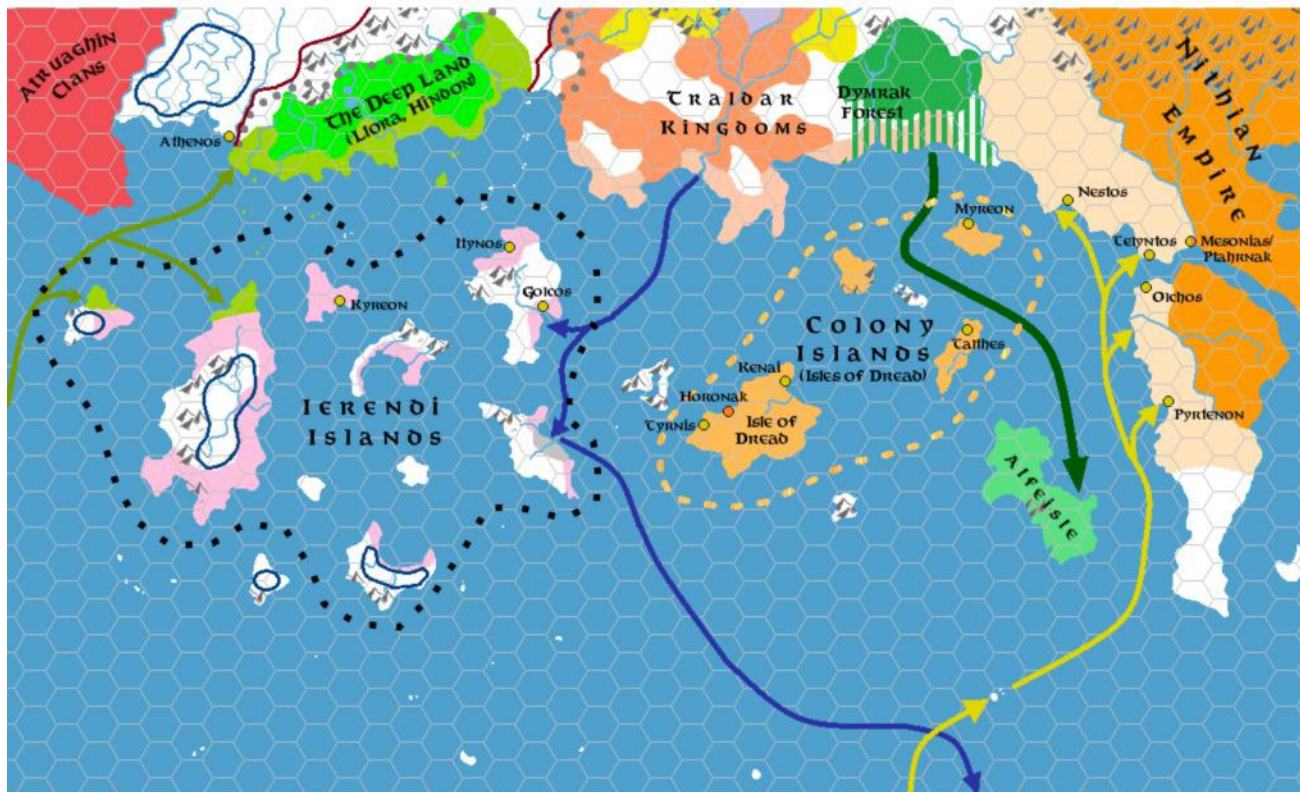
<sup>25</sup> According to Hollow World Campaign Setting, *Dungeon Master's Sourcebook*, "Timeline of History", the eve of the Nithian conquest is the time when the Immortals decided to transplant some Makai tribes in the Hollow World to prevent the assimilation of their unique culture by the Nithians. This means that throughout the Campaign Setting the inclusion of the Makai among the thousands "Tribes of Neathar" is erroneous – the Neathar tribes have been transplanted



*Nithian Conquest of the Makai Isles*



The Ierendi and Colony Islands during the Nithian Age  
 From the Golden Age of the Traldars to the Thyatian Migration (BC 1300-600)



**NITHIAN EMPIRE**

- Territories under the control of the Nithian Empire in BC 1000
- Islands settled by Minroth's expedition in BC 1100
- Vassal and tributary peoples of the Nithian Empire in BC 1000
- Nithian claim over the Colony Islands in BC 1000
- Nithian claim over the Ierendi Islands in BC 1000
- Known settlements founded by the Nithians

**IERENDI ISLANDS**

- Areas of Utter Island inhabited by the Albino people
- Areas of the Ierendi Islands inhabited by the Makai in BC 1000
- Areas with a stronger presence of lizardmen in BC 1000

**ELVES**

- Water and wood elven holdings in Aifeisite
- The "Deep Land" (Cruebyl clan) in BC 1000
- Vyalia lands
- Former lands of the Verdlar clan before BC 1720
- Verdlar clan's migration to Aifeisite (BC 1720)

**HINHOME**

- Lands settled by the Hins between BC 1300 and BC 1000
- Hin migration from Chanegia Island (BC 1300)
- Maximum extent of Lokta's Kingdom of the Glittering Land
- Approximate borders of orclish domains (BC 999-965 and 801-747)

**TRALDARS**

- Craidar realms under Hutaakan control in BC 1100
- Independent Craidar realms in BC 1100
- Territories under direct Hutaakan rule in BC 1100
- Known settlements founded by the Traldars outside their homeland
- Territory of the city-state of Cuma in BC 1100
- Route of the Craidar migration from Mirtlenos under King Milen (BC 1000)

**OTHER**

- Route of the Thyatian peoples' migration from Davania (BC 600)
- Domain of the Red Orcs over the Atruaghin Clans (BC 1257-800)



and northern Ierendi islands shared the fate of the Makai natives, and were easily subdued and enslaved by the Nithian conquerors; their kin in Llor (modern Five Shires), under the dominion of the orcs, did not represent a safe haven for them, so they had no other choice but submitting to the Nithians.

Around the same time in which the Nithians were conquering the Makai isles and the local Traldar and halfling populations, the mainland Traldar kingdoms (in modern Karameikos) were being ravaged by a huge gnoll invasion.<sup>26</sup> A whole city of the southern Traldar kingdoms, under order of local King Milen, was evacuated and set sail to flee from the its doomed homeland; their fleet entered the waters around the southern archipelagos and split, landing half in Safari Island and half in Utter Island, hoping to find shelter among the local Makai who were in the process of being subdued by the Nithian Empire<sup>27</sup>. But they had no will to become subjects of the Nithians, who had conquered their kinsmen in the Colony Islands and were ruling them harshly. The Nithians, on the other hand, were not willing to allow the Traldar refugees to hamper their conquest of the Makai islands, mostly out

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in the Hollow World by the Immortals around BC 3500, when the Neathar people had still not differentiated into many separated cultures. The Makai civilization developed much later, and moreover not from exclusively Neathar ancestors.

<sup>26</sup> About the gnoll invasion of the Traldar kingdoms, see also Threshold no. 1, The History of Karameikos, pages 44 and 48.

<sup>27</sup> The following story of the struggle between Traldar refugees and the Nithians is not featured in any of the canonic sources, but was inserted under suggestion of F. Defferrari to make the history of the Traldar migration toward Davania a little more credible; in fact, as they were fleeing from their homeland, they would have likely stopped as soon as possible – that is in the Nithian-ruled southern islands – trying to win a place to settle there.

of fear of an alliance between the Traldar and the native Makai, which would have threatened their newly-won conquest. So the Nithians at first confronted the refugees, making clear they could live in the islands only if they accepted being split among the various islands and settling according to what the empire felt was better; then, after the Traldar's opposition and some quarrels, the Nithians turned to force and attacked the Traldar that had landed on Safari Island, capturing many of them, and readying to launch another assault on those who landed on Utter Island. Understanding that they could not win this fight, and having to chose between enslavement and flight, the Traldar refugees chose the latter and sailed past the archipelagos south of their homeland, where the Nithians didn't follow them; afterwards they would have reached the northern coasts of Davania, becoming the ancestors of the Milenians.

Exploitation of the islands' population and resources was harsher here than in the Colony Islands; the Nithians pushed inland to get control of the metal deposits, thus coming into conflict against the primitive lizardmen tribes who inhabited the interior. At first these clashes were sporadic and limited to some areas; however, the Nithian penetration stirred up fiercer lizardman resistance, which threatened the very stability of Nithian rule on the islands and risked sucking more money from the empire than the conquest was worth. Thus, the Nithians contented themselves with the control of the coastal areas and surroundings, and with the exploitation of Makai labor<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Given the five centuries of Nithian rule over the Ierendi Islands, the contemporary destruction of the Nithian and lizardman cultures on them (in BC 500), and the quite sudden (that is, not centuries-long)

## The Islands During the Decline of the Empire

When the Nithian Empire slowly began to slide into decline around BC 800, with most resources devoted to military campaigns, luxuries, and construction programs than to trade and infrastructures, the flourishing Colony Islands settlements seized an even greater control over trade routes which linked the motherland to the southern archipelagos, soon becoming the main trading power of the northern Sea of Dread.

Things changed after BC 700, when the leadership of the Nithian Empire turned to the worship of Entropy. The whole eastern part of the empire – the one which included Thothia and other Isle of Dawn colonies – broke away from the empire, starting a civil war that would have gone on until the empire’s very end two centuries later; also, civil unrest began to plague the continental areas of the empire, and an increasing amount of money and resources was needed to enlist mercenary armies.

The pharaohs at the beginning of this age thus attempted once more to put their hands over the western islands’ mineral resources; in order to put the lizardmen resistance down, starting from BC 650 they brought to the islands cheap slave armies made up of scores of goblins captured elsewhere<sup>29</sup>. A brutal and

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demographic loss suffered by the lizardmen due to the plague imported by the Nithians in their islands, were the reasons behind the choice to have the Nithian-lizardmen contacts limited to a few squabbles; only later did the two peoples clash more regularly, and the plague spread among the lizardmen.

<sup>29</sup> Despite a passage on GAZ4, page 60 («In the seventh century AC the island [Honor Island] was settled by a colony of humans and goblins»), another passage – which I favored over the first one – on page 7 says that «Some of the lava tunnel complexes are inhabited by

bloody war of skirmishes and ambushes began; at first the lizardmen held off against these renewed Nithian attempt to wrest control of their lands from them, but soon they had to face an enemy more terrible than the Nithians, and one they could not withstand. Unbeknownst to the Nithians, some domesticated animal species they had recently introduced to the islands (or perhaps even the goblins themselves) carried a tiny skin parasite; this nearly invisible vermin was harmless to humans, but transmitted a devastatingly lethal disease to lizardmen. The reptilian population of the islands was thus quickly weakened by the disease and decimated in the turn of a century and a half or so, allowing the Nithian goblins to dispose easily of the survivors.

In those same centuries, the Nithians began to take halfling slaves from Elegy and Ierendi islands to bring them into other provinces of their empire. The halflings represented an ideal labor force for working in the deep mines of the Hardanger Mountains, so many were transplanted there; that area, in fact, had suffered from a shortage of local Northman slaves, many of which had been transferred by the Nithians in a recently-established colony on the northern coast of Davania. This process completely erased the halfling population from these two islands, and nothing was left of the Hins there. If this was not enough, the Nithians also started to barter halfling slaves for weapon and tools

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descendants of goblin slaves brought to the islands by Nithian colonists in the fifth century BC». I chose to put back in time by a century and a half the introduction of goblin slaves by the Nithians to the isles, because by the fifth century BC the Nithians were no more; the only “Nithians” who could then be used were those of Harbortown on Trader’s Isle – but I could not devise a reasonable explanation to have them bringing goblin slaves into Ierendi, so I changed GAZ4’s date.

with the orcs which ruled Shaerdon (modern Five Shires) in the 8th and 7th centuries BC.<sup>30</sup>

At the other end of the chain, in the Colony Islands, the spread of Minrothism and the locals' pivotal role in the empire's trading network spared the islands from the introduction of the Entropy-worshipping cults which were imposed in most other regions of the Nithian Empire. In fact, as civil unrest and decline in the Nithian Empire increased, Nithian control over outlying areas like the southern archipelagos waned; this allowed the Colony Islands to assume greater freedom from the motherland, trading both with the pharaoh and his enemies at the same time, also seeing as an unexpected boon the northward migration of the Thyatians, Kerendans, and Hattians – who reached southeastern Brun from Davania in BC 600 – which further weakened Nithian control over the area and diminished even more the possibility of a resurgence of Nithian power.

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<sup>30</sup> Presence of halflings in the Northern Reaches region was established by the Poor Wizard's Almanac books, *Geographic Overview*, under "Leeha" and "Norwold" entries: «Halflings first settled this area 1,500 years ago when kobold invasions drove them out of the Northern Reaches». How and why the halflings were found in the Northern Reaches has never been explained. The story told there follows Usamigaras' background found in [Codex Immortalis, Book One: Guide to the Immortals](#) (by M. Dalmonte)]. Basically, the halflings continued to live in the Hardanger Mountains' foothills as allies of the local gnome clans after the destruction of the Nithian Empire freed them from slavery. But life in that region became harder and harder after BC 450, as they were cornered between the giants' and gnolls' lands, and their gnome allies started to succumb in front of the kobolds' onslaught. After another century or so, the surviving halflings followed the leadership of a prophet of the High Heroes (actually Usamigaras in disguise during his path to Immortality) and left the area, migrating north. They would found Leeha, in Norwold, some years later.

## The End of the Nithian Domain

In the western islands, the Nithian garrisons left without support from the mainland had an increasingly hard time in keeping the goblin and Makai slaves under control. Nevertheless, the lizardmen's doom was by then sealed because of the disease the Nithians had brought to the islands. In BC 500, as a last act of vengeance against the ones who had exterminated their own people, the lizardmen shamans performed unearthly magical rituals, invoking the power of their ancestors and deities, and unleashed a final spell of horrible power over the Nithians: Makai legends tell that the settlements of their masters were completely wiped away in a single night by the power of the lizardmen's spell. By BC 500, both the Nithians' and the lizardmen's presence were thus almost erased from the islands; the lizardmen only survived as small primitive clans on Roister Island and in some shallow water areas, far away from the humans.

BC 500 also saw the end of the Nithian Empire as a whole; the Nithian civilization was erased from the surface world by the Immortals it had angered. The lizardmen's vengeance over them in the western islands was perhaps part of the Immortals' plan to cancel the Nithian civilization from the Outer World. The Nithians of the Colony Islands, however, were spared by the Immortals because they had never succumbed to the worship of Entropy. The memory of their Nithian past erased from their minds by the Immortals, they began to call themselves "Minrothians" and forgot ever being a colony of the Nithian Empire; they only recalled that the Nithian Empire had been a trading partner of theirs in the north, which now was no more.



## THE ISLANDS' MIDDLE CENTURIES

The disappearance of the Nithian Empire had quite different consequences on the two halves of the island chain which included the modern Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos, which developed along widely diverging lines in the five centuries before the crowning of the first Thyatian Emperor.

### The Goblin Wars in the Makai Isles

In the western islands, after the destruction of Nithian presence, the Makai were free and went back to their everyday life, mostly forgetting having been dominated by the Nithians. However, the Nithians had left in the islands a legacy that had not disappeared with them: the goblin slaves. Deprived of their Nithian masters and of their lizardmen enemies as well, scattered among various islands, the goblins ran amock and began a long series of intermittent tribal wars against the Makai, which were the cause of the demographic stagnation of the islands in the following centuries (BC 500-AC 0). At the end of this age, the goblins had been almost wholly exterminated – only a few tribes survived in some of the uninhabited islands (like Honor Island), and in secluded mountainous and barren areas of other islands<sup>31</sup>.

Long decades of war favored the unification of a number of Makai tribes under powerful

or prestigious war chiefs, who began exerting a certain degree of control over some areas of the islands which fell under their authority. Short-lived Makai kingdoms were born in the latter half of this age; their rulers also started to fight among themselves for the dominance over the islands as the goblin threat gradually waned. Thus were born the first kingdoms encompassing a whole island or a number of them, the most famous and powerful of which was established in BC 178 by King Kapena Kekoa, who managed to achieve control over the whole eastern three-quarters of Ierendi Island; his successor were able to extend their control over Fletcher Island and parts of Safari Island, conquering lesser chiefdoms and settling the wilderness there. Another lesser Makai kingdom of this age was that of Kauhona, who controlled the western side of Ierendi Island and Elegy Island<sup>32</sup>.

During those centuries the western islands and their Makai inhabitants were largely ignored by other cultures of the Known World. The Hin were slowly rebuilding themselves after the centuries of orcish tyranny, while the Traladarans were in the middle of their Dark Age; moreover, the birth of local Makai kingdoms made possible attempts at conquest much more difficult and costly, and ended up discouraging them altogether. Occasionally, Hin sailors, Minrothian or Traladaran traders, or Thyatian pirates visited the islands, but their presence was temporary at best. There were indeed a few exiles or refugees, fleeing their homeland for a variety of causes, who were

<sup>31</sup> Their presence in such terrain and lands is described in GAZ4; the Goblin Wars were devised by the author in order to explain the gobins' spread among various islands, and to add some color the otherwise uneventful centuries between the end of the Nithian Empire and the colonization of the archipelago by the Five Shires and Thyatis (6<sup>th</sup> century AC).

<sup>32</sup> The birth of the mentioned Makai kingdoms is not canonic, and has been created by the author under suggestion of F. Defferrari to fill in with interesting and realistic historical developments those centuries of Makai history.

allowed to settled among the Makai, but their number was negligible.

Toward the end of those centuries, the name “Ierendi” – which was the Makai word that indicated the largest island of the archipelago – became widespread as the name of the whole island chain, which became known as the “Ierendi Islands”.

## The Colony Islands between Thyatis and Alphatia

In the eastern islands, things went along differently. The trade power of the Minrothians began to decline due to the disappearance of their major trading partner, the Nithian Empire. They continued indeed to trade rare woods and handcrafts with other peoples of the southern Known World, but their profits never reached again the peaks of the late times of the Nithian age.

### The Thyatian Piracy and the Alphatian Conquest

More importantly, the rise of the Thyatians in the east turned to represent a serious halt to the Minrothians’ sea trade. At first devoted to expand and colonize the continental lands where they had landed around BC 600, the three Thyatian tribes became more aggressive after BC 500, when they were fully in control of their lands. Their rulers began to sponsor piracy, which after BC 400 became so widespread in this area of the Sea of Dread that all the peoples who lived off its coasts – from the Atruaghin to the inhabitants of the western Isle of Dawn – began to fear the ruthlessness of Thyatian corsairs. Many coastal peoples paid the Thyatians a tribute to avoid being targeted by their pirates, and the Minrothians were one of them. Thus, outward

expansion of Minrothian trade and settlement was halted.

But neither could the Thyatian pirates go unmatched. When their raids began to put the Alphatian trade routes in the east in serious danger, and when the latter discovered that the Thyatian mountains were rich in unexploited gold and silver, the Alphatian Empire made its first moves to conquer the Thyatian peoples. The Thyatians opposed a fierce resistance against the Alphatian armies, but eventually were conquered between BC 192 and BC 190. Alphatian conquest of the Thyatians was seen as a boon by other peoples of the Sea of Dread – they feared the distant power of the mighty Alphatian Empire, but were more than happy that its expansion had brought an end to the ever present threat of Thyatian piracy.

### The Rise of the Minrothians’ Trade Power

Thus the Minrothians managed to establish peaceful relations with the Alphatians and signed a series of agreements with them in order to keep the seas free from piracy through joint operations. The most important of them was the agreement of BC 180, through which the Alphatians entrusted the Minrothians with the duty to keep the sea routes from the Western Sea of Dawn to the Sea of Dread free from pirates, while giving them possession of the island of Terentias and allowing them to extend their trading network to the Alphatian-dominated Isle of Dawn<sup>33</sup>.

Thanks to these developments, the Minrothians again expanded their trading

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<sup>33</sup> This part modifies and expands on original ideas found in [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland)].

network, which for the first time began to regularly touch the settlements of the western coast of the Isle of Dawn, with rarer forays into the Alatian islands and Ochalea. The old capital city of the Colony Islands, Horonak – now called Harbortown by the Minrothians – again became a wealthy center of trade in this corner of Brun.

This renewed prosperity was behind the Minrothians' new drive for expansion; settlements were built on the lesser islands of the chain, that is Open and North islands, as well as on the newly-acquired Terentias. Blackrock, Fortress, and Fire islands were instead too impervious and barren to be of any interest for the Minrothians. The last two centuries before AC 0 were indeed a time of demographic growth for them.

### **Alfeisle's Isolation and the Establishment of Undersea**

Meanwhile, in Alfeisle the elves were keeping to themselves, shrouded by their magic, and distantly watching the development of the world around their island. Among the water elves the first opinions against continued isolationism were heard around the same time the Alphatians conquered the Thyatians; some water elves envied the success of Minrothian traders, and wished to freely explore the outside world. They were still a minority among the water elf population, however, so isolationism prevailed. Elven society was also upset by the rift which arose between the Meditor and the Verdier clans about the exploitation of Alfeisle's forests for wood and timber; as a result of the harsh quarrel among the two elven clans, the Verdiers retreated to the woods and decided to lead a life of sylvan isolation, while the Meditors kept living on the coasts, near their beloved sea. It was after this event that the terms "water elves" and

"wood elves" came into use by the elves themselves to indicate the two branches of their Alfeisle kin<sup>34</sup>.

This age also saw the migration of the tritons into the Sunlit Sea, which took place around BC 200. The organized and conquest-minded tritons wished to carve a dominion for themselves in the bountiful waters surrounding the Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos; they came into conflict against the nomadic merrow who inhabited these waters, and thus a centuries-long squabble began<sup>35</sup>. At the end the tritons managed to gain the upper hand and established the Kingdom of Undersea in the sea region between Utter and Blackrock islands. Many merrow living in this area were subdued by the tritons, and became subjects of Undersea; many others instead continued to live their nomadic lives on the fringes of the triton kingdom.

### **The Minrothians during the Struggle for Freedom**

However, the decline of the Alphatian Empire took its toll also on the Alphatia-Minrothians relations. As unrest began to undermine the very stability of the empire's provinces in the west and imperial governors drained the territories they ruled of any riches to please the imperial throne, the Minrothians started to worry about imperial policy – the Alphatian throne was exploiting and taxing without regard and beyond any tolerability in its subject lands, with the consequence of making trade suffer and the Minrothians'

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<sup>34</sup> This rift among the elves is mentioned in GAZ9 (*History of the Minrothad Guilds*, Dungeon Master's Booklet).

<sup>35</sup> Mention of the tritons' migration and squabbles against the merrows are found in PC3.



profits decline. The Minrothians were looking to the future with serious concern.

When Lucinius Trezantembium and Zendrolion Tatriokanitas led the Thyatians into revolt against the Alphatian dominion, the whole Alphatian control over the western part of the empire crumbled – other subject territories rose in revolt against the hated Alphatian masters, and joined the Thyatians in their Struggle for Freedom (BC 2). Totally unprepared to face such an opposition and taken by surprise by their adversaries' cunning tactics, the Alphatians were put on the defensive and soon had to fight harshly to preserve their control over the Isle of Dawn. Seeing all this, the Minrothians decided to stay neutral in the war – their agreements would have put them on the Alphatians' side, but the empire was too far away to send them any help, while the Thyatians were near and were achieving many successes; moreover, the Minrothians deemed that the fight to preserve the integrity of the Alphatian Empire was not theirs, so they preferred to keep out of it.

As the war dragged on and the possibility of an Alphatian victory waned, seeing which way the wind was blowing the Minrothians threw their lot on the side of King Lucinius and in the very last months of the war helped the Thyatians to transport their troops across the Western Sea of Dawn from one battlefield to another, and supplied their lines thanks to their control of the seas.

### **Under the Shadow of the Thyatian Empire**

In AC 0, Thyatis was finally victorious, but when the federation planned by King Lucinius was transformed into the militaristic and expansion-minded Thyatian Empire of Zendrolion I Tatriokanitas, the Minrothians'

concerns deepened. In the aftermath of the war, they unwillingly had to keep their alliance with Thyatis for fear of reprisals, and saw their trade network shrink; in fact, Zendrolion's empire recovered from the war much more rapidly than Alphatia, building a powerful military and naval machine a few miles away from the Minrothians' isles.

Relationships between the Minrothians and Thyatis became more tense with the passing of the decades. In AC 120, the inhabitants of Terentias, mostly of Thyatian descent, revolted against Minrothian rule due to taxation and control imposed over the isles by the centralist political faction in Harbortown. The Terentians proclaimed independence from the Minrothians and fought off a couple of attempts by the latter to reestablish their dominion over the island; then, they appealed to the Thyatian Empire for support. After various events, the island formally accepted annexation by the Thyatian Empire in AC 127<sup>36</sup>. Relations between Thyatis and the Minrothians after this event became strained as the empire tried to extend its direct influence over the archipelago.

### **The BEGINNINGS of the COLONY ISLANDS' CONFEDERATION**

Despite the power and vicinity of the Thyatian Empire, a series of events – most of all the opening of Alfeisle's elves to outside contact – helped the peoples of the Colony Islands to emancipate themselves from Thyatian influence. This spurred the formation of the first trading alliance, but these developments were not achieved without internal conflicts.

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<sup>36</sup> I imagined this process to be somewhat akin to the independence of Texas from Mexico; the idea of a Thyatian conquest of Terentias around AC 120 comes from [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland)].

### The foundation of New Alphatia

In AC 250, a large group of Alphatian exiles led by a team of powerful wizards came asking the Thyatian Emperor for protection against persecution in their homeland and for a place to settle<sup>37</sup>. The Thyatian Emperor, not trusting the exiles enough to allow them to settle in the empire's territory, granted them lands indeed – but on Tralder's Isle, that is in Minrothian territory: the isle would be theirs, if they could take it from the current occupants.

The Alphatians, helped by their magics, made a sudden inroad into the territory of Trader's Isle, managing to build the outpost of New Alphatia on the island's northeastern coast. Shrouded by their spells and separated from the Minrothians by the central mountains of the isle and by dense fogs, the Alphatians settled there and went almost unnoticed for nearly a year. Then, the Minrothians discovered the newcomers and started a war against them to cast them away from their homeland. The war (AC 250-251) went on with a series of inconclusive clashes which resulted in some losses for either side, without any one of them prevailing.

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<sup>37</sup> GAZ9 is quite reticent about who those Alphatians were, and why they were migrating from their homeland; nevertheless, their ties with the Alphatian Empire are never mentioned, so it's likely that they were part of some minority group which was subject of persecution or discrimination at home (maybe they came from a territory other than the Alphatia proper) – otherwise they would have a difficult time to settle lands on Thyatis' back. Perhaps, given their aptitude for water- and sea-magic, they were members of an ancient sect of Followers of Water. In the article, I have tried to put together some of these elements to clarify the history of their migration in Trader's Isle. For additional ideas about a possible background of those people, see also [Old Alphatia History](#) (by F. Defferrari)] and [The Lost Art of Hydromancy](#) (by G. Gander)].

Saner heads of both parties then decided to meet, seeing better perspective in cooperation rather than in war. The Alphatians agreed to share their knowledge of magic with the Minrothians, while the latter agreed to allow the Alphatians to settle on their island and to include them in their trading network. Thus a Minrothian-Alphatian alliance was born, and joint trade operations were agreed upon. The Thyatian Empire was disappointed with this development, even if the introduction in the Colony Islands of the destabilizing element represented by the Alphatians was nevertheless a success in their effort to weaken the Minrothians.

### The End of Elven Isolationism

Meanwhile, something unexpected happened on Alfeisle<sup>38</sup>. In AC 273 a series of volcanic eruptions on the elves' hidden isle caused panic to spread among the inhabitants, who preserved the memory of their parents' accounts of the terrible destructions of two thousand years ago. Damages due to those eruptions were limited, but fear ran high. The progressive faction among the water elves took the opportunity to advocate for the opening of relations with the outside world and for the end of the elves' isolationism in order to find other places to settle. After much debate, the progressive faction prevailed in AC 275. The end of isolationism came to be seen favorably by the wood elves

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<sup>38</sup> GAZ9, *Dungeon Master's Booklet, History of the Minrothad Guilds*, only says: «In the third century AC, human and elvish cultures finally stumbled upon one another when volcanic activity forced elves to seek out other appropriate settlements in the island chain». Exact year of the elves' meeting with humans is indicated in the *Historical Synopsis of the Minrothad Isles* as AC 276. I further elaborated the story of the end of elven isolationism and the encounter with humans.

also, who were suffering since some years from a famine caused by their isolation and by their inability to import enough food to support their populations.

In AC 276, the water elves revealed their existence to the outside world by sending an embassy first to Harbortown and then to New Alphatia; friendly contacts were established, and subsequently Minrothian and Alphatian diplomats were allowed to visit Alfeisle to contemplate the water elves' civilization, while the elves were allowed to visit human towns on Trader's Isle. The elves were much impressed by the Alphatians' magic – which had in the past decades applied almost exclusively to tasks related to sea and weather – as well as by the alliance's wealth and abundance in trade goods; on the other hand, the humans were astonished by the water elves' ship design and intrigued by their sailing skills.

### The Birth of the Human-Elven Trading Combine

Only a few months passed before the Minrothians offered the water elves an agreement to form a joint trading combine with themselves and the Alphatians, to share knowledge and open trade among them. The water elves, never oblivious of their wood elf kin, sent words to them in order to persuade their leaders to join the combine as well. Prostrated by years of famine, the wood elves accepted to share their woodworking products and skills in exchange for food.

Thus, the combine was created in the same year of AC 276. The four peoples traded goods, services, and vessels among them, sharing knowledge about magic, seafaring, and shipbuilding. They soon began to perform joint trading ventures in near and distant

lands. The wars raging between the Thyatian and Alphatian empires in the east were a boon for the combine's economy, because both empires relied heavily on merchant shipping to carry booty and supplies from and to occupied territories. The members of the combine were shrewd in negotiating and keeping their neutrality between the two large and powerful empires, allying with neither but trading with and selling services to both.

### The Slave Trade Wars and the Water Elf Emigration

Tensions between the Minrothians of Harbortown and the Alphatians of New Alphatia sparkled again when, around AC 280, Minrothians and Alphatians were for the first time involved in slave trade toward the markets of the Thyatian Empire. They took slaves from the Makai islands, from the Atruaghin and Five Shires coastlands, from Traladara, and sold them in Thyatian markets, or offered their transportation services for inter-imperial slave trade. This trade was very profitable and brought a great amount of money into the coffers of the two peoples in a short time. Nevertheless, the problem of inter-imperial slave trade was that most of the slaves bought and sold were of Alphatian descent<sup>39</sup> – prisoners of war in Thyatis' Isle of Dawn campaigns. The people of New Alphatia began to voice their opinion against

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<sup>39</sup> GAZ9, *Dungeon Master's Booklet, History of the Minrothad Guilds*, only says that «In the next decade [after AC 276], Minrothians and New Alphatians fought over the slave trading of Alphatian sailors»; this passage can be variously interpreted, the one featured in the article is just one of many possibilities. The exact year of the war is indicated in the *Historical Synopsis of the Minrothad Isles* as AC 284; I chose to have a previous phase of the conflict in AC 281-283 to increase the importance of this war.



this trade, advocating a limit on slave trade as to avoid buying and selling Alphatian slaves. Minrothians, on the other hand, were not willing at all to limit the wealth coming into their coffers from such a trade.

Things went on nervously between the two peoples, with tensions running higher up to the point when some Alphatians began to sabotage Minrothian slave trade. Harbortown authorities lost no time and retaliated, declaring war on New Alphatia in AC 281. The Slave Trade Wars were two conflicts interspersed by a truce, the first one lasting from AC 281 to AC 283, and the second fought in AC 284. They carried on through skirmishes, corsair raids, sea battles, and truces, with neither side managing to get the upper hand nor accepting to come to terms with their opponent. The trading power gained by the combine severely lessened during this war, much to the satisfaction of the Thyatians and the disappointment of Alfeisle's elves.

In the end the elves – who nevertheless were opposed to the slave trade altogether – stepped in and forced the two exhausted human opponents to make peace at the end of AC 284, threatening to enter the war on the Alphatians' side. They allowed Minrothian slave trade to continue, but under heavy limitations and with the forbiddance to trade ethnic Alphatians. While the Alphatians were content with this development, the Minrothians were not, because the limitations they had to accept cut a very large slice of their profits from the slave trade, and also deprived them of most of the money they obtained from Thyatian markets. Despite this, they had to grudgingly comply but were embittered by this defeat.

Also, in the years after AC 276 the water elves began to travel in surrounding lands,

exploring them, establishing trade relations, and even founding small colonies of migrants in some of the most strategic or profitable sites. Most of these colonies were made up by trade agents, their aides, and their families, and were supposed to be temporary and with rotating personnel, with new agents from Alfeisle replacing the previous ones after some years. Nevertheless, slowly small water elf communities developed in places like Terentias, Actius, Port Lucinius, West Portage, and other cities and towns of the Western Sea of Dawn, even up to Seagirt in the Pearl Islands. Such emigration toward places in the east was also influenced by the instability which reigned in the Colony Islands for years as a consequence of the Slave Trade Wars – actually forcing elven emigration to head elsewhere.

With peace again restored, the elves and the humans of the Colony Islands put again their best efforts in trade, in order to rebuild the influence they had lost. Even if a trading combine between the three was formally re-established, rivalry between Harbortown and New Alphatia continued to run high, as did the elves' distrust for the quarrelsome and unpredictable humans. The fourth century AC was an age of prosperity for the Colony Islands. Water elf trade increased and in AC 300 the elves built their first great port city, Seahome, to host foreign merchants and ships and their own great shipbuilding facilities.

### **A Century of Prosperity**

Minrothians, bitter after the humiliation they had suffered from Alphatians and elves in AC 284, pursued aggressive trade policies aimed at increasing their power and influence. Wealthy Minrothian families were involved in the internal affairs of the Thyatian Empire,

lending money to a couple of emperors or imperial candidates during the Thyatian Civil War (which had started in AC 313); in AC 318, as indemnity for a debt left unpaid by the Thyatian throne, the Minrothians assumed control of the island of Terentias – where a loud minority also including the local water elf community was advocating autonomy from the empire – which was confirmed by Thyatis some years later<sup>40</sup>.

Relations between Harbortown and Thyatis improved as the Minrothians continued to practice moneylending activity in favor of several Thyatian emperors, thus linking the future of their finances with that of the empire. Moreover, the weakening of Thyatis after the civil war allowed them to successfully occupy the vacuum left by the waning of the Thyatian trade power in this century, penetrating the eastern markets of the Isle of Dawn and beyond; this was made easier by the fact that Thyatian emperors of this time were willing to grant the Minrothians special trade concessions in exchange for money. This meant, fatally and again, an increasing Minrothian involvement in slave trade.

Around AC 360, the Minrothians felt strong enough to challenge limitations imposed on slave trade by the peace of AC 284. Again they carried slaves all over the Thyatian Empire's markets, making great profits, all the while expanding their trade network to the Eastern Sea of Dawn and to the Alphantian coasts. This time they also followed Thyatian customs and introduced slaves in Harbortown; their favored targets for this role were the halflings of the Five Shires, who they captured through swift raids and employed in their isles in a variety of tasks. In the next century, several thousand

halflings were brought in the Colony Islands' Minrothian possessions as slaves<sup>41</sup>.

Alphantians and elves were disappointed by the turn of the events, but were wary about taking direct action against the Minrothians because of the latter's ties with Thyatis. They preferred for now to keep their alliance with the Minrothians and to exploit the influence of Harbortown to expand their own trading networks.

Despite these internal rivalries, this age was very prosperous for all members of the trading combine, whose network touched almost all coastal regions of the Known World, where old and new nations were emerging and willing to receive the trade goods from distant places that the combine's merchants carried. However, this prosperity was about to come to an end in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, when lycanthropic epidemics spread in the archipelago.

### The Ierendi Islands in the First Four Centuries AC

While all these events were taking place in the Colony Islands – the Alphantians' migration, the end of the elves' isolationism, the formation of the trading combine, and so on – in the five centuries between the crowning of Emperor Zendrolion I (AC 0) and the coming of the first convicts in the Ierendi Islands from the Five Shires (6<sup>th</sup>

<sup>40</sup> This further change of control over Terentias was taken from the [History of the Thyatian People](#) (by J. Ruhland)]; I slightly elaborated the event further.

<sup>41</sup> The history of the Five Shires is quite empty between 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and 5<sup>th</sup> century AC, as GAZ8 doesn't give much insight on this age. If the Hin coasts were so easily hit by Minrothian slave traders, it may be guessed that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AC were a time of internal trouble or crisis in the Shires, whose naval rise should still come by. See also the following paragraph about "The Ierendi Islands in the First Four Centuries AC" for additional causes which favored the expansion of Minrothian slave trade to the Five Shires.






## The Ierendi and Colony Islands during the Middle Centuries






From the Fall of Nithia (BC 500) to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC





### THYATIAN EMPIRE

-  Limit of Alphanian holdings in Thyatis (BC 190-2)
-  Territories of the Thyatian Empire under Emperor Zendorillon I (AC 0-20)
-  Territories conquered by Thyatis after AC 20







### COLONY ISLANDS

-  Harbortown claim over the Colony Islands
-  Areas actually settled by the Minrothians
-  Territory seized by the Alphanians in AC 250
-  Cerentias (to Alphania BC 190-180, to Harbortown BC 180-AC 120, independent AC 120-127, to Thyatis AC 127-318, to Harbortown thereafter)
-  Water and wood elven holdings in Aifeiste

### IERENDI ISLANDS

-  Areas of Utter Island inhabited by the Albino people
-  Kingdom of Ierendi under Kapena Kekoa (BC 178)
-  Kingdom of Kauhona
-  Other Makai territories
-  Kingdom of Ierendi at the death of Kapena Ikaika (AC 317)

### OTHER

-  Elven holdings on the mainland (Callarii and Vyalla clans)
-  Kingdom of Craladara at the death of Bogdan Ivanovich (AC 356)
-  Territories of the Atruaghin Clans
-  Territories of the Five Shires
-  Borders of the Lordship of Meruvar (BC 476-174)
-  Territory of the city-state of Athenos
-  Main cities



century AC), the Makai flourished and grew in prosperity, their local kingdoms exerting a wider control over the archipelago and maintaining increasing relations with other peoples and nations of the mainland.

The kingdoms' population began to grow again after the Goblin Wars, and some tribes of Makai settled the islands which had been left depopulated since the ancient age of seismic disasters (like Alcove, Aloysius, and Roister). By mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, all the eight major islands of the Ierendi archipelago (except White Island and Honor Island, which was inhabited by some of the last goblin tribes) had been settled to some extent by Makai tribes.

Pirates, exiles, and outlaws fleeing from their country sometimes still found shelter among the Makai as in the previous age. Fletcher Island, in particular, became an emigration spot for a small number of coastal Traladarans who left their homeland during times of war or economic crisis (such as during the Traladaran Wars of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC<sup>42</sup>). Angel Cove on Alcove Island, instead, became a haven of pirate activity in the region, which local Makai kings never managed to uproot.

The Ierendi Islands were still considered a backward and unimportant place by the rising powers of the Known World at the beginning of the first century AC, but the situation changed afterwards. The small Traladaran domains and the nearby Five Shires had consolidated a steady trade with the archipelago's local Makai kingdoms; the islands' natural resources – gemstones,

precious metals, and wood – began to be looked upon and coveted with some interest by sea traders and expansion-minded rulers abroad, especially in Harbortown and Thyatis.

The political situation of the Ierendi Islands was not very stable, however. Local kingdoms occasionally waged war against one another in order to expand their domains. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AC, King Kapena Ikaika “the Great” of Ierendi (who ruled from AC 285 to AC 317), through a series of daring military campaigns, conquered the lesser neighboring Makai kingdoms and ruled over a realm encompassing the whole Ierendi Island, and Elegy, Fletcher, Roister, and Safari islands. Kapena Ikaika also signed agreements with the Hin of the Five Shires and with the newly-created Kingdom of Traladara under Bogdan Ivanovich in order to keep the seas around these lands devoid from Minrothian and Thyatian threats, mostly represented by pirates and slavers.

Kapena Ikaika's successors were not as able as he was. Unrest burst in the kingdom's peripheral areas, and the ability of the kings to put down such rebellion was depressed by the intrusion of foreign merchants and pirates, who lended their support to the rebels in order to destabilize the kingdom. The loss of authority of the king became evident when in AC 343 Kapena Ikaika's grandson, Kapena Kapono, was abducted by the Minrothian sea captain and pirate Reho Chemnis and held for ransom<sup>43</sup>. The Makai kings ultimately proved unable both to hold

<sup>42</sup> About the Traladaran Wars, see Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, pages 56-57, and most of all [A Karameikan Companion](#) (by G. Agosta)].

<sup>43</sup> The Ierendi Kings (Kapena Ikaika and Kapena Kapono), the character of Reho Chemnis, and events relating to the rise and decline of the Makai kingdom were created by the author, after some suggestions by F. Defferrari.

together the various tribes which had been forcibly subdued, and to keep the archipelago free from pirates' and slavers' raids from Harbortown and Thyatis. The Five Shires, plagued by internal troubles in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, could not help, neither could Bogdan Ivanovich's Kingdom of Traladara, which crumbled at his death in AC 356<sup>44</sup>.

Thus, at the turn of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, political disintegration and unrest in Ierendi, Traladara, and the Five Shires proved instrumental for the beginning of a renewed season of raids from slave-trading

powers like the Minrothians of Harbortown and the Empire of Thyatis. Thyatian and Minrothian slavers made frequent inroads into the archipelago, swiftly attacking isolated Makai villages and capturing as many slaves as they could. These peoples were then brought to slave markets all over the Thyatian Empire. Slave trade in this area was mostly left to Minrothians' control by the empire, which relied on Harbortown to feed the request of slaves by its markets. Thus, the Minrothians' raids into the archipelago increased, reaching a peak in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AC, at the same time in which the Minrothian slave traders were hitting the Five Shires' coasts. But the spread of the lycanthropic plague in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC would have imposed a different turn to events.

<sup>44</sup> See also note 41, above, about troubles in the Five Shires. The reign of Bogdan Ivanovich in Traladara is mentioned also in Threshold issue 1, *The History of Karameikos*, page 54, and more extensively in [A Karameikan Companion](#) (by G. Agosta)].

## A Sea of Migrations

Despite its name and alleged dangerousness, the ages of violent seismic activity, the presence of pirates and hostile peoples, and the rumors of a colossal underwater monster capable of swallowing whole fleets, the Sea of Dread always was and continues to be a crossroads of migrating peoples and trade which has linked since the ancient times the coasts of Brun to Davania, and those of the Isle of Dawn to the Serpent Peninsula.

In order to make the reader familiar with the continuous passage of peoples from one shore to another of the Sea of Dread, this sidebar will summarize the main events and migrations which have crossed it during the course of its history, from the Great Rain of Fire until AC 0.

**BC 3000:** What will become the Sea of Dread shifts from the arctic latitude to a temperate-subtropical one.

**BC 2800:** Southeastern Brun (nowadays archipelagos of Minrothad and Ierendi) and some of the northern islands and archipelagos of what will become the Sea of Dread are inhabited by the Oteino (an Oltec- or Azcan-descended human population) and the lizardmen.

**BC 2500:** By this time the Eokai have migrated from the Davanian coast northward, settling many islands and archipelagos of the Sea of Dread, and establishing settlements also on Brun's southeastern coasts. The Taymora arrive from the north in southeastern Brun.

**BC 2450:** The koprus establish a realm called Adhuza in the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago (which at that time is a single, huge island), inhabited predominantly by the Mawa humans and the aranea, with small scattered groups of Eokai and Oteino in surrounding islands. The Mawa people start migrating slowly from the Eastern

Thanegioth Archipelago to the other isles and island chains of the northern Sea of Dread (the process will take about another five hundred years).

**BC 2250:** First elven immigrants reach the Taymoran lands from the Serpent Peninsula.

**BC 2200:** Tanagoro settlers coming from the Izondian Deep migrate to the Serpent Peninsula and settle there.

**BC 2100:** After squabbles with newcomer Tanagoro, clans of elves (Meditor water elves, and Verdier wood and fair elves) migrate from the Serpent Peninsula to the lands east of the Taymora civilization.

**BC 2000:** Civil war and seismic activity start the destruction of Taymoran civilization. The Aquarendi arrive in the northern Sea of Dread and settle in the waters around the areas inhabited by land elves.

**BC 1750:** Huge earthquakes break the southeastern corner of Brun, forming large islands. The last remnants of the Taymoran civilization disappear under the waves. The Serpent Peninsula is partially flooded: Dhiki Namazzi and Thanegia Island are created.

**BC 1720:** Kikianu Caldera event; the southern coast and isles of the Known World assume their modern geographical appearance. The Verdier wood elves, separated from their water elf kin by the newly-created sea, migrate from the forested coasts of nowadays Karameikos (leaving their fair elf brethren there) to Alfeisle. Fall of the kopru realm of Adhuza as their island becomes an archipelago. Merrows living around Adhuza split: a half, made up by nomadic tribes, migrate north and settle in the Sunlit Sea; the other assume the dominance over the seas around the newly-created archipelago after the demise of the koprus.

**BC 1600:** By this date, the Makai culture has formed in the western islands of the northern Sea of Dread, that will become the Ierendi archipelago; the Makai are the result of the absorption of the Oteino and Eokai human people by the more recently-migrated Mawa.

**BC 1500:** Halflings migrating from the Adakkian Sound settle in Thanegia Island, south of the Serpent Peninsula. The Nithian clan of Ptahr-al-Dar sails up to modern Traladara and conquers the region. A fearsome colossal monster of ocean abysses, the Behemoth, awakens and brings destruction in the Sea of Dread; the merrows of Thanegioth manage to put it to sleep again using a dangerous and costly ritual.

**BC 1300:** Halflings migrate from Thanegia Island and land in the modern Five Shires. Rise of Traldar naval power; colonies established by the coastal kingdoms in some of the southern islands and in nearby coasts.

**BC 1200:** Tanagoro peoples coming from the Serpent Peninsula gradually settle the Western Thanegioth Archipelago and move further east, in the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago and other tiny islands of the Sea of Dread, where they meet the local Eokai, Mawa, and Oteino.

**BC 1100:** A Nithian expedition led by Minroth colonizes Trader's Isle and the surrounding islands, which are called Colony Islands. The Nithian Empire begins to challenge Traldar supremacy in the northern Sea of Dread.

**BC 1000:** From the Colony Islands, the Nithians carry on the conquest of the neighboring islands of the Makai, which are enslaved alongside local halflings; first clashes with local lizardmen tribes. The



inhabitants of the Traldar city of Mirlenos, led by King Milen, flee from the Traldar lands which are being invaded by bloodthirsty gnolls; they sail past the Nithian-controlled southern islands, and – after being chased by the reawakened Behemoth – reach the Davanian Jungle Coast, landing at the mouth of a river in front of the modern island of Dwair (in the Pearl Islands). Meanwhile, the Traldar civilization is ravaged by the gnolls; end of Traldar naval power. Afterwards, the Nithians transplant many human tribes from the Northern Reaches to modern Hinterlands region in northern Davania, and establish a colony there.

**BC 900:** The Nithian colony in modern Hinterlands is ravaged by a slave uprising; the freed slaves are the ancestors of the Thyatians.

**BC 800:** The Nithians start taking halfling slaves from the Ierendi archipelago; halfling presence there is erased in the turn of a few centuries, as many halflings are brought to the Northern Reaches and in other provinces of the empire.

**BC 700:** The Nithian Empire turns to the worship of Entropy; civil strife plagues the empire. The Colony Islands keep their faith in Minroth and keep neutral, pursuing trade.

**BC 650:** The Nithians bring goblin slaves into the Makai islands to fight local lizardmen.

**BC 600:** Thyatian, Kerendan, and Hattian tribes set sail from modern Hinterlands' shores in order to flee from Milenian expansionism. They settle in modern mainland Thyatis and Hattias.

**BC 500:** Fall of the Nithian Empire, which is destroyed by the Immortals. Lizardman culture becomes extinct in the Makai islands. Rise of Thyatian piracy across the northern Sea of Dread; many coastal settlements are plundered or pay tribute to avoid becoming targets of raids.

**BC 400:** A new awakening of the Behemoth starts a century and a half of destruction and ravages for coastal settlement in the northern coast of Davania and for underwater cultures up to the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago.

**BC 250:** Last recorded sighting of the Behemoth.

**BC 200:** Tritons reach the Sunlit Sea area and begin warring against local merrow; at the end of a long age of struggle, the tritons manage to establish the Kingdom of Undersea.

**BC 190:** Thyatian piracy comes to a sudden end when the Alphatian Empire completes the conquest of Thyatis.

**BC 180:** Rise of Minrothian trade power thanks to agreements with the Alphatian Empire.

**BC 178:** The Makai realm of King Kapena Kekoa extends its control over most of Ierendi, Fletcher, and Safari islands.

**BC 100:** The Alphatian conquest of the Pearl Islands triggers a wave of Nuari migrations toward the southern islands and archipelagos of the Sea of Dread.

**AC 0:** Empire of Thyatis established after the Struggle for Freedom. Resurgence of Thyatian military and naval power.



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

## Minrothad Merchant-Prince

a 3.5 prestige class

by Troy Terrell (CmdrCorsiken)

“Flamboyant fellows they are, all puffed up with themselves. So they can conjure elementals. So can any Glantri<sup>1</sup> lord worth the name! But Minrothaddans regard them as nobility for their spell casting as much as their money. Hmm.... Perhaps they’re learning something from us after all.” --Vinciento de Belcadiz, Glantri Ambassador to Minrothad.

In the island nation of Minrothad, there is a long tradition of magic used aboard ship to aid in seafaring. Since most elvish captains knew a little sea or weather magic, the combination of merchant skill and spell casting became identified as one in the person of the Merchant-Prince of Minrothad. This combination of magic and skill make him a cunning businessman, a skilled seaman, as well as an effective leader. He is capable of successfully leading his crew through the many dangers of weather and commerce, with a tidy profit at the end.

Rogues and rangers with experience in professions and crafts associated with seafaring and trade make the best merchant-princes. Bards, druids, and wizards can also attain the necessary skills, but usually focus on their own spellcasting development and are more often employed in support roles or as companions to established merchant-princes. The same can be said for clerics of ocean deities.

NPC merchant-princes are often the most elite of experts in fields associated with seafaring

and trading, master navigators and master craftsmen. Only a few are admitted to the exclusive academy which trains its students in the arts of sea and air magic.

**Alignment:** Any.

**Hit Die:** d6

**Requirements**

To qualify to become a Minrothad merchant-prince, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Skills:** Appraise 3 ranks, Bluff or Diplomacy 3 ranks, Profession (sailor) 6 ranks, Craft (any) or Profession (any) 3 ranks.

**Feats:** Negotiator

**Special:** The character must either hail from one of the islands of Minrothad or must have worked aboard a Minrothad merchant vessel for at least two years. The character must also apply to and be admitted to the prestigious Minrothad Merchant Academy.

**Class Skills:** Appraise, Balance, Bluff, Climb, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Speak Language, Spellcraft, Spot, Survival, Swim, Use Rope.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

<sup>1</sup> GAZ9: The Minrothad Guilds Dungeon Master's Booklet page 16

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Minrothad Merchant Prince.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Minrothad Merchant-Princes gain no additional weapon or armor proficiencies.

**Spells per day:** A Minrothad Merchant-Prince prepares and casts arcane spells according to Table 1. To cast a spell, he must have a Charisma score of at least 10 + the spell's level. Bonus spells are based on Charisma, and saves against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the merchant-prince's Charisma modifier. When he gets 0 spells of a given level, he gets only bonus spells. A merchant-prince has access to any spell on the list (below) and can freely choose which to prepare.

**Water Focus:** At 1st level and higher, he casts all spells with the 'water' descriptor, including those modified to be such, at +1 caster level. At 6th level and higher, he casts them at +2 caster levels. Any save DCs increase by the same amount, +1 at first level, +2 at sixth.

**Leadership:** At 1st level, a Minrothad merchant-prince gains the Leadership feat without having to meet the normal prerequisites.

**Air Focus:** The other vital aspect of a Minrothad merchant-prince's is air magic. At 2nd level and higher, he casts all spells with the 'air' descriptor, including those modified to be such, at +1 caster level. At 7th level and higher, he casts them at +2 caster levels. Any save DCs increase by the same amount, +1 at second, +2 at seventh.

**Weather Sense:** At 2nd level a Minrothad merchant-prince's connection to the forces of

air and water provide additional insight into weather patterns. When on the ocean or within eight miles of an ocean or large lake (at least 50 square miles in area), he gains a +1 bonus to all Survival and Knowledge (nature) checks involving weather prediction or phenomena. This bonus increases by +1 each even level attained.

**Resourceful Trader:** At 3rd level, a Minrothad merchant-prince's growing list of business contacts and specialized dealers allow him to treat any community as one size larger for purposes of the maximum price item that can be bought or sold.

**Wind at your back:** At 5th level, any ship commanded by a Minrothad prince moves at one mile per hour faster than normal.

**Bonus feat:** At 5th and 9th level, a Minrothad prince may select a feat from the following list: Acrobatic, Athletic, Charlatan, Diligent, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Sea Legs, Ship's Mage, Trustworthy, any Metamagic. He must still meet all requirements for whatever feat he selects.

## MERCHANT-PRINCE SPELL LIST

Minrothad merchant-princes choose their spells from the following list:

**0 level** – Create Water, Daze, Detect Sea Life\*, Light, Mending, Purify Food and Drink, Read Magic

**1st level** – Endure Elements, Entangle, Faerie Fire, Obscuring Mist, Produce Flame, Speak with Sea Creatures\*, Summon Sea Creature I\*, Wave Blessing (SW)



**2nd level** – Call Lightning, Fog Cloud, Make Whole, Resist Energy, Stormrunner's Ward (SW), Summon Sea Creature II\*, Swim (SW), Warp Wood, Whispering Wind

**3rd level** – Detect Ship (SW), Favorable Wind (SW), Fire Ball, Lightning Bolt, Protection from Energy, Quench, Summon Sea Creature III\*, Water Breathing, Water Walk

**4th level** – Air Walk, Control Currents (SW), Control Water, Disguise Ship (SW), Freedom of Movement, Sending, Summon Sea Creature IV\*, Tongues, Wake Trailing (SW)

**5th level** – Call Lightning Storm, Control Winds, Find Port\*, Summon Sea Creature V\*, True Seeing

**6th level** – Acid Fog, Chain Lightning, Control Weather, Summon Air/Water Elemental\*

(SW) = spells from Stormwrack<sup>2</sup>

### \*Specialized Spells

**Detect Sea Life:** as Detect Animals or Plants, but only animals and plants of the sea.

**Find Port:** as Find the Path, but only toward a known port.

**Speak with Sea Creatures:** as Speak with Animals, but only with creatures native to the sea.

**Summon Air/Water Elemental:** as Summon Nature's Ally VII, but only for air or water elemental.

**Summon Sea Creature:** as Summon Nature's Ally, but only brings creatures native to the sea.

### Design Notes

In adapting the Minrothad Merchant-Prince class from Gazetteer 9 Minrothad Guilds, I initially considered developing a full base class progression. However, with the significant differences in how classes in the BECMI rules and the 3.5 rules progress, a prestige class seemed the best way to bring the Minrothad Merchant-Prince into the 3.5 ruleset.

Still, since the original class could be taken by a 1st-level character, it was necessary to make entry into the prestige class possible at a rather early character level. Thus, it is possible to enter this prestige class as early as 4th level, which is two to four levels sooner than most 3.5 prestige classes. The in-world, setting-specific circumstances included in the requirements allow the DM to control access.

As spellcasting is fundamental to the Minrothad Merchant-Prince, a workable spell progression was needed. Given the emphasis on magic inherent to the original class, a fairly focused but relatively aggressive progression was in order; thus, a tightly limited spell list with seven total spell levels available.

Water and air magic in particular are key aspects of a Minrothad Merchant-Prince's seafaring magical abilities. A scaling bonus to the casting variables of those types of spells was a simple way to represent this.

Similarly, a scaling bonus on skill checks related to weather, along with an increase in the speed of his vessel, fills the need for advancing seafaring prowess.

Making business deals is another aspect of the Minrothad Merchant-Prince's abilities. While much of this is covered by normal skill advancement, an additional special ability to

<sup>2</sup> © 2005 Wizards of the Coast

## MINROTHAD MERCHANT-PRINCE

make more lucrative deals provides an interesting twist.

Recruiting a loyal crew is also important to a Minrothad Merchant-Prince, so granting the Leadership feat early was an easy choice.

Finally, a couple of bonus feats allows for some extra customization from one merchant-prince character to another.



*Merchant Prince*

**Table 1: The Minrothad Merchant-Prince**

----- Spells per Day -----

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1st	+ 0	+ 0	+ 2	+ 2	Water focus +1, leadership	2	1	0	--	--	--	--
2nd	+ 1	+ 0	+ 3	+ 3	Air focus +1, weather sense +1	2	2	1	0	--	--	--
3rd	+ 2	+1	+3	+3	Resourceful trader	3	2	2	0	--	--	--
4th	+ 3	+1	+4	+4	Weather sense +2	3	3	2	1	0	--	--
5th	+ 3	+ 1	+4	+ 4	Wind at your back, bonus feat	4	3	3	2	0	--	--
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Water focus +2, weather sense +3	4	4	3	3	1	0	--
7th	+5	+ 2	+5	+5	Air focus +2	5	4	4	3	2	0	--
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Weather sense +4	5	5	4	4	2	1	0
9th	+6	+3	+6	+ 6	Bonus feat	6	5	5	4	3	2	1
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Weather sense +5	6	6	5	5	3	2	2

# Ierendian Government and Aristocracy



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

by Giampaolo Agosta

## The Ierendian Government

Ierendi is a city-state, formally organised as a diarchy -- the joint rule of a King and Queen -- but actually run as an oligarchic republic -- the collective rule of a council of aristocrats, known as the Tribunal of Ierendi. The personal prestige of the famous adventurers who win the yearly appointment as King and Queen contributes to maintain the atmosphere of the city, a peculiar style that is flamboyant yet casual, which is designed to appeal to rich foreigners as well as to the local populace, and to divert attention from the real government engine. Besides the Tribunal, the other powers behind the throne are the mysterious fire mages of Honour Island, who act in Ierendi through a plenipotentiary, and the military. The Kingdom of Undersea also exerts a major influence, especially through the navy and the merchant and privateer families<sup>1</sup>.

### King & Queen

The Royals of Ierendi hold merely ceremonial titles, conferred yearly as the result of the Great Tournament. Any authority they exert is based on personal influence, charisma and money, not derived from the law, as any laws



*Fighting in the Tournament of Ierendi*

proposed by the Royals need to be approved by the Tribunal in order to become effective.

The King and Queen, however, have some privileges, in particular in the appointment of some officials, the Ministers. They also select the Kia'i, or Guardians of Ierendi. It is worth noting that particularly savvy Kings or Queens may remain in charge for long periods, and end up exerting significant

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the independence of Ierendi from Thyatis and other powers is ensured only by the military and intelligence help the Kingdom receives from Honour Island and Undersea.



influence over the government thanks to their popularity. King and Queen are simply two offices, and do not imply any personal relation between the two -- actually, it is quite common for both the King and Queen to have families.

### Ministers

Eight ministers (four Ministers of the King and four Ministers of the Queen) complete the Royal Court. Ministers are basically agents at the direct service of the King and Queen. Contrary to ministers of other nations, they have no role in the executive, and act more as diplomats and advisors. They also help the King and Queen in their public role, and may replace them on occasion -- e.g., when an official is needed to make a speech on one of the lesser islands, a Minister might be sent instead of the King or Queen.

### Tribunal

The Tribunal of Ierendi, formerly known as the Council of Lords, is composed of 21 members from the most powerful aristocratic families. These positions are formally elective, but *de facto* hereditary -- only should a family not be able to fill the Tribunal position, then the Council of Citizen would select a new family to take its place. All Tribunes are, formally, named by the King and Queen through a joint decree.

The Tribunal holds the executive and judiciary powers, exerting the former through the *Council of the Sages* and the latter through the *Guard*<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the Tribunal must confirm

<sup>2</sup> The Guard has the authority to pass sentences, while the Tribunal acts mostly as a court of appeals. Only members of Baronial families or those that belong to the Council of Citizens can request a trial at the Tribunal without a sentence passed by the Guard. It is also worth noting that the Tribunal has little to no interest in fair trials -- most appeals are simply handled by confirming whatever sentence came from the Guard, with an added



*The Tribunal of Ierendi*

all laws, which makes it the holder of the true legislative power -- in essence, the Tribunal is the true ruler of Ierendi.

The Tribunal often appoints *Colleges*<sup>3</sup>, that is smaller groups of Tribunes who are in charge of handling urgent problems, study and draft laws on a given issue, or otherwise act in place of the entire Tribunal with greater speed than allowed by the full assembly. A College has at least three members, and rarely more than seven -- since any more would make the College little different from the Tribunal itself.

The Tribunal is presided by the Chancellor of the Tribunal, elected yearly by the Tribunes.

A family that is selected to join the Tribunal receives the Baronial title. Individual

penalty to discourage other people from appealing the Guard's judgements.

<sup>3</sup> For example, in the War of the Master crisis, the Tribunal appoints a college composed of the Lords Seilus, Meikros and Karibus to deal with the events [See X10 "Red Arrow, Black Shield"]

Tribunes may not have the Baron title, but in general this only happens when the current Baron is old, and is replaced by his heir on the Tribunal. In most other cases, Tribunes are also Barons. However, the number of Barons is not fixed -- there are more Barons than Tribunes. This is because some families never were on the Tribunal, but were awarded a Baronial title by the Kings (this is formally still the case, but nowadays Baronial titles are only issued by the King and Queen, while the decision to award such titles is taken by the Tribunal), while at the same time some Baronial families lost their position on the Tribunal, but not their title.

The identity of the Tribunes, while not exactly secret, is not entirely public either -- the Tribunes avoid flaunting their status, and are rarely seen in public occasions. Like most Ierendi nobles, they prefer to keep their privacy well-protected by curtained sedan chairs and walled mansions. Sessions of the Tribunal are not public either.

### **Council of Sages**

The five Sages enact the decisions of the Tribunal, thus acting as an administrative (and partially an executive) body. Each Sage heads a Department (or, more properly, Magistrate) -- Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Customs and Assessment, Internal Affairs, Military Affairs.

*Providitors* are named to oversee the administration of regions (usually one per each lesser island, part of the Department of Internal Affairs) or specific matters within the scope of each Department. Lesser officers of each Department are called Subproviditors and Deputies. Within the Department of Military Affairs, these titles are reserved for civilian officers, while military officers are part

of a different hierarchy, headed by the Admiral of the Fleet.

The Sages are chosen by the Tribunal. They may be Tribunes themselves, but this is not necessary -- they may as well be high-ranking career civil servants (i.e., former *Providitors*). They customarily take part in the meetings of the Tribunal, but have no voting rights unless they hold both the Sage and Tribune position.

### **Council of Citizens**

The Council of Citizens is formed by the heads of the largest merchant and land-owning families of Ierendi. About 10% of the families living in the city of Ierendi are represented on the Council, which has about 120 members (plus the Tribunes, who are also members of the Council of Citizens).

The Council elects new members of the Tribunal, though an actual choice is only given when the family of the previous holder cannot provide a candidate. The Council of Citizens may propose laws, which need to be approved by the Tribunal to become effective. A favourable vote from the Council of Citizens is also needed to modify laws that deal with the election of King and Queen, as well as the composition of the Tribunal.

The Council of Citizens is presided by one of its members, the Grand Chancellor, who also heads the office (Royal Chancery) that acts as the archives of the Tribunal and the Council of Citizens.

Members of the Council of Citizens use the Honourable style, unless they have a higher title (Baron or, more rarely, *Kia'i*). The Grand Chancellor uses the style Lord, regardless of his original rank.

**A NOTE ON Ierendi LAW**

Note that Ierendi law is generally convoluted and full of contradictions, so the rules given in the write-up should be taken as guidelines -- the write-up represents the average case, but exceptions and special conditions are probably easy enough to find. E.g., rules on underage heirs may be different for male and female heirs, exceptions could exist to the general ranking rules for nobles due to "ex-officio" ranks, like the Grand Chancellor being given a higher precedence than most nobles. Another similar case is the general lack of power of the Council of Citizens -- given the power of the Tribunal, it may seem that the Council of Citizens has no real role. Actually, the Council of Citizens holds a myriad of minor rights besides appointing new Tribune members and the Grand Chancellor. For example, there is no general rule for the appointment of Provisioners -- in some cases, a Provisioner is simply chosen by the Sage heading the appropriate department, but in other case he may be chosen by the Council of Citizens, or even by the Tribunal.

**The Ierendi Aristocracy****Hereditary titles**

Ierendian law recognises a single hereditary title, that of Baron. The title does not include land per se (Ierendi is not a feudal state), but is often associated with a position on the Tribunal. A Baron's wife becomes a Baroness (and vice versa), and both use the style Lord or Lady -- e.g. Lord Derwin Eddington (or Baron Eddington). His heir can use the style of Lord or Lady, though he does not have the right to seat on the Council (unless the Baron relinquished his own seat to him). Younger children of a Baron are styled "Honourable".

In modern times, a Baron who also has a seat on the Tribunal also appends "Tribune of Ierendi" to his name, and can be addressed as such. E.g., Baron Eddington's full style would be Lord Derwin Eddington III, Baron Eddington, Tribune of Ierendi.

Barons who do not hold a Tribune position have few benefits out of their rank, although they are recognized as equals in the Ierendi aristocratic milieu and enjoy the right to be judged directly by the Tribunal if accused of a crime -- a privilege that is rarely exercised, since it is seen as bad form to involve the Tribunal in "lesser matters". Bribing the Guard is the accepted way to deal with any accusation.

**Non-hereditary titles**

King and Queen are the highest non-hereditary titles. These titles are temporary, lasting for a term of one year unless the current King or Queen manages to confirm his position in the annual tournament. Former Kings or Queens are entitled to a knightly position (see Kia'i). Children and spouses of Kings and Queens are styled "Honourable".

Kia'i (Guardian) is the most common non-hereditary title, awarded to famous adventurers. It is not permanent -- the Guardian must keep accepting "challenges" for the privilege of retaining his title. The



Kia'i title is used for both men and women equally. The style "Sir" or "Dame" is also used by Guardians.

**Order of Precedence**

The nobles are ranked formally in the following order of precedence: King and Queen (equally ranked); Tribune; Baron; Guardian. Courtesy titles rank below the actual nobility titles, in the following order: Lord; Honourable. Note that the Grand Chancellor has precedence over all other Lords, while the

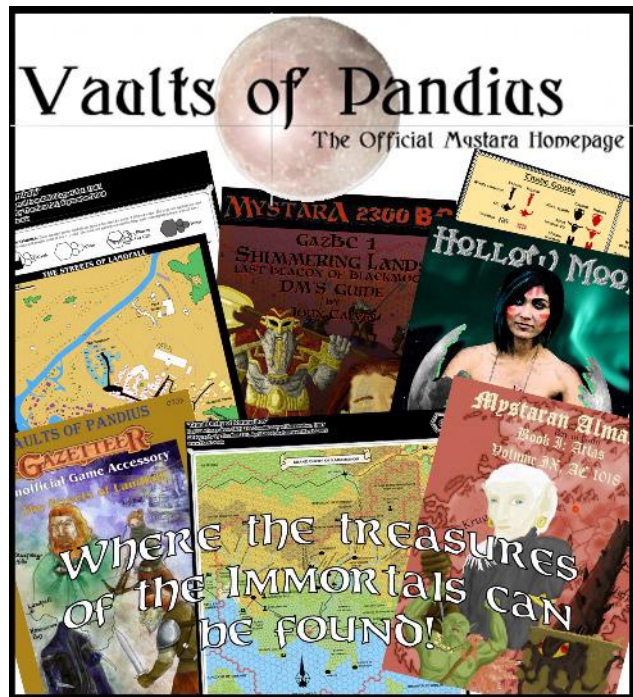
Admiral of the Fleet is sometimes also a Ki'ai, but if he is not one, then he ranks immediately after the Grand Chancellor. All others holding equal ranks are sorted in order of seniority in the Tribunal, Council of Citizens, or in the Adventurers' Club.

Visiting heads of states from foreign nations are generally ranked immediately below the King and Queen, while foreign noblemen are considered intermediate in status between Tribune and Baron (for landed titles) or Baron and Kia'i (for Knightly titles).

Ierendi noble or honorific title	Nearest continental title
King/Queen	King/Queen
Tribune	Duke
Baron	Baron
Kia'i/Guardian	Knight
Lord	Court Lord
Honorable	Court Lord



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### A PRIMER to Heraldry

The Ierendi heraldry presented here is based on real world heraldic language (*blazoning*). To provide a comprehensive description of real world heraldry is a task that goes far beyond the scope of this article. Nonetheless, we provide a brief introduction to help the reader, and provide references to more complete treatments of the matter.

Coats of Arms are employed, in Ierendi as in other Known World nations, for identification purposes -- allowing armored warriors to be recognized from the drawings on their shields, or ships from their flags. To this end, the Coats of Arms need to be easy to memorize, to draw and to engrave. The shield is the traditional form on which arms are depicted, although flags, banners, ovals and other forms can be used as well. The simplest arms employ a single colour for the background (the *field*), although more complex ones use a partitioned background. Figure 1 shows the most common types of partitions (*divisions*).

In heraldry, colours are known as *tinctures*. For visibility purposes, light tinctures (called *metals*) are usually put next to darker tinctures (called *colours*). A third category of tinctures is composed of conventional patterns used to represent *furs*. Figure 2 shows the most common tinctures. Less common tinctures include the *stains*, which are sometimes used in Ierendi Coats of Arms.

Distinctive items drawn over the field (*charges*), such as animals, objects, or geometric forms serve to further distinguish different coats of arms. Figure 3 shows the *ordinaries*, a set of conventional geometric patterns which serve as charges. The ordinaries can also be used as patterns, or *variations*, on a field -- e.g., the *paly* variation represent a vertically striped field.

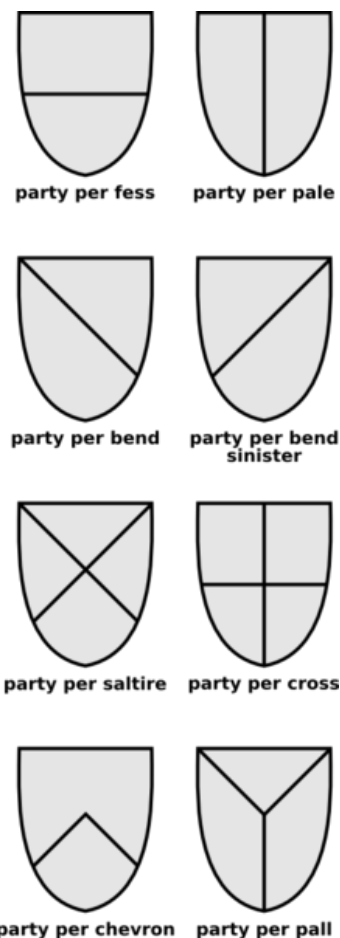


Figure 1: Divisions of the field



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**Heraldry**

Coats of arms are issued by the Council of Citizens and registered at the Royal Chancery. Technically, any family head can request a coat of arms, but only the affluent (i.e., those who are eligible to join the Council of Citizens) do so, due to the associated administrative costs.

Family coats of arms are used by all members of a family, each of whom generally adds some distinctive element to the basic arms to avoid confusion. Bordures<sup>4</sup> and common charges (particularly mullets, crescents and roundels<sup>5</sup>) are often used to distinguish members of the same family. There is no specific rule, however, and each family has its own way to manage this issue, with a single, albeit important, exception.

The head of a noble (or rich) family always bears the basic arms, with a bordure to identify his title (if any). For the King and Queen, it is a bordure ermine. For a Baron or Tribune, it is a bordure erminois, with two exceptions: in the case of the Baron Matringle, the bordure is pean (this exception is due to the original status of the Matringle clan as the hereditary royal family of Ierendi), while in the case of the Baron Meikros, the bordure erminois is replaced by a bordure gyronny azure ermined argent and argent ermined azure (this exception is due to the fact that the Meikros coat of arms includes a bordure gyronny in its basic form).

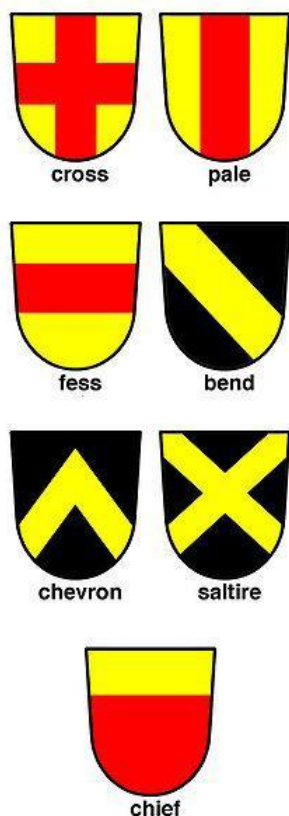
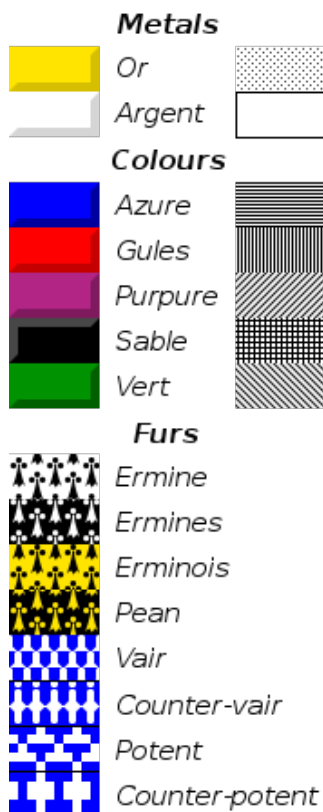


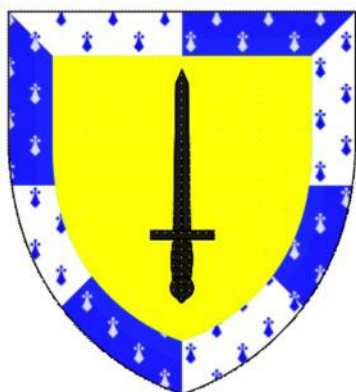
Figure 2:  
Heraldic tinctures

Figure 3: The most  
common ordinaries

<sup>4</sup> A bordure is a thick border around the shield, painted in a different colour from the field.

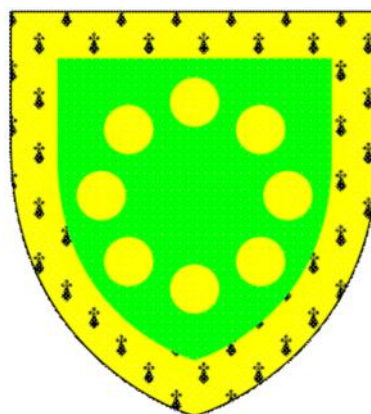
<sup>5</sup> A mullet is a (usually five pointed) star, a crescent is a rising moon shape, and a roundel is a disc shape.





*Coat of Arms of the Baron Meikros, showing the peculiar ermined bordure*

some prefer to change the field from the original tincture to a gutty variation. The only exception is the goutte de poix, which is used traditionally by the Caulker family.



*The arms of Baron Derwin Eddington, Tribune of Ierendi, showing the bordure erminois signifying his tribunal rank.*

Finally, a member of the Council of Citizens adds a bordure vair to his or her coat of arms, although some exceptions exist for those families whose coat of arms already includes a bordure. On the other hand, the ermine, erminois, pean and vair tinctures are reserved for members of the royalty, Tribunal and Council of Citizens, so they never appear in other Ierendi coats of arms. The heraldic stains (tenné, sanguine and murrey), which in Thyatian and Darokinian heraldry are rarely used, except as punishment, are often used in Ierendi arms -- possibly because many Ierendi families descend from traitors and other criminals<sup>6</sup>.

Another reserved element is the goutte<sup>7</sup>, which can only be used by a Ki'ai (although not all Guardians choose to bear one in their coat of arms. The goutte des larmes is the most commonly used, except on colour fields, where the goutte d'eau is used instead. Eccentric Ki'ai also use other gouttes, and



*The arms of Kia'i Figgen Halfellow, showing a goutty field, which symbolizes the large number of participations to the Royal Tournament.*

<sup>6</sup> However, note that the Tenné stain is almost only used by hin families, possibly as a replacement of the orange tincture which is present in the Five Shires arms, but not used in Ierendi heraldry.

<sup>7</sup> A goutte is a stylized drop. A drop of tears (goutte des larmes) is painted azure, whereas a drop of water (goutte d'eau) is painted argent. The goutte de poix, or drop of tar, is painted sable.



## KINGS OF IERENDI

### Matringle Dynasty <sup>a</sup>

Mad Creeg	602-637	Founder of the Kingdom of Ierendi.
Black Toes & Kerhy Matringle	637-663	Son and daughter-in-law of Mad Creeg.
Kerhy Matringle	663-670	Kerhy survived her husband.
Jan Matringle	670-684	Son of Black Toes and Kerhy. Died at sea at 46.
Halia Matringle	684-701	Daughter of Black Toes and Kerhy, sister of Jan.
Michelozzo Matringle	701-718	Son of Jan.
Donatello "The Black" Matringle	718-735	Son of Michelozzo. Disappeared at sea.

### The Forty Years Terror <sup>b</sup>

Artalus "Art" Rackham	736-748	Elected by the Council of Lords. Died at sea at 50.
Thaddeus "Fish-eye" Teach	748-762	Elected by the Council of Lords.
Varaldo "Aldo" Teach	762-769	Son of Thaddeus. Died in a fire at 57.
Willem Van Hoorn	769-775	Elected by the Council of Lords. Assassinated at 39.

### Elective Kings/Queens <sup>c</sup>

Rena Longkeel	775-787	Elected by the Council of Citizen. Abdicated.
Derwin Eddington	787-790	Elected by the Council of Citizen. Deposed.

### Elective Kings & Queens <sup>d</sup>

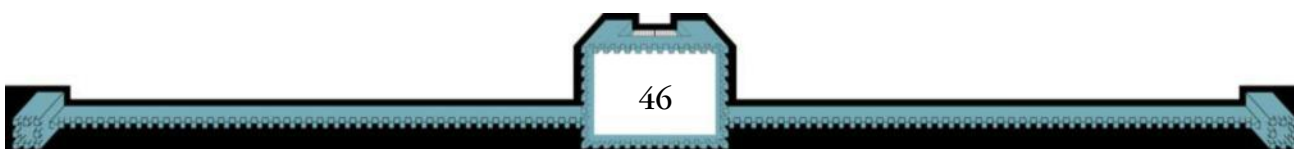
**Tournament Kings & Queens** 868-current

<sup>a</sup> Inheritance of the throne went through the Matringle family, initially through seniority rather than primogeniture -- Halia Matringle was Jan's sister, for example. Her descendants are the current Matringles, since Jan's line became extinct with Donatello.

<sup>b</sup> During this time, the king was selected by the Council of Lords.

<sup>c</sup> During this time, the position of King (or Queen) became elective, theoretically through popular elections, although candidature were controlled by the Council of Lords. The position was for life, although Rena Longkeel abdicated and Derwin Eddington was ousted.

<sup>d</sup> During this time, the positions of King and Queen were elective and lasted only one year, like in modern times. Candidatures were still very much controlled by the Council of Lords.



## Ierendi Noble Families

Most of the noble families of Ierendi are of human stock. These people are only in part descended from the original founders -- relative newcomers include the Thyatian exiles that formed Mad Creeg's entourage and descendants of the great captains of the pirating days of Ierendi.

Nobles of Halfling descent can generally trace their ancestry to one of the "Four Hin Exiles", Durmast Caulker, Tolman Halffellow, Holvar Longkeel and Archer Shanwood.

There were very few Elves (five, according to the legends) among the original inmates of the Ierendi prison, and most Ierendian with elven blood are likely descended from one of them, or from visiting elven adventurers. A few noble families (the Alvine, Elfinblood, Gentle and Halfelven) are considered "half-elven" -- in each generation, these families produce one or two offsprings that favour heavily their elven ancestry, and most other members of the family have some elven traits (pointed ears, delicate facial features, etc.).

Even though dwarves were present among the first prisoners, there is no great or noble dwarven family. Actually, very few dwarves are found in Ierendi at all, and most of them seem to be recent immigrants. What happened to the native dwarves is one of the Ierendian mysteries -- all traces of dwarven families stop about two centuries ago. Rumors abound of lost dwarven settlements near mount Bina-Bura on Ierendi island or in the higher parts of Alcove island. Also, Thyatian scholar Manuelus Nicholous, in a note to his magnum opus, *The Senator*, hints at the connection between the disappearance of the dwarves from Ierendi and the contemporary persecution of dwarves in Glantri, noting that

Glantri has often exerted some direct or indirect influence on the island kingdom since the times of Kerhy Matringle.

### ALEXANDER

Coat of Arms: *Per fess or and azure, two bendlets countercharged.*



The Alexander family descends from former Senator Tiberius Alexander, a political opponent of Thyatian Emperor Lucius IV Monomachos, imprisoned in the penal colony of Ierendi in 596 AC. Tiberius had been the leader of a small but rich senatorial family from Kerendas, and an experienced politician and military man, having campaigned as a cavalry officer in the Isle of Dawn. With his prospects in Thyatis ruined, he fell in with the Hattian pirate, Mad Creeg, and was instrumental in organizing the Royal Brigade and the Ierendi fleet, adapting Thyatian military science to the conditions of the archipelago. His descendants turned to piracy and smuggling, and finally legitimate trade. The current Baroness, Kel Alexander, favors Darokin over the Shires in foreign policy, reasoning that Darokin is more complementary to the strengths of Ierendi.

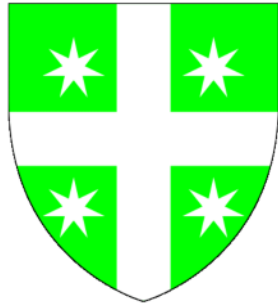
**Dark Secrets:** The Alexander family makes a tidy profit out of the sale of exotic woods used by the élites of Glantri and Darokin for furniture and decoration. Unfortunately, their methods are very aggressive, and many essences risk extinction. The Alexanders do not give too much weight to such concerns, since rare woods fetch higher prices, making trade more efficient. Natives, especially Makai



shamans, are outraged by the lack of concern for the vegetation, but the Ierendi government, at this time, is more interested in the profits and taxes it can draw from such trade. There are also tales of a fairy folk, the *menebune*, with whom the shamans would be in league.

## Alvine

**Coat of Arms:** *vert, a saltire between four mullets of seven argent.*



The Alvine were originally an elven family, composed of two of the original elven prisoners and their descendants. They settled in Port Siers, and both family leaders died in the eruption that destroyed that town. Their descendants married into the human families of Ierendi, so that nowadays the Alvine are not much more elven than the Gentle or the Elfinblood. Having lost their plantations in the Port Siers catastrophe, the Alvine turned to mercantile trade, developing good trade contacts in Port Tenobar and Minrothad. They are well connected to the Darokinian House Umbarth, with whom they also have blood ties.

The Alvine have, for undisclosed reasons (reputed to have much to do with the way the clan founders ended up in Ierendi), a long-lasting hatred towards the Five Shires, and a general mistrust of the hin folk. Thus, politically they strongly favor Darokin both as a trade partner and a political ally of Ierendi. The current Baroness, Mira Alvine, is a tall, dark haired woman about thirty years old, with elven ears and eyes. Gossipers at the Adventurers' Club firmly believe she is looking

for a mate in the Karibus clan -- or perhaps the Meikros clan.

**Dark Secrets:** the Alvine clan's hatred of the Five Shires does indeed originate with their elven progenitors, a couple of Darokinian elf merchants who had been robbed by hin bandits. Rather than admit the robbery, Five Shires authorities convicted the merchants with claims of vagrancy and loitering, and had them shipped to Ierendi.

## Caulker

**Coat of Arms:** *quarterly tenné and or, on each quarter a lymphad sable.*



The Caulker family claims to descend from Durmast Caulker, one of the first exiles, who had been abandoned on a raft for unspecified crimes. The legend is hard to believe, as all four of the first hin exiles were males, but what is historically certain is that the Caulkers were already settled in Ierendi when the Thyatians occupied the archipelago. Rather than flee to the mainland, as many other hin did, the Caulkers and the Longkeel, another ancient clan of halflings, retreated into the swamplands, fighting a long guerrilla war against the Thyatian legionnaires.

They would have never dislodged the occupiers, had it not been for the large number of political prisoners brought to the archipelago by the Thyatians. When a captured Caulker met Mad Creeg, the deal that would free Ierendi from the Thyatian occupation was struck. The Caulkers and Longkeels coordinated a raid against the prison camps with an uprising of the

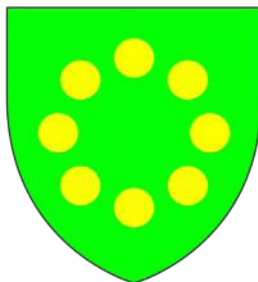
prisoners, and freed many of them, starting a large scale rebellion.

After the establishment of the Kingdom of Ierendi, the Caulkers turned eagerly to piracy, to which they commit to this day, under the pretence of "privateering". Hal Caulker, a relatively young baron, leads the clan with a strong hand, and has gathered a reputation of recklessness.

**Dark Secrets:** the Caulker privateers often carry out acts of outright piracy -- they prefer not to leave any witnesses, of course, unless their captains think they can pass off their actions as privateering. Trumped up charges, and even planting fake evidence through corrupt sailors are typical tactics. They also operate as fences, which is the source of much of their income.

## EDDINGTON

**Coat of Arms:** *vert, eight bezants in annulo.*



The Eddington family has its roots in the Eastwind clans of Steel Plains of Darokin. In the III century BC, the Eastwind chief Eadwine son of Eadbald led his clan to victory against the orc tribes in the Second Battle of Favaro. His descendants founded the village of Eadwintune in the northern reaches of Eastmark. Two centuries later, Edmun of Edington, a captain in Ansel Eastwind's campaign against the southern Eastwinds of clan Ansimont, earned the title of Earl of Edington. By the VI century AC, the Eddingtons had the title of Barons, following a reorganization of Darokinian noble titles, and were vassals to the newly independent

Duke of Dirnath. Baron Arlin Eddington, however, was a partisan of the Sorcerer Princess Lowetha of Dirnath, who murdered her father, Duke Iolan, plunging Dirnath into chaos. By the end of the century, the Eddingtons were displaced to southern Darokin, and the village of Eddington was an abandoned ruin.

In 688 AC, Derwin Eddington left the crumbling Kingdom of Darokin with his family and a single ship. He launched into sea trade, hoping to exploit the new trade routes from Ierendi to Sind. His trade ventures were not terribly successful, and his heirs turned to piracy and settled in Ierendi. One of them, Edward "the Black" Eddington, was hanged for piracy in Port Lucinius in 703 AC, while Arthur "Longtail" Eddington crowned a successful, decade-long piratical career in the western seas by buying the title of Baron from crown of Ierendi in 754 AC. The fortunes of the family raised quickly. Arthur's son, Edward, was elected to the Council of Lords in 765 AC and his grandson Derwin was elected King of Ierendi in 787 AC. However, his reign was brief -- the Age of the Pirate Kings was over, and the mercantile class ousted King Derwin just three years after his crowning, and forced the formation of the Council of Citizens.

The Eddington family remained part of the Tribunal, however, and is still one of the most powerful houses to sponsor privateers. The leader, Derwin III, is in his seventies, but still hale. Many sons, grandsons and other relatives tend to the day to day business, which ranges from merchant trade to privateering.

**Dark Secrets:** One of the Eddington offspring left Ierendi for Karameikos after falling under suspicion for smuggling

restricted substances from the Kikianu Caldera. He is reported to have fallen in with Zila, a lower class sailor and pirate currently nursing a broken leg in Specularum.

## Elfinblood

**Coat of Arms:** *argent, a basswood vert.*



The Elfinblood family descends from Ellantir, a Callarii adventurer who is often counted among the first settlers of the islands of Ierendi. Certainly, Ellantir had settled on Elegy Island when the Thyatians seized the archipelago from the hin, and remained there for thirty more years, when his human wife died. At that time, Ellantir's children were already middle-aged, whereas the elf was still young. Between the shock of his wife's death, and the difficulty of living in a world where everyone aged much faster than him, Ellantir took advantage of the new influx of ships -- smugglers and pirates attracted by Mad Creeg's new nation -- to leave Elegy and the archipelago. Nothing more is known of him -- perhaps he returned to the Radlebb woods, although by this time even he would be fairly old, or perhaps he died in some boarding action on the high seas.

In any case, his descendants, marked by a longer lifespan than the average human and by somewhat elfin features on otherwise Makai build and complexion, remained on Elegy for decades, until Ellantir's granddaughter, Jek, joined a hin pirate crew, got rich, and finally settled in Ierendi city, establishing first a tavern, and later a shipwright business. Her

descendants constantly expanded the family assets, diversifying into trade and buying a noble title from the last Matrongle king. The current Baron, Keril Elfinblood, shows strongly his elven heritage -- while he is reaching his sixth decade, he is still as youthful as if he was in his thirties, and is a good mage (for Ierendi) as well as a decent swordsman. A no-nonsense politician, he keeps the family mostly neutral, although he generally sides with the *New Money* and the *philo-Darokinian* factions if he needs to.

**Dark Secrets:** The Elfinblood merchants derive most of their wealth from smuggling magical components between the nations of the Known World. Many of these components are stolen from the Kikianu Caldera natural preserve.

## Gentle

**Coat of Arms:** *quarterly vert and argent, a cinquefoil countercharged.*



This is one clan whose history is shrouded in myth. Very little is known about the origins of the family, which does not trace its origin to any of the first exiles, yet it is as ancient as the Caulkers or the Longkeels. In any case, the Gentles carry elven blood, and occasionally a child is born with a natural affinity for magic, pointed ears, or infravision. At the time of the rebellion, the Gentles owned (and had operated for since the hins' times) a trading post on Ierendi Island, as well as a small, independent plantation. While they remained neutral in the conflict between the rebels and the Empire of Thyatis, they managed to acquire large amounts of land in



the first years of Mad Creeg's rule by acting as go-betweens towards Five Shires weapon dealers, as well as providing advance money to cover the construction of the King's fleet.

Since that time, the family focused entirely on the business of running plantations, becoming the breadbasket of the City of Ierendi, as well as a provider of exotic fruit to several Known World markets. Politically, the Gentle Barons are generally conservatives, and support a closer alliance with the Five Shires, which are one of their primary markets.

**Dark Secrets:** The few sages in Ierendi have at least two theories for the origins of the Gentle clan. The first is that they derive from an obscure elven clan that lived, centuries ago, in the Five Shires region. The second is that they do have elven blood, but it is aquarendi.

## GOGUNOV

**Coat of Arms:** *per pale gules and sable, a lion rampant argent.*



The Traladaran clan Gogunov originated in the Duchy of Marilenev, where they were a trading family closely allied with the Dukes. After the Guilds ousted the Marilenev family from power, the Gogunov, threatened by the aggressive Radu clan, moved to Lazkow, a small trading and fishing town along the coast south of Marilenev, where they thrived for three centuries, establishing good trading relations with the islands of the Sea of Dread. When the Thyatian armies led by Flavian Oesteropoulos landed in Marilenev, the Gogunov attempted to put up a resistance, but were easily

defeated. Several family members fled to Ierendi, where they had warehouses and offices, moving their trading base there. The family completely abandoned Traladara after the Marilenev Rebellion against the newly-installed Duke Stefan Karameikos. By that time, the Ierendi branch of the family had become one of the richest clans in Ierendi, and bought a position at the Tribunal when the Vane family was ousted for piracy against Ierendi ships.

In Ierendi, the Gogunov are strongly in favor of an alliance with Darokin, both against Thyatis and for commercial reasons. They have little land in Ierendi, and most of their wealth is invested in trade ventures. This, combined with their recent joining the Tribunal, makes it so that they are not much trusted by the landowning clans.

**Dark Secrets:** The Gogunov have at least a highly placed official at the court of the Grand Duke of Karameikos in their pocket. It is also rumored that they are preparing to destabilize the Karameikan government by sponsoring Traladaran insurgents.

## Halfelven

**Coat of Arms:** *per saltire azure and argent, on each an anchor countercharged.*



The Halfelven family is a relative newcomer to the Ierendi aristocracy. The family descends from the popular Queen Haradith of the Tall Cedars, who was known as a "half elf", being the illegitimate daughter of an

Erewan elf and an Alphatian lady from Glantri City. Thanks to her twelve years as the Queen, Haradith amassed not only popular favor, but also a large network of contacts, which she was able to use to establish a number of trading ventures, including the first resorts for rich adventurers. She was awarded a baronial title after retiring from the royal competition. Her descendants continue in the family business, and soon bought their way into the Tribunal. The current Baron Halfvelen is, actually, not that elven -- actually, gossipers call him "Halfdwarven", for he is short, fat and greedy as a dwarf. Politically, he favors progressive policies that increase mercantile trade.

**Dark Secrets:** The Halfvelen merchants have invested heavily outside Ierendi, primarily in trade ventures in Darokin and Glantri. Apparently, this is a diversification strategy that would allow them to withdraw from the islands in case of Thyatian aggression or other political upheavals.

## Halffellow

**Coat of Arms:** *per fess tenné and or, a s b e p b e r d countercharged.*



The Halffellow family is one of the oldest land-owning clans in Ierendi, dating back to the times of the Hin settlement of the islands. The family claims to descend from Tolman Halffellow, one of the "four exiles", the first four Hin who were exiled to Ierendi. Historically, the clan was already established in the interior of Ierendi when the Thyatians took over. The Halffellow clan leaders supported Mad Creeg's rebellion,

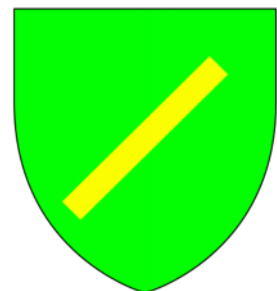
and further extended their lands in the formative years of the Ierendi monarchy.

Today, the family is still quite large, with several members managing farms scattered on the main island. The Baron Halffellow is a conservative politician who favors the Five Shires over Darokin in foreign affairs. Beyond the Baron, the most prominent member of the family is Ki'ai Figger Halffellow, a well-known adventurer who lives in the city of Ierendi.

**Dark Secrets:** Kia'i Figger is a hero of high reputation, yet there are aspects of his story that idle gossipers and the wise scholar often ponder about. Where Strongheart and Mercion, who went on to win the tournament and become King and Queen of Ierendi were deeply affected by the magic of the Heartstone, like most of their companions, Figger alone was unaffected. Some ascribe this to the hin resistance to magic, some believe that his role in the quest was rather exaggerated in the tales. Moreover, Figger is also believed to have extensive contacts with the Thieves' Guild in Darokin.

## Karibus

**Coat of Arms:** *vert a baton or.*



The Karibus family originated in Thyatis. Contrary to many other inmates of the penal colony in Ierendi Island, Eusebes Karibus was truly a criminal, of the "white collar" kind -- convicted for numerous charges of war profiteering, tax evasion and fraud. When Mad Creeg organized his

rebellion, Eusebes offered his services -- he knew well most of the corrupt Thyatian officials in the colony, and had smuggled into the colony a small fortune in gems. When the Kingdom of Ierendi was established, Karibus went back into business, primarily by re-opening the brothels that had served the Thyatian troops for the new customers, the local and foreign pirates. The business perfectly fit Karibus and his descendants, and much of the stolen wealth of the pirates ended up in their coffers. It is not unsurprising that the Karibus were able to enter the Council of Lords quite early, during the reign of Michelozzo Matrongle.

Nowadays, the Karibus business is, officially, mostly shipping and touristic resorts. In truth, the family business has not changed much from the times of the Pirate Kings. Politically, the Karibus are in favour of opening Ierendi to the foreigners, especially if the foreigners are rich and willing to part with their wealth.

**Dark Secrets:** The Karibus' main business is not so secret, but they manage to get a lot of extras out of it, in particular by spying on their customers, which means the Karibus leadership is privy to many secrets of the other families.

## LONGKEEL

**Coat of Arms:** *argent, a fess wavy azure between two ships sable.*

The Longkeel family descends from one of the Four Hin Exiles, but only rose to fame



during the Age of the Pirate Kings. The Longkeel were not part of the original Council of Lords, but worked their way through the ranks through bloodthirstiness and courage. Although few Longkeel captains remain in Ierendi history, the family produced many quartermasters, who were generally very popular with the crews. The most famous Longkeel remains Queen Rena, who was so popular that the Council of Lords, forced by the merchants and the lower classes to concede elections for the succession to King Willem, negotiated her candidature, which was highly successful, and stymied the protests against the Council's harsh rule for a decade.

Rena, knowing she was not in the position to overthrow the Council, chose to side with it, bargaining the admission of her family into the Council for her abdication, and support for an aristocratic candidate, Derwin Eddington. The Longkeel have since positioned themselves comfortably in the Ierendi aristocracy, adopting all their customs and mannerisms. Nowadays, the family operates several privateer ships, as well as a few merchantmen.

**Dark Secrets:** It is said the Queen Rena, not trusting the Council, had several special works done in the Royal Castle. She had hin-sized secret passages dug in several rooms, allowing her to escape a couple of assassination attempts.



## Marley

**Coat of Arms:** *per chevron wavy argent and vert, a cinquefoil sable in chief.*



The Marley clan is one of the few Ierendi families with roots in Minrothad. Cooper Marley was one of the rebel chiefs, and one of the retired pirate captains that went on to form the Council of Lords that advised King Black Toes. His descendants were remarkably less successful, but managed to cling to power, until Geral Marley had a strike of luck -- a recent immigrant from the Guilds, whom Geral had hosted out of a whim, turned into a successful prophet and founded the People's Temple of Ierendi, a major (and lucrative) religion. Geral became one of the Temple officials, considerably improving the family fortunes.

Nowadays, the Marley still remain in the privateering business, although many of them are employed either as Temple officials or as naval officers.

**Dark Secrets:** Like most Ierendi nobles, the Marley are aware of the not-so-genuine nature of the People's Temple. Most of the Marley Temple officials are actually magic users, rather than true clerics, educated in the academies of Thyatis and Glantri.

## Matringle

**Coat of Arms:** *Azure a sea lion argent within a bordure ermines.*



The Matringle family descends more or less directly from Kerhy Matringle and Black Toes, Mad Creeg's son and the second King of Ierendi, who took his wife's surname. Mad Creeg himself was a Hattian and a political opponent of the Thyatian emperor of that time, Lucius IV Monomachos. He had turned to piracy as a way to oppose the emperor, shedding his true name and taking the moniker of Mad Creeg. Captured by a Thyatian patrol off the southern coast of Hattias, he and his surviving crew had been deported to Ierendi. After the successful rebellion, he had married a local woman. Of Kerhy Matringle little is known, except that she hailed from the Flaem Highlands and was a reasonably competent mage of clearly Flaem ancestry.

The Matringle dynasty, in any case, produced a number of Pirate Kings, until the disappearance of Donatello "The Black" - who did not have any legitimate heir - in an expedition towards Davania weakened the family to the point that the Council of Lords ousted them and elected a new Pirate King from the Rackham family. The surviving Matringle took years to emerge from a bloody feud, jokingly called the "Matringle Succession War" by the other families. In time, they regained their position on the Council of Lords, but the mercantile and naval assets of the family had been compromised by Donatello's ill-fated expedition, as well as by the internal struggles. Nowadays, the Matringle are a

primarily landowning family. Due to their history, each branch of the Matringle family tends to concentrate control of the family possessions into the hands of a single heir. The Baronial branch of the family is led by Faral Matringle, a greedy, fat man who deals mostly with his merchants from the Five Shires, who buy his plantations' produce wholesale.

**Dark Secrets:** It is rumored that Kerhy Matringle's arrival in Ierendi was engineered by the mages of Honor Island, who wanted to preserve their independence as well as safeguard the secret of their lore from the Collegium Arcanum and the Ministers of Magic in Thyatis, as well as the even more feared Followers of Air in Alphatia.

The great mystery surrounding the Matringle family is their original surname: Black Toes adopted his wife's surname, and Mad Creeg never used his real name, which was not known to his captives. Of Mad Creeg's life, nothing is known except what he himself told to his fellow inmates and later to his captives. It is possible that the family has kept some knowledge of why Mad Creeg wanted to erase his original identity, but if so they have never told. The archives of the Thyatian ministries might hold some clue, but it would be a long and tedious task to find any useful information in centuries old documents, assuming one could get access to them..

## Meikros

**Coat of Arms:** *or a sword sable within a bordure gyronny azure and argent.*



The Meikros family is one of the oldest in Ierendi, dating back to the Thyatian penal colony back in the late VI century. The founder, Galerian Meikros, was an impoverished noble who had turned to smuggling and had been falsely involved in a plot against the tyrannical Emperor, Lucius IV Monomachos. After serving a 10 year sentence on the islands, Galerian was unable to return to Thyatis (Lucius' laws exiled minor conspirators), and established a small plantation in the island of Ierendi and married a local woman.

Galerian's son was quick to throw his lot with the pirate captain, Mad Creeg, in the rebellion that led to the formation of the Kingdom of Ierendi. Galerian's descendants were involved in early piracy, but they mostly took advantage of the pirates' lack of agricultural skills (and interest) to expand their plantation, selling their products high and acquiring slaves at very low prices. When the state consolidated along more civilized lines under Kerhy Matringle's descendants, the Meikros emerged as one of the most powerful and rich families, and were inducted in the aristocracy with a baronial title.

Currently, Baron Meikros is one of the most senior members of the Tribunal, and a well respected one as well. His son, Midge Meikros, holds divisional commander commission in the Ierendi Royal Brigade, the elite ground force of the Kingdom.

**Dark Secrets:** The Meikros clan leaders are not noted for being equal opportunities employers -- their native laborers are heavily discriminated by the hin or continental foremen, especially in remote farms where the Guard and the public opinion do not reach. Makai who protest such treatment tend to disappear without leaving traces.

## Rackham

**Coat of Arms:** *sable, two crossed scimitars argent.*



This family holds the distinction of having provided the first king of Ierendi outside the Matrongle clan. The founder, Cormac Rackham, was a Darokinian exile who had taken to piracy in the VIII century. His son, Artalus Rackham, was the hero of the Battle of Jaibul, where the Sindhi navy was destroyed by a pirate fleet secretly funded by Ierendi and Minrothad. When Donatello Matrongle was lost at sea in 735 AC, the Council of Lords overrode the Matrongle claimants -- all of them only distantly related to Donatello -- and named the popular "Art" king. Art Rackham not only openly sanctioned piracy against foreign merchant navies, but contracted the fleet and the Royal Brigades as mercenary units. He did bring a time of prosperity and change to Ierendi, leading to the exploration and settlement of several of the lesser islands. However, in 748 AC, he died at sea, after an unforeseen storm took his fleet. Rumors abound that his death was engineered by the Sea People, who did not like the aggressive policy of exploration and exploitation of

marine resources that King Art had been pushing for. Indeed, the Council of Lords quickly selected a new king from the Teach family, which was well known to have close deals with the merrow, ending the reign of the Rackham kings.

The Rackham family remains one of the more aggressive group of privateers. They also sponsor several marinas, owned by Hanni, a cousin of the current Baron Rackham.

**Dark Secrets:** The Rackham also head a major gang of thieves in the city of Ierendi. Hanni provides them spaces under her marinas.

## ROGERS

**Coat of Arms:** *gules a bend argent between two moor's heads.*



The Rogers family is the newest entrant in the Tribunal, having joined it when the Council of Lords changed its name in 980. The accession of the Rogers was a political move to give the impression of real change, as the Rogers were recent immigrants from Darokin. However, little real change happened, as the newcomers had well-established trade relations with several of the Lords, and were even related by marriage to the Eddington and Van Hoorn families. The Rogers had left Darokin mostly to escape taxation, and employed much of the saved wealth in campaigning for their leader's "election" to the Tribunal.

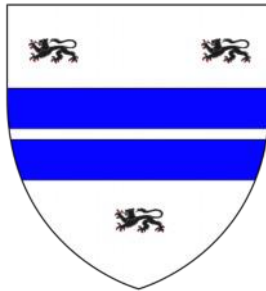


Nowadays, the Rogers are mostly aligned with other mercantile families, and are a force for modernization in Ierendi, having brought several best practices over from their homeland.

**Dark Secrets:** The Rogers have always been involved in the slave trade -- barely masked under “outsourced labor to indentured servants” in Darokin, but even straightforward slave trade in Jaibul and, more recently, in Fort Doom. They have ties to the Iron Ring, and they employ Hounds of the Iron Ring as mercenaries.

## Seilus

**Coat of Arms:** *argent two bars azure between three lions passant sable.*



The Seilus family arrived in Ierendi during the Pirate Kings era. With a piratical tradition of its own, the first Seilus were forced to flee from Thyatis after a “misunderstanding” with the Shadow Hand, the powerful Thyatian thieves’ guild. At first dabbling in piracy and smuggling, the Seilus went legitimate at the end of the Pirate King era, establishing strong ties with the Achelos trade firms. Nowadays, they are one of the richest merchant families, as well as one of the most politically savvy. Baron Seilus, a long-bearded, elderly statesman, is the current Chancellor of the Tribunal, and therefore the holder of the executive power in Ierendi.

**Dark Secrets:** When he was much younger, the current Baron Seilus was an adventurer. Once he and his party woke a red dragon, who

proved too strong for them<sup>8</sup>. Seilus, the only survivor, was about to be eaten, when he had a strike of genius and bargained his life for an interesting secret. Unfortunately, the only secret of interest to the dragon he had was the fact that Ierendi’s Kikianu Caldera holds a plant that is reputed to act as a stabilizer for a dragon’s sleep, and that the title of King of Ierendi can be achieved via the Royal Tournament...

## Seleukides

**Coat of Arms:** *per fess gules and argent, an elephant sable.*



The Seleukides family is of Kerendan origins, although it is first attested in the Thyatian province of Dythestia, nowadays a part of the Emirates of Ylaruam. A branch of the family purchased lands in the archipelago from the Thyatian government shortly after the occupation, and established a set of plantations. While most plantation owners were forced to leave during the rebellion, the Seleukides family did not make use of prisoners as indentured servants, and thus was not a primary target for the rebels. The family leaders of the time negotiated with Mad Creeg, offering much needed supplies in return for safety. Once the Kingdom of Ierendi was established, the Seleukides kept a low profile, so they joined the Council of Lords only later, after the end of the Age of the Pirate Kings.

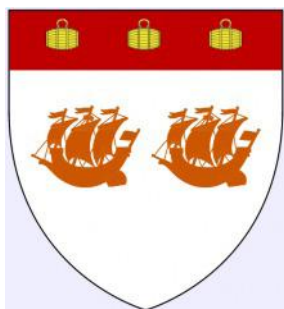
<sup>8</sup> This is Respen ak Tarpis, introduced in the Gazetteer. An alternate view of Respen and his homeland can be found in Giulio Caroletti’s article, “Arentela”.

The current Baroness, Apama Seleukides, is a middle aged woman who controls vast plantations. She is very prudent and conservative as a politician, favoring the more reliable Darokinians over the flamboyant hin of the Five Shires. Like most of her ancestors, she favors an unofficial policy of division between the Ierendians of continental origins and the various native tribes.

**Dark Secrets:** The Seleukides are very conservative, to the point that they intermarry with few, very high placed families, such as the Karibus and the Meikros. This has led to a degree of inbreeding, resulting in a number of mentally imbalanced or otherwise “weird” offspring.

### Shanwood

**Coat of Arms:** *argent two ships tenné and on a chief sanguine three barrels or.*



Archer Shanwood, the founder of the Shanwood Hin clan, was one of the First Prisoners, the Hins exiled to the Ierendi archipelago. Contrary to the other famous Hin families, though, the clan did not rise to prominence early on, as many of its members returned to the Five Shires during or after the Thyatian occupation.

During the Age of the Pirate Kings, though, the Shanwoods, who had become successful pirates operating out of Rundegos, came back to Ierendi, which was a market to their stolen goods as well as an occasional port of call when the Five Shires ports were watched by the Imperial Navy.

“Pegleg” Thob Shanwood was perhaps the most successful of the Five Shire Shanwood pirates, and although his treasure was lost with his death at sea, the clan thrived both on the mainland and in the archipelago.

The current Shanwoods are still in the privateering business, and although on the Ierendi side their activities are significantly more within the boundaries of the law than on the Five Shires side, they are still considered pirates at heart. Baroness Shanwood, a tough old Hin lady, is considered the strongest ally of the Five Shires in Ierendi, which makes her a target for the attacks of many human Tribunes.

**Dark Secrets:** The Ierendi and Five Shires Shanwoods have a permanent arrangement -- when a member of either family comes under the scrutiny of the law in his home country, the other branch of the family takes him or her in, allowing both families a great deal of room in their illegal activities.

### Teach

**Coat of Arms:** *per quarter, 1 and 4 argent a dolphin sable, 2 and 3 sable a ship argent.*



The Teach family used to dominate the Council of Lords during the later age of the Pirate Kings, after the death of Donatello Matringle led to the “Matringle Succession War” and the ousting of the royal family.

The family had been active in Ierendi since the founder, Marlon Teach, a Minrothaddan

sailor, had been quartermaster on Claes Van Hoorn's flagship, the *Red Lightning*, and his son had been inducted into the Council of Lords under the reign of Jan Matringle. After the death at sea of Artalus Rackham, Thaddeus "Fish-eye" Teach, who was the leader of the faction within the Council opposed to Rackham, was named king. The circumstances of this election, and why neither Artalus's daughter, Yolanda, nor any of his three nephews inherited the throne, are not entirely clear, as the Royal Chancery seems to be missing the records of that year. In any case, it amounted to little less than a coup d'état, and the Rackham and Teach families, while sharing similar interests, are not on the best of terms. Besides Thaddeus, another Teach, Thaddeus' son Varaldo, ruled as King of Ierendi. The family fortunes grew considerably during that time, and have not faltered since that time, even though Varaldo and both of his sons died in an accidental fire that destroyed the original royal castle.

Nowadays, the Teach family provides the largest amount of privateer ships to the fleet, and owns also several large tuna fisheries.

**Dark Secrets:** Marlon's son, Barnabas "Barney" Teach, is rumored to have had weird deals with the merrows, and that his offspring were actually half-merrows. What is certain is that King Thaddeus negotiated an alliance with Undersea shortly after the death of Artalus Rackham, and that he was called "Fish-eye" for his weird, unblinking stare. As to the storm that killed Artalus, it has been long rumored that Thaddeus was involved, either through his Undersea alliances, or through some Minrothaddan sea magic -- his Minrothaddan ancestor, Marlon, had had a reputation as a witch doctor in his time.

## VAN HOORN

**Coat of Arms:** *sable a unicorn gules armed, unguled and crined or.*



The Van Hoorn family descends from one of the leaders of the anti-Thyatian insurrection, Claes Van Hoorn, a Flaem heretic who had joined a Hin pirate crew and had been captured by the Thyatian fleet. While the early Van Hoorn were blood-thirsty pirates, including the only Van Hoorn king, Willem, the current leadership of the family thrives on mostly legitimate trade. The Van Hoorns are shipping magnates, their roundships moving huge amount of cargo to and from Athenos, Tenobar, Jahore, Specularum and Minrothad.

**Dark Secrets:** While a Flaem, Claes Van Hoorn never liked Kehry Matringle nor her influence on young Black Toes. A prudent man who had survived many adversities, Claes did not openly attack Kehry, but worked to collect evidence against her. It is said that some of this information may still be found in the Claes' old journal, which is hidden somewhere in the saferooms of the family mansion in Ierendi City.



## Factions

Ierendi politics revolves around shifting allegiances between the families that sit on the Tribunal. There are generally two parties (a dominant one and an opposition), but when the current dominant faction suffers a major defeat, the new ruling party generally breaks into two different groups, the weaker of which usually tries to get support from the defeated families. Factions usually form along economic or political interests, but there is also a strong divide between the *Old Aristocracy* -- families who claim to descend from the first settlers and the leaders of the rebellion that led to the foundation of the Kingdom -- and the “*New Money*” families, merchants and privateers who immigrated more recently. In terms of economic policy, *Landowners* are generally at odds with *Seafarers*, both merchants and

privateers. However, in foreign policy the issue is usually between a *philo-Darokinian* faction (mostly merchants who wish to improve trade relations with the rest of the Known World) and a *philo-Hin* faction (mostly composed by privateers who favor a strong alliance with the Five Shires against Thyatis and, to a lesser extent, Minrothad). The other two alliances -- with Honor Island and with Undersea -- are never seriously challenged, as they are the basis of Ierendi independence from the mainland powers.

Which criterion is used at any given time depends on the primary political issues that are discussed at the time, as well as economic and foreign policy factors. Table 1 classifies the current Tribunes along the three main criteria.

**Table 1: Political factions in the Tribunal of Ierendi**

	Old Aristocracy	New money
<b>Landowners:</b>		
(pro-Darokin)	Meikros, Seleukides, Karibus	
(pro-Shires)	Gentle, Halfellow, Matringle	
<b>Merchants:</b>		
(pro-Darokin)	Alexander, Alvine, Van Hoorn	Eddington, Elfinblood, Gogunov, Halfelven, Rogers, Seilus
<b>Privateers:</b>		
(pro-Shires)	Caulker, Longkeel, Marley	Shanwood, Rackham, Teach

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FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

# The Minor Islands of the Sea of Dread

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion)

The Sea of Dread is the wide expanse of water found south of the Known World. It is surrounded by the Known World and the southern coast of the Great Waste to the north, and by the Serpent Peninsula to the west, but geographers and navigators don't agree on which its other limits are. In its larger definition, the Sea of Dread stretches up to the northern coast of Davania and the island of Ochalea to the south, and up to the western coast of the Isle of Dawn to the east, ending on the ideal line connecting Cape Gabrionius (Province of Septentriona, on the Isle of Dawn) to the town of Dawnpoint (Tel Akbir Peninsula, Thyatis), giving way to the Western Sea of Dawn to the north. In its smaller definition, the Sea of Dread is limited to the south by the Western and Eastern Thanegioth Archipelagos – giving way south of them to the Davanian Shallows – and to the east by a line connecting the Verdant Isles, the Burning Mountain, and the easternmost island of the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago – east of which the Western Sea of Dawn begins.

According to the legends, the inauspicious name of this sea was given to it by the Thyatian, Kerendan, and Hattian peoples who migrated to the Known World in BC 600. Their migration turned to be a dreadful passage through waters as stormy as they never remembered to have seen; many of their numbers died, but when Protius' wrath was appeased, they reached the northern land, thanking the Immortals and assigning the enemy sea the name it deserved. While this is

the most commonly accepted origin of the Sea of Dread's name, fact is that the elves of Alfeisle, in Minrothad, tell that their ancestors began calling it "Sea of Dread" in their language much before the Thyatians arrived in the Known World, during the age of seismic upheavals before BC 1700 which ravaged and changed the whole southern coast of the mainland (even if some theories give the name a more sinister origin – take a look to *Darkness Beneath*, by F. Defferrari, in this issue of Threshold, to know more).

Whatever the origins of its name, the Sea of Dread is filled with a vast number of large, small, and tiny islands. The educated common man only knows the largest or more important islands and archipelagos – the Ierendi and Minrothad chains, the great island of Hattias and the Thyatian islands east of it, the faraway and savage Thanegioth Archipelago. Only a few people, apart from most experienced seamen, will be able to name even one of the minor islands, but neither they could keep count of all the lonely atolls, keys, and islets scattered through the sea.

Well, if you are not an ever-travelling seawolf, and more akin to watch the sea through the window of your home, or through the pages of a book, then follow us and we will bring you in a short tour of the smaller islands of the Sea of Dread.

*Unfurl the topsails!*

## Dread, Colony, or What?

The Minrothad island chain, made up by seven islands (Trader's Isle and Alfeisle, the largest; then Open Isle, and Fortress, Blackrock, North, and Fire islands) – eight if you add Terentias, under Thyatian control – have been called with a variety of names during their history. The archipelago's first name was given to it by the Meditor and Verdier elves, who called it Isles of Dread due to the decades of seismic and volcanic instability which had sunk into the water most of the lands where they lived, leaving only Alfeisle, around BC 1750. Obviously, these Isles of Dread have nothing in common with the Isle of Dread which is found in the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago.

Later (BC 1100), they were the Nithians which gave the archipelago the name with which sometimes it is still called today, that is Colony Islands. After the formation of the Minrothad Guilds (AC 691), the chain is usually called Minrothad islands or archipelago, but "Colony Islands" is geographically more correct when one intends to refer to the whole island chain, Terentias included.

## A TOUR OF THE SEA OF DREAD

This article will shortly describe a number of minor islands which dot the Sea of Dread – basically the ones included between the Ierendi and Minrothad chains and the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago – leaving out the larger and already known ones. Among them one archipelago, that of the Verdant Isles, is usually recognized. The others are treated individually.<sup>1</sup>

### Verdant Isles

The archipelago of tiny islands known as the Verdant Isles owes its name to the lush vegetation and jungles which cover the greater part of these five islands – East Key, Magedoom Isle, Green Reavers' Island, Sea Demon's Fang, and Zephyr's Curse. Despite their plentiful resources, the archipelago's islands are very dangerous places for a number of reasons.

The first is represented by the dreaded "ship-bane", a vicious mist which ravages ships passing nearby these islands (actually the mist is generated by baleful creatures of the Elemental Plane of Air, called "kal-murus" by the kara-kara).

The second is the fact that the islands are inhabited by a race of aggressive, green-skinned, orc-like humanoids, called "kara-kara". The kara-kara have their own unique culture, centered on the worship of a "pig-god" (likely Orcus), rule by "manwu-papas" (witch-doctors), and sailing on large canoes. They survive through hunting, fishing, and raiding of small ships and nearby nations' coasts, which they perform

<sup>1</sup> On the accompanying map, several islands' names come from canon sources (GAZ4, GAZ8, GAZ9, GAZ14, DotE, PC3, TM1, TM2, X1, X8, XSOLO). Some names were borrowed from fan works (in particular those of F. Defferrari, A. Francolini, and G. Gander), while names for some of the islets surrounding the Isle of Dread were borrowed from the *Savage Tide* adventure path (found in Paizo's "Dungeon Magazine" nos. from 139 to 150). All others were created by the author.



# The MINOR Islands of the Sea of Dread



swiftly, retreating in their islands afterwards. Sometimes their canoes are encountered at sea, even at some distance from the Verdant Isles.

Despite their fierceness and the fact that the Verdant Isles are accessible only with difficulty, the kara-kara have been occasionally known to trade with merchants landing in their archipelago, being more than happy to put their hands of foreign metal weapons and tools.

#### East Key

This subtropical island is plain and partially covered by vegetation and jungle, with abundant freshwater. It is inhabited by only a few tribes of kara-kara, who came from the Green Reapers' Island, to the northeast. Moreover, the "ship-bane" is rarely found there. The island's plentiful resources make it an advantageous stop for ships braving the Sea

of Dread, good enough even to risk attacks by the kara-kara natives. *Source: XSOLO Lathan's Gold.*

#### Green Reapers' Island (Teki-nura-ria)

This small, jungle-covered island ages ago hosted some sort of ancient and advanced civilization, as ruins and archeological remains testify. Nothing is left of the ancient dwellers of this place, as since a long time the island is the home of the kara-kara, whose presence here is greater than in nearby islands. The kara-kara call this island "Teki-nura-ria", which means "mountain of death" in their tongue. Besides the aggressive kara-kara, the island is made dangerous by the stormy waters around it, and by the ever present "ship-bane" mist. *Source: X8 Drums of Fire Mountain.*



*Magedoom Isle, Sea Demon's Fang, and Zephyr's Curse*



### Magedoom Isle, Sea Demon's Fang, and Zephyr's Curse

These three tiny islands complete the Verdant Isle archipelago. They are all covered in thick jungle, inhabited by tribes of kara-kara, and infested by the "ship-bane" mist, just like the Green Reapers' Island. Magedoom is known among wizards because the island harbor a vast number of plant species useful for alchemical and arcane procedures; wizards from Sclaras and elsewhere occasionally foray there – unfortunately, not all of them came back alive from those tours in the kara-kara territory. Sea Demon's Fang and Zephyr's Curse are more like the tops of two submerged mountains; the former has a rocky peak at its center, while the latter's top is rounder, but the coasts of both are rugged and filled with creeks and shallow reefs. *Sources:* X8 Drums on Fire Mountain (featured on general area map; the islands' names were created by the author).

### Other Scattered, Lonely Isles

This group included all other islands of the Sea of Dread which do not form archipelagos or island chains. Some of these islands are indeed uninhabited, some other are simply the barren top of underwater mountains and volcanoes; some other, instead, are large and pleasant enough to have become the home – already in ancient times – of Makai and Tanagoro tribesmen, coming from the Davanian coast or from the Serpent Peninsula. Where still present today, these natives continue to lead a simple lifestyle based on fishing and gathering.

### Aleea Keys

This series of five small islands is found south of a vast and dangerous area of shallow reefs known as the Aleea Reefs, which only the few Makai natives living in the keys know how to navigate. The islands, from northwest to southeast, are known by their Makai names as Miwoa, Natula, Tiruka, Lawana, and Okea. The islands offer few in terms of resources, but the area around them is quite good for fishing, especially

### The Island of Mardius and Thyralax

The adventure *Thyralax and the Ruby Amulet*, included in AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants, describes a savage volcanic area of swamps and hills, bordered by high stone mountains to the north, which is found «about 20 miles north of the nearest civilized area». This area is the domain of the ruby dragon Thyralax, while to the north dwells the old nemesis of him, the brown dragon Mardius; the two dragons have a long-lasting feud which results in constant struggle. The domain of Thyralax, which is the area detailed in the adventure, is about the size of a single 8-miles hex. Besides its draconic master, the land hosts gatormen and koprus.

The presence of the koprus would make it ideal to set the adventure on one of the islands of the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago. The adventure needs an area with a north-south extension of about one and a half 24-miles hexes, so the most suitable islands of the archipelago seem to be large island to the west of the Isle of Dread (Karawa Island), or even better the second slightly smaller one found to the east of it (Nogoro Island). The "nearest civilized area" could be a trading post or colony belonging to one of the Known World's sea powers, or even a native village (like the ones found



in the Isle of Dread's southeastern peninsula).

The presence of gatomen (who are the same humanoid as the Gurrash of the western Savage Coast), might seem problematic, as according to the *Voyage of the Princess Ark* series, they were created by Herathian wizards some centuries ago. However, we should consider that a race of crocodilemen already existed during Blackmoor's times, as proved by their first appearance in module DA4 The Duchy of Ten; even then, their existence was due to an «evil wizard's experiment», after which their «numbers grew dramatically». In the thousand years intervened between the setting of DA4 (BC 4000) and the Great Rain of Fire (BC 3000), almost everything may have happened to explain the gatomen's presence in the Thanegioth area. Nevertheless, it seems that the Herathian wizards rediscovered some ancient Thonian ritual to create the gatomen. Today, these and other sparse groups of gatomen (besides those of the Bayou) would be the last remnants of the Thonian experiments. In turn, all these magical experiments aimed at the creation of reptilian races could likely be the result of rediscovered lore from the Carnifex, an advanced reptilian race which dominated the Outer World several thousands of years ago.

mollusks dwelling in the shallows. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People (featured on the poster map; the islands' names were invented by the author).

#### **Calitha's Tears**

A couple of islands which owe their name to an elven legend in which the Immortal Calitha mourns one of her beloved mortal champions, shedding tears which come up from the sea bed and formed these islands when they arrived in contact with the air of the surface. Be it for Calitha's blessing or not, the two islets are noted for the beautiful and unusual fields of white, yellow, and pink-colored flowers which grow on them. Enterprising elven lovers sometimes bring their would-be spouses there to utter their love declarations. Touristic guides from Ierendi have been known to organize visits on this island. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People (featured on the poster map; the island's name was invented by the author).

#### **Burning Mountain**

The main feature of this island is a tall volcanic mountain found in its middle, which releases poisonous gases. Because of the toxic substances which come out from the volcanic openings, the island's uplands are barren – nothing grows here. The surrounding area, instead, is covered by lush tropical vegetation and is inhabited by Makai tribes. Navigation in the vicinities of the island is made dangerous by the sudden changes in wind direction, which may move in an unpredictable way the vapors coming out of the volcano. Occasionally, the lava flows expelled by the volcano carry large quantities of melted gold, which then solidifies into large lumps – a phenomenon that has fed the legends about the “gold mountain”. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold.

#### **Clesius' Reef**

A rocky and barren island which was discovered when a Thyatian seaman, Rutilius Clesius, was found near-mad and starving there, two years after the Battle of Midpoint (AC 713) in which the Ierendian navy

## The Floating Islands of the Lizardmen

The existence of these islands is known only thanks to occasional alleged sightings, and maybe only the product of misinterpretations, blunders, or simple rumors. Nevertheless it is worth mentioning, because such sightings have become a relevant number. Reference to these islands can be found in GAZ4 The Kingdom of Ierendi and in Joshuan's Almanac & Book of Facts.

These are strange islands – little more than massive, bare rock fragments – which float a little above the water's surface, and move above sea level through unknown means. They seem to appear from time to time near some of the coastal lands surrounding the Sea of Dread. The islands, which in many tales are described harboring alien buildings, are inhabited by warlike groups of lizardmen, who use them to move across the sea to attack and plunder isolated and undefended settlements. Even if the lizardmen's number is not so high (rumors say some hundred warriors), they are well equipped, both in the ways of war and magic.

Some speculate that the islands are ancient artifacts of the lizardmen whose origins can be traced back to the prehistoric age; according to this theory the lizardmen would still use them as transportation and

destroyed a Thyatian fleet. Clesius was missing since the battle and believed dead at sea; no one figured out how he could have survived two years alone on this island. Back in Thyatis, he lived another three years in a religious hospice before dying. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People (featured on the poster map; the island's name was invented by the author).

### Good Omen Isle

According to the legend, this small island (and the two tiny reefs northeast of it) was the first land sighted by the Thyatian, Kerendan, and Hattian ships which had taken the long journey through the Sea of Dread to migrate from Davania to the Known World. Thyatians landed on the island and sacrificed to the Immortals, thanking them for their benevolence. The island is plain and pleasant, covered in vegetation and small copses. Thyatian faithful occasionally make pilgrimages there, and Thyatian priests have built a small altar and statue to honor the Immortals in the location of the coast in which it is believed that the Thyatians first landed. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People (featured on the poster map; the island's name was invented by the author).

### Insect Island

A subtropical island covered in forests and vegetation, with few Makai natives. The island has plenty of water and food, and would be a great stop for ships – if it was not for the fact that hundreds of species of insects (especially beetles) and worms haunt it. The Makai natives even use some of these vermins as food, but sometimes they have problems with them. It is likely that any type of supply brought on board of a ship from the island's interior is filled with the eggs and tiny larvae of the vermins which infest it; if this is the case, the food and water will be spoiled soon, once the eggs hatch. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold.

### Maiden, The

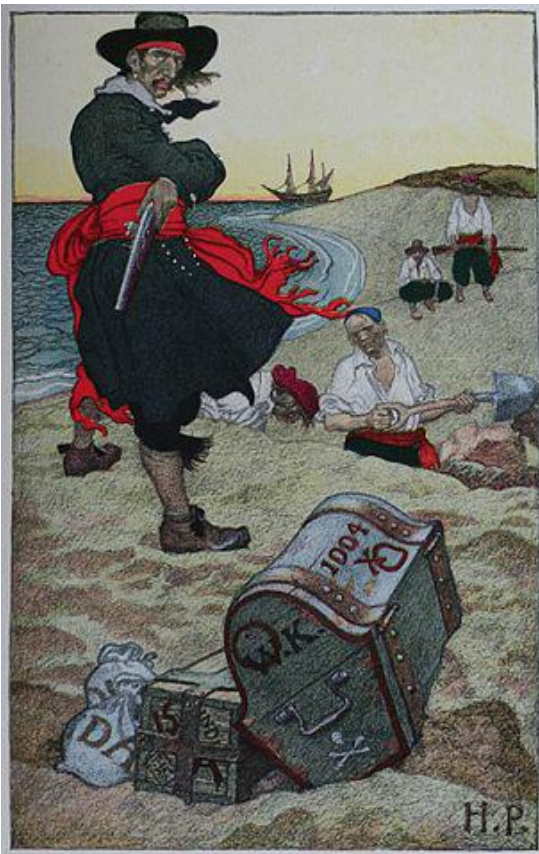
A plain island inhabited by a scattering of Makai natives, owes its name to an ancient legend of a

communication means between their communities scattered from the Ierendi Islands to the Thanegioth Archipelago across the Sea of Dread, and maybe even beyond.

Traldadaran princess who had been left here awaiting the return of her hero, which however died tragically and never came back to her. The legend says that the princess' ghost still haunts the beach, longing for the return of her beloved one. Of course, the local Makai have never seen such a spirit. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People (featured on the poster map; the island's name was invented by the author).

### No Name Island

This flat island is little more than a large cay, with some water but where very few edible plants grow. Much time ago this island was recorded as being inhabited by Makai natives, but today it is uninhabited, and while in the past it was occasionally used as a haven by pirates, today it is not anymore. It is unknown to the Known World folk that this island is actually a shark-kin sacred ground; they call it the "Island of Dried Skins" and are the reason for which even the pirates keep at bay from it. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold (the island featured in the adventure has been identified with the "Island of Dried Skins" from PC3 The Sea People, whose location was not indicated in the module).



*Burying treasure on Pirate's Rock*

### Pirate Rock

This inhospitable island has very few resources and offers nothing in terms of supplies; no one has really a reason to dock here – and this is why a lot of pirate crews used to bury their loot and treasures in this island. In old times, the island was inhabited by Tanagoro natives, most of whom have been carried away as slaves during the course of the centuries; only a very few of them remain. Even pirates do not seem to be a stable presence in this area anymore – at least, this is what most Known World folks believe – in truth, the island is a quite alive spot of the Sea of Dread, inhabited by some ancient cultures and races, still a major pirate hideout, and within the reach of the powerful Twaelar Kingdom from the southern waters. It is worth noting that due to past and present pirate activity on the island, various



chests filled with gold still await to be dugged out of the earth, their owners executed by the law of the civilized countries or gone missing after sea storms. *Source: XSOLO Lathan's Gold.* [A much deeper insight about Pirate Rock will be included in the *Three Starflowers* adventure by F. Defferrari, which you will find in the upcoming issue #4 of Threshold.]

### Roc's Island

This tiny island (and the smaller just north of it) is just a barren crag protruding out of the sea, rocky and barren, with only sparse vegetation and often surrounded by mists. The larger islands is actually the cone of a dormant volcano. Rocs are known to nest on these islands. *Source: PC3 The Sea People, and X10 Red Arrow, Black Shield* (the island is featured on PC3 poster map, and has been identified with the island of the same name mentioned, but not given a position, in X10).

### Sea Nuggets, The

Both of these islands have a shape which remembers a couple of jagged lumps, with many crags, reefs, and cliffs. The top and center of the islands are covered in low vegetation. The name of these islands come from the traces of gold veins exposed by water erosion on the islands' cliffs. However, before claiming the islands to mine them, the Ierendian and Minrothaddan governments – both of which covet the Nuggets – have still to figure out how to dispose of the greater sea serpents which dwell in the islands' underwater caves. *Source: PC3 The Sea People* (featured on the poster map; the island's name was invented by the author).

### Skeleton Key

This island is found just west of a long coral reef running in northwest-southeast direction from this key to the Three Sisters Keys to the northwest, called the Dragon's Teeth Reefs. In the past this isle was inhabited by Tanagoro tribes, but then it became a battlefield in the Aquapopulus War between humans and merrows (see the sidebar), one of the most tragic

## MORGANA'S ISLAND

The woman called Morgana is a young, raven-haired beauty with violet eyes and copper complexion. This character was first introduced as one of the pregenerated PCs of adventure module M3 *Twilight Calling*, and had a Neutral alignment.

Her past is shrouded in mystery, but she likely has Common Alphatian origin, while her name seems a Thyatianization of a common name used by some peoples of the Isle of Dawn (*Morrigan*). In truth, Morgana is quite old (she preserves her youthful appearance at 25 years old through magic longevity potions) and one of the most powerful magic-users of the Known World (around AC 1000 she should have reached 33<sup>rd</sup> level in the Magic-User class under BECMI rules terms). She undertook many adventures during her past, at one time also becoming the ruler of the underground city of Cynidicea (see adventure module B4 *The Lost City*) for a while. After that, she married one of her adventuring companions, the fighter Taran, had two children from him, and sat together with him on the throne of Ierendi for a couple of years after their victory in the local Royal Tournament of Adventurers.

After separating from Taran, she created a tiny, magical floating island not far from the coasts of

one of Ierendi's isles. Today, Morgana lives there, paying occasional visits to her old adventuring companions (Taran included) and to her children, both of whom also have won the Ierendian crown on some years in the past. Morgana's isle cannot move in the air, and is found many hundred feet above the sea level, even if the wizardess has enchanted it with the power to float downward into the sea, to appear as a true island. The island is surrounded by a powerful *dispel magic* effect (cast at the 33<sup>rd</sup> level of power), which makes reaching it through *fly* spells and the like quite hazardous, and requires the use of magic items such as *flying carpets* and flying boats. The island is about 1000' across; its terrain is mostly rocky, with spurs and crags, but also sports short grasses and alpine-like vegetation, albeit with very few and short trees. In its center lies Morgana's mansion, a small half-wizardly tower and half-mountain cottage building, where the wizardess conducts her experiments, studies, and researches about the Path to Immortality.

### A Little KNOWN Story: Thyatian Westward Expansion

The fact that the Ispans, a cultural subgroup of mainland Thyatis, were sent to colonize the eastern Savage Coast in a sort of "forced" migration is quite well known. What is not known as well is that Thyatian expansion in the western seas could have had some precedents. In fact, a couple of canon sources hint at this expansion. The second volume of the *Poor Wizard's Almanac*, under the "Davania" entry, says that the region of Davania stretching from the Adakkian Sound to the Hinterlands hosts «forgotten colonies from other nations»; while the *Explorer's Manual* in Champions of Mystara is even more explicit, saying that «the stretch of Davania's coast closest to Yavdlom is inhabited by scattered city-states, the remnants of Thyatian and other nations' colonies that have since lost ties with their mother countries». This, coupled with references to the "Aquapopulus War" in XSOLO Lathan's Gold, could make the basis for an interesting story about Thyatis' attempt to expand and control trade routes in the western Sea of Dread.

When did the Empire establish colonies in the Green Coast? What so valuable did the Thyatians find there? Were the merrows of the Twaelar Kingdom responsible for the Empire's abandonment of its colonies in Davania? So is this struggle between Thyatis and the Twaelar Kingdom what is known as the "Aquapopulus War"?

Another intriguing Mystaran history dilemma, which maybe will be further explored in one of the future issues of Threshold!

battles of which was fought on this island. The few natives died in that occasion or migrated away afterwards. Today, the heart of the island is covered with the bones and the weapons of the soldiers who died fighting in that grim day. No one has settled this island since then. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold.

### Spider Isle

This southern island is partially forested, and is inhabited by some tribes of Tanagoro ethnicity. Rumors hold that at the heart of the island is found the so-called Lost Temple of Araknee, an ancient stone building with a spider-shaped plan. Known World archaeologists speculate that the temple may have been built in ancient times by the Tanagoro to honor their spider-like Immortal, Korotiku, during the golden age of the human cultures of the Thanegioth Archipelago. Still today, missionaries from Thyatis and the Pearl Islands set on voyages toward this island to find this lost relic of their Immortal patron. Actually, the Lost Temple could be even more ancient than that, its original builders having been the aranea – some of which may actually still hide in disguise among the island's human population, *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold.

### Termite Atoll

A lonely island inhabited by friendly Makai tribes, who are usually willing to resupply ships from the Known World which stop there in exchange for tools and trinkets. Its names is due to the voracious giant salt-water termites which infest the sea around the island, attacking all ships trying to dock near it. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold.

### Three Sisters Keys

This small archipelago of three tiny islets is separated from the eastern Sea of Dread by the Dragon's Teeth Reefs, a long coral reef running in northwest-southeast direction, which crosses the sea just east of the Three Sisters Keys and the southern Skeleton Key. These islands centuries ago were inhabited by Tanagoro

## Kythria's Pleasure Island

Not all the islands of the Sea of Dread live up to their host's name. Legends tell of a mysterious island, located somewhere in the huge expanse of this sea, where worthy mortal heroes can find solace from the life's trouble, enjoying for a while the most joyful pleasures in the company of beautiful nymphs and faeries, and where the Immortals themselves and some of their exalted servants sometimes come to remember the feelings of their life on Mystara. The story that follows was first devised in [Codex Immortalis, Book I: Guide to the Immortals](#) (by M. Dalmonte).

### *Kythria's Deeds as a Mortal*

Kythria was a very successful Ierendian adventurer of Makai origins; besides undertaking memorable feats, she was gifted with great beauty and charm. Kythria became in a short time a person of renown in Ierendi; it was hers the idea to select the Kingdom's monarchs through the Royal Tournament of Adventurers – and this gained her a place of honor among the country's celebrated historical figures. Eventually she undertook the path toward Immortality under the patronage of Eiryndul. She is still today worshipped by minor cults in various countries as the patroness of lust, sensuality, and



pleasure, and in Ierendi as a national heroine.

As her last feat and testimony to achieve Immortality, Kythria created her Pleasure Island. The island is small (about 4 miles across), mostly plains and rolling hills, filled with flowering meadows, groves, springs and ponds of sweet waters, bountiful trees, flourishing orchards, beautiful cliffs, lagoons, underwater caves, and small falls. Fruits and water are always available on Pleasure Island. Small animals – singing birds, peacocks, squirrels, mice, and the like – are found on the island. It hosts no artificial buildings besides a sensuous statue of a scantily-clad woman, representing Kythria, in everchanging hues, located at the very center of it; the statue is actually an artifact created by the Immortal.

#### *Your Wishes Coming True...*

Besides this, what else is found on Pleasure Island depends on its occupants – this is the power of Kythria's artifact. Whenever one lands on the island, the artifact will automatically read the newcomer's hidden wishes and lusts and react to them, subtly summoning, creating, or making them appear. Their appearance is not sudden, and things appear to the visitor as if they had always been there. This means that as the island's occupants change, so does what is found on it – people, animals, buildings, features – even if the elements which have been described above are always present. When people leave the island, the features and companions they had wished for slowly disappear, leaving room for the next comer's wishes. Nevertheless the hidden wishes given life by the artifact are not illusions, they are real, albeit temporarily.

On the island one can encounter other peoples who are visiting the island and their own fulfilled wishes; in fact, multiple visitors are satisfied by the artifact at the same time.

Obviously, the artifact can't satisfy just any type of wishes, but only those in line with Kythria's sphere of interest. A visitor looking for sensual or romantic fulfillment of any type (and in any surrounding) will almost always be satisfied, but one wishing to sit on a mountain glacier at dawn will not. Moreover, Kythria does not allow the artifact to satisfy outright cruel, excessively painful or destructive wishes – people harboring such feelings are anyway unlikely to be allowed by the Immortal to find her island.

At any time, besides his own fulfilled wishes, a visitor on Pleasure Island will find merrows playing around its waters; nymphs bathing on the beaches; beautiful males and females of various races, ready to satisfy the visitor's wishes; cooked meals and fresh drinks for any taste; cozy cottages, romantic leisures, luxurious villas scattered here and there; wandering musicians, poets, and artists; and much much stranger, extravagant, lewd, and shocking things. Usually one or more powerful servants of Kythria (high-level clerics or even exalted beings) are present on the island to ensure that nothing endangers visitors of the island or the place itself.

Occasionally, Kythria herself comes here in mortal form together with one of her Immortal or mortal lovers; Immortals such as Palson, Harrow, Bastet, and Eiryndul

have been known to spend some time on the island in mortal form.

*... and Their Side Effect*

The artifact also has a side effect on those who subjected to the island's pleasures: when they leave the island, a feeling of lack slowly pervades them, causing nostalgia for the happiness they experienced, and a sense of longing for them; after having been on the island, everything else will seem dull, boring, and ordinary. This feeling usually last for some weeks, but will never truly abandon again the one who has been on Pleasure Island, and the time passed there will be remembered by him or her as one of the happiest and most extraordinary times of all his life.

*Finding the Island*

The location of Pleasure Island is unknown to all, and can be placed anywhere in the Sea of Dread, more likely in high sea than near any of the surrounding continents or islands. The power of the artifact conceals the island with mists, illusions, and the like to most of those that Kythria would not allow on the island, which are then unable to see it. These

are artifact-level powers, difficult to dispel or see through.

Kythria usually directs here her most devout servants and worthy clerics, but also heroic adventurers, other people she has taken some interest in, and even casual travelers. She also loves to bring on Pleasure Island some bigot or fanatic of some other cult – especially those of grave Immortals such as Tarastia, Khoronus, Koryis, Ilsundal, Halav, Petra – and see how they behave, usually with amusing results.

People are usually allowed to stay on the island for some weeks at most, then their fulfilled wishes start to vanish and new wishes are not satisfied anymore. People trying to stay on the island any longer usually get up one morning sitting on a barren, rocky island in the middle of the sea, alone with their possessions (and with their ship, if they had one), the people they came with, and the feeling to having dreamed everything they experimented. Nevertheless, staying on the island is always a one-time experience in one's life; Kythria usually does not allow people to visit two times her Pleasure Island.

tribesmen, but the humans have slowly disappeared and the keys have become the residence of the three Sisters of the Sea – Silera, Krimera, and Desimera, who give the three islands' their names. These mysterious beings – each of whom is supposed to dwell on one of the three keys – have never been seen; they make their presence known by taking control of other creatures and speaking through them. The Sisters are known to seamen since a long time; they

don't like prolonged stays in their islands, and have been known to offer teleport anywhere else on Mystara to seamen who were victims of shipwrecks near the keys – a reward for the sacrifice of their ship against the Dragon's Teeth Reefs. No one knows what kind of beings the Three Sisters might be – unusual sea fairies, benevolent sirens, elemental beings, reclusive sorceresses, or what else. It may even be that the islands are much more inhabited by fairy occupants than

mortal eyes could tell. *Source:* XSOLO Lathan's Gold (the names of the three islands were invented by the author).

### **Typhoons Island**

This wide volcanic islet has been avoided by sailors since some decades ago because of the dangerous typhoons and hurricanes which often hit the waters around it; any ship unfortunate enough to meet one of these phenomena is likely to sink below the waves. It's a pity that the island is found on the very route used by Minrothaddan ships to reach the Thanegioth Archipelago. No one has ever landed on the island and came back to tell what is found in the volcano's forested slopes. The truth is that the island's interior is inhabited by several cyclops and it's also the home of Jord, a powerful storm giant. *Source:* AC10 Bestiary of Dragons and Giants (the island's location was not exactly given in the module).

### **Volcanic Tops**

A few islands are actually volcanic cones or mouths which emerge to some extent from the sea. These places are barren and uninhabited without exception – unless you take into account some fire creature dwelling into the volcanic cone. Examples of these islands are Devil's Glow and Dragon's Glare, south of the Ierendi Islands, and Coral Fire and Fireswell, south of Utter Island and Fortress Island, respectively. *Source:* PC3 The Sea People.

## **TRADE IN THE SEA OF DREAD**

Since a long time ago, the Sea of Dread has been the crossroads of trade and migrations of people, through which cultures have come in contact, blended and clashed. From the Known World to Davania, from Ochalea and the Isle of Dawn to the Serpent Peninsula – passing through the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago and the other smaller, scattered islands – despite its name the Sea of Dread has always been a bridge between different places and cultures. A role it continues to play today.

After the Thyatian migration toward Brun and the fall of Nithia (BC 600-500), the greater expanse of the Sea of Dread, which had seen many migrations passing through it in the preceding centuries, temporarily ceased to be crossed by ships, merchants, and explorers. For some centuries, shipping was limited to the northern archipelagos of Ierendi and the Colony Islands, to the Thyatian mainland and isles, and to the western Isle of Dawn down to Ochalea.

Apart from attempts to consolidate a Thyatian trading empire in the western Sea of Dread (see the previous sidebar "A Little Known Story: Thyatian Westward Expansion"), the emerging sea powers of Minrothad and Ierendi, still in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AC, continued to favor the route along the Great Waste's and the Serpent Peninsula's coasts to reach the Gulf of Hule or the Davanian Green Coast. The many islands which dotted the Sea of Dread continued to be unknown, unexplored, or uninteresting for them, as it was the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago, whose seas were dominated by the proud and territorial Twaelar Kingdom of the merrows.





The latter half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century AC, however, saw a renewed interest in the Sea of Dread. Between 960 and 970 AC the Eastern Thanegioth Archipelago was again reached by Known World's ships, and its islands were gradually charted. The main explorer of this age was indeed the Ierendian Rory Barbarosa, who was the first to map the coastlines of the Isle of Dread. In fact, the Thanegioth islands were already known to be rich in exploitable resources – like precious gems and metals in possession of the natives or to be mined, unique spices, and other valuable goods. Trade in the archipelago had always been difficult due to resistance from the Twaelar Kingdom, but opposition from the merrows was lower in those decades; quite the contrary, the merrows took the opportunity to trade with Known World explorers and merchants, while keeping an eye on the increase of the northern realms presence into

the region they controlled, and barring any incursion in the Davanian Shallows to the south.

Nevertheless, in the last three decades, the Eastern Thanegioth saw an increasing presence of merchantmen – and, consequently, of pirate ships – in the archipelago. Most ships came from Ierendi and Minrothad, but ships from other sea countries were not unknown. The two island realm, however, managed to monopolize the two main trade routes – from Ierendi Island and from Trader's Isle straight south to two different point of the archipelago – and quickly discouraged all ships of other countries to trade along them.

The only other power who managed to penetrate the archipelago was the Thyatian Empire, which at the same time was initiating the conquest of the Davanian Hinterlands.

Thyatians came to Thanegioth from a route going south from Hattias and passing from the Burning Mountain, or from one going northwest from Ochalea. The Twaelar merrows did not take any immediate action against the Thyatian expansion into northern Davania, perhaps because they felt the area was to the southeast of their kingdom proper, or because they did not feel threatened at all by Thyatian land grabbing.

Small outposts and coastal forts may also have been – and are being – built by these three sea powers in the most strategic locations of the archipelago, to ensure for themselves control of trade routes and resources. The Known World powers have also begun to value the strategic position of some of the minor islands of the Sea of Dread, and may soon claim possession of some of them.

In AC 1000, the archipelago is an important trade hub, with still many interior areas unexplored, where ships from Ierendi, Minrothad, and Thyatis trade and compete, where pirate havens are increasingly numerous, where the humans meet with the Twaelar merrows to trade, where the clash of interests could soon lead to a war among the powers of the Known World to decide who will keep control of the archipelago's resources, or between them and the Twaelar Kingdom, which may again be persuaded that the human presence in the archipelago is becoming too thorough and dangerous.

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# Mystaranomicon



## » » » Exploring the Books of Mystara

by Jesper Andersen (Spellweaver)

*At one time or another, most Dungeon Masters have had their group of player characters enter a library, a sage's office, a wizard school or a noble's study and heard the dreaded question: 'So, what are all these books about?'*

*Mystaranomicon is a regular column that provides Dungeon Masters with books ready to be inserted into any game with a moment's notice. Use them simply as colourful fluff or to provide clues and books to adventures. This time we look at books related to seafaring and the ocean realms.*

### 20,000 LEGS UNDER THE SEA

**Author:** Captain Noma

**Rarity:** Common in the city of Seashield in the kingdom of Aquas in Alphatia, Uncommon in coastal cities in Ierendi and Minrothad Guilds, Rare elsewhere.

**Year:** 988 AC

**Language:** Originally Alphatian, but it now exists in the languages of many seafaring nations

**Contents:** This famous book, written by Captain Noma of the Alphatian submersible vessel The Shark, is the memoir of his and his

crew's journey down into the dreaded Abyss, below the terraces and the Twilight reaches of the Undersea.

Captain Noma was a mage of some repute from the city of Seashield, famous for his personal exploration of the Elemental Plane of Water. In 986 AC, Noma received the patronage of King Zyndryl of Aquas and the use of his famous submersible, the Shark and her crew. The mission was to explore the depths of the Abyss and find the suspected portals or wormholes to the Elemental Plane of Water believed to be there.

The expedition went as planned until they reached the Twilight. At 2,500 feet below the sea they encountered a horrifying monstrosity - a Gargantuan version of the large, aquatic millipedes known as mashers. This nightmarish creature was more than ten times as large as a normal masher and in a deadly battle nearly shattered the Shark before she finally escaped up to the warmer, sunlit ocean above. Captain Noma returned to Seashield and chronicled his exploits before finally succumbing in 990 AC to nightmares and drinking.

**Legality:** Legal

**Number of pages:** 150 pages

## THE WISE MARINER'S ALMANAC

**Author:** The Imperial Oceanic Explorers' Guild (Thyatian)

**Rarity:** Common in seaports, Rare elsewhere

**Year:** 997 AC (8th Edition)

**Language:** Thyatian, but translations do exist

**Contents:** This very popular almanac is a dictionary of all things nautical, from Oceansend to the Hinterlands. It lists everything from common diseases and conditions to weather phenomenons and signs of underwater reefs or other hidden dangers. Each edition is expanded with the latest new information from all corners of the Thyatian Empire. It does not teach you how to pilot a ship, but it will teach you how to keep the galley free from rats, how to forage for fresh water and supplies on unknown shores or how much you can water down the crew's grog without endangering the morale onboard.

**Legality:** Legal

**Number of pages:** 200



## COCONUT AGAIN TOMORROW - SURVIVING STRANDED IN THE SEA OF DREAD

**Author:** Harremiah Athazar

**Rarity:** Very Rare. Mostly known in Ierendi, Minrothad Guilds and Karameikos

**Year:** 993 AC

**Language:** Thyatian

**Contents:** This book could just as easily have been classified as a biography, had it not been for its numerous, innovative recipes for coconut. The author, a sailor named Harremiah Athazar, got shipwrecked on a small island in the Sea of Dread and managed to survive for almost 30 years before he was rescued by another ship. By that time he had gone almost completely mad, yet he managed

to write down his memoirs when he got back to the mainland before being committed to an asylum run by kind monks. Other sailors might acquire this book and read it just to prepare themselves for the worst possible scenario.

**Legality:** Legal

**Number of pages:** 75

## IN HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE - PRIVATEER OF THE CROWN

**Author:** Captain Blaimonde of The Undaunted

**Rarity:** Uncommon in Ierendi (but quickly becoming Common), Rare elsewhere

**Year:** 1000 AC

**Language:** Ierendi

**Contents:** This is the tale of the exploits of Captain Blaimonde - one of the Queen of Ierendi's most successful and daring privateers in recent decades. Wanted for piracy in the Empire of Thyatis, at home in Ierendi Blaimonde is something close to a national hero - the personification of the island kingdom's free spirit and love of independence.

Foreign ambassadors have sought to have the book banned, saying that it inspires outright unlawful behavior such as piracy, but so far the daring captain remains in the queen's good graces - which somewhat annoys the king.

**Legality:** Legal in Ierendi, frowned upon in other seafaring nations

**Number of pages:** 125 pages

## ALGAIK'S SEA LEDGER

**Author:** Algair Teic

**Rarity:** Common

**Year:** 998 AC

**Language:** Thyatian mainly, but translated into several languages

**Contents:** The famous Sea Ledger is a popular book among seafarers because it remains one of the few and fairly accurate accounts of a voyage to the Thanegioth Archipelago - the islands 1000 miles south of Ierendi and Minrothad Guilds.

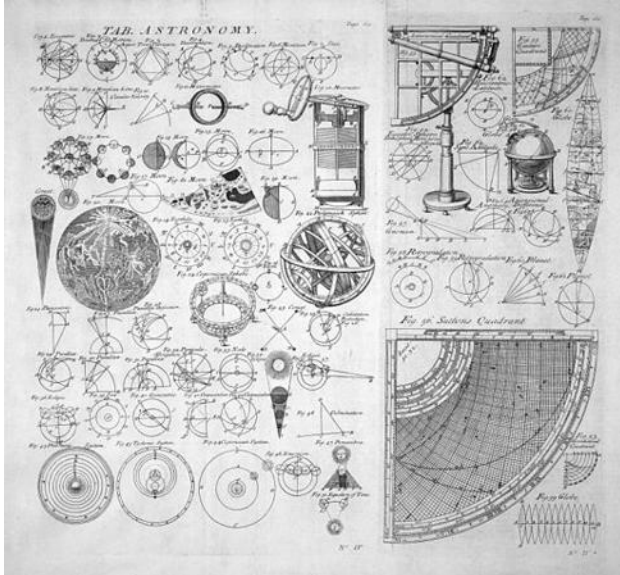
The Sea Ledger was never intended for widespread publication. It was the book in which captain Algair Teic kept accounts of his trading ventures with the natives of the isles, including commentary about observations he made about the popularity of various goods his crew had brought from the mainland. The ledger also includes a few accounts of good places to anchor around the archipelago but Algair only ever visited less than five percent of the isles. The ledger was later stolen and the entrepreneurial thief managed to produce and sell several copies before he was caught. By then, the book had spread like wildfire all along the coast from Soderfjord to Athenos.

**Legality:** Legal

**Number of pages:** 150 pages



## UNDER THE STARS — A SAILOR'S GUIDE TO ASTRONOMICAL PHENOMENON



**Author:** Fithraldor of Clan Kelar of the Waterelves

**Rarity:** Rare

**Year:** 963 AC

**Language:** Elvish

**Contents:** This book is a long account of Fithraldor's observations during decades of sailing on the Sea of Dread. It notes the patterns of moons and comets, the movement of the stars in the night sky and other matters related to astronomy and astrology. It is an impressive work but really only valuable to astronomers and collectors.

**Legality:** Legal

**Number of pages:** 125

### BOOK RARITY REFERENCE TABLE

**Unique:**

Only the original copy of this work has ever been known to exist

**Collectible:**

Less than 20 copies of this work are known or rumoured to exist

**Very Rare:**

Less than 200 copies of this work are known or rumoured to exist

**Rare:**

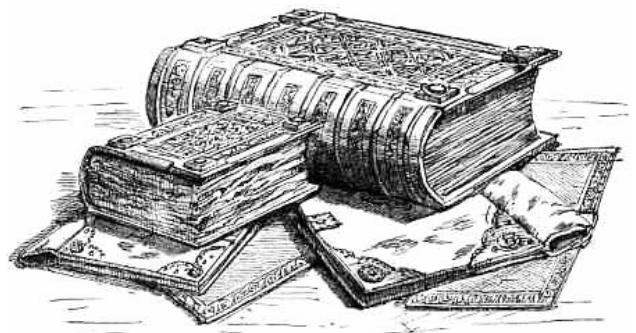
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FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

## A Truly Dreadful Destination: **Bararna Island**

by Geoff Gander (Seer of Yhog)

### FOREWORD

In 1999 I wrote [an article](#) about an island in the Thanegioth Archipelago inhabited by troglodytes who had an abiding interest in sacrificing anyone they captured to the Outer Beings. The article was a sequel of sorts to a piece I wrote about ancient evils in the Thyatian Hinterlands of Davania ([“A Discovery in the Hinterlands”](#)). I had had plans at the time to write an entire series of articles detailing ancient cults and holdovers from dark times that DMs could insert into their campaigns to give them a more Lovecraftian flavour. Although I continued to flesh out the cosmology of the Outer Beings, I never did write the third installment of Marcus Cassius Aurestius' misadventures (which would have centered on the Blight Swamp); although some of the ideas did finally come to life in my [“Mental Ramblings”](#) story.

As to why I chose Bararna Island in the first place, the answer is fairly simple. I was very aware of the popularity of X1: The Isle of Dread, but had long thought that the Thanegioth Archipelago needed some truly dark antagonists in the classic pulp action style (which was what I was writing at that time) – the kopru were good villains, but not dark enough for my tastes. I was reading a lot of H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard (Conan the Barbarian) then, and it seemed only natural that I should take a random island and

turn it into an unforgettably nasty place! I thought I had succeeded. Revisiting Bararna Island has been fun, and going through this exercise has allowed me to flesh it out to a degree that just wasn't possible back then. I hope you enjoy this voyage just as much.

- G.G.

### INTRODUCTION

Well-travelled Mystaran adventurers (and their players) will no doubt know of the aptly-named Isle of Dread. Remote, exotic, and teeming with hostile plants and animals, the Isle is the quintessential "lost world", complete with dinosaurs. The particularly bold - or simply those with little or no sense of self-preservation - may also be familiar with the Isle's evil and utterly inhuman masters, the kopru, who fume and plot in the very centre of the island. With all that danger and excitement, it is easy to forget that there are many other islands in the Thanegioth Archipelago, each of which could be home to equally exotic - and deadly - inhabitants. One such place is Bararna Island, which was named after an unfortunate Kerendan explorer who was shipwrecked there roughly 50 years ago, and managed to survive there long enough to be found by another vessel. His encounters with the inhabitants were well documented, which prompted many adventurers to visit the island in the years since. Few returned.



## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

*“The Immortals grant that I should find relief from this oppressive place which civilised man has had the sense to overlook.”*

- from “My Life on the Waves”, by Octavius Cato (published 981 AC)

Bararna Island, which lies due east of the Isle of Dread, is a long, narrow, heavily forested place. The land rises gently from the sea in most places to a height of roughly 300 feet above sea level to a central ridge of hills running the length of the island, with a shallow, swampy depression many miles wide (lying roughly 100 feet above sea level) situated in the centre. Unlike the better-known Isle of Dread, there are no true mountains or active volcanoes here.

Many streams and rivers of varying sizes wind their way from the hilly uplands to the coast and the swampy interior. The oceangoing rivers generally flow swift and straight, while the few interior rivers wind more due to the gentler slope until they converge in the central swamp. All of them contain many species of freshwater fish and aquatic insects; although the central swamps are home to much larger varieties. A single, shallow river – known only to the native inhabitants – drains the swamp sluggishly into the sea.

The coastline is dotted with dozens of coves, many of which are deep enough to be used as natural harbours for oceangoing vessels. Offshore, the seabed drops away precipitously to the north and south. As with the rest of the Thanegioth Archipelago, Bararna Island is tropical with a rainy season from Ambyrmont to the end of Flaurmont, with little rainfall during the rest of the year. Even during the

dry season, however, the air is quite humid; although it is stifling in the central swamps all year round. Storms and fog banks are common around the coasts, which only add to the island's less than inviting reputation.

## FLORA AND FAUNA

*“...and all the while we noticed something odd about this land. There were no birds, nor were there any mammals - at least, none that showed themselves.”*

- from the account of Marcus Cassius Aurestius (c. AC 997)



At first glance, Bararna Island is a tropical paradise. Palm trees and cycads, interspersed with ferns, grow thickly over much of the island. Fruit trees – such as papaya and mango – are also present in large numbers, and the sickly-sweet aromas of the rotting



fruit attract numerous insects. Although the jungles extend to the coastline in most parts of the island, the northern and eastern coasts are rocky, and there ferns are predominant. The interior swamplands are filled with reeds, cattails, as well as lily pads as wide as a man is tall.

Bararna Island is unique among the islands of Thanegioth in that almost all of its animal life is reptilian or amphibious. The rocky beaches of the northern shore teem with abnormally large (6-7 foot long) iguanas that feed on the mats of seaweed that coat the tidal zones, while further inland the dense tropical jungles echo with the chirps and croaks of frogs and toads - and the hissing of the snakes that eat them. There are no mammals or birds to be found anywhere, nor have any lived here for millennia.

Of all the island's inhabitants, the semi-civilised troglodytes dominate every region. Most follow a hunter-gatherer existence and are grouped into loose tribes led by a shaman or powerful warrior. Although the troglodytes of Bararna Island are a Stone Age culture, they do have the technological know-how required to build outrigger canoes capable of sailing the length of the archipelago if necessary - thus they are known to many coastal communities on all of the islands.

## THE FIVE TRIBES OF BARARNA

*"We were not alone, however, for in the midst of that clearing, dancing around the fire to the sonorous thrumming of those unseen drums, were unwholesome lizard-kin!"*

- from the account of Marcus Cassius Aurestius

The troglodytes are divided into five tribes, each of which has its own traditions and taboos. Most tribes generally coexist peacefully so long as warriors stay within their own lands; however, during times when hunting (for food or sacrifices) is poor, bloody skirmishes are common. Shamans, however, wander the island unopposed - all tribes share the belief that touching a shaman without permission invites great misfortune on the offender's family. Each of the tribes is described briefly below:

### Asteb ("bloodied hill")

At 140 strong, this tribe is the smallest; however, what it lacks in numbers it more than makes up for in sheer ferocity. Its warriors are well known for their propensity to go berserk in battle, and to desecrate the remains of their fallen enemies. The other tribes are generally content to leave them alone, and will mount raids into their territory only when the need is dire.

**DM Notes:** Members of this tribe gain an additional +1 to hit in battle, on top of other bonuses. Warriors do not make Morale checks once battle is joined.

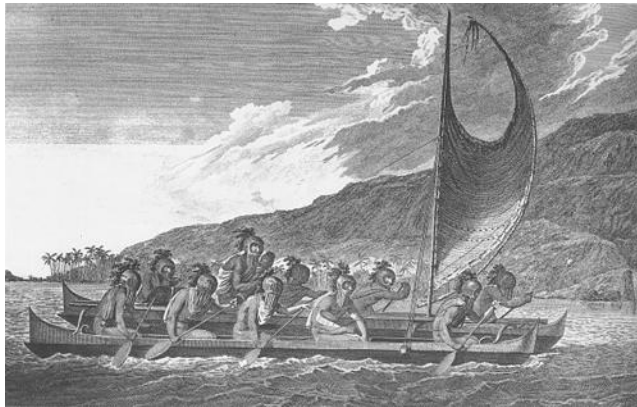
### Kugmarek ("stone-armoured")

This tribe of 600 troglodytes occupies the rockier portions of the uplands of Bararna Island, and controls most of the paths leading into the interior swamp. Their warriors make frequent raids on neighbouring tribes to make up for the poor hunting on their own lands, and they have a reputation for being disciplined combatants - and for giving no quarter at all to vanquished enemies. Being intensely pragmatic, the Kugmarek will often eat a fallen opponent if given the chance. If the opponent (regardless of race) fought well,

the troglodytes of this tribe will posthumously “adopt” them, and name one of their hatchlings after them if the victim's name was known. In doing so, the fallen warrior's strength is added to the tribe's.

**DM Notes:** Members of the Kugmarek tribe receive an additional Armour Class bonus of 1, on top of any other bonus. Due to their skill in battle, it is also impossible to gain a flanking attack against a warrior of this tribe.

### Rakoragresh (“sea storm”)



These troglodytes occupy the westernmost part of the island. One would think their tiny territory would be barely sufficient to sustain this 400-strong tribe, but the vast majority spend most of their time at sea. They are, in fact, the most accomplished sailors among the troglodytes, and their massive canoes have ranged as far as the outer reaches of Yavdlom in search of plunder and captives. They occasionally offer their services to other troglodytes, and sometimes even human tribes on the Isle of Dread, in exchange for plunder. Because of this, the Rakoragresh are generally distrusted by their kin.

**DM Notes:** Members of this tribe gain a +1 to all sailing skills, and they may re-roll one bad result per day (but the new result must be accepted).

### Keresh (“fire warrior”)

The 550 members of this tribe have long-running feuds against the Rakoragresh (who delight in raiding their land) and the Kugmarek (with whom they have numerous territorial disputes). This tribe is unique in that it is the only one that mines, and forges iron weapons and armour. This has given its warriors an edge (no pun intended) in battle. The chieftain dreams of gaining dominance over all of the other tribes, and using the combined might of all the troglodytes to build an empire as described in their most ancient legends.

**DM Notes:** Troglodytes from this tribe gain a +1 to hit and a -2 bonus to Armour Class when fighting in formation.

### Nalemgesh (“unseen ones”)

The 250 members of this tribe are sandwiched between the Rakoragresh and the Keresh, both of which are more numerous and generally more aggressive. The frequent raids have led the Nalemgesh to become very stealthy, and proficient in concealing themselves – even for troglodytes. They are reclusive, and are more likely to pepper intruders with poison darts than challenge them. These troglodytes have built their two villages in the trees themselves, and each is protected by magics that confuse the uninvited. Members of the Keresh tribe occasionally buy passage across Nalemgesh land in order to raid Rakoragresh territory.

DM Notes: Members of this tribe gain an additional bonus of +1 when attempting to surprise opponents. They also gain a +2 bonus on saving throws vs. Poison.

## HISTORY (AS THE TROGLODYTES KNOW IT)

*“The medicine man shook his rattle and began telling me the saga of his people. In that moment I was grateful to have learned the tongue of the lizard men, for that, I am sure, is all that kept me alive.”*

- from “My Life on the Waves”, by Octavius Cato (published 981 AC)

The troglodytes maintain a rich and detailed oral history, dating back almost 8,000 years to the dying days of the Carnifex Empire. Through their interpretation, the tribes tell a story of coming to a great island during a time of upheaval in which their ancestral home had been destroyed. After taming the land and building a strong realm of their own, their remote ancestors were beset by hostile human kingdoms who coveted their wealth and glorious cities. During this period of strife, epic heroes arose who, wielding the Five Spears of the True People, led the troglodytes to great victories. What followed, according to the ancient histories, was a golden age in which the troglodyte kingdom received tribute from dozens of humbled nations.

The troglodytes' undoing was their generosity. In defeating so many of their enemies, the victorious troglodyte armies acquired thousands of prisoners, whom they brought back to their island as slaves. While many were used as common labourers, some human captives were tractable enough that they could be trusted with more complicated, and

important, tasks. Some of the craftier slaves, dreaming of revenge, learned the secrets of the troglodytes' defences and betrayed their generous masters during an attack by a coalition of human realms. The troglodyte kingdom was utterly destroyed, ushering in a dark age from which the tribes have not yet emerged.

The original article on Bararna Island provides the true history of the troglodytes; I will not repeat it here, aside from noting that the legendary, long lost kingdom the tribes claim as their own was in fact the realm of the Y'hog Carnfiex, who were the masters of the troglodytes' ancestors. The conflicts with human nations are dimly-remembered conflicts with Lhomarr and its allies, and the ancient betrayal by crafty human slaves was a complete fabrication. Regardless, almost all of the inhabitants believe this legend to be true, and this forms the basis of their hatred of the humans on neighbouring islands.

## CULTURE

*“They lived in accordance with the rhythms of their island, but that such an otherwise idyllic place should be home to such as they makes a mockery of any notions of Nature's balance.”*

- from “My Life on the Waves”, by Octavius Cato (published 981 AC)

The tribes of Bararna Island follow a largely hunter-gatherer existence, with life centred around two or three villages within their territories. There is little industry to speak of in these communities beyond the



fashioning of weapons and basic tools; although many troglodytes also create art out of sea shells, driftwood, and bones. Due to the long-running antagonisms that exist among some tribes, and the lack of variation on the island in terms of resources, there is relatively little trade – or inter-tribal contact in general.

Each village, regardless of tribe, is led by the oldest female, who is advised by the most senior shamans and warriors. Of the two groups, the shamans have more influence due to the strong spiritual undertone present in all communities, which is a hold-over from the period when this part of the world was dominated by the Carnifex. In times of strife, however (which happen fairly frequently), the warriors quickly take control in order to co-ordinate the defence of the tribe's territory. Day-to-day village life, however, is the exclusive province of the tribal mother, and her word is law. A tribal mother rules her community until death, after which the second-oldest female assumes control. Understandably, most tribal mothers rule for a few years at most, and as each wishes to make their mark on their communities it is not unusual for laws and traditions to change drastically when a new tribal mother takes over. Most members of the tribe accept this as the natural rhythm of life, much as the rainy season follows the dry, and simply accommodate whatever changes their new leader imposes. However, there is only so much change a tribal mother can impose before the shamans, acting as the guardians of morality and tradition, step in. Internal strife is not uncommon. Despite the frequent upheavals, the core values of the troglodytes remain largely unchanged.

Shamans, in addition to their ceremonial duties and their role as guardians of social

order and spiritual health, prepare herbal remedies to cure the diseases that frequently pass through the islands, and provide what passes for formal education among their tribes. In the latter role, they are living repositories for the extensive oral history of the troglodytes. The shamans also direct the young to occupations that they feel would be most suitable – whether it be a warrior, an artisan, or (for the lucky few) an apprentice to a shaman. If a young troglodyte is chosen in this way, he or she is immediately sent to live with their new master, acquires a new name, and all familial ties are severed. The apprentice's family holds a funeral, and never speaks the offspring's name again.

On rare occasions, a young troglodyte will refuse the role assigned to them by a shaman. If this happens, the youth will be permitted to make their own choice if they survive an ordeal assigned to them by the tribal mother – unless they were destined to become a shaman, in which case they are imprisoned and sacrificed at the next new moon.

Although inter-tribal rivalry is common, almost all of the troglodytes are united in their devotion to the Outer Being known as He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Seen, whom they call Gleeshka. Their patron is revered as the source of all life and as their protector, and in their mythology He led them to Bararna Island during a time of great chaos. The troglodytes revere Gleeshka by way of quarterly sacrifices – usually humans captured from neighbouring islands, but when these efforts fail they turn to members of rival tribes. Gleeshka is not terribly picky.

## SECRETS OF THE ISLAND

Before the Taymoran disaster the central, swampy depression was a shallow, sulphurous lake fed by hot springs, which was inhabited by kopru. From their inhospitable domain, they controlled the surrounding region in the name of their master, the Emperor of Adhuza. Undersea aftershocks following the sinking of Taymora collapsed many of the hot springs, which made the highlands uninhabitable for the kopru as the lake drained away. Since that time, the once-magnificent underwater palace has been looted by the troglodytes, and what remained has fallen into ruin and largely sunk into the swamp. Jagged, mossy wall fragments poke out of the reeds. The troglodytes know of the ruins, and have tales of their former masters, but none come here because their shamans have declared the entire swamp to be taboo. The only visitors are the shamans themselves, who come here to commune with their ancestors and to train their apprentices, and to meet amongst themselves.

While the upper level of the palace has been picked clean, the lower level, which once contained the private chambers of the kopru, is still largely untouched thanks to the presence of numerous mundane and magical traps – many of which no longer function. It can be accessed via a weed-choked, perfectly circular hole in the centre of the ruins, which leads to a winding, flooded tunnel, at the end of which is a series of natural caverns. All of these caverns are flooded, and contain some of the personal treasures of the kopru who once dwelt here. Another watery passage, which once led to the ocean, leads further down for 100 feet before ending in a massive rockfall (caused by the quakes from the Taymoran disaster). These caverns contain fish of varying sizes and giant clams, who feed

off of tiny zooplankton that in turn live on bacteria.

Some examples of the treasures that the players could find are listed below:

### DIADEM OF INFLUENCE

This is a ruby diadem set in gold, shaped to fit the head of a kopru. When worn, it enhances a kopru's inborn charm ability, such that all saving throws are penalised by 2. This item cannot be used by other races.

### NECKLACE OF LANDWALKING

This necklace is composed of hundreds of gold and silver links, interspersed with pea-sized, uncut aquamarine stones. When worn by a kopru, the necklace creates a 10 foot wide sphere of water around them, which can be controlled by thought. The water ball's magical surface tension allows it to roll over any surface, up to a 60 degree inclination, at a speed of 60' per turn (or 20' per round). While inside the ball a kopru can breathe easily, cast spells, and speak (its voice can be heard outside the water ball; although it sounds distorted). The ball lasts for up to six hours when created, at the end of which time it evaporates back to the Plane of Elemental Water at a rate of one foot in diameter per round.

### AMPLIFIER STATUE

This foot-tall statue, carved out of coral to resemble a kopru, was designed to pick up the mind-control signals of the kopru masters of Adhuza and rebroadcast them over a larger area, thus enabling them to control the populace without having to be physically present. Hundreds of these statues were made, and many remain scattered across the

archipelago. The enchantments in the statue are specifically attuned to kopru brainwaves, and therefore it cannot be used by any other race.

### Gauntlets of Vitality



This item once belonged to a Taymoran hero of noble (i.e., vampiric) blood, who sought to assassinate the kopru overseers of this region when it was part of Adhuza. He failed in his mission, and a few of his items ended up in kopru hands. The gauntlets appear to be normal leather and metal gauntlets (which have been preserved from centuries of being underwater due to their enchantments), with what appear to be four thumbnail-sized pearls mounted on the wrists. Each of these pearls opens when tapped five times, revealing a hollow. If filled with fresh blood, each pearl will act as a *cure light wounds* spell, and will activate as soon as the wearer sustains damage – the blood is consumed by the activation of the healing magic. Blood kept in a pearl will last only a week before spoiling.

### Horns of Fury

This is a pair of enduk horns, inlaid with gold and rubies, attached to a simple metal cap. When worn, the horns increase the wearer's Strength by 2 (to a maximum of 18), but also make them prone to berserk rages when in combat (cumulative 10% chance per round of combat), during which they must attack the nearest person – friend or foe. These horns were worn by the elite warriors of the Taymoran city-state of Tycur. The horns incur a reaction penalty of -4 with minotaurs, whereas enduks must save vs. Spells or fly into a rage and seek to kill the wearer (with an additional +3 bonus to their attacks).

### Mogrethian Officer's Sword

This sword (a *falcata* +2) was issued to most officers in the armies of Mogreth in the later period of the Second Empire (BC 2300 – BC 2000) who were based out of Theliir (modern-day Tel Akbir). Most such swords were enchanted to give the wielder an edge against the foes most likely to be encountered during those times, such as the Taymorans, the Adhuzans, and the free sea peoples. The most common enchantments used were *water-breathing*, *flames on command*, and *baste* – the DM should choose which one has been placed on the sword. Roughly 10% of such swords, which would have been wielded by senior officers, were imbued with two enchantments.





[Optional rules for falcata weapon mastery](#) have been created, or the DM may rule that this works the same way as a normal sword.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The most obvious way of introducing the players to this setting is to have them come across references to it in an incidental fashion (perhaps in the form of a journal found in a treasure hoard, or overheard in a bar). The information gained in this way would likely be incomplete and/or inaccurate, and should whet their appetites to learn more.

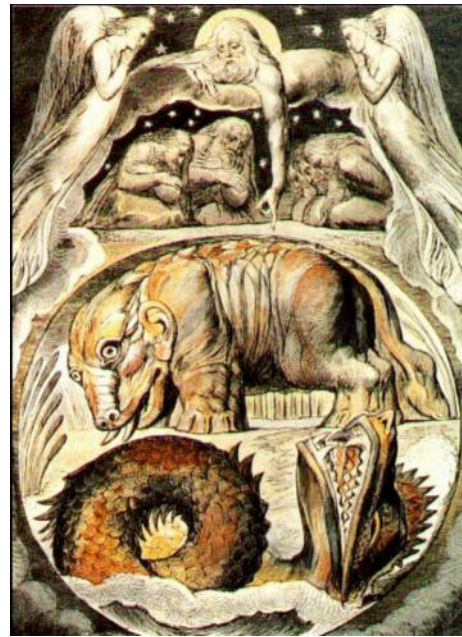
Another way of learning about Bararna Island would be to encounter Marcus Cassius Aurestius himself. Marcus survived his adventure on the island, and likely did more than just write about it. He could be giving a lecture tour about his discoveries at a variety of Mystaran colleges, and depending on who the PCs know they could very well have heard of him. Marcus would happily share additional information with the PCs – especially if they expressed a willingness to go to the island and try to put down the menacing creature that devoured his companions.

Alternatively, the PCs can find their way to Bararna Island in much the same way as the original discoverer did – by accident. In this case, the PCs may not even know about the island and its fearsome reputation. This might be the best way to introduce the island.

## NEW MONSTERS

*“Of its description I can say little, save that it resembled a moving blackness - a crawling, slithering, mass of nothingness that destroyed all it touched.”*

- from the account of Marcus Cassius Aurestius (c. AC 997)



### Aragresh (Glorious Warrior)

Armour Class: 6  
 Hit Dice: 15\*\*\*\*  
 Horror Rating: 12  
 Move: 60' (20')  
 Attacks: 2 grab or 1 smother, or 1 devour  
 Damage: 1d6/1d6 or 3d4 + special or 1d8/round  
 Number Appearing: 1 (1)  
 Save As: F17  
 Morale: 10  
 Treasure Type: None  
 Intelligence: 6  
 Alignment: Chaotic

Aragresh (lit., “glory warrior”<sup>1</sup>) are elephant-sized masses of black protoplasmic matter that originate in the same dimension that currently houses their master, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Seen (also known as the One – “Gleeshka” to His troglodyte followers). These exceedingly rare creatures are almost only found in or near temples dedicated to their master, who is not known for being terribly interested in the affairs of mortals. The few scholars who are familiar with the forbidden lore of the Outer Beings are not entirely sure what purpose the Vault Fiends serve.


These creatures lack any skeletal structure and are highly elastic, and as such can assume any shape they wish and can stretch or contract their forms to pass through almost any aperture (even as small as a keyhole; although passing their entire form through it would take a full turn). They are also immune to fire, lightning, and non-magical weapons. The foul odour exuded by these creatures is such that anyone within 10 feet must save vs. Poison each round or succumb to nausea (-4 to attacks, skill checks and saves). These effects

remain until the individual leaves the area of effect for one turn.

In combat, an aragresh can extend parts of its mass twice per round to grab its opponents (inflicting 1d6 crushing damage), or it can try to smother an opponent for 3d4 damage, after which the victim must make a successful attack to escape. Until they do so, a victim must save vs. Death Ray each round or suffocate in 2d6 rounds and die 1d4 minutes thereafter. The aragresh’s most deadly attack, however, is its ability to devour its victim whole. If it hits, it wraps itself around its victim and begins liquefying and absorbing their flesh for 1d8 damage per round. Once the victim's hit points fall to 0, he or she is absorbed completely (no resurrection is possible).

<sup>1</sup> This was incorrectly translated by Marcus as “Vault Fiend”, due to his weak grasp of the troglodyte tongue - which, although related to the common lizard man tongue (known as Hemkalss, which he did speak well), has important etymological differences. Hemkalss uses the letter “h”; although it is pronounced towards the back of the palate and is occasionally hard to discern. Non-native speakers who wish to have any skill with the language quickly train themselves to listen attentively for this letter, as dropping it can substantially change the meaning of what is being said. The troglodyte tongue rarely makes use of “h”, and thus Marcus heard “Haragresh”, and from that inferred the component word “harag”, which means “pit”, or “cavern” – a reasonable conclusion, given the creature was emerging from a pit at the time. In fact, the troglodytes were saying “arag”, which is derived from the Carnifex word “arh” (light) – which also carries the implied meaning of glory (this is not the case in Hemkalss).

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## SUMMARY

I wrote this campaign in the early 1990's, and our group played it in 1994–95, if I remember correctly. The events take place in the Thanegioth Archipelago circa 1000 AC, but the campaign can be adapted to other time periods, as it is only loosely connected to canon material. It should be noted however, that this is not a ready-to-run adventure. The editors of *Threshold* have courteously provided island maps based on my originals, but any building maps are long since gone. Also in keeping with the spirit of this publication, I have kept the text rules-light. On the other hand, the prospective GMs would have to tailor the campaign to suit the abilities of the PCs anyway. I provide only approximations of monster and NPC numbers and abilities. In any case the campaign will be a demanding one for the PCs, so it is definitely meant for the higher Expert-level range in *ye olde D&D parlance*.

This campaign assumes that the Thanegioth Archipelago is unknown and unexplored, much like the assumptions made in *X1 Isle of Dread*. That module is definitely useful for anyone running this campaign. The mystery of the archipelago is central to the campaign.

The campaign revolves around the ambitions of the renegade magic-user Daricus, who harbours a bitter hatred for the two empires, Alphatia and Thyatia. He is the leader of the ancient Cult of Starfire Sphere, a sub-cult within the larger cult of Rathanos, the Immortal of fire and energy. Daricus has built a small empire in the Thanegioth Archipelago, led by himself as the “Firelord” and other members of the cult, fire mages and clerics of Rathanos. His ambitions are many: 1) to finalize his control of the whole Archipelago and to decimate the remaining opposition, 2) to exact revenge on Thyatis and Alphatia and 3) to complete the mystical Ritual of Ascension that will assist him in all his other goals and make him one of the most powerful beings in the world. If he succeeds, a powerful Reign of Fire will begin on these parts of Mystara.

The assumption of this campaign is that the PCs oppose the Firelord. They have been sent to investigate the disappearance of many Thyatian vessels in the Sea of Dread – they were captured or scuttled by the Firelord's raiders. The quest to punish these strange pirates pits them against a dangerous foe, reveals ancient secrets, offers the possibility of new friends and allies, and may decide the fate of the two empires.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND TIMELINE

The backdrop for the whole campaign and much of its historical background is the Cult of Rathanos and one of its sub-cults, the Cult of the Starfire Sphere. I'll explore that first and then move on to describe first the history of the original Firelord and then the history of the modern Firelord Daricus. In the end of this section I'll offer a schematic timeline.

### Rathanos and the Cult of the Starfire Sphere



*Symbol of Rathanos*

Rathanos is an Immortal consumed by an interest in Fire and energy transformations, especially transforming biological beings into beings of pure energy. He is symbolised by a burning brand, often in the shape of a fiery Ankh, as he was worshipped in the lost Empire of Nithia. In the early years of the Nithian Empire, worship of Rathanos was widespread but mostly constrained to elite circles of scholars, priests, mages, alchemists and people attracted by the dream of transformation into “Beings of Fire” (or Light). The mysterious Magian Fire Worshipers, who forged alliances with beings in the Elemental Plane of Fire, were always in close albeit a bit uneasy contact with followers of Rathanos. Only the more militant branches had more cooperation.

Rathanos is an Immortal consumed by an interest in Fire and energy transformations, especially transforming biological beings into beings of pure energy. He is symbolised by a burning brand, often in the shape of a fiery Ankh, as he was worshipped in the lost Empire of Nithia. In the early years of the Nithian Empire, worship of Rathanos was

After the destruction of Nithia, a mystical branch of the cult of Rathanos was spared on the Isle of Dawn, but other more energetic and aggressive tendencies remained as undercurrents. The most important of these branches had its origins in the Thanegioth Archipelago during the Nithian era. It emerged around the mysterious figure of the Firelord in 1600–1500 BC. Those events are described in the next section. This section describes briefly the canons of this sect.

After the fall of Nithia, the cult of Rathanos around the area of former Nithia was linked to many nationalistic or even anti-colonialist concerns. Initially the Thothian followers of Rathanos harboured a bitter hatred towards the Alphatian Empire due to its colonial overlordship. Later on, when Thyatis emerged, the (literal) flames of this hatred were fanned by many Alphatian-Thyatian struggles that ravaged the homelands of the Thothians. In the Alasiyan basin of the present-day Ylaruam, the centuries of colonial wars between Alphatia and Thyatia would feed this anti-colonial attitude among the few persecuted followers of Rathanos and the dangerous Magian Fire Worshipers. Although most of the knowledge regarding the Nithian-era Firelord had been lost, scattered remarks in their scriptures about “the Fiery Pharaoh” would eventually spark ideas about re-establishing a power base for more militant worship of Rathanos. This is the general religious basis for this campaign scheme.

According to two important and ancient books, *The Fiery Scriptures* and *The Dogmas of Ouroboros*, Rathanos is aided in this world by an important ally the Starfire Sphere, who is said to reside among the stars with its strange breed of fire vampires. (Inspired by

the entity Cthugha created by August Derleth.) The Starfire Sphere is Rathanos's "right arm" in Mystara, his tool for influencing developments in this world. But the Starfire Sphere holds also a greater promise. Every 2500 years or so "the Stars are Right", and the Starfire Sphere has a rare chance of channelling a vast amount of power to a single follower of Rathanos in this world. This would make the follower into the Nexus, a being who has powers over the Element of Fire equalling those of the highest elemental rulers. Such an individual could create a lasting Reign of Fire where Rathanos would be the most important deity. The previous time of ascension was during the rule of the Nithian-era Firelord; the next is circa 1000 AC.

**Starfire Sphere** is a very powerful entity that appears in this world very rarely, only during the successful Ritual of Ascension, as a multilayered, semi-transparent sphere of flames. It is an ally of sorts for Rathanos, but only indirectly, by being able to channel power for powerful cultists. Those cultists are the concrete tools for Rathanos's works. In itself the Starfire Sphere is a chaotic, unpredictable entity with little concern for matters in this world. It may even be that the whole Ritual of Ascension is little more than a lure for the unfathomable Sphere, and becoming a Nexus is more a side-effect than a conscious act by the Sphere. Or perhaps the Sphere is even connected to the Outer Beings in some way, and the gathering of the Nexus candidates has a deeper purpose that Rathanos cannot grasp from his "merely" Immortal perspective.

In the scriptures of the Cult of the Starfire Sphere, this event is called the Ascension of Nexus. It is said that during the Ascension, the Starfire Sphere will descend from the heavens, warping the very fabric of reality and bringing its stellar home with it to touch the mortal lands. A new star will be born in its home constellation to mark the birth of a new Nexus. It is thought that every star in the constellation represents Nexuses that have Ascended in other worlds. But until now, nobody has succeeded to Ascend in Mystara<sup>1</sup>.

Essentially, the Cult of the Starfire Sphere is a millenarian (2 ½ millenarian, to be exact) cult. During the long years between the times that "the Stars are Right", the cult is virtually non-existent, if one doesn't count the occasional mad prophet or a crazed follower who tries desperately to extend his/her life in order to be alive during the next Ascension. During the final century before the time of Ascension the cult is revitalised, as powerful individuals within the main cult of Rathanos start gathering followers and try to find a good area for the Ascension Ritual. One major requirement for the Ritual is that the area where it is performed has some powerful links to the Plane of Fire – volcanic areas are often preferred. The constant volcanic activity in the largest island of the Thanegioth Archipelago must have been what originally drew the first Firelord there.

In order to complete the ritual, the Nexus candidate has to be an accomplished cleric of Rathanos or a Fire Mage. Also, summoning the Starfire Sphere and its constellation down from the heavens requires a lot of power, inaccessible to any single individual. Thus the

<sup>1</sup> In the Cthugha stories the constellation is Piscis Austrinus, and the home of Cthugha is the star Fomalhaut.

candidate has to gather a large amount of followers, both mages and clerics. This gathering of power is at the core of the Cult of the Starfire Sphere.

The Ritual of Ascension will take place in a carefully prepared location, where both natural and artificial fire-related power points are needed. The cultists will gather in concentric circular formations described by the Fiery Scriptures, channelling power for the Nexus candidate. Each of them has to undergo strict rituals of purification for weeks or months on end before attending. If some cultists cannot be present, they must be replaced with magical power beacons crafted for just this purpose. Only a certain (small) percentage of the cultists may be replaced thus, so killing enough of them beforehand will stop the Ritual. Another chance to stop the ritual is to kill enough cultists during their incantations, which will disturb the channelling of power.

In accordance with the nature of the Ritual of Ascension, the Cult will organise itself in hierarchical Spheres of Influence – the Nexus candidate being at the centre of several co-centric circles of cultists. One's place in these spheres dictates both political power and access to the secrets of the cult. During its history, the cult has developed secret crafts similar to those of the Glantrian Fire Elementalists.

The Cult often forms alliances with various fire-based creatures like efreeti, fire salamanders, red dragons and fire giants. Through these alliances they can gain protection and important resources required in the Ritual (rare ingredients and such). The allied fire-creatures are promised a better future within the coming Reign of Fire. But there are some beings that are bitter enemies

Use the ones in the Glantri Gazetteer, but substitute the highest craft with the ability of the Nexus candidate to attempt the Ascension. Optional: If you don't like the idea that both clerics and mages can learn these crafts, you can make the Fire-Mages the most influential group. The mages form the Spheres of Influence, being the only ones able to attempt the Ascension. The Clerics of Rathanos function as a support structure, preferring "direct" worship of Rathanos. This might even cause schisms within the cult. This is just a matter of taste and doesn't affect the scenario significantly.

of these traditional allies, like the Sollux and the Helions who hate the efreeti. Anyone opposing the Cult will find willing allies there.

**Notes on important enemy NPCs:** In order to set the power-level of the campaign, the DM should prepare the Spheres of Influence within the cult of the Firelord beforehand. The leader is of course the Firelord Daricus himself. In my campaign he was a level 18 Mage, with two high-level subordinates on the next sphere, four on the next, eight on the next et cetera. The amount and the respective levels and classes of the cultists is important in setting the right level of challenge for the whole campaign. However, 6th level mages and priests are important battle specialists, and the Firelord should have a large amount of them at his disposal. An example of the organisational structure of a very powerful Cult might be:

Firelord (18th)

1st Circle (14th) x2: High Priest of Rathanos,  
Director of the School of Magic



2nd Circle (12th) x4: Leader of the Navy, Leader of the Home Army, Leader of Expeditionary Forces, and Spymaster

3rd Circle (10th) x 8: Commanders of large military units, Head teachers, Senior Priests

4th Circle (8th) x16: Local Commanders, Spies, Teachers, and Elite Battle Mages

5th Circle (6th) x 32: Battle Mages and Priests

Lower Circles: Uninitiated (1st to 5th level)

**NOTE:** Because especially the inner-circle cultists are needed in the Ritual, they will always have some resources for escape and will not willingly fight to the death. This will make things a lot easier for the PCs, as otherwise the presence of fairly high-level spellcasters might be too much for them.

## Ancient History of the Thanegioth Archipelago

There are scattered legends about the origin of the Thanegioth Archipelago in the oral traditions of the Nuari people and the people inhabiting the Serpent peninsula to the west. Mostly these are, of course, just metaphoric stories. Some tribes tell the story of the Father of All Dragons, who reached the end of his days and crashed down. The fall created the Sea of Dread, and the Thanegioth Archipelago is said to be the remnants of his gargantuan body. It may well be that these legends are transformed memories of the Great Rain of Fire, the destruction of Blackmoor, and the time Brun and Davania were violently ripped apart, forming the Sea of Dread. However, the islands have always been the home for a host of Red Dragons and Sea Dragons.

These beliefs are reflected in the languages of some Nuari tribes of the Serpent peninsula. The southern island chain of the peninsula,

the one “reaching” towards Thanegioth Archipelago, is called in some of their languages “Than-e-gia” (the tongue of the serpent). The southern large island is “Than-e-gil” (the head of the serpent), and Thanegioth could be “Than-e-gia-othi” (the flame tongue/fiery spit of the serpent). Thus, the Serpent peninsula is mythically pictured as a large fire-breathing dragon.

The dragon peoples inhabiting the Archipelago hold similar legends. Just to the north of the Archipelago there’s a large reef called the Dragon Reef due to its peculiar shape. The Sea Dragons are convinced that the reef was born from the body of their ancient predecessor, who fought the Father of All Reds. The Reds, in turn, see the middle group of islands in the Archipelago as the bones of their forefather (although the term might also be “Mother”). In both versions, the dragons killed each other.

In any case, these various mythic histories of the Thanegioth Archipelago picture cataclysmic encounters with the elements of Fire and Water, and this can’t be coincidental. Especially the eastern islands have strong connections to the Plane of Fire, and in the waters surrounding the Archipelago there are various powerful wormholes. One of them manifests as a large whirlpool, which travels to and fro in the waters south of the Isle of Dread. The Sea Dragons refer to it as “the Home-Song Fountain”; seafaring humans call it “the Whirlpool of Lost Hope”. The dragons live within or close to the whirlpool and can direct its movements to some extent.

***Some notes on the various migrations to Thanegioth:*** The red dragons and the sea dragons are the earliest inhabitants of the islands and the surrounding waters. The elves of the western island, The Children of the



Swan, were the next to arrive. Stories of their history suggest that they were a splinter group originating in the great divide between the elves of Grunland and Vulcania, and that they took to the seas after reaching the southern shore of the Sea of Dread. The arrival of the rakasta on the Island of Dread is shrouded in the mist of history: they believe that their patron the Great Lion brought them to live here in peace. The final waves of migration were by the Nuari.

### **The Era of the First Firelord, or the Fiery Pharaoh**

The first Firelord was originally a member of a ruling family in Nithia. He was also an accomplished mage and obsessed with Fire magic of all kinds. Around 1600–1500 BC, amongst a wave of radicalising Rathanos-worship, he stumbled upon the secret of the Nexus. Perhaps he learned this from the various elemental beings he summoned and bound, or during his travels in the Elemental Plane of Fire. During this time he also understood that he didn't have a chance of becoming a pharaoh and that his life might even be in danger. The Ritual of Ascension

might offer a way of overcoming these obstacles.

Later on, with a group of trusted followers from the Magian Fire Worshippers, clerics of Rathanos and some obscure fire elemental sects, he retreated to the Thanegioth Archipelago. In his studies he had found out about the powerful presence of the Element of Fire in some of the islands and decided to construct the Ascension platform there. Essentially, this signalled the birth of the Cult of the Starfire Sphere on Mystara.

Arriving in the Thanegioth Archipelago, the Nithian mage assumed the title of the Firelord, or the Fiery Pharaoh. He started building his own little empire in the middle of the Sea of Dread. His seat of power was on the easternmost, largest island. He forged alliances with the efreeti and the fire giants living in the volcanic western region of the island, and befriended the red dragons of the central Archipelago. Together they completed a wonderful construction, the Plateau of Fire. It is an artificial plateau raised by diverting magma to the bottom of the island. Permanent wormholes were created there and were made controllable by complex rituals and incantations described by the sacred texts mentioned above – the Firelord himself wrote these. In the centre of the plateau is a dome-shaped temple of the Starfire Sphere, specially crafted for the ritual of Ascension.

### **Rise and Fall of the Firelord's Empire and the Lion King Rak'Asta**

When the Fiery Pharaoh started expanding his hatchling empire to the western islands, his forces met with opposition. The ancestors



*Bust of King Rak'Asta*

of the present-day rakastae lived on the Isle of Dread. At that time they resembled weretigers and lived in a highly advanced society that centred on the worship of their patron the Lion. The cultural centre was on the plateau in the northern part of the island, where their king Rak'Asta led them. (For the purposes of this campaign, there isn't the society of koprus from X1, and the plateau is very different in any case.) When the minions of the Fiery Pharaoh invaded the island, Rak'Asta managed to make alliances with the Children of the Swan and the remaining Sea Dragons, who had been beaten to submission by the Reds in several draconic wars. It is told that some groups of Sollux warriors and Helions joined them also, as their main enemies the efreeti were on the side of the Fiery Pharaoh.

The armies of Rak'Asta defeated the invasion force, and with great cunning he made a spike assault on the isle of the Fiery Pharaoh. Rak'Asta stopped the Ritual of Ascension and killed the Firelord in a duel. Later on he took the battle to the islands of the red dragons and

killed their leader, an ancient red, but was also slain. The duel decimated an entire island, the Farthest Shore (a reference to Ursula le Guin's Earthsea books). Since then the scorched island has been a taboo to the Nuari, a sacred place for the Reds, and forgotten by the other inhabitants of the Archipelago.

After the war the Sea Dragons withdrew beneath the waves, where they still live, in the great whirlpool, waiting for the rise of the next Firelord. The proud ancestors of the rakastae fell from grace of their patron and "diminished", transformed into the feline creatures we know. The Children of the Swan withdrew to their island, limiting their shipping to short fishing expeditions, centring instead on nursing their Relic, an ancient figurine of a swan. (They can't have a Tree of Life, as Ilsundal created them much later.) The local Nuari slowly assimilated the followers of the first Firelord. The creatures of fire remained but kept close to the volcanoes of the easternmost island, and thrived on the deserted Plateau of Fire.

***The Artifacts of Rak'Asta:*** The great king Rak'Asta succeeded in his efforts not only due to his own cunning, but also because he had two very powerful artifacts in his possession. His sword "the Dragon-tooth" was crafted from the tooth of an ancient Sea Dragon and enchanted with powers against red dragons. (For example: Sword +3, +5 Against dragons, Triple damage against red dragons. Add other powers if you like.) "The Lion Helmet" was a helmet crafted to the likeness of a majestic lion, giving protection against the Element of Fire and enhancing the wearer's abilities of leadership and warfare. (For example: Extra -1 to AC, +2 to Fire Saves, Deduct 2d10



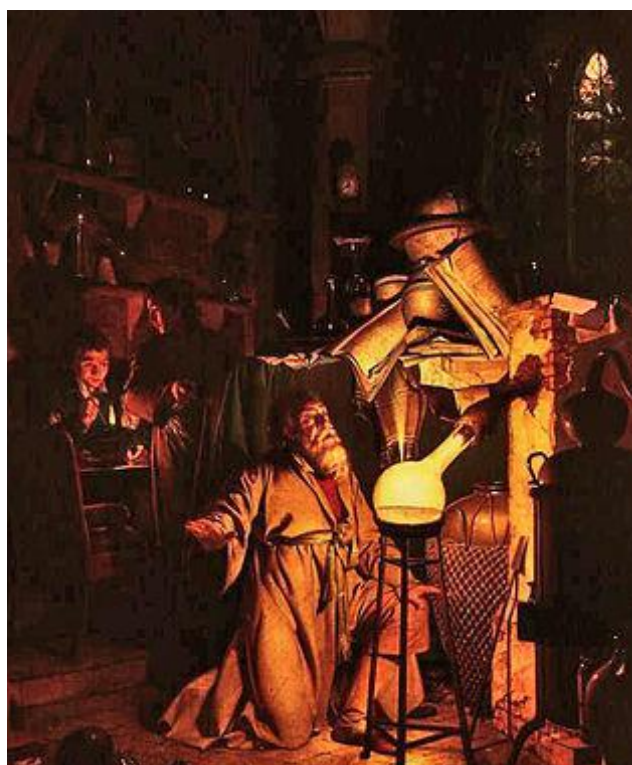
from Fire breath damage, Skill bonuses to leadership and tactics/strategy.)

When the king Rak'Asta went to battle the ancient red dragon, he left his helmet, the symbol of the king, for his followers. They brought it back to the Isle of Dread, where it was left in the palace on the plateau, waiting for the Future king. (Nobody knows it, but Rak'Asta was allowed by his patron to leave a small portion of his soul in the helmet. If someone gains it, the next wearer's soul will meld with Rak'Asta's, permanently transforming him.) The sword is still in the decimated island, beneath the bones of the king and the dragon.

### The Rise of the Second Firelord

The Isle of Dawn has been a skirmishing ground of the Alphatian and Thyatian Empires for many generations. Years ago a man of Thothian origins called Daricus lost his whole family in one of the most intensive conflicts in recent history. Daricus developed a strong hatred towards both Empires and their colonial policies, and began dreaming of revenge. He had also embarked on a path of magical learning and proved to be a talented student, albeit a bit prone to hasty and rash decisions and dangerous experiments. He was sure that magical learning could give him the tools to strike back at his enemies.

Travelling repeatedly across the shifting borderlands of the Isle of Dawn, he contacted various groups and individuals that held similar views. He offered his (still humble) magical abilities to local resistance groups, which brought him respect and friendship among those people. During this time he met various Followers of Fire, magic-users of the underground Alphatian sect, and found their trust in the Element of Fire appealing. In time



*The Firelord performing the Ascension Ritual*

he rose among their ranks and gathered a small following of trusted henchmen whom he convinced to join him in his search for power and revenge.

Together they travelled to the mainland, to Ylaruam, where Daricus learned of outlawed and persecuted sect of Magian Fire Worshipers. He set out to find them and succeeded, and after some years of adventuring he had also gained contacts and friends in the Cult of Rathanos. Their learnings persuaded him to join the followers of the Fiery Ankh as a layman follower – but his knowledge and skill with fire magic gave him an exalted position, one of a religious scholar. In this role he stumbled upon fragmented remarks about the previous Firelord, the Starfire Sphere, and the mystical Ascension. Elements of them were found in the writings of all groups that he has

contacted, as the nearing time of Ascension rejuvenated old memories. These were however merely hints, and Daricus set out on a quest to find the way to become the new Firelord and the Nexus of Starfire Sphere. Little is known about these travels among Nithian ruins, in the strange Plane of Fire and even among the circles of the Fire Elementalists in Glantri.

By 975 Daricus had found enough information to start serious studies on the Ascension. He formed the Cult of the Starfire Sphere again, gathered his allies and set out looking for the lands of the first Firelord in the Sea of Dread. His initial following consisted of a few Glantrian Followers of Fire, members of the Alphatian underground, some Magian Fire Worshipers, and most of all, a great number of Rathanos cultists. Together they started the perilous journey to find the mysterious Thanegioth Archipelago, hinted at only in the tales of deranged seamen. The arduous voyage claimed the lives of some of them, but in the end they made landfall in the easternmost and the largest island of the Archipelago, which they named The Isle of the Firelord.

Initially Daricus and his followers were friendly with the local Nuari villagers, joining their communities and gaining respect by their use of magic. But over the next few years, in total secrecy, the cultists travelled to various lands seeking new recruits to their anti-colonial army. These voyages were disguised as expeditions, merchant voyages and such to avoid suspicion. It is perhaps the best proof of Daricus's immense talent that the intelligence forces of the two empires never learned about this. Daricus gathered a sizable force of people who had good reasons to hate one of the empires, or both of them: Ylari militants (although few of them would join a

Fire-mage), mercenaries from Helskir, Heldanners, Hinterlanders, members of various opposition groups of Thyatian and Alphatian colonies, and people from the Isle of Dawn.

The next step was to subjugate the Nuari tribes. They were reduced to the status of slaves and were forced to start building the infrastructure of the new Empire of the Firelord. Daricus also made contact with the fire giants and the efreeti living of the western parts of the island, as his predecessor had done. Having thus consolidated his power on the main island of the Archipelago, Daricus could now focus on unearthing the lost lore of the Starfire Sphere. With the help of the efreeti he found the ruins of the ritual site on the Plain of Fire and the founding tracts of the cult (see above). Rebuilding work was started immediately, as was the research and education to recreate the Spheres of Influence of the cult that are necessary for a successful ritual of Ascension.

To do all this, Daricus would need much more resources, however. Also he was eager to start striking at his enemies. A fleet of raiding ships was built, and it was sent to raid Thyatian shipping lines to gather supplies and much-needed slaves. His other ships smuggled zonga-plant to Alphatia in order to gather vital magical supplies and to disrupt that empire too. This allowed Daricus to begin further projects: plantations, fortresses, barracks, irrigation systems, a small town, and most of all, a school of wizards on the main island. He established the laws of his Empire of Fire and created efficient chains of command with the members of the Cult functioning as the secret police and as the supreme commanders.

Following the example of the Fiery Pharaoh, Daricus started expanding his empire to the rest of the archipelago. He befriended the red dragons of the central archipelago, and then conquered the Nuari territory on the southern tip of the Isle of Dread. He also managed to contact the witch Darwa living on the westernmost islands. This is the situation when the PCs arrive on the scene.

## SCENARIO OVERVIEW

The assumption is that the PCs are sent to disrupt or to stop the Firelord's plans – initially without the knowledge about him and with the assumption that there is just a base of pirates somewhere in the Sea of Dread. There are other ways to use this campaign material, but this text has been ordered into a sequence of “Acts” that allows a prospective DM to use it more readily. It should be noted that any such ordering into pre-set sequences by necessity involves some clumsy railroading, and I encourage DMs to tailor this campaign to suit their needs and more free play.



## TIMELINE

**3000 BC:** Birth of Thanegioth Archipelago and the strong connection to the Planes of Fire and Water. The arrival of the Red and Sea Dragons.

**Unknown:** Arrival of the elves of the Children of the Swan Clan

**Unknown:** Arrival of the ancestors of the rakastae

**Unknown:** Arrival of the Nuari

**c. 1600–1500 BC:** Nithian colonists arrive and found the realm of the Fiery Pharaoh, the First Firelord.

**1500 BC:** The King Rak'Asta kills the First Firelord and stops the Ritual of Ascension

**1499 BC:** Rak'Asta dies in combat with the Ancient Red Dragon

**1000 BC:** Alphatian Landfall. The few members of the Fire sect learn about the Cult of Rathanos.

**Unknown:** The people of Rak'Asta fall from grace.

**500 BC:** Fall of Nithia

**900 AC:** Knowledge of the Cult of Starfire Sphere is slowly rejuvenated among the Magian Fire Worshipers, the cult of Rathanos, the Fire Elementalists and the underground Alphatian Fire Sect.

**950 AC:** Daricus is born.

**960 AC:** Daricus loses his family.

**965 AC:** Daricus begins learning magic and becomes involved in resistance movements.



**970 AC:** Daricus travels to Brun (Ylaruam and eventually Glantri) and into the Plane of Fire.

**975 AC:** Daricus gathers his followers and travels to the Thanegioth Archipelago.

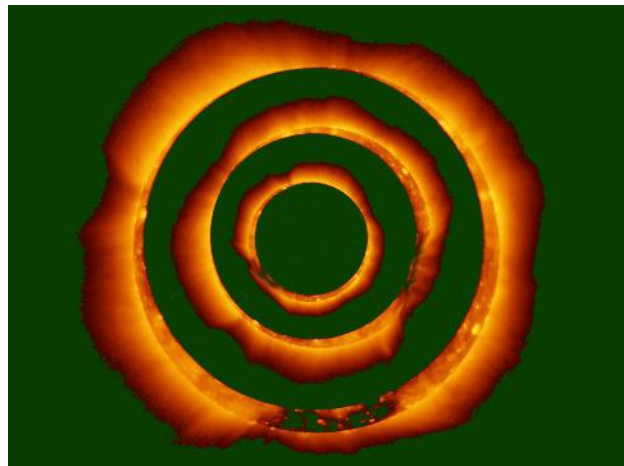
**995 AC:** Pirating and zzonga-smuggling begins. Slowly the Thyatian authorities are alerted, but the identity of the raiders remains unknown.

**997–1000 AC:** Pirating attacks increase in frequency and severity. Problems with zzonga grow worse in Alphatia.

**1000 AC:** Today.

The second primary part of Daricus's plans consists of exacting revenge on the two Empires. Because Daricus is rash and impatient, he has started this part before ascending to Nexushood. He wasn't content with the few raids and smuggling operations necessary to fund his enterprises. He has ordered the construction of a powerful navy, augmented with ingenious fire-based war machines and other resources, which will make it possible to strike at Thyatian navy harder. Such devices may be mundane, such as fire ships, catapults and ballistae shooting fiery missiles, flaming oil on waves etc. They may also be magical or "scientific": fireball-shooting battle mages, lenses and mirrors that can use sunlight to ignite sails, exploding ballista missiles, etc. The ships sail under banners depicting concentric circles of fire on dark green background.

The Ascension Ritual is of course the main plan of Daricus the Firelord. The DM should determine a set time for the ritual beforehand to give the PCs a sense of urgency and a real possibility of failure. It should be noted, however, that failing to stop the Firelord is pretty much a campaign-stopper, unless the DM wants to take things to a whole new level. To complete the ritual Daricus will have to meet the following requirements: 1) A sufficient amount of educated and purified cultists must be arranged in the circular formation mentioned earlier. 2) The Ritual Dome must be completed on the Plain of Fire. 3) The research into the key elements of the ritual, mainly the obligations of the Nexus candidate, has to be finished. (Note: Again, it is up to the DM to decide this, as the amount and power of spell-casters will largely determine the difficulty of the campaign. See above the section on the Cult.)



*Flag of Daricu's Fleet*

Daricus's fleet strikes against the Thyatians on various fronts. They disrupt operations on the Hinterland front by sinking supply ships and giving weapons to rebels. They raid Ochalean shipping lines, leaving behind clues of Alphatian pirates and atrocities. They also

sink supply and merchant vessels close to the mainland Thyatis. Against Alphatia the plans are subtler: Daricus has constructed various magical greenhouses, where *zzonga* is cultivated, and then it is shipped to Alphatian waters and sold very cheap. This has created serious problems. (Note: Use of *zzonga* in the Empire of Firelord is punished by immolation in a lava stream.)

Although Daricus has managed to cause a lot of damage, his premature attacks have drawn the attention of the two empires. It would have been wiser to wait until the Ascension – as the Nexus Daricus could have commanded enough power to take on the Empires more directly and forcefully.

The armies of the Firelord also continue their conquest of the Thanegioth Archipelago. On Isle of Dread they make alliances with the local lizard men and the aranea as a preparation for an impending assault on the local rakasta population. Crack troops will also make landfall on the western island of the sea elves, starting their operation by building a palisade fortress on the northern beaches. The landing force is augmented by the battle mages to keep the elves at bay. The elven operation is advancing on another front, too. The Sea Witch, who has been promised a large part of the elven island, uses her powers to curse and darken the westernmost elven jungles, spawning “vegetation monsters” and dark imps.

Also, the small island north of the island of the sea elves has been fortified, in order to secure Thanegioth from a possible northern assault: the chain of small islands northwards to the mainland make it a more likely direction of attack than the empty reaches of the Sea of Dread.

## Act 1: Discovering the Empire of the Firelord

The PCs are contacted either by the Thyatian or the Alphatian authorities, which want to stop the pirating raids or the *zzonga* trade. Both sides have strong reasons to believe that the culprits are hiding somewhere in the Sea of Dread. “The First Tower” is the first and the most likely point of contact.

## Act 2: Saving the Elves and battling the Sea Witch

The elves living on Kulan-Gath (Isle of the King) are attacked by the forces of the Firelord and the evil being summoned by the seawitch Darwa. If the PCs save the elves, they gain allies and learn about the Isle of Dread.

## Act 3: Legacy of Rak’Asta

The forces of the Firelord and their allies are threatening the rakastae of the Isle of Dread. If the PCs help the rakastae, they can learn about the legend of Rak’Asta and gain a powerful artifact, the Lion Helmet. The Nuari villages may have to be liberated.

## Act 4: There Be Dragons

In order to reach the Isle of Firelord, the PCs will have to cross the realm of the Red Dragons. They are not yet under the Firelord’s sway, but they have promised to protect the Isle of Firelord against intruders. However, there are also the Sea Dragons, thought to be lost long ago. They will contact the PCs and help them to find Rak’Asta’s sword “the Dragon’s Tooth” in exchange for help against the Reds.

## Act 5: Arriving on the Isle of the Firelord

The Sea Dragons help the PCs get to the western shore of the Isle of the Firelord. They perhaps fight the Fire Giants and need to breach the mountain fortress to gain access to the rest of the island.

## Act 6: Disrupting the Ritual of Ascension

This is the highpoint of the whole campaign and the most dangerous task for the PCs. Killing Daricus is hard and may be impossible, surrounded as he is by all his most important followers. However, killing enough of them will break the ritual and make it impossible to try it again until 2,500 years.

## Act 7: Getting home?

It would be hopeless for the PCs to take on the Firelord's armies themselves, so the next task is to get home and alert the authorities. This is an open-ended part of the campaign. The cities, camps, harbours and other locales of the Isle of Firelord are not fleshed out, as the PCs may very well still have their own ship and won't need to bother with them.

There are many other ways that this campaign can be used. An important feature of the campaign is the moral ambiguity of Daricus. He is not your run-of-the-mill evil villain: he has a cause, and in some ways a just one, but his methods are vicious and he is willing to kill and enslave others to achieve his goals. One possibility is an insurrection among the slaves or the Nuari locals and the quest to find allies for an all-out rebellion. The PCs might even be allies or minions of the Firelord in their fight against the Evil Empires. In the latter case the Ritual of Ascension is harder to tie into the story.

## ACT 1: DISCOVERING THE EMPIRE OF THE FIRELORD

The PCs are hired to investigate the latest series of pirate attacks by agents of Thyatia or Alphatia. There should be enough hints available to point to the Sea of Dread, perhaps an inkling of the fire-related attacks, but nothing leading directly to the Thanegioth Archipelago. The PCs are furnished with a ship and a crew, and their first task is to scourge the seaside nations for clues. The DM can furnish them with legends, hints, partial maps, logs etc. Eventually they are led towards the Archipelago via the Dragon's Teeth Reef, so the first contact with the forces of the Firelord will be on the island called "the First Tower" ("Eth-Salar" by the southern elves).

**OPTIONAL:** The DM can include an agent of the Firelord who tries to infiltrate the ship's crew. The agent would definitely try to lure the PCs deep into the Archipelago and then try to betray them. IMC I had a similar mole among the crew, but he was an agent of the Iron Ring trying to get back at the PCs for destroying the organisation. The mole lured the ship of the PCs to the enemy while they were gone, which spiced up the events on the Isle of Dread. (I was inspired in this by Jules Verne's Captain Grant book and the character Ayrton.)

"The First tower" is an island about 180 miles north from the northernmost tip of the elven island. Firelord had a strong fortress built





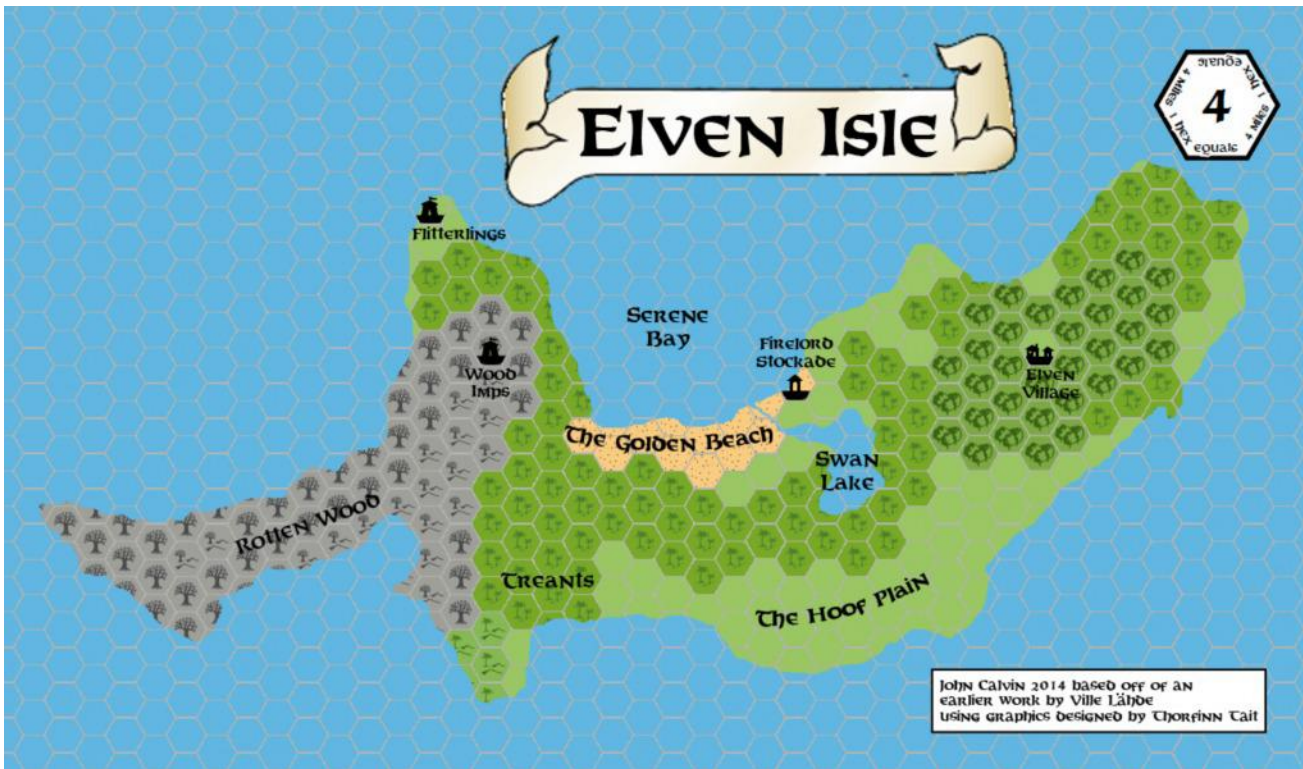
here to guard the secret sea routes to the north. The fortress is a simple tall keep that houses ballistae and catapults that are able to fire fiery ammo. The cliffs of the island are steep, allowing only one landfall that can be defended easily. This is the only freshwater island in these parts, so most likely the PCs cannot simply bypass it. The commander is a 4th Circle Commander aided by two 5th Circle battle-spellcasters. There is a garrison of elite troops (3rd level at least) and a host of trained Hellhounds.

If the PCs defeat the garrison, they find evidence of the Empire of the Firelord, and from the diaries of the cultists they find notes about the coming Ritual. The Cultists at the fort won't be able to attend (they are replaced by power-beacons), and they complain about this in their notes. This should create the

much-needed sense of urgency. The PCs will also find local sea charts that lead them to the island of the elves.

## ACT 2: SAVING THE ELVES AND BATTLING THE SEA WITCH

The elves call their island “Kulan-Gath”, the Island of the King. The vegetation is more diverse than on the other islands due to the influence of the elves. There are some plains, some thick jungle, and some more elvish forest. The eastern part of the island is dominated by the Elven Trees. There is one large sweet water lake, The Swan Lake, and a river leads from it to the gulf on the northern shores of the island. The shores of the gulf are sandy beaches, which have a



golden tint. Thus the name, The Golden Beach. South of the gulf, after some stretches of forest, is the large Hoof Plain, the home of centaurs and chevalls. Towards the west the forests grow more dense and dark, until at the western cape they are sinister indeed. Some treants live in the slightly brighter areas. The elven clan the Children of the Swan lives in the eastern part of the island. There is also a community of flitterlings in the northern cape.

Lately darkness has been spreading over the island. The dark western forests have been spawning terrible plant monsters that eat anything that moves. Good trees are dying, and bad ones stretch their roots over large areas. A violent and large tribe of Wood Imps has been taking over the forest, creeping eastward. Currently it is threatening the flitterlings and the treants.

The Children of the Swan haven't been able to intervene, since they have their own problems. A while ago, Firelord's troops landed on the Golden Beach, began cutting down the trees and built a stockade. Now they are building a naval shipyard. Elves can't match the fiery magic of the Firelord's servants and the power of Rathanos's clerics, since the tribe isn't very large. The situation has worsened even more as the Sea Witch Darwa, an ally of the Firelord, has been sending her minions to harry the elves.

The Sea Witch Darwa lives on the westernmost island of the Archipelago. The island is mostly barren, and she subsists on seaweed, gull eggs and mussels, living in a ramshackle hut. However, she is very powerful and should be a very dangerous opponent for the PCs. I suggest giving her



most of the Witchcraft powers in the Glantri Gazetteer, and perhaps some more. She uses her summoned creatures as commandos, through which she can channel her powers. Red Imps are her favourites.

Most likely the PCs will contact the elves to get help against the troops of the Firelord. Those should include a commander or the 4th Circle, if not 3rd, and several 5th level Cultists, and a ship or three full of experienced marines. The PCs should definitely not be able to defeat them by themselves. The PCs can get help from the elves and the centaurs, but in order to get help from the treants and flitterlings they will have to defeat the Wood Imps and Darwa.

The elves know about the Isle of Dread and know about a landing beach on the western shores of the island. The invasion force has some logs and charts that can give the PCs some idea about the extent of the Empire of the Firelord. They also learn that the Nuari villages in the Isle of Dread have been occupied. The elves know that in the distant past they used to be allied with the people of Rak'Asta and suggest the PCs contact them. They can also send one of their tribe, a skillful warrior named Cymoril Stargazer, to accompany the PCs. She is willing to take the fight to the lands of the Firelord. The clan can perhaps also offer some magic furnished by their Relic.

### ACT 3: LEGACY OF RAK'ASTA

The classic module X1 offers a ready-made map of the Island of Dread, and it can be used here with very few alterations. Some of the material in the module regarding the inhabitants of the island is also usable, with the exception of the plateau of the kopru. It

has been replaced with the ruins of the civilization of Rak'Asta.

The rakasta that now inhabit the island are of the standard rulebook breed, a "degenerated" version of the elder race. They live in primitive matriarchal tribes, where the female population lives in the villages, ruled by a strict caste system. The males wander the jungle, hunting and gathering food and other materials for the females. The latter are mainly engaged in crafts and rituals. One significant part of their culture is a religious program of breeding that casts out "deformed" children – much like the culture of the Shadow elves. Only, whereas Rafiel wishes to offset the effects of Radiance, in this case the children who show signs of their elder heritage are removed from the gene pool, speeding up the process that "animalises" the former were-like species. The ones cast out live in remote communities.

The western jungles of the southern part of the island belong to the rakasta. The main village is ruled by a matriarch priest, who worships a distorted version of "the Lion god" (she still gets spells, though). The four male tribes, the Panthers, the Lions, the Tigers and the Sabretooths, have divided the jungle between themselves – although during the mating season the fights for the privilege get fierce, but seldom lethal.

The lizard men live in the swamps and near the tar pits. The Firelord's local commander is currently trying to get them to attack the rakasta.

To the west and to the north from the swamp is a region of forested hills, and the aranea live in the northernmost parts. They are already allies of the Firelord and have begun harassing the rakastae, especially by driving the more dangerous monsters into their lands.



Other inhabitants of the island include phanatons and bugbears, who fight each other sporadically, and the green dragon Abode. If the DM wishes, she or he can include more alliances and plans to the mix, but the ones described above should suffice.

Tribes of Nuari, subjugated by the Firelord, live in the southern part of the island and the nearby islands. The easternmost village on the main island is the HQ of the occupation, with the harbour of the Fiery Navy and the largest garrison. Firelord's troops man the Great Wall.

There is a sizable contingent of the Firelord's troops on the island. They are led by a high-ranking cultist of the 3rd Circle, a couple of 4th Circle envoys for contacting the other races and many 5th Circle combat specialists. The PCs definitely need the help of the rakasta to defeat them. In order to get their help they will first have to defeat the lizard men and the aranea, and perhaps they can incite a rebellion among the Nuari, who knows. But an important part of this Act is discovering the inheritance of Rak'Asta. Among the ruins on the plateau there is an ancient temple-palace. It is guarded by ferocious were-tigers, and many traps protect the treasure, Rak'Asta's Lion Helmet. Only fighters and similar classes can use it. If a PC wears the helmet, his or her soul merges with the soul of the king Rak'Asta, giving the ability to impress and command the present-day rakasta. The Helmet also gives its wearer awareness of the lost sword Dragon Tooth and its location, and the danger that the Red Dragons would pose it the Firelord manages to ally with them fully.

If the PCs defeat the Firelord's forces, they learn more about the impending Ritual of Ascension and know that time is running short.

## ACT 4: THERE BE DRAGONS

The central archipelago consists of the four islands of the Red Dragons, the waters of the Sea Dragons and the barren island "the Farthest Shore", where Rak'Asta and the ancient Red Dragon killed each other and where the sword of Rak'Asta awaits.

The islands of the Red Dragons are of course very dangerous. The current leader of the dragons lives on "Death's Head" island. She is engaged in negotiations with the Firelord. Until now she hasn't agreed to place her kin under the Firelord's command, but the dragons allow his ships to move in this area unmolested. The dragons have also agreed to stop any foreign vessels, which will make these waters very dangerous for the PCs. They will be very soon chased or even attacked by dragons.

However, the Sea Dragons can sense the approaching soul of Rak'Asta and will protect the PCs against their ancient enemies. This can be very frightening, as they can direct the Whirlpool to snatch their ship (the dragons can of course keep it safe). The Sea Dragons can take the PCs to a safe secret cove on the Island of the Firelord, if they agree to help them against the Red Dragons.

The main part of this Act is the battle against the leader of the Red Dragons. The Sea Dragons can take the PCs to the Farthest Shore, where the PC wearing the Lion Helmet can wield the Dragon Tooth safely. The DM may wish to include some dangerous opposition, even the ghost of the dead dragon, to stand in their way. With the whole array of Rak'Asta's artifacts the PCs can take

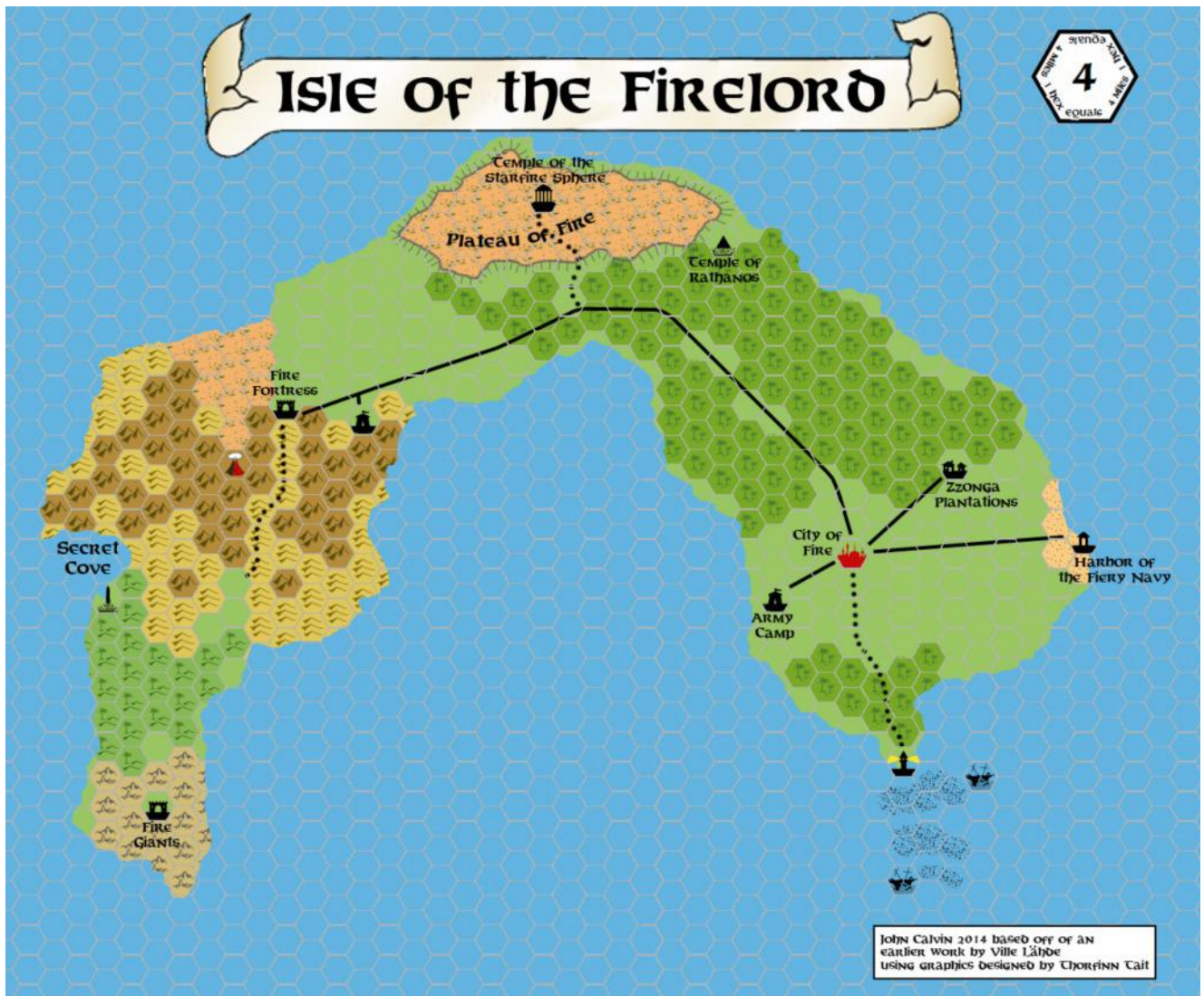
on the leader of dragons. This should be a very dangerous and deadly conflict.

## ACT 5: ARRIVING ON THE ISLE OF THE FIRELORD

Most likely the PCs will arrive on the western shores of the island, in the secret cove known by the Sea Dragons. The western part of the island is mountainous and mostly barren land, with the exception of some forested hills. In the rugged hills at the southern tip lives a tribe

of Fire Giants, allies and friends of the Firelord, who patrol the roads south of the mountains.

The mountain range blocks passages to the rest of the island except via a narrow pass that is blocked by a northern fortress. Fierce fire salamanders who survive here due to the presence of volcanoes inhabit the mountains. A few isolationist Red Dragons live here also. However, the PCs have also the chance of contacting a group of Sollux, who hide in this area. They are more than willing to aid them



in the fight against the Firelord. They may also know a way to contact some Helions on the Plateau of Fire.

A strong garrison, but not that many Cultists, mans the fortress as most of them are already engaged in purification in preparation for the Ritual. The PCs should still be opposed by some spell-casters also. The fortress is also a school for the cultist initiates, so a host of low-level cultists can offer dangerous opposition – the initiates will not be needed in the Ritual. In the school the PCs can find more info on the Ritual.

There is a lava basin to the north. The initiates travel there to meditate and study the secrets of the Starfire Sphere.

Note that there is a military training camp fairly close to the east, so things will become harder for the PCs if word gets out of their attack.

## ACT 6: DISRUPTING THE RITUAL OF ASCENSION

The Plateau of Fire dominates the northern part of the island. It is a high artificial plateau with steep and razor-sharp cliffs of volcanic glass. A great dome-shaped temple has been built in the middle of the plateau. The only accessible path up is guarded by a huge bronze golem, which lets only members of the Cult to pass, if they utter the right incantations and make the right gestures. Many creatures of Fire prowl the Plain of Fire. Some of them are wild, some protect the temple, some may be allies against the Firelord (the Helions).

How hard disrupting the Ritual of Ascension will be depends on the performance of the PCs this far: 1) what allies they have gathered to aid them and 2) how many high-level cultists they have managed to slay. If cultists have been

replaced by "power-beacons", those will be easy to destroy during the Ritual. Killing the participants of the Ritual will also be fairly easy, as they have to focus on their incantations. Of course efreeti and other elemental allies of the Firelord protect the Ritual.

The trouble is to get out alive after disrupting the Ritual and angering a host of experienced spell-casters. Let's hope the PCs have made plans. Getting into a fight with the Firelord would be deadly. However, Daricus will very likely just flee if the Ritual is disturbed. He knows his plans are finished: without the powers of the Nexus he will never prevail against the Empires. So maybe he will return some day with new plans. Of course the DM can also have him fight to the death, if preferable.

## ACT 7: GETTING HOME?

After the Ritual has been disrupted, it would be wise for the PCs to head home. It can be easy, if they still have a ship and a crew, and very hard otherwise. The best plan is to steal a ship and liberate some slaves as a crew, if their own ship is lost. In any case, the other locations of the Island of the Firelord are left for the DM to flesh out in case the adventure continues there.

The eastern half of the island is dominated by jungle. However, the southernmost parts are grassy plains, where most of the grain for the Empire is being grown. The road that leads to the western fortress cuts through the jungle, and it is heavily guarded. In the jungle, near the northeastern shore, are the Temple of Rathanos and the centre of the Cult of the Starfire Sphere. Woe those foolish adventurers who decide to storm its gates.



The only real city of the archipelago, the City of Fire, lies in the middle of the southern plains. It is a relatively large city, with a population consisting of enslaved Nuari and slaves captured in the pirate raids, and the “cosmopolitan” mix of Daricus’s followers. Four roads lead out from the city. The northern one leads to the jungle and the western parts of the island. The northeastern road leads to heavily guarded zonga plantations. The eastern one leads to the

shore, and the harbour of the Fiery Navy, the shipyards and a small town. The western road leads to the main barracks and training grounds of the Firelord’s army. Also, a smaller path leads to the south, ending in the southern tip. There is an isolate lighthouse, which is used to lead back the ships that sail for the Hinterland route, and for ships returning from pirate missions (they always take a detour).

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Threshold editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the **sixth** issue of the magazine.

We are looking especially for contribution fitting the theme of that issue - **The Northlands**.

**Proposal Deadline: May 31st, 2014**

**Manuscript Deadline: October 31st, 2014**

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

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

The Threshold editorial team strives for edition neutrality, but edition specific articles (e.g., conversions) are also accepted.

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

See [inside back cover](#) for submission guidelines.

# For Guild and Country!

A Minrothad / Savage Tide / Freeport mashup

## My Mystara

by Maxime Beaulieu

First outlined by David Cook in the 1981 Expert Set and adventure module *X1: Isle of Dread*, the **Known World** was expanded by Frank Mentzer in the 1984 Expert Set's revision. Bruce Heard became the setting's shepherd throughout the late 80s and 90s, overseeing development (and writing a couple) of the **Gazetteer** line, giving readers in-depth view of countries of the Known World. These were followed by the *Dawn of the Emperors* and *Hollow World* boxed sets, expanding from a single continent to the entire planet, inside and out. Bruce also developed Mystara through the *Voyage of the Princess Ark* and *Known World Grimoire* articles published in *Dragon Magazine* between 1990 and 1993. Much of that work was compiled into 1993's *Champions of Mystara* boxed set. The setting was further revised and brought over to AD&D 2nd Edition as the "Mystara" line in 1994. Official TSR support in-print of the setting ended in 1995.

### Caution : spoilers ahead!

How do you create the ultimate swashbuckling campaign? Step one: don't hesitate to mix classic Mystara with great products and ideas from other sources, like the Savage Tide adventure path or Green Ronin's Freeport! Step two: do your research and read, listen, and watch every book, soundtrack, and movie you can on the genre. Step three: trust your players to create great character ideas, surprising plot twists and melodramatic story arcs. Mix well in a jug of Corser rum and you'll get a 115+ sessions, six year campaign that's taken its players from Harbortown to the Isle of Dread; from the haunted shores of Karameikos to the Hollow World. Get ready to defend Minrothad from its worst enemy: itself! For guild and country!

### Fair winds guildsmen!

The article will focus on the use of various gaming sources used to create the theme, mood, and setting for a Minrothad-based high seas campaign. It revolves around Corser guildmaster Milton Drac unleashing a savage

tide of lycanthropy on the Sea of Dread to seize the highest prize: Immortality! Of course, the heroes affected not only Drac's evil plans but the GM's prepared campaign arc, and so I'll also be musing on how player action transformed a carefully plotted campaign into a character-controlled narrative.

## OUR STORY SO FAR

The campaign started in 313 Verdier reckoning, three years after the end of the Great War that saw mighty Alphatia sink beneath the waves. A band of young *evems* (the wealthy middle class of Minrothad) from Guild Corser were getting ready to become officers-in-training on the *Radiant*, under merchant-prince Verik Alexir. They got an introduction to the history of their guild, notably the simmering resentment between (human) Guild Corser and the elven guilds. Apparently the humans of Minrothad came down with a terminal case of lycanthropy a few centuries ago and the elves responded with something called the Silver Purge. So as the young officers-to-be ran around town, getting into trouble alongside the son and daughter of their captain, Vanthus and Lavinia, they also slowly discovered signs of a dark conspiracy involving the return of wercreatures, a pirate armada called the Crimson Fleet and a shadowy figure known as the Pirate King. They even started a fashion trend of Sind silks at the annual Saneer ball (not their last sartorial action...).

Finally they left port on their maiden voyage. As they traveled through the ports of Thyatis, Ylaruam and the Isle of Dawn, they uncovered more signs of the manipulations of the Pirate King, most importantly that he seemed to be infecting the Crimson fleet with lycanthropy. They also came to believe this Pirate King to

be none other than the wealthy Milton Drac, main contender to the recently vacated post of guildmaster of Corser and sponsor of a new lighthouse in Harbortown. Things came to a head when they learned Drac had just been elected as the head of Corser shortly before witnessing an invasion by a Crimson Fleet armada in the city of West Portage.

That's when things got interesting...

## FREE PORTS AND HARBOR TOWNS: SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS

Readers with ranks in knowledge (gaming) will have recognized several different sources in my little overview of the *Guild and Country!* set-up. The initial idea for the game came from the desire to run a maritime campaign after reading the excellent Freeport adventures and city sourcebooks (*Freeport: the City of Adventure*, the *Freeport Trilogy*, *Black Sails over Freeport*).



*Milton Drac's lighthouse temple*



From the *Freeport Trilogy*, I gleaned the idea of Milton Drac as main antagonist, along with his plan to hide a sinister temple in a lighthouse. I kept his (successful) attempts to gain leadership over the city but changed his motivation into a more personal goal: this ex-buccaneer was on the path to Immortality, sponsored by Masauwu (who I modified slightly to be the dark reflection of Minroth, patron of the Guilds). *Madness in Freeport*<sup>1</sup> also gave me a fun event, the ball where the players got to meet many of the movers and shakers of the campaign. I used the images of the various NPCs from the module to create little handouts to help the players handle the introduction of 15+ characters. The lighthouse would only get explored later in the campaign. In typical swashbuckling fashion, the players would infiltrate a convict chain-gang from a prison hulk (stolen from *Black Sails...*) sent to work on the lighthouse. A clear example of rule No. 9 of swashbuckling: « It's getting back out again that's tricky » (we'll get back to those in a bit).

I then got my hands on the *Savage Tide Adventure Path*, published in *Dungeon* issues 139 to 150. In this third and last AP published in the magazine, players seek to prevent the unleashing of a curse and sail to the mythic Isle of Dread...the actual *X1 The Isle of Dread!* Of course it had to be included in this campaign and that meant the whole thing had to take place in Mystara. From *Savage Tide* I extracted the immediate NPC circle around the characters: Vanthus and Lavinia were childhood friends of the PCs. Vanthus was a bad-influence scoundrel and Lavinia the eventual patron once she inherited the family fortune. Vanthus would drift into becoming a pawn of Drac and play an integral part in the

death of his father, the PCs' start-of-campaign mentor. It also became obvious the *Savage Tide* curse would get folded into Drac's plot to spread chaos and entropy.

So we had a villainous plot by the leader of the PCs' home town to spread madness across the seas, a cast of allies and enemies and a set of adventure modules to run. All I needed was a home base.

## A GUILD OF ONE'S OWN: PLACING AND FLESHING OUT THE HOME PORT

I started by checking where other GMs had placed Sasserine. Some had used Ierendi, but I was never was a fan of the "Holiday resort" vibe the gazetteer gave that nation (although there's an excellent adaptation of Freeport in Ierendi available in the *Vaults of Pandius*<sup>2</sup> that was very tempting). Others suggested placing the starting point of the AP in Davania, but that continent felt a bit barren for my taste. Then I remembered my old *Gaz 9 The Minrothad Guilds*. I went back and re-read the supplement and that's when everything fell into place.

For those of you who've never read much on the Guilds, it's a mercantile plutocracy ruled over by a council of racially-aligned guilds. Guilds Elsan, Meditor and Verdier are the dominant elven guilds, with humans, dwarves and hin each controlling their own. The relative weakness of humans on the islands is explained by a plague of lycanthropy which devastated the Sea of Dread about three centuries ago. The elves culled the humans till the disease was mostly eliminated, and while the survivors reorganised into a single

<sup>1</sup> The second adventure in the Freeport Trilogy.

<sup>2</sup> The Pirate Kingdom of Ierendi (AM2)



*Lycanthrope created by the Black Pearl*

guild the elves pretty much took control and set up the system of government. There you had it! The villain's plan fell into place. Through the Black Pearl, an artifact found on the Isle of Dread as part of his quest for Immortality, Milton Drac was to infect guild Corser with lycanthropy. Then Minrothaddan merchants would spread it across the seas, and either Thyatis would stop it in time by crushing the guilds to stop the plague or, if things went really well, most of the Known World would collapse into savagery. In either case Entropy would be served and Drac's Legacy would be assured. He also hired alchemists to refine

fragments of the Black Pearl into a lesser version of the disease, a bestial curse (as seen in *The Bullywug Gambit*) which the PCs dubbed "the anger goo". This ooze could be spread more easily, tainting water supplies and even dispersed through precipitation. The pirates of the Crimson Fleet were also part of this plan: they were to be Drac's werecreature shock troops, a fleet of pitiless and bestial raiders.

Officially, Guild Corser is based out of Harbortown, a small city on Trader's Isle. Since the city was not very detailed in the supplement, I replaced it with Freeport as fleshed out in *Freeport City of Adventure*. Various background elements from the sourcebook got integrated or transformed to fit the story. For example, the Halfling Benevolent Association became the Hin Benevolent Association, a front for a local thieves' guild involved in a turf war with another (were-infected) gang. The Golden Pillar Society, the Field of Honour; the Sea Lord's Palace - All these places became familiar to the players through the first 10-15 games. In a campaign that was going to be about traveling, it was important to create an emotional bond to the home port. It added a certain poignant element to the campaign as all the players created human characters, natives or adopted members of Corser. They quickly came to hate Drac for wanting to turn their community into a living weapon. But they also did not trust the elven guilds and the ruling guildmaster Oran Meditor, both for their desire to concentrate power into the Meditor-controlled political guilds and thus lessen Harbortown's independence, and for the Silver Purge. Many elven NPCs alluded to a possible repeat of that sad event if Drac's plans were not stopped. The PCs were very proud of their guild and did not want the

## Variant Shadow Pearls

Those who have played the *Savage Tide AP* know that the plot revolves around the Shadow Pearls, created by followers of Demogorgon and disseminated by his/her mortal pawns, the Crimson Fleet. The pearls, when unleashed, transform creatures in a large area into mutated, savage versions of themselves (as seen by the players in *The Bullywug Gambit*). My version of the Pearls underwent its own mutation. Rather than placing them in every port in the Sea of Dread and have the players race to prevent the ritual to unleash them, I decided that there was a larger, single Pearl. An artefact of Demogorgon that caused the Isle of Dread's present state of savagery and had since then rested on the Taboo Plateau, it was discovered by Drac and used in his plot. The Black Pearl (as I called it) slowly sheds its outer shell. Using these castoffs as a base ingredient, Drac had alchemists create a solution of lycanthropy. The players witnessed its earlier, imperfect versions in an abandoned base (not unlike the effect of the canon shadow pearl). If the PCs manage to find this large Pearl and discover a way to destroy it, the solution will become inert and Drac will have to spread lycanthropy the old-fashioned way.

elves to solve their own problem (or to wipe them off the map for that matter). Thus the name of the campaign... For Guild and Country!

Everything was ready: setting, NPCs, adventures... but something was missing. Something to give focus and help establish a clear mood. The answer would come from a four page article in an old Dragon Magazine: "*Swashbuckling Essentials*", by Robin D. Law.

## LOVE LIFE AND LIFE WILL LOVE YOU BACK: A CAMPAIGN CONTRACT

A lot of people have written about the use of social contracts in setting up a campaign (just type "social contract rpg" in Google). The contract can be as formal or informal as you want -- it serves as an agreed-upon set of rules and guidelines for handling anything from player arguments to treasure allotment. It can also support the mood or theme of your campaign. Issue 273 of Dragon Magazine was a special "Swashbuckling" issue, with articles like "*40 Daring Adventure Hooks*" and "*Touche*", which gave good ideas on fun character concepts and a great fiction and non-fiction reading list and recommended movies to inspire the GM and players alike. The movie list also gave me a great starting point to create soundtracks for the game, based off movie original scores. In Robin Law's article "*Swashbuckling Essentials*" the author gave 12 tips to help dungeon delvers adapt to the world of high sea adventures and dashing heroics. I read the tips at the start of every session for the first few sessions and they completely suffused the campaign. Six years on, the players still quote them when an appropriate situation comes around. I won't relate them all, but here are a few

*He who hesitates is lost* - Swashbuckling heroes don't dwell too long on plans or agonize over details. They charge into a situation and trust they will be handled



properly. Whenever the players would spend too much time fretting on a problem or situation, someone would quote the tip and everybody would smile and tell me "Enough talk! Let's go!"

*The world is on your side* - This one is most important for the GM, I think. It also has two meanings. On the surface it encourages the players to use the environment in fun, creative ways and urges the GM to go along for the ride. Think swinging chandeliers, using improbable items as improvised weapons, that sort of thing. It also led me to relax rules on iconic moves like disarming for example. But on a more philosophical approach, this tip encourages the GM and players to take a more easygoing, fun approach to the campaign. Sure, the bad guy wants to accomplish terrible things and tragedies can happen, but in general a swashbuckling campaign is one of laughing heroes and hopeful adventure.

*It's getting back out again that's tricky* - This one led to a lot of fun, as players would willingly consider zany schemes to infiltrate villain's lairs or enemy ships because getting in is easy. It's getting out that's the hard (and fun) part. This led to many situations where they got into trouble, and the entertainment came from trying to get out/escape/blow up the enemy ship!

I could quote more tips, but the point is that the entire mindset of both players and GM were basically on the same wavelength thanks to these rules. We were playing the same game, with the same expectations of what would be easier or harder, of what was acceptable character behavior and what was "deviant" (which could make for cool role-play, when some acted out of style). It gave an energy and panache to player actions and guided villains' responses. I think it's one of the reasons why

my players still enjoy the game after so long and why it's still so fresh for me. It definitely has convinced me to use similar guidelines in any future campaign I will run, regardless of genre, setting or system.

## LOVE TURNS FOES INTO FRIENDS: WHEN NPCs DON'T TURN BAD

Armed with setting, modules and dice, we started playing *For Guild and Country*. And true to form, the players quickly unraveled key elements of the campaign, notably the transformation of Vanthus into a villain. Three of the PCs were childhood friends of the Alexir siblings and we worked together to imagine a common upbringing, with incidents serving to set up future roles. Vanthus started the campaign having returned from a "reform school" meant to teach discipline and he was to accompany the PCs on their apprenticeship on the *Radiant*. I had planned for him to grow angrier and distant in the early part of the campaign, as his youthful resentment towards his father fanned into outright hatred. For example the very first adventure had the players sent by captain Alexir into Scurvytown to recover Vanthus from a scummy dive named the Chum Bucket. He got them involved in a duel with visiting Thyatian legionnaires and introduced them to his disreputable "lady companion" Brissa.

But of course, PCs are PCs and the players would have none of his guff. But instead of pushing him away, they decided to help him clean up his act. No amount of lashing-out, no angry tirades discouraged them. Heck, they even decided to assist Brissa in kicking her drug habit by getting involved in a local

turf war between rival gangs. It became less and less believable Vanthus would turn out bad. He might still be mad at his father, but the PCs were clearly his friends, and refused to abandon him despite his jerky ways. When push came to shove, he didn't betray his father, and a large part of the campaign turned on its head.

Lavinia, for her part, was supposed to stay behind and manage the Alexir estate while the PCs were away. However, one of the players started romancing her and the others clearly noticed she was slightly jealous of them getting the chance to sail away on an adventure while she had to be the dutiful daughter. And so they hatched a plot to convince her to come along and snuck her aboard, even going so far as forging the ship manifest to introduce a new sailor named Alex Levin (or Levin, A. according to the manifest.). Great Disguise and Bluff checks, a fair Forgery result and "*the world being on our side*" allowed this scheme to come to fruition. A bit corny? Perhaps, but a perfect match for a swashbuckling campaign and a source of great roleplay as the players felt torn between their loyalty between their captain and their friendship with Lavinia. She ended being a full party-NPC, still accompanying them on their away missions and even following them to the Hollow World...

## FOR THE WORLD IS HOLLOW AND I'VE SEEN THE RED SUN : PLAYER ACTIONS AND THE CAMPAIGN

And here we come to the main story deviation caused by player action, one that took the campaign on what could have been a major

sidetrack but turned out to be a pivotal moment. In the background fluff I had given the players (notably through a handout-newsheet called the "Shipping News" taken from the Freeport supplement), they had been introduced to the concept of the Hollow World. They read Claransa the Seer's book on her voyages to said Hollow World and attended her conference (the PC bard even got the author to sign her copy of her book). But it was more of a backdrop element. Until the invasion of West Portage...

Returning from a trading mission while most of the crew of the *Radiant* stayed in West Portage, the players were witness to a massive maritime assault on the city by Crimson Fleet pirates. The ships had been magically transported to the harbor *en masse* by a mysterious maelstrom that churned the water but left ships unharmed. My plan was for the players to dash through the city battling raiders to their ship, arriving just in time to witness assassins killing merchant-prince Alexir. The Crimson Fleet would depart, leaving the players as the trainee-officers in charge of the ship. After chasing the pirates they would learn of the source of the curse on the Isle of Dread and the AP could unfold. But then players happened...

Someone proposed to capture a docked pirate vessel (either to battle other pirates or reach the *Radiant* faster). Donning red bandanas and grabbing "loot" they walked onto the *Beautiful Ana* and quickly seized the vessel. By interrogating the crew, they learned the commanders of the fleet were using a powerful item called the Maelstrom Tree to transport the fleet to and from their hidden base named Baraga. They even learned of the code to trigger a reversal of the transport (to be used in emergency, like

the appearance of an Imperial fleet or stiff resistance). They triggered the code, canceling the assault and sending the Crimson Fleet back through their watery tunnel. And of course, the players decided to stay on the ship, masquerading as pirates to infiltrate their lair. I asked if they were sure, they of course answered "*He who hesitates is lost!*" I described their passage through the maelstrom and their arrival in a strange land with a red sun. The Crimson Fleet main base was located in the Hollow World (in the Merry Pirate Seas of course) reached through a powerful Immortal artifact. We then paused for the night.

In retrospect, I should have predicted they would choose to embark on this path. It seemed both dangerous and crazy, hallmarks of the genre we were playing. I knew it would strand the players for a long time, but they didn't. It profoundly changed the path of the campaign. They stayed in the Hollow World for a full year. They met the main captains of the Crimson Fleet, got a crew for the *Beautiful Ana*, encountered new allies and enemies and discovered that Sunken Alphatia was still around, floating in the sky of the Hollow World. They even got to travel to the Empire and resolve one of the PCs background quests. On one hand, it got the players in the heart of enemy territory and netted them lots of useful information. For example, they learned of divisions amongst the pirate captains, notably Harliss Javell (an important

figure in the *Savage Tides* adventures) who was dubious at the advantage at being turned into a wererecreature. The players were able to recruit her and a fellow captain into defecting from the Crimson Fleet and becoming privateers. They also discovered the Fleet was recruiting heavily in the Hollow World (mostly in the Merry Pirate Seas and Azcan Empire) thus giving them a large pool of replacement troops. On the other hand, it delayed the *Savage Tide AP* even after their

return from the Hollow World. By then they were powerful enough to get involved into national politics. They met the heads of various guilds, learned more about the elf wielding the Maelstrom Tree and made (tentative) peace with Oran Meditor.

The end result is that after the Hollow World and running up and down the Sea of Dread resolving sidequests, background issues and basically enjoying having their own ship, they're finally arriving at the Isle of Dread. They're now 18<sup>th</sup> level and way too powerful for the *Savage Tide AP* as written, but the campaign became theirs in a sense. They wanted to find a cure for a beloved NPCs' mother's curse? Well I wasn't going to tell them no! I always tried to place little elements of the campaign as they adventured: a clue here, a link to the main story there. In a sense their actions freed me from having to run the adventure path as written and forced me to deconstruct the adventures, rearrange





them, swap events and places. *Savage Tide* became a sandbox for the adventure that was the PCs life. No plan survives the test of reality -- I guess no campaign survives it's players.

## THE FIEND IS IN THE DETAILS: BRINGING A WORLD TO LIFE

I tend to run rules-light campaigns: my adventures are more on the storytelling side of the GMing spectrum. But I did recognize that certain rules could encourage or distract from the mood we were trying to implement so I established a few house rules. Notably we used the defense bonus system from *Unearthed Arcana*<sup>3</sup>, basically replacing armor and shield bonuses with set numbers determined by class and level. It even became a point of pride that the PCs were NOT wearing armor, as opposed to the lumbering guards and soldiers they often battled. We also used the action point rules from the same book, using I-Ching coins (pieces of eight!) I

got from Chinatown, where I also procured little wooden boxes used by the players to store their action coins and figurines. Each PC had his own little treasure chest! We also eventually integrated Paizo's Critical Hit Deck (great for those flashing rapiers) and Plot Twist Cards (used many times to create classic swashbuckling role reversals, surprising betrayals and other trope-appropriate twists).

My players also contributed to the atmosphere in lots of little ways: someone brought rope and a guide on making nautical knots: instead of doodling between turns in combat they'd often end up practicing their use rope skill. Someone else got a lexicon of ship and sailing terms and we tried to integrate them into our speech. I made a few soundtracks using movie scores (The opening of Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* *The Crimson Permanent Insurance* is the best swashbuckling song EVER!) And my awesome players even made me a great ship birthday cake (gluten free, too!)

<sup>3</sup> [The D&D 3e book](#) published in 2004.



## SAILING INTO THE SUNSET...

I've been GMing for over 25 years now and I have to say *For Guild and Country* is my most consistent, complete game. Through the use of various background books and supplements fused into a single coherent whole and by adopting a clear campaign philosophy the players could integrate and adopt, I think I've run my favorite adventure so far. My players, most of them not familiar with Mystara, enjoyed their visit to our favorite shared world and contributed in its growth by steering the campaign into unexpected directions. They sailed forth on the Sea of Dread, and when the final battle with the Pirate King will be joined this spring, they will proudly shout:

*"For guild and country!"*

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## Of Dreadful Encounters

The crew of the *Beautiful Ana* saw many strange things as they sailed the open seas. Here are three examples of their encounters on the Sea of Dread:

- An Ironclad ship from Honor Island, adrift after the fire elementals from their boiler ran amok;
- The raft city of Kron, as an unexpected safe harbour;
- The haunted coasts of Karameikos. How the players came to hate that realm: every small fishing village seemingly more riddled with Demogorgon cultist than the last!

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[The Pirate Kingdom of Ierendi \(AM2\)](#)  
by John Biles

The DEMOGRAPHY of

# Ierendi and Minrothad

by Simone Neri (Zendrolion)

This article is the second of the demography articles begun with *The Demography of Karameikos* featured in the first issue of 'Threshold'. Like the first, this second article deals with the issue of demography – how the population is spread among the country, which races inhabit the land, which is the region's population density, and so on; this time we will center on the island states which lay to the south of the Known World's coast, that is Ierendi and Minrothad. As in the first article of the series, we will beforehand take a look at the way in which Ierendi and Minrothad are described in terms of population in official supplements, then we will again be giving our suggestion on some modifications to alter official population figures in order to make them appear more consistent with real-world demographic data in the Middle Ages, and with the changes suggested in the article found in the first issue about the population of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos.

We suggest reading the introductory paragraph in *The Demography of Karameikos*, in Threshold #1, titled "A Look at Medieval Demography", to get an idea of what the population density was like in the place and time which inspired the Known World of Mystara, that is late Medieval Europe.

Just a last note before we go on. Both GAZ4 The Kingdom of Ierendi and GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds state that a huge number of

small and tiny island, atolls, and reefs dot the sea around the two archipelagos' main islands. These lesser islands, however, are not featured on both supplements' 8-miles per hex poster maps. The following article will therefore take into account only the population of the major islands shown on canon maps, assuming that population in the lesser islands is negligible or so small as not to change the picture too much.

## THE KINGDOM OF IERENDI

### Ierendian Population in Official Sources

GAZ4 The Kingdom of Ierendi, the tables featured in TM2 The Eastern Countries, and the three volumes of the Poor Wizard's Almanac constitute the main official sources for the population and demographic figures on the Ierendi islands. All the sources are more or less consistent in giving the Kingdom an overall population of about 60,000 people (numbers range from the 62,500 of the TM2 and GAZ4 to the 57,850 of the PWAs), three-quarter of which live in the largest of the ten islands – Ierendi Island – and with Ierendi city as the only urban settlement with over 10,000 inhabitants. At best, with those figures the Kingdom's population density results in 1.4 people per square mile – barely



above the threshold of what is considered untouched wilderness.

In GAZ4, which is the most thorough source about Ierendi, the Kingdom is described as a lush subtropical paradise of beautiful scenery, white sandy beaches, and calm waters, populated by Hawaiian-style natives (the Makai), and visited by thousands of tourists from the continent each year (GAZ4 says about 20,000). Apart from Safari Island, which is mostly kept in wilderness state for tourism purposes, most of the islands are at best only averagely populated, while some (Aloysius, Roister, and Utter islands) are only inhabited by a handful of people on the coasts. In at least two occasions, GAZ4 speaks of “port towns” and “small towns” scattered among the islands’ semi-arid plains and coastal beaches, but apart from Gaamo and Vlaad (both with a population of 1,100), no other town is marked or described in GAZ4 or elsewhere. These official figures generate an urban population of about 20% – mostly made up by the capital town of Ierendi itself (12,000 people).

Nevertheless, Ierendi’s inhabitants don’t seem to be threatened by monsters, beasts, or other perils haunting the almost uninhabited islands; that means that the frontier and the fight against the wilderness is not a main theme of this setting. Volcanic activity and natural dangers (parasites, diseases) seem to be the only causes which may explain this very low population level – but according to GAZ4 they only usually plague some of the islands. Also, Ierendi’s history has not been plagued by population-threatening events in the last thousand years or so.

What contrasts with this level of (or lack of) settlement is the fact that Ierendi is described as one of the main sea powers of the Sea of Dread, with an increasing importance in

international trade and a powerful fleet. Moreover, the Kingdom sees a huge number of visitors from the continent each year, and GAZ4 describes in more than one occasion the various tourist facilities present in almost each of the isles. The fact that the islands’ central activity is tourism leads us to think that the official population figures for Ierendi may have somewhat been heavily underestimated – you won’t have any excess population devoted to the tourism trade if the islands had the density of a wilderness land. Besides that, a country of 60,000 people could hardly pose a threat – in terms of resources and manpower – to, say, the Thyatian naval power. And not without difficulty official sources could explain how the neighboring, smaller, equally volcanic, partially less fertile Minrothad islands could have a population (as per GAZ9) five times that of the Ierendi islands.

### AN ALTERNATE TAKE ON IERENDI’S DEMOGRAPHY

So, while canonic population figures for the Kingdom of Ierendi are not unreasonable per se, they appear to be somewhat inconsistent with some aspects of the country’s description and history. Therefore, what follows is an attempt to redesign Ierendi’s population figures according to numbers more in line with population densities in 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe – the real world historical setting which inspired Mystara’s Known World. We have tried to stay as true as possible – if not to canonic population figures – at least to the individual islands’ settlement rank, as found in the description given of each island in GAZ4, ensuring the preservation of Ierendi Island’s vast superiority in terms of population and settlement.

As you can guess, this way we will end up having a much more populous Ierendi, but don't be afraid! This won't alter your tropical paradise setting. Population figures don't make interesting settings, descriptions do: what we are doing here is taking the descriptions of the islands featured in GAZ4 and deriving from them some hopefully more consistent population figures which would reflect Ierendi's status as a sea power and as the Known World's main tourist travel destination. In doing this, we will not rework the urban population and we will keep it as listed in GAZ4, but take a look at the "Increasing the Urban Population of Ierendi" sidebar for suggestions about a different approach.

For simplicity's and uniformity's sake, we will make use of the same density ranks that we used in the article about Karamaikos' demography in the first issue of "Threshold".

## **AN Overall LOOK at the Ierendi Isles**

The whole area of the ten main islands of the Ierendi archipelago totals 17,539 square miles, with a surface area comparable to that of real-world countries like the Dominican Republic or Estonia, or to the sum of the US states of Vermont and New Hampshire; Ierendi island alone is about double the size of real-world islands like Puerto Rico or Cyprus. Several tiny atolls and islets dot the sea around the ten major islands, but there are mostly unmapped and unsettled, and only serve at best as pirate hideout or are simply the emerging top of underwater volcanoes.

While the Kingdom of Ierendi claims all the ten major islands and several minor ones, it actually controls only a part of these lands. Of the ten islands, one – White Island – is the

## **INCREASING the Urban Population of Ierendi**

As you may read in the "Ierendian Population in Official Sources" paragraph, GAZ4 mentions in two places a scattering of "small towns" and "port towns" which shall dot the islands' plains and beaches.

Even if the Ierendi's urban population is perfectly acceptable as it is (without any town besides the capital, Gaamo and Vlaad), with the increased population figures we will get in this article you could deem fitting to raise a handful of villages featured on GAZ4's poster map to the status of small towns, and you could do it without having to worry about the urban:rural population ratio. A number of small towns would also seem more fitting for a "pirate islands" setting like Ierendi.

Both Gaamo's and Vlaad's population could be increased even three-fivefold, and the same could be done for the population of the main settlement of each other island – Nula, Jortan, Kurutiba; among other villages, particularly fitting to be raised to the status of town would be Kobos, on Safari Island, which is listed as having a port nearly the same size as the one of Tameronikas (pop. 4,000, in Ylaruam) and is also the main tourist stopover of Safari Island.

If you do this, increasing by some thousand people the capital's population could be a good idea – but try not to overdo with this, because the islands should not end up having great cities; thus we suggest to avoid pushing Ierendi's population beyond 16,000 people.

home of a mysterious sects of druids and declared off limits to shipping; while another – Honor Island – is a de facto independent state which is (more or less willingly) allied to the Kingdom. Both islands are usually considered part of the Kingdom, even if actually the Ierendi government doesn't exercise any authority there.

Moreover, of the whole surface area of the ten major islands, only less than the half is settled to some degree. About 37% of the area is wilderness, while another 21% is made up by barely-settled borderlands. Most of the population (72%) actually lives in less than one-fifth (19%) of the islands' surface area.

Total population of the Kingdom of Ierendi is about 381,000 people, including 330,600

humans – most of which (over 70%) belongs to the native Makai ethnic group, while the rest is made up by settlers from foreign countries who came here in the course of the last three centuries –, 34,900 demihumans, 8,000 humanoids, and 7,500 other creatures (taking into account only the races who are represented by not less than 100 members in the country). Average population density for the whole country is about 21.7 people per square mile.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the archipelago's population among major racial groups. The table doesn't take into account the tourists that swarm the islands yearly in the summer season; according to official data, their numbers is around 20,000 people.

**Table 1: Ierendi's Racial Groups**

Racial Group	Total Racial Population	% on Total Population
Humans	330,600	86.8%
Demihumans	34,900	9.2%
Halflings	32,400	11.8%
Dwarves	2,000	0.5%
Elves	400	0.1%
Gnomes	100	Negligible
Humanoids	8,000	2.1%
Goblins	8,000	2.1%
Other Creatures	7,500	1.9%
Lizardmen	3,500	0.9%
Lupins	3,000	0.8%
Harpies	700	0.2%
Fire Elementals*	200	Negligible
Fire Giants	100	Negligible
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>381,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Including true fire elementals and other intelligent creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire (like efreet, helions, fire plasms, and so on).



## LAND CONTROL AND GOVERNMENT

Ierendi is a young realm which has quickly developed since its independence from the Thyatian Empire, happened four centuries ago in AC 602. Though formally a kingdom, Ierendi is so in name only, because its monarchs don't wield any real power apart from a ceremonial one, that is representing the unity of the islands in front of their diverse population and of the foreign nations. In fact, since AC 790 the Ierendian crown is elective and elections are held annually; from AC 867 the choice of a yearly royal couple – a King and a Queen – has been done not through popular election anymore, but through the Royal Tournament of Adventurers, an annual competition (opened also to foreigners since AC 935) whose male and female winner become Ierendi's King and Queen for an year.

Real power is in the hands of a number of aristocratic families, some of ancient origin, some raised only in the recent times, whose wealth comes from the owning of vast expansions of land, or from financial or mercantile activities, or shipping enterprises; some of the most unscrupulous of them earned their wealth through the practice of criminal activities, like smuggling or piracy.

One member of each of the most powerful aristocratic family of the Kingdom sits in the Tribunal, an oligarchic council who represents the true power and government in Ierendi. These families' position in the Tribunal is de facto hereditary. The Tribunal has judicial and executive powers, as well as legislative ones – even if the latter is shared with the Council of



Citizens, which is formed by the heads of the richer and larger merchant and landowning non-noble families of the Kingdom; about 0.5% of the families of the whole Kingdom sit in the Council of Citizens, most of whom reside or are native of the capital itself.

The political stage sees almost constant struggle between major parties within the Tribunal. Corruption is rampant, as are abuse of power, blackmail, and other ruthless means of forcing or persuading other families to support one's policy. Sometimes the political struggle transfers also to the Council, where friction between non-noble families and aristocratic ones often resurfaces. The result of this political mess is that the Kingdom's laws are many, unclearly-written, full of contradictions, and pierced by subtle shortcuts which the most acknowledged people know how to exploit to their own advantage. Nevertheless, this internal conflictuality to the country's ruling class is a weakness and limit to the Tribunal's authority.

Both the Tribunal's and the Council's families are almost all of foreign heritage – that is,

nearly none of them has Makai origin. This means that a minority (wealthy and aristocratic families) of a minority (the descendants of the foreign settlers) controls the Kingdom. This is certainly another weakness as well, more so if one considers the exclusion from the government not only of the Makai, but even of the larger part of the settlers' population (middle and lower classes).

The control of the government extend to about 60% of the islands' area. Wilderness regions most often include the mountainous territory, the volcanic areas and the lava fields around them, swamps or the depths of the rain forests. One exception is Safari Island, which is kept unsettled by royal decree in order to use it as a touristic attraction for adventurers and monster-hunters. Wilderness areas are most of all the domain of dangerous creatures, like wild and giant animals, monsters, a few sparse lizardman tribes, and even of the occasional dragon. The islands' wilderness doesn't host a large population of savage humanoids (apart from a handful of goblin clans), thus raids from this sources are not considered a relevant danger or even a problem by the government. Settlement of wilderness areas is nevertheless seen as a primary issue by a part of the Tribunal and the Council, and special measures are often devised to make settlement there an attractive perspective for islanders and foreign immigrants alike.

## LAND OCCUPATION AND SOCIAL CLASSES

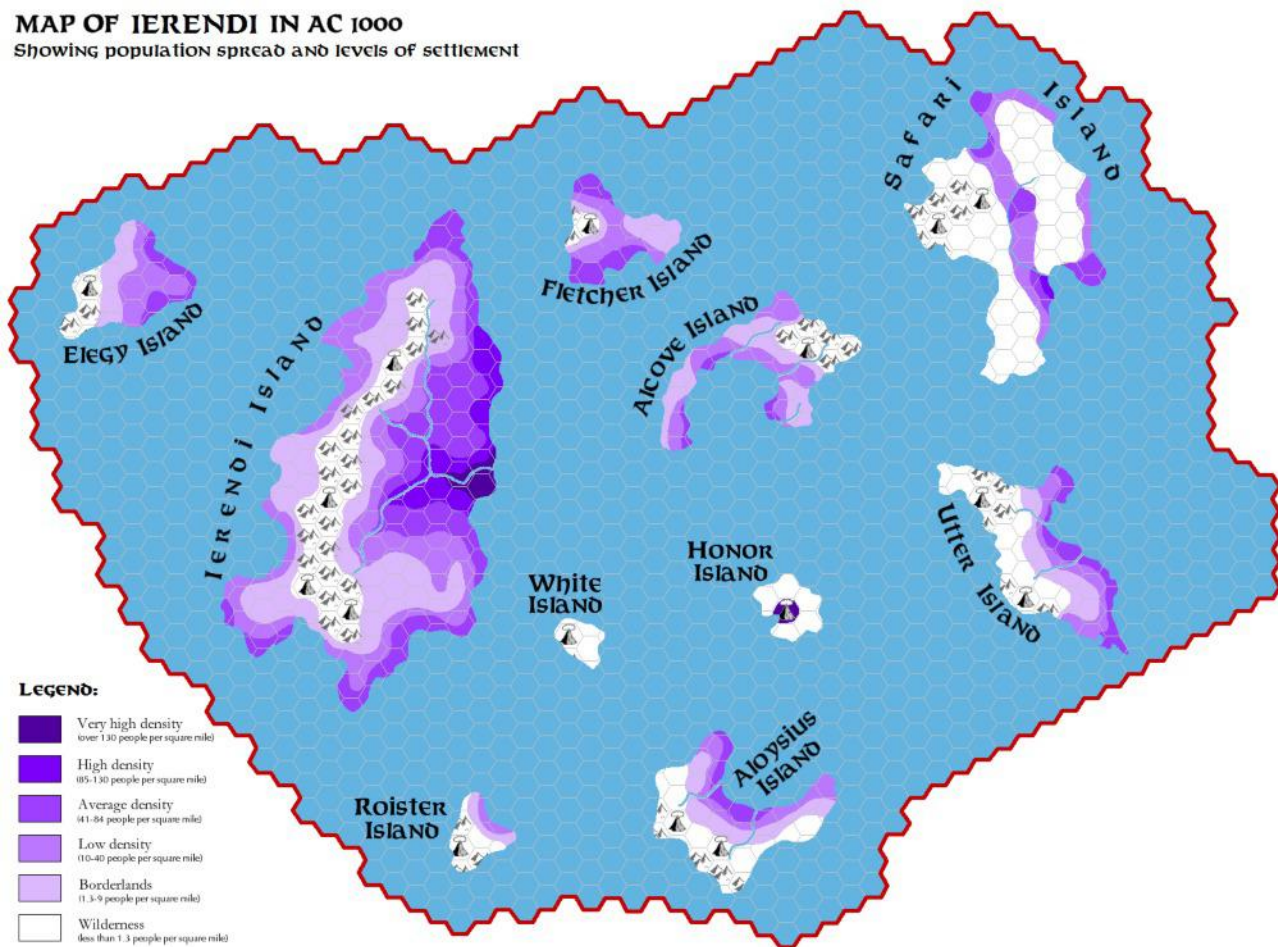
As said above, only a small area of the whole surface of the islands is truly settled; wilderness (37% of total land area) and borderlands (21%) still account for the greater part of the country. In fact, areas with a very high density level (over 130 people per square mile) are only found in the immediate suburban surroundings of Ierendi town, while high density areas (85-130 people per square mile) extend about 15-20 miles around that region, along the final course of the Ierendi River, and on the tract of plain and beachy seacoast north of the capital. The central area of Honor Island, where the settlement of Filtot and the Citadel are found, can be considered very high density areas, even if a particular type of that. The small area around Kobos, on Safari Island, where most of the wilderness preserve's tourist trade is located, counts as a high density area.

Average density areas (41-84 people per square mile) host the bulk of Ierendi's population: they encompass a vast area of Ierendi Island's interior along the Makai and the Ierendi Rivers, and much of the island's northern, eastern, and southern coasts. Average density areas also represent the upper level of settlement in other islands: the eastern shores of Elegy Island, the northern and southern coasts of Fletcher Island, some spots along the Angel Cove in Alcove Island, some areas along the coasts and the interior of Safari Island, the central and northern half of the Mau-Mau Bay on Aloysius Island, and the eastern coasts of Utter Island.

Low density areas (10-40 people per square mile) usually extend beyond the average density ones. On Ierendi Island, the best-settled parts of the western coast belong to



**MAP OF IERENDI IN AC 1000**  
 Showing population spread and levels of settlement



this level of settlement, as the area around Ronowac village on Roister Island. In turn, around low density areas are the borderlands (1.3-9 people per square mile), which often represent the only type of settlement found in the islands' inland areas, often in forest, hill, or mountainous regions. The wilderness (less than 1.3 people per square mile) encompasses the most savage and remote areas of the islands, usually the mountain peaks and chains, the uplands, and the deepest forests.

A sizeable part (about a third) of the lands over which the government claims control is inhabited by native Makai tribes who still

practice their traditional lifestyle. These tribes, who live on what nature produces, practice a little agriculture, fruit-gathering, fishing, and hunting; they mostly live in Ierendi Island's uplands and rain forests, or on smaller islands, and in general are found in borderlands or low settled areas. These traditional Makai tribes have uncommon contacts with the rest of the Kingdom: their lifestyle is self-sufficient and they are only interested in the little trade they need to get metal tools or other manufactured items. Otherwise they tend to themselves, and are often as left alone by the government as they ignore it themselves.



**Table 2: Settlement Levels in the Kingdom of Ierendi**

Settlement level	Number of 8-mile hexes (averaged)	Square mileage (averaged)	% of total mileage (averaged)	Population density range	Average population density (people/sq. mile)	Total population per settlement area (averaged)	% of total population (averaged)
Very High	3	196	1%	Over 130	155	30,500 (+12,000)*	11%
High	10	577	3%	85-130	104	59,800	16%
Average	47	2,621	15%	41-84	65	169,700 (+2,200)*	45%
Low	71	3,970	23%	10-40	21	82,300	22%
Borderlands	67	3,724	21%	1.3-9	5	19,300	5%
Wilderness	115	6,451	37%	Below 1.3	0.8	5,200	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>17,539</b>	<b>100%</b>	**	<b>21.72</b>	<b>366,800 (+12,200)*</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Numbers in brackets indicate urban population to be added to the listed figures.

\*\* Population density in the country can range from zero (wilderness uninhabited by intelligent creatures) to some thousand (6-7,000 in the capital) people per square mile.

The two-thirds of the Kingdom's territory which is under the control of the government is inhabited by Makai who have adopted a lifestyle more akin to that of the "civilized" countries, influenced by the large minority of "foreign" settlers who came to Ierendi in the past centuries. These Makai who live in rural and coastal villages found in the more settled areas make up the Kingdom's working class in the agricultural field, as only a handful of them own their own land. Many are employed as workers in the plantations, where life is still hard even after the reform edicts of the last century, while others work in the Kingdom's gold and platinum mines. Some of them live in the capital, where they usually perform low-class jobs, like labourers, longshoremen, roundsmen, servants, manufacturers or sellers of traditional products, and so on. A few more fortunate ones find occupation in the bustling and recently-developed tourism trade.

Descendants of foreign settlers live mostly in average- to heavily-populated areas, in the surroundings of the capital and in Ierendi town itself. Tourist trade and middle-class activities and professions are mostly in the hands of this minority, as is the greater part of the Kingdom's private-owned land. The richest or fanciest of these people have villas, residences, and mansions in the most beautiful beaches and spots of the archipelago. A few of them are indeed former adventurers who decided to settle in Ierendi after the end of their career.

Table 2 shows the settlement levels of the Kingdom, indicating the number of hexes (on GAZ4's poster 8-miles per hex map) belonging to each level and the number of people (all races) living in it. Note that the wilderness areas' average density is a little higher than norm (which would be 0.3 inhabitants per

square mile) due to the presence of some groups of creature who live exclusively there – such as some lizardman and goblin clans, harpies nests, and so on.

## Urban Population

Talking of Ierendi's urban population essentially means talking of the capital's population only. Ierendi town in fact is the only urban settlement (that is the only settlement with more than 10,000 inhabitants) of the whole Kingdom. Trade, craft, tourism, government, and the military and navy are centered here; this makes the nation a sort of city-state whose power extends over the rest of Ierendi Island and the other lesser islands. Thus, the Kingdom's urban population is only 3.2% of the total population.

No other towns exist in the Kingdom besides Gaamo (on Utter Island) and Vlaad (on Fletcher Island), both of which have a very small population (1,100 inhabitants); they don't change at all the picture if one also adds settlements with 1,000 inhabitants or more to the count of the country's urban population – which in this case would amount to 3.7% of total population.

Other settlements are mere fishing or agricultural villages of some hundred residents. Thus, Ierendi is still a mostly rural country, with city life only limited to the capital. Nevertheless, in the near future immigration and the increase of trade and tourism could improve the status of some villages, helping them to grow to the size of small towns.

Here follows a list of the Kingdom's known settlements, along with their population, if known.

**Cities and Large Towns:** *Ierendi Island:* Ierendi (pop. 12,000).

**Small Towns:** *Fletcher Island:* Vlaad (pop. 1,100). *Utter Island:* Gaamo (pop. 1,100).

**Villages:** *Alcove Island:* Kurutiba (pop. 600). *Aloysius Island:* Jortan (pop. 800). *Elegy Island:* Nula (pop. 600). *Honor Island:* Filtot (pop. 750). *Ierendi Island:* Makalau, Maona Kea, Matarakai, Punaauia, Taroa, Tooraka. *Roister Island:* Ronowac (pop. 700). *Safari Island:* Calatupos (pop. 350), Kobos (pop. 800), Pupami (pop. 200).

## The Ten Islands

Now we will take a brief tour of the Ierendi archipelago, examining each of the ten islands which make it up, their main features, and their level of settlement. Please refer to Table 2, above, to detect the density range and average density of each settlement level.

### ALCOVE ISLAND

**Surface area:** 1,241 square miles (7.1% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 15,050 (4% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 12.1 people/square mile.

Alcove is an oddly-shaped island which is one of the last remnants of the old Kikianu Caldera; its eastern mountains give way to placid sandy beaches in the west. The island

has been for centuries a haven for pirates fleeing or hiding from justice, and thus has never enjoyed a high level of settlement. In the last century, clearing operations undertaken by Ierendi's Royal Navy have allowed for a modest immigration, which has directed itself mostly along the bay known as the Angel Cove; there, a fishing industry and many recreational activities devoted to tourism have grown. The remaining pirates have relocated in hidden caves and lagoons on the other side of the island.

Alcove Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage (averaged)	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	1	4%	3,650	24%
	Low	7.5	34%	8,700	58%
	Borderlands	8.4	38%	2,450	16%
	Wilderness	5.3	24%	250	2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,050</b>	<b>100%</b>



**ALOYSIUS ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 1,302 square miles (7.4% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 16,750 (4.4% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 12.9 people/square mile.

Aloysius is one of the southernmost islands of the archipelago and one of the remnants of the old Kikianu Caldera; its southwestern coasts are mountainous and volcanic, while the rest of the island is hilly and forested, leaving room to plains along the northeastern

Mau-Mau Bay. Aloysius' woods are infested by a nasty specimen of disease-carrying mosquitos, which the Makai call "mau-mau". The island has long been a penal colony for the Kingdom's criminals, but recently the government has decided to increase its population through sales of land at cheap prices, and some immigration has begun also thanks to the discovery of gold and precious stones mines in the interior. Among these new settlers is a large minority of dwarves, mostly from Fortress Island in Minrothad (there are about a thousand of them).

Aloysius Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage (averaged)	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	2.5	11%	9,050	54%
	Low	4.8	20%	5,550	33%
	Borderlands	5.5	24%	1,600	10%
	Wilderness	10.5	45%	550	3%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,750</b>	<b>100%</b>

**ELEGY ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 924 square miles (5.3% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 20,100 (5.3% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 21.8 people/square mile.

Elegy is the westernmost island of the archipelago; it is essentially a large plateau

dipping from the western mountains to the eastern coasts, lightly wooded, rocky and poor in resources. Its predominantly Makai population lives on agriculture, fishing, and herding. For centuries the island has been used as burial ground by the Makai tribes living on the western coasts of Ierendi Island; the practice of cave-burials has been revived in recent years by well-off inhabitants of Makai descent.

Elegy Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage (averaged)	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	3.4	21%	12,350	61%
	Low	5.5	33%	6,400	32%
	Borderlands	4.1	25%	1,200	6%
	Wilderness	3.5	21%	150	1%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**FLETCHER ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 802 square miles (4.6% of total Kingdom’s surface area).

**Total population:** 20,600 (5.4% of total Kingdom’s population).

**Population density:** 25.7 people/square mile.

This pleasant island is dotted with caves left from the past volcanic activity; many Makai natives have their homes built in these underground caves, while other inhabitants

mostly live in Vlaad and other villages. Fletcher produces a variety of common and luxury goods: from the wines, olives, and citruses coming from its agricultural activity, to the feather artistry made possible by the thousands of birds which dwell on the island, to the mining of the famous “fire-starters” – crystals able to start fire through reflection of sunrays. The island is also notable for the presence of a relevant number of Traladaran immigrants.

Fletcher Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	3.6	25%	14,150	69%
	Low	4.3	30%	5,000	24%
	Borderlands	4.8	34%	1,400	7%
	Wilderness	1.6	11%	50	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,600</b>	<b>100%</b>

**HONOR ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 310 square miles (1.8% of total Kingdom’s surface area).

**Total population:** 8,800 (2.3% of total Kingdom’s population).

**Population density:** 28.4 people/square mile.

Honor Island is the last remnant of the ancient Kikianu Caldera’s central volcanic cone – what is now called Mount Kala. The island is a small, bleak place of dark terrain made up by dried lava and devoid of most plant life. Honor is not part of the Kingdom of Ierendi, but is actually an independent realm inhabited by a sizeable community of Alphatian expatriates who settled there in AC 629 after an agreement with the King of Ierendi of that time. The Alphatians now make up about one-third of



*Fire salamander on Honor Island*

the island's population; the rest of the inhabitants are goblin slaves who serve their human masters, and their families. Honor Island's Alphatians are all trained as spellcasters as soon as they reach an adult age; there are a secretive, ruthless, and belligerent lot, who only preserve its alliance to the Kingdom of Ierendi out of trade needs (mostly agricultural products). Here the famous and formidable steam-powered, armored fireship are built and stationed. Honor Island is off-limits to anyone; those displaying a special pass of the Ierendi government are allowed

into the village of Filtot, but that's all they can see. The island's mages have accumulated a lot of lore about the Ethereal Plane and the Plane of Fire, thanks to a gateway leading there, located on Mount Kala and closely shielded from discovery by outsiders. A number of creatures from the Planes of Fire (plasms, efreet, fire elementals, helions, etc.) dwell here to collaborate with the island's mages, as well as a small community of earth gnomes, while small groups of fire elemental tourists make occasional visits here from their fiery home plane.

Honor Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Very high	1	18%	8,700	99%
	Wilderness	4.5	82%	100	1%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>100%</b>

**IERENDI ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 7,438 square miles (42.4% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 241,500 (63.4% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 32.5 people/square mile.

Ierendi Island is the heart of the Kingdom and of its activities, the center of its government, and its largest and most populous island. Nearly two-thirds of the Kingdom's population lives in this island, mostly on the eastern and southern coasts and beaches, with a large part of it (around 40%) clustered in the immediate area around the capital town. The island's population swells by 15-20,000 people coming

from the other countries of the Known World during the summer tourist season. Villages, farms, plantations, villas, and resorts of all types dot the eastern side of the island, while the western side is comparatively less settled and mostly inhabited by Makai natives. A mountainous ridge known as the Ierendi Uplands runs parallel to the island's western coast; the mountains are mostly unsettled, and many volcanic peaks are found in this chain – like the famous Makalaui Crater. The capital of the Kingdom, the town of Ierendi, is located at the half of the eastern coast: there are found most of the Kingdom's prides, like the famous coral royal castle, the Adventurers' Club, and the Naval Academy.





Ierendi Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Very high	2.5	2%	33,750	14%
	High	10	8%	58,000	24%
	Average	27.8	21%	100,800	42%
	Low	32	24%	37,150	15%
	Borderlands	36.5	27%	10,600	4%
	Wilderness	24	18%	1,200	1%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132.8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>241,500</b>	<b>100%</b>

**ROISTER ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 322 square miles (1.8% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 2,950 (0.8% of total Kingdom's population).

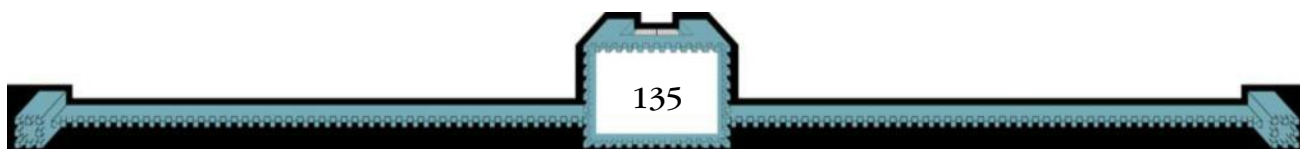
**Population density:** 9.2 people/square mile.

Roister is a small southern island of the Ierendi archipelago. Its landscape is dominated by the volcano called Mount Ronowac, whose

northeastern slopes give way to a vast area of swamps which encompasses most of the island's lowlands. The small local Makai population lives of fishing, and must strive daily against the deadly "mau-mau" mosquitos which infest the island, as well as with the numerous lizardman tribes who lives in the swamps of the interior (and who make up about 90% of Roister's wilderness population).

Roister Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Low	0.8	14%	900	32%
	Borderlands	1.7	29%	500	17%
	Wilderness	3.3	57%	1,500*	51%*
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* These figures include the local lizardman population, which lives in the island's wilderness.



**SAFARI ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 3,360 square miles (19.2% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 29,800 (7.8% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 8.9 people/square mile.

Safari is the second largest island of the Ierendi archipelago; it's an island of beautiful scenery, gifted with plains and lush forests in its eastern half, and with hills and mountains in its western one. The island has always been the home of a variety of creatures, both harmless and dangerous, which have never been exterminated in the course of the past centuries, thus allowing for only a small level of settlement. In the past decades, the government has decided to make the island a tourist attraction for monster-hunters and people who like to take wilderness tours and to see strange creatures in their habitat; thus

it was decreed that most of the island's interior (about 90%) should be kept as wilderness and off-limits to any type of settlement. All in all, about 75% of the island's surface is uninhabited, while the remaining 25% - located mostly along the eastern and northern coasts, and along the course of the Wautili River - is quite settled in regard to other islands' standard; in fact, Safari Island lacks settlement areas qualifying as borderlands, because the island's population and immigration has directed itself in the few areas which were allowed for settlement. Nevertheless, the government imposes strict regulations over monster hunting, in order to avoid the island depletion. Safari Island is the home of the famous adventure parks of Ierendi - foremost among which is "Gastenoo's World of Adventure" - that is places where fictional, live adventures are staged for the tourists' benefit.

Safari Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	High	0.3	1%	1,750	6%
	Average	4.5	8%	16,300	55%
	Low	9.5	16%	11,000	37%
	Borderlands	0	0%	0	0%
	Wilderness	45.7	76%	750	2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29,800</b>	<b>100%</b>

**UTTER ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 1,642 square miles (9.4% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 25,350 (6.7% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 15.4 people/square mile.

Utter is one of the remnants of the ancient Kikianu Caldera, and is one of the Kingdom's easternmost islands. It's a rugged land, featuring mountains of its southwestern side, and beautiful hills in the rest, half of which is carpeted with forests. The small town of Gaamo is the main settlement of the island. Little more than half (53%) of the island's

population is made up by an unusual race of humans, the Albinos, descendants of an ancient servitor race of the Taymoran civilization. The Albinos have their own distinct culture, which they preserve despite being ruled by the Ierendi government. Their most interesting custom is the emphasis they put on architecture as a mean to earn their Immortal patron's favor after death; the island is indeed filled with their beautiful constructions – both monumental and simple, ranging from decorative sand castle to full-fledged mausoleums. The rest of the population is made up by Makai natives and by a minority of foreign settlers.

Utter Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	4	14%	15,600	61%
	Low	6.5	22%	7,500	30%
	Borderlands	5.5	19%	1,600	6%
	Wilderness	13.3	45%	650	3%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25,350</b>	<b>100%</b>

**WHITE ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 196 square miles (1.1% of total Kingdom's surface area).

**Total population:** 100 (less than 0.1% of total Kingdom's population).

**Population density:** 0.5 people/square mile.

This small island derives its name from the white stone of its cliff. White Island is a strange, enchanted place, dotted by clear, cold, and very deep ponds, whose only inhabitants are the members of the monastic community of Whitenight Abbey; they are all males (adults and children) belong to an ethnicity not found anywhere else in the Known World, and speak

an unknown tongue. Unknown to all, these are the last remnants of a groups of Nithians who didn't cede to Entropic worship in the final days of the Nithian Empire, and who were saved by their patron Immortal Orisis (an alias of Ixion), but obliged to live here. White Island can't be reached easily by boat because of its rugged coasts and reefs; the few who managed to land on it tell of horrible, madness-inducing dreams haunting their sleep. Besides the monks, the island is noted for the birch doves which flock here in endless number, and the large white apes who roam the interior.





White Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Wilderness	3.5	100%	100	100%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Main Races

The following entries list in order of their number – from the most numerous to the least numerous – the main races who dwell within Ierendi’s borders. Each entry gives a brief description of that race’s composition (ethnic subgroups, and the like), its diffusion in the Kingdom, relationships with other races, and some additional information. Note that only races who number at least 100 members within Ierendian territory are described here. Other, less-represented races – alongside unintelligent creatures – are found in the following chapter, “Fauna and Minor Races”.

### Humans (pop. 330,600)

Humans make up the most numerous race of the Ierendi islands. Within the whole human population of the archipelago, two main groupings can be distinguished, that is the “natives” – the Makai – and the “foreigners” or “settlers” – that is the descendants of foreign settlers who migrated to the islands in past or recent ages. Customs, lifestyles, spoken tongue, social rank, and social classes are mostly defined by the one of the two groupings to whom an individual belongs.

The **Makai** are a very old people, who – according to historical accounts - has always inhabited the islands. In truth, they are a mixed

Neathar-Oltec blood people, born from the intermarriages between the Oltec-blooded Ti-teque (descendants of the more ancient Azcan culture) who lived in the southwestern Known World during the Taymoran age, and the Neathar-blooded Eokai who had lived for centuries in northern Davania and had then migrated in the islands of the Sea of Dread, up to the southern Known World.

The Makai tongue is unrelated to any other tongue spoken in the Known World; in fact, their language was heavily influenced by the close relations that their ancestors maintained with the rakasta in ages past, during their stay in northern Davania. Rakasta influences (and perhaps even dominion) – mostly by the Pardasta and Fast Runner breed – slowly changed the Makai ancestors’ tongue to what is today.

The Makai make up the vast majority of Ierendi’s human population (71%). They are a peaceful and welcoming people, and tend to favor their traditional rural lifestyle to the urban ways of later settlers. The islands of the archipelago are dotted by their villages, most of which rely on farming, fishing, and some other traditional trades. A relevant part of the Makai population has adapted to the lifestyle introduced by the continental settlers during the course of the centuries; some of



them live in the capital, where they make up the city's working class, while many more live in the countryside, performing agricultural labor for the plantation-owners, who possess a great deal of the Kingdom's land. The Makai usually belong to Ierendi's lower social classes, but there are some cases of Makai who managed to climb the social staircase and to reach a position of economic comfort or even of wealth.

About one-fifth of Ierendi's Makai population, mostly located in borderlands area of rain forests and low settled uplands, still practices a tribal lifestyle, living off forest products through gathering and hunting, and keeping some of the most ancient and primitive customs. These tribes are usually the ones over which the Kingdom's government exercises little control; they tend to be a little more warlike than their kin, and it's not uncommon for tribal feuds to go out of control and become true wars between tribes in these areas – somewhat which put to risk the settled population living in the vicinity.

The other human grouping of Ierendi is that of the so-called “settlers” (25%), made up by the descendants of the many generations of settlers who came to the archipelago in the course of the last five centuries. The settlers are not at all a homogeneous group; however, most of them consider themselves “Ierendians”, and don't stick to their foreign heritage. Their origins range from the first convicts and exiles sent there by the Thyatian Empire, to the subsequent great number of immigrants who came here from various nations of the Known World and beyond, to the last, tourism-generated immigration of the last century – which saw a number of people from the continent decide to come to live in Ierendi after they visited the islands as tourists.

The settlers mostly live in the capital town, in the area of countryside surrounding it, and in the small towns and villages scattered around the islands. They keep control of the political power, of the government, and of most of the islands' economy through their influence on mercantile activities, tourism trade, financial activities, and plantation farming. In fact, the aristocratic families are all of settler origins.

The vast majority of settlers has Thyatian origins (66%); they mostly came to the islands during the first decades of Thyatian dominion over the archipelago (AC 571-602), and among them are also found families of Hattian heritage, whose ancestors were victims of the oppressive politics of the Thyatian Emperor of that time, which harshly hit some of its political opponents (many of which were indeed Hattians).

The origins of the rest of the settlers are almost evenly split between the major countries surrounding the archipelago. Darokinians, coming both from Darokin itself and from the nearby Five Shires, form the largest group (8%); then come the Traladarans from the nowadays Grand Duchy of Karameikos (6%), many of which live in Fletcher Island; immigrants from the northern country of the Highlands (modern Glantri) come next (4%), their number being almost equal to that of immigrants from the neighboring Colony Islands, that is modern Minrothad (4%); another relevant group (6%) is made up by minorities coming from a whole bunch of disparate countries – immigrants from Ylaruam and the Northern Reaches realms, sparse people from Atruaghin's coastal tribes, people from Sind and someone from Yavdlom, to immigrants coming from the eastern territories of the

Thyatian Empire, like the Isle of Dawn and Ochalea. Lastly, a little part of the settlers is made up by the secretive group of Common Alphatians who live in Honor Island (3%), jealously guarding their crafts and secrets there.

There is a third very small grouping, that of the **Albino** people (4%), all of them living on Utter Island. They are descendants of an ancient Taymoran servitor race, who managed to survive the catastrophes which rocked the southern part of the Known World in the second millennium BC and preserved its own distinctive culture on this corner of the archipelago. The Albinos form a cohesive and united group; many live in the town of Gaamo, the others scattered among various villages and isolated houses in Utter Island's hill country.

#### **Halflings (pop. 32,400)**

There are many halflings living in the Ierendi islands, most of whom are immigrants from the nearby Five Shires. The Hins from the north were the first to note the archipelago's rich resources exploitable for shipbuilding activities, and the first immigrants from the Known World were indeed halflings from the Shires. Since the first settlements founded by them in the islands five hundred years ago, Hin immigration toward Ierendi never ceased, and today a sizeable part of the islands' population and the near totality of the islands' demihuman population belongs to the halfling race. Like the human settlers, the halflings occupy a variety of social positions in Ierendi's society, but many halflings are indeed comfortable or rich people, and a number of the islands' most influent families are Hins.

#### **Goblins (pop. 8,000)**

It could come as a surprise that a relatively high number of common goblins (*Goblinus*

*goblinus*) dwells on the islands. The goblins were slaves brought here by the Nithians in the last century and a half of their dominion over the archipelago (BC 650-500), in the effort to break the lizardmen resistance at a cheap cost. After the fall of the Nithian Empire, the goblins – left without their masters - and the native Makai began a long series of wars that ravaged the main islands for another five centuries, leading to the almost total extermination of the goblins. The few surviving tribes retreated in barren and isolated places, like the uplands and the heated cave systems near volcanoes and underground lava fields. A large group of them was stranded on the desolate Honor Island. When the group of Alphatians mages arrived in AC 629 and claimed possession of Honor Island, they imposed their dominion over the local goblins, using them as slaves.



*Honor Island goblins*



Today, only a few goblin clans are found in the wilderness of the islands (around 23% of the total goblin population); the Ierendians call some of them “black goblins” from the darkened color their skin developed during their life near volcanoes and lava fields. These goblins are usually aggressive toward strangers, but frightened by humans, and tend to perform raids only in the most dire times, when famine threatens them.

The rest of the goblin population (77%) are slaves in Honor Island, used both for menial labors, as servitors, and for guard purposes. The life of the goblins on the island is harsh, but after centuries of servitude they have become a docile bunch, posing few or no problems to the Alphatian mages who rule over them. Their number and breeding are closely controlled by the local Alphatians, in order to ensure that their population never exceeds a given limit.

### **Lizardmen (pop. 3,500)**

Lizardmen were once one of the dominant races of this region, but their presence has been reduced to some thousand individuals after the Nithians unknowingly brought in the islands a disease-carrying parasite living on their cattle, which was deadly for the lizardmen. After BC 500, the lizardmen had almost disappeared from most of the islands, surviving only in the large and hot swamps which are found down Mount Ronowac, on Roister Island, where a dozen of lizardman tribes continue to live to this day (about 40% of total lizardman population), harassing the local Makai and settler population.

The rest of the lizardmen (60%) belong to an amphibious subrace which retreated in coastal shallow waters and deep submerged lagoons after the destruction of their kins in BC 500.

They are mostly found on Ierendi, Safari, Aloysius, and Utter islands, but are wary of humans – due to the legends told by their shamans - and try to avoid contact with them.

### **Lupins (pop. 3,000)**

A relevant number of these creatures lives in the archipelago, scattered among the human settlements; many of them have come from the Known World countries, but not few are immigrants directly from the Savage Coast – they reached the islands on board merchant and corsair ships which occasionally tour between the two regions. Mongrels are the largest lupin group (23%), followed by Great Beagles (16%) and Blue Bandits (14%), then by Grand Bloodhounds (11%), Shag-Heads (11%), and Neo-Papillons (10%). Minorities of Eusdrian Bulldogs (7%), Bouchon (4%), and Wolvenfolks (4%) are also represented.

### **Dwarves (pop. 2,000)**

A small number of dwarves lives in the islands; most of them are immigrants from the nearby Fortress Island, in Minrothad, while a few others are continental dwarves coming from Rockhome, Darokin, and Thyatis. Dwarven immigrants have all come in the last century or so; the legends about the first convicts settlements in the archipelago relate the presence of a few dwarves among them - nevertheless, there have never been influential dwarven families in the islands, and all traces of older immigrants disappear from historical accounts about two centuries ago (some historians speculate that this may have something to do with the Year of Infamy in the Highlands).

About a half of the dwarven immigrants have settled in Aloysius Island, where it has entered the growing gold mining activity and

jewelry trade; the rest is scattered among major islands and larger settlements.

### **Harpies (pop. 700)**

Many nests of these nasty creatures are found among the wilderness and borderlands of the archipelago, mostly in the isolated and inaccessible rocky and steep reefs or rocky outputs which dot the coastlines of the islands. Harpies live in nests of about 30-40 individuals; they are not particularly friendly toward passersby, and represent a constant danger for individual travelers and small boats.

### **Elves (pop. 400)**

Even if legends about the founders of Ierendi tell of some elven convicts present among the first settlers, none of the aristocratic families who trace their origins back to those times has true elven blood. A few have indeed some traces of elven ancestry, which become visible as physical traits in some generations of individuals, but that's all.

The elves scattered here and there among the islands' settlements are all recent immigrants, who work in the tourist trade, in mercantile and trade activities, or as corsairs and pirates. About two-thirds of them are water elves from Minrothad, some of which work in Ierendi town as the Guilds' port agents; the rest are wood or fair elves immigrants from the continent (mostly from Alfheim, Darokin, Karemikos, and Thyatis) or from Alfeisle, in Minrothad.

### **Fire Elementals (pop. 200)**

Under this entry fall not only the true fire elementals, but also other intelligent creatures from the Plane of Fire, like helions, efreet, fire plasms (both normal and giant), and so on. About a third of these creatures is made up of planar immigrants who live in Honor

Island, collaborating and sharing knowledge with local Alphatian mages; some of them are actually geased to serve these mages. Nevertheless, the Alphatians keep most of these creatures under disguise, beyond the eye of a casual observer.

The rest are fire creatures found in some of the largest underground lava pools, volcanoes and heated caves, where they have found a natural habitat in the Prime Plane akin to that of their own home plane. The latter are often in league with other less intelligent fire creatures (like flame salamanders) or with fire giants.

### **Gnomes (pop. 100)**

A small community of earth gnomes lives in Honor Island, where they are employed by the local mages to help as engineers and artificers. Their presence here is due to an old agreement that the Honor Island mages signed with the Supreme Symposium of Gnomish Syndicates in AC 691. The gnomes' presence in the island is temporary and a given group of them usually stays in Honor Island for a season before being replaced by another group. These gnomes usually comes from the Kingdom of Highforge, in Karameikos, while a few come from Rockhome, Ylaruam, or other more distant places.

About half of Ierendi's gnomes live in Honor Island; the few others live scattered in the other islands of the archipelago, working as craftsmen, engineers, and traders.

### **Fire Giants (pop. 100)**

A number of fire giant clans live in the islands' wilderness, near volcanoes and lava deposits. These warlike giants rarely cause trouble to the islands' government, but small

## The Supreme Symposium of Gnomish Syndicates

The gnomes of the Known World are not an unified people; they have no homeland, like the elves' Alfheim, the dwarves' Rockhome, and the halflings' Five Shires. The gnomes seem to be divided in various races (i.e. skygnomes, earthgnomes, forest gnomes, the northern gnomes, and the legendary gnomes of far-south Davania – and perhaps even others), but no one besides gnomes themselves (maybe) has ever properly classified them.

## A Brief Sum of Gnomish History

Many centuries ago, the heart of the gnomish civilization was located in the Falun Caverns, a huge underground complex located under the Hardanger Mountains; other large gnomish communities existed in modern Darokin and Rockhome, also. The Falun Caverns were invaded by vicious kobolds in BC 490, and in the turn of a century and a half the gnomes who survived the onslaught had to abandon their home and find shelter elsewhere. Since then, a number of gnome settlements sprung in various places in the Known World and beyond; the larger and most famous of these was the city of Torkyn Falls, located in the Three Fires Volcanoes area of the Wendarian Range. The city was badly damaged and abandoned in the course of dragon attacks during the Time of the Second Dragonlord, at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AC; most of its inhabitants relocated in other countries of the north. Today, known gnomish communities of some size in the Known World and surroundings are found in Rockhome, the Five Shires,

Darokin, Karameikos, Ylaruam, Thyatis, the Heldannic Territories, Wendar, Norwold, Stoutfellow (on the Alphatian mainland), the Black Mountains and Hule. And then there is also the marvelous flying city of Serraine.

## The Birth and Development of the Symposium

Nevertheless, despite the fact their settlements are scattered among various distant lands, since the fall of the Falun Caverns, the most important gnomish clans have continued to keep contact between themselves thanks to periodical secret meetings of clan representatives; such meetings were useful to share informations, exchange favors, offer hospitality or migration opportunities to refugees, and so on. With time the meetings became regular (one was held once every three-five years), and in BC 207 an organization was created to coordinate the meetings and keep contacts with all gnomish settlements. Thus the Symposium of Gnome Clans was born.

Centuries passed and the organization became more complex, as instead of a periodical meeting of clan representatives, the Symposium became a semi-permanent body with its own officials which took care to organize the gatherings and spread among the scattered clans word of the Symposium's meetings and decisions. The Symposium selected its officials among the most trusted members of the various clans; with time, it managed to have one of its officials among the prominent members of each major gnomish clan of Brun, and recruited the most acknowledged elders and vivid minds of each gnomish craft guild and



community to take part in the Symposium's activities. Such duties were still keeping contact between the gnomish clans, but also to gather informations both in lore and technology, try to experiment with new inventions and ideas, spy and steal technological innovations from other races, and so on.

In AC 463 this organization changed its name into Supreme Symposium of Gnomish Syndicates. Its leadership was in the hands of a council formed by old and learned gnomish clanheads, master craftsmen, inventors, and priests. This leadership periodically met in secret, each time in a different place, to discuss things of interest to the gnome race as a whole. The members of the leading council became more and more distant from the actual life of the gnomish communities, most of whose members were not even aware of the Symposium's existence; most activities of the Symposium started to be run in secret. Obviously, with the passing of centuries, the Symposium began to pursue its own aims, which were not always in line with those of the gnomish clans it theoretically represented, with its own treasury, its own goals, its own secret relationships with other races' governments and realms.

### The Symposium Today

Today, the Symposium still exists, despite the fact that this existence is not common knowledge. It is led by the Inner Council of the Most Enlightened Potentates, made up by about ten of the most old, learned, and unscrupulous gnomes. In their "actual" life, these people are respected or influential clanmasters, leaders, kings, intellectuals,

scientists, inventors, engineers, master craftsmen, priests, and rich traders with main roles in their communities of origin. To better defend the gnomes' (or their own) interests, the member of the Council enforce a certain (but not absolute) degree of secrecy over the Symposium's existence.

All the members of the Inner Council know who each other member is; if one of the members dies, the others chose a substitute among the most prominent gnome personalities abroad, and they can also periodically increase their number with the addition of another member. Often, the new member is contacted by their agents without even knowing what the Symposium is. The Inner Council has its own treasury to finance its activities and enterprises, an archive regarding current and recent activities (trade agreements, accounting, pacts and treaties, etc.), and an historical archive which preserves the gnomish race's lore through the centuries.

These three branches of the Symposium's possessions are split among various places to avoid the risk (which already happened two times during history) that the destruction of a gnomish settlement put in danger the existence of this material also. Such management of resources and knowledge is somewhat unpractical and slow, but the Inner Council's members consider the Symposium to be an undying organization with themselves only as its own occasional instruments, so time is not an issue. Knowledge of the treasury and archives locations, also, is not shared among all Inner Council members: each one of them does not know at least one of the secret locations among which the treasury

and archives are split. Such locations may be secret places in actual gnomish settlements, buildings within other races' cities and towns, or in rare cases they may even be found within another race's building – for example, a secret or rarely-examined section of a human library, a secret underground room under the mansion of a merchant who trades with gnomes, and so on. These places, however, are invariably set in places which may be easily reached through common communication means – towns, cities, and so on; you won't find such a place in a cavern in the untamed wilderness, or in an isolated tower on the top of a mountain.

Under the Inner Council is the Outer Council of the Industrious Stakeholders, made up by part-time agents and operatives which carry out the Inner Council's decisions. Such agents do not usually know more than one to three Inner Council members, and are often recruited among gnomes with some

martial or arcane skills. They carry out the decisions of the Inner Council, such as trading and diplomatic agreements, contacts with gnomish settlements and other races' communities, recruitment of new members, espionage, theft of money or knowledge, elimination of rivals or competitors, information gathering, recovering parts of the Symposium's treasury or archives from abandoned or destroyed places, and so on.

While most gnomes and members of the other races alike are not aware of the Symposium's existence, the governments of some of the realms of the Known World have gathered enough informations to suspect indeed that there is something like a supreme coordination of major gnomish interest. Anyway, even if they may manage to identify a number of gnomes linked with such alleged organization, they lack sufficient informations to get the whole picture.

settlements near their lairs may suffer from their raids and attacks. Fire giants are often in league with other fire creatures.

## FAUNA AND MINOR RACES

The following paragraphs describe which creatures can be found in the islands of Ierendi, including intelligent races whose number don't exceed a hundred individuals in the region. Creatures are grouped according to their monster type (for a definition of monster types, see the Rules Cyclopedia or DMR2 Creature Catalogue).

Note that in addition to the following creatures, a variety of monster species have been imported and bred on Safari Island to

populate the local tourist attractions (like adventure parks) and to make the whole place even more alluring for monster hunters. Even some rich owners of private villas and parks sometimes import strange and foreign species to "appease" their hosts. Given the quite random nature of such imported species, only those native of the archipelago or found on most islands are indicated below.

### Animals, Giant

The archipelago is home to a huge variety of giant animals, mostly reptiles and amphibians; these species have been hunted down in most settled areas, but are still found in quantity in scarcely settled ones. **Giant lizards** are found almost everywhere, from

rocky terrain (where the **giant gecko** and the **giant tuatara** dwell) to the forests (where the **giant horned chameleon** and the **giant draco** are found). Some dangerous **giant crocodiles** have survived in isolated swamps, and there are some in Safari Island's wilderness preserve. Among giant amphibians, **giant toads** and the dangerous **giant poisonous frog** are found in the wilderness.

Giant sea life includes the **giant crabs** found in many shallow and coastal areas, and the rare **giant octopus** which lives in the shallow waters around some of the islands.

Giant mammals are represented only by the very numerous **giant rats**, which live almost everywhere; other varieties of giant mammals are not featured in the islands, besides the very rare **giant vampire bat**, found only in some underground caves.

#### Animals, Normal

Domesticated and wild animals of many types abound in the archipelago's islands; mammals tend to be a minority, mostly represented by herd animals like **horses**, **pigs**, **sheeps**, and **cattle** brought from the continent in the past centuries. Both domesticated and wild **normal dogs** and **normal boars**, while present, are not native of the islands and likewise were imported from the mainland. Among mammal wildlife, **normal rats** and **normal bats** are ubiquitous, and the islands also sport two unique species of primates: the white-faced gibbons of Elogy Island, and the large **white apes** of White Island (which, contrary to the continental variety, don't live in underground caves). Sea mammals include a variety of whales (**killer whales**, **narwhals** and **giant whales** among them), sometimes domesticated by local merrows, and the

friendly **dolphins** which make up the mounts for the allied merrows' sea cavalry.

Many species of birds dwell in the islands; there are varieties of seabirds (like sea gulls), and a great number of species of colorful tropical birds – parrots, parakeets, cameo flamingoes, and the strange **birch doves** of White Island.

Amphibians and reptiles, however, are the true dominant species of the archipelago, numerous variant of whom dwell in the islands; one of the most rare is the small and beautiful leopard salamander (so called due to its black-yellow coloration), found in Safari Island. **Crocodiles** of all sizes (both **normal** and **large**) are found in various shallow water areas of the islands, as well as along rivers and in some swamps. Snakes abound here, from the poisonous **pit viper**, to the powerful **rock python** found in the forests, to the **sea snake** dwelling in the seas around the islands, to the greater cave snake (a variety of the continental **giant racer**), unique of Safari Island.

The clear, shallow waters of the archipelago are the home of an infinite variety of fishes. Among the most notable of them are the **normal manta ray**, and some species of **sharks** (**bull**, **mako**, and the feared **great white shark**), which are sometimes domesticated by the merrows.

#### Constructs

Ierendi is not a land of great wizards, but eccentric magic-users of foreign (especially Glantrian) origin can surely be found with a variety of constructs – mostly **gargoyles** or **golems** of any type – at their service. Such constructs are indeed common among the Honor Island mages – especially the ones – like **iron gargoyles** or **bronze golems** –



which are powered through fire elemental energies.

### Dragons

Many dragon varieties dwell in the Ierendi islands, mostly belonging to the **green**, **red**, **jade**, and **ruby** species; they live in the deepest rain forests, or on the most impervious mountain terrain and volcanic peaks. Most of them are found in the wilderness of Safari Island. The seas are known to host a number of **sea dragons**, the most famous of which is Thundar, a female sea dragon whose draconic realm of Thundiara lays to the south of Aloysius Reefs; from her submerged lair, guarded by sea serpents, Thundar plans her dominion over the tritons of Sunlit Sea. Among dragon-kin creatures, **wyverns** are quite commonly encountered in the wilderness of Safari Island.

### Humanoids

Besides those listed in the main races section, the only humanoids worth talking about in the Ierendi region are those who live in the Sunlit Sea. Under the waves, beyond proper Ierendian control, lay the land of the nomadic **mermen** (or merrow), allies of the Ierendian government, who often have come to the Kingdom's aid in its battles against Thyatian imperial power and who still represent one of the reasons of the supremacy of the Ierendian navy in its waters. The sea around the eastern islands of the archipelago is controlled by the **tritons** and their Kingdom of Undersea, which is friendly toward the Ierendians and its allies, the mermen. Less numerous than these two underwater races are the **knas**, a race of fish-like humanoids devoted to trade, and the **shark-kins**, who roam part of the Sunlit Sea. Even more rarely encountered are instead the delicate and seductive **nixies**.

It is worth noting that some rumors hint to the presence of local fairies and members of the Good Folk in isolated places like deep forests, hidden lagoons, and high mountaintops. Whether these are only individual creatures or parts of the Ierendi Islands may be the seat of a local fairy kingdom is still matter of speculation. Fact is that various types of fairies or fairy-like creatures feature prominently in Makai legends, folklore, and mythological tales – for example, the Makai call *menebune* a race of small forest humanoids, very talented in craftsmanship (which some Known World scholar has identified with local leprechauns).

### Humanoids, Giant

Besides the fire giants mentioned in the main races section, deep caves connected with underground lava deposits are known to host a number of rock **trolls**; these don't belong to the same Beastmen-descended race of common trolls, but seems to be older creatures, with a strong elemental earth connection, likely of the same stock of some trolls found in the Northern Reaches countries. Whatever their origins, they often make alliances with fire giants and other creatures who live underground. The Sunlit Sea hosts many families of **sea giants**.

### Lowlife

Most of the settled areas of the islands are thankfully free of dangerous varieties of insects, arachnids, and the like; **normal scorpions**, however, can be encountered everywhere. The southern islands of the archipelago (Roister, Aloysius, and Utter) are also plagued by the presence of the dread “mau-mau” mosquitoes, which carry a deadly disease and against which a disinfestation must be periodically – where possible –

carried out. Sometimes these mosquitoes form large clouds similar to **insect swarms**.

Utter Island is also known to host a large number of giant insects, like **giant ants**, **giant bees**, **giant centipedes**, **robber flies**, and some varieties of **giant beetles** (**fire**, **oil**, and **tiger**). In the island also dwell giant arachnids (**giant crab spiders** and **giant black widow spiders** in particular), the web of which is sometimes used by the native Albino humans to fashion curtains for their buildings. Also, **rhagodessae** have been known to attack travelers in forested wilderness and borderlands.

A couple of nasty insects species is also found in the archipelago: they are the **giant locusts**, which dwell in the rocky, barren areas of most islands; and the dangerous **steam weevils**, which are found near the great underground lava deposits.

Also, waters are neither free from the presence of dangerous insect types, for both freshwater rivers and ponds, swamps, and the seas are the home of all the three varieties of **water termites** (**swamp**, **fresh water**, and **salt water**).

Wormlike creatures are uncommon in the archipelago, but present nevertheless. **Giant leeches** infest some of the freshwater bodies and the swamps of the islands' interior; **caeciliae** are found in underground areas of softer terrain and in bogs (hence their Ierendian name, "bog caeciliae"); the gigantic **mashers** dwell in the bottom of the seas; while some dread **purple worms** (called "red worm" by the Ierendians) stay dormant underground, only resurfacing when something disturb their slumber.

Coming to amorphous lowlife, some parts of the Ierendi islands, Safari in particular, host

creatures like the **green slime**, the **gray ooze**, and the **ochre jelly**; the fearsome **lava ooze** can instead be found underground near the lava flows and the volcanic cones.

### Monsters

In the past ages, the islands were the home of a great variety of giant reptiles, the so-called **dinosaurs**, which had gone extinct in other parts of the world; even if they have been hunted down to extinction in most islands, some specimens survive in the wilderness and in Safari Island's preserve. While the largest and deadliest species of dinosaurs (like those which can be found in the southern Thanegioth Archipelago) are gone, in the islands can be found **small land carnivore**, and **small** and **medium land herbivore dinosaurs**.

Safari Island is also famous for the many nests of **flying hydras** found in its wilderness. Rumors spun by tourist guides also tell of a huge "father of all hydras" which should live somewhere in Safari Island's wilderness interior, but that rumor is still unconfirmed.

Volcanic areas, underground heated caves, lava deposits, and similar terrain are the home of creatures like the vicious **hell hounds** – often found in league with fire giants and other fire creature, and the dangerous **lava lizard**.

Among avian monsters, the most fearsome of all is the majestic **roc**, which has been sighted in isolated mountain peaks or in lonely atolls in the seas around the Ierendi islands in all its three varieties (**small**, **large**, and **giant**). Flocks of nasty **stirges** can instead be found, again, in Safari Island's interior.

Then there are the monsters of the sea: the **sea horse** is a common encounter

underwater, especially in company of the tritons, while the **lesser sea serpent** is a rarer sight. Other larger creatures – like the **greater sea serpent** and the giant turtle (a variety of **armored aquatic dinosaur**) – are encountered only very rarely, and most often come to life only in the tales of seamen who venture in the southern seas beyond Ierendian borders. Another dangerous but rare monster of the sea is the **siren** (see the “Siren” sidebar, further on), who lures seamen to their doom with her charming song.

Lastly, even if not especially common in the archipelago, **lycanthropes** of neutral behavior (**wereboars**, **weretigers**, and **werebears** mostly) are tolerated and even employed as professionals in adventure parks and in the entertainment trade – shapechanging shows in public attracts many tourists! This activity however is very strictly regulated by the government, and any lycanthrope shapechanging in public outside tourist shows is sure to pass some trouble. On the other hand, wild **weresharks** are known to roam the Sunlit Sea.

#### **Planar monsters**

The islands have their share of planar monsters mostly thanks to their link with the Plane of Fire through Honor Island, and to the

presence of so many powerful spots of fire elemental energy, like volcanoes and lava deposits. Besides beings already mentioned in the main races section – efreet, fire elementals, hellions, and normal and giant fire plasms – the **flame salamanders** can be encountered both in Honor Island and in volcanic areas above and underground.

Additionally, White Island is the home of an unique race of planar beings native of the Ethereal Plane, the **ether weirds**, who live inside the mysterious icy ponds found on the island, put there by the Immortal patron who saved the local monks during the last days of the Nithian Empire.

#### **Undead**

Undead don't abound in the Ierendi islands, but some unconventional Makai shaman has been known to practice necromantic magic to raise **skeletons** and **zombies**. The ritual to create the shrunken zombies known as **topi** is of Makai origin, and these undead may still be found somewhere in the archipelago. Other undead, like **wights** and **wraiths**, while rare, sometimes raise spontaneously to perform revenge or haunt the place where they died tragically. Lastly, there are rumors about a **lich** living under disguise in Elegy Island.



## The Denizens of the Sunlit Sea

The northern reaches of the Sea of Dread, where Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos are found, are inhabited by various races of sea creatures, first and foremost by merrows (or mermen as land-dwellers sometimes call them) and tritons. These creatures call this part of the sea the Sunlit Sea, due to its shallowness which allow for the sunrays from above to light it up.

Merrows are found in large number in the waters around Ierendi islands; they migrated here from the southern seas after the seismic cataclysms of the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC. The merrows are a nomadic people, friend of the dolphins, who moves in groups of 50-100 members, following the fish schools and gathering the resources of the sea floor. They are friendly toward the Makai and the Ierendians in general, and trade with them; in exchange for protection of their waters and their sacred burial grounds by invaders and desecrators from the surface, the merrows agreed in AC 748 to help the Royal Navy of Ierendi in the defense of the islands, and to train its members in sea and underwater combat. In past battles against the Thyatian Empire (the wars of AC 643-44 and AC 713-14), the merrows represented a formidable allied force for the Ierendian fleet, and today they are one of the main reasons for the supremacy of the Ierendian navy in its territorial waters.

On the other hand, the tritons are a reclusive people, who only occasionally maintains relations with the land-dwelling races. They mostly live in the region between the Ierendian isles of Utter and Safari, and the Minrothaddan Trader's, Fortress, and

Blackrock Islands, where they have built their own organized underwater realm, the Kingdom of Undersea. Undersea sees the tritons as dominant races, but is a cosmopolitan realm, where many other minorities belonging to other sea races live peacefully. Centuries ago (around BC 200), during the time of their migration in the Sunlit Sea, the tritons made war against the local merrow to carve a territory for themselves; the struggle went on for centuries and, after the tritons' victory, grudge between the two races continued for decades. After many years of peace, however, the tensions cooled down and friendly relations slowly developed between the two peoples. While not formally allied with the Kingdom of Ierendi, Undersea keeps friendly relations with it, being instead more wary of the Minrothaddans.

This is due to an historical fact. During the rule of Missan Meditor as Ruling Guildmaster of Minrothad (AC 862-887), the race of sea traders known as the knas refused to accept the Guilds' regulations over trade, which had the aim to establish their monopoly over merchant activity in their archipelago. The knas began a series of raids against Guilds' shipping, and in AC 880 the Guilds retaliated with an assault to the underwater communities of the knas; many families of these creatures were ruthlessly butchered and slaughtered, and the knas ultimately had to abandon trade in the Guilds' waters – but a deep hatred still runs in the knas' heart toward the Minrothaddans, and other underwater races still remember the ruthlessness which the Guilds demonstrated in that occasion.

## THE GUILDS OF MINROTHAD

### Minrothaddan Population in Official Sources

GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds represents the main sources about the Guilds' population and demography. Further population figures for the archipelago are found in TM2 The Eastern Countries, and in the three volumes of the Poor Wizard's Almanac series. Unfortunately, the population figures provided by these sources are not consistent at all one another. Now we will take a look at each of them.

First of all, GAZ9 is quite clear in establishing Minrothad's population at 280,000 people, with an urban population (towns and cities with 10,000 people or more) reaching a very high rate of 29%. GAZ9 also set the islands' surface area at 6,552 square miles, thus resulting in a population density of 42.7 people per square mile. Unfortunately, a rough measurement of surface area made on GAZ9's poster 8-miles per hex map shows that the surface area given in gazetteer was miscalculated.

TM2 instead lists the Guilds' population and surface area, setting the former at 131,300 people, and the latter at 8,120 square miles. While this surface area seems more consistent with the re-measurement of the islands' surface done on GAZ9's poster hex map, the listed population is definitely way too low to support an urban population of 80,000 – 97,000 if you include in the count towns with less than 10,000 people – which would result in a high industrial age urban : rural population ratio (i.e. 61% : 39%). Thus the listed population seems quite unacceptable if

one wants to keep firm the population figures given in GAZ9 for the archipelago's cities and towns.

Then, there are the figures found in the PWAs, which list Minrothad's surface area as being 8,120 square miles (thus making it consistent with TM2's figure), and its population as being 135,000 people – apart from the population figure found in PWA3, which gives – giving only as explanation an influx of refugees from Thyatis in the last year, whose number frankly seems excessive – a figure of 208,000. Now, the first two PWAs' figure generates the same problems as the TM2's one, while the one of the third issue seems very much a mistake for GAZ9's figure of 280,000 and not something having a reasoning behind it.

While correct surface area appears to be 8,120 square miles, that is the one provided by TM2 and the PWAs, among the inconsistent population figures, it seems that the more acceptable one be that given in GAZ9, that is 280,000 people. This, coupled with correct surface area, would mean an archipelago with a 35.5 population density, which is quite acceptable for a nation like Minrothad – quite settled, farmed, and (apart from Alfeisle, and at least according to GAZ9's descriptions) deforested, undisturbed by wars, dramatic events, or population losses for the last five centuries, and the very heart of this region of Mystara's sea trade.

### Adjusting a Little Minrothad's Population

So, all in all, selected canonic sources about Minrothad end up giving reasonable population figures. Nevertheless, to be properly satisfied by Minrothad's population figures, we will have first to adjust them a

little in order to make them consistent with the alternative demography described in the previous paragraph for the Kingdom of Ierendi, as well as with the one found in Threshold #1 and regarding the population of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos. This will mean raising a little Minrothad's population to reflect the Guilds' status as an island nation half the size, but double the population density of the Kingdom of Ierendi, whose different history and later settlement would explain this gap.

As in the previous paragraph, we will make these adjustments with an eye to the real-world population densities of 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe – the real world historical setting which inspired Mystara's Known World. Again, for simplicity's and uniformity's sake, we will make use of the same density ranks that we used in the previous paragraph and in the article about Karameikos' demography in the first issue of "Threshold".

## AN Overall Look at the Minrothad Isles

The whole area of the seven main islands of the Minrothad archipelago totals 8,120 square miles, with a surface area comparable to that of real-world countries like El Salvador, Slovenia, or Israel, or to the US state of New Jersey; Trader's Isle alone is about the same size of the island of Crete, Greece. A great number of tiny islets, atolls, and small islands – most of which are of volcanic origin, while a few others are made of coral growth atop volcanic rock foundations. Some of these atolls are uninhabited, but some others are the refuge of lonely fishermen, pirates, or simply small havens for a tired crew who has been too long at sea.

The Minrothad Guilds are one of the most widely settled areas of the Known World. The 36% of the land has an average or better level of settlement, and – adding in the low-settlement areas – we see that most of the archipelago (67%) shares some level of settlement. Borderlands only make up for the 24% of the whole surface, while wilderness

**Table 3: Minrothad's Racial Groups**

Racial Group	Total Racial Population	% on Total Population
Humans	160,800	39.70%
Demihumans	239,900	59.2%
Elves	166,900	41.2%
Water Elves	113,800	28.1%
Wood Elves	53,100	13.1%
Halflings	43,100	10.6%
Dwarves	29,900	7.4%
Other Creatures	4,700	1.1%
Lupins	4,400	1.1%
Harpies	300	Negligible
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>405,400</b>	<b>100%</b>



are only 10% of the total – mostly represented by volcanic terrain on Fire, Fortress, and Blackrock islands, and by the unsettled Gregus' Ridge mountain chain on Alfeisle. Nevertheless, 85% of Minrothad's population lives in 36% of the land – that is the areas with average or better level of settlement; only 15% of the population lives in lower settled areas.

About half the whole population of the Guilds dwells on Trader's Isle, the largest and most populous island of the archipelago, while another quarter lives on Alfeisle; the two major islands of the archipelago thus end up hosting the three-quarters of its population.

Total population of the Minrothad Guilds is about 405,400 people, with the 160,800 humans being only a minority (39.7%); most of the population (59.2%) belongs to the demihuman races, among which elves are the most numerous (166,900 people – albeit divided between water and wood elves), followed by halflings (43,100 people), and dwarves (29,900 people). From the point of view of humans and demihumans, Minrothad is thus one of the most multiethnic countries of the Known World. No other major racial group dwells in the archipelago, and other races account for only 7,500 people – almost wholly made up by the lupin population. These numbers take into account only the races who are represented by not less than 100 members in the country. Average population density for the whole country is about 49.9 people per square mile, thus making Minrothad one of the more densely settled realms of the Known World.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the archipelago's population among major racial groups.

## LAND CONTROL AND GOVERNMENT

The Minrothad Guilds are a sort of federation of different racial guilds, each of which exerts political control over one area of the archipelago and oversees a number of specialized trades and crafts. The federation is held together by a central government whose seat is in the city of Minrothad. The origin of the Guilds' confederated government can be traced back to AC 691 and to the "Second Unifier", the wood elf Gregus Verdier; the confederation turned into a federation, with the establishment of the executive role of Ruling Guildmaster, only after the end of the Council of Minrothad's reforms, in AC 862.



*Guildmasters of Minrothad*

Most power – both economical and political – lies in the hands of the Guildmasters of the five major family guilds; each of these five guilds has national monopoly over a series of trades and crafts, which in turn are managed by lesser associate guilds. Each family guild is dominated by one of the main races who dwell in the archipelago. Guild Corser is predominantly human, and oversees a number of selected luxury trades and crafts like spices, wine, trained animals, and alchemical substances; Guild Hammer, controlled by dwarves, deals in trades and crafts regarding minerals and stone (mines and quarries, masonry, smithing, and so on); Guild Elsan, the water elf family guild, deals with sea-related crafts like shipbuilding, fishing, shellworking, and also oversees teaching of sailing and navigation crafts; Guild Quickhand, dominated by halflings, deals with leatherworking, basic crafts (glass, baskets, pottery, items made of horn), and fuels (candles, oils, and charcoal); and Guild Verdier, the wood elf family guild, controls trades and crafts regarding cloth and wood, like woodcutting, woodworking, carpentry, bowmaking, spinning, weaving, and so on. Through its own associate guilds, each of the five major guilds' control over its trades and crafts extends to the whole archipelago.

The five heads of the family guilds form the Council of Guild Leaders, which holds legislative and executive powers. This actually makes Minrothad a guild-ruled plutocracy; each Family Guild Leader has one vote at the Council, and its office – both at the Council and as head of its guild – is hereditary. The Council decides the Guilds' foreign policy, declares wars and signs treaties, appoints diplomats and ambassadors to other nations, passes laws regarding trade practices (including duties and tariffs), general guild

regulations, and government affairs. The Council is actually a sort of executive committee of the larger General Council of the Guilds and States (see below).

The Council is presided by the Ruling Guildmaster, the Guilds' head of state, who is traditionally a member of the Meditor water elf ruling clan; the Ruling Guildmaster does not have a vote at the Council, but has one when voting at the Council results in a draw (due to the abstinence of one or more members from the vote). The Ruling Guildmaster has always had a largely ceremonial role, but in the last decade – since the young Oran Meditor was nominated to this office – it has acquired a greater influence in the country's government, de facto beginning to exercise an active presidential role, more and more taking away executive powers from the hands of the Council in order to exert them itself. The authoritarian, but reform-oriented, rule of Oran Meditor has spurred fierce opposition and intrigue among the family guilds, some of which are plotting to have the current Ruling Guildmaster removed.

To serve as its executive arm, the Ruling Guildmaster also appoints a cabinet of advisors, who act like other countries' ministers. The most important of them are the First Advisor (a sort of deputy and right arm of the Ruling Guildmaster, and minister of the interior), the First Consort (a role introduced by Oran Meditor and held by his wife, overseeing ceremonial and social functions of the government), the Master Treasurer (a minister of treasury and finances), and the Master of the Ruling Guildmaster's Agents (the head of the secret service and of the Ruling Guildmaster's own security force).

Then there are the political guilds, that is guild-structured organizations which oversee services and activities of political and national interest. The most important of these are the Merchant Sailors Guild, devoted to import-export trade; the Mercenary Guild, a standing force devoted to the defense of the archipelago and of its ships; and the Tutorial Guild, which oversees training and education in all fields all over the islands, keeps monopoly on magic-use in Minrothad, and functions as high justice court and appeal court for lesser justice managed by local government guilds. Each of these guilds has its own associate guilds which take care of particular areas of their duty. The political guilds are independent from the family guilds and, while they may surely be influenced by them, since Oran Meditor came to power they have represented a strong support for the Ruling Guildmaster's struggle against the family guilds.

Local government is handled by the so-called "local government guilds", which are nothing more than political bodies which oversee local government of an island or part of it, including bureaucracy, law enforcement, and low justice; following the country's custom, each local government is considered a guild in itself. Actual form of local government, however, depends on the region; history and customs of each area have resulted in a different local way to handle political affairs, the only things in common being the fact that each local government answers to the Council of Guild Leaders. For example, local government among Alfeisle's elves is based on clan structure, with council of hereditary clanheads being the main ruling body presided by the oldest, most prestigious or powerful clanhead. On Open Island, nearby villages are united in shires, each of which democratically elects its own sheriff and a couple of delegates to take

part in the isle's ruling assembly in Malfton, presided by a Seneschal elected for life. On Trader's Isle the territory is divided into small baronies and lordships (some actually ruled by a Baron or Lord, other such only in name and ruled by an elected Seneschal), each of which is governed by its own assembly made up by representatives of the rural noble landowners and of the city-dwelling guildmasters. Local governments are usually heavily influenced by the Family Guild which has control over trades and crafts most important for their region. While this may appear confusing, the system developed by Gregus Verdier in AC 691 functioned because the persons appointed as heads of the Family Guilds were all already powerful and influential individual in their own local government, thus establishing an easy link between local government and the Guilds' national government. This does not mean that things go on smoothly: the political struggle among different guilds and branches of the government is fierce, and intrigue is hidden behind each political maneuver.

The capital city of Minrothad is a sort of neutral territory whose government answers directly to the Ruling Guildmaster, who appoints its Seneschal; this ensures that, at least within the city walls, the plotting families and guilds may find a safe ground for agreements and pacts.

Last in real power but first in institutional importance is the General Council of the Guilds and States, a larger assembly which theoretically represents the whole population of the archipelago. The General Council is made up by 40 delegates sent by the local governments of the various provinces in which the islands are subdivided (as could be expected, Alfeisle and Trader's Isle are the two most represented islands). Delegates at



the General Council are often guildmasters themselves, or officials of the local government, or members of aristocratic families – or a combination of all three. Until the Council of Minrothad (AC 850-862), the General Council exerted a quite high deal of influence in the government, as it was the true government body of the Guilds, with responsibility over approval of national laws, foreign policy, tax collection and assessment, administration of the army and the navy, and so on. Since then, the Council of Guild Leaders functioned essentially an executive committee of the General Council. However, in the last century or so, true decisional power has slowly

slipped in the hands of the Council of Guild Leaders, with the General Council relegated to a largely advisory role. Customarily, the General Council is gathered once per year to approve the next year's budget, to appoint the General-Captain of the Guilds' army and the General-Admiral of the navy in times of war, and in extraordinary session to decide over important treaties or declarations of war. The Council of Guild Leaders usually gives "instructions" to the General Council, that is suggestions (little less than orders) about what the Family Guildmasters expect the result of the vote to be.

### The Government of the Guilds

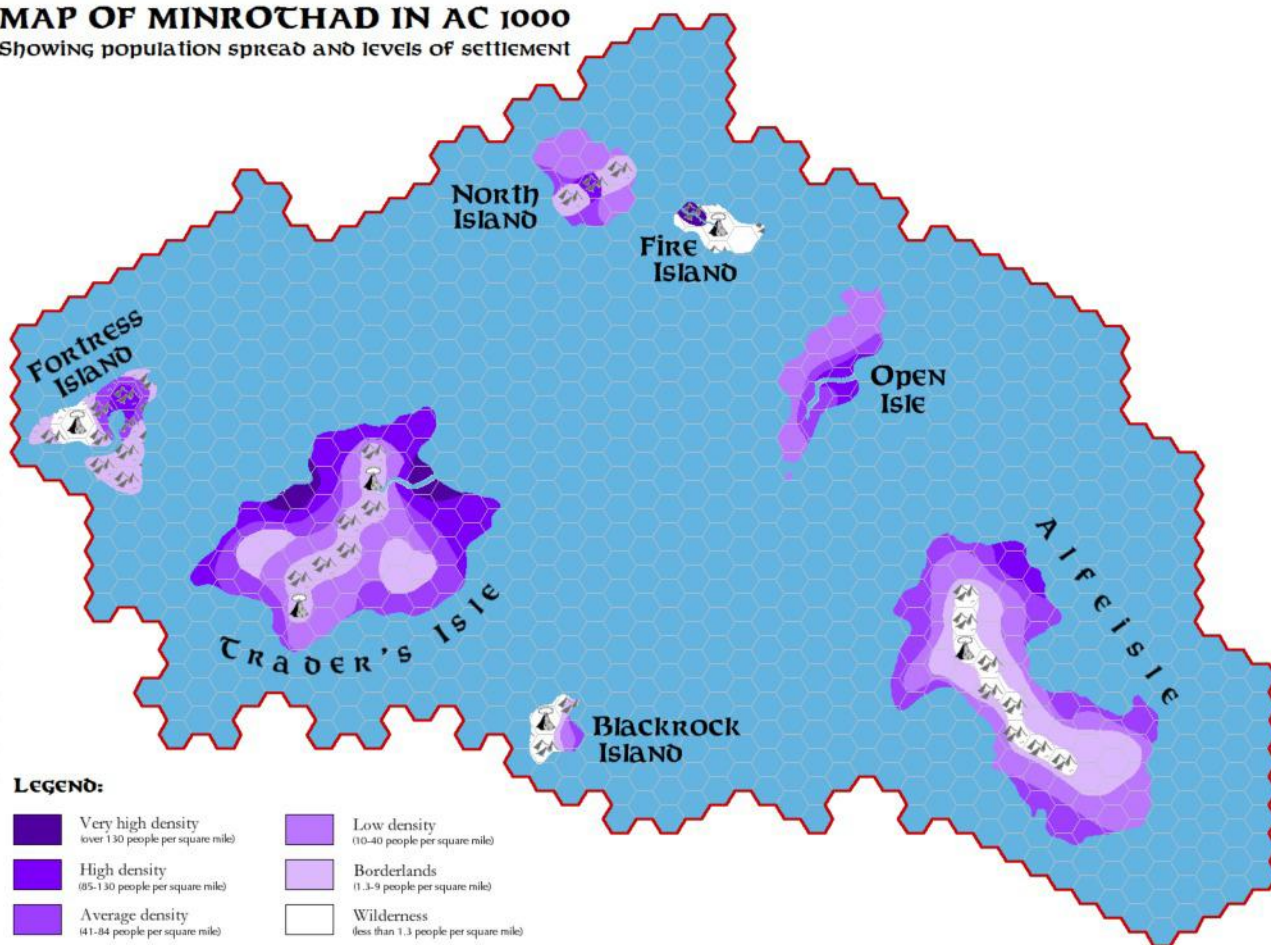
Official products did never give too much details about how the Guilds administered their own territory. GAZ9 gives us an account of the Guilds' national government – the Ruling Guildmaster, the Council of Guild Leaders, the capital's Seneschal, and the Tutorial Guild's function as high justice court – but says nothing about local government. In a handful of places, GAZ9 mentions "local government guilds", "the constabulary, a division of the local government security guild", "the local retail tax collector", and "a first guild advisor who interacts with local government", but gives no account of what this local government is.

Module X10 Red Arrow, Black Shield says instead that "the isle of Minrothad is divided into many small baronies. The baronies form trading guilds, each with its own plot of land. The government is run by the heads of the various trading guilds. [...] The PCs can arrange a meeting with the Guild's Council to discuss a potential alliance. The Council is made up of 40 of the most powerful guild leaders and barons." It's obvious that GAZ9 was written without this passage in mind, but it could be of some use to

further detail the government of Minrothad; presence of a nobility of sort is not unreasonable either, as GAZ9 also says, regarding Harbortown, that in "Old Town [...] are old and aristocratic residences", and that Trader's Isle has had a past history of employment of slave labor (especially halfling labor) and likely, given the Nithian origins of its population, plantation farming. GAZ4 The Kingdom of Ierendi in fact informs us that plantation farming was introduced in Ierendi by the Nithians; the same happened preasumably also in Minrothad, which was conquered a century before. Lastly, module X7 War Rafts of Kron mentions that, among other things, the Guildmasters of Minrothad will offer the PCs a small (6 square miles) island next to Minrothad as reward – which may suggest a sort of landowner-managed local government.

Putting together all these elements, and drawing inspiration from the Renaissance age government of the real-world Republic of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, I have tried to clarify some of the details of the Guilds' government, both local and national, in the paragraph "Land Control and Government".

**MAP OF MINROTHAD IN AC 1000**  
 Showing population spread and levels of settlement



## Land Occupation and Social Classes

As said above, the archipelago is one of the most settled areas of the Known World; nevertheless, not every corner of it share the same population density. Very high density areas are found in the farmlands around main cities of Trader's Isle, that is the city of Minrothad and Harbortown, from the city walls themselves up to 5-10 miles away. The area around Cove Harbor, on Fire Island, also counts as a very high density area. A great number of farms and villages is found in these regions.

Then there are high density areas, which include almost all the western, northern, and eastern coastline of Trader's Isle and part of the inland area, and the surroundings of the other islands' main cities – Stronghold on Fortress Island, Gaptown on North Island, Malfton on Open Island, and Seahome on Aifeisle. More than a third of the Guilds' population lives there. These regions, like the high density ones, have seen a great deal of deforestation during centuries, and now they are filled with cultivated lands, orchards, and pasturelands for herd animals – as well as with the properties of rich landowners.

Another third or so of the Guilds' population live in average density areas, which include most of the southern coasts and some of the interior of Trader's Isle, most coastal areas of Alfeisle, the eastern coast and the valley of the Quickhand River on Open Isle, the areas between Gapton and the eastern and southern coasts on North Isle, the larger area around Stronghold on Fortress Island, and the small eastern coastal strip on Blackrock Island. A number of activities, both pertaining to agriculture or herding and to guild trades or crafts, are practiced in these regions, making most of these areas economically important for the Guilds.

The rest of the country's land is somewhat considered a backward area by the government, both in infrastructures and population. Low density areas include the inland area around the Diamond Spurs on Trader's Isle, most of North Island's territory (except for the mountains), the rest of Open Isle's surface area, a small strip of land around the fishing-devoted villages of the coastline on Blackrock Island, and a large strip of land circling the coastlines of Alfeisle inland (and including some of the southern and western coasts as well).

Borderlands extend beyond the limits of a decent level of settlement; few people live there, not because of dangerous monsters of inhabitants, but because the lands are uninteresting from an economic point of view, or because these lands have not seen a decisive effort of settlement by the government. Nevertheless, some important activities, such as mining, often take place in some borderland spots. Borderlands include the Diamond Spur chain and the deepest forests on Trader's Isle, the area farthest from Stronghold (save for Mount Redtongue and vicinities) on Fortress

Island, the mountains of North Island, the inland area around Gregus' Ridge and a stretch of the southern forests on Alfeisle, and the inland area before the volcanic landscape around Old Nenthead on Blackrock Island.

Wilderness areas are few in the Minrothad archipelago, and limited to the most dangerous volcanic areas or to the most impervious mountains – that is the Gregus Ridge chain on Alfeisle, and the areas around Mount Redtop and Old Nenthead on Fortress and Blackrock islands, respectively. Fire Island, which has been declared off-limits to settlement and to ships by the government, can be considered – apart its hidden port of Cove Harbor and vicinities – wilderness terrain.

Social classes in Minrothad are quite more blurred than in other countries. This is mostly due to the decline of traditional, landowning-oriented aristocracy in the past century and the consolidated primacy of a class of city patricians whose wealth depends on trading and manufacturing activities. Nevertheless, Minrothad has an aristocracy of sorts, mostly human and descended from the old Minrothian and Alphatian leading families of Trader's Isle, where they account for about 2% of the island's population. Some of them still bear old hereditary titles of "Barons" or "Lords", albeit deprived of any powers besides social status and that which may derive them from their influence in guild or local government affairs. Minrothaddan aristocracy does not conduct a lifestyle much different from that of the high-ranking guilders; they own lands and often a still important part of their wealth comes from land rents and farming activities, but many have entered the guild system as well in order



to improve their riches and increase their political power. On Alfeisle, aristocracy consists of the clanmasters and their families and relatives, who usually devote themselves to guild activities and do not own great deals of land (also due to the customs of elves regarding land property, which is mostly left to common usage). The halflings and the dwarves don't have proper aristocracy, nor do the other lesser islands who have been settled only more recently.

Of the rest of the archipelago's population, only about a 60% works in farming activities – one of the lowest percentages of the Known World. Farming activities may be directly guild-related – such as grapes cultivation, whose products are then sold to the winemakers of Guild Corser, or cattle-rising, whose production of leather and horn is then passed to Guild Quickhand – or not; the latter is the case of general agricultural products, such as grain, cereals, olive oil, milk, cheese, flour, vegetables, fruits, meat, and so on. Some of these good are produced for local consumption, while some other are exported – including some plants grown for the luxury trade, such as coffee and tea. Even the selling of goods which are not directly linked to gild manufacturing is managed through proper trading guilds. Contrary to the rural population of the continent, Minrothad's farmers are not subject to feudal obligations and have a decent lifestyle thanks to the richness of the Guilds' farming activities; families who possess their own plot of lands are nevertheless few, especially on Trader's Isle, as landownership is mostly in the hands of old aristocratic families and of guilder families, who acquired lands in the course of the years thanks to the wealth accumulated through trade. Most rural population thus

works on fields rented from landowners, or receives a wage to work on the owners' lands.

About 40% of the population of the archipelago belongs to a guild or another; this means the almost whole urban adult population of the islands, and a little more than half of their adult rural population. There is a guild for almost everything – most control a trade, craft, or service going from the most simple and menial to the most specialized and luxurious. Guild membership ranges from the high-ranking guild officers and masters, to craftsmen, workers, and apprentices who make up the bulk of most guilds. Not all guilds share the same social configuration; guilds which deal with fishing or woodcutting, for example, include a number of lower middle-class members higher than those dealing with, say, spice trade. Also, not all trade guilds are associated to one of the five family guilds; some trades and activities, like innkeeping, butchering, grocery, parchment-making, bookbinding and selling, baking, pharmacy, notary's activity, moneylending, and some others, are managed by local guilds which don't operate on the national level – meaning that one could find more than one Bakers' Guild in the archipelago (typically one or more per island). Family guilds discourage further organization of these lesser guilds on the national level, as they would fall out of their direct control, preferring instead to keep them in check through their political and economical influence; on the other hand each of these lesser local guilds is way too small and weak to initiate a struggle against the family guilds through a process of unification with other similar guilds.

Social class in the Minrothad Guilds is determined by one's rank within one of the

Table 4: Settlement Levels in the Guilds of Minrothad

Settlement level	Number of 8-mile hexes (averaged)	Square mileage (averaged)	% of total mileage (averaged)	Population density range	Average population density (people/sq. mile)	Total population per settlement area (averaged)	% of total population (averaged)
Very High	4	224	3%	Over 130	155	33,100 (+44,000)*	19%
High	17	952	11%	85-130	104	97,500 (+40,000)*	34%
Average	32	1,792	22%	41-84	65	117,200 (+13,000)*	32%
Low	44	2,464	30%	10-40	21	50,300	12%
Borderlands	34	1,904	24%	1.3-9	5	10,000	3%
Wilderness	14	784	10%	Below 1.3	0.3	200	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>8,120</b>	<b>100%</b>	**	<b>21.72</b>	<b>308,400 (+97,000)*</b>	<b>100%</b>
* Numbers in brackets indicate urban population to be added to the listed figures.							
** Population density in the country can range from zero (wilderness uninhabited by intelligent creatures) to some thousand (10-11,000 in major cities) people per square mile.							

trading and crafting guilds. In fact, the Guilds are a society characterized by a formal hierarchy which assigns a person to one of six castes depending on his or her station within the guild. This system developed in the course of the last centuries, as traditional class distinctions lost their importance with the rise of the guilders, and one's station within his or her guild was the only thing that mattered; slowly, this system extended to the whole society, not only to the guilds. The six castes range from the first, which includes guild laborers, workers, and apprentices, to the sixth, which includes the guild leaders; common guild members belong to the second caste. A caste identifies one person's social status, influence (and skill) within its guild, and, often, wealth – but there are exception, as the higher castes are only attainable through a high level of experience and skill in the guild's trade or craft, thus it's not uncommon to see a very wealthy guildmember who however never went past the third caste. Castes are not completely rigid, either; hard work and talent can push a person higher in the caste system, even if it's quite unlikely that a skilled person without ties with important families, political offices, or a certain degree of wealth, could rise beyond the third caste. Minrothaddans not belonging to a guild – farmers, herders, unskilled workers and laborers (including servants and maids) – are considered to belong to the first caste for what regards social matters, even if they are not proper members of any guild. Aristocratic landowners not belonging to a guild (very few, indeed) are considered part of the fourth caste, while commoner landowners are usually considered part of the second caste. Of the whole Minrothaddan population, about 55% belongs to the first caste (including people not belonging to a guild), 35% to the second,

8% to the third, less than 2% to the fourth, and less than 1% to the fifth and sixth.

Table 4 shows the settlement levels of the Guilds, indicating the number of hexes (on GAZ9's poster 8-miles per hex map) belonging to each level and the number of people (all races) living in it.

## Urban Population

The islands ruled by the Minrothad Guilds have a sizeable portion of urban population (that living in towns and cities with 10,000 people or more), reaching 19.7%. While there are not very big cities in the archipelago, the many large towns and the couple of cities which dot the isles makes the Guilds one of the countries with the highest urban:rural population ratio in the Known World. In fact, if we add to the count of urban population the people who live in small towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants, the archipelago's urban population rises to 23.9%. Urban population also represent the bulk of the nation's guild members.

Besides towns and cities, there is a vast number of farming and fishing villages scattered through the countryside, especially on Trader's, Open, and North islands. Coastal and woodland villages also abound on Alfeisle.

Due to the recent rescission of the Isolation Act by the current Ruling Guildmaster, and to the start of immigration-favoring policies, urban population is quite likely going to raise in Minrothad, enlarging some of its town and cities or upgrading some of its villages to small towns.

Here follows a list of the Guilds' known settlements, along with their population, if known.



## Serendib and Lady Darkrook

A couple of official sources mention the Minrothaddan city of Serendib. The adventure *The Djinni's Ring* by V. Garcia, featured in *Dungeon Magazine* #9, mentions "the port of Serendib, one of the cities of the Minrothad Guilds". The adventure *The Isle of the Storm Giant* featured in AC10 *Bestiary of Dragons and Giants*, gives some additional details: "The port of Serendib has long been a prosperous trading center where exotic goods from around the world are offered for sale and barter. Much of the credit for the city's bustling commerce lies with the effective guidance of its powerful merchants' guild, which possesses trading agreements with sovereign and business people from many foreign lands", also mentioning "the fortress-estate of Lady Darkrook, the powerful guildmistress" who is "the beautiful if somewhat ruthless head of the merchants' consortium". But where is Serendib? There are two possible ways to handle the answer.

The first is the simple one. 'Serendib' is the Arabic and Persian word with which the merchants coming from the Middle East called the island of Sri Lanka; thus in Minrothad, 'Serendib' could simply be the name that the Alphatians gave to Harbortown, or even the name which in Minrothad Patois means Harbortown, that is the name of the town itself as heard by foreign ears. In this case, Lady Darkrook may be a powerful member of Harbortown's local government, surely a high-ranking member of Guild Corser, and the head of some guild trading luxury goods and associated with Guild Corser (a guild which should be in addition to those indicated in GAZ9).

The second answer is that Serendib is another city to be added to the map of the Minrothad Guilds. As a prosperous trade city, it should have at least 10,000 inhabitants. As Lady Darkrook is not mentioned to belong to another race, likely AC10 assumes that she be human; this would likely make Serendib a human city, and thus the best place to put it would be Trader's Isle, again, maybe in the coast opposite of Harbortown, between Duns-on-Fell and Newport Keep. Another option would be placing it on Alfeisle's western coast, where the sea route coming from Minrothad and the one coming from Malfon meet in correspondence of one of the island's spurs; in the latter case, however, you will need to devise a good reason explaining the presence of a human-led city on Alfeisle (or, alternatively, you could simply consider Lady Darkrook a water elf). If you make Serendib an additional city, you will have more freedom in determining who Lady Darkrook actually is; anyway, it's likely that she is a member of Guild Corser, given that the city prosper on the trade of luxury goods, or alternatively she could be a high-ranking official of the Import or Export Guilds, associates of the Merchant Sailors Guild.

The addition of a large town or even a city does not represent a problem for the urban:ratio population if you use the figures indicated in this article. Even making Serendib a city of 15,000 people, for example, would simply raise the urban population of the archipelago to 27%, which is still very much acceptable, considering the type of country Minrothad is.

**Cities and Large Towns:** *Alfeisle:* Seahome (pop. 20,000), Verdon (pop. 13,000). *Fortress Island:* Stronghold (pop. 10,000). *Trader's Isle:* Harbortown (pop. 12,000), Minrothad (pop. 25,000).

**Small Towns:** *Fire Island:* Cove Harbor (pop. 7,000). *North Island:* Gapton (pop. 5,000). *Open Isle:* Malfton (pop. 5,000).

**Villages:** *Blackrock Island:* Hermian. *North Island:* Eyemouth. *Trader's Isle:* Ainwick, Dunbar Hamlet, Duns-on-Fell, Haycroft.

## The Seven Islands

Now we will take a brief tour of the Minrothad archipelago, examining each of the seven islands which make it up, their main features, and their level of settlement. Please refer to Table 4, above, to detect the density range and average density of each settlement level.

### ALFEISLE

**Surface area:** 2,761 square miles (34% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 111,600 (27.5% of total nation's population).

**Population density:** 40.4 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 57% water elves, 39% wood elves, 3% humans, 0.8% halflings, 0.1% dwarves, 0.1% lupins.

[Table SI-1]

Alfeisle is the ancient homeland of the Verdier wood elf clan, and of the Meditor water elf clan. From this large island, which was kept

hidden from the outer world for centuries by elven magics, the elves went to become the leading race of the archipelago. Alfeisle is run through by the Gregus Ridge mountain chain; these mountains and their slopes are heavily forested, and in part even unexplored. The coastline is mostly flat, but in some areas it features beautiful cliffs and reefs. The wood elves are more numerous in the woodlands and farmlands in the south part of the island, where their port of Verdon is found; while the water elves favor the coasts, the ones in the northern half of the island especially, where they built their trading city of Seahome, one of the richest and most beautiful of the whole archipelago.

Alfeisle	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	High	2	4%	31,600	28%
	Average	12.7	26%	59,100	53%
	Low	14.6	30%	16,900	15%
	Borderlands	13.4	27%	3,900	4%
	Wilderness	6.6	13%	100	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>111,600</b>	<b>100%</b>

**BLACKROCK ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 218 square miles (2.7% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 1,900 (0.4% of total nation's population).

**Population density:** 8.7 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 95% humans, 2% halflings, 2% harpies, 1% water elves.

Blackrock is a small and poor island in the southern part of the archipelago, inhabited

only by some hundred fishermen who live in small village along the eastern coast. The scarcity of resources, and the presence of an active and angry volcano, Halfpeak (or Old Nenthead, as it is known to the elves), discourage further settlement. Blackrock is also notable for the presence of a small community of mystics, Larril Hermitage, founded by a former Minrothaddan port agent in Alphatia who took interest in that culture's mystical traditions.

Blackrock Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Average	0.3	8%	1,100	59%
	Low	0.5	13%	600	31%
	Borderlands	0.5	13%	150	8%
	Wilderness	2.6	66%	50	2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>100%</b>

**FIRE ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 207 square miles (2.6% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 12,300 (3% of total nation's population).

**Population density:** 59.4 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 64% humans, 24.5% water elves, 5% halflings, 4% dwarves, 1% lupins, 1% wood elves, 0.5% harpies.

Fire Island is a dangerous place because of the presence of the volcano of Mount Thymas (the elves call it the Great Fire Mouth), and

nicknamed "Redtop" by sailors, both Minrothaddan and foreign, who have learned its vicious habit to periodically spew forth ashes and dust up to miles in the sea surrounding the island. It's no surprise, thus, that Fire Island is avoided by anyone and declared off-limits to settlement by the Guilds' government. What is not known to the general public is that the island is inhabited, indeed: it's the secret seat of the Privateers Guild, which has its own base in the hidden town of Cove Harbor, some miles inland up the Reedy River.

Fire Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Very high	0.6	16%	12,250	100%
	Wilderness	3.1	84%	50	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>100%</b>



**FORTRESS ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 515 square miles (6.3% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 24,000 (5.9% of total nation's population).

**Population density:** 47.6 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 90% dwarves, 6.6% humans, 3% water elves, 0.2% harpies, 0.2% lupins.

This barren island is dominated by Mount Redtongue, an active volcano from which a

constant flood of lava flows down into the sea, generating clouds of smoke and dense fog around the place. The island is almost devoid of vegetation, and was nearly unsettled until about two centuries ago, when dwarven immigrants were offered to settle there by the Guilds' government, and accepted. Apart some small fishing villages scattered on the coasts, the heart of Fortress Island is Stronghold, the town of the Minrothad dwarves, located at the end of a narrow fjord and clinging to the mountain slopes.

Fortress Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	High	1	11%	15,800	66%
	Average	1.9	20%	6,900	29%
	Borderlands	4.3	47%	1,250	5%
	Wilderness	2	22%	50	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NORTH ISLAND**

**Surface area:** 532 square miles (6.6% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 20,000 (5% of total nation's population).

**Population density:** 37.6 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 64% humans, 15% water elves, 10% halflings, 5% wood elves, 4.8% dwarves, 1% lupins, 0.2% harpies.

North Island is a small but pleasant place which lacks the typical volcano featured in almost all the island of the Ierendi and Minrothad archipelagos. The shallow waters surrounding it made it scarcely interesting for

establishing trade stations and ports. Nevertheless, some settlement by people interested in agriculture, mining, and fishing did take place. In the last century, the Guilds' government decided to use North Island as a refuge should volcanic activity or other calamity threaten the Minrothad islands as it happened in the past. Thus, the nice but heavily fortified and supplied town of Gapton was built in a dale in the middle of the island's mountain chain. Today, Gapton is inhabited by a large community of scholars and clerics, while the island is used mostly as a resupplying stop for ships traveling between the continent and Minrothad.



North Island	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	High	0.6	6%	8,500	43%
	Average	1.4	15%	5,100	25%
	Low	4.9	52%	5,700	28%
	Borderlands	2.6	27%	700	4%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**OPEN ISLE**

**Surface area:** 661 square miles (8.1% of total nation's surface area).

**Total population:** 33,100 (8.2% of total nation's population).

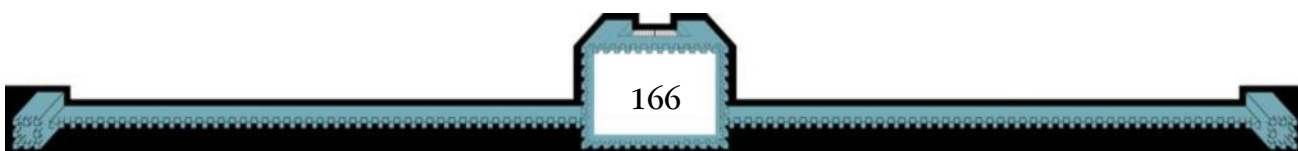
**Population density:** 60.1 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 89% halflings, 4.8% humans, 3% water elves, 2% dwarves, 1% wood elves, 0.1% harpies, 0.1% lupins.

Since more than five centuries, Open Isle is the home of the archipelago's halflings. The island had been previously settled by humans, but the halfling freedom hero Malf Quickhand

led the rebellious halfling slaves here in AC 450, and the humans of that time, hardly hit by the lycanthropy plague, had to recognize the halfling possession of Open Isle. Since then, the halfling population of the island has grown, and the few humans who continued to dwell here became a small minority. Open Isle is so called because few trees grow here; the island's soil is thin and rocky, and requires a great deal of work to farm. Nevertheless, the halflings managed to transform the island in a land of flat green fields, pasturelands, and orchards. The main port of the island is the town of Malfton.

Open Isle	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	High	1.4	12%	13,100	40%
	Average	3.2	27%	11,600	35%
	Low	7.2	61%	8,400	25%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33,100</b>	<b>100%</b>



**TRADER’S ISLE**

**Surface area:** 3,226 square miles (39.7% of total nation’s surface area).

**Total population:** 202,500 (50% of total nation’s population).

**Population density:** 69.8 people/square mile.

**Population breakdown:** 65.1% humans, 21% water elves, 5% halflings, 4% wood elves, 3% dwarves, 1.9% lupins.

Trader’s Isle is the largest and most populous island of the Minrothad chain, and the heart of the country’s government, politics, economy, and history. It was here where Minroth led his people thousands of years ago, it was here where Alphatians and Minrothians clashed over slave trade, it was here where the lycanthropic plague took its toll, it was here

where Hadric Corser decided to found the city of Minrothad over the ruins of New Alphatia – the city which became the capital of the Guilds. The island’s population is predominantly human, through all other races of the archipelago are represented as well. The other town of the island is Harbortown, a very old settlement which today is still the center of Guild Corser’s activities. Trader’s Isle is cut in half by the Diamond Spurs, a mountain chain which also includes two inactive volcanoes; the island’s interior is forested, but as one moves toward the coasts the woods disappear – cut through the course of centuries to fuel the island’s shipbuilding and construction activities – leaving room for farming fields, pasturelands, and hundreds of small rural villages.

Trader’s Isle	Settlement Level	# of 8-miles hexes	% of island mileage	Total island population (averaged)	% of island population (averaged)
	Very high	3.2	6%	64,800	32%
	High	11.8	20%	68,500	34%
	Average	12.8	22%	46,400	23%
	Low	16.2	28%	18,800	9%
	Borderlands	13.6	24%	4,000	2%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57.6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>202,500</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Main Races**

The following entries list in order of their number – from the most numerous to the least numerous – the main races who dwell within Minrothad’s borders. Each entry gives a brief description of that race’s composition (ethnic subgroups, and the like), its diffusion in the archipelago, relationships with other races, and some additional information. Note that

only races who number at least 100 members within Minrothaddan territory are described here. Other, less-represented races – alongside unintelligent creatures – are found in the following chapter, “Fauna and Minor Races”.

**Elves (pop. 166,900)**

The elves are the most numerous race of the Minrothad archipelago, whose elven



community – alongside the Kingdom of Alfheim – represents one of the largest concentrations of elf population in the Known World. The elves of Minrothad, however, are not a closely united group, but are divided into two major cultural groupings which descend from the original elven clans who settled Alfeisle thousands of years ago.

The largest grouping is that of the water elves (representing 68% of the archipelago's total elven population), descendants of the ancient Meditor clan, whose scions are still one of the most powerful families in the Guilds. An unique subrace of elves – a little taller than wood elves but fair-haired and pale-complexioned – the water elves are a jolly and curious lot, devoted to exploration and trade enterprises. Their name comes from their affinity for the sea and for all activities connected with it, including seamanship, navigation, shipbuilding, fishing, and crafting of sea products and resources. Water elves possess an uncanny sense of direction which makes them some of the most skilled seamen in the world. Contrary to most other elven cultures, the water elves live in coastal settlements (cities and villages), not in the woods. Today, water elves occupy important positions in the government of the Guilds, both through the Elsan family guilds and the Ruling Guildmaster office; many of them belong to the Merchant Princes associated guild, and thus to the fifth caste of Minrothaddan society. They represent the true propulsive force behind many of the Guilds' successes – including technical, scientific, and magical discoveries. Most of the water elf population (57%) lives in Alfeisle, where the beautiful and ancient city of Seahome is located, but many others (37%) live in Trader's Isle, mostly in the capital city and in other coastal towns and settlements; the remaining

few (7%) are scattered among the other islands.

The second, less numerous grouping is that of the wood elves (representing 32% of Minrothad's total elven population). They descend from the old Verdier clan which, millennia ago, chose to abandon the newly-formed coasts of the continent to reach the water elves on Alfeisle. The Minrothad wood elves belong to the same stock of the mainland's wood elf clans, like the Callarii or most of the clans of Alfheim. Even if their culture has adapted to life on an island, to Minrothaddan ethic of work as one's duty in life, and to the trade- and manufacture-oriented society of the Guilds, they still love the woodlands and their affinity and skill for woodworking is legendary. The wood elves control the Guilds' wood industries through their Verdier family guild. Most of the wood elves (82%) live in Alfeisle's woodlands, where their trading center of Verdon is found, but a minority (15%) is found on Trader's Isle, both in the capital and in that island's forested lands; only a very few (3%) are found on other islands.

### **Humans (pop. 160,800)**

Humans are the second most numerous race of the archipelago. After the Taymoran age, they were the first to settle the Colony Islands, and they did continue to be the most influential race of the archipelago until quarrels among them and the spread of lycanthropy in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries AC toppled their power, allowing for the rise of elven power in the archipelago.

Today, the archipelago's native humans consider themselves Minrothaddan, and make up for the vast majority of the human population (92%); however, this people and

its culture originated from the union between two very different people. The first group is that of the dusk-skinned Nithian colonists who settled the Colony Islands around BC 1100, absorbing and conquering the scattered surviving descendants of the Taymora and the handful of Traldar colonies; after the demise of the Nithian Empire in BC 500, the Nithian colonists started to call themselves Minrothians, from the name of the legendary leader (Minroth) of the first colonization expedition. Around AC 250, a second group came to the Colony Islands; they were copper-skinned Common Alphatians, who founded the city of New Alphatia on Trader's Isle. The relationship between the two ethnicities alternated between times of alliance and war, until the spread of lycanthropy in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AC and the subsequent Silver Purge unleashed by the elves did lead to a decisive population loss for both human groups. After that, Minrothians and Alphatians – who had been the most hardly hit by the Purge, having suffered the destruction of their main settlement of New Alphatia – started to intermarry, leading to the formation of the Minrothaddan culture, whose name comes from the city of Minrothad, founded by Hadric Corser in AC 488. The original, bronze or dark complexion of the Minrothaddans was diluted during the course of the following centuries, due to intermarriage of the Minrothaddan merchants with partners from the continent, or even with families of water elves – which, if it didn't produce half-elves, concurred to lighten the skin tone of the natives. Steady immigration of fair-skinned humans from the continent – mostly from the Thyatis Empire and Darokin - until the Isolation Act was passed in AC 890, was also a factor. Indeed, the current main tongue spoken in the archipelago, the Minrothad Patois, developed

from the base of the original Minrothian tongue, with heavy influences from Alphatian and elvish tongues, and many words imported from other human languages of the continent.

Besides the Minrothaddan majority, a minority (8%) of the human population is made up by immigrants from the Known World, who came in the archipelago after the rescission of the Isolation Act passed by Oran Meditor in AC 991, which again allowed foreign immigrants to settle in the Guilds' territory. This brought a number of people coming from Thyatis (60%), Ierendi (10%), Karameikos (10%), and elsewhere (20% – mostly from Ylaruam, Darokin, Glantri, Northern Reaches, Isle of Dawn, Ochalea, the Pearl Islands, and the Alatian Islands) to establish their home in the archipelago.

### **Halflings (pop. 43,100)**

The halflings are a sizeable minority on the archipelago, whose presence there can be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AC, when the Minrothians started to bring on Trader's Isle halfling slaves captured in the Five Shires. It took the halflings a bloody rebellion against the Minrothians weakened by the lycanthropic plague to conquer freedom in AC 450. Under the rebel leader Malf Quickhand, the halfling managed to obtain possession of Open Isle from the humans, and since then that island has been their main hold in the archipelago. Only after the reforms of Gregus Verdier at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AC the halflings were included as full partners of the newly-born Minrothad Guilds in AC 691. From that time, despite being less numerous, they have struggled to avoid being dominated by the elves' and humans' influence, managing to keep control over a vast series of largely-needed basic

crafts, and also over agricultural and farming production. Today, most of the halflings (69%) live on Open Isle, but many have settled also in Trader's Isle (23%), while only a minority of them (8%) is found in the other islands.

### **Dwarves (pop. 29,900)**

Dwarves form a quite large community in the archipelago, even if the presence of such an earth- and underground-loving people may appear very unusual to the outside eye. The dwarven immigration in the Guilds took place after the tragic events of AC 828 which led to the expulsion of the dwarf immigrants (who had come from Rockhome) from the Highlands (nowadays Glantri), in the far north. Seeing the opportunity to put the dwarves' talents to the nation's advantage, the Guilds' government offered to the dwarves a place to settle in the archipelago, that is the rocky and barren Fortress Island, which had been until then almost devoid of any settlement. Many clans of dwarves accepted and established the town of Stronghold on the island, making it a center for metal- and stone-crafting activities. Today, the dwarves control metalworking, stoneworking, engineering, and mining trades, and form a tight group which tends to keep to itself and to avoid too much meddling into the affair of other races. The majority of the dwarves (72%) indeed lives on Fortress Island, with a sizeable minority (20%) found on Trader's Isle, mostly in the capital; only a few other dwarves (8%) are found on other islands.

### **Lupins (pop. 4,400)**

A number of lupins lives in the archipelago; they are mostly found in the cities of Trader's Isle (88%), where they are employed in the most varied works, but only a few of them live in other islands (12%). Lupins are especially appreciated in Minrothad for their great

animosity toward lycanthropes and their skill in scenting their presence; many lupins are indeed employed as law enforcers, guards, and investigators devoted to root out lycanthropes and prevent the danger of other spread of that plague. Most represented lupin breeds in the archipelago are: the Mongrels (23%); the Bouchons (15%), many of whom work with Guild Corser's winemaking associate guild; the King Mastiffs (14%) found serving the government or individual guilds; the Great Bloodhounds (11%) who are members of the Blue Eels; and the roving and enterprising Blue Bandits (10%). Less represented are the breeds of the Shag-Heads (7%), Eusdrian Bulldogs (6%), Neo-Papillons (5%), Great Beagles (5%), and Wolvenfolks (4%).

### **Harpies (pop. 300)**

Lonely nests of these aggressive creatures are scattered in the most remote places of the archipelago – isolated crags, uninhabited cliffs, barren rocky islets, volcanic formations, and the like. They represent a serious danger for small ships and sea travelers passing near them.

## **Fauna and Minor Races**

The following paragraphs describe which creatures can be found in the islands of Minrothad, including intelligent races whose number don't exceed a hundred individuals in the region. Creatures are grouped according to their monster type (for a definition of monster types, see the Rules Cyclopedia or DMR2 Creature Catalogue).

### **Animals, Giant**

Giant animals dangerous for civilized folks have been all hunted down to extinction in most of the islands' settled areas.



## The Aquarendi

There is a third subrace of elves who lives in the region dominated by the Minrothad Guilds – in the underwater region, indeed. They are the Aquarendi, or aquatic elves as they are often called by other races. These elves belong to an ancient breed who adapted to life underwater in the age of the ancient civilization of Evergrun. Later, they migrated north after the Great Rain of Fire, living near the emerged regions of the Known World inhabited by their land cousins. After the volcanic upheavals of 18<sup>th</sup> century BC they ultimately found a suitable shelter in the sea around the various islands of the northern Sea of Dread. They helped the Verdier wood elves to migrate from the mainland to Alfeisle, to join the Meditor water elves stranded there. After these events, they have dwelled in the Sunlit Sea alongside other underwater races. The main concentration of Aquarendi is found around Alfeisle, between the numerous reefs and hidden lagoons which dot the island's surroundings. Alfeisle's elves have friendly relationships with the aquatic elves, and vice versa - but the latter prefer to be left in peace by the land-dwelling races, so their presence in the waters around Alfeisle is a well-guarded secret of the Minrothad elves and almost unknown to the humans, dwarves, and halflings of the archipelago.

Nevertheless, wilder regions, especially in wooded and forested terrain, still hosts various species of **giant lizards**, among which are the **giant gecko**, the **giant draco**, and the **giant horned chameleon**; the **giant tuatara**, instead, prefers barren territory like the one found on Blackrock, Fire, and Fortress islands. Regarding giant sealife, on shores and shallow sea regions **giant crabs** are also sometimes found, as are **giant octopi** in submerged coral formations, reefs, and sea areas rich with prey.

### Animals, Normal

The archipelago is the home of a variety of domesticated animals, from **animal herds** of **cattle** and **oxen**, to **cows**, **domestic sheeps**, **pigs**, donkeys, and **normal dogs**. **Horses** are also raised for various purposes, as are **ponies** in Open Isle, but both are usually imported from the mainland. Mammal wildlife includes small animals like **normal bats**, **normal rats**, monkeys in the forested hills, as well as wild **goats** and a species of diminutive wild pigs known locally as peccary.

Birds abound in all islands except Fortress Island, devoid of treelife; coastal areas are flocked by sandpipers, gulls, and terns, while warblers, toucans, herons, and egrets are found in the interior, mostly in the forests and near freshwater bodies. A local type of grouse, the ulit, is a popular food bird. The only predatory birds found in the archipelago are **normal hawks**.

**Snakes** are quite rare in the islands, but the archipelago still hosts some dangerous type of these reptiles, that is the **giant racer**, the poisonous **pit viper**, and the **sea snake** which is found in the Sea of Dread.

Also, the waters around the islands are the home of **dolphins**, **normal manta rays**, and **sharks** (mostly the **bull** and **mako** types, with the **great white** rarely sighted).

### Humanoids

Besides the ones listed in the Main Races section, the archipelago does not see many other humanoid races, being thankfully free of orcs, goblins, and their lot. Traveling **earth gnomes**, mostly coming from the Kingdom of Highforge, in Karameikos, sometimes visit the Guilds. Also, Alfeisle occasionally sees the presence of some members of the Good Folk, mostly **sidhe**, **sprites** and **pixies**, even if they don't like too much the lifestyle that the local wood elves have adopted.

On the other hand, the Sunlit Sea is the home of a vast array of underwater humanoid races, like the **aquatic elves** who live around Alfeisle, the nomadic **mermen** (or merrows, as they call themselves), the **tritons** with their Kingdom of Undersea, the **shark-kins**, and the alluring **nixies**. Knas, because of their past quarrel with the Guilds, almost never show up in this part of the Sea of Dread.

### Humanoids, Giant

The only giant humanoids found in the Minrothad region are the **sea giants** of the Sunlit Sea.

### Lowlife

Insects, especially spiders, abound in the islands; **normal scorpions** may be found everywhere, while **insect swarm** sometimes may represent a danger for rural farming villages. Dangerous or giant varieties are thankfully almost unknown. There are some exceptions, however, like the **giant crab spider** and the **huge wood spider**, both of which are found in the densest woodlands. Also particularly dangerous, if rare, is the **salt-water** variant of the **water termite**. Underwater, the giant sea worm known as the **masher** is quite common. In volcanic areas,

mostly underground, **steam weevils** are instead known to dwell.

### Monsters

Few monsters haunt the Minrothad islands. The last vicious species of **dinosaurs** (**small land carnivore** variety) may still be found in wilderness or borderlands areas, but these have become very rare and doomed to extinction. **Lava lizards** may sometimes be found in volcanic or heated underground caves, while the dangerous **sea serpent** (both the **lesser** and the **greater** types) occasionally are reported to attack ships and people at sea. Underwater, especially in the triton kingdom, the beautiful **sea horse** is a common sight. Small uninhabited islets and lonely crags or mountain peaks are from time to time chosen as nests by the majestic **roc** – the **small** and **large** varieties are uncommon, while the **giant** one is very rare.

Isolated sea reefs, especially in shallow sea waters, are known to host the vicious creatures called **sirens** by seamen; they attract seamen and their ships on hidden reefs and shallow waters, causing shipwrecks and devouring the victims. (See the "Siren" sidebar to learn more about these creatures.)

Lastly, despite its past history and the government being always on the look for cases of infection, **lycanthropes** are known to dwell in the islands – mostly on Trader's Isle. The last dangerous plague of lycanthropy happened in AC 980; despite many of these creatures had been hunted down in the intervening years, many suspect that more of them could have escaped in the wilderness or be hidden in the midst of the busy trade cities. Types of lycanthropes most likely to be encountered in the islands are **wererats**, **werewolves**, **werebats**, **weresharks**, and **devil swines**.

## SIREN

<b>Armor Class:</b>	4
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	6***
<b>Move:</b>	60' (20')
<b>Swimming:</b>	360' (120')
<b>Attacks:</b>	2 claws + 1 bite or constriction
<b>Damage:</b>	1d4 / 1d4 + 1d6 or 2d4
<b>No. Appearing:</b>	0 (1d6)
<b>Save As:</b>	MU12
<b>Morale:</b>	7
<b>Treasure Type:</b>	(V) C
<b>Intelligence:</b>	14
<b>Alignment:</b>	Chaotic
<b>XP Value:</b>	950

**Monster Type:** Monster (Rare).

Sirens are dangerous and treacherous creatures of the sea, who use their song and appearance to lure seamen and ships to their death and devour them. Sirens have the appearance of dire mermaids, with the lower body of a giant fish (which may be shark-like, scaly, or eel-like) and the upper body of a beautiful female of human-like race, albeit with razor claws and oversized sharp teeth. Their fish-like lower half can be of any color combination, while the skin of their human-like upper half is usually a light and sickly shadow of white, yellow, azure or green. However, sirens can *polymorph* once per day to appear as very beautiful females of human, elven (even aquatic elven), merrow, or triton race, with voluptuous figures and wearing scanty clothing at best. They can also become



*invisible* once per day. Both spell-like powers have an unlimited duration, but end as soon as the siren attacks or wishes so; using the siren's *charming* song does not end these effects.

A siren may breath both air and underwater. In her true form she can move on land – slithering and aiding herself with her arms – but there her movements are impaired (consider her to have AC 7), unless she has taken humanoid form. In the waters, a siren in her true form can be deadly swift.

Sirens attract unwary seamen and travelers using their alluring voices and song, which can be heard up to 300 feet of distance. Any humanoid (male or female) hearing them



must make a saving throw vs. spells at -2 penalty or be *charmed*; usually a siren lures her *charmed* victims into reach her as soon as possible, despite obvious dangers and perils. When the victim is near, the siren shows her true appearance and attacks, using her sharp claws. If both claws hit the same victim, the siren may choose to bite her or constrict her with her long fishlike tail. Besides doing damage, the siren's bite is also poisonous; a bitten victim must make a saving throw vs. poison or be paralyzed and unable to move for 2d6 turns – which usually makes her drown if she is in a watery environment. Otherwise, the siren can constrict her victim, doing 2d4 points of damage per round, starting from the round following the double claw hit; a constricted victim has 50% each of having her two arms pinned. The siren can automatically hit a victim with both arms pinned with both claws or with the bite. The siren's song (and other spell-like effects) can be dispelled as if cast by a 12<sup>th</sup>-level magic-user.

Sirens are carnivore, and even if they can eat fishes and mollusks, their favorite food is the fresh meat of humanoids. Their favourite tactic is to lure ships into areas of dangerous hidden reefs and shallow waters with their song, causing them to shipwreck or run aground;

then, attack lonely seamen while they are still in the water.

Sirens usually live alone or in small packs of 2-8 individuals. They make their lair in hidden underwater or semi-submerged caves on isolated atolls, reefs, or rugged coastlines. Their caves are laden with the bones of their victims, and with the treasure they had with them when they died. They reproduce only by mating with males of any land or sea humanoid race; thus they sometimes take *charmed* victims into their lairs and mate with them for a time, before eating the victim.

Sirens have a lifespan of up to 300 years. The oldest of them have accumulated quite a lot of knowledge about the sea region they inhabit, and can be a valuable source of information if one can persuade them to talk. Sirens usually can speak two or three human and humanoid languages of the area they live in. They can become wokani or shamans of up to 8<sup>th</sup> level; they usually master spells which deal with water, illusion, charm, and weather, or serve air or water elemental powers, or wild and ruthless ocean Immortals.

***Terrain:*** Ocean.

### Planar Monsters

The only planar monsters found in the archipelago are those fire creatures which sometimes are attracted to the islands' volcanoes from their elemental plane. In such environs, **fire elementals**, **efreets**, and **flame salamanders** may be encountered.

### Undead

Undead creatures are very rare in the islands, as the Tutorial Guild does not usually allow the casting of spells to animate even mindless undead like skeletons and zombies. Nevertheless, very rarely undead like **wights** and **wraiths** raise spontaneously as the result of unavenged wrongs or dramatic and untimely deaths. Still more rare and dangerous are **vampires** and their aquatic cousins, the **velyas**.

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# The Darkness Beneath

## Ancient buried secrets in the Sea of Dread

by Francesco Defferrari

*The following is a missive written from famed Ylari scholar and explorer Aamir Ibn Saleem, a teacher at the Krakatos School of Magecraft, to his friend and colleague Erik in the year 1013 AC. Details about Aamir can be changed if the DM wishes to set the letter in 1000 AC.*



Aamir Ibn Saleem

*Dear friend,*

I hope my letter finds you well and I pray you to give me some news about your travels and discoveries, for my part here is all I have discovered in the last two years about the buried ruins of the Sea of Dread.

It's curious that I have now become a sort of expert on dark and forgotten places, as I was born in a nation full of sun, and it is in other nations full of sun that I search for these lost locations. It's ironic also because I very much feared the stories of dark dungeons as a child, when my grandfather told me that the "Evil wizard in the darkness" would come one day from below the sands<sup>1</sup>. What can I say? Life always takes you on unexpected paths!

My companions, Leander Mortensen, another wizard from the northern reaches, Lidia Mariev, a young Karameikan priestess of Chardastes, Abdul Muid, a warrior who is a Ylari expatriate like myself, and Corsin Seril, a Minrothaddan elf, and I, have begun to call ourselves "The Delves" as we are always entering some forgotten underground ruin. And we have explored several already, all of them, I believe, linked to an ancient civilization that flourished in the upper Sea of Dread. At least that's true for the nearest layers, because there are more, in some cases... many more..

But let's proceed with order. All began for us in **Krakatos**<sup>2</sup>, because I teach at the School, and the city beneath is well known to have multiple layers of ruins that in recent years have become a sort of test of courage for reckless students. It was indeed during such an occasion, when I had to rescue some irresponsible youngster from a carrion crawler, that I found in one of the deep levels the sign of a double axe. Such a sign is well known, at least among scholars, as a symbol pertaining to an ancient civilization that once flourished in the area of Karameikos, Ierendi, Minrothad, and beyond. According to the elves, this civilization called itself Taymora<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1000 AC Krakatos is still an abandoned ruin that will be cleared only in 1010 AC to build the Karameikan School of Magecraft. All the layers beneath the city however do exist in both times.

<sup>3</sup> See here: [Index to Taymor articles at The Vaults](#) and here: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#) for more

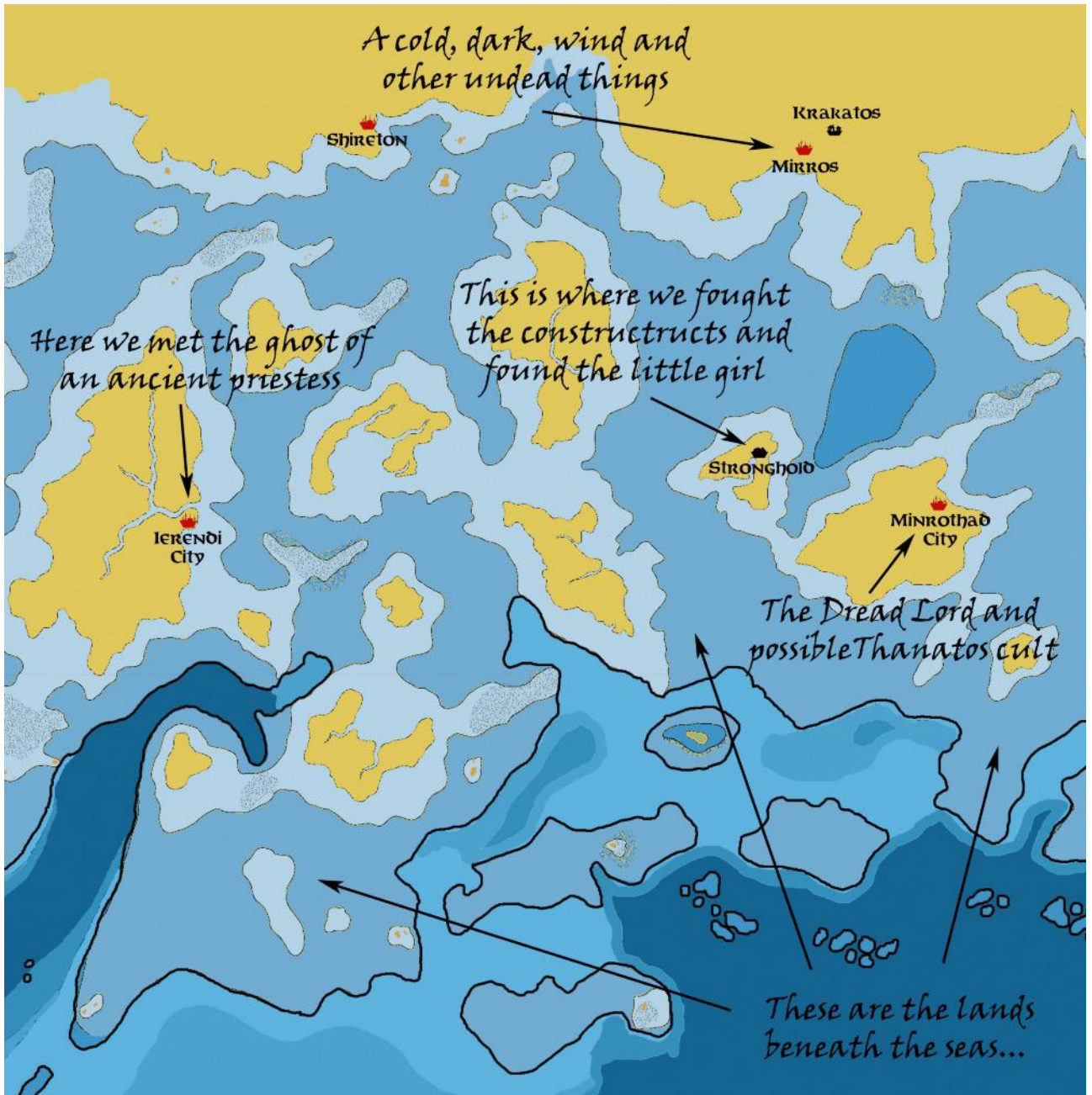
<sup>1</sup> A reference to Barimoor, see Gazetteer 02, The Emirates of Ylaurum.



and ruled over lands that at the time were over the waves, and that are now partially at the bottom of the Sunlit Sea. That little sign led me to wonder if other cities of the area had under their streets ancient ruins of the past, like Krakatos, or even older.

I spoke of this with my friend Leander, and together we began to search for other people, who like us, might be interested in similar explorations. So we met Lidia and Abdul, a couple of adventurers quite younger than ourselves, and began our “delving” under Krakatos itself.

information about Taymora.



As the many layers of Krakatos deserve a treatise upon themselves, being the ones we explored better, I'll leave their full description to another letter. For now let's just say that it seems the city wasn't a very important place in the time of Taymora, but rather some time after it, so Krakatos it's not very interesting for the purposes of the present letter.

**Under Mirros** however it's another matter, as delving beneath the city (and mind that it wasn't easy, as we had to cross a layer of wererats, and one of nasty intelligent insects, to reach the older levels) we discovered what I believe in the remote past was a mighty fortress or castle. The time should have been around 2000 BC, at the time of Taymora's splendor. What surprised me were the huge blocks of stones that were used to build this fortress, a thing I've seen in the past only in buildings raised by giants. From what I was able to study of this layer (we found also some objects and weapons) I have developed the theory that this was a hotly contested place, where Taymora and an unknown giant people fought for supremacy and control. Curiously we also found a mirror and a dagger that seem to be ancient elven, or maybe fairy objects, as they still had a faint aura of magic. Have fairy folks too, lived in the castle at some point?<sup>4</sup> It seems, from many sources, that fairies had a relevant presence in the land. We soon found out however that the third layer was quite dangerous, as it was swept by a cold, dark wind that almost drove us mad. I think there were voices in the wind, of things dead since centuries, and yet not completely dead.

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<sup>4</sup> Aamir doesn't know that, but the castle was a contested place between Taymora and the fairy folks/giants nation of Grondheim according to the Mystara 2300 BC setting, see [the 2300 BC sub-forum at the Piazza](#) for more details and [The History of Mystara and its Races](#) by John Calvin.

We ran away, I must confess, but in our confusion we escaped to a deeper layer, that would be the fourth. Here there were bronze plaques, or at least they seemed made of bronze, with names written in a strange alphabet, yet understandable to me as it seemed a mixture between Thyatian and Nordic. One name was recurrent, and I think it translates as Albimia. Was that the name of the city? A city even more ancient than the Taymoran, or fairy ruins above?. The fourth level too was inhabited by something, as we heard heavy steps coming toward us. I think we were still under the effect of some wicked magic from the level above, because we again ran away confusedly through the first passage going up. We were lucky enough to find a road to the surface, even if we had to fight a group of men and women going up - I think they were cultists of some sort<sup>5</sup>. We drove them away however, and came out into the more familiar sewers.

I must admit this delving wasn't very successful, but it also must be noted that the places under Mirros seem very, very dangerous. We'll try to return there, however, one day.

About Very Dangerous Places I have a special mention of **Stronghold, in Fortress Island, Minrothad**.

The home of the local dwarves has extensive tunnels beneath that are worthy exploring, and we discovered that because the dwarves invited us to do so. At the time we were already a bit famous, and the dwarven guild

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<sup>5</sup> Followers of Orcus, Thanatos or Nyx could all be appropriate under Mirros, or even followers of the Outer Beings (see [Insanity, Horror, and the Outer Beings in Mystara](#) by Geoff Gander).



wanted an expert opinion of what they found under the earth. The dwarves in fact dug several levels on the long narrow sound, at the end of which there is their wonderful town. They obviously met other creatures, and told us they had some clashes with flame salamanders and other critters in the past, but the recent events were something completely different. They warned us that already two of their exploring squads had gone missing, and offered us the best equipment they had. We were a bit concerned by the situation, but curiosity won over caution, as it always does, and may it not kill us. Down we went, for quite a long time and, even if we met some usual inhabitants of the underworld, insects and worms mostly, none of them were really dangerous.



*Shade of Tayma roaming the halls beneath Stronghold*

Only after going much deeper we finally found a girl<sup>6</sup> It was indeed a strange encounter as she was a young, tiny girl, really she seemed Makai for the colour of her skin but was just a bit taller than an halfling, unharmed and with a beautiful, precious white dress. She explained she needed our help to “defeat the creatures who held captive her and her people” and disappeared into thin air. That obviously surprised us, to say the least. Had she been a sort of magical sending? We were even more curious now, and went ahead, or rather deeper and deeper. Then we met them. They were different from anything we knew and from any story we ever heard. They looked like humanoid constructs, but they weren’t normal golems.<sup>7</sup> They had lights on their skin, and strange weapons, as burning light rays, or a sort of wands, and they spoke too. We could not understand the language at first, but later I realized it seemed similar to a Glantrian dialect I heard once. Did they come from an ancient known world civilization? They didn’t seem to be Taymoran at all, from what I know of that culture, and neither Milenians nor Alphatians. Maybe they were from something even more ancient. We managed to destroy one of the things, but the others forced us to retreat. We searched for another route to reach the place where the girl and “her people” were supposed to be held. With much caution and a very convoluted path we finally were able to reach a huge room, decorated in a style that seemed very much early Taymoran to me. But what immediately caught our attention was a big

<sup>6</sup> She would be Tayma, the ancient, and long imprisoned, first vampire queen of Taymora according to the discussion in progress here: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#)

<sup>7</sup> The constructs would be Blackmoor-era robots, see this [“Rovot, SBOT”](#) by Jamie Baty for possible inspiration.



crystal sepulchre in the middle, where the girl we met before laid sleeping. Everywhere on the floor around her, there were other people, hundreds, maybe thousands of them, all pale young men and women with dark hair, who also laid strangely asleep. Just a moment after we entered the room, she, or rather her image, appeared again right over the sepulchre, saying something we couldn't hear, but that sounded alot like a cry for help.

We moved toward her, and hell break loose, as several of the strange constructs we met before attacked us, and, even worse, there was a beholder guiding them! Only it wasn't a regular beholder at all, as he/it had metal parts in his huge body and also looked quite dead to me. Yes, I think it was an undead beholder with strange metal implants. He was really dangerous. In a few minutes my companions and I were about to die. I had no choice but to mass teleport all of us away as quickly as possible, to a safe place prepared before in the upper levels. We went to the dwarves and told them all, and petitioned them to provide us with a stronger, armed expedition, but they refused. They were kind, and insisted to pay us handsomely, but refused to discuss the matter further, much to my frustration<sup>8</sup>. At last, we left Stronghold feeling a bit defeated and disappointed, but what could we do? It seems that the dwarves wanted to seal the levels with all those living there; the beholder and its strange constructs, the girl and her sleeping people. Probably we'll never discover who she was and why she was here. A deep regret for me, as I often

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<sup>8</sup> There could be several reasons behind the dwarves behaviour, as the DM prefers. They could wish to exploit the golems secretly or they could wish to strike a deal with the Undead Beholder to know his secrets. The desire of secrecy of the dwarves could be another adventure seed.

dream about the girl and her people. The same happens to the others, from time to time. I think she's trying to call us, and one of these days we'll return to Stronghold, if necessary without the dwarves permission, to find her.

Speaking of Stronghold reminds me of another buried city we explored in the guilds, that is right under the capital of the island nation, the **City of Minrothad**. The city itself has a long history and, that means for a start, several layers of dungeons beneath it. After the modern sewers, the ancient Alphatian city is the first level we encountered, a creepy place dotted with old remains and that, according to local legends, is still inhabited by hidden werecreatures. We didn't encounter any however, but went below to an older city with the great stone buildings that I've learnt to associate with Taymoran architecture. Now that I have seen several ruins of those ancient times I can distinguish between different traditions within that culture. If the symbols of the double axe and the bull's horns are widespread in all the Taymoran region, i.e I think all the modern Ierendi, Minrothad and southern Karameikos, some decorative elements are particular of certain areas only. For example, we've often found the symbol of the deer and the swan in the area of modern Minrothad and up to Safari Island in Ierendi, but not more west than that. This area also always has rounded stone structures that could have a ceremonial use, or maybe were the houses of their chiefs, or rather priestess, as it seems that ancient Taymora was dominated by a mostly female religious hierarchy.

In the particular case of Minrothad City we began to find other strange decorative

elements, previously unknown to me. It took us some time to realize they were engravings of a Thanatos cult. There were indeed many wall reliefs and writings narrating the endeavours, or rather a string of heinous acts and massacres that made us sick, perpetrated by a “conqueror” identified as “The Dread Lord”<sup>9</sup>. I wondered if that is the reason why in the past Trader’s Island was called Dread Island? The name maybe isn’t due to the legend of the Behemoth, but to this cruel follower of Thanatos, or maybe to both<sup>10</sup>. I also wondered if the Dread Lord was somehow linked to the immortal Orcus. We discovered in Krakatos (where we fought some of his cultists) that in the latter Taymoran age Orcus was a feared warleader in the service of Thanatos in the region of modern Karamikos. But The Dread Lord mentioned under Minrothad city seemed to be another person entirely.

The question wasn’t purely academic as we soon met some shady people in that level, and from the magic they used and the undead they had in their service I can affirm they were indeed Thanatos’ and not Orcus’ followers. We managed to defeat them and move on. The level had been a huge city once. I believe it’s the one named Salkish in ancient sources. At some point in its history, the city clearly



*Exploring the ruins of ancient Minrothad*

fell to the forces of this "Dread Lord", but before that it was apparently dominated by a female immortal, often associated with the moon, that I believe to be Nyx.

The most ancient parts of the city, indeed had several symbols of her. In one of the rounded stone towers we also found a row of tombs, but we didn't dare to open them, as we feared several undead could emerge. In the room however, we found a hatch that lead us to an even deeper level. The area we found had architecture similar to the ruins of Salkish above, but it was even more ancient. It had huge signs of devastation, and I wondered if that wasn't one of the cities destroyed during the Great Rain of Fire itself! We also found some headstones that often bore the same name. It was in that strange alphabet that I

<sup>9</sup> Extensive research on half forgotten books could give the PC's more details about the Dread Lord, maybe even his burial place, or legends about his return. he could be a very powerful vampire in the service of Thanatos or even an avatar of Thantos himself. He could also be somehow related to The Last One, the powerful vampire that has occupied the ruins of Koskatop (see the articles about this megadungeon in this and past issues of Threshold magazine.

<sup>10</sup> More details about the different legends about this name can be found in the article “The History of Ierendi and Minrothad”, by Simone Neri, in this same issue of Threshold magazine.

already mentioned, and I think it said Albisaska. Maybe that was the name of the first city. Unfortunately here too our exploration was cut short by the presence of some people, or creatures, we weren't really sure, hideously deformed and hostile<sup>11</sup>. Were they once humans, mutated by some hideous, ancient magic? We may never know, because they had light rays as the golems of Stronghold, and we had to run for our lives...

Those described above are only two of the mysterious places buried deep in **Minrothad** but I can assure you, my friend, that there are many more, not only on the islands, but also in the sea around them, as once told me by a friendly mermaid. She is as beautiful as well as educated in magic and lore of the Undersea, and she said that in the waters inhabited by the secretive sea elves around **Alfeisle** there are many circles and lines of big stones planted in the seafloor that often discharge strange lights and magical energy. In the sea many miles south of Utter Island and Stronghold lay a ruined elven city, and even more to the south another big and ancient city once inhabited by the powerful undersea race of the kopru. Another story says that the ancient capital of lost Taymora lies under the waves many miles south of Roister and Aloysius island, in Ierendi, once inhabited by the race of shark-kin and now by the feared devil fish.

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<sup>11</sup> The true nature and origin of these people is left to each DM's choice. They could be the degenerate descendants of an Albai people, a Neathar culture that lived in the area in Taymora's time and before (see also New Blackmoor, the Known World in 3050 BC article in issue 2 of Threshold magazine), who were subjected to radiance poisoning after the Great Rain of Fire or after the 1750 BC disaster that destroyed Taymora, or even deformed Shadow elves.

So many places to explore, so many legends that for sure my lifetime will not be enough to study all this. But that's exactly the reason why, my friend, I'm writing you this letter. After I die, be of delving or old age, you and others will be able to continue my work... that's the beautiful and sad story of frail humankind. I want to write to you something more about the deep ruins we found in Ierendi, but before that, indulge me for two more important digressions that will have to remain just notes for now.

The first one is **Shireton**. The capital of the Shires has extensive ruins beneath it that we explored only partially, and could well date back to the dawn of the world. The hin live there, and elves before them, and a culture of fairies and giants similar to the traces we found under Mirros, as well as humans who apparently had some cultural elements in common with the modern Atruaghin, and other humans that had elaborate underground tombs, and ivory figurines, and harps. A lost culture completely unknown to me<sup>12</sup>. Add to that the fact that the levels under Shireton are homes to wererats, unique monsters and undead, and you can realize that it's quite an interesting place...

The second digression I must mention is the underground of **Thyatis** and the seas around it, as we found the remains of at least three unknown human cultures under **Tel Akbir**<sup>13</sup>,

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<sup>12</sup> They would be the Eokai neathar culture, mentioned here: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#) and also in the article History of Ierendi and Minrothad by Simone Neri, in this same issue of Threshold magazine.

<sup>13</sup> These three cultures would be: the first, lower and most ancient one, Tjeset and the Blackmoorian colony of Dawncity, mentioned in New Blackmoor 3050 BC article in issue 2 of Threshold magazine, the middle one the Frontierlands culture, mentioned in [Mystara 2300](#)



one that existed slightly after Taymora, I suppose, one contemporary to it, and another before the Great Rain of Fire! I read a book that says that under **Thyatis City**, deeper than the oldest Thyatian ruins, there are at least four levels of identifiable, lost cultures. And, according to my merrow friend, south of **Hattias**, near the Verdant isles, there would be a huge underwater city, still guarded by a powerful construct, and several other ruins lay on dry land on the islands. Unfortunately the area is extremely dangerous as it is infested with nasty, sailing orcs and plagued by strange, dangerous seastorms<sup>14</sup>.

Alas, I could write of this topic for ages, as you may have noticed by now, but let's move to **Ierendi**. I cannot mention the mysteries of Honour Island, White Island, and Elegy Island as these places deserve a treatise on their own, I'll just mention that is well known among the undersea races that there are pyramids under the sea, in a vast area that goes from the west of Roister island all the way to the Atruaghin and the Sindian seas - an ancient culture that could be the Oltec empire mentioned in the west by many books and sages before and after the Great Rain of Fire. It seems indeed that a kind of Oltec culture existed to the western borders of Taymora in its age, around 3,000 years ago, probably the ancestors of the Atruaghin<sup>15</sup>.

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[BC Campaign Setting at The Vaults](#), upper and more recent one could be [the Doulakki culture](#) (ny Matthew Levy) or other fan created cultures that existed in the thyatian area before the Thyatians immigration.

<sup>14</sup> That's a reference to the Kara-kara orcs, mentioned in the canon adventure X8 Drums on Fire Mountain, and also in the article The Minor Islands of the Sea of Dread by Simone Neri in this same issue of Threshold magazine.

<sup>15</sup> A reference to Intua, mentioned in [Mystara 2300 BC Campaign Setting at The Vaults](#) and to the Oteino,

But for now I'll only write to you about the ruins under Ierendi City. A very old elven chronicle confirmed to me that a Taymoran city existed there, known as Soleclea<sup>16</sup> and, according to the elves, it was built over an even more ancient city, known as Mahalea. From many studies and discoveries I'll eventually detail to you, I've developed a theory that almost all the area of modern Ierendi, in particular Ierendi Island, Utter Island, Fletcher Island, Alcove Island and Safari Island, and all the lands around them now under the waves, were the home of an ancient human culture called the Mahakians, or the Maharians, that preceded Taymora and influenced it very much. A culture that indeed, I believe, has left many cultural traces even in the modern known world. I know the spiral was an important symbol for them and they worshipped female immortals of nature, probably Ordana. They made exquisite objects of amber, copper and silver and were apparently ruled by priestesses. Bovines were sacred animals to them, and they are shown riding bulls in their beautiful wall paintings.

All that and much more we discovered under **Ierendi City**, speaking with the ghost of an ancient priestess<sup>17</sup>. Anyone that could wish to

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an oltec culture mentioned here: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#) and also by Simone Neri in his article The History of Ierendi and Minrothad in this same issue of Threshold magazine.

<sup>16</sup> A city of ancient Taymora mentioned here: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#)

<sup>17</sup> The origin of the priestess could be left to each DM's decision. She could be a Maharian Priestess predating Taymora, see here for more info about the Maharian culture: [Taymor discussion thread at The Piazza](#) and also here: [Ethnographic History of Mystara - Neathar](#) (by Giulio Caroletti, Geoff Gander and Giampaolo Agosta) or even a Taymoran priestess of Nyx with her hidden agenda.

do the same however, be advised, and beware, that ancient Soleclea and Mahalea hosts many dangers, from undead pirates of Ierendi's recent past, to vampires created by the church of Thanatos at the time of Taymora, to vile monsters spawned from magical poisoning in more ancient times. And those are just some of the inhabitants of the ruins, as others we encountered just briefly, as some strange lizardmen, and many others we didn't see at all because the ruins are much larger than the small part we thoroughly explored.

My dear friend, that's all for now, forgive me if I abused your time and patience, but there would be much more to write on the many secrets, items, people, and cities we discovered in our "delvings". If you are interested I'll be happy to write you again, and if one day you and your friends wish to join one of our little explorations, be assured that you'll always be well accepted, as the dangers of the Sea of Dread and its islands are many and its mysteries and lost secrets are even more...

Yours sincerely,

*Aamir Ibn Saleem*

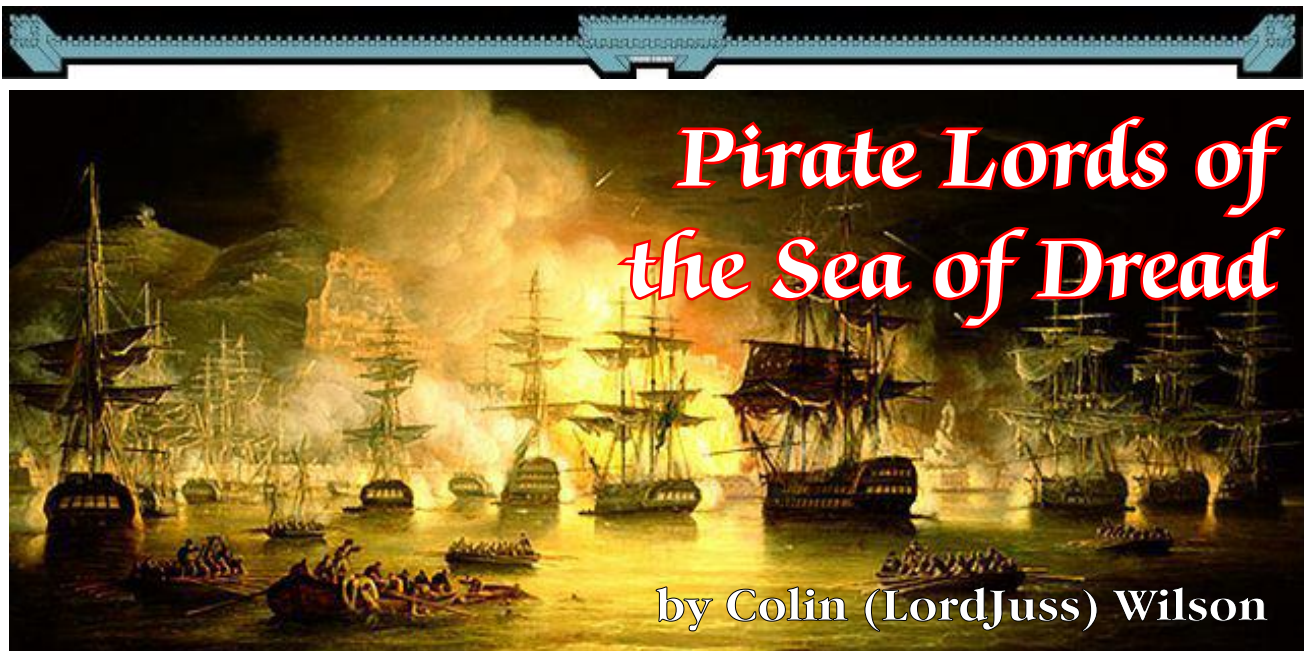


*Speaking with the ghost of an ancient priestess*

## REFERENCES

This article started from [this thread on the Piazza](#)

But also used some information from [this thread](#) (also on the Piazza), from my article "New Blackmoor, The Known World in 3050BC" in issue 2 of Threshold magazine and from the [Mystara 2300 BC Campaign Setting](#) by John Calvin that has also its [own dedicated forum on The Piazza](#), where you can ask anything you might want to know about this fascinating setting!



# Pirate Lords of the Sea of Dread

by Colin (LordJuss) Wilson

## INTRODUCTION

One of Mystara's many virtues is as a magpie campaign setting. The original authors of the Mystara modules happily took any shiny thing from history or literature and put it into the setting, creating a bizarre patchwork of countries and peoples. This peculiar effect is one of the reasons Mystara is so brilliant. Fortunately that means we can follow in their footsteps and shamelessly borrow anything that takes our fancy.

This article was inspired by the Pirates of the Caribbean movies, specifically the concept of the Brethren Court. I was intrigued by the idea that, beneath the anarchy, pirates might have some sort of formal command structure. I wondered how that would work in a magical world, so the first half of this article explores this. The second half is a handy overview of some of the main pirates of the Sea of Dread, very much in the style of the AC series. There are plenty of adventure hooks for any GM to choose from.

For those who want more of this sort of thing, the article is completely compatible with the

forthcoming Sea of Dread Gazetteer, which should be out around May 2014. Now, on to the ocean waves.

## THE PIRATE LORDS OF MYSTARA

Pirates may ply their trade for many reasons: some do it for treasure, some for excitement and some simply from a love of violence. But for the most powerful pirates the goal is to become a Pirate Lord. A Pirate Lord is a pirate so powerful in his sphere of influence that all other pirates in the area bow to his superiority and offer tribute. Though each pirate is a king on his own ship, they all owe fealty to the Pirate Lord.

Becoming a Pirate Lord is a simple process in some ways. When a pirate is so feared and so powerful that no other pirate risks a battle with them, they can claim the Pirate Lordship of their Sea. This is normally achieved through a combination of bribery, fear and personal loyalty. A simpler method is to kill the previous Pirate Lord, though holding the title may then become more difficult. Once



accepted as Lord, all other pirates in the area must send them regular tributes. How much and what form these tributes take are all up to the Pirate Lord in question. Asking too little will mean they are not respected, but asking too much may lead to a concerted effort to depose them.

Apart from the benefits of regular tributes the Pirate Lord can also require the buccaneers in his domain to form a pirate fleet under his command. This isn't often done, but should a country ever try to erase piracy from a region this may be the result.

There are Pirate Lordships up for grabs in every sea on Mystara. The Sea of Dawn has a Lord based on the island of Ne'er-do-well. Another can be found in the Izondian Deep, sailing from the Barony of Vilaverde. Even the Merry Pirate Seas have their Lord, currently Necco-the-Black. But the Sea of Dread is different. The high concentration of pirates and the difficulty in navigating its depths have meant that, after the death in a storm of the last Pirate Lord a century ago, no pirate has ever managed to hold the claim. Many now feel they might have a chance and the next few years are likely to see ever more violent battles as the contenders fight it out.

## SECRETS OF THE PIRATE LORDS

For those fighting for it, being a Pirate Lord is all about the title. Little do they realise that, once they are granted the position, the role is much more than that. The Pirate Lords were created over a thousand years ago by a magician and pirate of astonishing power known as Twistbone. Nobody knows his true name and his place of birth is lost to history. Even the Immortals are unsure, and some

speculate that he came from another plane entirely. In his prime he was the most feared pirate on Mystara, using his supreme magical abilities to overwhelm his foes, burning their ships, taking their treasures and attacking their ports with impunity. With his magically long life, he sailed all the seas of Mystara and brought them under his control. But one man could not rule all the seas alone, so he created the Pirate Lords, each responsible for one Sea and answerable only to him.

Using his powers he crafted a brass ring for each Lord. With these he could track their movements, communicate with them and summon them to him. The rings also granted some magical abilities to their wearers. With his Pirate Lords he sought to rule the seas forever. But one should never forget the treachery of pirates. Within a decade, the Pirate Lords turned on him and magically imprisoned him in an ornate mirror. They agreed that none should have overall rulership of the seas and instead agreed to keep to their domains. Since that time there have been many such Lords. As each dies, a successor eventually takes their place and the rings magically find their new wearer.

The Lords recognise no leader, but continue to meet secretly to ensure that piracy maintains its grip on the seas of the world. The meetings are irregular and are arranged using the rings to communicate. They take place in the captain's cabin on *The Scourge*, Twistbone's original ship, which is where the rings take their bearers when requested. The ship creaks and groans as it floats in a dark sea that is unknown to any Pirate Lord who has yet visited it. The ship has somehow become magically entangled on a series of sharp rocks, so the front half is separated from the back. On one of the rocks is a small

lighthouse which illuminates the continual rain. With the ship stuck fast, no Pirate Lord has managed to leave the rocks to find out more about the region.

Inside the cabin sits a huge table surrounded by thirteen chairs, usually more than enough to accommodate all living Pirate Lords at any given time. Two walls are taken up by the windows and the door. On the third wall hangs a massive mirror, entirely covered with a thick, green cloth, while on the fourth there sits a framed painting of a huge port filled with lights and ships, covering beneath a lighthouse that reaches almost to the cloud layer. Beneath the painting is a glass-topped, wooden display case containing a large map of Mystara, on which sit the rings of those Seas currently without a Pirate Lord.

## RINGS OF THE PIRATE LORDS

Pirate Lord Rings have the following abilities.

Once per day: *clear sight, nightwatch, water breathing*

Once per week: *talk to sea creatures, control winds, weather control<sup>1</sup>, commune with pirate lords, teleport*

Commune with Pirate Lords

This allows the wearer to mentally commune with the other Pirate Lords. The wearer can target a specific Lord or all of them and they are put into instant mental communication.

Teleport

This spell will teleport the wearer to the Captain's cabin aboard *The Scourge* (and back

<sup>1</sup> All of the above spells use the statistics from Gaz 9: The Minrothad Guilds

again whenever they wish). It cannot be used to teleport to any other location.

On the death of their wearer, the rings magically return to the display case on *The Scourge*. When a new Pirate Lord of a particular Sea is declared and recognised, the ring for that Sea appears on their finger. While the rings can be removed, they cannot be discarded. Even if thrown over the side, they return to their owner at midnight, reappearing on their finger. The same occurs if the ring is stolen (though its other functions can be used in the intervening time).

## PIRATES OF THE SEA OF DREAD

There are thousands of pirates plying their trade on the Sea of Dread and many have no interest in the Lordship. But a few have heard of Pirate Lords on their travels and consider that they should rule the waters between Davania and Brun. This section outlines some of the main contenders for the title.

### Cold Captain Wyther

Captain Wyther (F15) is broad-shouldered and clean-shaven with a handsome face and chiseled look. He was born in Hojah, one of the City States on the Savage Coast. At a young age he was pressed into service aboard a pirate ship that preyed upon the shipping around the Savage Coast. He quickly rose through the ranks and eventually became captain of his



own ship, *The Crimson Scar*, which had red sails and a crew entirely equipped with *red steel* weapons. Through diplomacy and conquest he became admiral of a collection of ships known as The Crimson Fleet and eventually became Pirate Lord of the Izondian Deep. But four years ago he lost that position to a pirate even more ruthless than he was. Rather than serve under another, he and his crew sailed round the Serpent Peninsula and began raiding the richer lands around the Sea of Dread. The Crimson Fleet is now based in Scuttlecove<sup>2</sup>, on Sekorvia, and Wyther is eyeing another Lordship, though he hasn't the strength to claim it yet.

### 'Black' Nikolas Hackett, the Tattooed Captain

Nikolas Hackett (or Black Nick, F12) is tall, broad-shouldered and covered from head to foot in tattoos. He was a young swashbuckler from Ierendi who delighted in the sea. He was also arrogant and quick-tempered, but these traits did not manifest themselves often. He left Ierendi as a sailor and returned



after several years to find a friend of his, Kester Grace, married to a beautiful Espan girl called Imogene. He fell immediately in love with her and pursued her aggressively. Eventually she relented and the two eloped. Unable to return to Ierendi, Nick took to the sea and swiftly fell into the life of a pirate. Since then he has sailed

<sup>2</sup> Scuttlecove appears in the Savage Tide Adventure Path published in *Dungeon Magazine*.

the Sea of Dread preying on shipping and making a name as one of the most black-hearted pirates on the waves. He named his ship after Imogene and hid her in Garganin on Davania, while making his home in Scuttlecove. Over time he has gained many pirate followers and has several ships at his command.

### Captain Clegg, the Devil (of Tarastia)

Clegg (C13) is tall and thin, with pale eyes and hair and a fierce expression. His real name is Kester Grace and he was born in Ierendi where he was a pleasant, if wild, young man with a devout nature. In his early twenties he met and married an Espan girl called Imogene who had recently arrived in Ierendi by ship. Only a few months later Imogene eloped with Nick Hackett, who Grace regarded as a friend. Grace went mad with anger and grief at her loss and swore to get her back at all costs. He set out to sea in pursuit of them but was captured by pirates. Within a few hours, he overpowered his guards, slew their captain in single combat, and took command of the ship, *Brimstone*. From then on he became Captain Clegg, pirate of the Sea of Dread. He spends his time taking ships and pursuing Black Nick, intending to kill him for his betrayal. Nick has yet to work out that Clegg and Grace are the same person but the revelation must come soon. Despite his originally good nature, Clegg has fallen far and fast. He is as dangerous a foe as any on





the seas and utterly ruthless in his quest to find Imogene.

## Ah Ling



Ah Ling (M10) is an Ochalean mage of unremarkable appearance. After many years of study he yearned for excitement and so left Ochalea to pursue a life at sea. He swiftly joined a group

smuggling drugs and slaves between Sekorvia and Alphatia and, through judicious use of magic, rapidly became its leader. Since then 'The Seven Blessings', as the gang is known, has successfully branched out into piracy and may even threaten The Crimson Fleet in time. Ah Ling himself almost never sails with his fleet and, as he magically changes his appearance, even his own henchmen are unsure precisely what he looks like. Most of the time he lives a quiet life on Ochalea running things from a distance.

## Kotorolo Dwair

Kotorolo (T10) is a Pearl Islander with brown eyes and short black hair. Though he is shorter than average, he is surprisingly stocky. He is a serious man who rarely smiles and has never been heard to laugh. In his youth, he came to believe that his people were regarded as little more than primitives by the Thyatian nobility. Before he reached twenty he had gathered a group of like-minded individuals and began to fight, violently, to make the Pearl Islands

independent.

Unfortunately he was captured and sentenced to life as a galley slave on a trading vessel, plying the routes between the Islands, the Isle of Dawn and Brun. Against the odds, he survived for

three years, during which time he gradually gained a following among the other slaves. One day, when the ship was far away from land, he organised a revolt. The slaves broke their chains, killed the Thyatian crew and took up the life of pirates, with the long term aim of freeing the Pearl Islands from Thyatian rule. Now the *Freedom* preys on ships throughout the Sea of Dread, concentrating on Thyatian vessels when possible.



## ISMERON

Ismeron (M12) is a dark-skinned man with large black moustaches and greying hair. A magic user from Jalawar, in Sind, he was originally court mage to the Rani Drisana Madhar. As he grew older, he

began dabbling in dark magics, summoning creatures from other planes and specialising in predicting the future. Eventually he attempted to overthrow the Rani, but the rebellion failed and he fled from Sind. Using his magic he commandeered the ship he left on, the *Sindbi Queen*, and set off on a life of



piracy on the high seas. Now he makes his base in Jaibul and uses his magic to foresee the location of the weakest victims with the most treasure.

## GREYLAN NARROWGIRTH



There are many Hin pirates who sail the waters south of the five shires. Some are dabblers who engage in piracy for sport, others do it for adventure, while some even do it for the treasure. But

GreyLAN Narrowgirth (Halfling 8) does it because he's good at it. GreyLAN is tall for a hin, with short, brown hair and a mischievous expression. Like many others he started his career as a buccaneer because it was more interesting than being a trader. He did both for a while, but eventually settled on piracy as he continually lost money on trading trips and gained it through thievery. It was, in fact, the only thing he'd ever truly excelled at. Unlike the more ruthless pirates of the region, he abides by an unbreakable set of rules: no needless death, no Halfling ships, no slavery. However, like many Hin, he is not to be underestimated and will kill those threatening him with no warning, using both the blade he wields very well and the considerable number of magic items he has amassed over his life. He can be found sailing the western Sea of Dread in his ship *The Juggler's Fool* and, if he's in a good mood, may tell the story of how it came to have such a curious name over a pipe and several flagons of ale.

## SARIENA

Sariena (Elf 9) is an elf of medium height with long pale hair and distinctive mismatched eyes, one green, one blue. She is very beautiful, but also cold and distant. Though born among the water elves of Minrothad



her mother is a shadowelf who was sent out of their caverns to learn more of the elves of the south. To maintain her cover, her mother formed a relationship with one of the Meditor elves and Sariena was the result. Like many of her clan, she learned to sail at a very young age and trained as a trader, eventually rising to the rank of captain. Her skill with arms and her lack of fear soon led to her being trained as a privateer by the Minrothad government, and she now sails her ship, the *Seastar*, around the northern Sea of Dread, sinking enemy trading ships and taking their treasure for Minrothad. She is one of their most prized captains and it is in this role that she has been asked to investigate the possibility of shadowelf spies among the elves of Minrothad, a task she intends to undertake with vigour.

## MARIE RAYE

Marie (F14) is a human of medium height with long brown hair that falls in waves to her shoulders. She wears brown leggings and boots with a white blouse that she lets hang open, a ploy to distract her opponents. She uses a sword, and wears jewellery and an

eye-patch, having lost her eye in a battle five years ago. Marie was born in Minrothad on Trader's Isle. Her parents were very devout and originally planned for her to be cleric in a contemplative order, locked away from the world. Unfortunately for them Marie turned out to be wild, wicked and generally unsuited to such a life. After she caused untold mayhem in her village, her parents arranged for her to be married to the local blacksmith's apprentice. He was not an unattractive man, but Marie had no interest in being tied to one man forever. She couldn't escape the wedding but crept out of her new home early the following morning and left, leaving the ring on the blacksmith's anvil. She made for Harbourtown and took a place as a deckhand on a trading ship, looking for a life of adventure. The ship in question turned out to be a raider, rather than a trader, but Marie found that all the more exciting. The ship's captain, another woman with an uncertain past, took a liking to Marie and taught her how to sail and fight, eventually bequeathing her the ship itself. That was twenty years ago. Since that time Marie has become a major player in the criminal community of the northern Sea of Dread. Aboard the *Maiden's Revenge*, she sails out of Crossbones and is the most respected pirate in the Minrothad area. She is no privateer though, and will prey on any ship that crosses her path.

### Marcus Kerral

Marcus (F9) is a good looking young man with a ready smile and an easy manner. He was brought up in Thyatis City as the second son of a merchant family. A combination of boredom and a taste for the high life led him into gambling, which he turned out to be very good at. In the course of a few years he won jewels, money, property and even a ship.

Eventually he had won so much that he was suspected of cheating. Though nothing was ever proven, he had made enough enemies that he was run out of the city, escaping on his ship with only the goods he could carry. Within a few weeks he had turned pirate, putting his extraordinary good fortune to work in robbing the shipping lanes near Thyatis and the Isle of Dawn. He now makes his home in the town of Crossbones and his ship, the *Lady Luck*, can regularly be seen there, often with the sounds of music and laughter drifting from below decks. He's not considered a great pirate yet, but his star is on the rise and some of those who have heard of him are beginning to wonder whether his luck can be entirely natural.



### Nathaan McRhomaag

Nathaan (F12) is a young man with broad shoulders, huge muscles and a dour expression. He is the nephew of Baron Uthgaard McRhomaag, the ruler of the Barony of Caerdwicca on the Isle of Dawn. When he was a boy,



Baron Uthgaard noted that Nathaan was both strong and ill-tempered, which he felt were the main requirements for a truly successful pirate.



Uthgaard had been a pirate himself when younger, had heard of the Pirate Lords, and had even sought to become one of their number. However, his accession to the Barony prevented him doing so. Instead, he intends to help Nathaan secure the Lordship. Although the Baron supports many pirates, Nathaan received goods, training, men and even a ship, the *Cleaver*, from his uncle. Nathaan now leads the Caerdwiccan pirate fleet and is trying to extend his influence further. Should he ever achieve the position of Pirate Lord, his uncle may find him a good deal more difficult to control than he thinks.

### Adrienne Xylonias, of Petra



Adrienne (C11) is from Kastelios on the continent of Davania, and has the dark hair and golden skin common in that region. As a young girl she was sent to serve in the Temple of Petra and so was trained as a fighting cleric, dedicated to

defending the weak. When she was in her early teens her father, a trader plying the routes on the Davanian coast, was killed by pirates. This event gave focus to her abilities and, with the church's blessing, she took command of a ship and set sail to destroy any pirates she found and return their booty to the temple for the glory of Petra. Her approach since then has

been simple; she sails the southern Sea of Dread in her ship, the *Vengeance*, preying only on pirates. Since there are plenty in the area, she is never short of targets. Ordinary trade ships are completely safe with her, but any pirate ship will be attacked. For them she has no mercy and will commonly execute the entire crew, steal any treasure and burn the ship where it stands. This is certainly an odd form of piracy but it's possible, if enough pirates fear her, that she could gain the Lordship by default.

### KREM

Krem (Orc 7) is a red orc from northern Davania. He is short, squat, ugly and has enormous ears. When he was a young man he was driven out of his village after losing a



fight with another male over one of the tribe's females. He made his way north and eventually met a pirate who was sheltering in a cove on the coast. The pirate offered Krem a place on his ship and the orc spent several years learning the ways of the sea. Eventually he rose to first mate and, when the Captain was lost in a storm, he took command of the ship. Now he prowls the seas around Davania attacking shipping and looting the coastal villages. His ship, the *Marauder*, is a terrifying sight with hideous red and yellow eyes painted on the hull.



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

# TIMELINE of the SEA of DREAD

by Andrew Theisen

The following is a fairly complete listing of events in the Sea of Dread. I posted [a larger timeline](#) including many bits of fan works on a webpage many years ago. Those bits were excised from this version, which only includes published canon sources.

## REFERENCES:

GAZ4: Gaz4 Kingdom of Ierendi

GAZ2: Gaz2 Emirates of Ylaruam

GAZ9: Gaz9 The Minrothad Guilds

HW: Hollow World DM's Guide

PC3: The Sea People

CoM: Champions of Mystara Explorer's Manual

GAZ8: Gaz8 The Five Shires

DotE: Dawn of the Emperors

**3000 BC:** Blackmoor is destroyed in the Great Rain of Fire. The planet shifts its axis; ice caps melt and lands are flooded as the sea level rises. (*GAZ4, GAZ9, PC3*)

**2500 BC:** A human culture, the Taymora, settle along the shores of southeastern Brun. (*PC3*)

**2400 BC:** To the north of the Taymora, another human culture- the Antaliens- enter into the bronze age. (*HW*)

**2200 BC:** Elves from the two southern migrations reach the frozen valleys of the land now known as Glantri, to the northwest of the Taymora and southwest of the Antaliens. Colonists from the human Tanagoro culture of distant Skothar reach the Serpent Peninsula. They conflict with the Sheyallia elves who have also settled there. (*HW, CoM*)

**2100 BC:** The Meditor and Verdier elf clans part ways with the Ilsundal migration, settling along the southern shores of Brun, near to the Taymora. (*GAZ9, HW*)

**2000 BC:** The humans living near the River Nithia develop a swiftly growing bronze-age civilization.

The Antaliens begin migrating southwards, closer to the Nithians. (*GAZ4, GAZ8, HW, DotE, PC3*)

**1750 BC:** The Nithians begin developing new technologies. Within a century and a half, they will have progressed to Iron Age. Further to the south, a series of earthquakes and geological disasters begin to break apart

## FAN CREATIONS IN THE SEA OF DREAD

Over the years, there have been many fan works involving the Sea of Dread and its many islands and inhabitants. Many of these have been archived at the Vaults of Pandius, including:

[Gaz XF series detailing the Sea of Dread](#)

[Geoff Gander's Colhador](#)

[James Mishler's Thanegioth Achipelago](#)

[Sharon Dornhoff's Ierendi v.2.0](#)

the continent. The Taymora civilization is destroyed, and the Meditor elves are left stranded on islands in the newly-made southern sea. They name this sea the Sea of Dread.

The earthquakes cause flooding of the Serpent Peninsula, causing the Tanagoro culture to splinter and regress. *(HW, GAZ4, GAZ9, CoM)*

**1720 BC:** Continuing geological changes and volcanic eruptions cause more land to break away from the continent, creating new islands in the western Sea of Dread. The Makai humans and lizard men find themselves stranded on these islands.

The Verdier elves build ships and join their cousins the Meditor on the southeastern islands.

Fleeing similar elemental clashes in the southern seas near Davania, primitive tribes of merrow head northwards. Many settle in and around the Thanegioth Islands, but still others continue further, settling in the Sea of Dread. They name their new home the Sunlit Sea. *(GAZ4, GAZ9, PC3)*

**1500 BC:** The Nithians have now formed an Empire, and begin sending out colonial expeditions. One such expedition is led by the Traldar clan, and settles in lands to the southwest, along the shores of the Sea of Dread.

Davianian halflings, driven out of their homelands from population pressures of expanding human nations, sail northwards. They stop briefly at Thanegia Island, but quickly move onwards. *(GAZ2, HW, CoM)*

**1400 BC:** The Traldar colonists have not endured their new home well, and have suffered population loss from disease, weather, and animal attacks. They revert to a pre-agrarian lifestyle. *(HW)*

**1300 BC:** The halflings reach a sheltered land along the shores of the Sea of Dread inhabited by a reclusive clan of elves. They settle this land, which they name Llor. *(HW, GAZ8)*

**1100 BC:** A Nithian mercantile expedition led by the adventurer Minroth claims a large island in the Sea of Dread which they name Trader's Isle and found a settlement they call Harbortown. They name the newly discovered island chain the Colony Islands. *(GAZ9, HW)*

**1000 BC:** Gnolls invade the lands of the Traldar. King Milen leads a massive flotilla in an exodus to escape the gnolls, heading southwards to the continent of Davania. Traldar piracy in the Sea of Dread is drastically diminished.

With the Sea of Dread now relatively safe, the Nithian Empire extends its colonial holdings to the westernmost islands of the Colony Isles, conquering and enslaving the Makai inhabitants.

The Nithians also begin transporting Antalian slaves to the Colony Isles, to be sent with Nithian overlords following the flight of Milen's people, to start colonies in Davania. The slaves soon revolt, however, and the colonies quickly collapse. *(GAZ4, HW)*

**800 BC:** Elves from the distant Sylvan Realm reach the eastern shores of the Sea of Dread via a magical rainbow. They attempt to settle in the forests there, but are driven out by warlike humans. *(HW)*

**700 BC:** The Nithian Empire begins its decline, as Entropic Immortals corrupt its leaders.

The eastern Colony Isles are flourishing, and the people begin calling themselves the Minroth Traders, after the cult that arose to honor its founder. They increasingly distance



themselves from the Nithian Empire. (*HW, GAZ9*)

**600 BC:** Three warrior-tribes, formerly from Davania, sail north through the Sea of Dread, driven out by Milenian aggression. They make landing on the eastern shores, coming into conflict with the human tribes that drove out the elves 200 years before. (*HW, DotE*)

**500 BC:** The Nithian Empire collapses, and all memory of the culture is wiped out by the Immortals. All Nithian colonies are destroyed, save for those of Thothia and the Colony Isles, which have already turned away from the Entropic faith which led to the destruction of Nithia.



In the western Colony Isles (now called the Ierendi Islands), the Malpheggi lizard men, doomed to extinction by a parasitic plague brought by the Nithian colonists, wipe out the Nithians before dying themselves.

Goblin slaves brought by the Nithians retreat into lava tunnel complexes beneath the islands. Whitenight Abbey is established on White Isle,

populated by followers of the Immortal Orisis as a safeguard against any resurgence of the dark powers that led to the destruction of ancient Nithia.

The Thyatians, Kerendans, and Hattians have by now conquered the human tribes who opposed them, and control the region now known as Thyatis (*HW, DotE, GAZ4*)

**250 BC:** Thyatian pirates are by now a common scourge in the Sea of Dread. (*HW*)

**200 BC:** Fleeing devilfish enemies to the south, tritons enter the Sunlit Sea, settling waters between the islands of Ierendi and Minrothad.

The tritons and merrow clash over undersea territory for several centuries before the more organized tritons finally triumph, establishing the Kingdom of Tilluaraver, and leaving the rest of the Sunlit Sea to the merrow. (*PC3*)

**192 BC:** Irritated by the increasingly wide-ranging piracy of the Thyatian tribes, the Alphatians launch a campaign to conquer Thyatis. (*HW, DotE*)

**190 BC:** The Alphatians complete their conquest of Thyatis, bringing its lands and peoples into the Empire. (*HW, DotE*)

**100 BC:** The Kikianu Caldera erupts, killing the native population and breaking the landmass up into four smaller islands. These islands will later be repopulated by Makai and come to be known as White, Honor, Aloysius, and Roister Islands. (*GAZ4*)

**2 BC:** Lucinius Trenzantebium of Thyatis leads a revolt and declares himself King of Thyatis; war breaks out between Thyatis and Alphatia. (*HW, DotE*)



*Crowning of Emperor Zendrolion I*

**0 AC:** First Emperor of Thyatis crowned.

Their economies wrecked by the war, Thyatis and Alphatia sign the Treaty of Eclair. Later, in Thyatis, General Zendrolion Tatriokanitas assassinates King Lucinius and several other kings gathered there, crowning himself Emperor of Thyatis, Ochalea, and the Pearl Islands.

Thyatians do some trading with Minroth islanders. The halflings of the now established Five Shires also establish sea trade relationships with coastal nations.

The Verdier and Meditor split over disputes about usage of forest wood. The Verdier enter a period of isolation.

Alawyn Verdier, Treekeeper of the forest elves, undertakes a quest to find a relic to replace their long-lost Tree of Life. (GAZ4, HW, DotE, GAZ9, PC3, GAZ8)

**150 AC:** Thyatis begins colonizing the Alasiyan basin, driving out or enslaving native peoples. (GAZ4, DotE, HW)

**250 AC:** Alphatia begins colonizing the Alasiyan basin in direct competition with the Thyatians.

The Alphatian colony of New Alphatia is founded on Trader's Isle, and Alphatian air-magics are adapted to more sea-based needs. (GAZ4, GAZ9, HW, DotE)

**251 AC:** The Alphatians and Minrothians of Trader's Isle discover one another and though initially are hostile, quickly establish a formal alliance. (GAZ9)

**276 AC:** New volcanic activity in the Sea of Dread pushes the Meditor elves into looking for new settlements. As they explore, they come into contact with the human cultures of the Colony Isles and establish trade relations.

The Meditor re-establish ties with the Verdier elves, bringing them into the new trading combine. (GAZ9)

**284 AC:** Conflicts over slavery drives a wedge between the Minrothian and Alphatian cultures, but the elves force the humans to make peace. (GAZ9)

**300 AC:** Seahome is established as a trading port. (GAZ9)

**313 AC:** The Hattians attempt to establish independence, but Emperor Alexian II puts down their rebellion (DotE)

**c.313 AC:** Sir Actius, a warrior-knight of Alexian II, is granted an island off the coast of Hattias as his dominion, which he names after himself. It soon becomes a major provisioning center for trade in the Sea of Dread. (DotE)

**360 AC:** Minrothians engage in slave trade for the Thyatians; halfling slaves are introduced into the Colony Islands. (*GAZ9*)

**410 AC:** The plagues of lycanthropy and vampirism spread throughout the Sea of Dread cultures by unwitting Minroth traders. Even the undersea kingdoms are affected. (*GAZ9, HW, PC3*)

**432 AC:** The first reported sightings of lycanthropic Weresharks in Undersea. (*PC4*)

**437 AC:** Devilfish attack the Sunlit Sea in the Great Abysmal Invasion; they first strike at the undersea settlements of Ulhedar and Narwa. (*PC3*)

**443-445 AC:** The Silver Purge: elves and humans led by an elvish adventurer named Ruaidrhi purge Trader's Isle of all lycanthropes. The human population is sorely devastated and the entire colony of New Alphatia is wiped out.



*Lycanthropes fleeing the Silver Purge*

Similar events take place in Undersea, with many of the lycanthropes fleeing to deeper waters. This time is known as the Night of the Long Knives. (*GAZ9, PC3, PC4*)

**450 AC:** In the Colony Islands, the halfling Malf Quickhand leads a slave revolt and leads the newly-freed halflings on ships to the island they name Open Isle.

The elves, long opposed to slavery, quickly sign a treaty with the halflings, bringing them into the trade federation as freedmen. The humans, hurt by the events of the Silver Purge, can do little to protest. (*GAZ9*)

**475 AC:** Verdon is established as a trading port. (*GAZ9*)

**488 AC:** The scattered humans of the Colony Islands are brought together by Hadric Corser, the Great Uniter. The city of Minrothad is founded on the former site of New Alphatia. Corser lays the foundation for an organized trading federation.

The Farmarva family of tritons begins its monarchic dynasty in the kingdom of Tilluaraver.

The economy of Actius has begun to sour, as traders increasingly use the route through Vanya's Girdle as opposed to taking the longer route around Cape Hattias. Actius turns its resources towards shipbuilding instead. (*GAZ9, PC3, DotE*)

**500 AC:** Alphatia and Thyatis begin another period of intermitten warfare that will last for the next three centuries. The Minroth Traders stay neutral as they dominate shipping for both sides of the conflict.

The savage Makai tribes of northwestern Ierendi are mysteriously decimated. Legend attributes their disappearance as being brought on by a curse connected to the tribal burial grounds of distant Elogy Island.

The Battle of Minrothad takes place in the bay outside of the city of Minrothad.

The Clash of the Princes takes place between the islands of Alfeisle and Open Isle.



The Storm Battle takes place at the northeast end of Cove Reef. (*GAZ4, DotE, GAZ9, HW*)

**520 AC:** The halfling trading port and capital city of Open Isle, Malfton, is established. (*GAZ9*)

**570 AC:** Exiles from the Five Shires found a settlement on Ierendi Island alongside the native Makai inhabitants. (*GAZ4*)

**571 AC:** The Empire of Thyatis begins to use the Ierendi Islands as prison colonies, putting them into conflict with the Five Shires, who are using the islands as naval bases. (*GAZ4, HW, DotE, GAZ8*)

**575 AC:** Halfling sea trade flourishes as they begin building small, stout, rounded ships (nicknamed “wallowing turtles”), which prove surprisingly sturdy. (*GAZ8*)

**582 AC:** Last known sighting of a werewolf, slain by the Silver Hunter on a tiny island in the Sea of Dread. (*PC4*)

**586 AC:** The Empire of Thyatis, at war with the Empire of Alphatia and needing ships and shipbuilding harbors urgently, seizes the Ierendi islands from the halflings with all ships in harbor at the time. In retaliation, the halflings begin piracy against Thyatian shipping, which continues to the present day. The navy of Thyatis clashes with the Five Shires navy at the Battle of Ierendi and the War of Fletcher.

The Thyatians also clash with halfling pirates and kna at the Battle of the Trap off the northwestern coast of Safari Island. (*GAZ8, HW, DotE, PC3*)

**593 AC:** Battle of the Rovers takes place in the deepwater pool of the Kna.

Ruaidhri kills the last of the werewolves. (*PC3, PC4*)

**600 AC:** Mad Creeg the pirate leads a rebellion among the prisoners of the Ierendi Islands. With the help of the Makai natives, Mad Creeg’s army drives out the Thyatians.



*Mad Creeg drives out the Thyatians*

Honor Island is settled by a colony of humans and their goblin slaves, refugees from an Alphatian subject nation southeast of the Isle of Dawn. (*GAZ4, HW, DotE*)

**601 AC:** Gregus Verdier, the Second Uniter, is born on Alfeisle. (*GAZ9*)

**602 AC:** Mad Creeg claims all of the Ierendi Islands, establishing the Kingdom of Ierendi, and declaring himself ruler.

Thyatis, faced with its more urgent war with Alphatia, signs a treaty with Mad Creeg, abandoning its claims on Ierendi.

The Honor Islanders establish themselves as an independent nation, though they maintain close diplomatic ties and an alliance with the Kingdom of Ierendi. (*GAZ4*)

**625 AC:** A man named Lord Ingram rules a small island nation in the Sea of Dread, terrorizing the natives. They call him “the Devil Swine.” (*PC4*)

**637 AC:** Mad Creeg's son, Black Toes, assumes rulership upon death of his father. He marries Kerhy Matringle from Glantri and assumes her surname. The Matringle family begins long control of the island. *(GAZ4)*

**642 AC:** The Council of Lords, a cabinet of his closest advisors, is established by Black Toes. *(GAZ4)*

**644 AC :** The Thyatians attempt to regain control of the Ierendi Islands, but are defeated by the islanders with the help of war fleets from Honor Island at the Battles of Honor and Utter Isle Strait. *(GAZ4, PC3, DotE)*

**646 AC:** Gregus Verdier forges the forest elves into a unified political and economic faction. *(GAZ9)*

**650 AC:** The first naval school is established on Ierendi Island.

Tomia, a visitor from the Minrothad Guilds, combines his magic and the native beliefs of the Makai people and establishes himself as the leader of a new cult. He founds the People's Temple, and begins calling himself 'The Hope.' Followers and converts flock to his teachings. *(GAZ4)*

**651 AC:** Battle of Helk's Drift in the mermen kingdom of Nortens. *(PC3)*

**662 AC:** The Sharkfray; shark-kin battle devilfish near Sharkville. *(PC3)*

**681 AC:** The Ierendi navy is up to full strength and can fully defend islands. *(GAZ4)*

**687 AC:** Ierendi merchants discover the rich trade opportunities Sindhi ports offer. Jaibul and Putnabad compete fiercely for foreign trade. *(CoM)*

**691 AC:** Honor Island wizards begin secret negotiations with the Supreme Symposium of Gnomish Syndicates to create combined

magical/technological warships for the Royal Ierendi Navy.

Gregus Verdier establishes the Council of Dread and consolidates the Minroth traders into a system of family guilds. The Minrothad Guilds are formally established. *(GAZ4, GAZ9)*

**700 AC:** Gregus Verdier disappears at sea, murdered by Ierendi assassins hoping to disrupt his political ambitions.

Fanatic missionaries from Minrothad arrive in the Ierendi Islands prophesying the birth of a child named Right who is destined to save humankind. Their cult begins to spread among the native Makai.

The Minrothad Guilds rely increasingly on its merchant ships to supplement their navy's patrols. The Privateers Guild is formed as a direct result.

The island of Sclaras is declared a Protectorate and divided into estates for Thyatis's most powerful wizards. *(GAZ9, GAZ4, DotE)*

**713 AC:** The Battle of Midpoint; the first magical warships and galleys of the Royal Navy, along with their mermen allies, utterly destroy a Thyatian patrol. The Royal Navy achieves instant preeminence among the Known World naval powers. *(GAZ4, PC3)*

**726 AC:** The newly-completed Sindhi navy of four merchant vessels and a war galley mysteriously sinks in Jaibul's outer harbor shortly after returning from their maiden voyage to Tanakumba. The rajah of Putnabad suspects sabotage on the part of foreign merchants jealous of their own lucrative positions as middlemen in the trade between the eastern and western lands. *(CoM)*

**748 AC:** The merrow of the Sunlit Sea agree to continue assisting the Ierendi Navy in

return for Ierendi protecting sacred merrow shrines from pirate plunder. *(PC3)*

**775 AC:** After a major uprising of merchants, the Ierendi Council of Lords agrees to limitations on its power, and to the popular democratic election of the king and queen. *(GAZ4)*

**786 AC:** Mount Haumea on Ierendi Island erupts, destroying the town of Port Siers and its entire population of 1,000 people. The Ierendi Navy manages to successfully evacuate, but the Naval School is destroyed along with the rest of the town. *(GAZ4)*

**790 AC:** The Ierendi Council of Citizens is formed, primarily of merchants and influential islanders of foreign heritage. The annual election ceremony becomes an established tradition for revelry and popular celebration. *(GAZ4)*

**794 AC:** The Battle of the Uddars in the deep waters south of Amari in Undersea. *(PC3)*

**800-825 AC:** An influx of immigration workers and craftsmen flood Minrothad. *(GAZ9)*

**800 AC:** Thyatis regains control of Terentias isle from Minrothad.

Devilfish reappear in the Sunlit Sea, and war with the inhabitants.

A volcanic eruption destroys the triton castle of Facats. *(DotE, PC3)*

**816 AC:** The Kelp Quarrel in Smaar. *(PC3)*

**828 AC:** Dwarves fleeing persecution in Glantri join the list of immigrants to Minrothad, settling on Fortress Island. *(GAZ9)*

**841:** The dwarven port of Stronghold is established. *(GAZ9)*

**850-862 AC:** The Council of Minrothad refines structure and establishes office of ruling guild

master, appointing Missan Meditor; severe laws restricting immigration are passed.

The guild system is restructured to incorporate the newly developed merchant-prince class. *(GAZ9)*

**852 AC:** Minrothad explorers discover the city of Tanakumba on Thanegia Island. They name it “the Most Limpid City of Thanopolis.” *(CoM)*

**867 AC:** The Council of Lords proposes selection of king and queen in an annual series of contests called the Royal Tournament of Adventurers. The Honor Island magic-users offer aid in sponsoring and designing the contests. *(GAZ4)*

**880 AC:** Fire Island atoll is declared off-limits to all shipping; thieves’ guild secretly establishes Cove Harbor as a pirate base on this island.

The Fire Battle takes place between the Kna of Undersea and Minrothad pirates. *(GAZ9)*

**890 AC:** Ruling guild master Kitrina Meditor passes Isolation Act prohibiting immigration and most visitors to Minrothad. *(GAZ9)*

**900 AC:** North Isle is annexed by Minrothad, and the refuge colony of Gapton is established.

Emperor Gabrionus IV begins a policy of expansion. The Empire of Thyatis conquers Traladara.

Followers of the Eternal Truth, brought by Ylari merchant ships, establish a sanctuary in Ierendi City. *(GAZ9, HW, DotE)*

**920 AC:** The war with the devilfish ends indecisively. *(PC3)*

**935 AC:** The contests are opened to any adventurers willing to swear allegiance to the Council of Lords, the Council of Citizens, and Ierendi. *(GAZ4)*



**940 AC:** All Minrothad trading vessels are now captained by merchant-princes and carry marines.

Three volcanic islands arise 50 miles to the south of Aloysius island. *(GAZ9, PC3)*

**950 AC:** Minrothad signs neutrality pacts with most mainland countries. *(GAZ9)*

**957 AC:** Haradith of the Tall Cedars is the first non-Ierendian to win a regency, a feat she repeats in 12 of the next 14 years. *(GAZ4)*

**959 AC:** Alphatia and Thyatis begin another war. *(HW, DotE)*

**960 AC:** Piracy in the Minrothad Isles is at an all-time high as a direct result of suffering trade brought on by the Isolation Act of 890. *(GAZ9)*



**965 AC:** Kitrina Meditor is assassinated by a thief from a foreign guild; council of guild leaders acts as regent until Oran Meditor comes of age.

Following the death of Kitrina Meditor, the Death to Thieves decree is passed, mandating immediate trial and death sentences to anyone convicted of thievery. *(GAZ9)*

**970 AC:** Triella Tien-Tang discovers the secret of the volcano on Mositius Island and successfully petitions the Emperor to grant her the island as a Barony. *(DotE)*

**974 AC:** Gastenoo's World of Adventure-Ierendi's first adventure park- is opened on Safari Island. Its proprietors are Gastenoo Longblade and Simon Saint-Pierre. *(GAZ4)*

**975 AC:** The Academy of Naval Science is founded on site of the original school at Port Siers. *(GAZ4)*

**977-984 AC:** Breakwater constructed around city of Ierendi. *(GAZ4)*

**979 AC:** Devilfish resume their attacks on Undersea. *(PC3)*

**980 AC:** The Ierendi Tribunal (formerly the Council of Lords) formed as the official advisory council to all palace matters. Council consists of both elected individuals and those selected by the king and queen.

Lycanthropes are again discovered in Minrothad and Undersea; fear spreads that more may have escaped the Silver Purge. *(GAZ4, GAZ9, PC3, PC4)*

**988 AC:** Thyatians mount an expedition to colonize the southern continent and establish Ravenscarp. *(DotE)*

**989 AC:** Oran Meditor takes office, institutes reforms.

By this time, lycanthropes have been spotted

in places on all of the Minrothad Islands.  
Koom's Fight in the southern Sea of Dread.  
(GAZ9, PC3)

**990 AC:** Thyatian and Ierendi pirates step up their raids on Minrothad Guilds ships. Guild Privateers respond in kind. (GAZ9)

**991 AC:** Oran Meditor rescinds the Isolation Act and opens Minrothad to outside contact. (GAZ9)

**995 AC:** First assassination attempt on Oran Meditor; Clan Elsan promoted to replace Clan Kasan, who were behind the attempt. Mineral deposits are discovered on Aloysius Island. Ierendi encourages settlement of the

island, leading to conflicts with the native Makai. Dwarvish settlers arrive with the blessing of the government. (GAZ9, GAZ4)

**998 AC:** Second assassination attempt on Oran Meditor. Undead are reported in the waters to the south of Undersea. (GAZ9, PC3)

**1000 AC:** Minrothad celebrates 150 years of nationhood; Oran Meditor makes public appearances to stop rumors of his continued ill health.

Shark-kin tribes take up arms against the land dwellers; devilfish increase their attacks; the numbers of undead and werereatures grows. (GAZ9, PC3)

### The Tomia Code

The People's Temple of Ierendi is generally viewed as a benevolent organization, albeit one founded by a con-artist from Minrothad. But what if the underpinnings of the church are more nefarious than they appear? Perhaps Tomia was a cleric or even an avatar of Masauwu, the fast-talking Entropic also of Minrothad origins? The People's Temple might actually be a front for him to pursue his aims via the unwitting people of Ierendi. Gaz4 includes a number of adventure seeds involving the church and its long-vanished commandments, the Hope Stones. Consider adding Masauwu as the church's hidden sponsor to these adventures to bring a more deadly and potentially consequential epic undertaking.

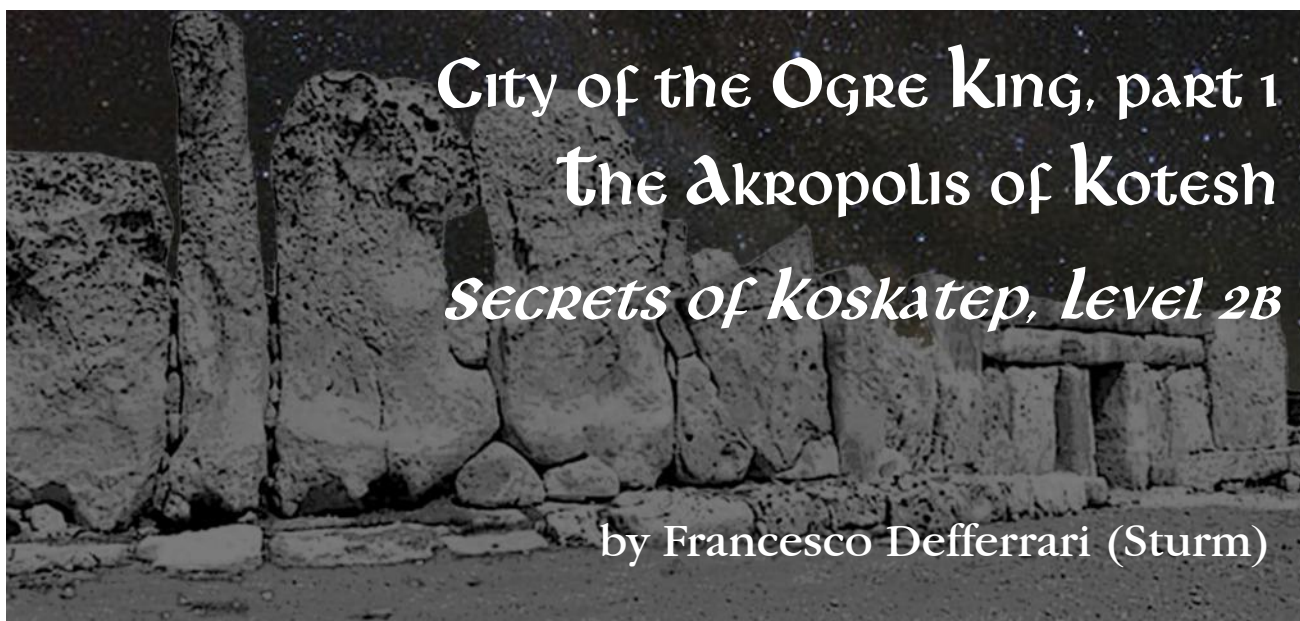
### Elemental Upheavals

There is some inconsistency with the dates of the Great Elemental upheavals in canon sources. In particular, the dates of 1750, 1720, and 1700 are used to refer



to several of the same events, in seemingly conflicting accounts. This timeline has used as many of them in direct connection with their source as possible, but where conflicts occurred, generally defers to the most recent, or most commonly used date as possible. In any event, it should be considered that all of these dates are not intended to be exact, but rather to reflect an ongoing time of considerable change. Some more in-depth coverage of the dating conflicts can be found at the [Piazza](#).





# City of the Ogre King, part 1

## The Akropolis of Kotesh

### *Secrets of Koskatep, Level 2B*

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)

**The text below was 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!**

Kulfan, an ogre king, established his throne hall on this level five centuries ago. No one remembers how his once powerful kingdom came to an end; the ogres say it was a human attack, but it could have been a war between ogres and giants, or the wrath of a dragon. This level is indeed partially burned and much of what was once contained within was destroyed or pillaged long ago. The walls and the rooms were built by giants and ogres with surprisingly good craftsmanship, and there may still be undiscovered rooms or tombs that contain the treasures of the ogres kingdom. This level is empty except for some random dungeon critters such as oozes, giant insects, and worms.

*The secret:* Kulfan occupied the ruins in the name of Nyx but was destroyed by powerful clerics of Ixion, that were soon destroyed themselves by an ancient evil sent by Thanatos.



Nothing is left of their bones and items, but the worn out diary of the main cleric of Ixion is still hidden in a crack of the throne room.

After the Darkers take control, some female ogres and female giants with children, wives of the ones above, live here and are slowly cleaning and rebuilding the place. They will obviously be hostile if intruders have killed their husbands and either way they will immediately try to warn the Darkers in the levels below.



## RELEVANT HISTORY (EXPANDED FROM ISSUE 1 OF THRESHOLD)

**603 BC:** The ogre king Kulfan conquers Koskatep in the name of Nyx, defeating the gnolls that inhabited the city before, and ogres rule over the area for centuries. Human priests of the Lady of the Night live in the city along with them. At this time the west of Traladara was more a gnoll country than a human one. The ogres, come recently from the area of the modern Five Shires and beyond, ally with local giants, in the area for millennia, and with them break the power of the gnolls. They were aided also by local humans of Tal ancestry (descendants of Taymora), followers of Nyx. The three races live peacefully in the area for centuries, under Kulfan and his descendants, ogres and giants kings. They had to fight frequent wars against the gnolls and sometimes against orcs, who constantly arrived from the west.

**517 BC** War between orcs and gnolls in the west. The two people lose their strength in a pointless territorial war and ogres and giants gain from their weakness.

**496 BC** Achelos Chardastes Halarov, heir of king Halav, escapes from civil war and establishes the first seed of his dominion in western Traladara. Relationships with ogres and giants are good at first for the common struggle against gnolls and orcs.

**190 BC** After fifty years of wars the gnolls are defeated by ogres and humans, and pushed

into the mountains. Ogres and Giants of Kotesh dominate the Cruth area, including orc tribes, but soon enmity with the local humans grows.

**100 AC** The Duchy of Achelos, grown in power and men, begins a full attack against the ogres and giants of Kotesh to conquer the city. The war will last five years.

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

**201 AC:** The citadel of Kotesh, now occupied by priests of Ixion and Achelos soldiers, is under constant attack not so much from ogres and giants but rather from gnolls and orcs, whose presence in the west is growing again.

**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 of them escape to the lowest level and become defenders of the inner temple. 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.

Leading down from Level 1 of Koskatep (published in issue 2 of Threshold magazine)- the first layer encountered, coming down from room 11 or 44, is **LEVEL 2 B**, the Acropolis of the former ogre city of Kotesh:

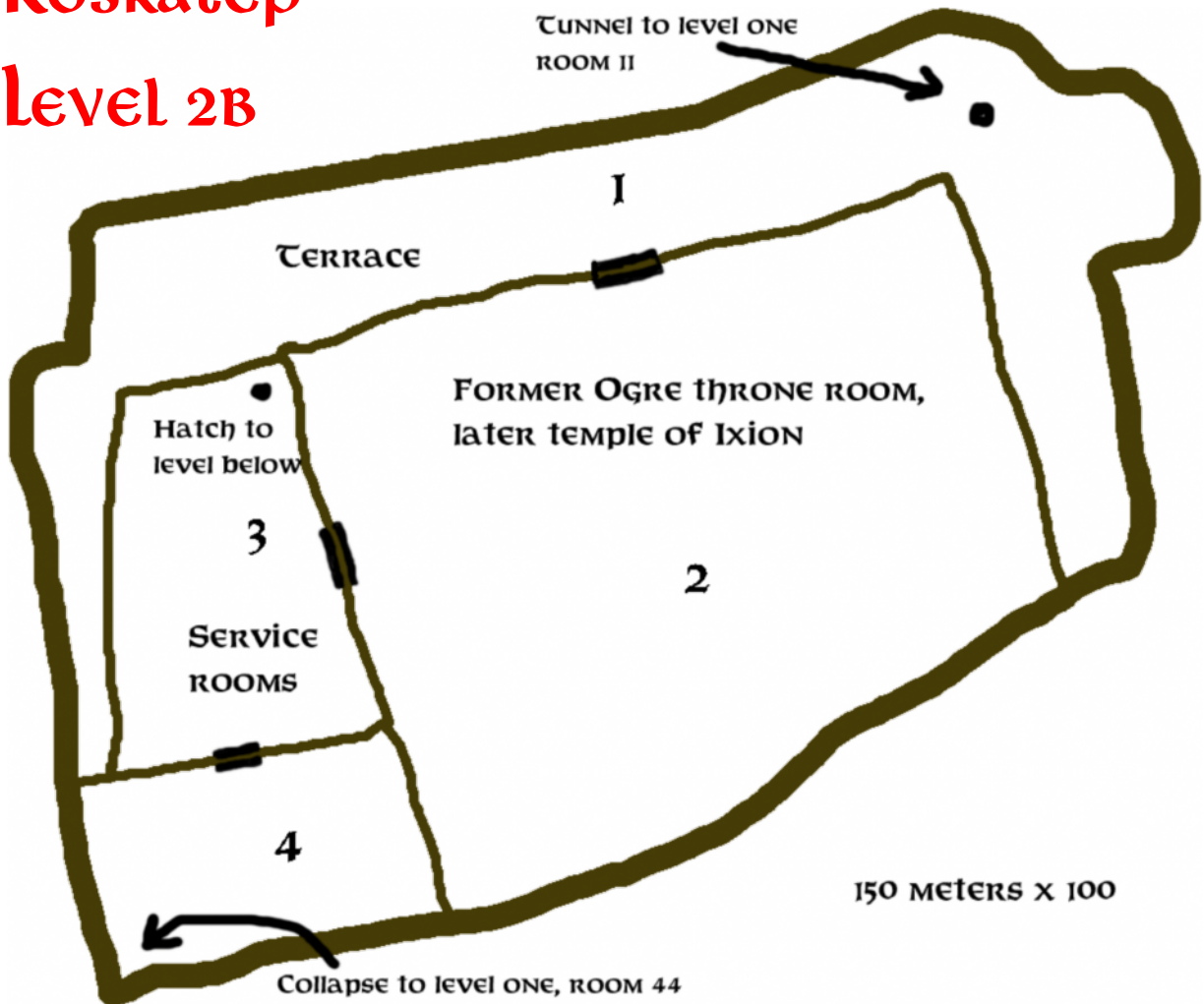
Level 2B was the castle built by the Ogre King Kulfan in 603 BC and occupied by all of his descendants until 95 AC.

The level was later inhabited by several members of the Church of Ixion from 95 AC,

when they conquered the Ogre city, to 227 AC, when they were exterminated by the powerful vampire The Last One. It has two passages to the level above and one to the level below. Doors from room to room are depicted as closed portals as most of them are stuck and may be difficult to open. There are also other small passages where walls have been partially tunnelled by various critters through the ages, but these are mostly collapsed and difficult to pass for humans.

# Koskatep

## Level 2B



## I - The Former Terrace, NOW UNDERGROUND

This big area is cluttered with debris that often obstructs the view and creates a veritable maze. In the past it had statues and reliefs done by ogres and giants that were later destroyed and replaced by similar decorations done by priests and followers of Ixion. Now most of them are ruined too, but lying around there are still bronze statues of the Immortal, his chosen or famous personalities of the church, and reliefs depicting the sun or great victories of the church on the walls. All these things have a huge archeological and monetary value for the church of Ixion and rich collectors in general, but are quite hard to move. In this area and throughout all this level **random critters** can be encountered, roll 1d20 on the Random Critters Table. There is also a 1% chance on 1d100 in each room that a Wandering Party can be encountered, see Table 2.

After the Darkers take control they will begin to clean the terrace from debris, objects, remains, and decorations of the church of Ixion, replacing them with their statues and reliefs praising Nyx. Among the statues there will be also a guardian **Obsidian golem** that will attack any intruder not saying "Night eternal" upon entering the terrace. The chance of encounters with random critters and wandering parties should be much diminished at this time. The skeletons will be used against the Darkers by The Last One, but they will destroy them all.

## 2 - The Former Throne Room OR Ixion's Temple

This large room is partially occupied by collapsed blocks from the original ceiling. It is therefore difficult to navigate, and the current ceiling is much lower than the original one at several points. The northwestern



(1) The terrace was completely buried by a landslide after The Last One and his minion killed the followers of Ixion in 227 AC, but later was partially cleared by the gnolls, humans and ogres that occupied the first level in the following centuries, even if most of them managed to occupy this level permanently only for brief times. The PCs however could find, with extensive searching, weapons or items lost here by gnolls, human troops of Achelos, orcs, ogres, giants, human followers of Nyx, traladaran rebels, thyatians priests of Ixion, as well as their remains. 1d100 skeletons could be reanimated here by a necromancer.

(2) The first extensive destruction of the room was caused by The Last One invasion in 227 AC, then it was aggravated by successive battles and landslides. Not much remains therefore of the many statues, wall paintings and reliefs praising Ixion



corner is better preserved, and was partially cleared out by humanoid in the past -- traces of campfires are evident in the corner.

Near the entrance to area 4, there are a few unstable blocks of stone forming an archway. Clumsy and/or large passersby may trigger a collapse (on a failed Dex roll, +4 bonus for medium sized creatures, smaller creatures have no chance of triggering the collapse). **Random Critters** Table apply.

After the Darkers this room will be slowly cleared to eventually be transformed into a temple dedicated to Nyx. **2d10+2 female ogres and 2d4 hill giant females, with 1d10 children** of either race will be there at any time during the day, but they'll sleep in room 3 during the night. If the PC's aren't allied with the Darkers they will be hostile but will fight only to protect the children and will try to flee to room 3 and the level below almost immediately.

### 3 - The Store Room

This room was once used to store excess furniture and other items used to decorate the throne room on various occasions. It was sacked during the fall of the ogre city, and nothing of value remains here. A portion of the floor has collapsed, giving access to the lower level of the ogre king's fortress. The original access stairs are likely buried and nowadays lost.

Descending to the next level is somewhat hazardous, since the lower room has an ogre-sized height. Climbing or mountaineering equipment (rope and pitons) make the descent easy. Without equipment, characters without the Climbing thief skill need to pass a Dex check, lest they fall down and suffer 1d6 HP of damage.

that the priests made in the 132 years in which the temple was consecrated to the sun god. Nothing at all remains of the many centuries before in which this was the throne room of Kulfan and other ogre kings. Yet, if a cleric of Ixion enters the temple, he'll see what's left of these decorative elements glow, as a hope that the temple could be rebuilt. During the time of the ogres, in the right side of the huge room where once stood the magnificent throne of Kulfan, there is a secret compartment in the floor. It contains the diary of Kulfan and his magical banner, an item that would be really prized by ogres. The same compartment also has the diary of Fedor, high priest of Ixion (see room 3B below), the one who hid these items.



(3) Used as storage room by the priests of Ixion too, the room hasn't much left but some old copper trinkets, centuries old, that could have a value for

After the Darkers arrive this room is used by **female ogres and hill giants**, see above. The Last One will not use Fedor in the first Darkers invasion but will keep him for after. If the Darkers discover him before, they'll offer him the opportunity to join them, but he'll refuse instead and choose true death.

#### 4 - The Warehouse

This room was used as a dormitory by the priests of Ixion of centuries ago and old broken beds can still be seen among the piles of rubble. Is connected to room 2 and 3 via almost crumbled doors. Usually it is occupied by random **critters**. Some minimal personal item of the priests can be found, such as coins, vials, shoes and boots, belts, clothes, pictures, small mirrors and figurines.

The Darkers will destroy the ghouls and soon the female ogres and hill giants will begin to use the room as a bathroom, equipping it with water, soap and brushes. Eventually the passage to the Hill Giant tomb (room 44, Level 1, in issue 2 of Threshold magazine) will be closed.

### RUMORS ON THIS AND NEARBY LEVELS

Before the arrival of the Darkers, the ogres, hill giants and orcs of Level 1 do know roughly the layout of Level 2B and 2A, which will be detailed in Threshold Issue #4. They know the two sublevels below are inhabited by several critters (see Table 1) and, sometimes, dangerous undead that can be encountered. They also suspect that a great, powerful, and evil being lives below. They know little of levels 3-5, except that they would be inhabited by malevolent dead gnolls. An ancient

antiquarians. Fedor, high priest of Ixion (mummy C12), was buried here under the floor of the upper left corner by The Last One, that occasionally visits in person just to mock him. Fedor is bounded to him but wishes for freedom above anything: if a cleric turns him there is a 40% chance that he'll be able to break The Last One's control, a 70% chance if he's a cleric of Ixion.

(4) At the time of the Ogre Kings this was the dressing room, but nothing is left of paraments and wardrobes now. Just a few years ago The Last One hid, here under the rubble, the corpses of some Darokinian adventurers that he'll reanimate as ghouls if necessary.

legend of the Cruth area also tell that a powerful artifact that “could change the world” is buried deep in the lowest levels, but guarded by extremely powerful monsters.

After the arrival of the Darkers, they will effectively conquer all the levels from 1 to 8 (even if some not completely, see issue 1 of Threshold magazine) and will begin to draw maps of them. Darkers roaming a level could then have a map of it, but the more complete ones will be in the hands of Lord Keiros in level 5 or other high ranking Darkers in level 7. The Darkers will not be aware of The Last One still hiding in level 10, nor of the inhabitants and layout of the levels from 10 to 13.

## THE BATTLES IN THIS LEVEL

During the first invasion of Koskatep by the Darkers, they’ll have the forces detailed in issue 2 of Threshold magazine, page 120. The Last One will fight back here with 1d100 skeletons and 4 corpses of Darokian adventurers reanimated as ghouls (rooms 1 and 4). The Darkers will destroy them all.

When he decides to strike back he’ll send Fedor (room 3) and 2 more ghouls (room 4) against the ogre and giant females and children. If the PC’s intervene before however, Fedor could already have been freed from The Last One’s control.

**Table 2: Wandering Parties**

Roll (1d6)	Party	Notes (These people could be hostiles or not, depending on the PC’s allegiance and attitude)
1	Vampire party	A group of adventurers (one or two less than the PC’s) who were killed years ago by The Last One and raised as vampires. They could be now committed followers of Thanatos or rather desperately trying to escape their bound.
2	Ogres party	A scouting party of Ogres (two less than PC’s) and one Hill Giant of the Cruth tribes, exploring the level in the hope of clearing and rebuilding it.
3	Orcs party	A scouting party of Upper Kotesh Orcs (same number as PC’s, see area 15, Level 1) exploring and foraging around the level.
4	Darkers party	A scouting party of Darkers (same number as PC’s), with at least one wizard and one cleric, exploring this level in preparation of their coming invasion.
5-6	Adventurers party	Random adventurers, (same number as PC’s), could be aligned with Karameikos’ government or with the church of Ixion, or even both, or Traladaran rebels, or just random people searching for treasures.



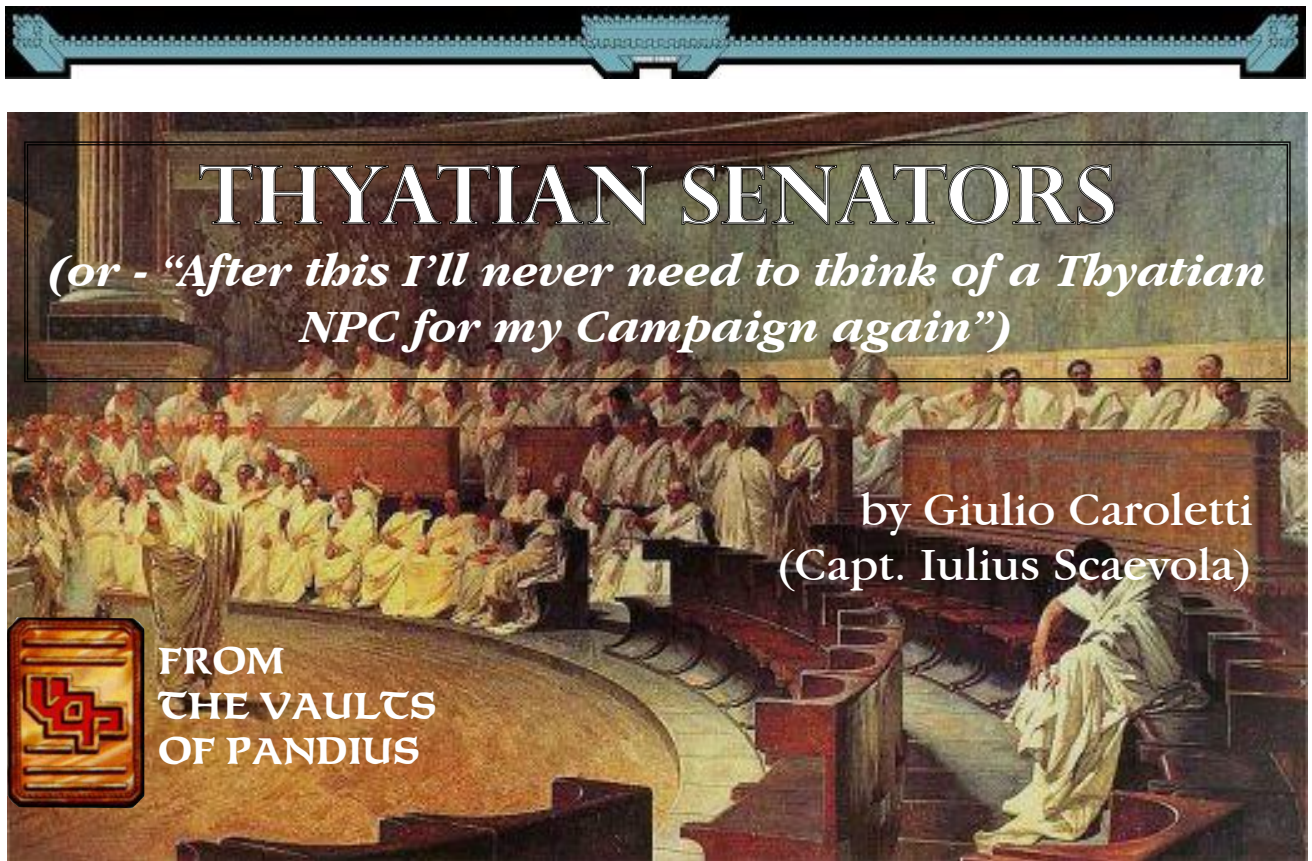
**Table 1: Random Critters**

Roll (1d20)	Monster	Number appearing
1	Giant Amoeba	1
2	Baric <sup>1</sup>	1d6
3	Bats	d100
4	Giant Beetle, Fire	1d6+4
5	Black Pudding	1
6	Carrion Crawler	1d3
7	Giant Centipede	2d4
8	Fungus, Shrieker	1
9	Gelatinous Cube	1
10	Ochre Jelly	1
11	Giant Rats	2d6+4
12	Rhagodessa	1d2
13	Rockfang <sup>2</sup>	1-2
14	Roper	1
15	Rust Monster	1d2
16	Giant Spiders, Crab	1d6+2
17	Sporacle	1
18	Stirge	2d4
19	Giant Toad	1d3+2
20	Yellow Mold <sup>3</sup>	1d4

<sup>1</sup> See [Palace of the Silver Princess, first edition](#), page 26

<sup>2</sup> See Gaz8: The Five Shires.

<sup>3</sup> This monster is not actually wandering. Rolling it means that a patch



# THYATIAN SENATORS

(or - "After this I'll never need to think of a Thyatian NPC for my Campaign again")

by Giulio Caroletti  
(Capt. Iulius Scaevola)



FROM  
THE VAULTS  
OF PANDIUS

This article provides statistics for NPCs in Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, 2nd Edition format. The Rake kit is identical to the Swashbuckler kit from the Savage Coast Campaign Book. When using the content in a Classic D&D game, replace Rangers with Foresters and Thieves with the "Rake" kit with the Classic D&D Rake class.

The Empire of Thyatis is a land of intrigue and complex politics. The chaotic structure of the Empire is the result of layers of the cultures, ethnicities and populations that have built its millennial history on the Known World and beyond. The Hattians invented the feudal system that has been exported to Glantri, Karameikos, Heldann, to the Savage Baronies and Eusdria. In ancient Thyatis, before Alpathian conquest, Thyatians evolved their Senate from the Milenian Empire to build the most democratic institution of the

Known World since. And the first Thyatian Emperor, Zendrolion I, modelled the figure of the Emperor on the Doulakki *tyrannoi* and on the Alpathian Emperor. It is small wonder Thyatian politics are so complicated and convoluted, and it also explains why corruption and inefficiency are ever on the rise in Thyatis: if you cannot get what you want from a dominion ruler, you can try with a Senator; if you cannot get to the Throne for a favour, you can turn to some Church or another; and if you cannot get the judgement you like in the trial, you can turn to another Praetor or Tribunus to overturn the result or to prosecute the mayor who fined you. On the other hand, this also means that the level of protection and maneuvering space for the average citizen is higher than in most other human countries of the Known World - and one of the reasons for the Empire's survival and popularity, even among conquered peoples.

## MAGISTRATI

Just like in ancient Republican Rome, most political posts in Thyatis are elective - the Magistrati, in particular, are all members of the Senate. While in ancient Republican Rome, elections were held every year and each post was assigned through individual elections, in the Empire of Thyatis, elections are held between four and six years from each other, and individual positions are assigned by the Senate. The rationale is that the Empire's elections involve a large territory, whereas the Roman Republic was essentially a city state.

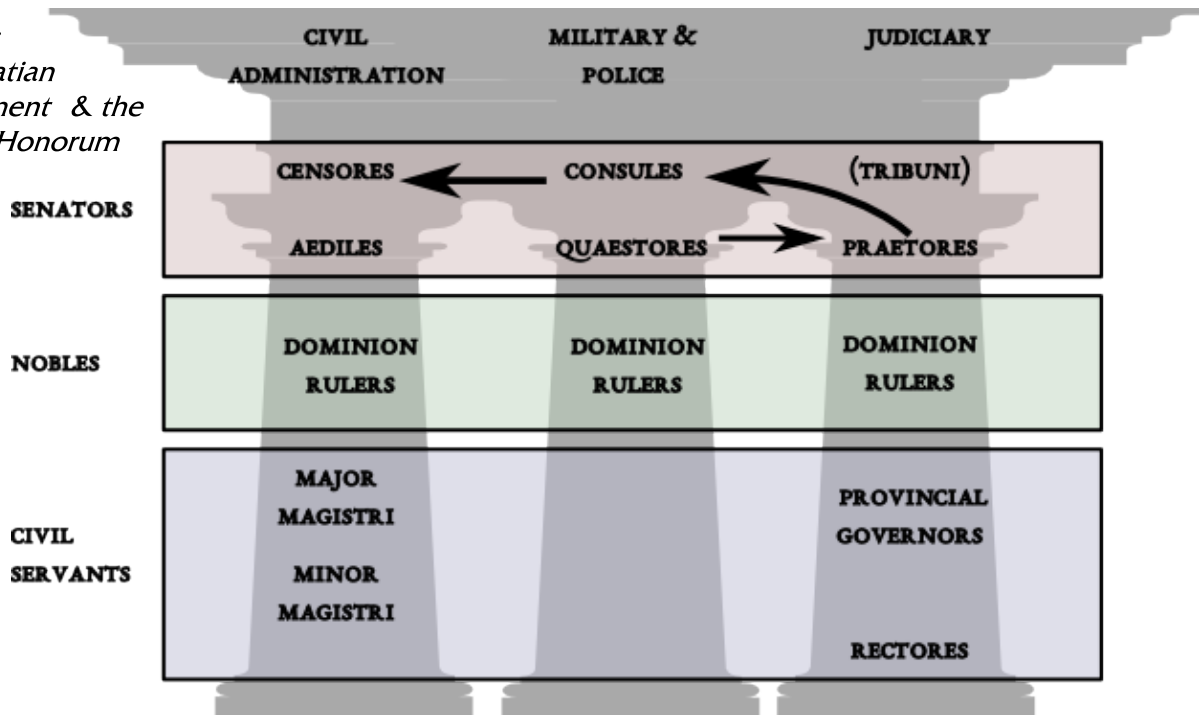
The Senate assigns posts (at the head of the judiciary, military, and administrative machine) in its first sessions after the elections, in order of rank, starting from the Censores (who are thus, at least theoretically, the higher Senators in rank after the Princeps Senatus, i.e. the Emperor). There are 23 Magistrati Imperiales ("Emperor's Magistrates") who make up the governmental cabinet

(*comitatus*) and thus respond directly to the Emperor. Since they must be his voice in the Senate, their election can be vetoed by the Emperor, so generally their choice is the most intriguing and important part of the first weeks after the elections.

The remaining 11 Magistrates, called *Magistrati Plebei* ("People's Magistrates"), are chosen only by and among the Elective Senators, as they are meant to represent and champion interests of the common people, rather than the Emperor or the aristocracy, and cannot be vetoed.

Furthermore, the rules of the *cursus honorum* state that a Senator cannot be elected Censor without having been first a Consul, Consul without having been a Praetor, and Praetor without having been a Quaestor. This forces political officials to have some experience and mitigates well-known issues of corruption in the assignment of such posts. Aediles and Tribuni are not subject to this rule.

Figure 1:  
The Thyatian  
Government & the  
Cursus Honorum





### **CENSORES (2 - all *Imperiales*)**

Censores are responsible for the Census, the registry of citizens and their property; for keeping public morals; and for administering the finances of the state, in particular for what concerns the superintendence of public works (including the Aediles' activities) and of tax collection. Censores are considered the highest Magistrates of the Empire after the Emperor, and the political heads of the civilian administration.

### **CONSULES (2 - all *Imperiales*)**

Consules are the political heads of the Thyatian military machine. These officials have the important task of supervising the distribution of pay to the Thyatian military, as well as its logistical provisioning. Consules are also tasked with inspection of the Imperial Armed forces, ensuring their quality. They work with the Imperial High Command to plan the military organisation, as well as directing research and development of new ships, engines of war, support the study of battle spells, and supervising military academies and training centres.

In war times, one of the two Consuls is expected to go into battle, while the other remains in the capital. Thus, depending on whether the Emperor remains in Thyatis or leads the army, one of the Consuls replaces the Emperor (either as the field commander or as the *Princeps Senatus*), and the other acts as the Emperor's chief advisor and second-in-command.

Traditionally, the Senate draws one Consul from the Aristocratic Senators and one from the Elective ones.

### **Praetores (8 - all *Imperiales*)**

Praetores are the chiefs of the judiciary, and are assigned responsibility over specific regions. Two Praetores are assigned to the City of Thyatis (the *Praetor Urbanus*) and the Duchy of Thyatis (the *Praetor Peregrinus*). The others are assigned to: the Duchy of Kerendas, with responsibility over continental Mainland Thyatis; the County of Hattias, with responsibility over the islands of Mainland Thyatis; the Grand Duchy of Westrouрке, with responsibility over the northern Isle of Dawn; Fort Redstone, with responsibility over the southern Isle of Dawn; the Grand Duchy of Ochalea; and the Grand Duchy of the Pearl Islands.

Praetores act as a supreme court of the Empire, and as such they are the only ones who can prosecute another Praetor, a Consul, a Censor, or the Emperor. In practice, the primary role of Praetores is that of monitoring the work of the local justice courts.

All foreign citizens wishing to bring to court a Thyatian citizen or another foreigner must get the approval of the Praetor Peregrinus, which makes it all but impossible for foreigners outside the Duchy of Thyatis to actually bring anyone to court, unless they have Thyatian friends to rely on.

### **Aediles (2 - 1 *Imperialis* and 1 *Plebeus*)**

Aediles are Magistrates responsible for the repair and preservation of temples, sewers and aqueducts, street cleansing and paving in the City of Thyatis; regulations regarding traffic, dangerous animals and dilapidated buildings; precautions against fire; superintendence of baths and taverns; investigation of black market, profiteering,

and similar charges; purchase of grain for disposal at a low price in case of necessity; superintendence and organization of the public games.

Note that the Aediles are not part of the civilian administration per se, so they have neither a staff nor a budget. Like other Magistrates, they are assisted by *adjutores*, who are in their case drawn from the *officia* of the civilian administration, but unlike other Magistrates, most of the Aediles' activities are self-funded. Ambitious Senators often spend enormous sums from their personal wealth in the latter activity to win popular favor and re-election.

Every dominion has similar offices - two men elected during local elections as Duumviri Aedilicii. However, the Aediles, in addition to being directly in charge of Thyatis City, can overrule any decision made by local Duumviri. As is often the case in the Empire, something like this means only that there is more potential for bribery - so Aediles see a lot of money come and go in their position.

### **Quaestores (10 - all *Imperiales*)**

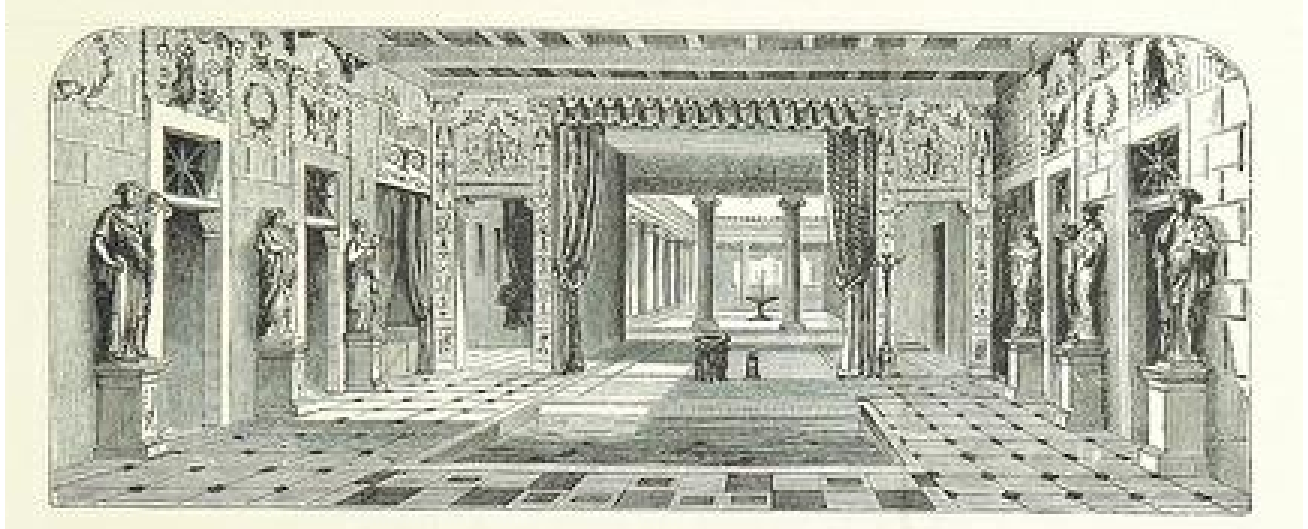
Quaestores are the chiefs of the Imperial police, which is part of the Thyatian Army. In general, police force responsibility follows similar patterns to the judiciary. However, there are two more Quaestores than there are Praetores, as the border police forces in Tel Akbir and the police forces of the demi-human

domains have separate commands from Kerendas.

The Imperial police are sometimes at odds with the local rulers' dominion guards -- this depends on many factors, especially the relationship between rulers and Quaestores, Quaestores and their own troops, and even Imperial troops stationed in a region and local dominion police. This makes for highly complicated interactions (and a skyrocketing of bribes if you want to be sure nobody bothers you).

### **Tribuni (10 - all *Plebei*)**

The Tribuni are technically not Magistrates, but rather officials charged with the responsibility of protecting the common Thyatian citizen from abuse by rulers and Senators. This means that, by law, every Thyatian citizen can appeal to a Tribunus to avoid any penalty, fine, punishment or trial, provided the Tribunus agrees - in this case what happens is generally an appeal judgement with the Tribunus as judge, although the Tribunus can simply decide to overrule the judgement and nullify it. The power of the Tribuni is thus great, although it is seldom used. Senators are extremely careful in selecting the Tribuni: wrong choices have often resulted in indiscriminate liberties for the supporters or patrons of a Tribunus, with devastating effects, so Tribuni are often the most honest and righteous politicians in Thyatis.



## IMPERIAL MAGISTRI

The civilian administration is supervised by the Censores, who are assisted by many high ranking civil servants. These apical positions in the administration are assigned by the Emperor independently of the Senate (and usually outside of it), and are called the *Magistri* ("Masters", or "Ministers"). Each Magister heads an *Officium* (bureau), which can be in turn subdivided into *Scrinia* (departments).

### Major Magistri

The four most important Magistri, those in charge of the imperial finances, magical and mundane resources, and other critical aspects of the civil administration, are actually as powerful as the Magistrates themselves, and as such they are almost always inducted in the Senate as Meritory Persons as soon as they are nominated to their post. Magistri hold to posts until removed by the Emperor, although the Senate may vote to "encourage" the Emperor to do so.

### Magister Arcanum ("Minister of Magic")

This officer is in charge of maintaining the records of the Senate and other governmental agencies, as well as supervising the Collegium Arcanum. He is usually a man of great learning, and often an experienced Magic User, since he is given responsibility over magical matters as well. The staff of this Magister includes many sages and learned men, and more than a few Clerics and Mages of repute can be found in this officium.

### Magister Aerarii

The Aerarium is, in effect, the "Ministry of the Treasury", supervising the Imperial Mint, as well as performing the tasks of a "national bank" -- primarily the control and maintenance of a national monetary reserve, but also the management of credit lines in favour of local rulers for dominion development purposes. Besides a number of civilian clerks (*scribae*), this officium also supervises the *Sacellarii*, a small but highly trained unit of guards.



### Magister Vestarii

This officium deals with objects other than cash, and supervises the Imperial Arsenal. "Objects other than cash" include magic items, alchemical workshops, research facilities and results, and the like. The Vestarium also has access to potent magic, and the very location of its most important projects is a tightly held secret.

### Magister Officiorum

This minister is primarily in charge of maintaining the imperial communication and information network. This includes supervision of legations to foreign lands, collection of reports of explorers, as well as intelligence and counter-intelligence functions. To the Magister Officiorum report the Speculatores (military explorers), the Cursus Imperialis (public postal service), the Viatores (couriers) and the Agentes in Rebus (a group of elite agents, who both act as spies and general adventurers in the service of the Empire). The Agentes are mostly Rangers (most of them belonging to the Foresters corps), Bards and Thieves (many self-styled as Rakes, or 'non-thieving thieves', in Thyatis)<sup>1</sup>, although the ranks are open to all character classes. Two Agentes are assigned to each Dominion, although they report directly to the central administration, and not to the local rulers. Other Agentes are sent as part of the staff of legations, legions, or operate independently. While the Agentes are mostly involved in information gathering in urban areas, the Speculatores are more concerned with collection of geographical data, reconnaissance operations, and even monster hunting. They are more heavily drawn from the military, so many Fighters and Clerics are

employed in addition to Rangers and Thieves. Speculatores tend to act in small groups, whereas Agentes often operate alone or in pairs.

Besides adventuring personnel, many clerks (scribae) are employed by this Magister for organizational and record keeping duties.

### Minor Magistri

There are a number of lesser Magistri, who are in charge of smaller bureaus of the Thyatian administration. The following four are the most notable of them, but other minor Magistri are in charge of tax collection, managing the civilian personnel in service of the emperors, or assisting the major magisters.

#### Magister Petitionum

This officium has two main roles. The first is to act as a filter between petitioners and the throne, sorting petitions and removing irrelevant ones. The second is to lobby the Senate so that the Emperor's will, and that of the Magistri, is speedily converted to law.

#### Magister Rerum Privatarum

This minor magister manages the Imperial estates, palaces and other economic activities directly owned by the crown. This officium may seem relatively minor, but provides a great degree of control on people who are in direct contact with the Emperor, and thus implies a high degree of security.

#### Magister Largitionum

This official is in charge of the Imperial orphanages and other charitable institutions. He is usually a renowned Cleric, and has a small administrative staff. This officium also controls land grants sufficient to support its charitable works, supplementing direct government largess.

<sup>1</sup> In Classic D&D, the Agentes are mostly Foresters, Rakes and Thieves.

**Magister Fabricae**

This officium is in charge of the Imperial arsenals in Thyatis city, Lucinius, and Beitung. It controls the assignment of naval constructions, weapon provisioning, and training facilities for artillerists, sappers, and siege engineers. This officium reports both to the Censores and to the Consules.

**LOCAL OFFICERS**

In addition to the Emperor, dominion rulers, Senatorial Magistrates and Imperial Magistri, there are also local rulers in the Empire. Every village and town with at least 500 adult citizens is entitled to elect a **Rector Urbis** (mayor), who reports to the dominion ruler and to the Praetor of his or her area. Rectores receive dominion funds from the dominion rulers to perform local errands and employ local officers, including town guards. The Rector is elected every time there is a Senatorial election or every time one Rector dies or steps down. If there are less than six months before a new Senatorial election, the town is put under direct administration of the local dominion ruler.

Cities and bigger towns, in addition to a Rector, might have a council, called **Ordo**, of elected officers (from four to twenty, depending on population and local laws). The Rector calls the council sessions and is responsible for local administration and relations with the other branches of the Thyatian government.

Dominion guards are employed directly by the dominion rulers, who can add their own personal wealth to enhance the numbers and equipment in addition to those bought with tax money. More often than not, the mayor of a dominion capital, although elected by the

citizens, is a member of the local rulers' entourage.

**JUSTICE IN THYATIS**

City, town and village mayors, dominion rulers and Praetores all act as prosecutors in the Thyatian government - although only Praetores can prosecute all over the Empire, while mayors and dominion rulers can prosecute criminals only on their lands. Only Praetores can prosecute Praetores, Consules, Censores and dominion rulers. Investigations might be carried out by officers of the Imperial Army police (under the orders of their Quaestores), or by the local city guards, or by dominion guards. Praetores have no investigative power and must rely on the Quaestores and their police forces to do the investigations. Mayors must rely on the chief of guards - but it is up to them to select him or her, and in small villages the two often are one and the same person. Dominion rulers, on the other hands, supervise investigators and prosecutors at the same time.

In a trial, the defendant can choose to defend herself, or to employ a lawyer. Lawyers must have a degree in Law from a University, or have registered after a short (and expensive - although by far less than studying for years in Biazzan or in the City of Thyatis) six-week course at an authorized governmental body. Many of these lawyers are second-hand lawyers that are often corrupt or inefficient, but sometimes a few gifted have risen among the best lawyers in the Empire.

The Empire's judiciary machine is complex, and regulations are far from clear or well-codified. In most simple or unimportant cases, prosecutors act also as judges. However, it is common for the prosecutor to

draft a judge or jury for the trial. Mayors who act as prosecutors generally form a jury of twelve citizens to judge citizens, or ask the local dominion ruler or Praetor, or even a Tribunus, if the matter is delicate or ends up involving powerful or dangerous individuals. Praetores and dominion rulers generally ask each other to help out. If the matter is especially delicate, a Praetor or ruler might form a jury of three Senators and/or rulers. There is no codification for this procedure, so any type of jury might be called upon by a prosecutor - and a prosecutor is always on the safe side of the law if he decides to keep the matter entirely in his hands.

## CONSTITUENCY SENATORS

There are 99 Senators representing specific constituencies, divided as follows: **21** ruler representatives, **11** dukes/archdukes, **60** elected representatives from dominions, **7** elected representatives from other Imperial territories.

Each Dominion Ruler of the Empire has the right to choose a representative in the Senate. A Ruler with the status of Baron or Count may even choose to be his own representative, but this is seldom the case, since a ruler can hardly attend regularly the sessions of the Senate. Dukes and Archdukes also have the right to a personal seat to the Senate. This seat cannot be traded nor can they choose replacements for the seat. It is nominal and tied to the dukedom.

Sixty-seven Senators are elected in the dominions and imperial territories. Elections are held every four-to-six years.

### AN EXAMPLE OF LOCAL RULE

As we have seen, politics in Thyatis are quite complicated, with many overlapping functions.

Let us look at what happens in a typical Thyatian town, like Bridleton in Kerendas.

The elected Rector of Bridleton has employed 10 guards and one officer to keep the peace and act as local police. If the Mayor needs more help because the town surroundings have been threatened by brigands or by a dangerous monster, he can call upon Duke Maldinius to send his dominion guards, or he can call upon the Quaestor of Kerendas. The Quaestor might go to Bridleton himself, or just send some of his soldiers from the Kerendan Cohort of the Imperial Legions.

If the Mayor does not have enough money to restore a damaged road, he can ask for more from the Duke. If the Duke refuses, the Mayor can call one of the elected Duumvir Aedilicii of Kerendas for help. If the Duumvir asks him for a bribe, the Mayor can travel to the capital and denounce the corrupt officer to the two Senatorial Aediles, who might ask in turn the Quaestor of Kerendas to investigate the matter and, if they think it is necessary, the Praetor of Kerendas to judge the man - or the Aediles might just refuse the Mayor's accusations and send him back. If the Mayor or the Duumvir is unsatisfied with the outcome, he or she might extend a plea to a Tribunus, hoping that he or she will overrule the judgment and nullify it.



## ACTIUS

Actius is a small, unproductive island south of Hattias, whose main feature is the lively and prosperous community of Actius (pop. 8,000) and its surrounding farms and fishing villages. Actius is a major shipbuilding concern, a rich fish-market and a provisioning center for some sea-trade around Cape Hattias.



**Population:** 10,000 (90% humans, 10% sea-elves)

**Dominion ruler:** Count Geraldan Actavius

**Senators:**

Count Geraldan Actavius (ruler representative), Gens Sergia.

Terentius Thalassonion (first elected), Populares.

Publius Kelophorios<sup>a</sup> (second elected), Populares; Aedilis.

<sup>a</sup> This character was first introduced in DDA1 Arena of Thyatis.

Count **Geraldan Actavius** (born 947, F15, N) is a descendant of Sir Actius, the founder of the city that bears his name and of its island dominion. He's an aging warrior who was a fighter in the Thyatian Navy for over 20 years, and resigned his commission a decade ago to

rule Actius when his father Rupert was lost at sea. Geraldan is a plump man with greying black hair and beard, brown eyes, a broad, merry face with scars on both cheeks from an early duel, and is too-fond of heavy, rich jewelry, although he prefers to dress in simple clothes. Geraldan is a moderate man who believes in tradition but loves to think of Thyatis as a land of opportunities for citizens and foreigners alike, so he has found it comfortable to fill his father's old niche among the Sergii.

His wife **Antonia**<sup>2</sup> (born 956, T3) is a common-looking woman with a homely face that hides her shrewd eyes. They have two sons and two daughters between five and twenty years old, the oldest one being his heir **Heraclius** (born 980).

The Actavii also hold a noble family seat (see also below), and Geraldan's uncle, **Rutiliano** (born 937, F7, N), is currently the family senatorial representative. Rutiliano is the younger brother of Rupert Actavius, but, unlike his father, brother and nephew, Rutiliano served in the infantry legions of Thyatis. The top position of his career has been the role as Lieutenant General of the Hinterlands during the planning stage and beginning of the invasion (AC 988), before he retired from the Army three years ago.

Actius is a major region of Populares support, with a very liberal view on politics. Senator **Terentius Thalassonion** (born 954, T16, CG) is a former pirate who harassed Alphatian, Thyatian and Minrothaddan slave ships and military ships in his younger years

<sup>2</sup> In the Almanacs, his wife is given as Dalia Salieri. Although not directly specified in canon, it can be assumed that Dalia and Geraldan marry sometimes during the Wrath of the Immortals War (1004-1009 AC).

under the name of ‘Blue Dog’. Although suspected of many pirate activities, last but not least several renegade attacks on troop ships directed to the ‘imperialist’ conquest of the Hinterlands, Terentius was never conclusively linked to the Blue Dog. His fame won him the respect of his fellow islanders, and he used it, and his riches, to enter the Senate a few years ago at the outrage of most noblemen and moderate-to-conservative politicians of Thyatis. The roguish outlook of this 45-years old pirate, with flamboyant pirate costumes and his mocking, sarcastic speeches at the Senate and in public forums, have made him a controversial and renowned figure even in the City of Thyatis.

His elected colleague is **Publios Kelophorios** (born 959, F5, NG), a prominent yet surprisingly virtuous senator. A fervent Popularis, Publios is renowned for his virtue and is an outspoken champion of the most progressive Populares. He has gained the love of his friends and supporters and the respect of adversaries, although the most conservative and aristocratic Senators loathe him because of his humble origins - his father was a poor fisherman who didn’t own a boat and died while he was still young, and Publios grew from fisherman to sailor to boat captain before entering politics. He takes his position as Aedilis very seriously, something that puts him often at odds with his colleague Aedilis, Maria Evergetes, whom he neither trusts nor likes, suspecting her of using her position for personal ends.

## BIAZZAN

A low, rich valley surrounded by steep hills in the shadow of the looming Altan Tepes mountains, Biazzan is a sheltered, quiet region, whose main feature is the rich city of Biazzan (pop. 12,500), which takes its name from its founder, the Alasiyan Selim ben Hassan. The city is one of the centers of trade between Ylaruam and Thyatis and the seat of one of the main universities of the Known World; about of the population consists of students and another fifth of university teachers, researchers and employees. The Baronial population is almost evenly split between Alasiyans and Thyatians. Its northern pass into Ylaruam is guarded by Fort Nicos (pop. 300), whose commander does not answer to the Baron but only to the Consules.



**Population:** 30,000

**Dominion ruler:** Baron Babrak Biazzan

Senators:

Baron Babrak Biazzan (ruler representative), Gens Aemilia

Tanja Bendaoud (elected), Populares.

**Babrak Biazzan** (born 962, F12, LG) has been the ruler of Biazzan since AC 996, and is his own representant at the Senate, continuing to hold the seat that had been his before as the representative of his father. He is a man of Thyatian upbringing with a love of Alasiyan trappings and furnishings.

He is married to **Gallia** (born 967, T(Rake)5, LG), and they have a son, **Himerius** (born 993), and a daughter, **Maisha** (born 995).

Babrak has two younger sisters, **Malika** (born 981, F3, LG), who is studying to become a military officer, and **Aisha** (born 985, T1, LG), betrothed to **Ahmed El Nicoui** (born 983, F1, LG), the son of a wealthy Biazzan nobleman, **Omar El Nicoui** (born 950, F1, LG).



Senator **Tanja Bendaoud** (born 969, NW, NG) is the e l e c t e d representative for the Barony. A sly Populares into her second term, she is especially concerned with educational and

trade issues in the Senate, something that plays well with her own countrymen. One of the slogans behind her electoral program is “to show Tel-Akbirans that “we are more advanced than them”. She has playfully played with the stereotypes of Biazzan Alasiyans against Tel-Akbiran Alasiyans, and she is seen as a positive political figure by the enlightened males and most females even in Tel Akbir. She is in very good relationship with Babrak Biazzan and with the Buhrohur senators (Thrain Kalskirt and Dwalur Swarkres, see below). She is married to **Ahmed Azad** (born 960, NM, N) a professor of History at the University, and they

have a son, **Kareem** (born 995) and a daughter, **Maria** (born 999).

## BUHROHUR

The main seat of Thyatian dwarves, Buhrohur is a rocky, mountainous territory settled almost only by dwarf colonists from Rockhome. Non-resident dwarves have no right to travel through Buhrohur. Its capital, Makrast (pop. 3,000), lies at the foot of a huge mountain with a sheared-off western face (thus the name for the town, i.e. “broken mountain” in dwarven). Only about 20% of Makrast is above-ground.

**Population:** 15,000

**Dominion ruler:** Gilla Blyskarats

**Senators:**

Thrain Kalskirt (ruler representative).  
Gens Aemilia.

Dwalur Swarkres (elected), Populares;  
Quaestor.

Buhrohur is ruled by **Gilla Blyskarats**, (born 950, C11 of Kagyar, LG) member of a family that belongs to the Farkres Clan of Makrast. The baroness, a cleric of Kagyar, new-come to rule and still unmarried, was well-trained for her role by her father, the old baron. She intends to keep the gold-mining moving, the city safe, the baronial borders secure, and perhaps to do a little adventuring under an assumed name...

This is also why she has chosen **Thrain Kalskirt** (born 870, F6, LG) an experienced dwarven diplomat, as her representative in



the capital: she doesn't intend to spend her sparse free time discussing senatorial laws. Even though Thrain is (relatively) young for a diplomat, he has spent several years adventuring in Thyatis and Rockhome before turning to politics, acting as a minor diplomat in matters involving dwarves. He has revealed himself to be a good politician, and has succeeded more than once for the benefit of Buhrohur before being chosen for this role immediately after the death of the old baron, who had preferred to be his own representative instead.

His companion in the Senate is **Dwalur Swarkres** (born 838, F9, LG) a middle-aged, gruff, stubborn and stern dwarf with a grim view on life and on humans. He doesn't trust humans, as his parents were refugees who moved to Buhrohur after the Year of the Plague in Glantri, and he says that even in Thyatis he has "seen more human politics and betrayals than any dwarf would care to see in a dwarven lifetime". After many years of adventuring and fighting, Dwalur retired and started a political career first as a representative from his village at clan meetings and then rose up to clan councils and then to the Senate, where he has been elected for the past 30 years ("dwarves don't like to change an old cogwheel if it works well, we all know it"). When not in Thyatis, Dwalur spends his time in the small village of Klystar, or travelling in the north-west in his position as Quaestor for Vyalia, Biazzan and Buhrohur. Dwalur is unmarried and is a homosexual. His partner died a few years after a long disease, and he has silently mourned him since. All his friends and relatives and most all the dwarves of his village know it, but he prefers to keep this publicly undisclosed. His fellow dwarves are not likely to talk about it.

## CAERDWICCA



This barony on the southern part of the Isle of Dawn has been settled for many centuries by pirates and fishermen of Dunael stock. About 750 live in Caerdwick Village, the other 250 live in McRhomaag Castle. The McRhomaags sponsor pirates, sailors and explorers both on sea and into the Great Escarpment.

**Population:** 1,000

**Dominion ruler:** Baron Uthgaard McRhomaag

**Senators:**

Brandan McStewart (ruler representative), Populares.

Gawain McLeod (elected), Populares.

**Uthgaard McRhomaag** (born 960, F15, CN) is the ruler of Caerdwicca, and is very popular with his subjects. Styling himself a "thane" instead of "baron" (to emphasize the fact that he descends from Dunael and Northmen

raiders), this red-haired and red-bearded, stocky fighter is a free-willed pirate with a variable mood and impetuous personality who prefers to wear great tartan kilts and keeps a carefully constructed shaggy, wild-eyed look. Uthgaard is unmarried, but has several offsprings from fishermen's and pirates' daughters (and wives!). He is very kind towards his natural children -- many of them have lived with him at one time or another. One of them, **Alastair Scott** (born 978, F4), is a Navy soldier in Actius; Uthgaard is following him closely to see whether he might make a good heir. Another daughter, **Gael Ferguson** (born 990, NW, NG) was brought to the Castle a couple of years ago with her mother **Fearchara Ferguson** (born 972, NW, CG) when Uthgaard's niece Eleanor came to live with him (see below). Uthgaard is very fond of Fearchara but in no way considers her to be his wife. Fearchara is determined to make the 'stubborn old fool' change his ways. Good luck to her!

Uthgaard's cousin from his mother's side is **Brandan McStewart** (born 970, F7, CG), who is also his Senator in Thyatis. He was appointed there after his wife Lysa left him to run away with his roguish younger brother Corum, and both died at sea shortly after... or at least they were never heard since. Brandan's father, **Ian McStewart** (born 942, F9, CN), an ageing pirate, has accompanied him to the capital, while his mother **Bridget Anderson** (born 950, NW, LN) separated from Ian several years ago and lives with her own family in Newkirk. Brandan is the younger brother of Uthgaard's mother **Diulanna** (born 940, NW, NG), who despairs of her son's 'liberal' ways with women, loves all her grandchildren even though Uthgaard makes her mad, and is watching closely Fearchara's attempts to woo him. She has not decided whether to throw

her lot in with the woman, but is increasingly warming up to her and her 'cause'. Diulanna's husband, Uthgaard's father **Willard** (931-989), died about ten years ago during a raid.

Uthgaard's youngest uncle **Colin** (born 952, R9, NG) married **Shylla** (born 866, T4/W9, CG), an Isle of Dawn elf whom he met while adventuring. Uthgaard jokingly mocks Colin since he's a "wood man" and not a pirate like most of their family. Colin was for some time senator of the McRhomaag aristocratic family seat, but Colin and Uthgaard passed the seat to Colin and Shylla's daughter **Iliana** (born 979, F1/T1, NG) a few months ago, as soon as she turned 21. Colin and Shylla travel a lot, but they have a big stone house with a river mill a few miles north of Caerdwicca Village in which they like to spend the mild summers of the region fishing and hunting.

**Eleanor** (born 989, T1, N), Brandan and Lysa's daughter, is a beautiful girl of 11, who talks very little but is very intelligent and perceptive. She lived with her father until a couple of years ago, but as she is growing she looks more and more like her mother and Brandan felt it was too hard to keep her with him, so he sent her away to Caerdwicca. She has taken a loving to the land, which she feels is like a fairytale land of magic and mystery and of which her father liked to talk and tell stories about. He also told her of the many feats of her uncle Uthgaard, whom she had seen very seldomly before, and she has grown exceedingly fond of him too. She is almost always seen in the company of her second-cousin and best friend Gael. The two girls are very different, from their looks (blonde haired and blue-eyed Eleanor, red-headed, freckled, green-eyed Gael; thin Eleanor, short Gael) to their personality (Eleanor is dreamy

and would like to become an expert forester like her aunt Shylla, while Gael would like to become a pirate like her father) but both are beautiful and promising girls of which Uthgaard is incredibly proud.

The elected Senator of Caerdwicca is **Gawain McLeod** (born 974, F3, N). A young and naive Caerdwiccan, he had little difficulty in being elected, being the only candidate. Caerdwiccans definitely think it enough to have the McRhomaag Clan representative, and have always trouble finding an elected Senator, who more often than not remains in the dominion for most of his or her term. Gawain saw this opportunity more as the way to reach Thyatis and do some adventuring on the distant Known World, for which he's had a long fascination for years, having become bored with the pirate's life along the southern Isle of Dawn. Since he came to Thyatis, he's been duped by a con-man, robbed by a whore and mistreated by a Storm Soldiers patrol. Finding little help in the amiable but brooding Brandan McStewart, he has become friends with Senator Cosmatos from Terentias, and has turned for help to the more sympathetic Abeeku Dwair and Populares-oriented Dawn Islanders.

## FURMENGLAIVE

Another Dunael dominion on the southern tip of the Isle of Dawn, Furmenglaive consists mostly of moors and rolling hills, with small ponds dotting the countryside, where sheep and goats are the most common sight. Many unpleasant creatures can be found in Furmenglaive due to the presence of the Thothian Plateau, which is a veritable nest of monsters, kept at bay by the willful Counts and the Castle's garrison.



**Population:** 750

**Dominion ruler:** Count Phileus Furmenglaive

Senators:

Eliana Furmenglaive (ruler representative), Gens Sergia

Peter Dunbar (first elected), Populares

Aynsley Erskine (second elected), Gens Sergia; Quaestor of the Southern Isle of Dawn.

Count **Phileus Furmenglaive** (born 938, F23, LG) descends from the original builder of the Castle and establisher of the dominion, Magnus Furmenglaive. Phileus and his wife **Lyra** (born 939, C23 (of Protius), LG) are cursed with a powerful, unknown strain of lycanthropy that, as a side-effect, keeps their age stuck at 30 - the age at which they caught it adventuring. Phileus is his noble family's appointed Senator (see below), but hasn't



been seen in the Senate for several years. The population of Furmenglaive is well-aware of their beloved rulers' lot, and go to great lengths in order to protect them.

Their appointed representative at the Senate is their only daughter **Eliana** (born 969, C9, of Aesculapius/Chardastes, LG), who was born shortly after her mother contracted the illness from her father. However, up to now, it doesn't seem she suffered any effect from it. She is aware of the curse struck upon her parents and would do anything to lift it, but even though she studied as a priest of the Immortal patron of healing, she has still not been able to do so. She knows her parents sent her away to shelter her from their grief, something that has made her even more worried for them. She spends a lot of time adventuring and researching and is one of the least seen senators in the Senate.

One of Furmenglaive's main characters is **Ion Andriscon** (born 964, Bard<sup>3</sup> 12, NG), an exceptional bard adventurer and a long time friend and counselor of Count Phileus. Ion travelled all over the Isle of Dawn and in the Alphatian regions, and often acts as a spy in Alphatia, given his extraordinary ability with languages and disguises.

For such a small region, there is an incredibly high number of representatives at the Senate, something that a lot of Barons and Counts around the country definitely resent - notably the Count of Hattias and the Gens Zendrolian, since the Furmenglaives and their subjects are notorious moderates and pacifists.

The two elected senators, **Peter Dunbar** (born 941, F6, NG) and **Aynsley Erskine** (born 944, F7, LN) are old family friends. Peter Dunbar

spends his time in the Senate acting like the de-facto representatives of the Counts. He is heavily involved in diplomatic missions especially in regard to Isle of Dawn/Alphatian matters. Aynsley Erskine is the energetic Quaestor of the southern Isle of Dawn.

## HALATHIUS

The easternmost region of hills in mainland Thyatis, Halathius is a rocky territory famed for its productive mines, which yield gold, minerals and other metals in abundance, supplying Thyatis with the majority of its iron ore. The country is dotted with mining villages and bands of brigands, with caravans crossing it to and from.

Its capital Goldleaf<sup>4</sup> (pop. 4,000) is the center of government and gold-crafts trade. Hundreds of its citizens are goldsmith, weaponsmiths, armorers, or trade in these goods.

**Population:** 20,000

**Dominion ruler:** Countess Sabrina Andreana.

**Senators:**

Marcianus Andreana (ruler representative), Philosophers.

Wayne Morrison, Populares (first elected)

Ascanio De Leonibus, Gens Zendrolian (second elected); Quaestor of Halathius and Kerendas.

Halathius is a Populares steadfast, however Halathians believe in the values of old Thyatis and are wary of the liberals of Biazzan and

<sup>3</sup> The Bard character class for Classic D&D is found in Dragon Magazine, Issue 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Bractea* in Classic Thyatian.

Buhrohur or the decadent people of the Empire's capital. Their Popular standing is more the result of distrust of the central government, although the Emperor is liked well enough. Halathians are not like Hattians, however - on the other hand, they see Thyatis as a "land of opportunities" more than most other people in the Empire, since Halathius itself is a land of opportunities to which many of them or their parents or ancestors were drawn to by the mines and riches of the land.

Halathius is ruled by Countess **Sabrina Andreana** (born 974, F9, N), a beautiful young woman of tanned complexion and hazel eyes, married to **Alex** (born 974, F9, N), a sharp and taciturn military officer, overshadowed by the strong personality of his wife. After spending most of her youth in the Isle of Dawn legions, Sabrina recently became Countess after the death in sickbed of her father Demetron (948+999). Demetron is also survived by his wife **Letitia** (born 952, NW) and his brother **Marcianus** (born 950, F4, NG), who remains the Halathius dominion senator after having served many years in service of his older brother. Marcianus is a bald, gaunt man with deep green eyes, a warm smile and a sympathetic voice, and a great friend to the Pearl Islander nobles and senators.

**Wayne Morrison** (born 947, F18, LN) is the stern Populares Senator from Halathius. An enduring Halathian icon, he epitomizes rugged masculinity and is famous for his demeanor, including his distinctive calm voice, walk, and height. Morrison was born in Westrouрке but his family relocated to the Goldleaf area when he was four years old. His impressive physical build and courage made him leave the mining work to become a caravan guard first, and then a bounty hunter and adventurer. He has held the position of

mayor in many small towns in Halathius, generally moving from one brigand-harassed town to another. Morrison's fame reached quickly the ear of Count Demetrius Andreana, who has since been a close friend and employed him as a personal bodyguard during some dangerous trips and missions in the past. After retiring at 50, he has been immediately elected at the Senate. Morrison embodies the Halathian spirit at the fullest in its mix of conservative and progressive values: as long as a person is true to the Empire, they are all alike, men, women, humans, demi-humans, ethnic Thyatians and non-Thyatians... But there is no place in Thyatis for the soft decadence of the liberals like Tanja Bendaoud or the venomous liars like Angelarian Canolocarius. Like the land he grew in, he is not a man of compromise - and this is liked by his countrymen. He has fathered five children out of three marriages, all to women of Alasiyan descent. His last daughter was born in 996.

His colleague in the Senate is Sir **Ascanio De Leonibus** (born 971, F11, CN) a Knight of Thyatis. Ascanio is a young adult man with little regard for human life and little interests beside women, gold and killing - not necessarily in this order. However, he is clever enough to stay on the good side of the law while doing his business. He saw the Senatorial title as a step to further his goals, although he is not sure himself of what his goals should be. After becoming Quaestor, he has harassed his colleagues (and bought the votes of some of them, especially among the Free Thinkers, Populares and Zendrolian) to get special powers as an Enforcer in a brigand-rigged region of northern Halathius, much to the resentment of local mayors and bounty-hunters. Senator Morrison is a bit too old and rigid to see the flaws of Ascanio's

character, though, and likes him well enough. Ascanio knows he risks stepping on the toes of his fellow countrymen and is trying hard to reconcile brigand-hunting with his own interests and those of the villagers. He's facing a hard task and risks to lose his senatorial seat at the next elections.

## HATTIAS

The County of Hattias is an island dominion, and the largest dominion of Mainland Thyatis. Mostly hill-country with a few productive lowlands, the island is divided in a northern part with greener hills, vineyards and sheep pastures, central hills dedicated to goat-herding, and a southern end consisting of fishing villages (and some pirate coves). Hattias is renowned because of its xenophobic-bordering-to-racist views on non-Thyatians. The capital Hattias (pop. 30,000) is a sprawling city and port in the north, whose defining feature is the lack of walls, torn down centuries ago after a Hattian uprising.



**Population:** 350,000

**Dominion ruler:** Count Heinrich Oesterhaus

**Senators:**

Tobias von Richter (ruler representative), Pure Ones

Mathias Rudat, Pure Ones (first elected)

Hugin Kahlweiß, Free Thinkers (second elected); Tribunus.

The most powerful man in Hattias is Count **Heinrich Oesterhaus** (apparent age 45, C24 (Avatar of Thanatos), CE), ruler of the dominion and leader of the Storm Soldiers. But the real Heinrich died many years ago at the hand of the Immortal Thanatos, who took his guise and identity. Oesterhaus, a tall and slender man, with black hair and saturnine beard, is raising his son **Hansel** and his daughter **Danielle** in his philosophy of hatred.

Oesterhaus/Thanatos has chosen as his representative **Tobias von Richter** (born 931, C11 (of Thanatos), CE), an old Storm Soldier, secretly a cleric of Thanatos himself. Tobias, an old gaunt man with little hair and a short, grey mustache, lives permanently in Thyatis, pretending that the rigors of travel between Hattias and Thyatis would be too strenuous in his old age. In fact he is 30 years younger than what he feigns, thanks to the use of *potions of longevity*. His apprentice in the Senate, who is unaware of his ties to Thanatos, is a young lawyer named **Alfred Voralberg** (born 978, F3, LE).





The Oesterhaus also have a seat reserved as an ancient aristocratic family (see also below). Currently, **Horst Oesterhaus** (born 956, F11, TN), cousin of Heinrich, is holding the seat, although Danielle will become the family Senator as

soon as she turns 21. Horst is worried by the direction Heinrich has given to the Storm Soldiers. Horst has always been a trustworthy and stern Hattian, but his view on Storm Soldiers and Hattian superiority is one built on virtue and honour, while in the last ten years it has become more arrogance, violence, and abuse, something he doesn't like at all. The change in his cousin's character has been a slow one, but now, when he looks around himself and Heinrich, he sees mostly young upstarts filled with hate, or ageing racists, and he is worried that this might put Hattians too much in conflict with the rest of the Empire, something that will not benefit his beloved land.

**Mathias Rudat** (born 963, F9, LE) is one of the leaders of the Storm Soldiers and a vocal and outspoken xenophobe. While Tobias plays inside the rules and tries to rationalize the Hattian viewpoint on things, Rudat, a skilled fighter and military officer who served many years in the Army, is much more antagonistic. Mathias was born a poor man and is blinded by his hatred of foreigners and the hate for the other races of the Empire who have cast down the proud Hattians, by demoting the once

powerful region to County status, while the Isle of Dawn dominions have more Senators than inhabitants and upstarts like Triella Tien-Tang become Duke of a family resort. He isn't totally wrong, and this truth is quite unpalatable to many of his opponents like the Philosophers.

The Free Thinker **Hugin Kahlweiß** (born 968, C7 (of Odin), NG) is the son of Franz Kahlweiß, a Hattian Priest of Odin, and has recently exploited his popularity as a battle priest to win his seat in the Senate in the last elections; his humanity and righteousness has easily won him a position as Tribunus. Hugin has immediately started working first with his fellow Mathias Rudat, whom he respects as a man-at-arms although he feels he is a bitter man, weighed down by the plight of the Hattians for a more influential role in the Empire. Hugin is trying to build a base in the Senate for promoting Count Heinrich to Dukedom, in the hope that this will make his countrymen relent a little from their attitude. The Count and his representatives are leaving him free rein to do so, and Hugin is trying to find followers in the most unlikely places, for instance among the Philosophers, who think of him as a well-meaning but delusional fellow. Horst Oesterhaus and Hugin have been seen increasingly together in the City, and Heinrich is not happy about that, although he pretends not to have noticed.

## HINTERLANDS

The Thyatian Hinterlands are the Empire's outpost on Davania. It is an Army-ruled protectorate, for the time being, with Commander General Leila ben Nadir, sister of Duke Tarik of Tel Akbir, as its highest ruling officer.

**Population:** more than 20,000

**Protectorate ruler:** Commander General Leila ben Nadir

**Senator:** Gneus Maccius, Gens Zendrolian, Quaestor of Ochalea.

**Population:** between 20,000 and 30,000

**Ruler:** the highest governmental officer in the area is Duccio Senese, Praetor of Mainland Thyatis, though not technically its ruler

**Senators:**

Aelius Varro (Eastern Territories elected), Populares, Tribunus.

Tiberius Mancino (Western Territories elected), Populares.

**Gneus Maccius** (born 966, F5, NE), a military officer, became Senator after rigged elections in the Hinterlands: several local candidates were not allowed to run because of their ties with rebel clans, and the real winner was one of the locals who was allowed to run - but he never knew it. Maccius was asked to run by the military in the Hinterlands, and although general Leila would never have condoned the rigging, other officials in her service arranged for it to happen. Maccius is a fierce imperialist who wants to use the aggressive stance of the Empire to build a career rich in titles and gold. Becoming Senator, and Quaestor of Ochalea, is just a way to further his own goals.

## IMPERIAL TERRITORIES

The Imperial Territories are the non-dominion areas of Mainland Thyatis. Local communities rule themselves through Rectores or town councils, and the Praetor of Mainland Thyatis is the highest governmental officer with direct responsibility over the area. Although the Imperial Territories are considered free areas for future dominions to rise, this seldom happens in practice: locals strongly oppose any possibility of having their lands be “eaten up” by upstart nobles or imperial lickspittles. They tend to be fierce in their independence, and mistrust the central government.

The Imperial Territories elect two Senators, one from the western and one from the eastern areas. The Eastern one is **Aelius Varro** (born 962, F19, CN). To choose someone like Varro for their senatorial representative just goes to show how stern and ferocious the settlers of these lands are. Varro is rumoured to have, as a youth, singlehandedly killed a Knight of Thyatis who was planning to found a new Barony in the region - and his body guards. He was a miner and bounty-hunter in Halathius, many say to escape an official investigation on the case, before returning home, where he has become the mayor of his town - and been its de-facto overlord for many years. Varro is a mountain of a man, with a short, trimmed beard, a cleanshaven head and small, red-brown eyes. He would like to be promoted to Baronial title, but since he is perceived as a fighter *against* this possibility, and has been elected with the mandate to *prevent* something like that to happen, he is in pains as to how to achieve his goal.

His colleague from the Western Territories is **Tiberius Mancino** (born 969, T10, NE), an amiable man who shares the same goals of Varro and is definitely in awe of his older pal.

Behind his shy and polite manners, Mancino hides an egoistic nature. He was a brigand and outlaw for several years, before selling out his posse to the law, covering up for his crimes and ending his roguish career with a lot of money. After that, he's been a respected farmer, land-owner and family man in town. His last move has been to get elected to the Senatorial post. He is quite happy with how things are going in life and he is not ambitious, but he is moved almost only by personal interest. He's determined to play his role well and to benefit the most of it for himself and his family - he loves his wife Servia (born 973, NW, NG) and his small daughter Sandra and son Gavius.

and grain are plenty in Kantrium, and Kantridae is a placid (some would say 'declining') city of fishermen and farmers, with an interesting political life.



The Duke of Kantrium and Quaestor for Kantrium, Tel Akbir, Lucinius and Retebius is **Leonidas Ruggiero** (born 966, F14, TN), a skilled fighter who proved his worth as an army commander on the Isle of Dawn before inheriting the seat from his father, killed by a troll while fighting brigands near the borders with Halathius. Leonidas, 25 at the time, went home as soon as he could be released from the Army, and started a ferocious fight against the outlaws of the area; after their defeat, he had all the surviving brigands hang the bodies of their dead comrades on the main road of Kantrium all the way to the capital - then he sold the survivors on the slave market and used the money to fund public work. Leonidas is a strong-willed man with very clear ideas; he is devoted to the Balance, and thinks that Balance is more important even than ideals like justice and truth: possible courses of actions have to be judged according to their ends, not to the letter of the law. In this he is very Thyatian-like, but his personal integrity can not be contested, and his ultimate goal is to contribute to the well-being of Kantrium and the efficiency and integrity of the Empire, something he thinks can only be achieved mainly by Balance - the Balance between Populares and Aristocrats, Senate and

## KANTRIUM

Kantrium is one of the smallest and oldest duchies in the Empire, consisting of a green and fertile strip of farmland around the sea, which holds 90% of the Duchy's population and hosts the capital city of Kantridae (pop. 10,000), and a northern countryside which grows arid toward the hills and Ylaruam. Fish

**Population:** 100,000

**Dominion ruler:** Duke Leonidas Ruggiero.

Senators:

Duke Leonidas Ruggiero, Populares; Quaestor.

Duchess Livia Ruggiero (ruler representative), Populares.

Seline Valleides, Populares (first elected)

Minucius Stabilis, Populares (second elected), Tribunus.

Tiberius Traianus, Republicans (third elected)



Emperor, Thyatis and Alphatia, Law and Chaos. He despises Thincol, who is a self-serving upstart that married to get to the throne; he doesn't like Eusebius and his religious obsessions; he hates the Storm Soldiers; he is contemptuous of his fellow aristocrats and senators who use their power for themselves; and he is bored to death by the preachy Philosophers and their cowardice. He's not an easy man to deal with, but he is loved in Kantrium and nobody can deny his personal magnetism and his political skills.

His chosen representative at the Senate is his wife **Livia MacGoraidh** (born 970, M8, TN), a former adventuress of mixed Thyatian/Dunael descent that Leonidas met on the Isle of Dawn, and that resisted a long courtship. Their marital relationship has not been one of the most calm, as befits the stubborn Duke and the temperamental Duchess. The Duke and Duchess love each other in a passionate and intense way, and have two small sons, 4 and 2 years old respectively. One of their main advisors is **Cratetes di Mallo** (born 963, F2, NE), a former Army attendant of the Duke. Cratetes is a vengeful and bitter man who is not a positive influence on the rulers.

Leonidas and Livia have a list of priorities to accomplish in the Senate: they want to keep a good balance between the Emperor and Senate, they want to raise Hattias to Duchy hoping to undermine the strength of the Storm Soldiers, and they want to fight the corruption they see in the Thyatian Army especially, and in their leaders. One of their political enemies, in this regard, is Senator Helenites Osteropolous. The Ruggieri like to think of themselves as the Populares' voice among the landed aristocracy. Kantrium is a Populares steadfast, probably the most left-wing region

of Thyatis and the activity center of the Republican Party, which is mildly supported by the fierce Duke.

Among the Populares elected Senators, one of the most important is **Seline Valleides** (born 966, T1, CG), a Kantridae resident. Born in a small village of the north, Seline has spent several years as the right hand of another brilliant politician, Maria Marconi (born 946, NW, TN), who stepped down from the Senate a few years ago and switched sides with Seline - the younger woman was able to gain her mentor's seat two elections ago and is now assisted by the older woman in her work for the Populares in Thyatis city. Seline has recently divorced her husband, **Paulus de Robertis** (born 960, F3, TN), a skilled smith and armorer in Kantridae, and is raising their two children, Marco, aged 10, and Serena, aged 3.

Another elected Senator, and friend of the ducal couple, is **Minucius Stabilis** (born 958, F3, NE). A friend of Leonidas's father, Minucius is apparently a Populares Senator, but he is in fact a corrupt man who has spied on the couple on account of Senator Helenites Osteropolous for the last three years at least. Minucius is a nervous man who is always afraid of being caught and is secretly buying a villa on Mositius through an intermediary with the money he gets from Osteropolous. He is also a Tribunus, and Osteropolous expects from him that with his position he can help Osteropolous's agents that find themselves in legal troubles.

**Tiberius Traianus** (born 969, F4, CG) is the Secretary of the Kantrium Chapter of the Republican Party and their most important representative in the Senate. An ex-Army fighter, Tiberius read "The Republic of Thyatis" while serving in the Hinterland

invasion Legion, and was disgusted by the imperialist excesses he saw there. Since coming back to Kantridae, his hometown, five years ago, he has become a schoolteacher and enrolled in the local chapter of the Republican Party, where he worked hard to increase the membership of the Party and get involved more in pragmatic city politics and less in empty philosophizing. In a city like Kantridae, he had the rare possibility of continuing his work without being harassed by aristocrat-paid thugs or Storm Soldiers. He was chosen as the Republican candidate at the last elections and has been elected as the third and last chosen Senator for Kantrium - the fourth elected Republican in Kantrium, and the third in a row - a major success for the Party. Tiberius is a moderate and a youngish optimist who sees what happens in Kantrium as the first stage of a peaceful revolution, and he is a bit at odds with the more relentless wings of the Party. He has not learnt to cope with the contradictions of his position, as he has found he has a liking for several aristocrats and rulers, like the Ruggieri (who are of a similar age), and the scholarly-minded and egalitarian Nuari senators.

## KENDACH

Kendach is a County on the Isle of Dawn. Southeast of Kendach Town and the Fortress is the large Kendach Escarpment, claimed by the County. Thyatians, Dunael and Alphatians are all present in the city, with Thyatian being the main tongue used.

**Julia Kendasius** (born 962, C17, of Halav, N) rules this dominion. An ambitious woman who wants Kendach to become the most powerful region on the Isle of Dawn, she would like to turn the County into a Grand-Duchy by absorbing Redstone and West Portage under

**Population:** 5,000+

**Dominion ruler:** Countess Julia Kendasius

Senators:

Countess Julia Kendasius (ruler representative), Gens Aurelia

Andrew Selkirk, (first elected), Populares

Storm Sinclair, (second elected), Gens Zendrolian

her rule. To do so she has invested especially in military expenses and encouraged immigrants to boost the population. She is a blond woman with brown eyes who likes to dress in white and uses symbols and her way of speech to impress upon others her fervent faith in Halav.

Julia also acts as her own appointed Senator in Thyatis City, since she thinks the matter of her ambition is too delicate at this stage to leave in the hands of others, although this is quite time (and money) consuming. The Shadow Hand (and its members in the Senate, Maria Evergetes and Memmus Theophilos) is studying her to see if there could be some room for it to gain something from the situation - although it is wary not to tread on the feet of the powerful *Westies* (the West Portage thieves' guild).

If the Shadow Hand is moving, West Portage is not standing still. The thieves' guild has a representative in Kendach and in the Senate, **Andrew Selkirk** (born 961, T12, TN). A ethnic Dunael, former acrobat thief who travelled all through the Isle of Dawn in his younger years, he has become one of the Westies Guildmasters and has been the ruler of the Guild's branch in Kendach. His main

role in the Senate is to oppose Julia's expansion - and his bribes and expenses in Thyatis and Kendach to win away supporters from the Countess have exceeded her own. In the meantime, he has grown fond of the pleasure of opposing prickly aristocrats, priests and senators.

The retired Army officer **Storm Sinclair** (born 948, F10, LN) seems to be the only Senator from Kendach that is sincerely interested in the city's administration. A former fighter and a Knight of Thyatis, Storm is stubborn but unimaginative. Undecided about the Countess's idea of turning Kendach into a Grand-Duchy, Sinclair tends to keep a low profile in the Senate and relies much on the help of his talkative, Alphatian-descended wife **Sarmella** (born 951, W4, CG). Sarmella, with the pen name of Mistress Rose, is the most popular romance novel author in Thyatis, something that makes Sinclair clearly uncomfortable. Luckily for him, the connection is not known. Storm and Sarmella have three children - **Mark** (born 975, F2, TN), an Army officer; **Ethlianna** (born 978, W1, NG), an apprentice wizard; and **Paul** (born 982, NM, NG), who plans to enroll at the University of Biazzan at the start of the fall semester to study ancient history.

## KERENDAS

Kerendas is one of the most prominent dominions of Thyatis, the center for cavalry training and the source of the best horses in Mainland Thyatis. The Kerendans are horse-crazy - horse races, jousts, fairs and stock shows are wildly popular. Kerendas (100,000) is the second-largest city in Thyatis, with a good seaport, the famous West Reach school for officers of the Thyatian Cavalry.

Population: 600,000

Dominion ruler: Duke Maldinius Kerendas.

Senators:

Duke Maldinius Kerendas, Gens Aemilia; Consul.

Marco Faralli (ruler representative), Gens Aemilia.

Duccio Senese, (first elected), Gens Aemilia; Praetor of Mainland Thyatis.

Cornelios Albireus, (second elected), Gens Aemilia

Valerianus Acrocuzritos, (third elected), Populares

Duke **Maldinius Kerendas** (born 966, F18, CE), since 997 Consul of the Empire for the first time, has the reputation of being a great adventurer and warrior - which is true if victory is the only thing that qualifies you for those roles. His elder brothers all died mysterious deaths, until Maldinius was the sole ducal heir. On his adventures, many of his companions died heroically - usually in sinking ships or burning buildings, shortly after the enemy was beaten and the treasure recovered. He's a backstabber, gossiper, and villain with a voice and manner as smooth as silk - and no coward (it's next to impossible to become an 18-th level fighter when you're a coward). Tall, handsome, with blond hair and beard and blue eyes, Maldinius is not married, but he is known to have fathered several bastards, none of whom has been nominated as his heir. His youngest (and only surviving) brother **Malderius Kerendas** (born 976, F9, TN) currently holds the



aristocratic seat belonging to the Kerendas family (see below), and is his heir to the ducal seat. Duke Maldinius is one of the most important senators of Gens Aemilia, and he is utterly committed to his role as an Aemilii 'top player'.

Maldinius's representative in the Senate is **Marco Faralli** (born 958, NM, TN). Since Maldinius has little trust in others - and few friends -, he has taken to the habit of raising one of the previously elected senators to the seat shortly before the new elections. His choice is based on popular opinion - something that he discovers by calling for a public acclamation of his potential candidate in the central plaza of Kerendas. Marco, coming from a wealthy merchant family that owns one of the most appreciated running horse stables of the Empire, and a loyal Aemilii man, received the strongest applause in the plaza and thus received the seat, to his great

personal satisfaction. He is a disciplined, dutiful but otherwise unremarkable Senator - exactly the type of man Maldinius likes to have at his side.

The popularity of the Kerendas family as excellent rulers and senatorial champions have always made the Duchy a stronghold of Gens Aemilia and of the moderate senatorial right. Other important Senators of the Gens, like Tiberius Paulus, were born and raised in Kerendas. Maldinius and Tiberius, with their personal magnetism and skills, have further increased the reputation of the Aemilii in the eyes of their fellow countrymen. However, Maldinius is a lone wolf who prefers to act through his power and prestige as a Duke and through ducal officials, and leaves to Tiberius the role of dealing and finding trustworthy candidates for the Senate, whom then Maldinius discreetly (and, if need may be, with illegal pressures and means)



supports. Two of the three Senators elected in 997 belong to the Aemilii faction and are Tiberius' men.

The first of them is **Duccio Senese** (born 955, NM, LN), a three-times Quaestor and famed judge coming from a minor branch of the Aemilius family, who has held a Senatorial seat on and off for the past twenty years. Kerendas was far from the Spike Assault and Senator Senese is one of the most vocal in minimizing the positive role of Emperor Thincol in the defense of the city, something that the imperial family finds infuriating. Senese is the new Praetor of Mainland Thyatis.

**Cornelios Albireus** (born 957, T10/Wererat10, NE) is a merchant who left Thyatis about twenty years ago to inherit his uncle's stake in a Kerendan housestable. He has since greatly increased the family riches, and is a renowned, wealthy and popular citizen, and a minor Senator of Gens Aemilia, content to sit through his second term. However, truth is that Cornelios is a wererat from the sewers of Thyatis City, who killed the true Cornelios and his uncle and is posing as his heir.

**Valerianus Acrocuzritos** (born 948, NM, CN) is the adopted son of a childless, middle class Kerendan family. Valerianus started his political

career about ten years ago, by denouncing that not everything went well in the optimistic, rich Kerendas. He was close to the plight of outcasts and poor people, and managed to get into the Senate two elections ago. Alas, immediately after that, Maldinius Kerendas and the Aemilii decided to buy him up. If he had not complied, they would probably have killed him. Acrocuzritos's denounces became more vague and populist - in a single word, empty. He became popular as a denouncer of corruption as a moral problem of the Empire, but has not really done anything practical to eradicate it in the Senate, much less in Kerendas. Valerianus has two sons from his wife Amatrice, the older, serious **Vanadios** (born 971, T(Rake) 3, TN), who works as a dock officer at the port of Kerendas; and the younger, reckless **Valentine** (born 974, T(Rake) 7, NE), who moved to Thyatis to study but turned low-life in his early twenties, became estranged from his parents, and was saved from financial ruin by Helenites Osteropolous. His hollow rants have managed to get him the seat in 997 too, but this time he was very close to lose the seat to **Gracula Matteotti** (born 973, T3, NG), a syndicalist of Populares sympathies from the Guild of Craftsmen of Southern Kerendas (based in Badivillae).

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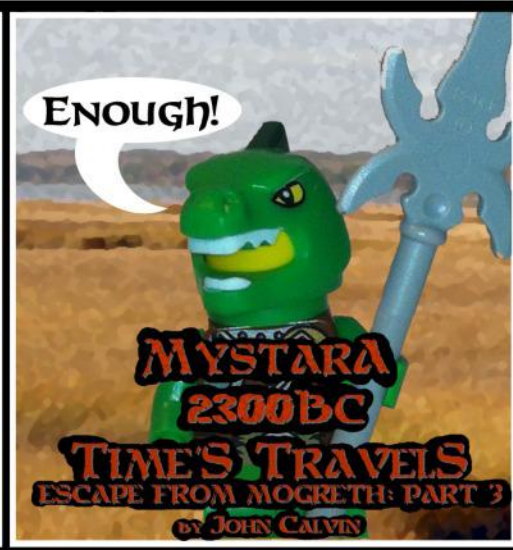
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## NEXT ISSUE



*Not final cover*

The Sea of Dread is vast... so large in fact that we will be returning to its shores in Issue #4. Fans continue to dream up adventures across the waves, so much so in fact, that we could scarcely fit them into one issue! The surface of these dangerous waters have as yet, been barely pierced. The journey is far from over, and soon we will all...

### Return To the Sea of Dread

- Anticipated contents include:
- Adventuring on Pirate Isle in search of the Three Starflowers
- Exploring the War Rafts of Kron
- Advice for Traders sailing these waters
- Concluding the History of Ierendi and Minrothad
- In depth Conversion for the Savage Tide AP

... and much more!



## Submission Guidelines

### Proposals

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:

threshold\_#\_your\_title.<extension>

(extension: see below for recommended file formats)

and the following subject format:

[ISSUE#][Manuscript] <title of your article>

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 [109](#)) for next issue deadline dates.

#Insert relevant issue number in place of '#'



# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

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## Sailing the Dread Sea

The Sea of Dread - these dark tempestuous waters loom off the southern coast of Brun, a raging force of nature that has shaped many of the nations in the Known World. Many of us have set sail upon these waters before, featured in adventure modules from X1 - The Isle of Dread, XSOLO - Lathan's Gold, X7 - The War Rafts of Kron, and many more.

These waters hold dangers both above and below the surface. Pirates from Ierendi, the Shires, and even far away Alphatia terrorize the shipping lanes, while the Tritons of Twaelar and sea monsters extort and terrorize ships that sail in deeper waters near the Thangioth Archipelago and along the shores of Davania.

The third issue of Threshold the Mystara Magazine follows in the tradition of exploring the unknown waters of the Sea of Dread... a tradition that will be continued in the next issue when we return to these waters.

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