

# THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

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## Return to Undersea

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The thirty-second issue of Mystara's premier magazine returns to the lands and people of Undersea!

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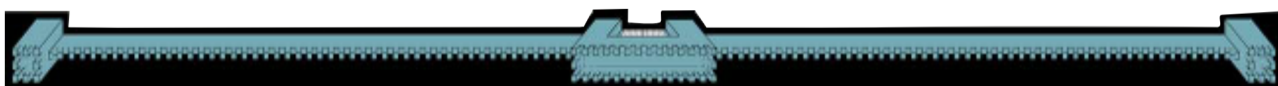
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# ISSUE #32

First published:  
September 2023

# THRESHOLD

## THE MYSTARA MAGAZINE

### OUR AIMS:

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.

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All issues of THRESHOLD are available for FREE download from the Vaults of Pandius website.

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*THRESHOLD* logo designed by Thorf

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# Back Under the Waves

This issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine* continues our exploration of the Undersea of Mystara! The world under the waves proved popular enough to allow us to publish two installments about it. For the next issue, we'll go delving into a classic D&D location, the Dungeon.

Our content starts with one more swim under the waves with the second part of my article on **Kingdoms and Empires of the Oceans**, which is again enriched by some wonderful illustrations from Jeffrey Kosh and Senarch, who have donated great art for the two Undersea issues, and some astonishing images also for the Dungeon issue.

The following article is **The Alphantian Undersea Expanded** by Hausman, an expanded classic from the Vaults of Pandius which will satisfy all your questions about the inhabitants of Alphantia if you decided to sink it as per the events of the "*Wrath of the Immortals*" boxed set. Then we have a trio of articles by Senarch: how **To Build an Undersea Hex** and also **On the Surface of the Sunlit Sea**, and finally **Old Mariner's Bluff**, an example hex on the coast of Karameikos where surface and undersea people meet and clash. Then Eliyah Von Launas, after the Aloysius Reef article of the previous issue, this time shows us **Underwater Dangers: Sharks and Crustaceans** of the sea, just in case Cab's creatures in the previous issue were not enough for your players!

We have another Mystara mapping showcase by Thorf in **Mappers of Mystara: Ricardo Mateus**, while Cab returns with two more articles and some fantastic illustrations by Jeffrey Kosh, **The Primate Races** and **Medicine Men of Mystara**. Finally Irving Galvez closes

the issue with **Legends of the Known World** Volume I, with some scary creatures to meet in the wilds.

Soon we'll begin working on issue #33, dedicated to **Dungeons**, and planned for release by the end of 2023. Following that, for the first issue of 2024, provisionally set for a June release, we'll have **Future and Alternate Mystaras**, a theme I am really looking forward to! Unless of course the Dungeon issue turns into a double feature, as happened for Undersea. That would be obviously further proof that *THRESHOLD Magazine* is indeed still going quite strong after 10 years!

To join the next issues as authors or illustrators please send your proposal to the *THRESHOLD* mail (check Submission guidelines and mail on the last page of the issue) or write in the Call for Contributors thread for issues #33 which will soon appear in The Piazza forum.

Even though we usually have no shortage of articles, we always need help for proofreading and editing the submissions. So anyone willing to help the *THRESHOLD* Editorial Team please come forward and let us know through the mail or in the Call for Contributors for issue #33 thread at The Piazza. Helping *THRESHOLD Magazine* certainly needs some time commitment, but is creative and rewarding work.

The *THRESHOLD* Editorial Team and the authors hope you will enjoy reading this new issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together, and stay tuned for the next issue!

Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)  
Editor, *THRESHOLD* Issue #32

## THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

**Cab Davidson** is microbiologist and entrepreneur living in Cambridge, UK, and has worked in and studied many different fields over the years. He has been lucky enough to have hunted for the fossils of some of the creatures he has brought back to life for *D&D* in this issue.

**Elijah von Llaunas:** playing *D&D* since 2012, he is a big rpg lover. He has tried multiple systems, from *Star Wars d20* to *Far West*, always returning to the good old BECMI. Officially playing in Mystara since 2014, he eventually became both player and Dungeon Master. Taught by Pol Ginés, he sometimes is his player and others his DM, but always a father. As a DM he seeks for cool adventures in Atruaghin... with few results. Instead, he retired to the bottom of the sea and he has become one of the (very) few people to develop a completely underwater campaign. As a final fact, he dedicated his last year to seeing documentaries of sea creatures and Jeremy Wade's *River Monsters* program for his underwater adventures.

**Hausman Santos** is an art educator and drawing professor. An enthusiast in Mystara since 1995 when he met in Brazil the *AD&D* boxed set of Karameikos. He has narrated campaigns for game groups in Thyatis, Alphatia, Rockhome and Glantri and keeps some of these groups since 2002. He manages a page for Mystara Brazilian fans on the internet. Currently he has gathered much of the material that he developed into game sessions with his group from projects

like the *Mystaran Almanac* and discussed with the members of the Old Almanac Team about the old and unfinished plotlines (around AC 1016-1017) in order to resume them.

**Irving Galvez** (a.k.a. Oleck) Mexican player since the early 80s, amateur Mystara writer since 1996. The time passes and when the days of fantasy flew away with age and you reach the stage of responsibilities, work, family and everyday problems, you look back and take those dusty books of *D&D*, and escape a moment to your childhood. Keep on playing!!!

**Jeffrey Kosh** is the pen name of a writer and graphic artist specialized in book covers and movie posters. He collaborates with various publishing companies and authors. His covers range from dark horror to space opera, from thrillers to fantasy. Inspired by great fantasy artists, such as Clyde Caldwell, Larry Elmore, Keith Parkinson, and more, Kosh likes vibrant colors and heavy use of light and a dark contrast. His graphic tends to be moody and evocative. He also likes to work on 'era-specific' movie posters and book covers, trying to recreate the style used in those years, from the 1920s to the 1990s. As a writer he has been published various times.

(<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykosh-graphics/home>)

**Sebastien Martineau** (Senarch) started playing *D&D* again in early 2022, and dusted off his prized GAZ1, promptly falling in love with Mystara again. While he drew all the time as a child, as a teen he was not encouraged to pursue his artistic interests and they faded until a few years ago, when he discovered Daz 3d rendering. He now combines Daz, Ai and digital painting in his artworks, and has started drawing again. A keen OSE/BECMI player, he enjoys the emergent storytelling from random tables found in some OSR games. This, and his love of underwater settings and lost, sunken civilisations, inspired his articles and art for this issue. Some of his work can be found here: <https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery> and he can be contacted here: [senarchpublishing@gmail.com](mailto:senarchpublishing@gmail.com)

Even though **Sturm** (a.k.a. Francesco Deferrari) 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.

**Thorfinn Tait** hails from the Orkney Islands in northern Scotland, though he has lived in Japan for many years now. Growing up with BECMI and the Known World, he learnt to type by compiling a database of Mystara's timeline. He joined the Mystara online community in 1997, but his true contributions began with the Atlas of Mystara project starting in 2005. Recently he has made the jump

to become a published fantasy cartographer, working on Bruce Heard's Calidar series. You can follow his work on his cartography site ([www.thorfmmaps.com](http://www.thorfmmaps.com)) and the Atlas site ([mystara.thorfmmaps.com](http://mystara.thorfmmaps.com)).

**Hervé Musseau**, a former editor of the fan-produced *Mystaran Almanac* series, is now helping shape *THRESHOLD Magazine*.

**Allan Palmer** (a.k.a. AllanP) was first introduced to D&D a long time ago (but not quite in a galaxy far away) by a work colleague who set up a gaming group using the last version of the "blue book" rules. While dabbling with RuneQuest and Traveler along the way, he developed a liking for what would become the world of Mystara as the BECMI box sets were released. He has always been fascinated by maps. He is an IT professional and when not indulging in hobbies of panelology, retro tv watching and family history research, uses his various PC skills to consolidate the writings of others into the issues of *THRESHOLD*.



FROM the  
MYSCARA  
FORUMS at



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

Some features in issues of *THRESHOLD* carry a “From the Mystara Forum at The Piazza” tagline. These Discussion Boards are an active and dynamic home of creativity for the Mystara community and many other game worlds. We hope you will enjoy the articles from The Piazza website: <https://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/index.php>



FROM  
The Vaults  
of Pandius



Some features in issues of *THRESHOLD* carry a “From the Vaults of Pandius” tagline. As one of our stated aims is “to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there”, we hope you will enjoy these revised or extended treasures from the Vaults of Pandius website: <http://pandius.com>





# A **MYSTARA** GLOSSARY

The Editors present a list of common abbreviations that authors may use to refer to various Mystara-related game products and events:

- AC#** - Accessory series product (rules supplements, campaign sources, etc)
- BECMI** - Basic, Expert, Companion, Master, Immortals rules (by Frank Mezter, 1983-6)
- BX** - Basic/Expert rules (by Tom Moldvay/David Cook, 1981)
- B#, X#, CM#, M#, IM#** - Basic, Expert, Companion, Immortal level adventure modules
- CoM** - "Champions of Mystara" boxed set
- DA#** - Blackmoor setting adventure modules
- DDA#** - Challenger series adventure modules
- DMR#** - Challenger series rules supplements
- DMSK** - "Dungeon Master's Survival Kit"
- DotE** - "Dawn of the Emperors" campaign boxed set
- GAZ#** - Gazetteer series campaign sources
- GAZF#** - Fan-produced campaign sources
- GRoF** - the Great Rain of Fire, a cataclysmic event in Mystara's past that destroyed the ancient Blackmoor civilization
- G:KoM** - "Glantri: Kingdom of Magic" campaign boxed set
- HW** - the Hollow World campaign setting
- HWA#, HWO#** - Hollow World adventure modules
- HWR#** - Hollow World rules supplements
- JA** - "Joshuan's Almanac & Book of Facts" campaign source
- KW** - the Known World campaign setting
- K:KoA** - "Karamaikos: Kingdom of Adventure" campaign boxed set
- MA** - Mystaran Almanac (fan-produced)
- MCMA** - "Monstrous Compendium, Mystara Appendix" rules supplement
- PC#** - Creature Catalog campaign sources
- PWA** - "Poor Wizard's Almanac & Book of Facts" I, II & III (AC1010, AC1011 & AC1012)
- PSK** - "Player's Survival Kit" campaign source
- RC** - "Rules Cyclopedia"
- RS** - Red Steel campaign setting
- SC** - Savage Coast campaign setting
- TM#** - Trail Maps
- VotPA** - "Voyage of the Princess Ark"
- VoP or Vaults** - The Vaults of Pandius website
- WotI** - "Wrath of the Immortals" campaign boxed set

Readers may also find Dave Keyser's "*An Index to Mystara Products*" and Andrew Theisens's "*Mystara acronyms*" (both available at the Vaults of Pandius website) of assistance



## NEXT ISSUE



*Cover not final illustration*

The third issue of 2023 will focus on a cornerstone of the D&D game

## DUNGEONS!

Anticipated contents include:

- Against the Wizards: Moving Mountain Menagerie of Morkhulan Minister
- Islands of Death part II
- Hidden Empires of the Kopru part II
- Mystara in Ravenloft Monsters
- The Reptilian Races of Mystara
- The Revised Mystic Class
- Legends of the Known World Vol II

...and much much more!

## YOUR OPINIONS?

The Editorial Team welcomes your feedback on this issue of THRESHOLD. 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]"



# CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

## Issue 33—Dungeons!

The third issue of 2023 will focus on a cornerstone of the D&D game!

**Proposal Deadline:** October 1st, 2023

**Manuscript Deadline:** November 1st, 2023

**Issue Published:** December 2023

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

Call for proposals for main themes of forthcoming issues:

## Issue #34—Future & Alternate Mystaras

The first issue of 2024 will focus on other versions of your favorite campaign world!

**Proposal Deadline:**

February 15th, 2024

**Manuscript Deadline:** May 1st, 2024

**Issue Published:** June 2024

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

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

Please refer to our Submission Guidelines elsewhere in this issue.

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 BECM/RC, 2nd Edition, 3rd edition/Pathfinder. However, this material should be limited to a minimum. For most NPCs, it is sufficient to mention class, level, and alignment. For important NPCs, a one or two line stat block may be included.

# THRESHOLD

## The Mystara Magazine

PDF editions and print-ready files are available for free download from the Vaults of Pandius website:  
<http://www.pandius.com/>



*THRESHOLD: The Mystara Magazine* is a non-commercial, fan-produced magazine. There is no intent to infringe upon anyone's rights, in particular those of Wizards of the Coast, which holds all rights to the original material on which contributors base their work. As the magazine is a free fanzine of original articles inspired by the world of Mystara (trademark of Wizards of the Coast), the Editorial Team cannot sell printed copies of the magazine. We have published issues of the fanzine as PDF documents that are freely downloadable from the Vaults of Pandius website. A list of the issues published follows.

Over time, the *THRESHOLD Magazine* Editorial Team received enquiries about obtaining print versions of its issues. Following continued interest, in 2022 an initial trial using issue #28 created print-ready files of cover and interior page that could be submitted to a print-on-demand service (such as [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)) by individuals to produce a professionally printed version for their personal use. The trial garnered a positive response and work continued through 2022 to generate print-ready files for all previous issues (as well as incorporating the process in the production of new issues).

The print-ready files are an option provided in addition to the "normal" PDF document version of each issue. Individuals may freely download the two print-ready files (cover and interior) and submit them to a print service for professional printing at their own risk. Any associated financial transaction is between the individual and their chosen print service. Neither the *THRESHOLD Magazine* Editorial Team nor the Vaults of Pandius receive monies in respect of the provision of these print-ready files or from the printing of them.

The print-ready interior and cover files have been formatted to produce an A4-page sized paperback book; no other page size/format is available; the print service will offer users choices of colour quality, paper stock, cover finish, etc. The print-ready files have been successfully used at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) to produce a printed book; the Editorial Team cannot guarantee the use of these files with other print services.

The print-ready version of *THRESHOLD Magazine* is provided for personal use only. *THRESHOLD Magazine* in either its PDF or print version cannot be sold in any online or physical store.

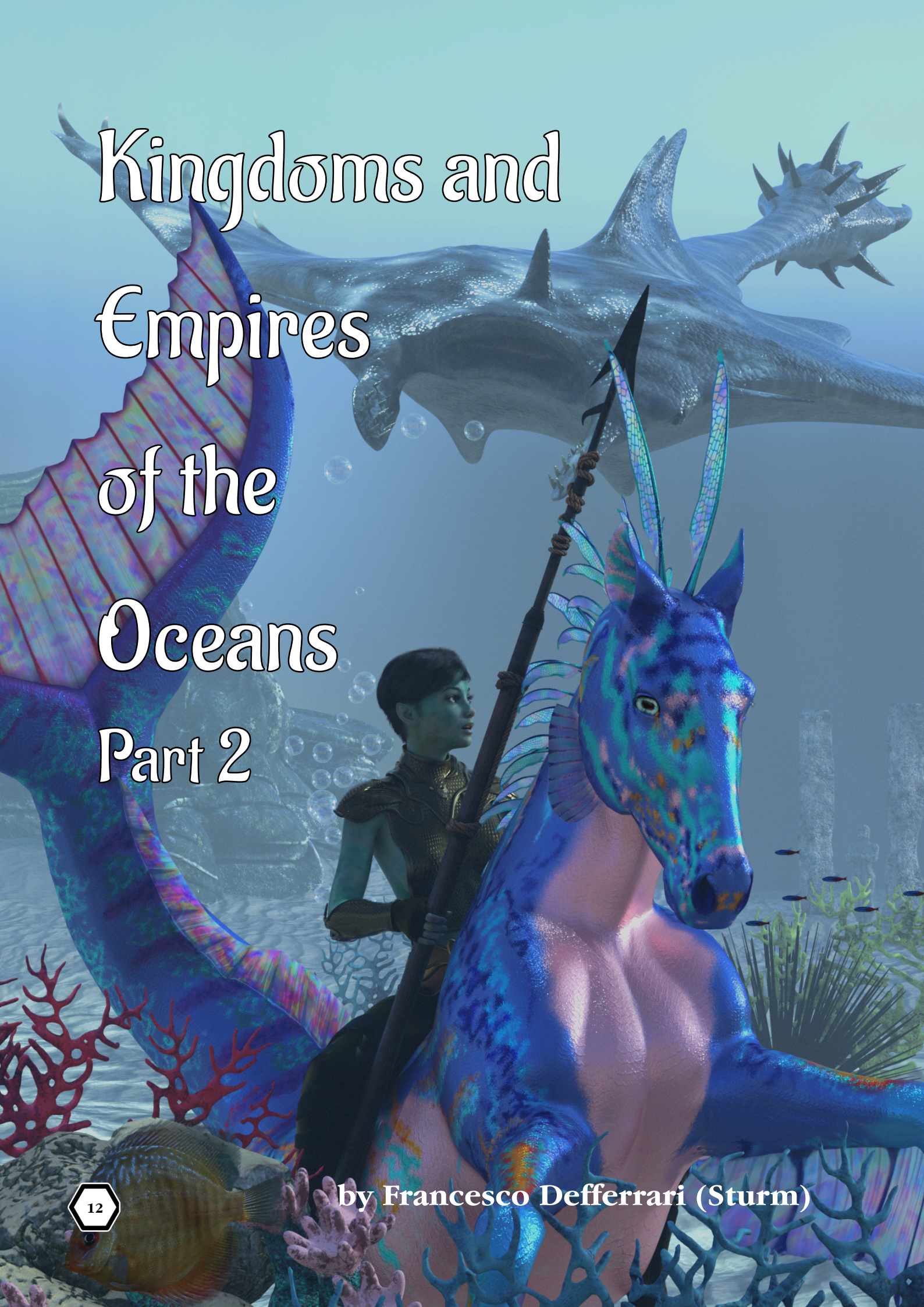
## FREE DOWNLOADS OF PREVIOUS ISSUES



Previous issues of **THRESHOLD** - the Mystara Magazine, both in digital and print-ready format are available for download from the Vaults of Pandius website ([www.pandius.com](http://www.pandius.com))

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

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| #1 (Oct 2013) "Karamikos"                  | #21 (Oct 2018) "Specularum"                       |
| #2 (Jan 2014) "Vaults of Pandius"          | #22 (Mar 2019) "Adventures & Campaigns"           |
| #3 (Mar 2014) "The Sea of Dread"           | #23 (Aug 2019) "Adventures & Campaigns 2"         |
| #4 (Jun 2014) "Return to Dread"            | #24 (Nov 2019) "Adventures & Campaigns 3"         |
| #5 (Oct 2014) "Exploring Davania"          | #25 (May 2020) "Strongholds"                      |
| #6 (Dec 2014) "The Northlands"             | #26 (Dec 2020) "Heroes, Villains & Organizations" |
| #7 (Apr 2015) "Exploring Norwold"          | #27 (Jul 2021) "25th Anniversary of the Vaults"   |
| #8 (Jul 2015) "Warlords of Norwold"        | #28 (Jan 2022) "Trade Routes and Darokin"         |
| #9 (Sep 2015) "Hollow World"               | #29 (Jul 2022) "Vampires and the Undead"          |
| #10 (Jan 2016) "Elven Realms"              | #30 (Dec 2022) "The Alphantian Sea"               |
| #11 (Apr 2016) "Thyatis & Alphatia"        | #31 (Jun 2023) "Undersea"                         |
| #12 (Jul 2016) "Ages Past"                 |   |
| #13 (Oct 2016) "A Crucible of Creatures"   |   |
| #14 (Jan 2017) "The Shadowdeep"            |   |
| #15 (Apr 2017) "Mystarospace"              |   |
| #16 (Jul 2017) "Dwarves, Gnomes & Hobbies" |   |
| #17 (Oct 2017) "Western Brun"              |   |
| #18 (Jan 2018) "Savage Coast"              |   |
| #19 (May 2018) "Planes and Immortals"      |   |
| #20 (Jul 2018) "Skothar"                   |   |



# Kingdoms and Empires of the Oceans Part 2

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)

## Part II: Around the World's Seas

### INTRODUCTION

After the panoramic view of the seas from the Savage Coast to the Alphantian Sea in the previous issue (#31) of *THRESHOLD Magazine*<sup>1</sup>, we will now take a good look at all the other seas of Mystara, going counter clockwise from the north of Brun to the north of Skothar, visiting the Sea of Brun, the Far End Ocean, the Sea of Steam and the Sea of Skothar.

In the bathymetric map of the Mystaran seas on the following page I have indicated only three colors. The light blue one means depth is within 200 meters and it's the real habitable zone of the seas. Only in this limited territory in fact photosynthesis is possible and algae can grow, sustaining a great variety of marine life. This is the only area permanently inhabited by intelligent creatures and dotted with their communities.

The middle blue one indicates a depth from 200 to 3,000 meters. Here there is little light and temperature rapidly drops to 5 or 6°C degrees even in the tropical zone. Pressure goes from 20 to 300 bar. Yet a lot of fish and other marine creatures

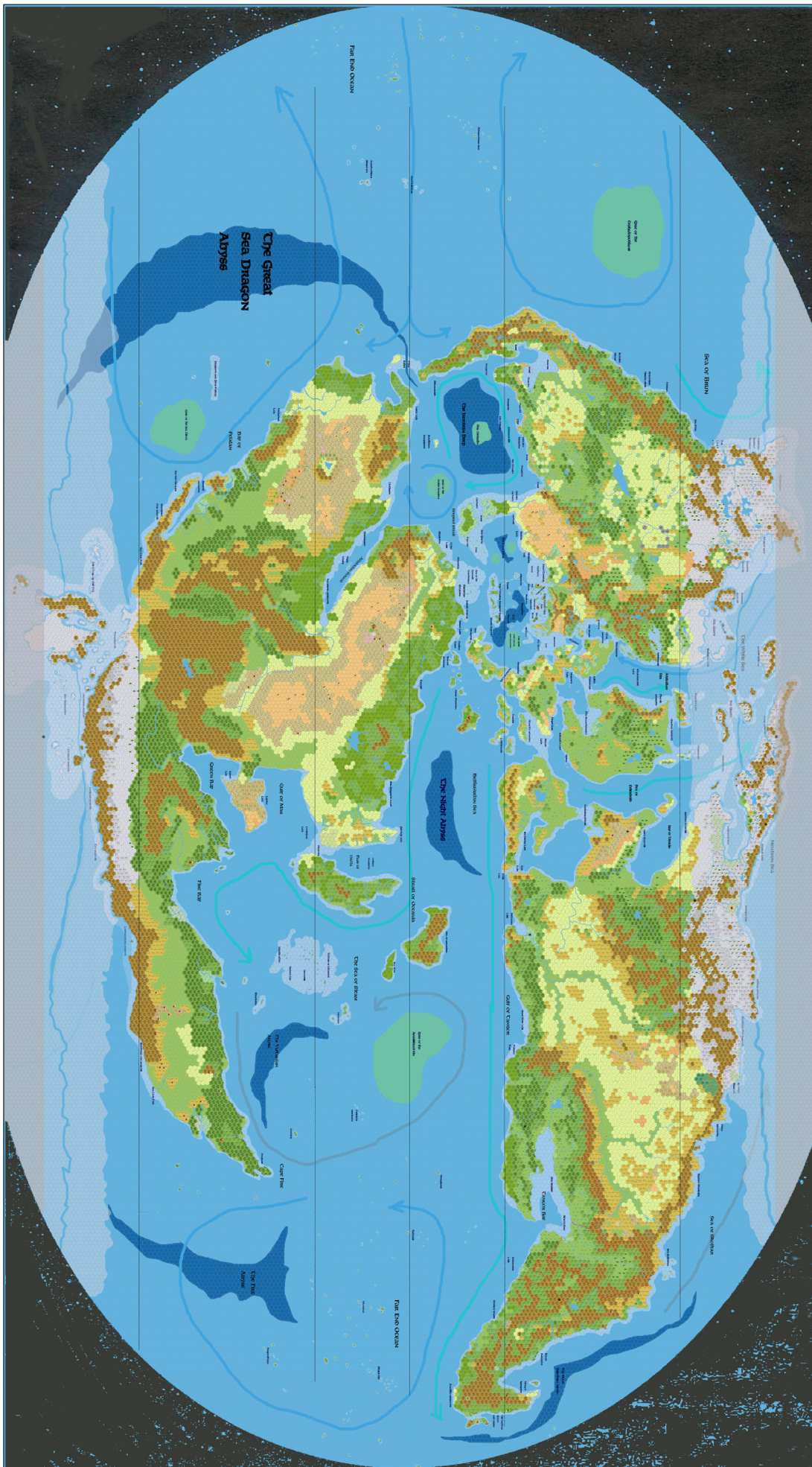
travel in this zone day and night. Penguins can dive down to 500 meters, hold their breath for almost half an hour and see well also in the dark, but seals see even better, and they can also navigate the dark waters with the vibrations of their whiskers and some can dive down to 1,500 meters. Turtles can dive down to 1,000 meters. Below the depth of about 1,000 meters, not even the little light which can filter from above is visible, and pitch darkness begins. Yet, dolphins and whales can use echolocation to find prey and avoid obstacles in the dark, and they can go at a depth of almost 3,000 meters and hold their breath for more than three hours. Intelligent creatures therefore can easily travel the blue sea as well, using marine animals or vessels, but they can hardly build permanent residences, unless they can anchor them to floating algae or some other floating structure.

The deep blue regions are areas from 3,000 meters to 15,000<sup>2</sup> meters deep. Here only abyssal creatures can roam and live, in total darkness, at incredible pressure and temperature of about 2–4°C, sus-

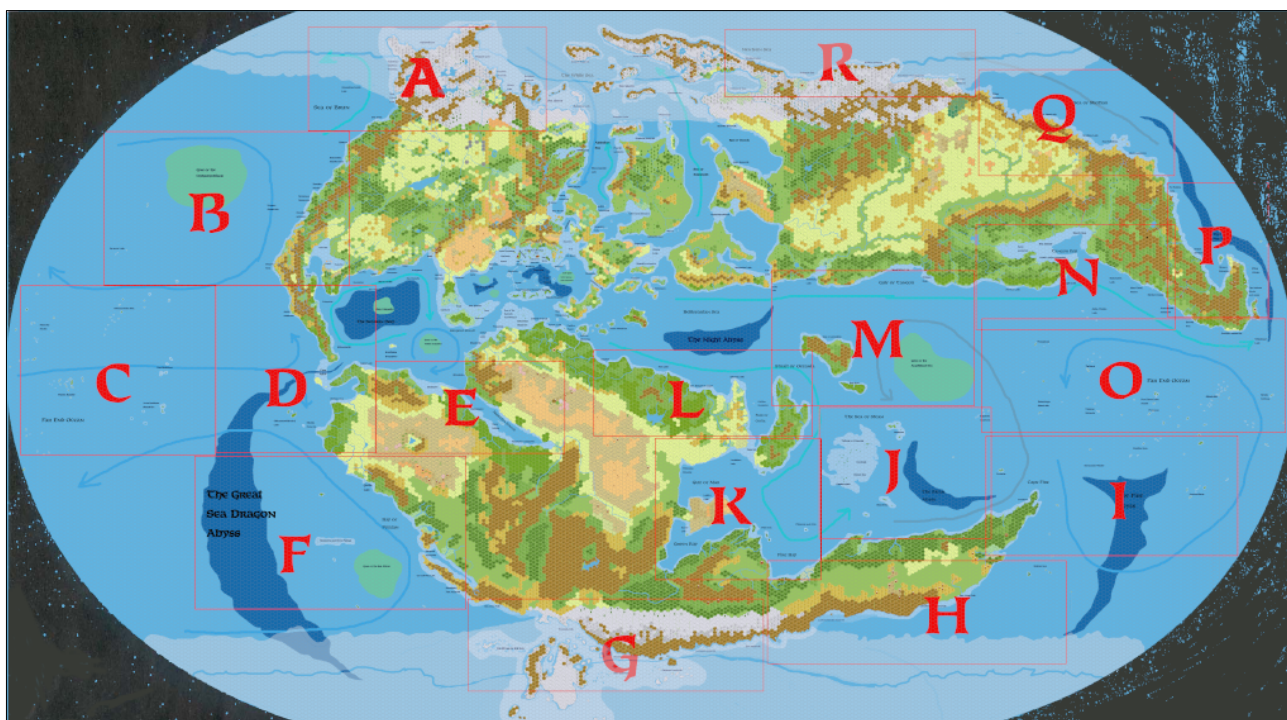
<sup>1</sup> Available at the *THRESHOLD Magazine* section of the Vaults of Pandius website: <http://pandius.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Depth of The Abyss in PC3's map is given at more than 50,000 feet.

Bathymetric map of Mystara in 72 miles per hex, showing also the main sea currents (warm in green, cold in blue, neutral in grey)







Mapped regions of Mystara's oceans discussed in this article (see key below)

taining themselves mostly with 'marine snow' i.e. the organic material which falls down from above, and eating each other. Still there is a great variety of life, and even some light, as several deep jellies or deep fish have bioluminescence or use it to lure prey<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, green-blue areas in the map indicate vast regions of floating algae which normally correspond to warm ocean gyre<sup>4</sup>. Such zones are typically inhabited by a lot of marine life and often also by intelligent creatures who can use floating algae to anchor their homes even in regions of deep waters.

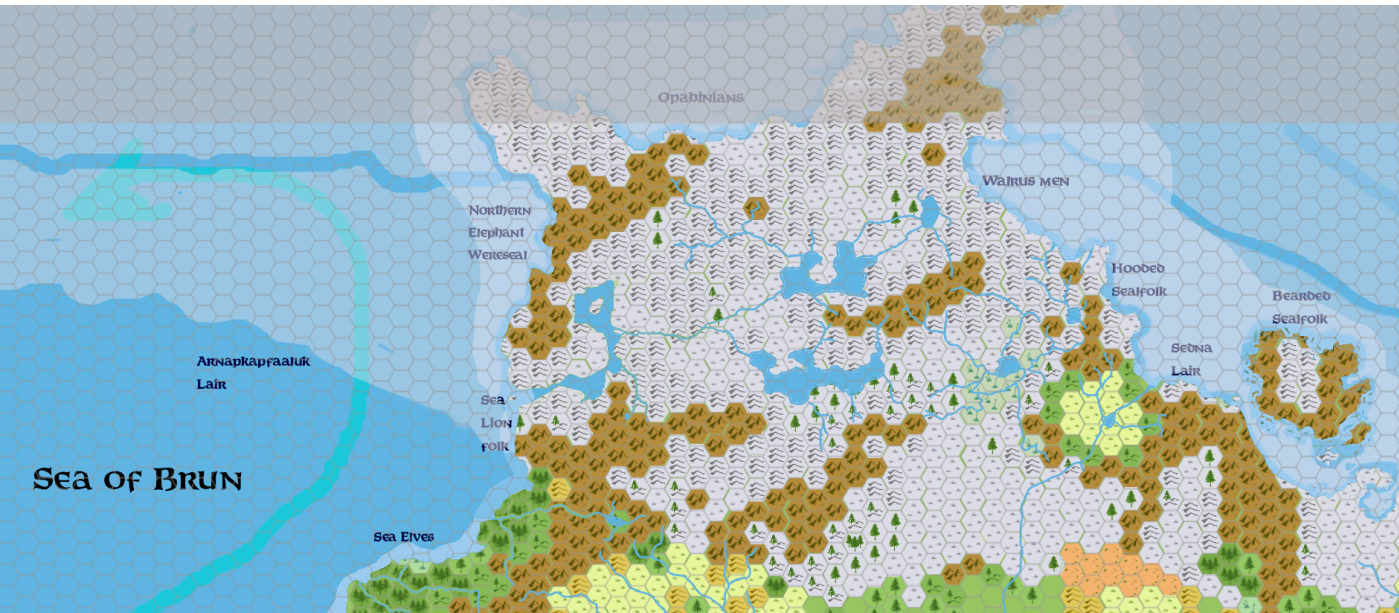
- A: Northern Sea of Brun
- B: Southern Sea of Brun
- C: Western Far End Ocean
- D: Strait of Izonda
- E: Adakkian Sound
- F: Pelatan Coast
- G: Antarctic Sea
- H: Southern Vulcanian Sea
- I: Fire Sea
- J: Sea of Steam
- K: Gulf of Mar
- L: Cestian and Aryptian Coast
- M: Oceanian Sea
- N: Tangor Bay and Coast
- O: Eastern Far End Ocean
- P: Northeastern Sea of Skothar
- Q: Central Sea of Skothar
- R: Nentsun Sea

<sup>3</sup> Also see the ["Deep Sea"](#) and ["Deep-sea Community"](#) Wikipedia entries

<sup>4</sup> See this article about the [Ocean gyre](#) on Wikipedia



## A) THE NORTHERN SEA OF BRUN



*The Northern Sea of Brun region*

### Sealfolk, Walrus Men, and the Domain of Sedna

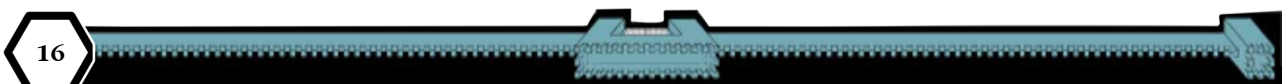
Bearded sealfolk, hooded sealfolk and walrus men, plus the other sealfolk who live in the western White Sea live also in its eastern part. These people normally have some bases on the coast as well, and even buildings, but live mostly underwater. The whole northeastern Brunian coast is dominated according to local legends by Sedna<sup>5</sup>, a sea dragon or an Immortal, usually appearing in the form of a nixie or a dragon. Some stories say she is the daughter of the sea god Protius.

### The Sea of Brun

The sea along the northwestern coast of Brun is inhabited by elephant wereseals, sea lion folks, some sea giants and kna clans and sea elves, who are quite numerous in the southern part, near the Sylvan Realm. These people are peaceful and rarely have had conflicts among them, but the deeper sea to the east is the domain of Arnapkapfaaluk<sup>6</sup>, another being of uncertain nature, possibly another sea goddess or an ancient sea dragon. Arnapkapfaaluk is served by creatures that can live in the deep sea, such as devilfish, and feared all along the coast, as it is narrated that she devoured whole villages and communities which dared defy her. She often exacts tribute from the people of this region, normally in the form of food, but sometimes also asks for live members of the communities.

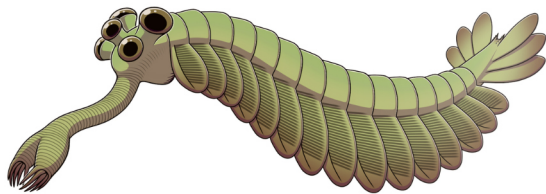
<sup>5</sup> Inspired by the [Inuit sea goddess](#) of mythology

<sup>6</sup> Another [Inuit sea goddess](#) of legend



## The Hollow World Sea

The northernmost Sea of Brun is already inside the Hollow World curvature. A reclusive community of opabinians<sup>7</sup>, an intelligent race of crabmen-like creatures which in ancient times were much more common in the seas of Mystara, still survives here.



Jun (@ni075)

*Depiction of the real world opabinia*

---

<sup>7</sup> Inspired by the real world [opabinians](#)



## B) THE SOUTHERN SEA OF BRUN



The Southern Sea of Brun region

### The Western Coast of Brun

The Western coast of Brun along the End-world line is inhabited by a variety of intelligent races. The hydrax, creatures originally from the plane of water, have colonized the northern part of the coast and even partially the land, creating their own nation in the region<sup>8</sup>. Just south of them there are the hresha-rhak,<sup>9</sup> a strange amphibian race of

fish men. Both cultures are quite reclusive, but the hresha-rhak actually trade with some of their neighbors. Further south there are the Rusalka nixies, the Moryana merrow and the Nanshe mermen<sup>10</sup>. merrow and mermen obviously should be the same race, but the two cultures have a long history of rivalry, so they call themselves and are called by other cultures with different terms<sup>11</sup>. The Nammu shark-kin live in the open sea, having adapted their culture

<sup>8</sup> Created by LoZompatore in his article [“Klagorst and surroundings: a mini atlas”](#) in the Vaults of Pandius and expanded in the *Mystaran Almanacs*’ entry, [“GREENKHLAAWDAA”](#) later

<sup>9</sup> Created by LoZompatore and Geoff Gander in the article [“Klagorst and surroundings: a mini atlas”](#) in the Vaults and later expanded in the *Mystaran Almanacs*’ [“KERMINHAE \(Land of\)”](#) entry

<sup>10</sup> Inspired by Slavic and Middle-eastern aquatic creatures, as the area is inhabited by Mystaran cultures inspired by them, see the Wikipedia entries for [Rusalka](#), [Moryana](#), [Nanshe](#) and later in the text [Nammu](#)

<sup>11</sup> The DM could choose to differentiate the two cultures by using the merman AD&D (or later editions) description for the ‘mermen’ rather than the BECM I D&D merrow description and statistics.



and homes to travel the great cold current of this region of Brun they live in connected pods made of algae which floats in it.

Along the coast of the southern Arm of the Immortal the dominant culture is instead the Dogon kna<sup>12</sup> who trade with Gombar, Suma'a and the other Tanagoro and tanagore cultures of the region.

## Gyre of the Cephalopodians

This region of the open sea is dominated by one of the biggest gyres of Mystara, a vast extension of algae inhabited mainly by cephalopodians<sup>13</sup> and kna, with not a small number of shark-kin too. The cities and communities of this region are anchored to the floating sargasso sea and float in a slow clockwise movement.

## AGUNUA LAIR

The creature who rules over the southern islands of this area and its inhabitants, mostly kna and shark-kin but other sea races too, is a mysterious entity who could be either a very powerful and ancient sea dragon or an Immortal.

<sup>12</sup> Inspired by a real world African culture which has legends of fish men, [the Nommo](#)

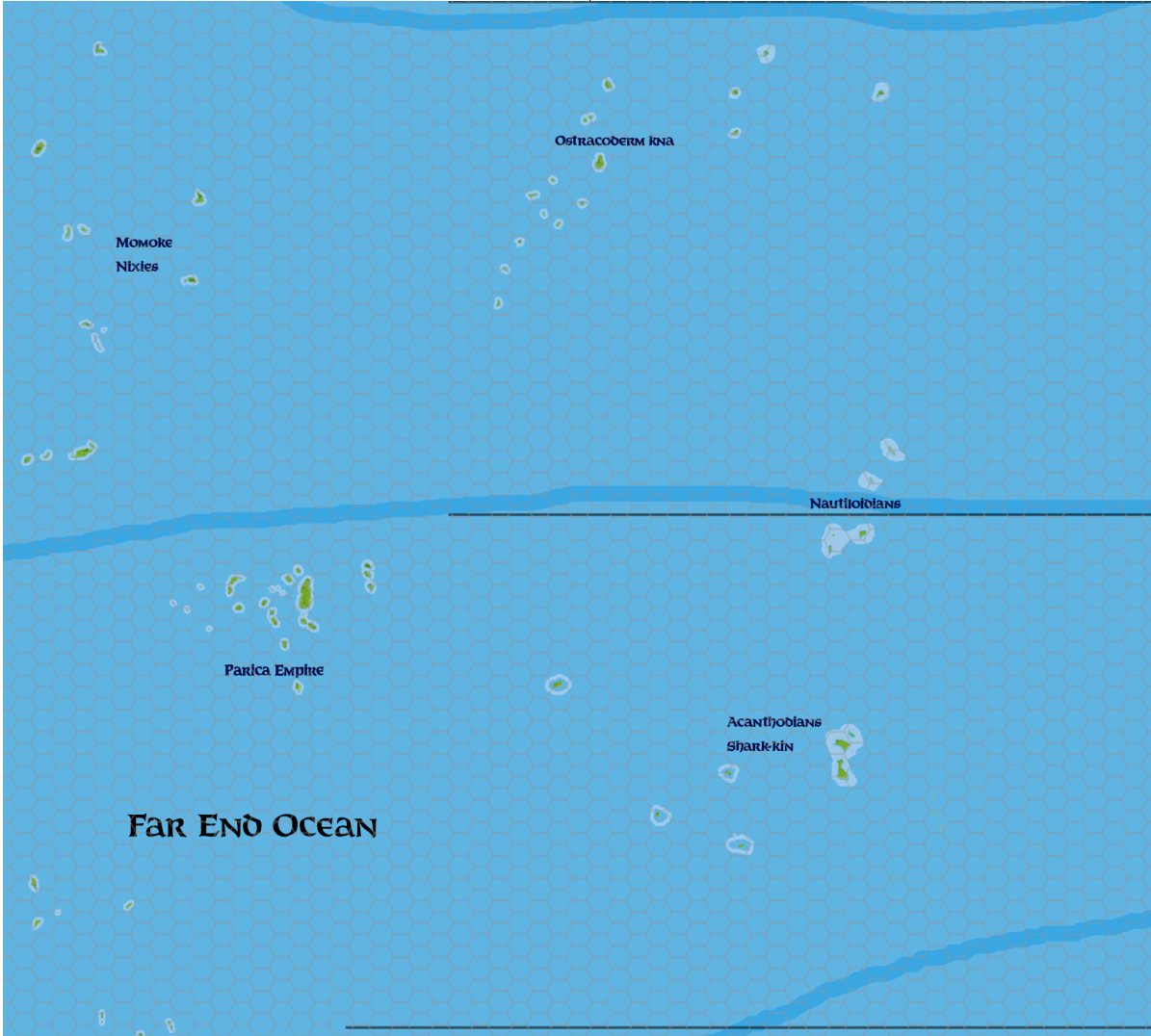
<sup>13</sup> These creatures are similar to illithids in aspect. The DM may choose to give them psionic powers or not. They could be the ancestors of the more famous *Spelljammer* illithids.





## C) THE WESTERN FAR END OCEAN

Note: Obviously for the inhabitants of the Far End Ocean, this is the Eastern part, but here in the article I've called it Western as so it appears in the world map above.



Western Far End Ocean region

### Ostracoderm Kna, Nautilodians, and Acanthodian Shark-kin

The undersea people who live in the northern part of this region of the Western Far End Ocean are likely living fossils of past ages<sup>14</sup>. The ostracoderm kna have an

<sup>14</sup> Inspired in fact by these ancient creatures, the [ostracoderm fish](#), the [nautilus](#), and the [acanthodians](#)

external carapace, which makes them quite formidable opponents. They had a true empire spanning a large area of the ocean once but nowadays they dominate over a much smaller territory and have become a relatively peaceful people. Unlike the common kna, trade is not their main interest, but they have relations with neighbors over and below the waves. The surface islands of this region are inhabited by several people descended from Oltec and



Tanagoro humans, elves, turtles, and crabmen. The nautilodians are intelligent creatures vaguely similar to the cephalopodians described earlier, but they have also an external shell over head and back. They also have a form of empathic communications between them and have built a strong and unified nation, currently at peace with other races. Finally the acanthodian shark-kin are an ancient race of shark-kin with rounded heads and spiny fins, bigger than the standard shark-kin but rather peaceful.

## The Momoke Nixies and the Parica Empire

All the people above are threatened by a rising power in the western and southern part of this region, the Parica Empire, created by merrow and sea elves, who have subjugated many other peoples, such as crabmen, snappers, shimmerfish, kna, and shark-kin. The Empire is expanding in the region and has obtained the alliance of the Momoke nixies, a group which has basically enslaved many inhabitants of the surface islands by charming chiefs, shamans and wizards. The Parica Empire is now trying to do the same in all this region of the ocean.

*Sea elf, original digital artwork by Senarch <https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery>*



## D) THE STRAIT OF IZONDA



*Strait of Izonda region*

### The Southern ARM of the IMMORTALS

This region of the sea, dominated in the east by snappers and shimmerfish, is ruled on the western coast by the Agwè merrow<sup>15</sup>, who have mixed relations with surface dwellers and other inhabitants of

the sea, sometimes trading peacefully and sometimes helping pirates. In truth, the Agwè are divided into multiple clans with different attitudes and agendas.

<sup>15</sup> Name inspired by the real world [Haitian loa](#) with the different clans inspired by different aspects of the mythical spirit





Underwater castle - Midjourney AI prompted by Senarch

## The Strait and the Ruins of Y'hog

Here starts the greatest abyss of the world of Mystara, It's also the location of the cursed ruins of Y'hog, capital of an ancient and evil empire of reptilian creatures, the carnifex<sup>16</sup>. Few inhabitants of the sea know about this lost history and fewer suspect its evil still lives here, as the very few who have explored these cursed ruins have not returned to tell the tale.

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<sup>16</sup> Created by Geoff Gander in his article "Of the Lore and Legends of Y'hog, City of the Unclean Ones, and of that Race" (available in the Vaults) and later also expanded in [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #5](#) with a description of its current state.

## The Arican Coast and the Silver Coast

The region of northeastern Davania, inhabited by descendants of Tanagoro colonists, zebrataurs and other races, is called Arica<sup>17</sup>. Its coast is dominated by the Olokun kna, who are a real trade power in a vast area of the sea, reaching also hundreds of miles south, north and east. Their southern neighbors are the Mindis omm-wa, a peaceful culture, while to the east there is the realm of Chicamassichinuinji, a very powerful dragon who dominates over sea giants, kna, and other undersea races<sup>18</sup>. The Silver coast<sup>19</sup> is the region north of Izonda and east of the straits, dominated by Lusca<sup>20</sup>, a mysterious being, possibly a giant octopus or maybe a creature mutated by the evil magic of Y'hog, feared by all the kna, shark-kin and crabmen tribes which live here.

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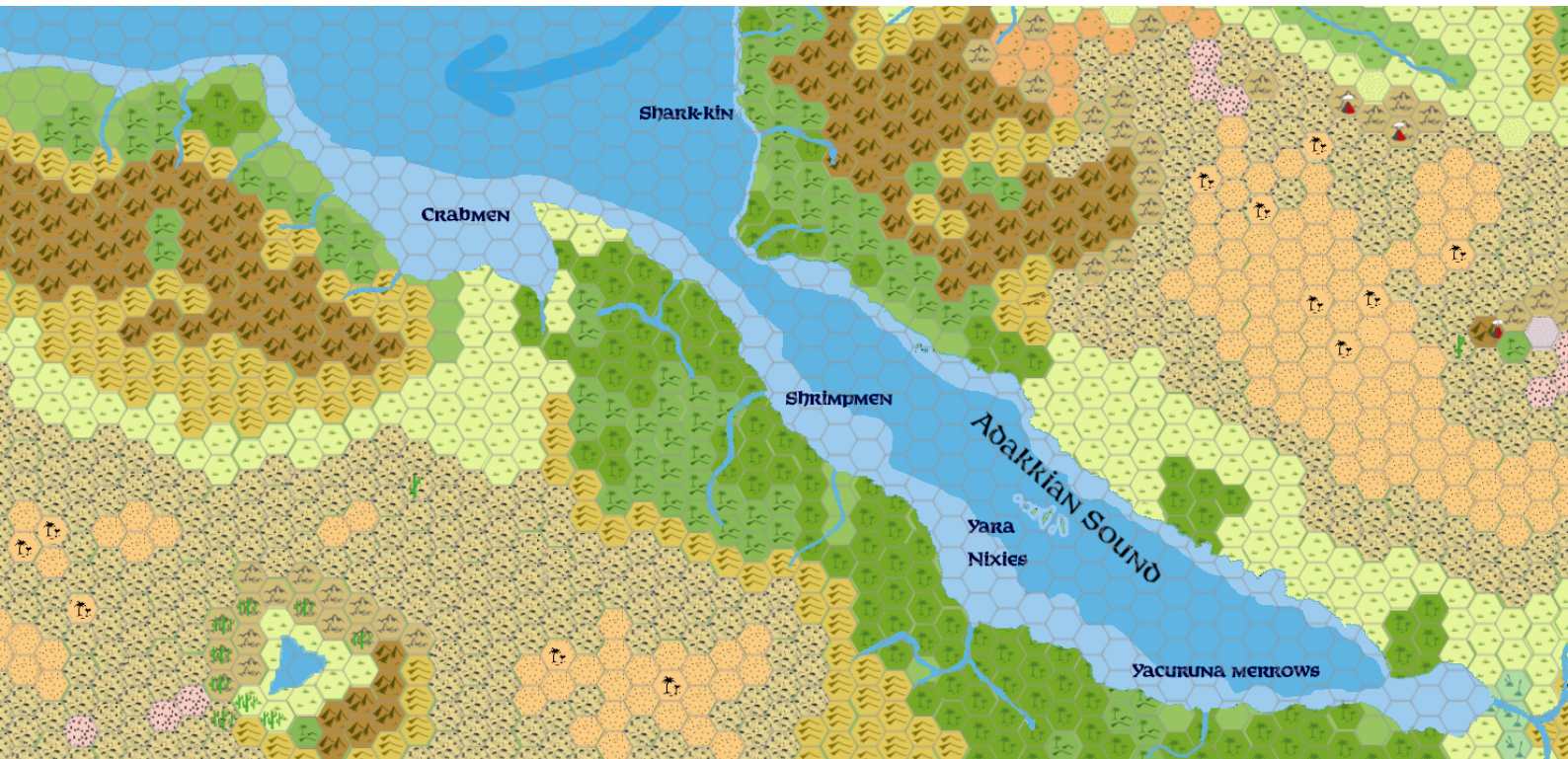
<sup>17</sup> Created by Steven Wilson in the article "[Arica, history and description](#)" (available in the Vaults)

<sup>18</sup> All names come from [water deities](#) of the world as described in Wikipedia

<sup>19</sup> See also [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #5](#), and especially the article "Davania, The Izondian Deep" by the author

<sup>20</sup> Inspired by [Lusca](#), the real world creature of Caribbean folklore

## E) THE ADACKIAN SOUND



Adackian Sound region

### The Adackian Sound and Eastern Silver Coast

The seabed of this region has a large expanse of habitable depth especially in the south, while the area is much smaller in the north. The Eastern Silver Coast is dominated under the sea by the crabmen, who also have a surface nation<sup>21</sup>. The rest of the Sound is home to several other races. Often aggressive shark-kin tribes dominate the northern part, often in alliance with the lizardmen and troglodytes of the surface. In the south live the shrimpmen, a sort of sub-race of timid and peaceful crabmen. The Yara nixies have a sinister reputation of killers and kidnappers, and some legends

say they are indeed velya, or dominated by them. The Yacuruna merrow<sup>22</sup>, a people which lives in the southernmost part of the Sound, are said to ride crocodiles and be able to turn into dolphins.

<sup>21</sup> [“Tlik’kill \(Haven of Crabmen\)”](#) created by the author for the *Mystaran Almanac* of AC 1019 and later also described in [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #5](#).

<sup>22</sup> Inspired by Amazonian legends [Iara](#) and [Yacuruna](#)

## F) THE PELATAN COAST



*Pelatan Coast region*

### The Great Sea Dragon Abyss

This is the greatest abyss among the seas of Mystara, and is believed to be responsible for an event known as “The Sea Dragon’s Wrath” which every five years causes thunderstorms and floods in all of Western Davania from the months of Flaurmont to Sviftmont. No one really knows if there is actually a sea dragon or more than one, living in these depths.

### The Open Sea and the Gyre of the Sea Elves

A significant number of sea elves who left the sea around Evergrun after the Great Rain of Fire decided to stop in a series of islands and a great plateau in the middle of the open sea, forging an alliance with local merrow, nixies and kna, where they still reside to this day. They have also colonized the gyre which takes its name from them, anchoring homes under the floating algae of this region.

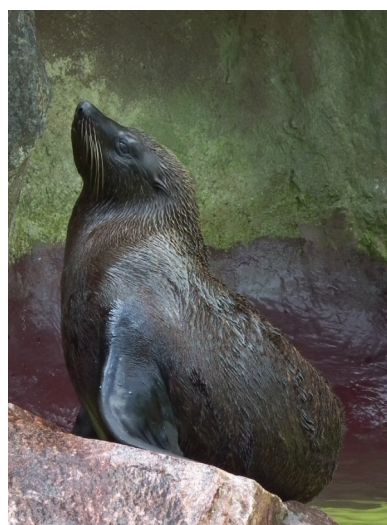


Underwater city - Midjourney AI prompted by Senarch

## The Bay of Pelatan Coast

The habitable regions along the coast are inhabited by many sea races. The north is the domain of Mama Qucha<sup>23</sup>, as she is called in the Matriarchy of Pelatan, a very ancient sea dragon who is the undisputed master of the coast and has subjects of all the possible undersea races. Mama Qucha gets along quite fine with the leadership of Pelatan, to the point of being willing to defend the nation from possible invaders from the sea and even pirates. More to the south, Coi Coi-Vilu and the Sumpall merrow<sup>24</sup> are considered rivals of Mama Qucha, or at least unwilling to submit to her. It's not clear if Coi Coi Vilu is

a sea dragon or a dragon turtle. This region of the coast is also inhabited by southern fur sealfolk<sup>25</sup>, a peaceful people but well able to defend themselves from intrusion of other races.



South American fur seal

<sup>23</sup> Inspired by the [Incan deity](#) of that name. For more about the Matriarchy of Pelatan see [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #5](#).

<sup>24</sup> Inspired by figures of [Mapuche mythology](#)

<sup>25</sup> Inspired by the [South American fur seal](#)

## G) THE ANTARCTIC SEA



*Antarctic Sea region*

### The Ice Elves of the Sea and the Sea Ice Salamanders

These two peoples live respectively west and east of Evergrun. The former elven island is still inhabited by those elves who refused to leave it and have adapted to the extreme cold of the region. The ice elves of the sea are allied with the ice elves of the surface, while the sea ice salamanders are an intelligent breed that has adapted to undersea life. They are rivals if not enemies of the elves, as are their allies, the Air Empire<sup>26</sup> of the clouds above this region of the sea. The Air Empire is inhabited mainly by cloud giants and several races of air elementals.

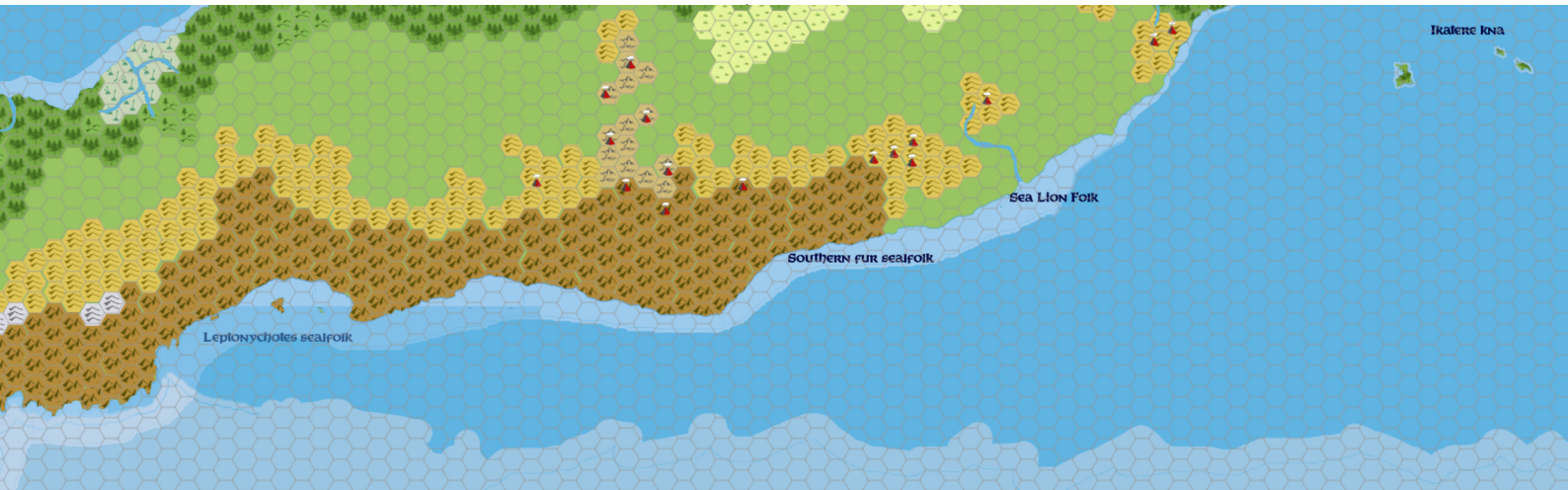
<sup>26</sup> The Air Empire is fully the author's invention, see "Sub-settings of Mystara part 2" from [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #24](#), while Evergrun as a still inhabited land was an idea introduced by LoZompatore in "[A map of Evergrun and the elvish colonies, BC3500](#)" and in other articles and later also developed by Omnibus in one of his Italian pdf Atlas supplements: "[Atlante: Evergrun](#)"

### The Southern Sealfolk and the Penguinfolk

The Davanian coast in this region is inhabited by several races of sealfolk, like the sea lion folk, the crabeater sealfolk, the elephant sealfolk, the leopard sealfolk, and the eye sealfolk<sup>27</sup>. These peoples are generally organized in clans; almost all domesticate sea mammals as mounts, and some are more aggressive than others toward their neighbors. In the region, there also live different clans and races of penguinfolk, which could be considered a local variant of gyerians. The biggest emperor penguinfolk tend to dominate the smallest races. Penguinfolk often have an enmity with sealfolk. The two people normally avoid each other, but clashes are not particularly rare.

<sup>27</sup> Inspired by the real [sea lion](#), [crabeater seal](#), [elephant seal](#), [leopard seal](#) and [Ross seal](#)

## H) SOUTHERN VULCANIA SEA



*Southern Vulcania region*

### Ikatere Kna and Sealfolk

This region of the sea is inhabited mainly by the same sealfolk races we have encountered in the previous region, plus the leptonychotes sealfolk<sup>28</sup>, who are indeed expanding both in the Vulcanian Sea and toward the Antarctic Sea. This breed of sealfolk has already subjugated several clans of other sealfolk, penguinfolk, and kna, and harbors many shamans and wicca, so they could well be on the verge of founding a true nation or even an empire. If they expand too much north they could well clash with the Ikatere kna<sup>29</sup>, a true nation of kna and merrow which dominates the coast and the seabed around multiple islands of this region and further north.



*Depiction of Ikatere*

<sup>28</sup> Inspired by the real life [Weddell seal](#)

<sup>29</sup> Inspired by [Ikatere](#), a polynesian and Maori divinity

## I) THE FIRE SEA REGION



Fire Sea region

### PONATURI AND TANIWHA OF CAPE FIRE

The region around Cape Fire is inhabited mainly by the taniwha shark-kin, a bigger variety of the more common race, and the ponaturi<sup>30</sup>, a race of goblin-like creatures, with relevant magical abilities, of unknown origin and descendance. The two races do not get along much and while the taniwha are generally benevolent toward the inhabitants of the surface, the ponaturi are not.

<sup>30</sup> Both people inspired by Maori mythology, [Taniwha](#) and [Ponaturi](#)

### THE FIRE ABYSS AND NEARBY INHABITANTS

The Fire Abyss is a deep sea region with volcanic activity, which often has warm currents or steam explosions rising from the depths. It's inhabited only by devilfish, velya, and monsters. Around it there are found more peaceful cultures: the rongomai whales, the ruahine kna, and the ammonitians. The rongomai whales are intelligent marine mammals with important magical abilities, the ruahine kna are expert wizards and traders in magic, and the ammonitians are a race of shelled and intelligent sea snails<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Inspired by Maori mythology again, [Rongomai](#) and Ruahine, and by ancient sea creatures, the [Ammonites](#)

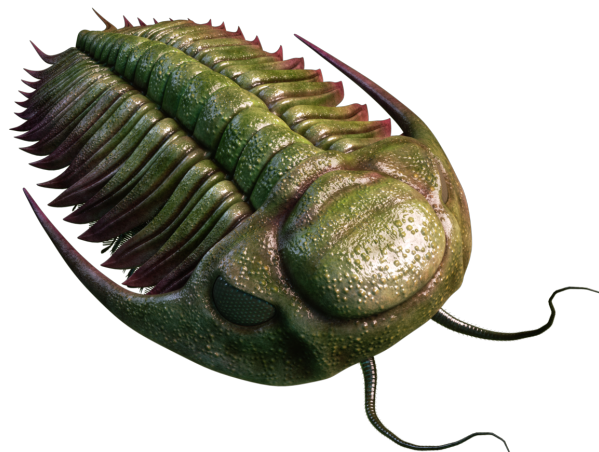
## 1) THE SEA OF STEAM



Sea of Steam region

### The Steam Abyss and the Nearby Islands

The Steam Abyss is reputedly inhabited only by monsters, devilfish, and other nasty creatures, but the seabed of the islands around it are the home of shark-kin, merrow, and a unique form of crabmen, the trilobitian<sup>32</sup>, of ancient origin. These peoples get along well among themselves as they often have to cooperate to fight monsters exiting the Abyss or Ancient Lhomarr.



3D image of trilobite

<sup>32</sup> Inspired obviously by these real ancient creatures, the [trilobites](#)



Triton knight, original artwork by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)



**TRITON KNIGHT - ©2022 Jeffrey Kosh**

THRESHOLD: The Mystara Magazine Issue #32



*Ruins of Lhomarr, Midjourney AI-generated image prompted by Senarch*



*Dagon from H. P. Lovecraft's works,  
inspiration for the hresha-rhak*

## Ancient Lhomarr

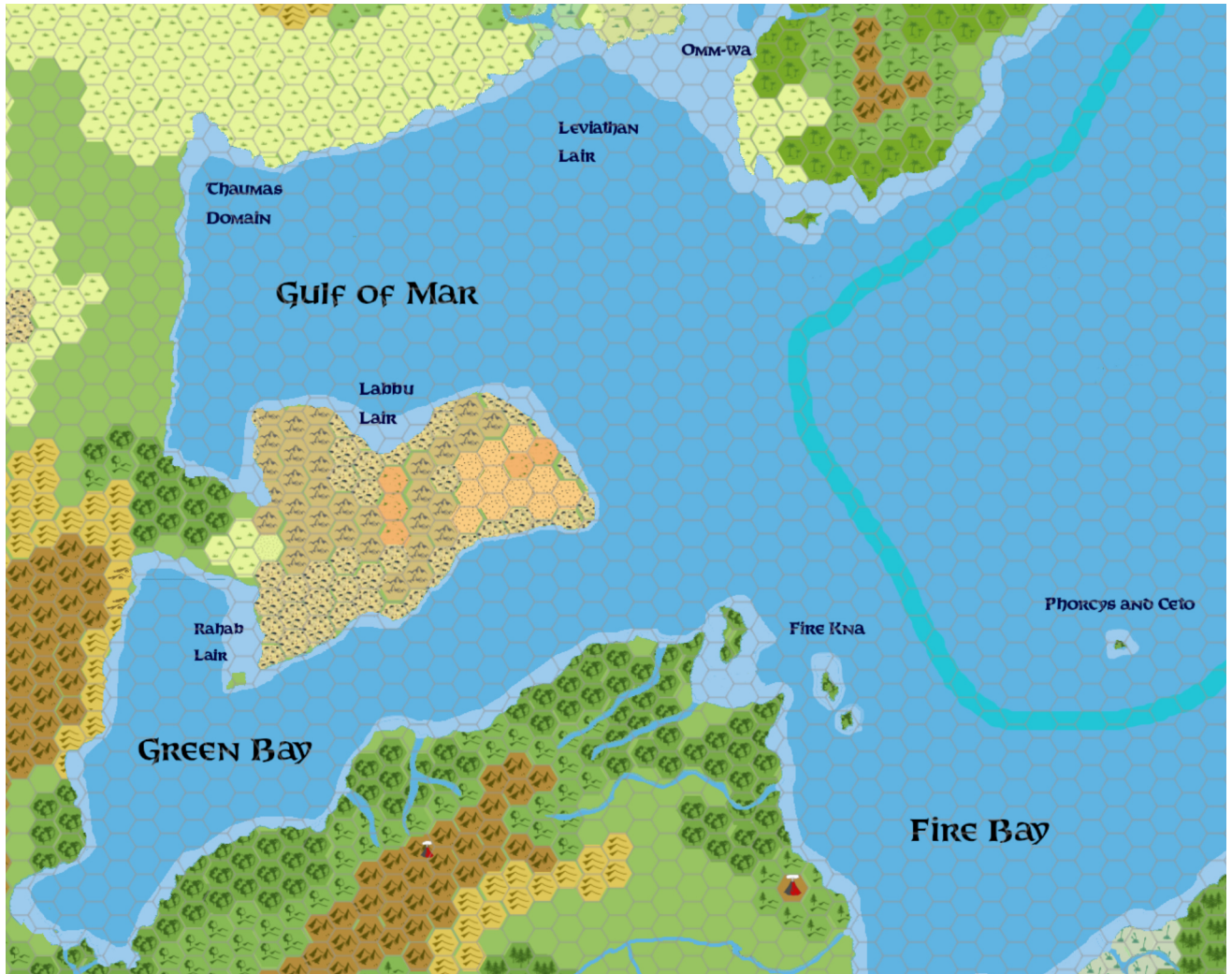
Here in the remote past of Mystara lay a great island which came to dominate half of Davania, but was destroyed in a terrible war with the carnifex of Y'hog<sup>33</sup>. Now the ruins are infested by devilfish, undead, and hresha-rhak<sup>34</sup>, and a militaristic nation of tritons who stubbornly resist them. These tritons consider themselves descendants of the ancient empire of Lhomarr<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> See "[Lhomarr: The Land, Its People, and Their History](#)," by Geoff Gander in the Vaults of Pandius

<sup>34</sup> Created by Geoff Gander in "[Servitor of Ubbeth \(Hresha-rhak\)](#)", at the Vaults, inspired by H. P. Lovecraft's stories

<sup>35</sup> An idea by the author. PC3 states that tritons escaped in the Sunlit Sea as they were pursued by devilfish, this could also be the original homeland of both races.

## K) THE GULF OF MAR



Gulf of Mar region

### Fire Bay

The region of Fire Bay is inhabited by the fire kna, a culture with great magical abilities and good relations with the gnomes of the coast. The seabed around a nearby island is instead the domain of Phorcys and Ceto<sup>36</sup>, a king and a queen of the local merrow who have a somewhat sinister fame as powerful wizards and creators of monsters and mutants.

<sup>36</sup> Inspired by these mythological creatures, [Phorcys and Ceto](#)

### Green Bay and Vulture Peninsula

The Green Bay coast is the undisputed domain of Rahab, a sea dragon who rules over the local kna and merrow. Another sea dragon named Labbu<sup>37</sup> rules instead the northern coast of the Vulture Peninsula, and the enmity between the two is legendary. The local nagpa have so far tried in vain to control either dragon.

<sup>37</sup> Inspired by the [Labbu](#), Hebrew and Mesopotamian mythical monsters



*Devilfish, digital artwork by Senarch <https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery>*

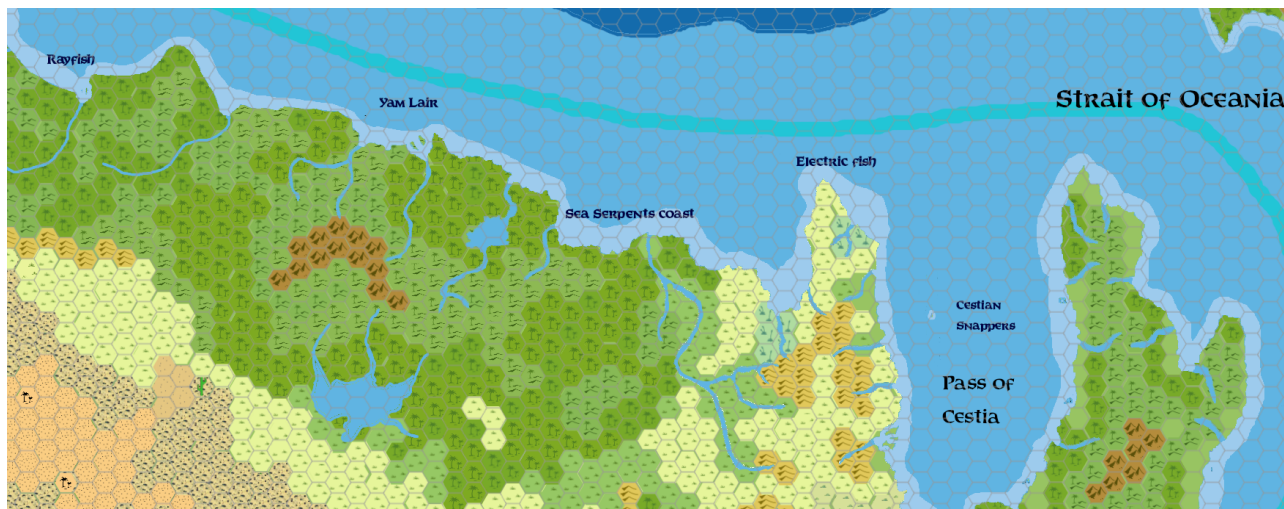
## Gulf of Mar

The northern part of the gulf is inhabited by many omm-wa, kna, and some crabmen. Omm-wa predominate toward Cestia, while the west is the domain of Thaumias, another merrow king famous for his magical abilities. Thaumias is negotiating an alliance, or a war, with the Heldannic knights of Vanya's Rest who have taken residence in what he considers to be 'his' gulf. The open sea of the gulf is inhabited by the Leviathan, a mythical sea serpent of gigantic size, feared by all undersea creatures and surface folk's ships.



*Leviathan by Gustave Doré*

## L) CESTIAN AND ARYPTIAN COAST



*Cestia and Arypt region*

### Pass of Cestia

The Pass, which is inhabited to the south mostly by the peaceful omm-wa, is infested in its northern expanse by the feared Cestian snappers and by the electric fish, a particular subrace of devilfish who can attack with a strong discharge of electric force. Fortunately for the surface and undersea inhabitants of the area, the two races hate each other passionately and therefore are more often busy assaulting each other than other people.

### Aryptian Coast

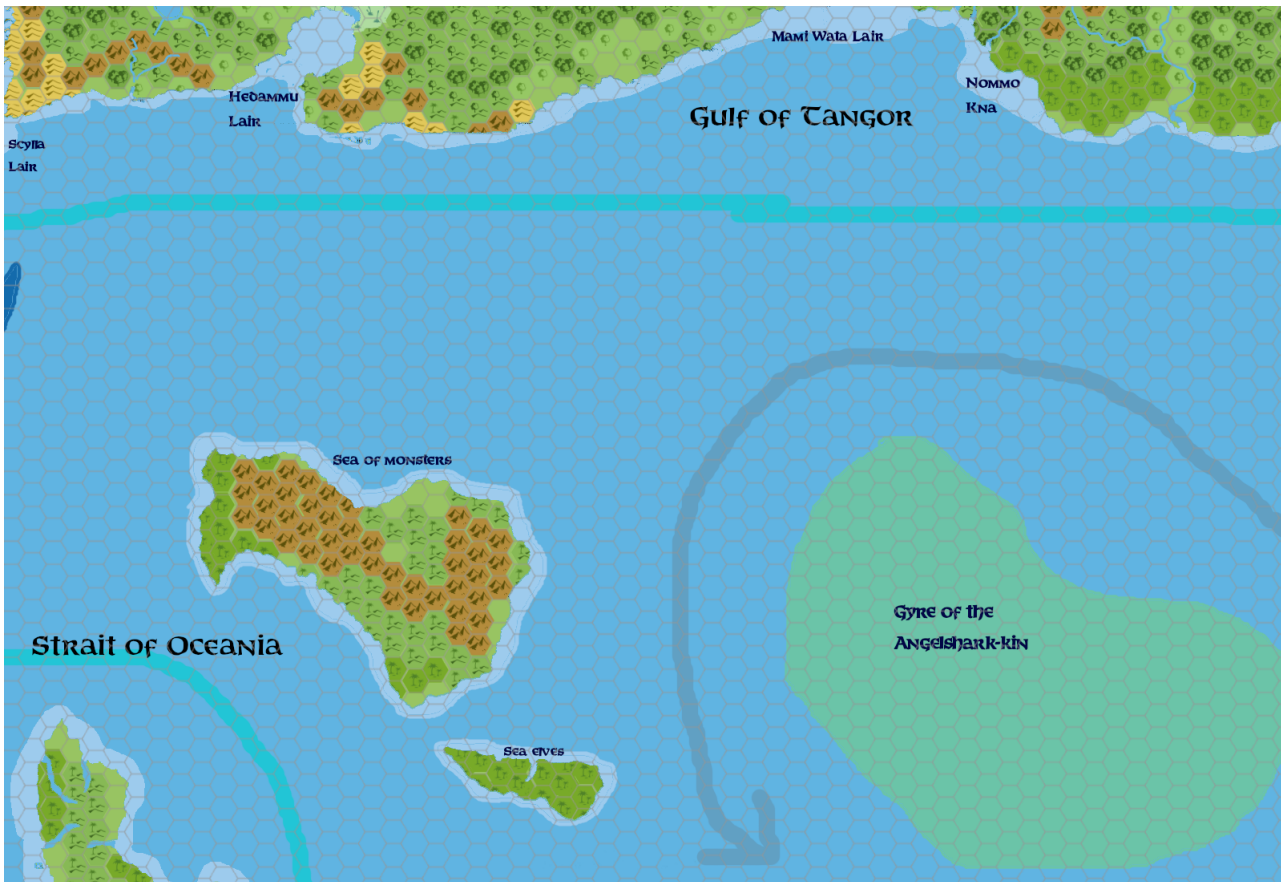
The seabed of this coast is infested with aggressive sea serpents, some say created or bred by the serpentines of Arypt before the Great Rain of Fire, to protect their coast from a possible Blackmoorian invasion<sup>38</sup>. In this region there is the domain of Yam<sup>39</sup>, another unknown being who could be a sea dragon, a deity, or a powerful kna sorcerer, notorious also because it seems that in the past he tried to conquer the surface, or at least a big tract of the coast, by colonizing rivers and lakes with his subjects. More to the west live the rayfish, a specific subrace of devilfish, who, very differently from their more famous cousins, are peaceful and friendly, even if they often suffer for the bad reputation of the devilfish.

<sup>38</sup> About the rivalry between Blackmoor and the serpentines of Davania, see [“The Age of Blackmoor”](#) by James Mishler in the Vaults

<sup>39</sup> Inspired by the mythological deity [Yam](#)



## M) OCEANIAN SEA



Oceanian Sea region

### OCEANIA AND EVERFEED

The seabed around Oceania, probably influenced by the presence of night dragons on the surface, is infested by monsters of all kinds and some corrupted sea dragons in the process of becoming night dragons themselves. Around Everfeed the local sea elves resist against these monsters, helped by nixies, tritons, merrow, kna, and other races. To the east there is the Gyre of the Angelshark-kin. This subrace of shark-kin is friendly and has often helped the sea elves against the monsters of Oceania.

### THE TANGOR COAST

The seabed along the southern coast of Skothar is inhabited by many sea races but dominated by the Nommo kna, a specific culture which is more focused on religion than trade. The Tarystian Bay however is dominated by Hedammu<sup>40</sup>, a ravenous and tyrannical sea dragon, while the Gulf of Tangor is inhabited by the merrow and nixies of Queen Mami Wata<sup>41</sup> who are generally peaceful but occasionally kidnap surface folk.

<sup>40</sup> Inspired by the mythological [Hedammu](#)

<sup>41</sup> Inspired by the African and American goddess [Mami Wata](#)



## N) THE TANGOR BAY AND COAST



Tangor Bay region

### The Bay

This region of Skothar has the most extensive habitable seabed of the continent, and therefore is densely populated by undersea races, but dominated by four main cultures. The Apas merrow are a very religious but peaceful culture. The sea drakes are a specific undersea subspecies of mandrake and woodrake. The Dewi Lanjar merrow are a sophisticated and ancient culture, builders of magnificent undersea structures. Finally the Renyu kna are a 'traditional' kna culture, who also trade with surface dwellers and have built a strong confederation of cities.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Inspired by the [sanskrit name for waters](#), an [Indonesian sea goddess](#) and [Chinese fish men](#)

### The Coast

Ao Run and Ao Qin are two very powerful sea dragons styling themselves Dragon King of the Western Sea and Dragon King of the Southern Sea respectively. The southern islands, however, are dominated by Ayida Weddo, another sea dragon claiming the open sea, while another, Bakunawa, claims the eastern coast. These dragons have many subjects, especially kna, merrow and sea drakes. Mau Thoai is instead a powerful creature, maybe a nixie or an Immortal, ruling over local kna and merrow. The Siyokoy kopru are not as devious and manipulative as their western cousins, or at least they hide it very well, and have good relations with the kna, shark-kin and merrow living in their region. The eastern Amanikable merrow meanwhile seem less peaceful, and nearby undersea races fear they are preparing a war of conquest.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Inspired by the [Chinese dragon kings of the sea](#), a [Haitian loa](#), a [Philippine sea dragon](#), a [Vietnamese goddess](#), [Philippine fish men](#) and a Philippine Tagalog deity.



## O) THE EASTERN FAR END OCEAN



*Eastern Far End Ocean region*

### The Southeastern Skotharian Coast

The extreme southeast of Skothar's coast is inhabited by Imoogi kna, a culture which venerates sea dragons and specifically Watatsumi, a powerful one who has his lair here and dominates also the nearby Amahiko merrow.<sup>44</sup>

### The Sea Kingdoms of the Far End Ocean

The habitable seabed of the ocean is only a small part around the islands, but the sheer number of islands is impressive. Most, but not all, are also inhabited by several different cultures of land dwellers who have come in wave after wave over the centuries. Inhabitants of the land and of the sea have joined into so-called Sea Kingdoms, a con-

<sup>44</sup> Inspired by [Korean mythology](#), [Japanese name and Japanese dragon deity](#)



*Sea giant*

*Midjourney AI prompted by Senarch*

*<https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery>*





federation of land and sea peoples, with surface people dominating the undersea inhabitants—or the opposite. The distance between the surface peoples' and the undersea peoples' settlements is in fact so minimal in the islands of the Far End Ocean that it is practically impossible to avoid contact, cooperation, and conflict. The islands are inhabited by more or less all possible undersea races, but especially merrow, tritons, shark-kin and sealfolk, sea giants and sea elves, kna and kopru, weresharks and wereseals, the latter two being usually land dwellers maintaining

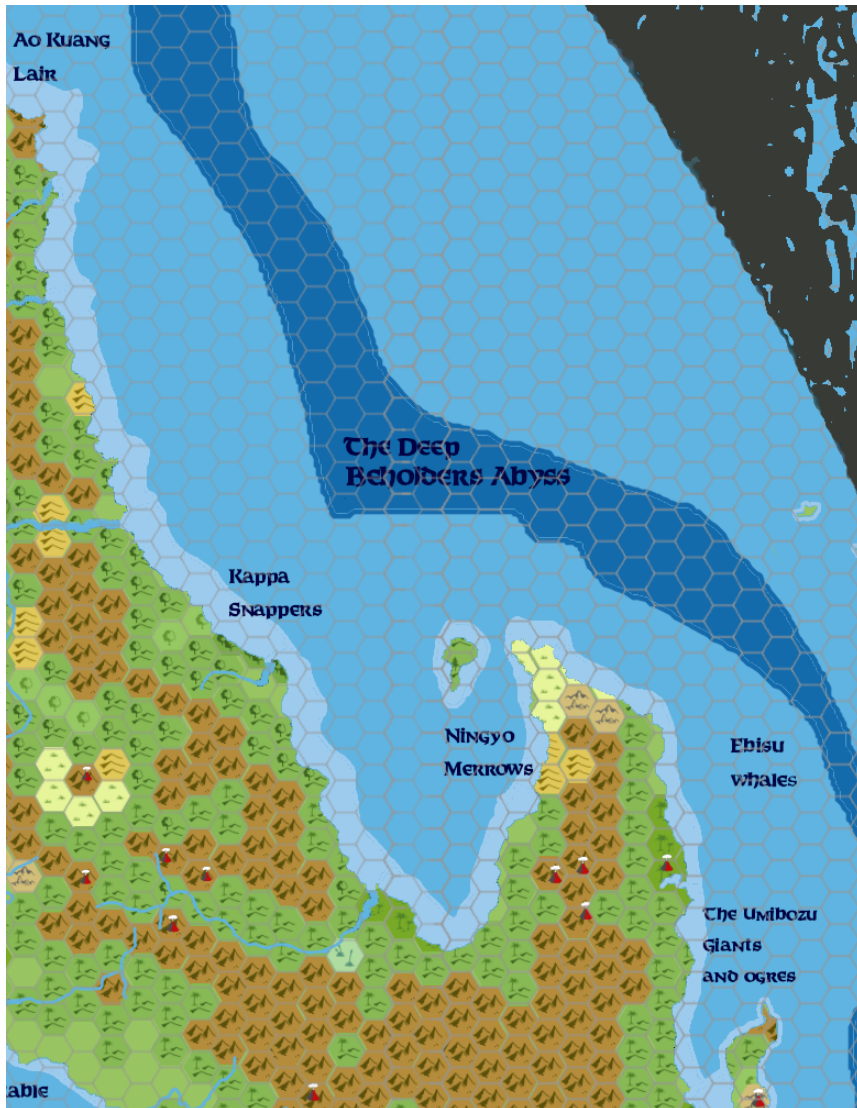
constant contact with their undersea masters or subjects.

Some sea kingdoms have risen to particular prominence over several islands and surface folks, like the Dakuwaqa shark-kin, the Tinirau mermen, the Realm of Nyai Roro Kidu with its sea giants guards, and the tritons serving the sea dragon Ryujin.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Inspired by [Fijian mythology](#), [Polynesian mythology](#), [Indonesian folklore](#) and [Japanese mythology](#)



## P) THE NORTHEASTERN SKOTHAR SEA



### The Coast and the Deep Beholders Abyss

The abyss, which runs all along the northeastern coast of Skothar, is inhabited by nasty and aggressive deep beholders who often venture to less deep regions of the sea with nefarious purposes.

The Kappa snappers and the Ningyo merrow who live along the coast often have to deal with them. Both peoples are not too hostile to surface dwellers, or at least much less than the deep beholders.

The sea dragon Ao Kuang who dominates the coast to the northwest has quite a sinister reputation as well.<sup>47</sup>

Northeastern Skothar region

### The Sea of Zyxl

The sea north of Zyxl is inhabited by the Umibozu sea giants and sea ogres who are generally quite confrontational with surface folks and ships and undersea races. The Ebisu whales who live north of them are not so unfriendly, and are even known to sometimes help ships in danger during storms.<sup>46</sup>



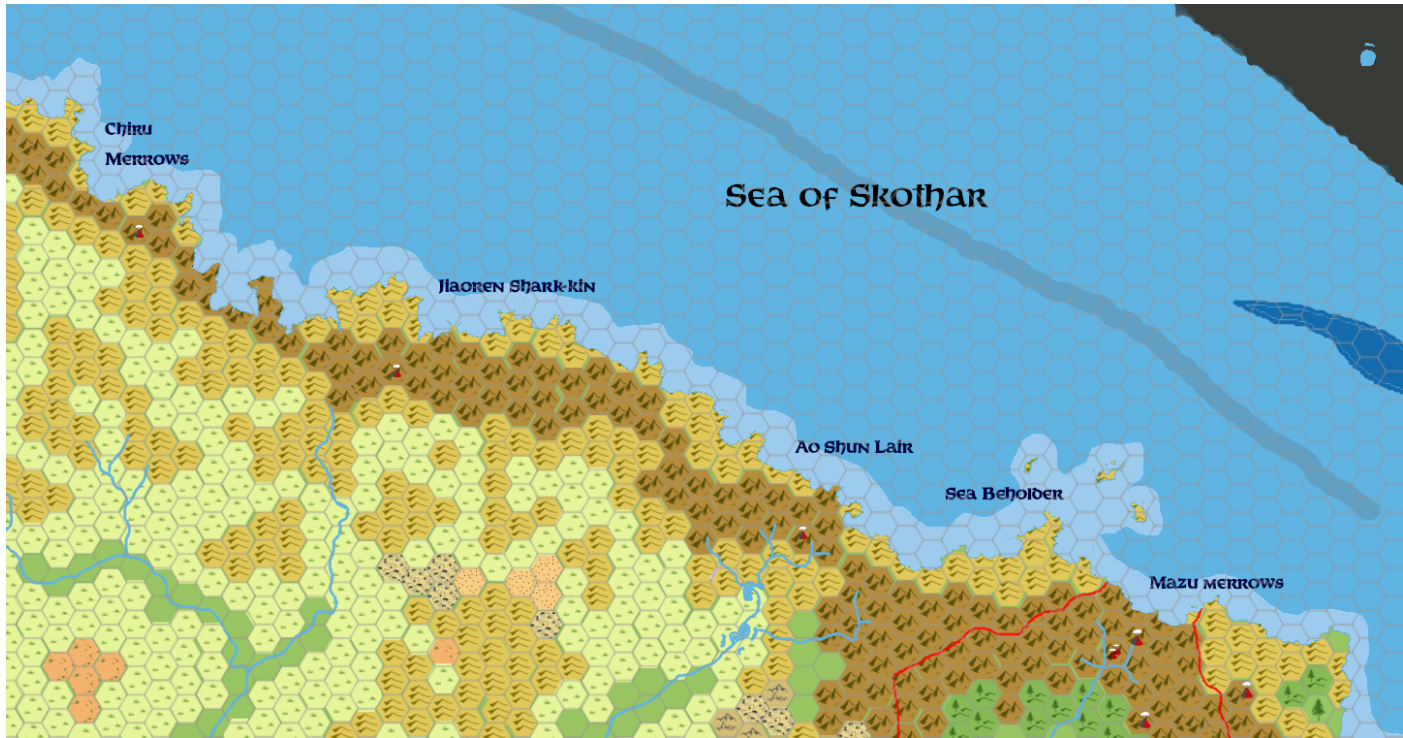
Umibōzu

<sup>46</sup> Inspired by Japanese mythology [Umibozu](#) and [Ebisu](#)

<sup>47</sup> Inspired by Japanese mythology [kappa](#), [ningyo](#) and [Chinese sea dragon king](#)



## Q) SEA OF SKOTHAR



Sea of Skothar region

### The Central Coast

The north central coast of Skothar is inhabited by many undersea races, with a certain prominence of merrow, kna, sea beholders, and shark-kin. From the south, the Mazu merrow are a peaceful people who sometimes have troubles with the northern sea beholders. The domain of Ao Shun, the sea dragon of the north, fortunately keeps the beholders in check. The Jiaoren shark-kin and the Chiru merrow have less problematic neighbors, even if they occasionally have to defend themselves from Ao Shun's attempts to conquer the whole coast.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Inspired by a [Chinese sea goddess](#), the [Chinese sea dragon of the Northern sea](#), and generic oriental names.



*Dragon King of the Seas  
in one of his manifestations*

## R) THE NENTSUN SEA



*Nentsun Sea region*

### Sealfolk of the North and the Undead Sea

The northwestern sea of Skothar is home to several races of sealfolk: the spotted sealfolk, ribbon sealfolk, northern fur sealfolk, and the walrus men. The first three races are rather peaceful while the latter are more belligerent. And they often need their strength to fight the undead, which abound along the coast near the site of former Blackmoor, where the millions who died in the Great Rain of Fire keep rising as lightning zombies or velya, possibly created by some malevolent power which still lurks in the depths.



*Spotted seal*



(Based on work posted on the Vaults of Pandius and discussed on The Piazza forum)

by Hausman Santos



FROM  
The Vaults  
of Pandius

FROM the MYSTARA  
FORUMS at



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article includes expanded details of the sunken Alphatian mainland continent, the New Alphatian Undersea and Alphatian Trench. Over time I have compiled suggestions from many friends on the Piazza forum (thanks to Michele, Havard, Giampaolo, Hervé, Khuzd and Hugin for the collaborations) and back then I tried drawing a quick map of the Alphatian Trench area between Aquas and the Sundsvall Maelstrom (southeast Alphatia) at a scale of 24 mi. per hex.

Later this work was published in the Vaults of Pandius (in 2008). To make this map I used as a reference the maps in the “*Wrath of the Immortals*” (WotI) Boxed Set (AC 1009) and in “*Poor Wizard’s Almanac III*” (AC 1012—Alphatian Sea); both are at a scale of 72 miles per hex. Then I cross-referenced it with the map of Alphatia in the “*Dawn of the Emperors*” Boxed Set, checking the area that formed the islands and zooming in on it. This article revisits the results of this work, expanding the ideas throughout the Alphatian Trench (going beyond what was originally worked on), reviewing various plots and references sown throughout various works on the subject, such as the “*Mystaran Almanacs*”, sections of the Atlas on the Vaults, and even some specific articles like “*Settlements of the New Alphatian Sea*”<sup>1</sup> (by LoZompatore) and “*Alpbak’s Gallery of Villains*”<sup>2</sup> (by me).

<sup>1</sup> [Article](#) available at the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>2</sup> Published in [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #19](#) available on the Vaults of Pandius.

## SPOILER ALERT

This article is primarily intended for Dungeon Masters to develop their campaigns in the sunken environment of Alphatia. We present here an overview of intrigue based on themes previously covered in scenario materials (canon & fanon), suggestions about NPCs, lands, plotlines, ideas, and courses of action, so that they can be developed in gaming sessions. Sensitive parts of this information (like the descriptions or suggestions of situations in specific regions) can spoil the element of surprise of the plots for the game, however the decision as to whether you read the article (or not) is up to the reader.

## NEW ALPHATIAN SEA AND UNDERSEA

Indeed, the sunken continent of Alphatia contains incredible wealth for undersea adventurers to plunder. Several powerful Alphatian undead—various forms of which abound, either ancient or spawned by the power of Entropy or even by the residual magic of the Doomsday Weapon—survived the sinking and could be working on building their own empires, now that there are not so many competitors for the path towards Immortality in the region (as in the case of Paragon, for example) and there is a lot of space for new landscapes. Explorers will notice some difficulties in accessing these territories, such as the formation of new seas (New East Sea of Dawn, New Sea of Rhuboka) with their own sea currents (SW) and climates, as well as pirates in the region, and strange storms, especially near the Sundsvall Maelstrom (which might transport them to another location like the Hollow World, or even to another plane). The territories below are under dispute from forces linked to the Sphere of Entropy, with some forces from undersea nations and races influencing the region as much as the Alphatians of Nayce and Seashield.

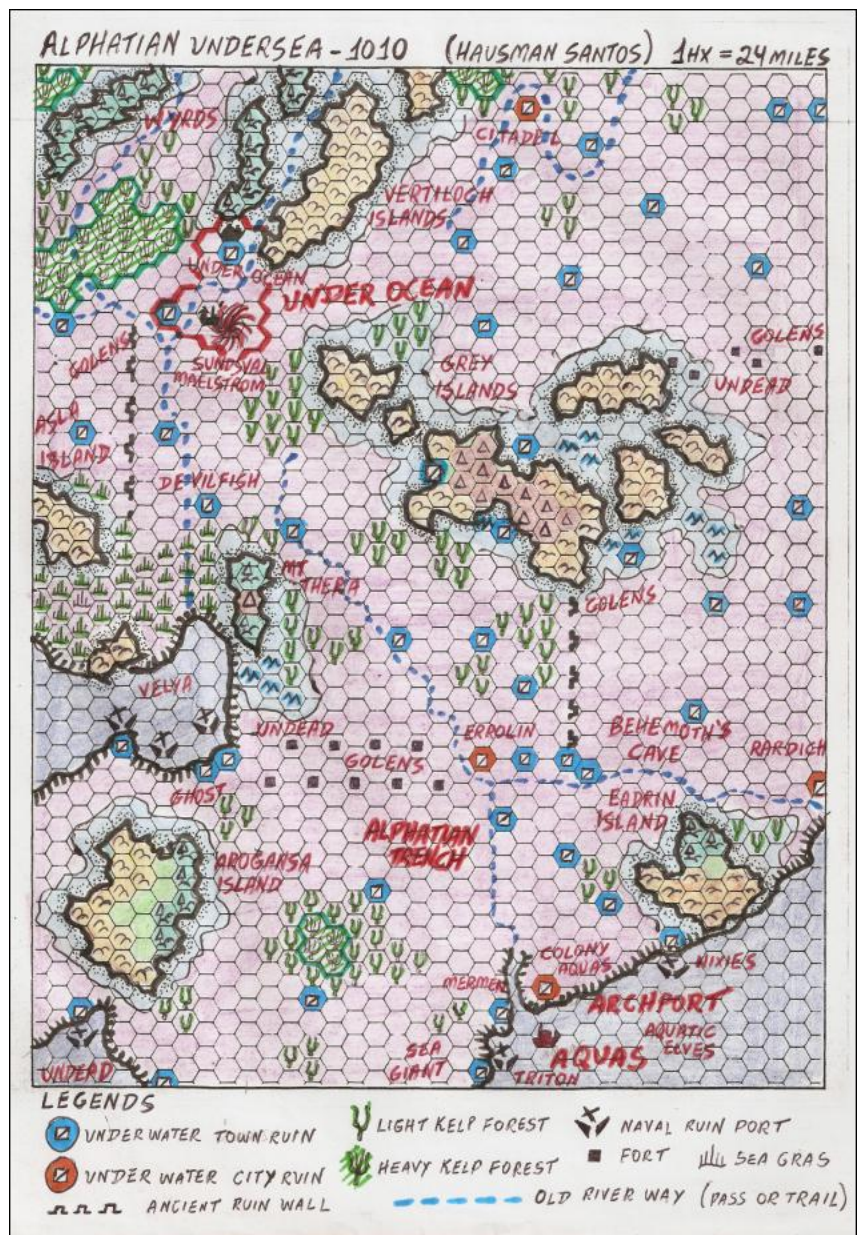
## UNDERSEA KINGDOMS AND UNDEROCEAN

Each sunken region has inherited ancient secrets and intrigues from ages past—even before the Alphatian Landfall and the Suppression Wars<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, some of these conflicts are ancient; others are from new magical forces spawned by the cataclysm (and influenced by Immortals); others are threats from either undersea or surface races; others come from other planes; and some even would challenge the Immortals themselves.

In 2008, when I started to produce a first sketch for The Piazza and the Vaults, I considered and expanded on some major features from the maps and events:

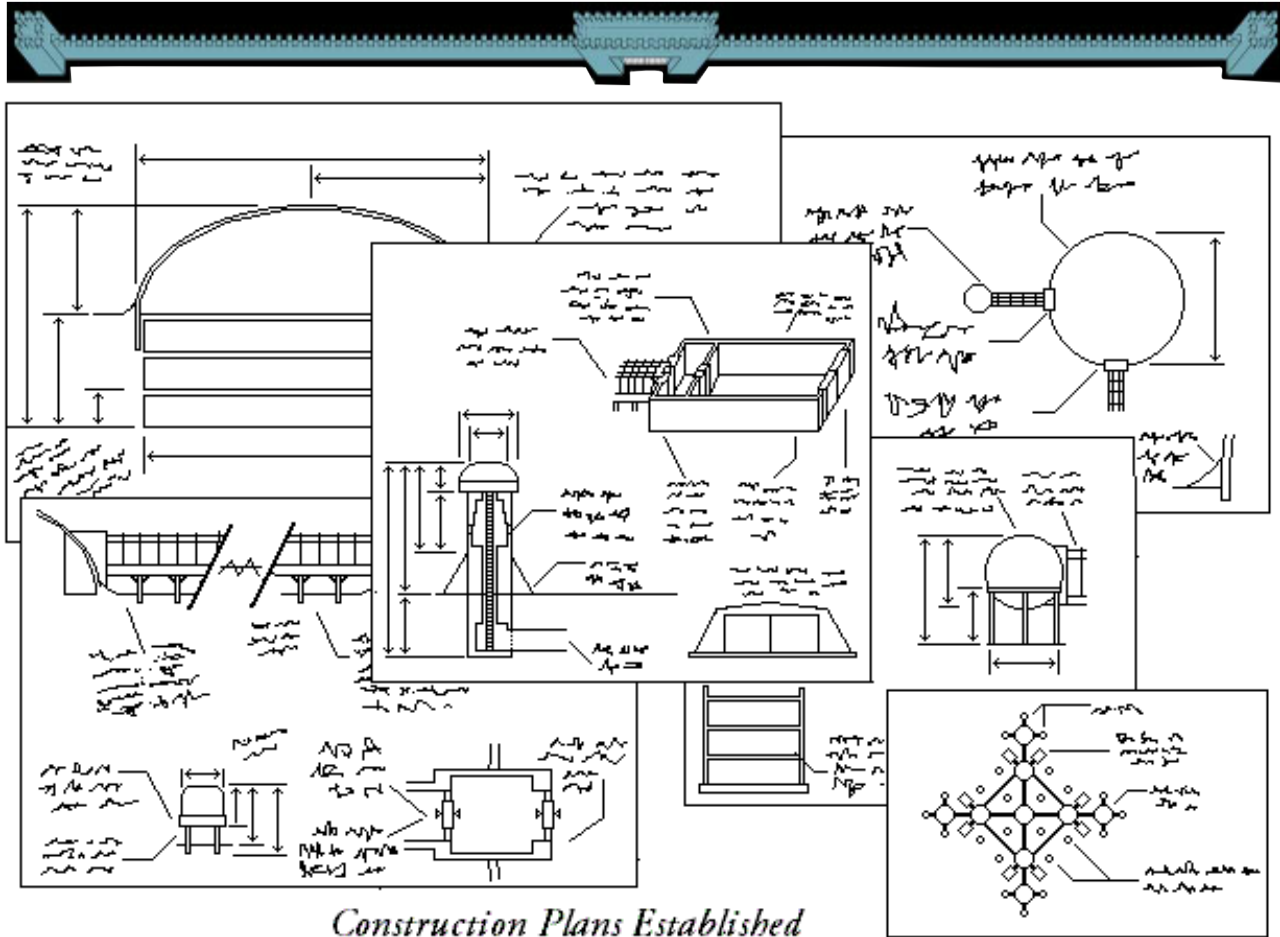
**Alphatian Trench:** Consistent with *PWA AC 1010–1012* (atlas of Aquas: notable sites), placed a mile to the north of Aquas (I added some few miles); considered the largest trench of any Mystaran ocean, with a length and breadth that shelters everything that once was the Alphatian continent (including the ruins of its cities). I marked the old borders of the continent inside of the trench in my hand-drawn map.

**Colonies of Aquas:** Consistent with *PWA AC 1010*, in which Aquas began explorations for colonization to the north of Seashield (with Archport as the most logical starting point), I included, on what would have been the closest ruins radiating from Aquas, some of the natives of Seashield to represent that expansion and exploration attempt: mermen, tritons, sea giants, nixies, etc.



<sup>3</sup> See more about this in [“The Conquest of Alphatia - The Early Years”](#) by Jamuga Khan on the Vaults of Pandius.

Old Hand-drawn Map for the Alphatian Trench and Undersea – 2008



*Construction Plans Established*

Sketch of part of Nayce’s design for the new underwater colony near Aquas – From the Vermont 7 entry in “Mystaran Almanac AC 1016”

**Ruined Naval Ports and Undead:** The ports of the cities would have become graveyards of ships, still laden with treasures and dead crew.

**Behemoth’s Cave:** As chronicled in *PWA AC 1010* the exploration team found this cave near the northern edge of Aquas (thus presumably placing it in the Alphatian Trench), before they spotted the Behemoth leaving the cave. I placed it at a safe distance from the territories of Aquas, but it could be moved closer to Aquas, to the north. While revisiting this article, and with Thorfinn’s maps and Bruce Heard’s articles now available, I am extending the zone to include more marine gargantua of various species, further north at *Worldwound Gash* in Alphatian Imperial Territories (North of Sundsvall Maelstrom), although the official

description in the Almanacs would still put it just a few miles north of Aquas, within the Alphatian Trench—and thus in a deeper region of caves.

**Golems Around Fort Lines:** I like the idea of golems in deep waters. I believe that during the Great War (AC 1005–1009) many golems would have been mobilized for military service, for heavy lifting and material transportation, or as fighting units; as a result the old forts and military outposts would be a good option for their presence on the map. It would be worth exploring the idea of them still manning the military bases against intruders today.

**Wyrds Northwest of Sundsvall Maelstrom:** At this point, the ruins of the old Kingdom of Shiye-Lawr begin, a place



where some banshees and wyrds would likely have appeared.

**Underocean Borderlines:** Consistent with the Underocean timeline, the capital of the tritons would be found 100 miles to the north of the Sundsvall Maelstrom (with communities extant to the west, east and south of the maelstrom). The suggested borders are in agreement with the geographical description in the atlas. The creation of the Kingdom dates to AC 1010, so I included it on the map.



Sundsvall Maelstrom

**Devilfish and Aquatic Beholders South of Underocean:** Devilfish are mentioned in the Underocean timeline<sup>4</sup> as the enemy in a war against the tritons of Underocean (it also mentions a city of aquatic beholders, but the city was not included in the map due to its geographical location: somewhere between the island of Aasla and Monster Island). Even after the war and the withdrawal of the devilfish, some of them could have remained in the ruins to the north of Mt. Thera.

**Velya and Blackheart Liches:** Included in the map are some velya between the islands of Aasla and Arogansa. I left out the Blackheart liches, but may return to them in a

future article based around the denizens of sunken Blackheart.

### Underneath the Sunlit Sea

About Other Undersea Realms: I suppose the Queen of the Tritons in the Sunlit Sea (as described in PC3: “*Creature Crucible – The Sea People*”) would send a strong and powerful expedition of tritons to retrieve as many magical objects as possible and map the area, making possible the formation of new nations with good possibilities of hex crawling, as in the *Expert* and *Companion* Sets. They would be a match for the challenge if you consider the undead threat in the Alphatian Trench—unless you play the tragic “*Fall of Sunlit Sea*” campaign<sup>5</sup>.

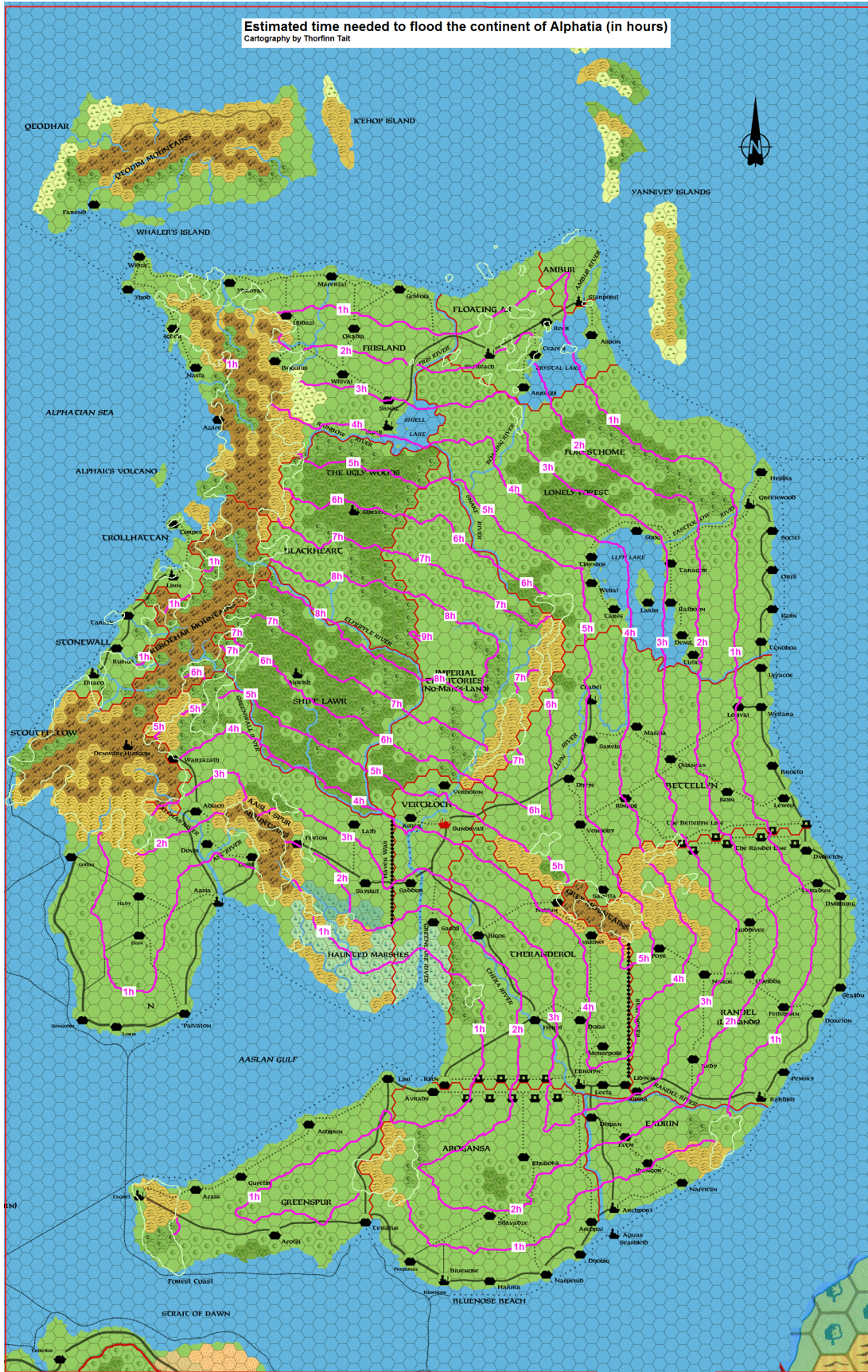
## THE ALPHATIAN TRENCH

The trench is a depression of terrain encircling the entire submerged Alphatian continent (currently the largest trench in all of Mystara). It is not known how deep the Alphatian plains now are, but it is estimated (with due contributions from LoZompatore on this data and information) to be about 1,000 feet (330 meters): from TM1: “*The Western Countries Trail Map*” we know that—before *WotI*—the height of Sundsvall above sea level was about 700 feet (210 meters). The city itself was made up of very tall buildings (for a Medieval/Renaissance city) with 10 floors or more. Let’s say they were around 90 to 120 feet (30 to 40 meters) tall.

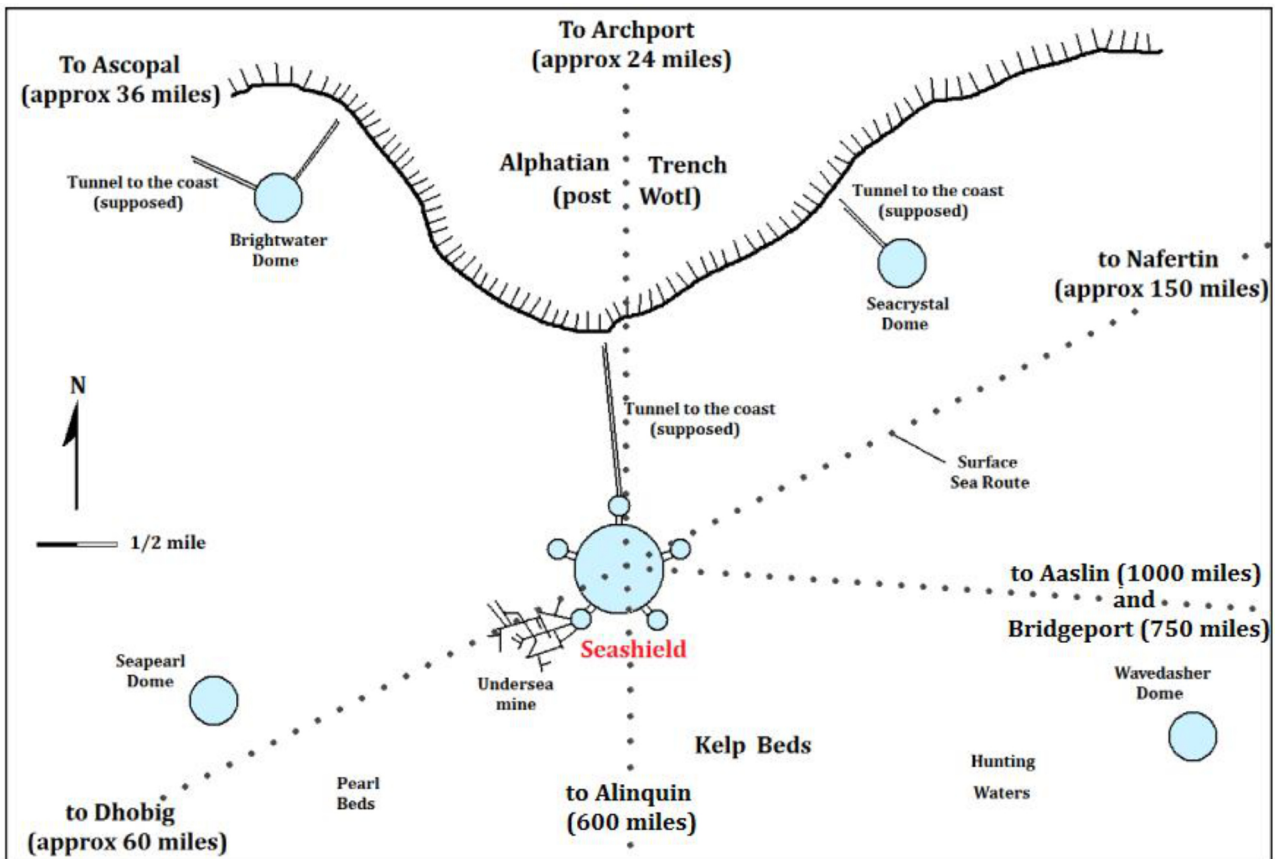
<sup>4</sup> “[Undersea Timeline](#)” by Aaron Nowack in the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>5</sup> You can get a lot of good ideas from Aaron Nowack’s “[Undersea Timeline](#)”.

This beautiful work by LoZompatore (Michele Carpita) is present in his article [“Settlements of the New Alphatian Sea”](#) on the Vaults of Pandius



Mystara: Sketch of Seashield and its surroundings



Sketch of Seashield and of its Surroundings - Art by LoZompatore

I suppose that at least a few of them survived the destruction of Sundsvall and the sinking of Alphatia. Considering that now these buildings are covered with water but they are still easily reachable by the surface (from PWAs' info about some submersible expeditions to the ruins of Sundsvall and the CDC) I would cover the city with 300 feet of water or so. From PC3 we know that 300 feet is the limit depth where most of the intelligent sea people races live (below this depth it is too dark to see and cultivate seaweeds), so I don't think this is a bad estimate.

The total sinking of the continent would be  $700 + 300 = 1,000$  feet. If Aquas is built at a 300-foot depth (for the same limitations about sea life I wrote above), then the trench in its vicinity is a dark and cold 700-foot-deep chasm graded on the "old" seafloor.

(Text by LoZompatore)

The ground near Aquas then suffered some earthquakes. The destruction didn't particularly affect Seashield, thanks to Zyndril's use of spells like *wish*, *force field* and *stone form*, thus preserving his legacy for posterity.

## THE NORTHERN REGION

In **Ambur**, the ruins of Starpoint and the secrets of the Great Observatory can now be on display for more daring explorers. The vast plains of the former **Floating Ar** allow for ample visibility given the open terrain of former pastures and farms.

**Frisland** now has its ancient Orza-feth lowlands below the waves in the Alphatian Trench. Its ancient, crumbling buildings may harbor unspakable dangers from ages past that were previously sealed by Sundsvall's magical wards. Along the northwest coast of **Kerothar Island** (popularly called

Monster Island in the modern era of Nayce) some survivors of the catastrophe live in the villages and ruins that were not submerged. Already below the waters, there are numerous submarine wrecks from the old Suppression Wars against Ystmarhavners—and perhaps there are some ghost ships and undead marauders in these depths. The Great **Foresthorne** region has become an endless sea of dead trees and dense kelp forests covering a vast region. In the **Imperial Territories**, where there are ruins from ages before Alphatia itself, a great rift (Worldwound Gash) is said to be located where Gargantuan sea creatures pass by; indeed one of the most prominent creatures to have plagued the nearby seas a little south since AC 1010 is the Behemoth.

**Blackheart's** domain (now submerged) contains several ruins of isolated towers of sorcerers' houses. Hidden among the dead kelp forests of what has become of the ancient Ugly Woods, creatures of the deep, lost magical experiments, undead, and sunken tree hamadryads (glittering like lightning zombies) plague the cursed woods. The Blackheart golems are horrible



*Sunken Forest, Midjourney AI prompted by Senarch*

monstrosities: parts of dead creatures joined together into horrible new animated aberrations. As golems “made of flesh,” they don’t need to breathe. They survived the Cataclysm and are “alive” and active under the waters, guarding their masters’ treasures. An ancient cabal in the lands now undersea, *Blackheart's Circle*<sup>6</sup> gathers some of its survivors brought in as undead, be they spectres or Alphadon lightning zombies, in their enduring dispute for their medallions and control of the lost artifact *Maggufin*<sup>7</sup>, or even the newly discovered

<sup>6</sup> The confrontation of this circle of sorcerers is first described in the First Quest Novel “*Son of Dawn*” – TSR Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> As described in the First Quest Novel “*Son of Dawn*” – TSR Publishing.



Sunken Hamadryad, Midjourney AI prompted by Senarch

secrets of *Radiance*<sup>8</sup> in Glantri. Alliances and clashes between the undead in these domains aim to control Shraek and all of Blackheart's Ugly Woods. Other forces seem to be at odds with each other in this undersea clash. The emerging power of a sorcerer known as Talerad<sup>9</sup> and his minions is seeking possession of the *Phylactery of Agmas*, an ancient artifact related to the Sphere of Entropy. Gradually the resurgence of forces linked to ancient Ilmaryl<sup>10</sup>, the elven kingdom corrupted by Atzanteotl in ages past, is taking over the ruined city of ancient Dor-Addon, southern Blackheart, and much of ancient **Shiye-Lawr**, in the form of a council of ancient warlock sorcerers from elven houses past now turned into wyrds controlled by the power of

Entropy. This power is in conflict with the forces controlling the southern lands of Shiye-Lawr, regrouping Alphadon (lightning zombies) and wyrds linked to remnants of the Sphere of Energy (once abundant among Alphatian artifacts<sup>11</sup> in Alfleish) under the banners and symbols of ancient houses that attempt to maintain tradition and autonomy.

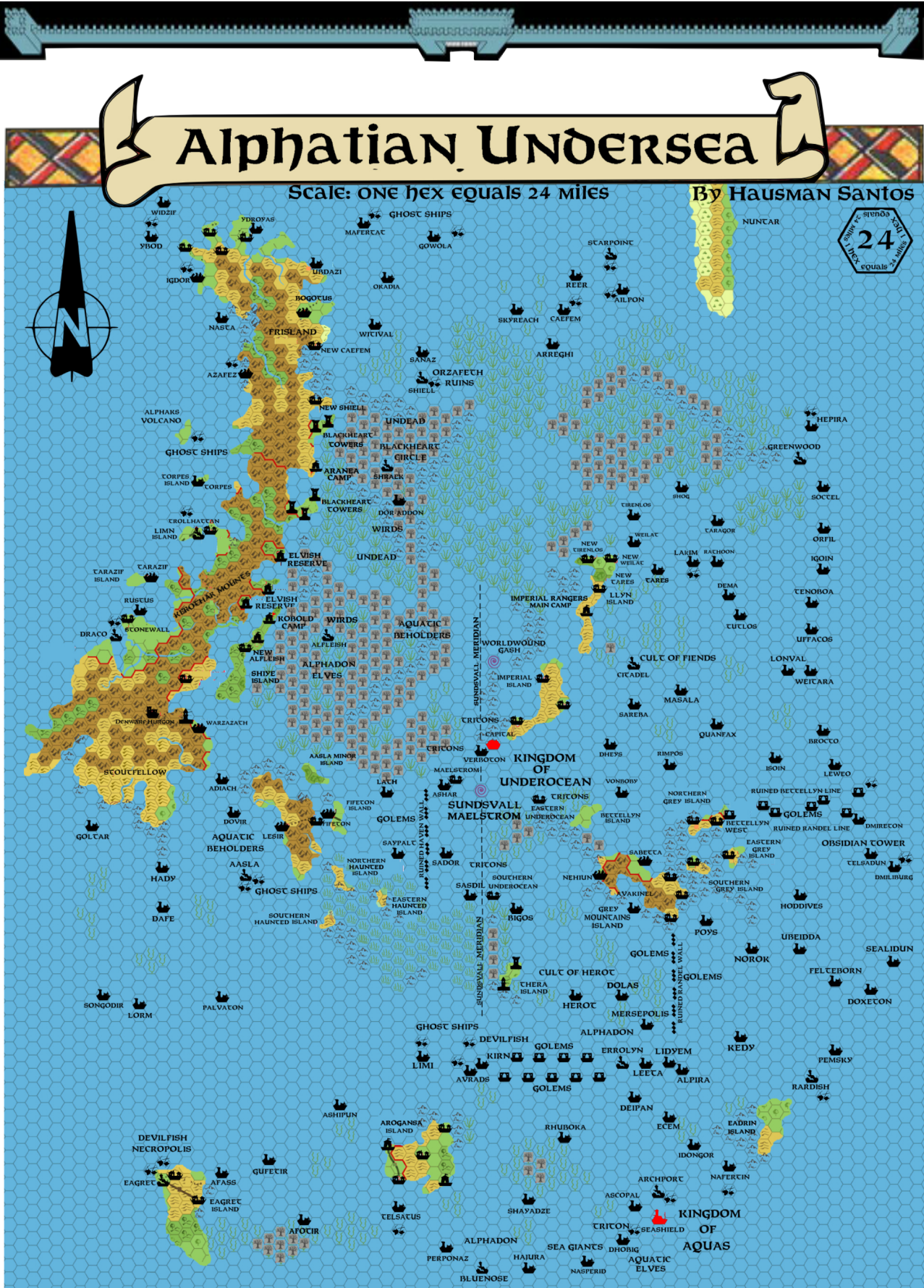
Some survivors of Blackheart managed to escape and a few live on islands east of Kerothar in what are now known as the Blackheart Towers. Even some surface Shiye elves, survivors of the Alphatian cataclysm, now dwell in so-called Elvish Reserves, on hilly islands further south of the Blackheart Towers.

<sup>8</sup> The offshoot of Blackheart's Circle and their quest and conflicts against Radiance (and fate) are updated in the "Alphaks Gallery of Villains" article by this author published in [THRESHOLD Magazine issue #19](#) and at the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>9</sup> See "[Mystaran Almanac AC 1018](#)" on the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>10</sup> Learn more at "[The Fall of Ilmaryl](#)" by Geoff Gander on the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>11</sup> Many of these items were empowered by the resonance generated by the Alphatian artifacts, now so abundant in the sunken lands. You can learn more about the power of these artifacts in the "[Mystaran Almanac AC 1016](#)" on the Vaults of Pandius.



Alphatian Undersea Expanded Map

## THE SOUTHERN REGION

The Kingdom of **Haven** region has left an array of monuments and cities in ruins. The effect of the *Doomsday Weapon* on Alphatia left a magical alteration propagated from the epicenter of the continent to the outskirts of the region. As a result, the casual visitor will be faced with gleaming statues, promenades and walkways with distorted effects, hostile magical constructs with counter spells and alterations in their effects, magical ships and castles made semi-intelligent by the radiation of Alphatian artifacts or imprisoned beings altering their surroundings. Some of the personalities who have been imprisoned have been powerful sorcerers, such as the Alphatian Council Member Karzamon of Theranderol (he was trapped in the magic sword *Fright Corps* as reported in *Mystaran Almanac AC 1016*, for example), and they have been able to retain certain magical powers—becoming artifacts of greater magical power. **Stoutfellow** now consists of Monster Island (or Kerothar Island), with a chain of ruined castles and towns across the mountains, and the addition of the capital of Nayce built on the ruins of the former capital of Stoutfellow Denwarf-Hurgon, a heavily reinforced citadel. The region became inhabited by all kinds of beings and creatures that managed to take shelter in these high lands during the destruction of the continent, which made the place extremely dangerous—in particular for any troops and/or attempts at military incursions to reclaim the region. Underneath the mountains are an endless chain of caves and ruins of ancient underground cities (now home to the undead and monsters of the deep).

The lands of **Limn** and **Stonewall** were flooded, and a few ruined cities are visible at sea level (due to the locations on hills and mountains); some survivors live in nearby ruins autonomously. Some marine creatures in the undersea of Trollhattan (reef giants, tritons, mermen) have taken over the cities that were part of the coast, now populated below the sea. Further south in **Greenspur**, undead spill out of the catacombs of ancient, ruined necropolises beneath Eagret, scattering underground and undersea. Observing events in the Alphatian Sea, some Sea of Dread devilfish have moved into these newly sunken regions and now occupy large areas.

**Bettelyn** was once a land hallowed by Immortals and archons but now its plains are scarred by the effect of earthquakes and flooding. The impressive capital of Citadel is now a pile of ruins on a mountain just meters below the water, with catacombs of dangerous creatures roaming free below. **Vertiloch** and **Theranderol** have vast sumptuous palaces of abandoned treasure guarded by golems and enchantments empowered by the magical radiation of the *Doomsday Weapon*, as well as the ruins of Sundsvall under its maelstrom with portals to other planes and even the Hollow World! Underocean patrols of tritons can be seen for miles around the region controlling most of these lands, under orders from King Juliast to confront any danger. In some parts of Theranderol to the south of Mersepolis and Errolyn a group of Alphadon are gathering and defending themselves from encroachment from both King Juliast's troops and the minions of the cult on Herot, who inherited some of the chivalric and court customs of Errolyn, but in a cartoonish and twisted fashion.

**Arogansa** also has a number of sumptuous palaces which are now in ruins and the golems which guarded the gates now also languish in state of poor repair. However, its highlight is an active population of conscious and intelligent Alphadon living in a small society, gathering the lore of a past culture that they still don't understand well, but that they are learning, aided by the visiting explorers from Seashield in Aquas. This phenomenon of gathering Alphadon is also seen in Ambur, Shiye-Lawr, Haven, Theranderol, Vertiloch, and even Randel; however, greater interaction has occurred between Arogansa and Aquas due to latter's new colonies in the Alphatian Trench and their field surveys. Underocean tritons still view them with distrust and hostility. Little is known about what happens in **Eadrin**, but there is talk about shadow creatures, dark seas, and beings not dissimilar to undead living in the region of the ruins of Archport.



*Court of Alphadon at the Ruined City of Bluenose*

## AN ANCIENT EVIL UNLEASHED

Some emerging powers are operating in the region, apparently in the service of the Immortals of the Sphere of Entropy. The city of Heroth, for example, so resilient and bellicose during the ancient Suppression Wars, became ruled by an ancient heretical cult devoted to Thanatos (who promised them an afterlife free from the Alphatians). Eventually Heroth's cult was defeated, but

its dead were freed from the catacombs by Hela<sup>12</sup>.

On Randel, in the ruins of Telsadun<sup>13</sup>, the power of the Obsidian Tower has been unleashed by Nyx and the ancient King's Guard by order of the late King Randel II,

<sup>12</sup> In the "Mystaran Almanac", Hela took advantage of Alphaks's punishment in AC 1016 to consolidate her power in the wrecked region of Alphatia and recruit minions; she discovered the cult and suborned them. Potentially this could bring about a direct dispute with Thanatos himself.

<sup>13</sup> The Obsidian Tower is described by Alex Benson in his work "[City of Telsadun](#)" from his series "Cities of Randel" on the Vaults of Pandius.



and vassals of their commander Deliantra are spreading out to maintain control throughout Randel's submerged territory and even as far as the northern borders of Bettelyn, which in the Citadel capital is bringing together an order of undead knights devoted to equivalent Pit fiends—and opposed to the ancient cult of Archons.

Beyond the nameless terrors in Frisland, there are reports of cults devoted to the Outer Beings<sup>14</sup>, centered on the old County of Orzafeth.

In addition to the dangers unleashed by the Phylactery of Agmas, the return of Alphaks<sup>15</sup> in AC 1020 unleashes a campaign to expand in and conquer Monster Island, as multiple clashes between the undead in the sunken lands of Alphatia and the Nayce fleets across the Alphatian Sea brings much confusion to an already turbulent land of strife.

However, as an Alphatian admiral once said: *"But then does adventure ever really end on Mystara?"*

<sup>14</sup> ["County of Orzafeth"](#) on Bruce Heard's Blog *"About Bruce Heard and New Stories"* and on the Vaults of Pandius.

<sup>15</sup> As depicted in the forthcoming *"Mystaran Almanac AC 1020"* after his banishment in AC 1016 by the Immortals due to the events at Alphaks's Volcano.

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- *"Alphatian Undersea"* by Hausman Santos from The Piazza (19 August 2008)  
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<http://pandius.com/newalphs.html>
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<http://www.pandius.com/alphconq.html>
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- *"County of Orzafeth"* on Bruce Heard's Blog: <https://bruce-heard.blogspot.com/2013/10/Frisland08.html>
- *"Mystaran Almanacs"* fanon series on the Vaults of Pandius  
<http://pandius.com/alm.html#almanac>



<https://mystara.thorfmeps.com/>



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# To Build an Undersea Hex

by Senarch

This article offers a set of random tables and process for creating an Undersea hex, for sandbox and hex crawl design. It is inspired by the excellent OSE supplements *Filling in the Blanks* by Todd Leback<sup>1</sup> and *Aquatic Adventures* by Kepr and Lothamer,<sup>2</sup> which are both recommended for adding more depth to your sunlit waters. We play BECMI/ OSE at my table, in line with the Gazetteers, so while this is system neutral, it errs in that direction.

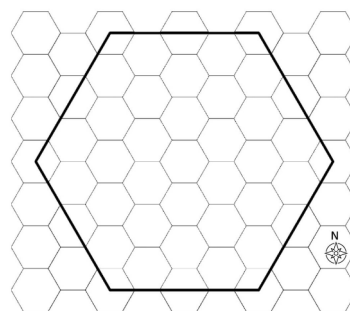
One of the aspects of the game I personally enjoy as a DM is improvising from random tables and using random tables to spice up my games. It keeps me on my toes, forces imagination, and can be a lot of fun. Similarly, when creating a living world for the stories to take place in, with hex crawls and emergent storylines, I find my imagination is aided by random tables.

<sup>1</sup> See product details at Third Kingdom Games website <https://www.thirdkingdomgames.com/product-page/filling-in-the-blanks-pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See product details at Knight Owl publishing website: <https://knightowlpublishing.com/product/aquatic-adventures-collectors-set/>

Note that this is tailored to Undersea and might need some modification to work with the other seas of Mystara. PC3 *The Sea People* uses 8-mile hexes, which is big. Undersea is a shallow, busy, thriving place, and I am working here on the assumption that underwater population density will be roughly analogous to overland (except in the Abyss, which should be dark, cold, and scary, not to mention the pressure).

A **hex template** is included at the end of this article for use with the process outlined. Additionally I have produced an example undersea using procedures I describe. This example hex “Old Mariner’s Bluff” appears later in this issue. I picked a 6-mile hex, but it should be relatively easy to adjust to a 3-, 5- or 8-mile hex.



*'Triton knights guarding their castle, original digital artwork by Senarch*



# THE 10 STEPS TO BUILD AN UNDERSEA HEX

## 1) Name your area and note the scale you are using and the area location

## 2) Roll or choose a dominant environment and depth for your UNDERSEA hex

Use Table 1 to select the dominant environment for your hex. Bear in mind that Undersea is very shallow, mostly less than 200 feet or 60m. Sunlight goes to 656 ft, so we can assume that as we get further south and closer to the Terraces, the depth drops, and some deeper blue areas of the PC3 map will be between 200 and 656 ft.

Each habitat tends to have its own flora and fauna, though some are richer than others.

Table 1: Dominant Environment

| d12 | Environment            | Description                                     | Depth   |
|-----|------------------------|---|---------|
| 1   | Coastal shallows       | Limited depth where terrain affects the waves   | <100'   |
| 2   | Coral reefs and atolls | Living coral formations (rich habitat)          | <230'   |
| 3   | Sand plains            | Mostly flat sandy seabed                        | <656'   |
| 4   | Rock plains            | Mostly flat rocky seabed                        | <656'   |
| 5   | Sea grass              | Underwater meadows (rich habitat)               | 3–190'  |
| 6   | Kelp forest (L, M, H)  | Underwater forests of giant kelp (rich habitat) | 49–131' |
| 7   | Submerged broken lands | Rock formations and caves                       | <656'   |
| 8   | Submerged mountains    | Mountains reaching towards the surface          | <656'   |
| 9   | Submerged volcanoes    | Warmth and hydrothermal vents (rich habitat)    | <656'   |
| 10  | Terraces and Twilight  | Underwater terraced cliffs, half light          | <1000'  |
| 11  | Trench                 | Deep depressions in the ocean floor             | >10000' |
| 12  | Abyss                  | Utter darkness, cold and high pressure          | >30000' |



**3) Roll or choose the main local population and population density**

Use Table 2 below to determine main population race. Population density refers to the number of intelligent creatures in the hex and will affect settlements and lairs.

- 1 – Abandoned
- 2 – Wild
- 3 – Settled
- 4 – Urban

*Optional:* roll or choose secondary populations (or roll for each settlement in stage 4).

Whatever the population or number of populations, give each 1d4 competing factions (e.g., ruling house, nobles, merchants, crime syndicates, hunters, army, and so on) to add flavour and sources of drama and conflict. Note that if the area is coastal, then surface-dwelling populations along the shore will most likely be a given.

Table 2: Main Population

**4) Choose or roll for settlements, lairs, and other features**

Each hex has several features depending on population density.

Table 3: Features per Population Density

|           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Abandoned | 1d3-1 settlements   |
|           | 1d4+2 monster lairs |
|           | 1d8 features        |
| Wild      | 1d3 settlements     |
|           | 1d4+2 monster lairs |
|           | 1d8 features        |
| Settled   | 1d6 settlements     |
|           | 1d6 monster lairs   |
|           | 1d6 features        |
| Urban     | 1d8 settlements     |
|           | 1d4 monster lairs   |
|           | 1d6 features        |

| 2d6 | Population                   | Description  |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 2   | Pirates and surface dwellers | Surface settlement, sailing through, depth explorers |
| 3   | Sea giants                   | Twilight / Depth dwellers >500'                      |
| 4   | Sea elves                    | Live in hidden coral reef and atoll cities           |
| 5   | Shark-kin                    | Semi-nomadic (see nomad settlement table)            |
| 6   | Merrow                       | Nomadic (see nomad settlement table)                 |
| 7   | Triton                       | Live in coral castles and cities                     |
| 8   | Kna                          | Semi-nomadic (see nomad settlement table)            |
| 9   | Nixies                       | Live hidden in coral reefs and crevasses             |
| 10  | Kopru                        | Prefer volcanic areas                                |
| 11  | Devilfish                    | Depth dwellers >700'                                 |
| 12  | Other or rare                | e.g., sahuagin if used                               |



Roll or choose the settlement (Tables 4 or 5) and features (Table 6 and the appropriate sub-table). (I provide examples but leave the detail of the features to your imagination). Lairs will usually be part of a feature.

Some populations are sedentary, others nomadic. I have marked the kna as semi-nomadic (they return to the Deepwater Pool), and the shark-kin also (since they usually have an island which they return to, to choose their leaders). If a nomadic population is migrating or travelling through a hex, choose an entry and an exit point.

Table 4: Settlement (Sedentary)

| <b>2d4 Sedentary Settlement</b> |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 2                               | Ruin / abandoned |
| 3                               | Dwelling         |
| 4                               | Hamlet           |
| 5                               | Village          |
| 6                               | Castle           |
| 7                               | Town             |
| 8                               | City             |

Table 5: Settlement (Nomadic)

| <b>2d4 Nomadic Settlement</b> |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2                             | Abandoned camp                |
| 3                             | Supplies cache                |
| 4                             | Refuge                        |
| 5                             | Migrating /travelling through |
| 6                             | Camp                          |
| 7                             | Market camp                   |
| 8                             | Tribal gathering              |

## Features Table

All the tables below could themselves have sub-tables (e.g., which a supplement like “*Filling in the blanks*” mentioned earlier, or to an extent the 5e DMG, provide). I leave those details to your imagination though. Here are a few ocean-related feature examples though, often where one feature implies or ties together others (examples mostly extrapolated from the *Blue planet* television series).

- Deep-sea vents releasing black clouds of mineral-rich smoke and drawing in an abundance of sulphur-based life-forms and giant carnivorous tubeworms.
- Bioluminescent plants and animals that light up the Abyss. Deep sea creatures use bioluminescence for defence, communication, camouflage, finding food or a mate. Ability to see bioluminescence or not being luminescent may have an impact on surprise in encounters (predators look up at the shadow cast by moving prey, some creatures use luminescence to confuse this. Yet being non-luminescent could have advantages as well).
- Gigantic kelp forests that sway and move with the current, making it difficult to navigate and creating a hypnotic effect on swimmers, or an underwater forest of seaweed and kelp that has grown so thick that it creates a dense, tangled maze for swimmers, within which lair many creatures.
- A deep-sea lake that is filled with a dense, viscous substance, such as a unique form of algae or bacteria, perhaps hiding slimes and oozes.



'What yuu say bout our wares, hooman?' — Original digital artwork by Senarch

Table 6: Features

| d20   | Feature    | Description                                     |
|-------|------------|---|
| 1     | No feature | The sea is empty                                |
| 2–5   | Resource   | Something of value                              |
| 6–8   | Structure  | A lone structure of some kind                   |
| 9–11  | Hazard     | A danger  |
| 12–14 | Terrain    | A geological or environmental feature           |
| 15–17 | Ruin       | Ruins of various size                           |
| 18–19 | Sign       | The signs of a possible encounter in the region |
| 20    | Magic      | A magical hazard or feature                     |

- A massive underwater sinkhole that creates a whirlpool and pulls objects and creatures into its depths, perhaps into a cave or canyon system.
- A layer of underwater fog created by a unique mix of temperature and salinity, making it almost impossible to navigate.
- Coastal upwelling zones: areas of nutrient-rich water that can support large populations of fish and other marine life, or underwater canyons that create upwelling currents that bring nutrients to the surface, similarly supporting a

diverse array of life. Nutrients bring many fish and predators (including birds and other flyers) for what can seem like huge feasts.

- Algae blooms: These large accumulations of algae can create “dead zones” where oxygen levels are depleted, and where many species of marine life cannot survive.



## Resources Table

Useful stuff for hunting, foraging, and mining. (Table 7, right)

## Structures Table

Inhabited structures or signs of habitation, past or present. (Table 8, below)

## Hazards Table

Dangerous areas and their causes. (Table 9, bottom)

Table 7: Resources

| d10 |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1   | Metal nodules                    |
| 2   | Oyster field                     |
| 3   | Seahorse feeding ground          |
| 4   | Fish and sea life (domesticated) |
| 5-6 | Fish and sea life (wild)         |
| 7   | Mineral (natural)                |
| 8   | Mineral (mined)                  |
| 9   | Vegetable (farmed)               |
| 10  | Vegetable (wild)                 |

Table 8: Structures

| d8 |                                |   |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1  | Burial ground                  | Tomb, crypt, cemetery, battlefield        |
| 2  | Monument                       | Obelisk, menhir, statue, plinth, memorial |
| 3  | Barrier                        | Seaweed, dead waters, collapse, magical   |
| 4  | Religious structure            | Shrine, monastery, temple                 |
| 5  | Mercantile structure           | Shop, caravan stop, market                |
| 6  | Industrial/Livestock structure | Artisans, farmers, hunters, butchers      |
| 7  | Educational structure          | Sage, school, university                  |
| 8  | Hazardous or unsafe structure  | Ruined, haunted, collapsing, lair         |

Table 9: Hazards

| d8 |                 |   |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1  | Battle ground   | Sacred, cursed, carrion eaters, undead  |
| 2  | Geological      | Quicksand, collapses, sinkholes, vents, whirlpools, gas, cold, hot                                |
| 3  | Flora           | Poisonous, dangerous, carnivorous, magical  |
| 4  | Monstrous       | Large sea monster passing through   |
| 5  | Weather         | Surface weather events affect the depth (e.g., sinking ship, nutrient clouds moved by rough seas) |
| 6  | Fauna           | Crazed, rabid, diseased, acting unusually   |
| 7  | Magical/Unusual | Ambush, magic storm, disease, gas, general weirdness  |
| 8  | Dead zone       | The water here is not breathable (except by magic)  |



## Terrain Table

Geological features.

Table 10: Terrain

| d8  |                                |  |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|
| 1-2 | Caves or mines                 | From single chamber to large complex             |
| 3   | Change in elevation            | Seabed drops one or more depth levels            |
| 4-5 | Change in dominant environment | Roll again on the environment table              |
| 6-7 | Rock formations                | Unusual formations, carved, magical              |
| 8   | Change in the water            | Temperature, salinity, breathability, visibility |

## Ruins

(roll 1-4 Taymoran, 5-6 roll on Population table to determine origin)

Table 11: Ruins

Will contain, roll 1d6: 1-3 lair, 4-6 dungeon (roll 1d10 for number of levels/difficulty).

Taymoran ruins are arranged around one or more central conical towers of varying sizes.

Shipwrecks: see Stage 7 on following page.

| d10 |                              |  |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 1   | Single dwelling or structure | House, tower, building                       |
| 2   | Hamlet                       | 1d6 houses or structures                     |
| 3-4 | Village                      | 1d20 houses around 1d6 buildings             |
| 5-7 | Shipwreck(s)                 | 1 or 2/6 chance of d6 d10 d12 d20 (roll 1d4) |
| 8   | Castle (+1 dungeon level)    | Single structure                             |
| 9   | Town (+2 dungeon levels)     | 1d100 houses and 1d20 large buildings        |
| 10  | City (+3 dungeon levels)     | 3d100 houses and 2d20 large buildings        |

## Signs

Roll on the encounter table you are using and foreshadow the possible encounter with signs of the creature or creatures.



## Magic Table

Weird or dangerous magical effects.

Table 12: Magic

| d6 |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1  | Space and time distortion                | Things get odd around here               |
| 2  | Magical fauna                            | Unusual or sentient magical animals      |
| 3  | Magical flora                            | Unusual or sentient magical plants       |
| 4  | Magical terrain, breathable water        | The stone, sand, or water is magical     |
| 5  | Magical structure or affected settlement | Village under a spell, magical statue... |
| 6  | Ley lines and strange fields             | Ley lines, anti-magic, wild magic        |



Taymoran ruin — produced from Midjourney with prompts by Senarch



### 5) Placing your settlements and features, adding lairs

Place your settlements and features as you wish on your hex map. Add lairs by attaching them to appropriate features.

### 6) Using encounter tables for encounters and lairs

I tried to make these tables (Table 13 on following page) system- and edition-neutral. The problem with that is that they are a little limited and repetitive. I would recommend swapping out monsters depending on the edition you use to add variety or use monsters from supplements like *Aquatic Adventures* mentioned earlier, or from *THRESHOLD Magazine*!

The tables on the **Hex template** are blank so that you can tailor your hex areas to your taste.

Merrow refuge — Original digital artwork by Senarch



Table 13: Encounters

| d20   | Coastal         | Coral            | Plains          | Seagrass        |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Dragon turtle   | Seals            | Killer whale    | Were-shark      |
| 2     | Giant crab      | Eels             | Whale           | Eels            |
| 3-4   | Seals           | Were-seals       | Merrow          | Merrow          |
| 5-6   | Dolphin         | Dolphin          | Aquarendi elf   | Aquarendi elf   |
| 7-8   | Aquarendi elf   | Aquarendi elf    | Fish            | Fish            |
| 9-10  | Jellyfish       | Giant fish       | Sea hag         | Nixie           |
| 11-13 | Main local pop. | Main local pop.  | Main local pop. | Main local pop. |
| 14-15 | Shark           | Nixie            | Sea horse       | Sea horse       |
| 16-17 | Giant fish      | Ooze/jelly/slime | Shark           | Shark           |
| 18    | Merrow          | Triton           | Triton          | Triton          |
| 19    | Sea serpent     | Sea turtles      | Kna             | Kna             |
| 20    | Killer whale    | Giant octopus    | Spider, aquatic | Sea serpent     |

| d20   | Kelp Forest     | Broken lands     | Mountains       | Volcanoes        |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1     | Dolphin         | Giant octopus    | Dragon, aquatic | Dragon, aquatic  |
| 2     | Eels            | Giant crab       | Giant crab      | Spider, aquatic  |
| 3-4   | Merrow          | Sea troll        | Sea troll       | Whale            |
| 5-6   | Aquarendi elf   | Ooze/jelly/slime | Giant shrimp    | Flame salamander |
| 7-8   | Giant fish      | Giant worms      | Giant worms     | Giant worms      |
| 9-10  | Sea hag         | Sea hag          | Were-shark      | Sea giant        |
| 11-13 | Main local pop. | Main local pop.  | Main local pop. | Main local pop.  |
| 14-15 | Sea horse       | Sharks           | Kopru           | Kopru            |
| 16-17 | Sharks          | Shark-kin        | Were-shark      | Devilfish        |
| 18    | Triton          | Undead           | Sea hydra       | Giant crab       |
| 19    | Kna             | Were-shark       | Eye of the deep | Black ooze       |
| 20    | Spider, aquatic | Spider, aquatic  | Giant squid     | Eye of the deep  |

| d20   | Terrace         | Trench           | Abyss           | Ruins         |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1     | Sea hydra       | Sea serpent      | Behemoth        | Giant crab    |
| 2     | Triton          | Sea snakes       | Ooze/pudding    | Sea troll     |
| 3-4   | Undead          | Ghoul fish       | Ghoul fish      | Sharks        |
| 5-6   | Giant octopus   | Giant octopus    | Jellyfish       | Ghoul fish    |
| 7-8   | Sharks          | Ooze/jelly/slime | Eye of the deep | Skeletons     |
| 9-10  | Shark-kin       | Undead           | Devilfish       | Undead fish   |
| 11-13 | Main local pop. | Main local pop.  | Main local pop. | Undead        |
| 14-15 | Sea giant       | Sharks           | Undead          | Zombies       |
| 16-17 | Giant fish      | Sea hydra        | Sea serpent     | Devilfish     |
| 18    | Jellyfish       | Giant fish       | Dragon turtle   | Sea serpents  |
| 19    | Manta rays      | Manta rays       | Whale           | Giant octopus |
| 20    | Whale           | Sea giants       | Giant squid     | Giant squid   |



## 7) Shipwrecks

Roll d6, on 1–2 the ship was a pirate ship. Then roll 3d20.

Table 14: Shipwrecks

| d20   | Origin           | Type             | Encounter               |
|-------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1     | Sind             | Canoe            | Giant crab              |
| 2     | Ylaruam          | Lifeboat         | Sea troll               |
| 3–4   | Alphatia         | Warship, small   | Shark                   |
| 5–6   | Thyatis          | Warship, large   | Spider, aquatic         |
| 7–8   | Karameikos       | Galley, large    | Devilfish               |
| 9–10  | Minrothad        | Galley, small    | Skeletons               |
| 11–13 | Ierendi          | Sail ship, small | Undead                  |
| 14–15 | Five Shires      | Sail ship, large | Zombies                 |
| 16–17 | Darokin          | Troop transport  | Spider, aquatic         |
| 18    | Northern Reaches | Longship         | Sea serpent             |
| 19    | Atruaghin        | Raft             | Giant octopus           |
| 20    | Other            | Sailing boat     | Were-seals, were-sharks |

## Completing your area

Once you have set all features, settlements, and lairs, including population and monsters, you will have a pretty good idea of the feel of your hex, and probably the elements of a story to tie it together. The following text and tables are just idea seeds, to be used by the hurried DM if needed.

## 8) NPCs

Rather than provide an Undersea NPC table that would be far too generic to be much use or fun, here are a few suggested design principles.

When fleshing out your hex, focus on the following key roles:

**Allies:** These are usually urban centre leaders, patrons, henchpersons, guides, or



information sources. This can include lair inhabitants.

**Enemies:** Either persons in inhabited areas, or intelligent monsters in lairs, either way they have an agenda potentially pitting them against the PCs.

**Neutral:** Any of the above, but PCs' actions, or some kind of bargain or task, can flip these between ally and adversary. Many merchants and artisans might sit here (who are the top three of each, and what are they famous for?).

I personally like this simple shorthand for an NPC when brainstorming (not all are needed):

**Name (Ally/Enemy/N) role, appearance, story, goal, strength, weakness, quirk.**

Examples:

- N'thaka (N) Makai Kraken hunter, grizzled, hates krakens following tragedy, wants to kill krakens, high-level fighter, partial to rum and brawling, chews a strange root that makes him red-eyed but alert.
- The Oracle of the Abyss (A) 8'-bell sentient jellyfish, bioluminescent, ancient Abyss dweller, delivers accurate future possibilities through telepathic imagery, 120' poisonous tentacles / jellyfish swarm, riddles, collects luminescent items for his cave.

## 9) Local flavour

What are some elements of the hex that make it unique? Most of this will derive from the features, but you can layer in added detail. This could be many things, ranging from:

Table 15: Local Flavour

| d10 |                                  |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1   | Metal nodules                    |
| 2   | Oyster field                     |
| 3   | Seahorse feeding ground          |
| 4   | Fish and sea life (domesticated) |
| 5-6 | Fish and sea life (wild)         |
| 7   | Mineral (natural)                |
| 8   | Mineral (mined)                  |
| 9   | Vegetable (farmed)               |
| 10  | Vegetable (wild)                 |

## 10) Adventure seeds

The “main quests” will most likely follow from the interplay of settlements, features, lairs and factions and NPCs, but here (in Table 16 overleaf) are a few quickfire ideas to get you started, or for “side quests”. These are pretty generic, but then I find that even an irritating dice roll result is often enough to trigger an idea...



Table 16: Adventure Seeds

### d20

- 1 Oh look, a fetch and carry quest (message, goods or items, or person(s)).
- 2 Undersea pest removal, or maybe something is emerging from a ruin...
- 3 Open conflict is brewing between two factions.
- 4 Raiding, or protecting, a nomadic group passing through.
- 5 Pilgrimage to a holy place for an answer, blessing, or other boon.
- 6 Spying on one faction for another, running political interference, or thuggery.
- 7 Exploration and mapping a ruin or area for a patron or a domain.
- 8 Hunting expedition, open or specific to a monster-lair, for trophies.
- 9 Protecting settlements from raiders or attacking encroaching hostiles.
- 10 Treasure hunting in ruins or shipwrecks.
- 11 Dealing with bothersome surface dwellers (pirates, navy, merchants, polluters).
- 12 An embassy arrives, or the PCs are asked to serve there as.
- 13 A named monster must be eliminated, and its lair cleared.
- 14 A merchant has bought a disused coral castle but... Oh, you know the drill...
- 15 A daring rescue, kidnapping, or assassination must be attempted.
- 16 A magical item must be recovered or stolen.
- 17 A dangerous ruin must be cleared for x faction or patron.
- 18 A behemoth or other sea monstrosity has been sighted. Maybe it ate a village.
- 19 A panic involving were-folk occurs.
- 20 The Devilfish are up to no good. Again.

## CONCLUSION

It would of course be possible to provide far more tables, and sub-tables for the tables, however I hope this is enough to kickstart your imagination when designing Undersea areas. Happy creating!

## UNDERSEA HEX TEMPLATE

A template that can be used to define your undersea hex is provided on the next page.



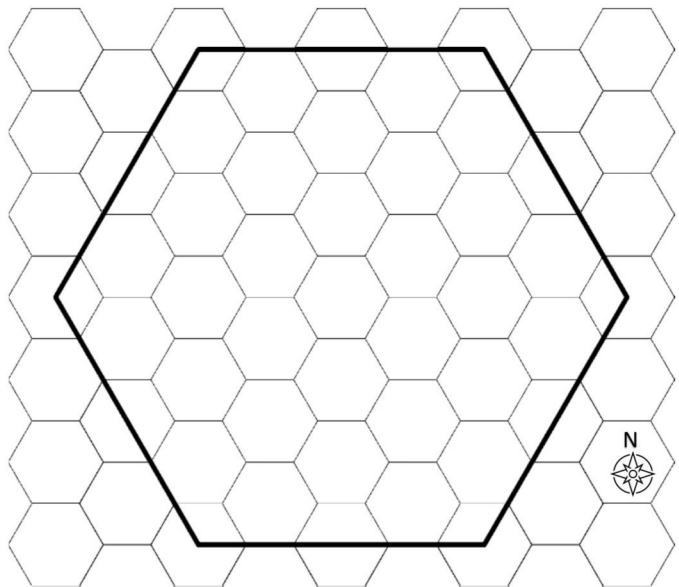


**Area Name:**

**Scale**  
 Large Hex =      mile(s) Small Hex =      mile(s)

**Location:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dominant environment        |  |
| Main Population and density |  |
| Depth                       |  |



**Settlements (City to dwelling)**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  |  |
| 2  |  |
| 3  |  |
| 4  |  |
| 5  |  |
| 6  |  |
| 7  |  |
| 8  |  |
| 9  |  |
| 10 |  |

**Ruins and dungeons**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |

**Monster Lairs**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |

**Other features**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |
| 7 |  |
| 8 |  |

**Encounter tables**

| Area: |  | Area: |  | Area: |  |
|-------|--|-------|--|-------|--|
| 1     |  | 1     |  | 1     |  |
| 2     |  | 2     |  | 2     |  |
| 4     |  | 4     |  | 4     |  |
| 5     |  | 5     |  | 5     |  |
| 6     |  | 6     |  | 6     |  |
| 7     |  | 7     |  | 7     |  |
| 8     |  | 8     |  | 8     |  |
| 9     |  | 9     |  | 9     |  |
| 10    |  | 10    |  | 10    |  |

**Important NPCs**

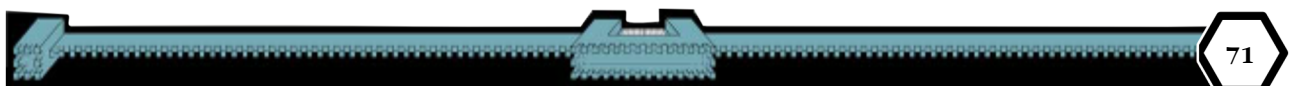
|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 |  | 4 |  |
| 2 |  | 5 |  |
| 3 |  | 6 |  |

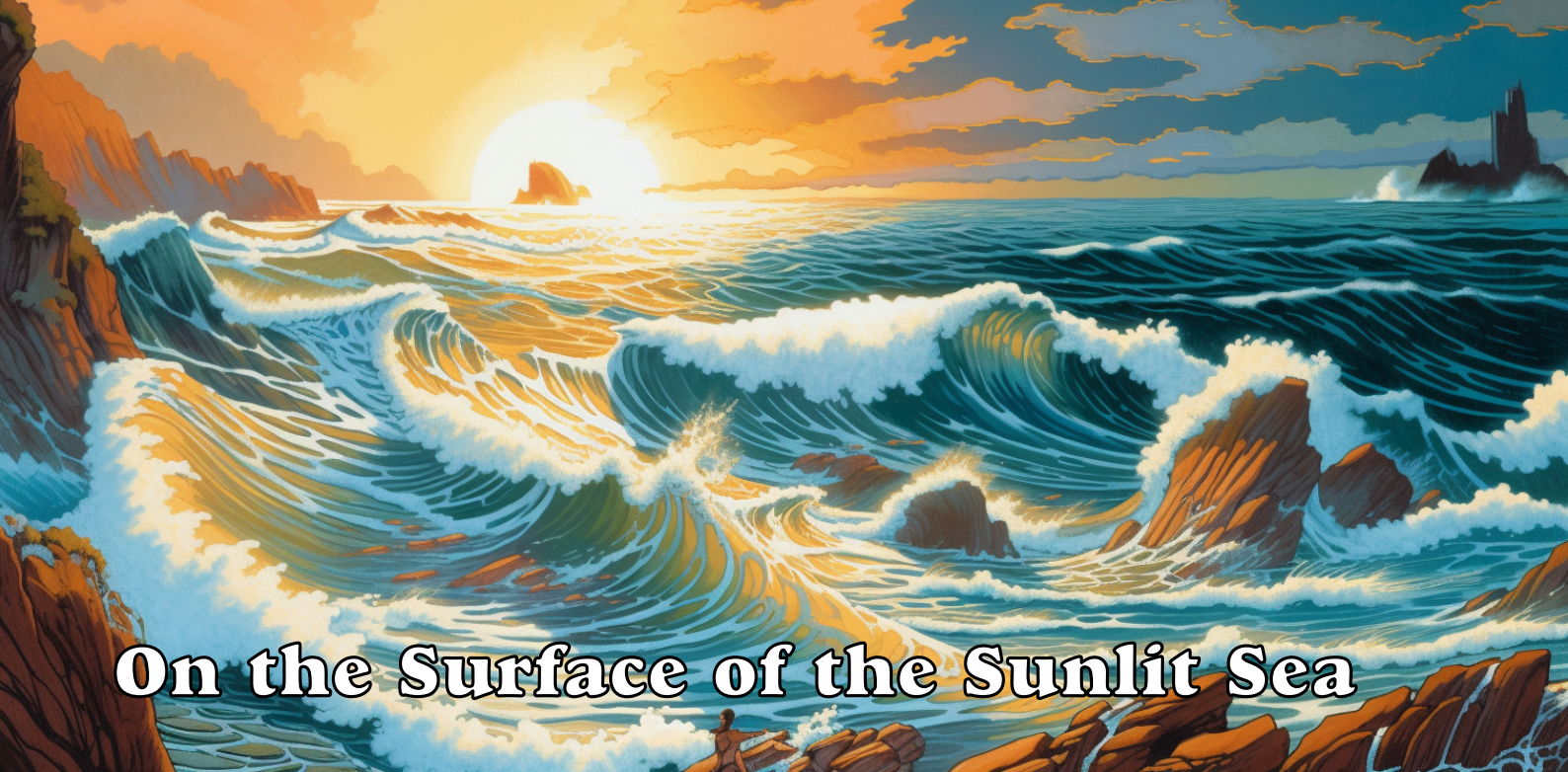
**Local flavour:**

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 |  | 4 |  |
| 2 |  | 5 |  |
| 3 |  | 6 |  |

**Adventure seeds**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |
| 6 |  |





# On the Surface of the Sunlit Sea

A random table for the surface of the Sunlit Sea

*The Sunlit Sea — produced from Midjourney AI using prompts by Senarch*

by Senarch

Roll d20 to determine the encounter. Where a ship is the result, determine its origins and type using the table for shipwrecks from the article “*To Build an Undersea Hex*” in this issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine*. If the result is Alphantian, there is a 1/6 chance the ship is flying.

*Table: Sunlit Sea Encounters*

**d20**

1 Roll again twice, with the results interacting with each other.

Ghost ship, roll d6:

2 1–2 Actually ghostly,  
3–6 Eerily abandoned, or is it...

3 Merchant ship (roll on the origin and ship type table).

roll d6:

4 1–3 No wind (no sailing for the rest of the day),  
4–6 Heavy fog (half movement and off course:  
roll d8 for direction and 1d10 for distance

Flotsam and debris,

5 2/6 chance of NPC survivor clinging to it  
(1/6 it is a disguised sea hag seeking to drag a victim under).

6 Shark feeding frenzy (3d6), anyone in the water is attacked.

7 Merrow band (1d8) approach, wanting to trade.

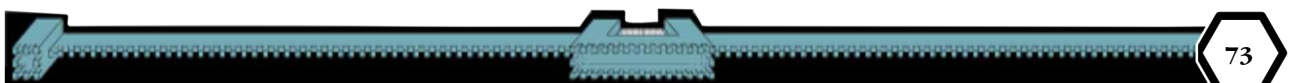
8 Jellyfish bloom surrounds you, beware,  
they may be poisonous (1/6).



Table: Sunlit Sea Encounters (continued)

## d20

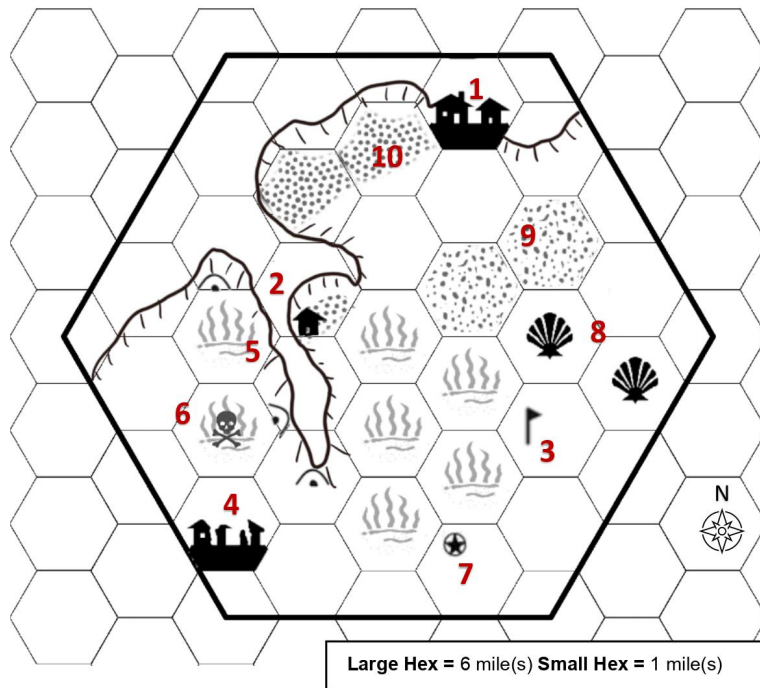
- roll d6:
- 9 1-3 Sandbar grounds your ship for 1d12 hours,  
4-6 Reef damages your ship hull, 1d6 hours to repair or start sinking.  
If swimming these can be rested upon.
- 10 Hostile flyers harass you  
(roll on a flyers table for whatever system you use).
- 11 Merchant convoy of d6 ships,  
1d2-1 escort warships,  
(roll on the origin and ship type table).
- 12 Kna riding a masher swim below you, do not offend them!
- 13 Fire, your ship takes 1d6 damage per turn until the fire is out.  
No event if swimming.
- 14 Warship (roll on the origin and ship type table).
- 15 A sea monster breaches nearby, will it attack?
- 16 1d6 orcas are hunting nearby, roll d6:  
1-2 Around you,  
3-4 Separating a whale from her calf,  
5-6 Hunting other prey.
- 17 Sudden change in weather  
(roll again on the table your system uses for weather).
- 18 Treasure ship, richly laden, juicy prey, for others, or perhaps for you...
- 19 Pirates!! Roll on the origin and ship type table.
- 20 Dragon flight circles far above – roll d6:  
1-3 friendly,  
4-6 unfriendly.





# Old Mariner's Bluff

Anton — produced from Midjourney by prompts from Senarch



**Wild coastal shallows, depth <100'**

**Population:** Humans, merrow.

**Description:** On the coast of Karamaikos, near the fishing village of Saescu, lies a headland jutting into the sea. It is home to the solitary dwelling of the old mariner Anton Valescu. In the waters merrow forage for oysters and sea-cucumbers and wait for market day...

## Locations

### 1) Saescu

This fishing village has about 120 inhabitants. It boasts of something you might call an inn if feeling generous, "The Mariner's Seat", that saw better days long ago, its origin forgotten. It is poor, and its mayor, Kern Orlov, deeply unpleasant.

### 2) Old Mariner's bluff

This narrow headland is riddled with underwater caves on its west side, and on the east a small cove holds a beach, and up stairs in the rock, Anton's modest dwelling.

### 3) Merrow market camp

Once a fortnight twenty merrow families from three nearby tribes gather in this famed market location to trade a wide variety of goods, foodstuffs, crafted artifacts and weapons and much more. Silthian is the leader of the local merrow group.

### 4) Ruins of Falhraz

Once a Taymoran village, a few buildings and two floors of the central tower remain (though access to the second level is blocked). It is home to many sharks, led by a merrow wereshark called Nurash.

### 5) Bluff caves

These caves, underwater at the base of the bluff, are home to giant barracuda, or, in the northernmost one, Morothog, a giant, sentient sea serpent.

### 6) Strangleweed bed

A parasite on the kelp forest it lives in, the strangleweed, made up of long thick cords of seaweed emanating from a central cluster, is a predator, entangling and drawing all kinds of passing prey into its maw.

### 7) Monument to Viazia

A sarcophagus and obelisk underwater, marking the resting place of Anton's merrow wife Viazia.

### 8) Oyster reefs

Rock-like reefs of fused together oysters providing a rich habitat for other marine animals and plants.

### 9) Coral reefs

Coral colonies amongst jagged rocks provide another rich habitat for all kinds of sea life.

### 10) Saescu beach

Kern Orlov and his brothers plan to lure ships to the reefs and plunder whatever wreckage washes up on the sandy shore.

## Dramatis personae

### Anton Valescu (Ally)

This old fisherman, living on the bluff, is in fact a high-level wizard. Tanned and weathered, his health is failing him and his long life, prolonged by magic, is coming to an end. He founded the village long ago, then disappeared into Undersea for a lengthy adventuring career. He married a merrow woman, Viazia, now dead twenty years. His children and grandchildren are still among the local merrow tribe. His origin is forgotten in Saescu, where he is considered an old eccentric, best avoided, and a figure to scare children with. Anton is worried about Kern Orlov, and Nurash the Wereshark, but too weary and weak to deal with them. He wants nothing more than to join Viazia in eternal rest. He will gladly serve as a patron to adventurers if they can restore peace to the bluff and protect the merrow. He holds several *amulets of water-breathing* in the caves below his house. If he feels the village and merrow are secure, he will kill himself at Viazia's monument, to be mourned and laid to rest with her by Sithian and his daughters. His daily routines, fishing, and the natural beauty of the bluff keep him going. He is forgetting things, struggles to do magic, and is terrified of forgetting Viazia. He smokes profusely despite a hacking cough.

### Kern Orlov and his brothers (Enemy)

The "mayor" (self-appointed) and his four brothers were criminals in Specularum, and originally came to Saescu to lie low. They have since taken over the village and bully its inhabitants. They are tough thugs, but like all bullies, cowards if faced with a fair fight. They are planning to become wreckers, luring ships unto the reefs and plunder-

ing whatever ends up on Saescu beach after murdering any survivors. Their first victim, the *Seabird*, a merchant ship from Minrothad, will pass in one week.

### Nurash the Wereshark (Enemy)

This imposing merrow is a wereshark wicca. Exiled by his tribe due to his lycanthropy, he is bitter and vengeful, and broods in the Taymoran ruins with the school of sharks he dominates. He is trying to penetrate deeper into the ruins in the hope of gaining more power and plans to attack the next merrow market just before dawn after the nighttime celebrations.

### Sithian and his daughters (Allies)

The merrow leader was married to one of Anton's daughters. He is worried. Relations with the village and fishermen have broken down, with the merrow considered hostile pests. Nurash lurks, his plans unknown, casting a pall over preparations for the next market. His daughters (Vialinn, Aruza, Keprenia) sometimes meet Anton as he is fishing and sing to him. The youngest, Keprenia, is eager to leave and explore Undersea and would gladly serve as a guide along the merrow trade routes for an adventuring party.

### Morothog (Neutral)

This huge sentient sea-serpent lairs in the cliffs, hunting the giant fish and barracuda in the area. He is not particularly interested in the merrow or humans nearby and is too strong even for the strangeweeder to hold. He dislikes the presence of Nurash and his sharks near his lair, since they have now boxed him in. He has no need or interest in treasure, and has none, and generally just wishes to feed and rest in peace.



### Adventure seeds

**“The old mariner’s lament”:** Anton will gladly hire the adventurers to deal with Kern and Nurash for him, in exchange for his amulets, if they can gain his trust. Their success frees him to die in peace as he desires.

**“The market raid”:** If the adventurers attend the market, a good idea since they can acquire numerous items for underwater pursuits, as well as build a relationship with the merrow, who are welcoming and generous if the connection to Anton is explicit, then they will likely be present for the surprise attack by Nurash and his sharks

**“Hunting Morothog”:** Some fishermen might ask the party to rid them of the sea-serpent, to open the fishing grounds west of the bluff. This would prove a very tough fight, and it might be wiser to deal with the serpent instead.

**“The shipwreckers”:** Staying in the village any length of time will uncover strange night-time activity near the beach, raising suspicion as to the Orlov brothers’ intentions. In turn the brothers will prove rather unhappy to have the party around and will seek to be rid of them in the most underhanded way possible.

**“Falhraz”:** The party can seek to clear the ruins of Falhraz, either for treasure hunting purposes or in pursuit of Nurash and his sharks after the market attack. The houses in the ruins are empty, except for sea life, but the ground floor of the tower remains and is home to Nurash and the sharks. A locked door at the bottom of the stairwell has so far frustrated the wereshark. Opening it will unleash a large number of zombies, who will head to the village along the seafloor.

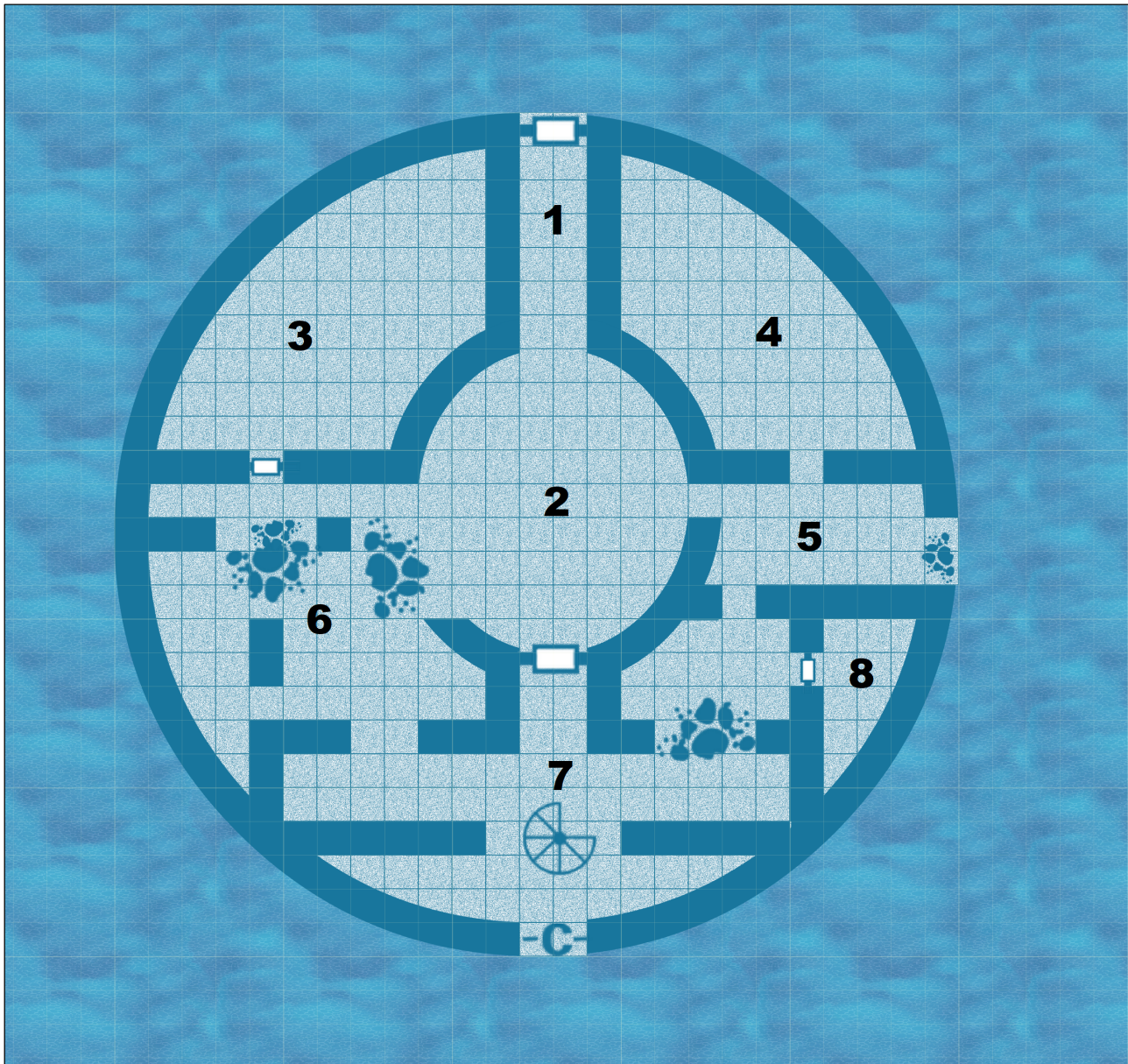
### Encounter tables

| Area: Reefs |               | Area: Ruins |              | Area: Kelp forest |                   |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1           | Giant crabs   | 1           | Sharks       | 1                 | Dolphins          |
| 2           | Seals         | 2           | Skeletons    | 2                 | Eels              |
| 4           | Dolphins      | 4           | Giant fish   | 4                 | Sea horses        |
| 5           | Fishermen     | 5           | Sea serpents | 5                 | Kna traders       |
| 6           | Merrow        | 6           | Ghoul fish   | 6                 | Merrow            |
| 7           | Jellyfish     | 7           | Undead fish  | 7                 | Aquarendi traders |
| 8           | Sharks        | 8           | Jellyfish    | 8                 | Giant fish        |
| 9           | Giant fish    | 9           | Zombies      | 9                 | Seals             |
| 10          | Killer whales | 10          | Sharks       | 10                | Aquatic spiders   |





## FALHRAZ TOWER



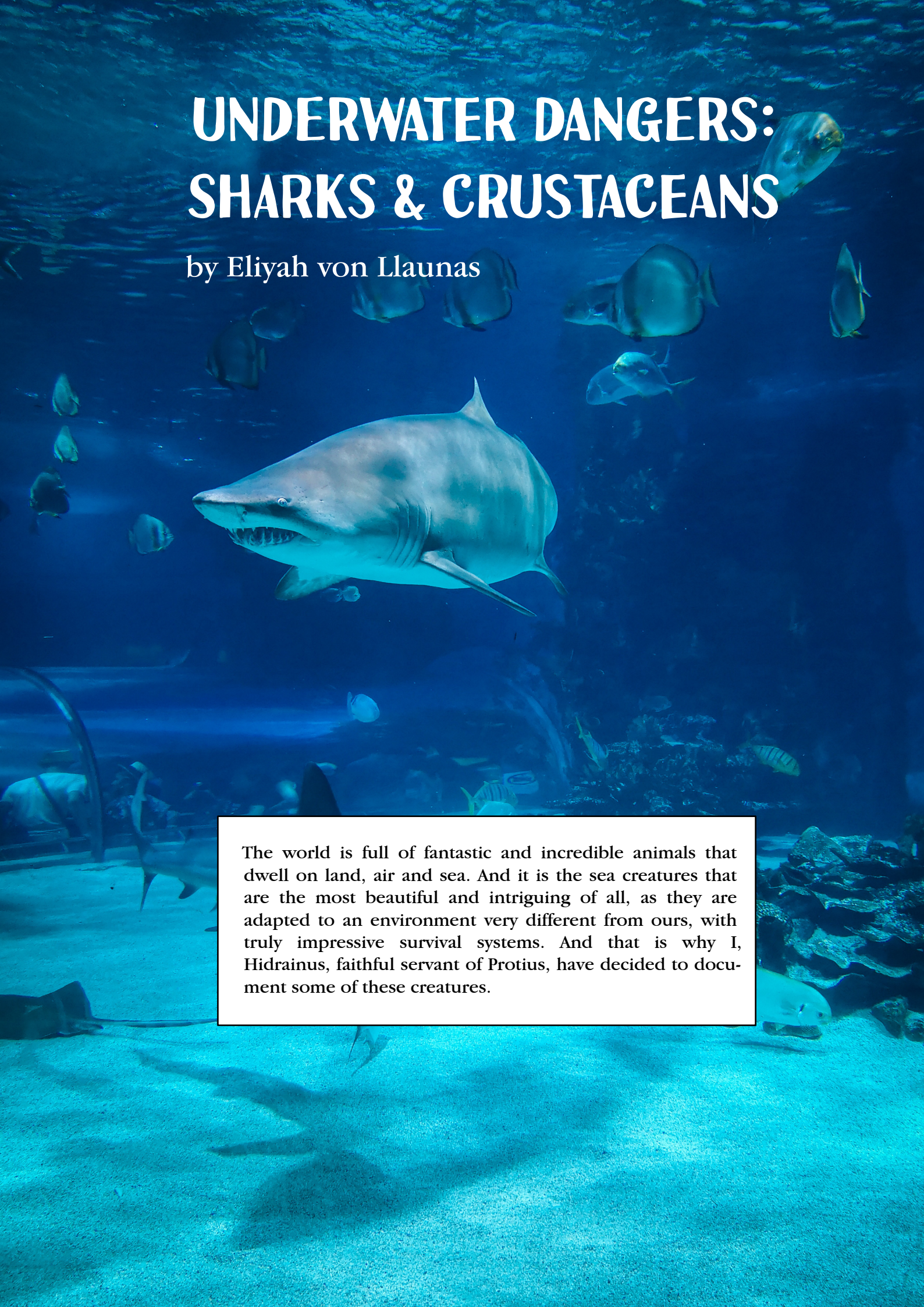
I only provide a map for level 1; any lower levels and the content of the tower is up to you. Nurash has made his home in area 3. Sharks and perhaps other sea life swim through and around the ruin. All doors are locked, and many walls are reduced to rubble. At the bottom of the stairs a locked door has so far defeated any attempts made to open it to access any lower levels.





# UNDERWATER DANGERS: SHARKS & CRUSTACEANS

by Eliyah von Llaunas

A large, greyish shark is the central focus, swimming towards the left. Its mouth is slightly open, showing sharp teeth. The background is a deep blue underwater scene with various other fish, including several flatfish and a few smaller, colorful fish. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong blue tint and some highlights on the shark's body and the water's surface.

The world is full of fantastic and incredible animals that dwell on land, air and sea. And it is the sea creatures that are the most beautiful and intriguing of all, as they are adapted to an environment very different from ours, with truly impressive survival systems. And that is why I, Hidrainus, faithful servant of Protius, have decided to document some of these creatures.

## SHARKS

Let's start with the sharks. They are terrifying creatures from an ignorant point of view, but the reality is that they are not that aggressive and often swim without paying much attention to their surroundings. In fact, many shark species swim in their sleep, but due to the absence of eyelids it is impossible to distinguish a sleeping shark from an awake one.

Another important thing about these animals is their ability to react and their capacity to fight even against invisible opponents. It was only thanks to the Caurentian magician Lorenzini that I discovered the answer. It turns out that they possess an organ in their nose called, after the illustrious magician (I never thought I would speak well of a Glantrian), Lorenzini's ampulla. This organ allows them to detect electricity in the environment and, apparently, also electricity from living things. In most species it reaches only up to 20', but there are more remarkable species with a longer range, which we will mention later. It should be noted that this ability does not allow the detection of undead or constructs of any kind, due to the absence of electricity in them. On the other hand, an electric discharge within its range will overload the ampullae, rendering them useless for 2d6 rounds. The most dangerous thing about sharks is their ability to go berserk and fight to the death. At the smell or, rather, taste of blood, these creatures go berserk and become aggressive and furious, fighting to the death and attacking even others of their species and even larger enemies. This gives them a +2 to hit and a morale of 12, for as long as it lasts. However, there are some sharks that are not prone to these attacks, as we will see below. As a general rule, unless otherwise noted, a

shark is prone to these frenzy attacks. Most adventurers (and Ierendi tourists, from what I have been told) are familiar with some sharks, namely bull sharks, mako sharks, white sharks and, to a lesser extent, Vamora sharks. These, due to their popularity, I will keep them out of my research and focus on lesser known sharks.

### Hammerhead Shark



|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| AC:              | 5                 |
| HD:              | 3-5*              |
| Move (swimming): | 120'              |
| Attacks:         | headbutt/bite     |
| Damage:          | 1d6+special/1d4+1 |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-6               |
| Save As:         | F1                |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)            |
| Treasure:        | Nil               |
| Alignment:       | Neutral           |
| XP Value:        | 45/125/300        |

The **hammerhead shark** is an animal with many subspecies, although quite similar in capabilities, so I will focus on the Sea of Dread variant. This animal hunts small- to medium-sized fish, especially those hidden in the sand. It is a hunter that relies heavily on its eyesight, elongated and spread out due to the shape of its head, which makes it, in addition to seeing prey moving to blind spots, difficult to surprise (1 on a d12). In addition, it possesses specially developed ampullae of Lorenzini, which allows it to detect living

creatures at a distance of up to 90' around. In combat they usually fight by striking with their head, unlike their cousins from the Alphatian Sea. This blow with the hard bones of the head is capable of stunning (ST vs Paralysis; 1 round) creatures up to the size of an orca, being more of a defensive weapon to allow escape.

Lifestyle-wise, it is a solitary hunter, but it is common to see a few in the same place, not cooperating, but competing for food.

## Tiger Shark

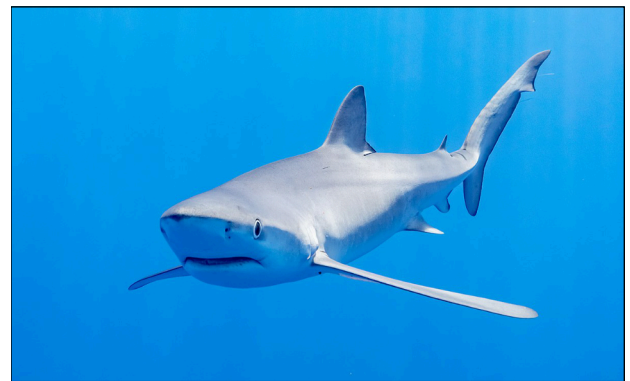


|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 5       |
| Move (swimming): | 180'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d8     |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-3 (1) |
| Save As:         | F2      |
| Morale:          | 9 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 125     |

The **tiger shark** (or striped shark, as it is called in underwater cultures) is so called because of the stripes on its side that resemble those of a tiger. It is a solitary predator of nocturnal habits, perfectly adapted for it. It has an infravision of 18m,

although out of the water its eyes dry up and it loses it. It is not picky about food and devours whatever it finds, be it fish, turtles, seagulls, manta rays, and even other sharks, as well as unwary adventurers, being one of the most dangerous and avoided sharks on the coasts of Ierendi. As with other sharks, encountering more than one does not imply a great coordination in the hunt, but rather the abundance of food in the area and, therefore, the presence of more interested parties.

## Blue Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 3       |
| HD:              | 3       |
| Move (swimming): | 180'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 1d6+1   |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-6     |
| Save As:         | F2      |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 25      |

This 2.5m **blue shark**, present not only in the Sea of Dread but in many other seas, is a shallow-water animal. It is a solitary or group hunter, using its numbers to surround schools of fish. It is not particularly aggressive towards large creatures and its

docility makes it the ideal target for shark-kin, especially in large numbers since, unlike other sharks, they usually hunt in shoals. It is a shark with very good reflexes and receives +1 to its initiative.

### Sevengill Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 3       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d4     |
| No. Appearing:   | 3-5     |
| Save As:         | F       |
| Morale:          | 7 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 25      |

The **sevengill shark** is an intermediate water predator, between 50 and 600m deep. It hunts in dark or turbid waters and is a school hunter. They surround the prey and attack when it is more distracted or weak, taking advantage of the opportunity. Due to their dark grayish color and the murkiness of the sea they often surprise their victims (1-4 on d6). They possess limited infravision (30') and developed ampullae of Lorenzini (60').

### Basking Shark



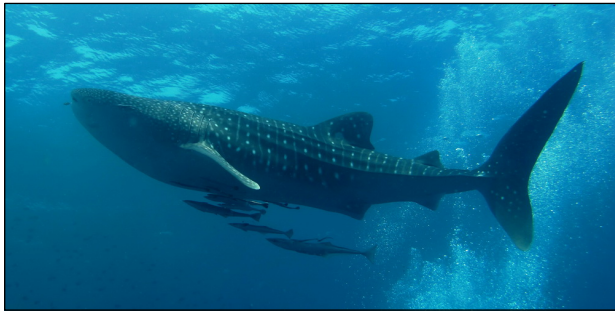
|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| AC:              | 4         |
| HD:              | 9         |
| Move (swimming): | 90'       |
| Attacks:         | bite/tail |
| Damage:          | 1d4/1d8   |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-3       |
| Save As:         | F5        |
| Morale:          | 7         |
| Treasure:        | Nil       |
| Alignment:       | Neutral   |
| XP Value:        | 900       |

The **basking shark** is one of the largest fish found in the Sea of Dread, not to mention monstrous creatures, reaching 10m in length. They have huge mouths, but are not predators, unlike their cousins. Instead, they feed on smaller organisms by filtering them through their mouths. They swim with their mouths open for this purpose. They are slow and have -1 at individual initiative.

Because they are peaceful (they do not go into frenzy) some schools of shark-kin tame

them and mount underwater ballistas on their backs, turning them into mobile artillery pieces. Although they like to feed a few tens of meters offshore, they are used to living in the open sea.

## Whale Shark



|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| AC:              | 4          |
| HD:              | 12         |
| Move (swimming): | 80'        |
| Attacks:         | bite/tail  |
| Damage:          | 1d4+1/1d12 |
| No. Appearing:   | 1          |
| Save As:         | F6         |
| Morale:          | 7          |
| Treasure:        | Nil        |
| Alignment:       | Neutral    |
| XP Value:        | 1,250      |

Larger than the basking shark, the **whale shark** reaches 12m in length. It shares feeding methods with basking sharks, but always stays in the open sea, without approaching the coast. They defend themselves from predators with violent tail slaps, which stun their victims for 1d3 as if they fail a ST vs Paralysis. They are also slow, with a -1 to individual initiative.

As with peregrines, some shark-kin shoals have tamed these marine giants and equip them with underwater ballistas.

## Cat Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 5       |
| HD:              | 2       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 1d6     |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-2     |
| Save As:         | F1      |
| Morale:          | 6       |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 20      |

Also called mustached shark by underwater cultures (understandable, since there are no cats underwater), the **cat shark** is a small shark of 80cm. It is a shallow-water shark that lives near the seabed. It is a territorial shark that has a den, where it sleeps at night, and which it does not hesitate to leave if it cannot defend it. Unlike other larger sharks, it does not go into a frenzy when it smells blood. It eats small prey from the seabed, such as crustaceans and small fish, and usually avoids confronting opponents larger than itself. There are rumors that in the Thanegioth Archipelago and surrounding waters there are specimens up to 4m in length, and that they are more aggressive, but I have no documented evidence.

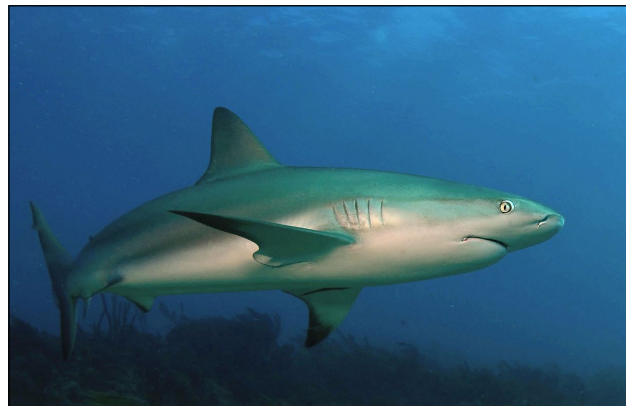
## Reef Shark or White-fined Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 2       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d4     |
| No. Appearing:   | 3-12    |
| Save As:         | F1      |
| Morale:          | 8       |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 20      |

This small 1.5m **reef shark** lives in the reefs of the Sea of Dread, both in rocky formations and coral reefs. It is distinguished by the white tip that stands out on its dorsal fin. It swims at shallow depths (less than 50m) and is a nocturnal hunter. Unlike its black-tip cousins, this shark does not go into a frenzy and, in addition, they have a very efficient metabolism that allows them to survive up to 6 weeks without eating (NdC: I encourage any master to make use of this information).

## Algae Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 2       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d4     |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-2     |
| Save As:         | F1      |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 20      |

Similar in size to the reef shark, the **algae shark** has a greenish color in order to camouflage itself among the algae that serve as both home and hunting grounds. Because the algae it inhabits often fills the waters with odor, this shark has highly developed its ampullae of Lorenzini, reaching up to 18m of range. It is an opportunistic hunter and will attack the prey that seems easier to devour (less armor, size, mobility...).

## Gray Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 4       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d6     |
| No. Appearing:   | 2-12    |
| Save As:         | F2      |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 75      |

The **gray shark** is one of the most dangerous species swimming in the Sea of Dread. They reach sizes of up to 2.5m and are fierce hunters. Unlike other species, they hunt indiscriminately between day and night, and always in organized hunting groups. They attack in waves, so that every round 2 or 3 more arrive to the fray. They possess an infravision of 18m and impressive reflexes (I attribute them to Lorenzini's ampullae, but it requires further study) that give them +1 to individual initiative. They are especially appreciated by the shark-kin due to their great efficiency in combat and their affinity to work in group.

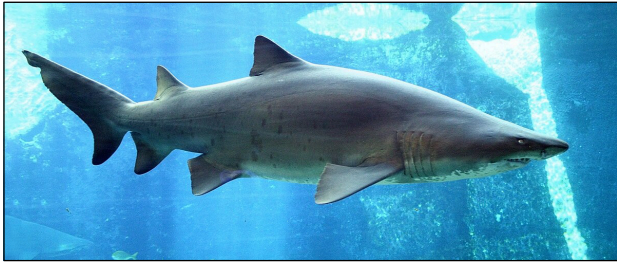
## Tailwhip Shark



|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| AC:              | 3                  |
| HD:              | 5                  |
| Move (swimming): | 240'               |
| Attacks:         | bite/tail          |
| Damage:          | 2d6/1d6+1 +special |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-4                |
| Save As:         | F2                 |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)             |
| Treasure:        | Nil                |
| Alignment:       | Neutral            |
| XP Value:        | 175                |

Cousin of the Alphatian Sea Thresher, the **tailwhip shark** shares many physiognomic traits with its cousin: a 5m to 6m body, the tail being half this length; great speed and, unlike its Alphatian cousin, a special ability to maneuver with the tail and an impressive jumping ability. It is capable of jumping up to 3m out of the water, which allows it to bite seagulls or other low-flying creatures. In addition, victims hit by the tail must make a ST vs Paralysis or be disarmed and stunned 1as (yes, like large dragons do). They inhabit depths between the surface and 200m, but shark-kins have meted me cases where they were seen even at 500m depth. It is a really terrible shark. Underwater cultures call it longtailed shark, since there aren't whips underwater.

## SAND SHARK



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 4       |
| HD:              | 5       |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d6     |
| No. Appearing:   | 1       |
| Save As:         | F3      |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 175     |

This large 4.2m-long predatory **sand shark** is one of the largest of its family. It is a migratory shark, being in summer in the waters of the Western Sea of Dawn and in the Sea of Dread during the winter. It is a solitary hunter, but when migrating they usually gather in groups of up to 40 individuals. Outside of migrations is where it really becomes dangerous. This predator is an opportunist and buries itself in the sand to wait for its prey. When its ampullae of Lorenzini detect prey just above it, it comes out of hiding and attacks (1–4 on d6).

## Black-finned Shark

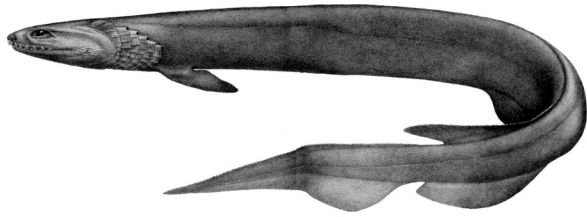


|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 5       |
| HD:              | 1+1     |
| Move (swimming): | 150'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 1d6     |
| No. Appearing:   | 2–16    |
| Save As:         | F1      |
| Morale:          | 6 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 15      |

The **black-finned shark** is small predator (1.5m), inhabitant of reefs and hunter of shallow waters (up to 50m), is a schooling animal. With their companions they close the passage to the victims and then attack from all directions. They are weak, but make up for it with numbers. They are a frequent companion for shark-kin shoals.



## Eel Shark



|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| AC:              | 3       |
| HD:              | 4       |
| Move (swimming): | 180'    |
| Attacks:         | bite    |
| Damage:          | 2d6+1   |
| No. Appearing:   | 2-8     |
| Save As:         | F2      |
| Morale:          | 8 (12)  |
| Treasure:        | Nil     |
| Alignment:       | Neutral |
| XP Value:        | 75      |

The terrible **eel shark** is a link to ancient times. It lives in deep waters (600 to 1,000m), near the Abyss, and measures between 1.5 and 2m. Unlike other sharks, it has hardly any dorsal fin and has a very elongated body, similar to a snake. Its teeth are more curved and tear harder than other species'. In addition, adapted to their environment, they have infravision of up to 18m and well-developed ampullae of Lorenzini (12m). Due to their habitat, it is rare to encounter shark-kins, but in my research I discovered that some groups of shark-kins living near the Abyss use them as guides when venturing into the depths. There are also rumors that there are specimens up to 12m deep in the abyss, but it is possible that they were mistaken for a sea dragon or a giant squid's arm.

## CRUSTACEANS

The other group of animals I investigated were crustaceans, which include all kinds of crabs, lobsters and shrimps. My curiosity was born after my encounter with a giant crab in the Tanegioth Archipelago. That almost lethal encounter pushed me to research more about them to prevent other adventurers from suffering the same consequences due to their ignorance. I will not stop to talk about the giant crab. Not, at least, about the common species. The adventurers of the world have already heard of it and a simple glance reveals all its capabilities.

Crabs are the first point of my research. They are the most armored of all crustaceans and therefore the slowest. But they are also the ones that spend the most time out of the water. Most species need water to breathe, since they use gills, however they can come out of the water. This is because the gills are inside the shell (which is not watertight and allows water to pass through) and, out of the water, they keep the humidity inside. However, if they spend too much time out of the water (1-8 hours, depending on the species), they dry out and die. This applies even to the giant specimens, which I discovered grow naturally, and not by the actions of the infamous Gargantua (very little appreciated in our cult, since he is dedicated to experimenting with marine animals and introducing new harmful species, such as the fish that bears his infamous name).

Lobsters and shrimps breathe in the same way, but differ from crabs in other areas. First, they are somewhat softer than crabs, but are more agile. In addition, lobsters tend to have claws differentiated into a 'grasping' and a 'cutting' claw, capturing

with the former and then dismembering the prey. Also, the eyes of lobsters and shrimps are more developed, allowing them to see in different directions and with great clarity, which makes them almost impossible to be taken by surprise. However, they do not see invisibly, although there are exceptions, as we will see below.

These animals that have reached gigantism are dangerous for adventurers, but not so much for the underwater inhabitants. This is because the adventurer usually insists on wearing his heavy armor, which makes him walk along the bottom, where the crustaceans dwell. On the other hand, mermen, tritons and other sea inhabitants simply swim on top, avoiding danger. Finally, it should not be forgotten that, in addition to being hunters, many of them are scavengers and, unlike sharks, they are not bloodthirsty. This makes it possible to distract them with leftover food, dead fish or similar.

## Giant Lobster



|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| AC:            | 3                |
| HD:            | 3+3*             |
| Move:          | 90'              |
| Attacks:       | 4 grapple/cutter |
| Damage:        | 1d6/2d4 +special |
| No. Appearing: | 1-2 (2-4)        |
| Save As:       | F2               |
| Morale:        | 9                |
| Treasure:      | Nil              |
| Alignment:     | Neutral          |
| XP Value:      | 75               |

The **giant lobster** is 1.20m long, claws aside. It has a large armored body and is unable to attack those behind it. However, it is capable of swimming backwards at high speed by bending its tail, and can move up to 50' in one round. To top it off, its attacks are deadly. If it hits with the 'Grapple,' a ST vs Paralysis must be made to avoid becoming trapped. Those trapped fight at -2 and are always hit by the lobster. A Check vs Strength allows to break free, spending the whole round.

## Giant Overpincer Crab



|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| AC:            | 2                 |
| HD:            | 4+1               |
| Move:          | 60'               |
| Attacks:       | pincer/overpincer |
| Damage:        | 1d6/3d6           |
| No. Appearing: | 1-4               |
| Save As:       | F2                |
| Morale:        | 8                 |
| Treasure:      | Nil               |
| Alignment:     | Neutral           |
| XP Value:      | 125               |

The **giant overpincer crab** species stands out for the large size of one of its pincers, comparable to the size of its own body. It is a hyper-developed arm that they use as their main defensive weapon. The small arm is used to lie in the sand and wait for victims (surprise 1-3). If for some reason they lose the large claw, the smaller one will hyper-develop to match the lost one and a normal claw will emerge from the stump in a few days. Females have normal-sized pincers and cause only 1d6.

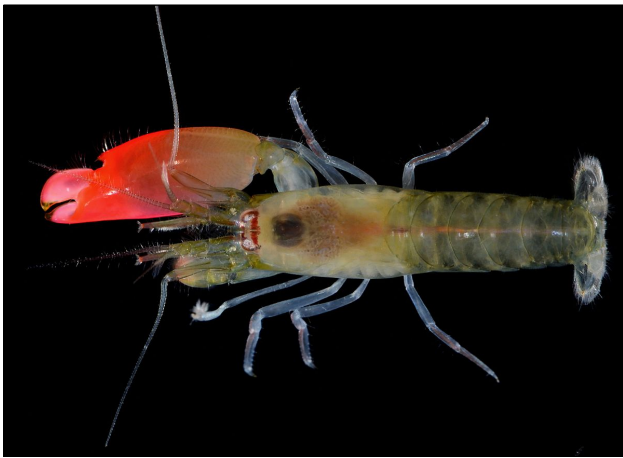
## Giant Cutter Lobster



|                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| AC:            | 3                  |
| HD:            | 3                  |
| Move:          | 90'                |
| Attacks:       | cutter/cutter      |
| Damage:        | 1d10/1d10 +special |
| No. Appearing: | 1-2 (2-4)          |
| Save As:       | F2                 |
| Morale:        | 9                  |
| Treasure:      | Nil                |
| Alignment:     | Neutral            |
| XP Value:      | 35                 |

Cousin of the giant lobster, the **giant cutter lobster** is similar to it in many ways, however it is more feisty. It doesn't grasp, but hits harder. It's better to avoid it.

## Giant Sonic Shrimp



|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| AC:            | 3                        |
| HD:            | 6*                       |
| Move:          | 90'                      |
| Attacks:       | cutter/cutter or special |
| Damage:        | 2d8/2d8 or special       |
| No. Appearing: | 1-2 (2-4)                |
| Save As:       | F3                       |
| Morale:        | 10                       |
| Treasure:      | Nil                      |
| Alignment:     | Neutral                  |
| XP Value:      | 500                      |

The **giant sonic shrimp** is a fascinating creature. At almost 2m long and with 60cm pincers, this animal is truly terrifying. However, its greatest weapon lies in the fact that it is able to close its pincers with such speed that it causes a snapping sound that damages and stuns its prey. In a 9mx5m cone in front of it everyone must make a ST vs Wands or suffer 4d4 sonic damage and be stunned 1d4 round. A successful ST halves the damage and avoids the stun. It lives inside reefs to avoid being attacked from behind.

## Giant Shellbreaker Shrimp



|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| AC:            | 3                   |
| HD:            | 7**                 |
| Move:          | 90'                 |
| Attacks:       | 'punch'/'punch'     |
| Damage:        | 2d12/2d12 + special |
| No. Appearing: | 1 (1-2)             |
| Save As:       | F4                  |
| Morale:        | 11                  |
| Treasure:      | Nil                 |
| Alignment:     | Neutral             |
| XP Value:      | 1,250               |

This fascinating animal is as fearsome as beautiful. With a length of 1.5m and a varied coloration with shades of hypnotic greens and blues, this shrimp is a heavy-weight of the seas. It has 2 eyes that see more than normal, and are able to detect invisible while ignoring illusions. In addition, it can perform speed bursts, where it doubles its speed for up to 3 rounds (movement only; it does not hit faster). However, the greatest danger lies in its 'fists.' Each hit is reduced by 1 point per AC difference between the racial base and that granted by the armor worn (if a human cleric, 9, wears chain mail, 5, then reduce 4 points) but in return the armor is broken beyond repair. If it is magical, the wearer is entitled to a ST vs Death using the armor's magic bonus to prevent breakage. This process is repeated with each hit until the armor is broken. Sea

giants stay away from these creatures because of their great power. Defeating one alone is a symbol of strength among them.

### Giant Running Shrimp



|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| AC:            | 5             |
| HD:            | 3             |
| Move:          | 120'          |
| Attacks:       | pincer/pincer |
| Damage:        | 1d6/1d6       |
| No. Appearing: | 1 (1-2)       |
| Save As:       | F2            |
| Morale:        | 6             |
| Treasure:      | Nil           |
| Alignment:     | Neutral       |
| XP Value:      | 35            |

The **giant running shrimp** lives in the most remote areas of the reefs, where it can hide if necessary or run along the seabed. It is weaker in shell than other shrimps of its species, but this has allowed it to run faster than others. It is not particularly harmful but can be annoying to chase.

### Giant Sea Scorpion



|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| AC:              | 3                   |
| HD:              | 5*                  |
| Move (swimming): | 90'                 |
| Attacks:         | pincer/pincer/sting |
| Damage:          | 1d10/1d10/1d6       |
| No. Appearing:   | 1-2 (2)             |
| Save As:         | F2                  |
| Morale:          | 10                  |
| Treasure:        | Nil                 |
| Alignment:       | Neutral             |
| XP Value:        | 300                 |

After my research, I discovered that this animal in the vicinity of Thanegioth was not really a scorpion, despite the resemblance, but a type of crustacean. During my confinement in Twaelar (a subject I don't like to talk about) I learned a lot about these creatures. They lack venom and use their tail mainly for swimming, unlike other crustaceans. They grab onto their prey with their pincers and then start repeatedly jabbing the stinger into their victim until it dies. If they hit with one claw, they have +4 to hit with all other attacks. If they hit with both pincers, they are hooked and hit automatically. They must hit both grapples in the same round to be hooked. They do not release except in mortal danger or when neutralized.

## Spider Crab



|                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| AC:            | 2                    |
| HD:            | 4*                   |
| Move:          | 90'                  |
| Attacks:       | pincer/pincer        |
| Damage:        | 1d8+1/1d8+1 +special |
| No. Appearing: | 1-2 (2-8)            |
| Save As:       | F2                   |
| Morale:        | 9                    |
| Treasure:      | Nil                  |
| Alignment:     | Neutral              |
| XP Value:      | 125                  |

The **spider crab** (or long-legged crab, for those tritons who have never seen a spider in their life) is a fascinating crustacean, with a large size without relying on the magic and experiments of the wizard Gargantua. It can reach a height of up to 1.5m with its legs and has a 'pincerspan' of 3m. Its long legs allow it to move efficiently along the seabed, avoiding obstacles and stalking prey swimming underneath. Their long claws also have an anticoagulant venom. If they hit, the victim must make a ST vs. Poison or lose 1hp/round until first aid is administered or a *beal light wounds* is successfully cast. Further wounds do not accumulate bleeding damage. Finally, it possesses camouflage abilities. It covers its shell with algae, anemones, mollusks, and other parts of the sea bottom to camouflage itself and prevent larger predators from spotting it from above. This animal is more frequent in the waters of Ochalea, but I

know of documented cases of specimens living around Royster, near the sea trench, and of colonies in the waters of Thanegioth, in the middle of Twaelar.

## Giant Spider Crab



|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| AAC:           | 0             |
| HD:            | 8*            |
| Move:          | 120'          |
| Attacks:       | pincer/pincer |
| Damage:        | 2d8/2d8       |
| No. Appearing: | 1-2           |
| Save As:       | F4            |
| Morale:        | 10            |
| Treasure:      | Nil           |
| Alignment:     | Neutral       |
| XP Value:      | 1,2000        |

Similar to its smaller sibling, this crab is larger, reaching 3m in height and 6m in 'pincerspan.' It lives in deeper waters, such as the Abyss (I have not explored it personally, but I trust the marine giants of the terraces), the Royster Trench, and some other minor trenches. It looks like a mutation of the original race, adapted to survive in more inhospitable places. Their carapace is harder, their pincers stronger and their venom more potent, so they make the ST vs

Poison with -2. Sea giants are used to scare small children with them in their stories.

### Giant Lancer Shrimp



|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| AC:            | 3               |
| HD:            | 5-7*            |
| Move:          | 90'             |
| Attacks:       | 'spear'/'spear' |
| Damage:        | 2d10/2d10       |
| No. Appearing: | 1 (1-2)         |
| Save As:       | F2-3            |
| Morale:        | 10              |
| Treasure:      | Nil             |
| Alignment:     | Neutral         |
| XP Value:      | 300/500/850     |

The **giant lancer shrimp**, which is very similar to the shellbreaker, shares habitat with its cousin. However, it is inferior to it in many respects. Although it retains the ability to temporarily increase its speed, it strikes with less force and is not able to break the armor of its prey. Therefore, it learned to be a silent predator. Using its whitish color to blend in with the sand, it buries itself, leaving only its eyes showing. When the prey passes by, it jumps with both arms in an attempt to skewer it, surprising on 1-4 on

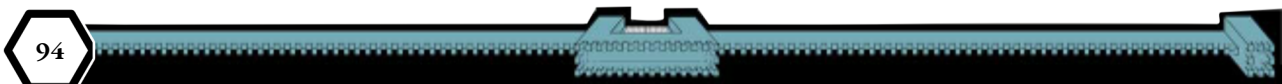
d6 and causing double damage due to the great speed with which it jumps in order to skewer its prey. Like its cousin, it is immune to illusions and sees invisible things.

### Gripper Lobster

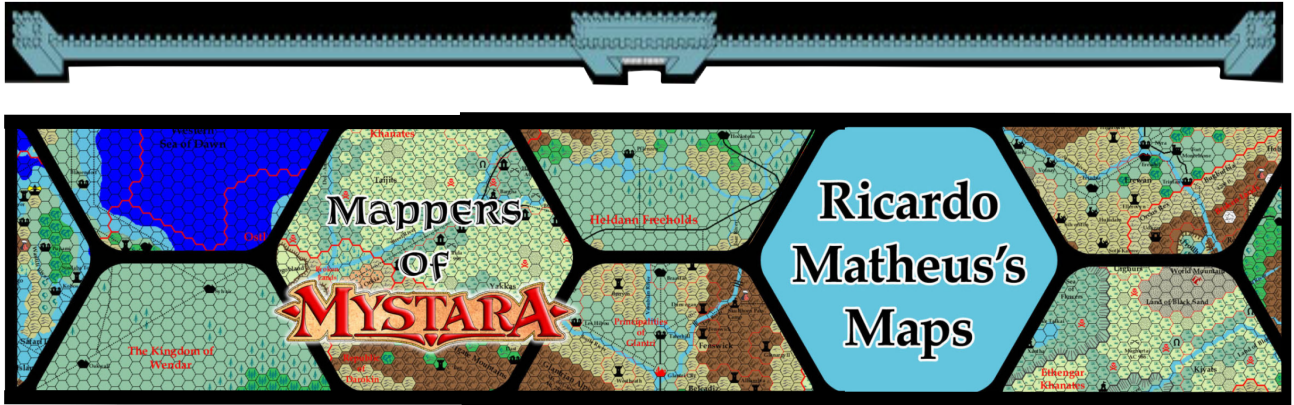


|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| AC:            | 3                |
| HD:            | 3*               |
| Move:          | 90'              |
| Attacks:       | grapple/grapple  |
| Damage:        | 1d8/1d8 +special |
| No. Appearing: | 1 (1-2)          |
| Save As:       | F2               |
| Morale:        | 9                |
| Treasure:      | Nil              |
| Alignment:     | Neutral          |
| XP Value:      | 50               |

This lobster, the size of a reef shark, evolved in order to best capture its prey. Its two claws are designed to capture and immobilize its victims. That way, it can squeeze them to death. Anyone hit by a pincer must roll vs. Par or be trapped. Those trapped take automatic damage each round from the grapple that traps them and have -4 to hit per grapple. A check vs Strength allows freeing oneself from a pincer by spending the entire round, but if one has 2 pincers there is a penalty of 4. This animal tends to trap a target with the 2 pincers and once it is dead move on to the next victim.







### Mappers of Mystara, a series by Thorfinn Tait

In this series, both on his blog [Atlas of Mystara](#) and here in *THRESHOLD Magazine*, Thorfinn will highlight the fans who have mapped Mystara over the years.

## RICARDO MATHEUS

*Creator of the first Mystara web map*

Years before Google Maps was a thing, and even before Google Earth had appeared on the scene, Ricardo created a web map of the Known World. Not only that, but he was one of the first to choose a mostly subdued palette, emulating the overall feel of the original printed maps.

### Profile

**Nickname:** Darkblood ([Vaults author page](#), [Piazza profile](#))

**Location:** São Paulo, Brazil

**Maps Posted:** 2000–2002

**Areas of Interest:** [Known World](#)

**Scales:** [8 miles per hex](#)

**First Posted Map:** The first six panels of his Known World map (October 2000)

**Software:** Adobe Photoshop

**Mapping Style:** Custom-drawn hexes with a carefully-chosen subdued palette

**Fonts:** Palatino



## OVERVIEW

A web map of the world has long been a dream of many a Mystara fan. Nowadays, of course, it's hard to even imagine life without Google Maps or one of its equivalents, but in fact it only debuted in 2005, while its precursor Google Earth only came out in 2001. Nevertheless, the idea was no stranger to the community, and it had already come up more than once on the Mystara Mailing List in the late 1990s.

Brazilian Ricardo "Darkblood" Matheus was the first to turn this dream into a reality. His Mystara's Map Navigator debuted in October 2000, with six of the eventual fifteen panels in place from the start.

*I felt the need to have good quality maps of Mystara on the web. Back then people didn't yet dream of having PDFs for sale and the original stuff was hard to get, I only owned one or two of the Gazetteers and some other stuff.*

*Ricardo Matheus, The Mystara's Map Navigator, 2009*

Ricardo's story is an interesting one, because his project was born of necessity: in Brazil, Mystara books - and therefore maps - were hard to come by, and his collection was limited to those he was able to find. This is a story that seems very far away in modern times, what with platforms such as eBay, DriveThruRPG, and all the other net shopping sites. But back in the 80s and 90s, it was a very common one outside of the US, as well as away from large cities. I myself (in the UK) struggled to find many books, and the vast majority of my collection came from TSR's UK Hobby Shop mail order.

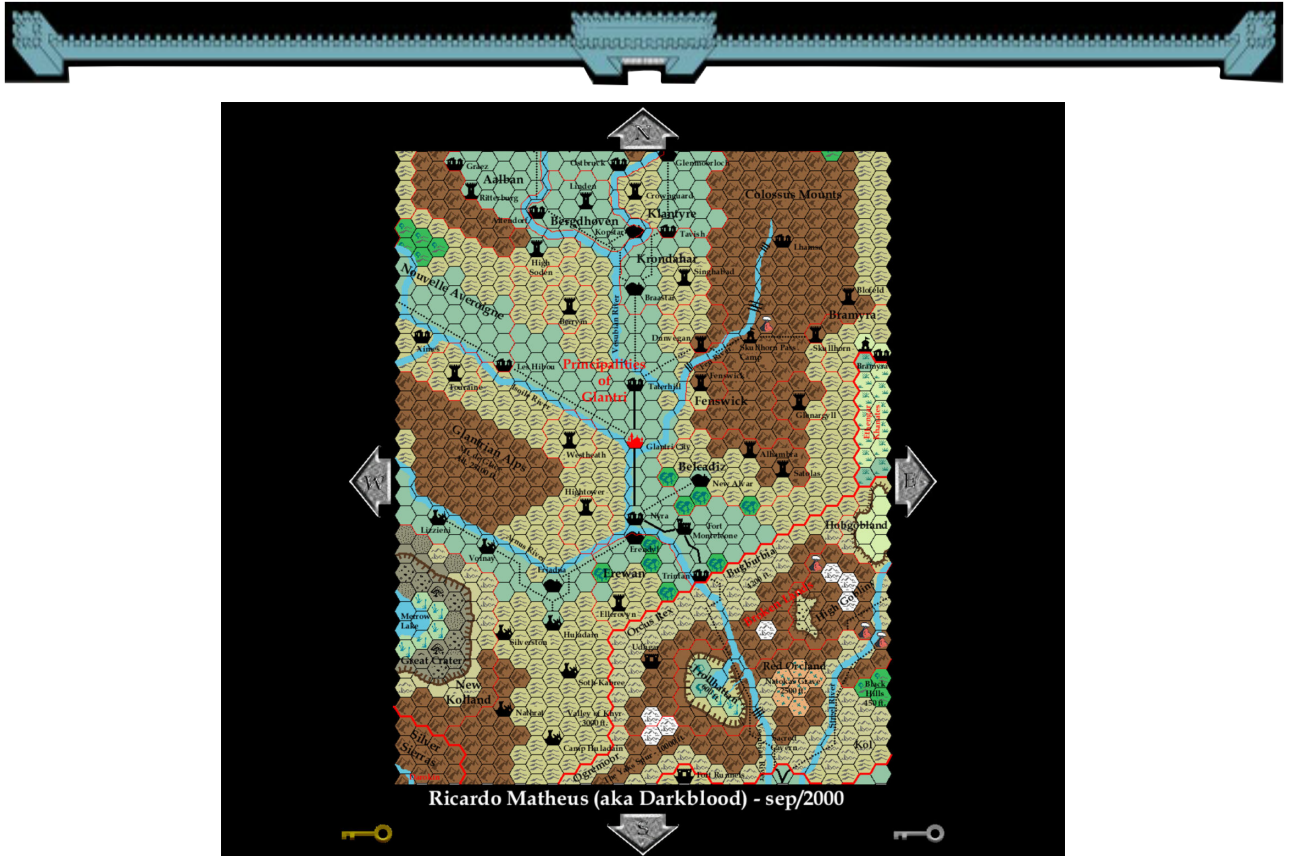
*I would be eternally grateful to anyone who send me some of the gazetteer's maps I don't have (you see, I live in Brazil, simply there are no stores for used RPG books and it's hard to find some USA dealer who wants to send them here).*

*Ricardo Matheus's original call out for maps, 2000*

As he relates in the interview below, it was through the help of other fans that he was able to complete the project. It's interesting to note the names of those who helped Ricardo: Leigh Witney, who sent his maps to Ricardo in Brazil; and Tim Roberts, who scanned many maps and sent them digitally. Neither Leigh nor Tim seem to have any credits at the Vaults, but Tim Roberts created his own maps of Mystara, including some Campaign Cartographer maps (three of which I have copies of; there may be more), as well as a whole series of Known World maps using Paul Holroyd's mapping system. Mystara's cartographers stick together! 😊

## A NAVIGATOR WITH STYLE

The other interesting thing about Ricardo's project is how pretty his maps were. Again, technology at the time was very much holding back a lot of would-be fan mappers, and many of our maps of the time had a rather poppy, VGA graphics style to them. By this time, Paul Holroyd's seminal Illustrator maps had already appeared, as had Christian Constantin's Photoshop masterpieces.



(Above) Example Navigator screen

See: <http://www.pandius.com/navigator/>

Ricardo chose to make his maps in Photoshop, assembling his own nicely subdued palette (with the exception of his deep water colour!), and working up his own hex art. The result was the closest thing yet to the printed maps at that time, nicely evoking their feel and atmosphere.

He also provided a full set of map legends, split into different sections for each map panel. This may seem like a small thing, but it's one that us fan mappers often tend to overlook, and it was much appreciated.

## LEGACY

The Mystara's Map Navigator lives on to this day, archived at the Vaults of Pandius. In 2009, Ricardo also wrote a wonderful history and explanation of the project, which I highly recommend you to read. You can find it on the index page.

In terms of significance, Ricardo chose to set his maps in AC 1011, making them a great source for anyone working on post-Wrath of the Immortals maps. He also detailed parts of Wendar and Heldann that never appeared on official maps, referencing other fan-made maps by people such as Geoff Gander and Thibault Sarlat.

All of this remains highly relevant today, and Ricardo's full Known World map, complete with its legend, can now be seen and easily referred to in a composite form in the map I posted in February 2021.

## INTERVIEW

Ricardo graciously agreed to answer some questions for this article.

### **How did you first get interested in Mystara? What draws you to the setting?**

Well, I first got into it for real world economic reasons. Brazil was a very closed country during the 80's, so a lot of things got here with a huge delay, and RPGs were one of them, only becoming a thing here in the mid/late 90's. Even when books and boxed sets started appearing around, you had to get what showed up, not exactly what you wanted. That meant usually getting the basic books and modules scattered all over the place. (For a long while I had AD&D's Monster Manual and Dungeon Master's books, but not the Player's!) The first "complete package" (in terms of having a complete set of rules, and a setting) I got was the Rules Cyclopedia. I was immediately drawn to those color maps of the "Known World". Almost at the same time I found a copy of the PWA II. I was immediately enchanted by the concept of having a setting which was "evolving" in time. What ensued was a decades-long hunt for more Mystara material.

Nowadays, what I like most about Mystara is the relation to real world cultures (makes it easy to get immersed into it) and the diversity. I recognize that a lot of things present here can be found in other settings too, but this is the one I grew up in 😊

### **Did you have a favourite official map?**

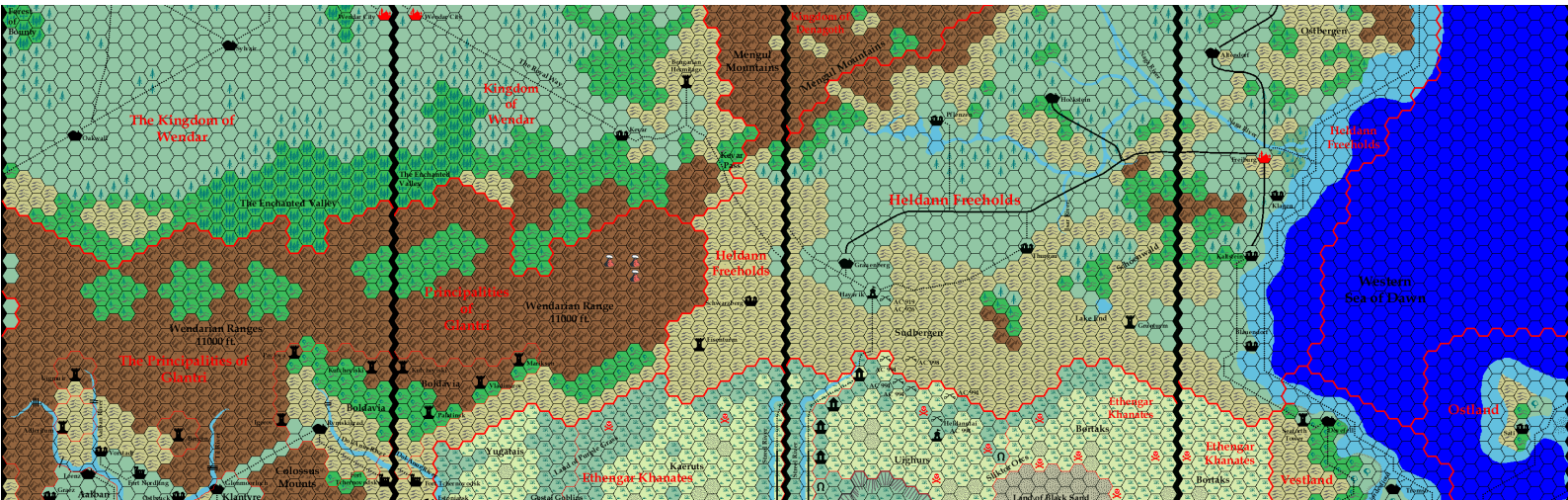
That would be the Trail Maps (technically two products, but I'll abuse the question). The sheer size and completeness of it blew my mind.

### **When did you start mapping Mystara? When and where did you post your first map online?**

Late 90's I was running a campaign centered around Glantri in AC 1011, but as the PCs started exploring around I felt the need to update the maps I had (which were mostly set in AC 1000) and fill the gaps from the material I was missing (I owned only one or two gazetteers at that point, most of the setting info I had came from the PWA's and maps I found online). I was a member of the MML and I thought people might be interested, so I launched a website, *The Mystara Map Navigator*, to see if I could attract help to my cause (which it did).

### **What software did/do you use? What were/are the limitations or peculiarities of that software? Please describe your process in brief.**

I used Photoshop, which I think was version 5 or 6 at the time. One of the main aims I had at that point was to produce maps that looked more (in terms of colors and symbols) to what was in the Gazetteers, as most maps circulating on the MML were done in software that looked "8-bit"y, if you know what I mean. My process can only be described as primitive: I had a Photoshop file with a collection of hexagonal tiles (forests, mountains, etc.) and I would literally copy and paste each hex into place (no snapping that I knew of!!!) in a layer that lay under the black hex grid. Then a layer went between those two with rivers, roads, plateau borders and other details that didn't fit a hexed approach. Text and borders would go above all that. It took weeks to get one finished.

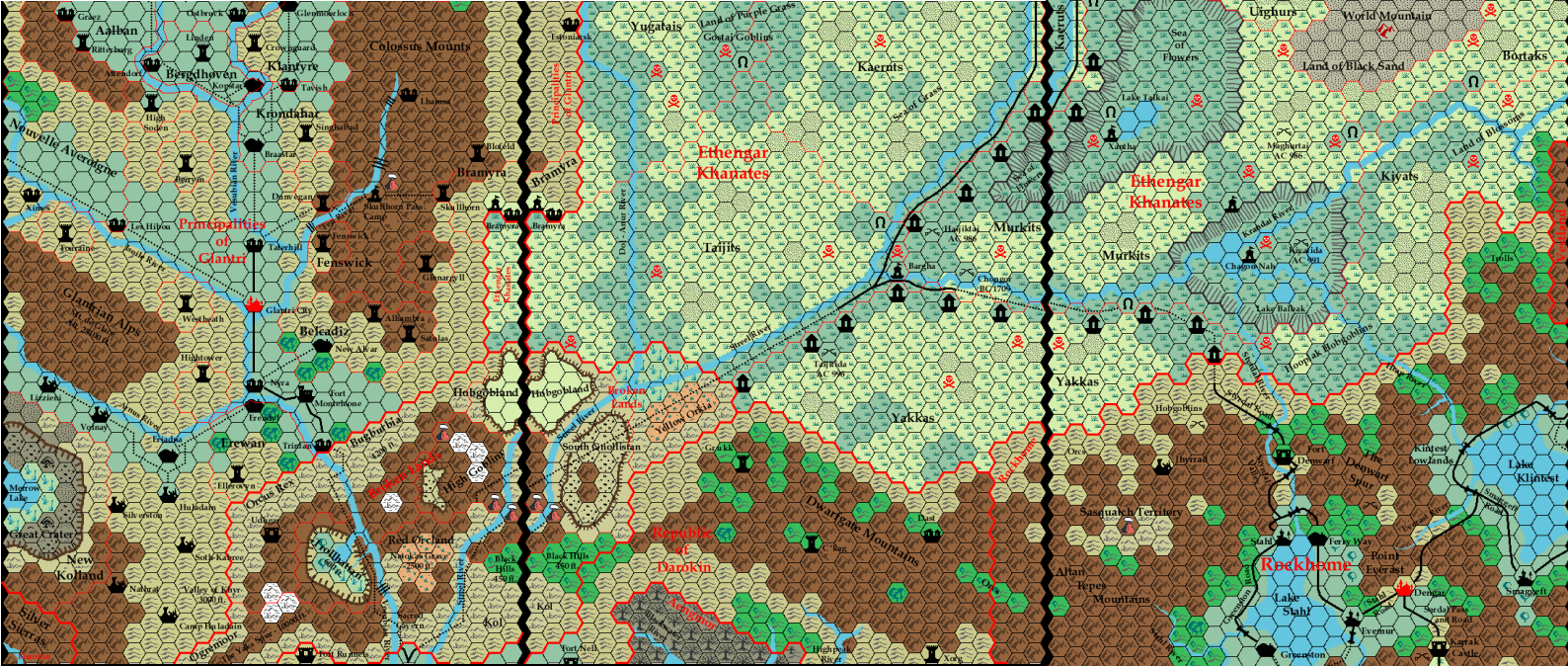


Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - nov/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - nov/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - nov/2000

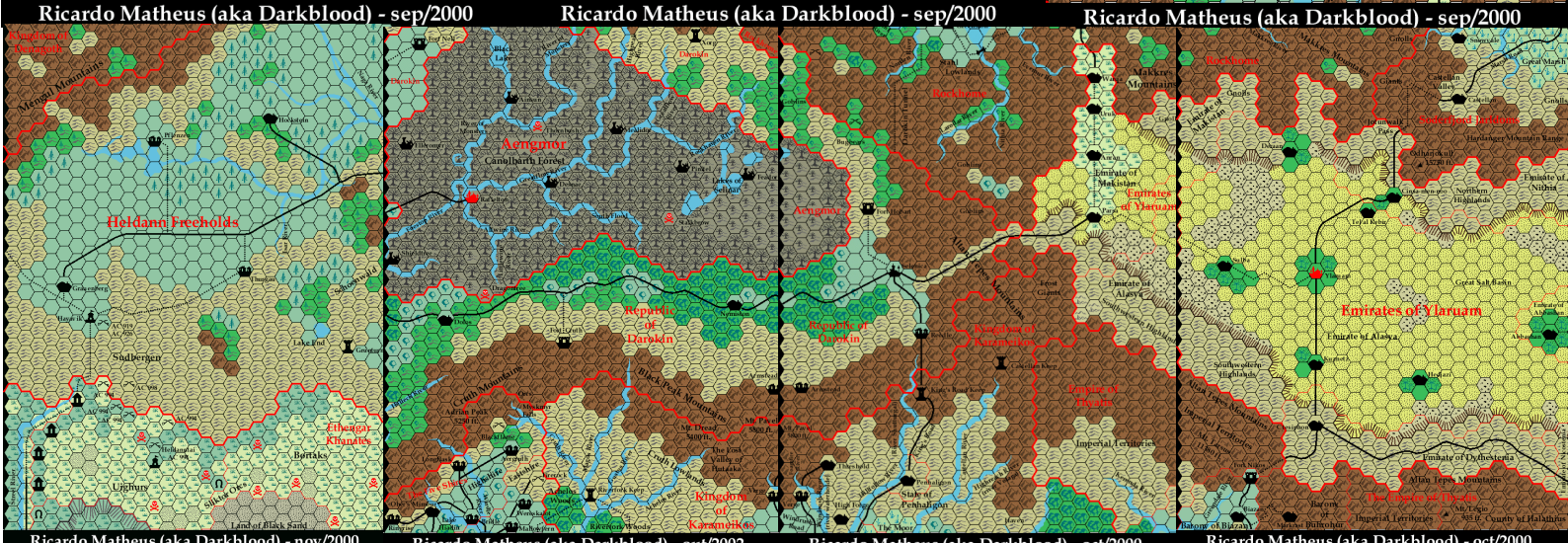
Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - dez/2000



Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - sep/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - sep/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - sep/2000



Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - nov/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - out/2002

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - oct/2000

Ricardo Matheus (aka Darkblood) - oct/2000



**What challenges did you face during your mapping projects?**

The main limitation I remember was the fact that I didn't have a lot of material (at first, see below) and, guess what: THE INTERNET. Dial-up connections meant I had to keep my maps small, not only in dimensions, but also in definition. At some point I had beautiful high definition templates for the hexes, but that was blowing up my PC memory and would not be feasible to put online anyway. So I settled for more pixelated art and nowadays it is my maps that look videogamy, lol.

**I'd love to hear an overview of your project.**

It lasted about two years, but the milestones are definitely all connected with the participation of MML members. At the start I had to count on the two Gazetteers I owned and the fragments in Rules Cyclopedias. There were fan-made maps online, but they usually didn't cover published areas or I didn't know how canon they were. My original cry for help can still be seen at the Vaults of Pandius.

After the website launch, I went from having almost no material to having every Mystara published map in about 6 months. People scanned maps, found material in local shops and sold it to me (no online shopping at that time, I had to actually give strangers my credit card number) or just gave me stuff. It was wonderful. The two highlights were Tim Roberts, who scanned a lot of his gazetteer maps, and Leigh Witney, who took all maps he had and mailed them from Luxembourg to Brazil! (I had them all photocopied in colors here, and sent all back.)

**What was your favourite area to work on?**

I liked doing the crater in the south of Glantri. I don't think there were existent colored hex maps of that area when I made it (I think there was a B&W one in PWA II).

**Do you have any future plans for your maps of Mystara?**

Not any plans really. I wish I had the time to cover at least the whole Known World before I stopped. But late 2002 I was about to start my PhD in physics (which was followed by an academic career, marriage and kids) so my "time out" from mapping eventually became permanent. I am happy to see the project becoming obsolete though, with so many high quality maps available.

**What are you doing these days?**

I still run D&D games these days (at a slow pace though, mostly once a month). A few years ago I realized I had never run a campaign during the Glantri/Alphatia/Thyatian war (AC 1000-1010) so I decided to give 5th edition a try at the same time I did that. So now I'm GMing a campaign loosely based on Wrath of the Immortals, but using D&D5E rules.

**Thank you, Ricardo!**



## RICARDO'S MAPS

| Map Name      | Vaults URL*              | Date       | Notes                |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Grid 0        | <a href="#">0.GIF</a>    | 2000/10/05 |                      |
| Grid E1       | <a href="#">e1.GIF</a>   | 2000/10/05 |                      |
| Grid E2       | <a href="#">e2.GIF</a>   | 2000/10/05 |                      |
| Grid S1-old   | <a href="#">s1.gif</a>   | 2000/10/05 | First posted version |
| Grid S1E1-old | <a href="#">s1e1.gif</a> | 2000/10/05 | First posted version |
| Grid S1E2     | <a href="#">s1e2.GIF</a> | 2000/10/05 |                      |
| Grid S1       | <a href="#">s1.gif</a>   | 2000/10/08 | Revised version      |
| Grid S1E3     | <a href="#">s1e3.gif</a> | 2000/10/17 |                      |
| Grid E3       | <a href="#">e3.gif</a>   | 2000/10/22 |                      |
| Grid N1-old   | <a href="#">n1.gif</a>   | 2000/10/29 | First posted version |
| Grid N1       | <a href="#">n1.gif</a>   | 2000/11/09 | Revised version      |
| Grid N1E1     | <a href="#">n1e1.gif</a> | 2000/11/21 |                      |
| Grid N1E2     | <a href="#">n1e2.gif</a> | 2000/11/23 |                      |
| Grid N1E3     | <a href="#">n1e3.gif</a> | 2000/11/23 |                      |
| Grid S2E3     | <a href="#">s2e3.gif</a> | 2001/02/07 |                      |
| Grid S2E2     | <a href="#">s2e2.gif</a> | 2001/07/09 |                      |
| Grid S2E1     | <a href="#">s2e1.gif</a> | 2002/10/25 |                      |
| Grid S1E1     | <a href="#">s1e1.gif</a> | 2002/10/25 | Revised version      |

\* Vaults of Pandius location URL: <http://pandius.com/navigator/>

## SOURCES

In researching this article, I searched out all the references I could find, and consulted with everyone I could track down. I have made every effort to ensure that the information is accurate, but in some cases I may have slipped up – especially when dealing with maps that are years or even decades old. I take full responsibility

for any mistakes; please don't hesitate to point these out if you find them! Following is a summary of my sources for your reference.

- Direct messaging with Ricardo
- [Mystara Mailing List Archive](#)
- [Mystara Message Board Archive](#)



# Primate Races of Mystara

by Cab Davidson

**LECTURE NOTES FROM ZOOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY 101,  
PROFESSOR DANE OSSIFY,  
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF DUNADALE**

Across the surface of Mystara, strange forces have allowed goats, manatees, cats, dogs, jackals, tortoises and occasionally even halflings to become bipedal and intelligent. While it may seem odd that there are so few civilised simians, it would be a mistake to assume that their scarcity in most civilised lands means that there are none of them – in fact Mystara has a diverse array of intelligent apes and monkeys spread across the three continents, although they are for the most part rarely seen in civilised lands. They are capable and interesting people who deserve greater recognition, and I do hope that at least some of you go to the trouble of learning more about them.

Of those species, only one belongs to the Strepsirrhines, that is the more primitive forms of primate. That would be the familiar phanaton, which is a member of the Lemuroidea, or lemur family. It is unusual both in its intellect and its capacity to glide through the trees of its native forests, and it is quite surprising that a creature so primitive has formed quite complex cultures wherever it has spread to. A second form is from the Cercopithecidae, a true monkey, and that is the fearsome taer, a monstrous and truly ghastly baboon that is thankfully rare outside of the mountains of Skothar. All but one of the others are apes. The nobubele, wang oranye, shaydaan, and gorira being derived from great apes or Hominidae, and one being a lesser ape (the Hylobatidae), the elegant and intelligent gibbon known as the shaydaan.

The last species I will describe is one that has thus far defied classification, and I hope that some of you choose to specialise in this field and bring specimens back for further analysis. Thus far dissection has been inconclusive and, I'm afraid, the subjects rather resentful. The internal anatomy of the creatures called yazarians doesn't fit what we expect of any primate or indeed of any Mystaran humanoid, and it is possible that their lineage is completely unknown to natural philosophy. Further work is needed.

## PRIMATES AS PCs

While they may not be suitable for every adventuring party, it is possible to play characters of any of the races described above. Whenever introducing new character options a DM should consider how this impacts on their campaign, but the character races presented here may offer both novel and fun options.



FROM  
The Vaults  
OF PANDIUS

### Changyi

Borne by mountain tops of Tangor, above the dense jungles of the valleys, are the Four Monasteries of the Changyi. Unlike the other simian races, changyi are of the same blood as the animals swinging in the trees below. Perhaps 1 in 50 adolescent golden-cheeked gibbons, upon hearing the distant songs of the changyi, become awakened to the possibilities of becoming more than they could otherwise be.

The bodies of changyi are small, rarely even reaching 2' long, but their legs and in particular their powerful arms are far longer. Those who hear and understand the calling begin their mountain climbs swinging upwards from branch to branch, until there are no trees any longer, and then they continue their walks to be welcomed by their brethren, to begin their studies and join the spiritual quest.

When born, they have golden hair, fading to dark brown through childhood. They reach maturity around the age of 7 or 8, when the males develop blonde cheeks and a tuft of fair hair on their heads, and the females become golden-haired all over their bodies except for a dark head tuft. Wild golden-cheeked gibbons live for perhaps up to 35 years, whereas changyi may live for over 200.

Much of the work of the changyi is in opposing the terrifying taer and preventing their incursions into the forests below. But they also search for something else, something that may not even exist. Their oldest scriptures tell them of something they must quest for, something important, something in the West. The boldest among them travel that way, through Skothar and towards other nations of Mystara, searching to discover what it is that the changyi must ultimately seek.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 15% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: +1, Int: -3, Wis: 0, Dex: +3, Con: -1, Cha: 0.

**Special Abilities:** Changyi are more adept in the trees than on the ground, and can both brachiate and treewalk with consummate ease. They can hang from one arm or leg, wielding items equally well with hands or feet. They may, for example, with no penalty use a bow with their feet while hanging from a tree with one arm. All changyi can climb walls equally to a thief of their own level with a 25% bonus, and can move up, down or through trees with absolute ease. They may also leap from tree to tree, being able to cross gaps of up to 30'.

Changyi can use their extremely long limbs to great effect if they choose to wrestle, gaining a +3 bonus to their wrestling rating.

Changyi are able to communicate with each other over great distances by means of song. Their howling, whooping chant sounds similar to that of other gibbons, but they may communicate with others of their species up to 1 mile away.

They are superb natural acrobats, and gain the acrobatics general skill (in addition to any other skills they may know) for free.



*Changyi, produced from DeepAi with prompts by Cab*

**Character Class:** The calling to one of the monasteries of the changyi brings with it a single goal – that of training to become a mystic devoted to one of the four elements – earth, air, fire, or water. Thus, all adventuring changyi are mystics.

**Hit Dice:** Changyi gain hit dice as human characters do.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** By far the most accomplished of all arboreal races, they can race through trees at a tremendous pace, at 180' (60'). While they appear ungainly on the ground, they are far more mobile than they appear, having a movement rate of 120' (40').

Changyi are terrible swimmers, being able to stay afloat and only travel at 10' per round.

Of smaller and lighter build than most other primates, with most of their mass being in the limbs, changyi can carry far less than most other characters, having half of the carrying capacity of humans and demihumans.

**Languages:** Changyi have their own language, made up of howls and whoops. They may also communicate with other gibbons, and most know the language of whichever human culture is closest (usually Tanagoro).

**Weapons and Armour:** Changyi can use any items allowable to mystics but can only wield small- and medium-sized weapons.

## GORIRA

The mysterious and mountainous island of Zyxl is home to a species of intelligent primate, the gorira. They are a spiritual, devout race devoted to (what they believe to be) balance in all things.

Gorira are dark-furred, greying with age, standing up to 5'9" tall and weighing anything up to 550 lb. While capable of walking on two legs they prefer to also spread their bulk on to their knuckles, being as well muscled on their arms as their legs. They inhabit the seemingly endless forests on the lower slopes of the mountains that dominate Zyxl, and they are the most numerous sentient race living there. They tend the woodlands to maximise the production of edible leaves, roots, fruits and shoots, which makes up almost all of their diet, with some seaweed and shellfish being gathered around the coasts. Trading vessels from Tangor, Minea and far distant Bellisaria call in to the sheltered bays of Zyxl and trade for fine woods, spices, and particularly for the high-quality pottery that the gorira patiently produce. In return, the gorira import metals and other worked goods.

The gorira believe in balance between the four positive spheres and each other, and collectively the four positive spheres and entropy. As such, their morality seems calm but strange. Gorira revere their ancestors, the land, the air, the ocean and the elemental force of fire, but they also revere the process of death, essentially engendering a largely pacifistic philosophy among them.

They are however not defenceless. Their great bulk makes them dangerous, and they acknowledge that part of a balanced world view is to be prepared to strike, with force, to maintain that balance where it is threatened. Thus they maintain an armed force of noble, independent-minded warriors who are afforded certain rights and privileges over other gorira, enacting the moral will of the Immortals as they and the druids see it to be.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 25% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: +4, Int: -2, Wis: -2, Dex: 0, Con: +2, Cha: -2.

**Special Abilities:** Gorira can attack using their natural weapons, inflicting 1d6 with each fist, and 1d8 with their bite. They may also wrestle a foe while making first attacks – if both fists hit they may make an (opposed) wrestling check with their foe, if they choose, allowing them to simultaneously punch and grapple a foe in this round, and they may subsequently decide whether to release their foe and strike again or to instead continue wrestling. If attacking an armed foe, that foe may make a wrestling check to avoid this effect, but they do not gain any initiative or hit bonus to attack the gorira with a weapon that round.

*Gorira,  
produced from DeepAi with prompts by Cab*



While gorira are usually a model of serene calmness, they can be utterly terrifying if they choose to be. They gain the intimidation general skill, in addition to any others known, for free.

**Character Class:** They may be of any class available to humans, but there are no known gorira merchants. Clerics tend towards following Ka, Valerias, Nyx, Korotiku, Djaea, and Protius, but through a lens of ancestor and spirit worship many other Immortals are known and followed.

**Hit Dice:** Characters use two higher hit dice than their class typically does, and gain an extra hit dice at first level. For example, a first-level thief uses d8 for hit points, and begins with 2d8hp at first level, whereas a fighter uses d12 for hit points and begins with 2d12.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** Gorira are not arboreal, and while they may climb they typically do so slowly and carefully, barely any better than humans do. Their great size and weight also means that they must be very selective in their choice of what to climb. On the ground, they move at a standard speed of 120' (40'). While they typically have little need to, they are also able to carry huge burdens, having double the available encumbrance that humans have for each speed category.



Gorira, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
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**Languages:** Their own language has both a spoken form, rather similar to whispers interspersed with sounds of fists beaten on their chest, and a sign language form. They have a written language in the form of pictograms, each of which symbolises a hand sign. They can usually speak the local human language, most often Tanagoro.

**Weapons and Armour:** While gorira may use any armour or weapon permitted to their class, the possession of armour is only known among the warrior caste in their society, and little is produced domestically. Owing to their size, the cost and encumbrance of armour made to fit them is double that of normal armour.

## Nobubele

One could easily mistake the nobubele for chimpanzees, being dark-haired, smallish (4' to 5' tall), simian creatures with similar facial features and builds to chimps. Few really notice any differences, and the secretive nobubele are quite happy with that. They are more slender, gracile creatures, slightly less muscled than chimps, and with a rather more reflective demeanour.

The name they give themselves is “the people”. The Karimari (who also call themselves “the people” in their own language) call them nobubele, meaning (in their language) “the kind folk”, a fair description of their temperaments and natures. They live a mostly nomadic, arboreal life, making nests of folded branches each night, eating fruits, leaves, and small game (rodents, birds, eggs, and some smaller monkeys). They have a surprisingly complex culture, with a ‘written’ language in the form of tree fibres twisted into cord and knotted in complex sequences (this being sufficient even to form spellbooks). They value family time, love, conversation and understanding above treasures, but they understand that other races value such and are happy to trade for gold and jewels.

Their social structure is matriarchal, with older, wiser females who know the lands and tribal ways better than younger folk making most of the decisions for groups of anywhere between 10 and 200 individuals, with disagreements being settled by long discussions, mutual grooming and occasionally mating. Typically, a nobubele will live up to 50 years, but individuals living 60 to 70 years are not unknown.

Nobubele are capable of using tools and prize metal and stone tools that they them-

selves do not fashion. They would be capable of making such items; they have the strength and intelligence to do so, but their lands lack the resources needed for this, and frankly they have better things to do with their time. For trade, they fashion superb strong, resilient but soft fabrics from the fibres of trees, and harvest fruits, game and rare, valuable spices, and in return they buy worked metal, stone, and rare books.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Nobubele characters require 15% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: -1, Int: -1, Wis: -2, Dex: +1, Con: +1, Cha: +2.

**Special Abilities:** As well as being able to travel from tree to tree (see movement, below), nobubele can choose to ‘freeze’ if within a tree, an ability similar to a halfling’s ability to go unobserved. A nobubele thus freezing is undetectable 90% of the time. Note that any character in a tree may also go unnoticed if a foe simply doesn’t think to look up. When hiding anywhere else, a nobubele can, like a halfling, successfully go unnoticed on a 1-2 on 1d6.

An unarmoured or leather-armour-wearing nobubele can climb any tree with no ability check required, and can climb walls as a thief of equal level. A nobubele thief gains a +15% bonus to all climb walls checks.

They can attack with their natural weapons, having two fist attacks and a bite, each for 1d4 damage.

**Character Class:** All classes available to humans are available to nobubele, but there are no known nobubele merchants or rakes. Clerics are common; they have a complex belief system, revering within their



*Nobubele, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
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pantheon Ordana, Ka, Chiron, Ixion, and Fugit. But above all the nobubele revere Valerias, viewing the acts of physical love as essential in social bonding and sacred in all forms.

**Hit Dice:** Nobubele advance with standard class hit dice.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** Nobubele may move on the ground at normal speed (120') and are also superb in the trees. If unarmoured or wearing leather armour they may choose to either treewalk or brachiate as appropriate, moving through trees at the same speed as they can move on the ground.

Nobubele are poor swimmers and dislike getting wet. To voluntarily enter water a character must succeed a wisdom check. Their swimming speed is half that of other characters (1/10<sup>th</sup> of their normal movement rate, rather than 1/5<sup>th</sup> as for other characters).

**Languages:** Nobubele speak their own tongue, and that of the local human population (typically Karimari). They may also communicate with apes (but not monkeys) and delight in hearing their tales.

**Weapons and Armour:** Nobubele can use arms and armour appropriate to their class, but typically prefer lighter weapons (spears, javelins, slings, short bows). They are especially dangerous with short bows, often choosing to loose a few arrows from one location in the trees before moving to another, often having multiple well prepared, hidden shooting platforms if they have had time to prepare. To be able to move freely in trees a nobubele needs at least one arm free, and many choose not to carry a shield to ensure this remains possible. Armour made for small humans or elves is, with little modification, a good fit for nobubele.

## Phanaton

Phanatons<sup>1</sup> are small (halfling-sized) primates, rather similar to ring-tailed lemurs, but having long flaps of downy skin connecting their arms to their legs. These are used to glide between branches of the great trees of their homelands.

Most phanatons are savage creatures, living in the jungles of Davania and the Thanegioth Archipelago, but some populations are also found to the West of the Savage Coast where a more civilised culture has emerged, centred around the nation of Jibarú.

They are nervous creatures, well aware that their small size (no phanaton has ever stood taller than 3') and slender build make them appear to be easy prey to most predators in their forests, but they are not unsociable, enjoying the company of other phanatons and visitors of other species who approach them peacefully. To outsiders, there is little to choose between male and female phanaton, but they are essentially a matriarchal society, with females simply being better at cooperating than males and able to form alliances among themselves to dictate how groups are run. They travel far and wide in small groups of 5-20 individuals, finding fruits, leaves, and small game to eat, but they return to central villages which may house hundreds of phanaton, in tree houses high above the forest floor. They live, on average, around 35-40 years.

<sup>1</sup>The Phanaton class presented here builds on the one presented in *DRAGON Magazine* issue #188 rather than later ones



*Phanatons,  
produced from DeepAi with prompts by Cab*

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 10% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: 0, Int: -2, Wis: +2, Dex: +1, Con: 0, Cha: -1.

**Character Class:** They may choose to be fighters or thieves, but they have so far shown limited spellcasting capability, only being able to take up the medicine man class (which they refer to as mpisorona).

**Hit Dice:** Phanatons use the next smaller dice to determine hit points. So, for example, a fighter phanaton gains 1d6hp per level rather than 1d8. Note that hit dice cannot be reduced below 1d4.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** Phanatons may move on the ground at normal speed (120') and may also glide. Phanatons may



glide up to a distance of three times the height they begin. They are also as at home in trees as they are on the ground, and can use their tail and feet to hold on to and steady themselves arboreally, allowing them to use their hands to fight, hold items, etc. while in trees. Their arboreal movement rate is 120' (40').

All phanatons can climb as a thief equal to their own level of experience, and phanaton thieves receive a +20% bonus to climb walls.

From fourth level onwards phanatons gain a limited capacity to fly but can only gain 10' of altitude per 60' of forward motion. From level 7 a phanaton may, once per day, pass plant as per the druid spell. From level 18 a phanaton may transport through plants, also as the druid spell, once per day.

While a phanaton may carry up to 2,400 cn in weight, a medium or heavily encumbered phanaton carrying more than 900 cn loses the capacity to glide.

**Languages:** Phanatons speak their own tongue, Jibari, and that of the local human population (typically Verdan). They may also communicate with lemurs and monkeys (but not apes) in the unlikely event that those creatures are interested and have something worth hearing.

**Weapons and Armour:** Phanatons cannot wear armour or use shields, their motion and capacity to glide are completely impaired by such constriction. Their base armour class is 8. They may use any small or medium weapons, but they invariably begin their careers with weapon mastery in primitive weapons such as short bows, spears, clubs and javelins.

## Shaydaan

A far cry from the boisterous but generally evasive chimpanzee from which they have descended, the shaydaan (in the language of Arypt, literally, demons) are ruthless, marauding killers stalking the forests and plains of Arypt for prey both to consume or to sacrifice to their patron Immortal, Demogorgon.

They form large groups, typically led by a dominant male with several powerful lieutenants, who claim not only leadership but ownership over others in the tribe. Groups may be as small as 10 or 12 individuals but can reach 200-300 strong, and while they are nomadic they are also territorial, protecting their own territories from other groups. It is common for groups to wage violent conflict against each other; indeed the flesh of other shaydaan can form a large part of their diet, if they're winning those wars, alongside fruits, roots, leaves, insects, and any smaller animals they can catch.

Few question their allotted role within society – larger males becoming soldiers, smaller males typically being driven out or killed, and females protecting each other and their young from predation by other tribes. But, rarely, an independent-minded shaydaan will want more, and will head out into a wider world. Most will be found by other bands of shaydaan and, as an outsider, killed and consumed. But occasionally one may escape and reach the villages and towns of other races. There, if not immediately mistaken for a normal chimpanzee, they may find a life of adventure and fulfillment outside of the cult of Demogorgon, but even then, if they rise to prominence, they will be hunted down by other adherents of that terrible belief structure.



Shaydaan, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
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They are built very like chimpanzees, dark-furred apes 4' to 5' tall, with females weighing up to 110 lb and males up to 150 lb. They are as at home on the ground as in the trees, spending more time on the ground than most other species of ape, which is necessary in many of the semi-wooded areas in which they live.

**Advancement and physical attributes:**

Characters require 20% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: +3, Int: -1, Wis: -1, Dex: 0, Con: +2, Cha: -3.

**Special Abilities:** Shaydaan draw great strength and resilience from their link to Demogorgon. Even those no longer in the cult are able to feel and exploit this connec-

tion. In combat, once per round they may attempt to enter a frenzy by making a wisdom check. If they fail, they enter the frenzy. They may continue their frenzy for 1 round per point of constitution +1 round per level of experience. During this time, they receive a +1 bonus to individual initiative, +3 bonus to hit and damage with their unarmed attacks, and a +2 bonus to hit and damage with any melee weapons used. While frenzying they also receive a temporary bonus number of hit points equal to their constitution score plus level of experience, these hit points being lost first, disappearing at the end of the fight (with no damage carried over unless that number was exceeded). At the end of the frenzy, or the fight, a shaydaan must rest for 1 full hour or suffer the effects of exhaustion (*Rules Cyclopeda* page 88).

Shaydaan can attack using their natural weapons, inflicting 1d6 with each fist, and 1d8 with their bite attack.

**Character Class:** Most shaydaan are fighters, but a few choose to become medicine men dedicated to Demogorgon. Some become thieves. There are no known shaydaan of other character classes, including magic-users.

**Hit Dice:** Characters use the next higher hit dice, and gain an extra hit dice at first level. For example, a first-level thief uses d6 for hit points, and begins with 2d6hp at first level.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** The shaydaan are able to brachiate, as are most other apes, and to tree walk. When traveling thus they are as fast as they are on the ground, moving at 120' (40').

An unarmoured or leather-armour-wearing shaydaan can climb any tree with no ability check required, and can climb walls as a thief of equal level. A shaydaan thief gains a +10% bonus to all climb walls checks.

**Languages:** Shaydaan speak their own language, one of shrill and angry growls and grunts, and those who have escaped shaydaan clans are able to speak the local human language.

**Weapons and Armour:** Armour must be made especially for a shaydaan, and it is rare that any armourer is willing to do so. They can fashion spears, clubs and maces from materials available in their tribal lands, but typically they favour using fist and bite attacks. When they can get them, they enjoy using human- and dwarf-made weapons, but they are usually shunned by other races, who refuse to trade with them.

## Taer

Savage snow apes are found on mountains across Skothar and Davania, but it is only on the slopes of the mountains of Tangor that they have gained a higher level of sentience.

The taer are essentially baboons, white-furred and savage, but larger, rather more upright, and far more intelligent. They can reach 5' tall, with dense white fur and heavily muscled bodies. Most are little more than brutes, driven only by physical desires and the need to feed, eking out a meagre existence on the snow-capped mountains. But a few hundred around the Monastery of Entropy<sup>2</sup> have become educated in martial ways and have risen to prominence in their region. They often battle against the changyi for dominance over the valleys and consider those creatures their enemies. In their hunts, in the valleys below, they seek to kill the gibbons who may become changyi, creating a never-ending contention between the two races.

While above the white apes in terms of intellect, they are otherwise very similar – brutish, violent, angry and dangerous. The natural lifespan of a taer is around 40 years – few make it to that age.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 15% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: +3, Int: -3, Wis: -3, Dex: +0, Con: +3, Cha: -1.

**Special Abilities:** Taer can attack with their fists (see below under character class) or can instead choose to grab an opponent and squeeze. If, in a round, they hit with

<sup>2</sup> The Five Monasteries of the Furry Flying Fists will be discussed in the next issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine*



Taer, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
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two hand attacks, they may choose to hug a man-sized or smaller opponent, inflicting 2d6 damage per round until they choose to release that foe or lose a standard round of

wrestling. They can, in addition to other attacks, bite for 1d4 damage per round.

They are poor tree climbers but excellent rock and cliff climbers. All taer can move up and down natural rock faces at their full normal movement rate.

A great rage can fall upon taer, and they may at any time choose to enter a death frenzy. This imparts a +2 bonus to hit and damage and allows them to continue fighting after being reduced to 0 hp. They will continue to attack until they are reduced to a negative number of hit points equal to their constitution score, at which point they will fall to the ground dead. If the fight ends before this, they may be revived by a cleric casting any healing spell, which will restore them to 1hp, within 5 rounds.

**Character Class:** The only adventuring taer are members of the Monastery of Entropy, and as such are mystics.

**Hit Dice:** Taer use the next largest HD, being 1d8 hp for a mystic (or 1d10 if the optional rules for mystics to reach higher levels with 1d8 hp to level 9 are used).

**Movement and Encumbrance:** Taer have a movement rate of 120' (40'), and normal encumbrance limits.

**Languages:** Their own language is one of wild and violent-sounding whoops and screams. They can also understand (but not speak) the language of the changyi. Some taer learn the local human language (typically Tanagoro) but must have sufficient intelligence to learn an extra language to do so.

**Weapons and Armour:** They may use any items permissible to mystics.

## WONG ORANYE

The thoughtful and reflective wong oranye are the true philosophers and inventors of the primate world. Resembling orangutans, they thrive in the dense jungles of the Cestian coast, occasionally travelling further afield on quests of discovery. They are most at home in the trees than on the ground, but curiosity often brings them down from their trees to see what can be found in the world below. And once they do so, it is the same curiosity that can take them far from home, with both individuals and groups ranging a great distance from their homelands.

Typically they live in small family groups, with a male and several females sharing a territory in which they forage for fruits, leaves and flowers, only rarely eating meat. Young stay in these extended groups for the first 12-13 years of their lives, and then either choose to remain near to home or to travel. Small groups travel towards settlements of other races to seek adventure. Typically, they live around 50-60 years.

They excel in technical endeavours, often choosing to go to sea (as sailors or, more often, pirates), and occasionally taking up employment with engineers, often gnomes, being as they are gifted in working with natural materials. If anything can be made from wood and rope, then a wong oranye can make it.

Purely out of choice, they do not manufacture stone or metal tools of their own, but they do make a bewildering range of tools from wood and forest fibres. It is not unknown for a wong oranye to have dozens of tools dedicated to opening nuts and fruits, processing fibres, personal grooming, grinding materials for further use,



Wong oranye,  
produced from DeepAi with prompts by Cab

twisting ropes, and creating traps – indeed creating new tools for different jobs is one of life's great joys for wong oranye.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 10% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: +1, Int: +1, Wis: -2, Dex: +1, Con: +1, Cha: -2.

**Special Abilities:** The wong oranye are competent inventors and creators. All have the engineering skill, in addition to any other general skills, from first level, and they gain the fantasy physics skill at 5<sup>th</sup> level, and meddling at 9<sup>th</sup> level of experience in addition to any other general skills known. Few realise that wong oranye are as accomplished creators as gnomes, their creations tending towards tools and machinery

entirely made from natural materials found in the jungle. Fewer still, having underestimated them thus, leave their lands alive.

An unarmoured or leather-armor-wearing wong oranye can climb any tree with no ability check required, and can climb walls as a thief of equal level. A wong oranye thief gains a +10% bonus to all climb walls checks.

Their long limbs make them dangerous opponents if they choose to wrestle. All wong oranye possess the wrestling general skill, in addition to any others known.

Unarmed, they can attack with two fists for 1d4 damage each, and a bite for 1d6 damage.

**Character Class:** In principle wong oranye may be of any class available to humans, but no merchants, mystics or rakes are known. Many become fighters or thieves, few being keen on the esoteric studies necessary to become wizards. Clerics may belong to any faith, indeed no specific patron Immortals have been identified, with each individual seeming to find their own way of following one of a bewildering array of Immortals for entirely personal reasons. The only exception to this is the recent cult of Benekander, whose practical aspect has appealed to many among them (and who is sufficiently flattered by this to return a similar level of respect).

**Hit Dice:** Normal hit dice for the class are used, but wong oranye start at level 1 with 2 HD rather than 1. For example, a first-

level wong oranye thief begins with 2d4 hp rather than 1d4.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** They are rather rapid when moving among trees, with a base movement rate of 150' (50') if treewalking or brachiating. They are equally rapid aloft among the masts and spars of a ship. Their hips being rather wide set mean they're a little slower than most other characters on the ground, slowing their base movement rate to 90' (30').

**Languages:** Their own language, known as Ookish, sounds very like gentle grunts to other creatures. They also speak the most common local human language.

**Weapons and Armour:** The long limbs of the wong oranye mean that armour must be made or adapted especially for them, but they may wear any armour permitted to their class. Likewise, their build very much favours the use of slashing, bladed weapons, so they generally use swords, cutlasses, and other slashing weapons, with which they gain a +1 to hit.

## Yazarian

Yazarians are a spacefaring race of roughly man-sized creatures resembling short-furred simians, with tan to brown fur across most of the body and a thicker mane of fur around the shoulders and head. In their spacefaring cousins a flap of skin stretches between their arms and legs, allowing them to glide. Mystaran yazarians have developed larger, feathered wings with which they achieve much the same thing. They stand around 5' to 5'6" tall, rather more upright than most other simians.

A population of yazarians descended from a stranded crew can be found living between the southern cliff faces of Denagoth and the dark pine woods of Wendar. They were shipwrecked there over 600 years ago, so long ago in fact that their elders (few live longer than 60 years) speak only of the 'before times' as a time when their ancestors travelled between the stars. They are the most intelligent of the core races of the Galactic Federation, a fact often masked by their tendency to be pushy, aggressive and on occasion simply hostile, and they have shown themselves to be a technologically capable race able to create some of the most potent mechanical items the galaxy has ever seen.

Unfortunately most of this knowledge is completely lost to the population living on Mystara. But this fact is sufficient for most immortals to treat them with great caution, remembering the damage inflicted by earlier technologies in the Blackmoorian era. And the quest to escape Mystara, to return to the stars, is not one that has been encouraged until very recently, when a new player has emerged among the Immortals.



Original Yazarian, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
(<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)

An interesting aspect of yazarian culture is the concept of 'life enemy', chosen at any time in a yazarian's life. This may be a competing group, an enemy race, or even a specific technological problem (if the yazarian is an inventor) or company (if the yazarian is a merchant). The more potent the selected enemy, the more honour there is in that choice, and it is seen as fitting and noble to try to defeat that enemy. If that enemy is defeated (an invention made to solve a problem, the company folds, the enemy

killed, etc.) that is considered a worthy and honourable achievement in yazarian society, and the yazarian might or might not choose a subsequent foe.

**Advancement and physical attributes:** Characters require 15% more experience points per level of experience. They are generated with the following stat modifiers: Str: -2, Int: +1, Wis: +1, Dex: +1, Con: -1, Cha: 0.



**Special Abilities:** Yazarians may glide at an angle of 30° downwards or less, at a rate of 180' (60').

They train themselves to enter a rage in melee combat, giving them a bonus of +3 to hit and damage for a number of rounds equal to their constitution score (after which they must rest for 6 turns or suffer the effects of exhaustion).

Yazarians have excellent infravision (90'), having evolved in near-dark primal forests, and can suffer in bright light – if they can obtain them they wear darkened glasses if forced to operate in direct sunlight (if deprived of such goggles, in sunlight they gain no bonus to hit or damage in melee combat).

They are competent climbers, and can climb walls as a thief of equal level. Yazarian thieves gain a +10% bonus to their climb walls ability.

**Character Class:** Yazarians may be of any class available to humans, but there are no known yazarian merchants or mystics. Until recently there had been few Yazarian clerics, but an active cult devoted to Benekander, with a belief structure based around their return to the stars, has become increasingly popular.

**Hit Dice:** As per humans for their assumed class.

**Movement and Encumbrance:** Yazarians glide at a rate of 180' (60') and their normal movement rate is 120' (40').

**Languages:** They speak a form of Interlac, a language shared by most members of the



*Mystaran Yazarian, produced by Senarch*  
<https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery>

Galactic Federation, and have also adopted Heldann, Wendarian and Elvish to suit their needs (each character may choose two of those three languages, in addition to any other languages they have learned).

**Weapons and Armour:** They may use any weapon permitted to their character class, often favouring mechanical weapons such as crossbows. If their class permits they may use a shield, but they cannot wear armour, that being incompatible with their capacity to glide.

## BRACHIATION AND TREE WALKING

Most primate characters are able to move rapidly through trees by either brachiation or tree walking.

Brachiation, the process of swinging through the trees arm over arm, by means of holding on with the arms, is the preferred form of locomotion of many such characters, and some (notably the changyi) can reach a dizzying pace by brachiating through the forest canopy.

Treewalking is a slower process of climbing on to branches, running or walking along, and cautiously moving out across to other trees. This necessitates a much more tightly packed forest canopy to move from tree to tree, but it has the advantage of being barely detectable from below.

Most primates can make progress through the forest canopy or through similar spaces (such as for example the masts and rigging of a ship, the balconies of a great city, etc.) using a combination of these two forms of locomotion. If fighting creatures not native to the treetops, creatures who are proficient at brachiation and tree walking gain +2 to hit, and a +2 bonus to wrestling rating. Any creatures not proficient must also make a saving throw vs. death ray if knocked prone while elevated in the trees to avoid falling to the ground, while creatures that are proficient therein are assumed to have held on with, at least, a hand or a foot.

## SKILLS

Primate characters may learn any general skills allowable to other characters, if available to learn where they reside. There are a number of other skills that are less common among other races, but widely known among the primates.

**Animal Empathy (Wisdom):** Generally knowing how to keep a wild animal on side – not so much controlling them or communicating with them, a successful check will inform a character as to whether an animal is likely to be aggressive, friendly, dangerous, or in general how it is likely to react. The character may then be able to change their behaviour accordingly and affect how the animal will react. This will not tame an aggressive animal that has already attacked, but it may allow a character to avert an attack or, at least, be ignored by an animal.

**Foraging (Intelligence):** How to identify and sustainably and safely harvest useful plants, fungi, shellfish, seaweed, fruit and nuts. An essential survival skill, and in some regions a means of producing harvests for sale or trade.

**Forest Construction (Intelligence):** Building structures from naturally obtained materials in forests or jungles. Constructing simple woven platforms or nests that last for a few nights does not require any kind of skill check, but to build more complex structures that may last for longer requires a high degree of skill. Successful use of this skill can also allow for construction of living, growing shelters made from still live branches and twigs within the trees, structures that will continue to grow and develop over many years.

**Howling (Constitution):** Being able to howl to communicate general thoughts and feelings over a wide range. A successful check will allow all creatures of the same species, if outdoors and within half a mile, to hear the character howling. Each howl takes around a minute, and can contain any sentence of 8 words or less that the character wishes to convey.

**Knapping (Ingelligence):** The skill of making stone tools, by breaking flint or other stones to create useful sharp edges. This skill allows a character to make or repair any of a number of specialised stone tools (knives, scrapers, axe heads, etc.) using other stones, antler, horn and other materials to form sharp edges.

**Monkey Wrestling (Dexterity):** Only characters capable of brachiation and tree walking can learn this skill, which involves climbing over a foe in combat. With a successful skill check, the character may choose to climb an opponent to either make a wrestling or unarmed attack with either a +2 bonus to hit or +2 bonus to wrestling rating. Normal bonuses to strike an unarmed foe attempting to wrestle do not apply in the event of the skill check being made, but the target may still make a normal weapon attack.

This skill can only be used if the enemy is significantly larger than the character using this skill. Once that character has climbed on to the target, if they gain initiative in the following round they may choose to climb over and continue their movement on the other side of their enemy, to continue making melee attacks, to continue wrestling, or to back away into normal melee combat. Note that only a single hand attack can be made while monkey wrestling, the other hand is needed to hold on.

**Permaculture (Intelligence):** Forest farming, for production of crops at ground level, mid-storey, and forest canopy, through the year, to sustainably maximise production of leaves, berries, nuts and fruits, fibres, wood, and other products, in a semi-natural woodland. An important part of primate food production, also practiced by other species elsewhere.

**Warrior Scream (Constitution):** Used primarily in primitive and 'warrior' cultures, although not confined to them. The art of letting out an ear-piercing scream to threaten opponents and psyche oneself up for combat. After spending a round screaming, a successful check will confer a +1 to hit and damage for 2d4 rounds, and may, depending on circumstances, force opponents to make a morale check. If this skill is used by a yazarian, this bonus is cumulative with their rage ability.

## LYCANTHROPES, VAMPIRES, AND MUMMIES

Simian characters are closer to humans than any other playable species, and as such some afflictions that affect humans also impact upon them. They can become lycanthropes or vampires, and populations of simian were-creatures are far from unknown.

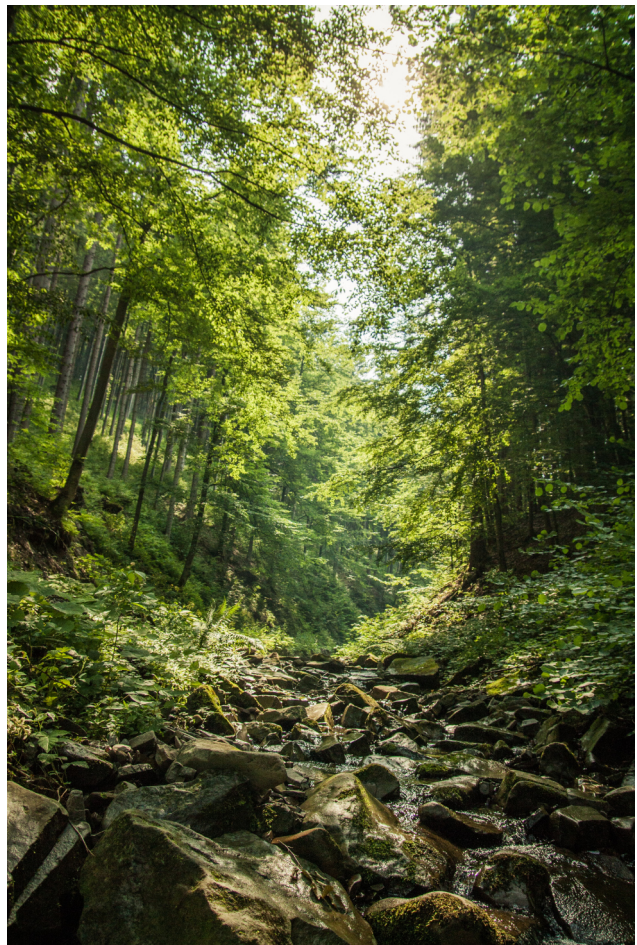
Nobubele were-tigers are commonly found in and around Ulimwengu, and indeed mixed groups of Karimari and nobubele were-tigers are of huge concern to the secretive Karimari, who fear their spread outside of the region may lead to others learning too much about their presence.

A recent concern among the wong oranye has been the presence of lycanthropy on the Cestian coastline that they typically head to when young. Recently spread there from Thyatian trading vessels, the ever curious wong oranye seem particularly prone to antagonising the were-rats, and many have become infected.

In the shaydaan tribelands, it is the devil swine strain of lycanthropy that is most common, with those who survive attacks and become devil swines being both feared and revered within their communities. Indeed many reach high rank within their troops, but ultimately this tends to lead to such losses among them that the whole troop is weakened. At present the number of infected individuals is relatively low, but every few years it rises to almost plague levels and whole troops are lost.

Vampirism is less common among the simians but does occur. One coven of phanaton vampires on the Isle of Dread is known and feared by natives of Tanaroa and surrounding villages, appearing (as phanatons often do) as the sun goes down, apparently seeking to trade fruits for other goods, and charming villagers away. Combined groups of native and Tanaroan and rakasta warriors sent to deal with this coven have been lost, and it is unclear where this group is hiding or what can be done about it. One notable yazarian vampire is known to stalk the cold desert highlands of Denagoth. His name is lost to time, and he shuns the company of his own people, preferring to prey on elves and humans. Some say he is old enough to remember the Before Time of his people, and sought out vampirism as a way of living long enough to lead them back to the stars. If this is the case, he's not (currently) saying.

In the former Nithian colonies of Arypt, under lost, jungle-covered pyramids disturbed only by the howling of monkeys and the avaricious predations of adventurers, are creatures mummified by members of cults of ages long past. Among them are literally hundreds of mummified shaydaan, whole troops taken from their lands with the blessing of their entropic patron, an army of the rotting dead awaiting the time they will be called on to serve their masters once more.



# MEDICINE

# MAN

## A MYSTARAN CHARACTER CLASS

by Cab Davidson



FROM  
The Vaults  
OF PANDIUS



Wong Oranye Medicine man, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
(<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)

Not every race on Mystara has the same arrangements with the Immortals as the one humans have. Indeed, in various of the more primitive, less advanced cultures (both human and non-human) with no written language or formal temples there can be no real clerics. In those cultures it is not uncommon that medicine man characters exist. They have various names in different cultures, with phanatons knowing them as mpisorona, chameleon men as boyla, etc. Each variant has its own unique abilities in addition to a capacity to cast a diverse range of spells.

A medicine man is less adept at healing than clerics of organised faiths, as with such education come certain advantages. But they are also less constrained by dogma and may use a wider range of weapons, and they may learn to cast a truly remarkable range of magical spells, far more varied than those a cleric can cast. And this is fortunate for the peoples blessed to have access to medicine men as, without written language, the medicine man must take on the roles both of magic-users and clerics within their society.

## PLAYING A MEDICINE MAN CHARACTER

Your access to magic makes you a valuable member of any adventuring party, and your capacity to choose from a diverse list every day gives you greater versatility than other spellcasters. Look out for chances to use your spells to incapacitate enemies, to heal party members, but also to provide increased powers for your own and your comrades' attacks. You can also use a wide range of weapons but you are not as well armoured as thieves, clerics, or fighters, so look out for chances to engage your foes with missile weapons, and keep a melee weapon handy for when that's necessary.

**Prime Requisite:** Constitution.

**Hit Dice:** 1d6 per level, plus or minus any constitution modifier, up to level 9; +1 hp per level thereafter. The hit dice of medicine man characters are modified according to race in the same way as for other character classes.

**Experience and Level:** Medicine man characters progress according to the table below. Note that racial modifiers still apply to this progression.

**Attacks, Combat, Saving Throws:** Medicine men may use any melee or missile weapon permissible to their race. They cannot wear armour, but if their racial characteristics permit, they may use a shield. Medicine men attack and save as a magic-user of equal level, and gain weapon mastery slots at the same rate.

**Special Abilities:** Medicine men can cast spells, memorised in a trance like a cleric, may reverse memorised spells at will in the same way once they attain 4<sup>th</sup> level. They are

unable to turn undead, but they gain the special-order abilities as a cleric, paladin, or avenger of the same faith. Medicine men gain the skill 'honour Immortal', specific to their patron, in addition to their other skills, at first level. Spells are gained once per day, in a ritual that may involve fire, a tribal dance, or various other cultural practices depending on the medicine man's race.

Few magic items are made for medicine men, but you can use any magic items crafted for clerics or magic-users, provided the effects they create are also generated by spells in your own list (see below). So, for example, you can use a *wand of fear*, that being based on *cause fear*, the reversed form of *cause fear*; which is a medicine man spell. But you cannot use a *wand of lightning bolts* because that item recreates the *lightning bolt* spell, which you cannot cast.

**Types of Medicine Man:** Each race that produces medicine man characters has a different name for the class, based on their own culture and customs, as shown in the table below. Each has a number of specific abilities that are described beneath the medicine man experience table. Note that there may be many other species with medicine man character classes with different abilities, and the dungeon master is encouraged to develop their own campaign-specific variants.

Table 1 Race/Class Name

| Race          | Class Name  |
|---------------|-------------|
| Cay man       | Brujo       |
| Chameleon man | Boyla       |
| Neathar       | Lithomancer |
| Phanaton      | Mpisorona   |
| Shaydaan      | Saaxira     |

Table 2 Experience levels

| Level | XP        | Abilities | Level Title  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1     | 0         |           | Hex          | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2     | 2,500     |           | Foreseer     | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3     | 5,000     | (a)       | Mundunugu    | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4     | 10,000    |           | Charmer      | 2 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5     | 20,000    |           | Soothsayer   | 2 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |
| 6     | 40,000    | (b)       | Isangoma     | 2 | 2 | 2 |   |   |   |   |
| 7     | 80,000    |           | Witcher      | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |
| 8     | 150,000   |           | Pawang       | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |
| 9     | 300,000   | (c)       | Obeah Master | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 |   |   |   |
| 10    | 450,000   |           |              | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |   |
| 11    | 600,000   |           |              | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 |   |   |
| 12    | 750,000   | (d)       |              | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |
| 13    | 900,000   |           |              | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |   |
| 14    | 1,050,000 |           |              | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 |   |
| 15    | 1,200,000 | (e)       |              | 6 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 |   |
| 16    | 1,350,000 |           |              | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 |   |
| 17    | 1,500,000 |           |              | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 18    | 1,650,000 | (f)       |              | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 19    | 1,800,000 |           |              | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| 20    | 1,950,000 |           |              | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 21    | 2,100,000 |           |              | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 22    | 2,250,000 |           |              | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| 23    | 2,400,000 |           |              | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| 24    | 2,550,000 |           |              | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| 25    | 2,700,000 |           |              | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 26    | 2,850,000 |           |              | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| 27    | 3,000,000 |           |              | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| 28    | 3,150,000 |           |              | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 29    | 3,300,000 |           |              | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| 30    | 3,450,000 |           |              | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 31    | 3,600,000 |           |              | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 32    | 3,750,000 |           |              | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| 33    | 3,900,000 |           |              | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| 34    | 4,050,000 |           |              | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 35    | 4,200,000 |           |              | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| 36    | 4,350,000 |           |              | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |

(a) At third level a medicine man can identify any plant or plant-like monster, with a 50% +3% per level of experience chance, up to a maximum of 95%

(b) 3<sup>rd</sup> level ability

(c) 6<sup>th</sup> level ability

(d) 9<sup>th</sup> level ability

(e) 12<sup>th</sup> level ability

(f) 15<sup>th</sup> level ability

(g) 18<sup>th</sup> level ability

## Cay Man



From 6<sup>th</sup> level a brujo may instantly and faultlessly *teleport* from any pool or water large enough for them to submerge in, to any other within 90', once per day. From 9<sup>th</sup> level, they may cast *lower water* or *raise water* once per day. From 12<sup>th</sup> level a brujo may cast *wall of ice* once per day. From 15<sup>th</sup> level a brujo may, once per day, cast *ice storm* or *ice wall*. And from 18<sup>th</sup> level a brujo may *teleport* from any pool of water to any other on the same world, once per day. These powers are all in addition to any other spells the brujo may cast.

## Chameleon Man



From 6<sup>th</sup> level a boyla can, once per day, cast *phantasmal force* in addition to other spells. From 9<sup>th</sup> level they can cast *hallucinatory terrain* once per day. From 12<sup>th</sup> level a boyla can extend its natural colour-changing ability to any 2 other willing creatures, for up to 4 turns, once per day. From 15<sup>th</sup> level they gain the ability to create a projected image spell, once per day. From 18<sup>th</sup> level a boyla can cast *reverse gravity* once per day. Note that while their racial ability of holding on to the undersides of branches and walls with their feet may make them immune to the effect of this spell, they are not immune to any items flung into the air falling back upon them. These powers are all in addition to any spells the boyla may cast.



## Neathar

From 6<sup>th</sup> level a lithomancer can choose a single animal native to their home terrain with which they have affinity. That animal type can be communicated with at will, and reaction rolls therewith are made at +2. From 9<sup>th</sup> level they can cast move earth once per day. From 12<sup>th</sup> level they can cast woodform, once per day. From 15<sup>th</sup> level they can cast stoneform once per day, in addition to any other spells they can cast. From 18<sup>th</sup> level they can cast statue once per day. These powers are all in addition to any other spells a lithomancer may cast.

## Phanaton

From 6<sup>th</sup> level, a mpisorona can hide in shadows and move silently as a thief of equal level. From 9<sup>th</sup> level they can cast levitate upon themselves once per day. From 12<sup>th</sup> level they can once per day cast fly upon themselves. From 15<sup>th</sup> level they can travel by dimension door, once per day. From level 18 they may cast teleport any object upon themselves or any inanimate object held, once per day. These powers are all in addition to any other spells the mpisorona can cast.

*(Previous page)*

*Cay Man and Chameleon Man Medicine men, original drawings by Jeffrey Kosh*

<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>

## Shaydaan<sup>1</sup>

At 6<sup>th</sup> level a saaxira can, once per day, cast animate pet (see below). From 9<sup>th</sup> level they can cast animate dead animals (see below) once per day. From 12<sup>th</sup> level they can dominate lesser undead (see below) once per day. At 15<sup>th</sup> level they gain the ability to cast animate dead, once per day, in addition to other spells known. From 18<sup>th</sup> level a saaxira can cast dominate greater undead (see below) once per day. These powers are all in addition to any other spells the saaxira can cast.



*Shaydaan Medicine man, produced from deep Ai via prompts from Cab*

<sup>1</sup> A primate race of Mystara, described in the namesake article in this issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine*, inspired by the chimpanzee.

## HIGH LEVEL OPTIONS

A name-level medicine man may settle down and construct a sanctum, and is then referred to as a witch doctor. A sanctum may be located in a cave, a sacred glade, a clean pool of water, or any other location of spiritual significance to the culture of the medicine man. It is rarely a large or expensive building, and any buildings constructed to house the witch doctor or their followers must be sensitive to the location in question. Many (50–300) of the character's race will seek to live around the sanctum, perhaps creating a new settlement or encampment, of which 2d4 will be medicine men of levels 1–3 seeking to learn from the master. Many will travel from far and wide to visit the holy place and will bring stories and rumours from near and far.

A travelling medicine man is called an animist. An animist will be welcomed by most tribes in lands of their own people, although rulers in civilised lands are often suspicious of them or even actively hostile. An animist typically travels to seek out wrongs inflicted on their people and to aid them when they are most in need, and will often attract powerful followers (over 5<sup>th</sup> level) who will seek both to follow and learn from their teachings.

## SPELLS LIST

### Level 1

---

Charm Person (RC 44)  
 Detect Magic (RC 45)  
 Detect Danger (RC 41)  
 Faerie Fire (RC 41)  
 Light\* (RC 45)  
 Locate (RC 41)  
 Magical Stone (see below)  
 Purify Food and Water (RC 35)  
 Predict Weather (RC 41)  
 Remove Fear\* (RC 35)  
 Resist Cold (RC 35)  
 Shield (RC 46)  
 Sleep (RC 45)  
 Ventriloquism (RC 46)

### Level 2

---

Bless\* (RC 35)  
 Cure Light Wounds\* (RC 34)  
 Find Traps (RC 35)  
 Heat Metal (RC 41)  
 Mirror Image (RC 47)  
 Obscure (RC 41)  
 Phantasmal Force (RC 47)  
 Resist Fire (RC 35)  
 Produce Fire (RC 41)  
 Silence 15' Radius (RC 35)  
 Snake Charm (RC 35)  
 Speak with Animal (RC 35)  
 Warp Wood (RC 41)  
 Web (RC 47)

**Level 3**

Call Lightning (RC 41)  
 Continual Light\* (RC 46)  
 Cure Blindness (RC 36)  
 Cure Disease\* (RC 36)  
 Dispel Magic (RC 48)  
 Growth of Animal (RC 36)  
 Hold Person\* (RC 48)  
 Prot. from Poison (RC 42)  
 Remove Curse\* (RC 36)  
 Speak with Plants (RC 37)  
 Stoneshape (See below)  
 Striking (RC 36)  
 Water Breathing (RC 49)  
 Water Walk (see below)

**Level 4**

Charm Monster (RC 49)  
 Control Temperature 10' (RC 42)  
 Create Water (RC 36)  
 Cure Serious Wounds\* (RC 37)  
 Growth of Plants (RC 49)  
 Hallucinatory Terrain (RC 50)  
 Insect Plague (RC 37)  
 Neutralise Poison\* (RC 37)  
 Polymorph Other (RC 50)  
 Polymorph Self (RC 50)  
 Prot. from Lightning (RC 42)  
 Sticks to Snakes (RC 37)  
 Summon Animals (RC 42)  
 Wall of Fire (RC 51)

**Level 5**

Anti Plant Shell (RC 42)  
 Commune (RC 37)  
 Create Food (RC 37)  
 Create Normal Animals (RC 38)  
 Control Winds (RC 42)  
 Hold Monster\* (RC 52)  
 Insect Plague (RC 37)  
 Languages\* (See below)  
 Pass Plant (RC 42)  
 Quest\* (RC 38)  
 Raise Dead\* (RC 38)  
 Speak with Monsters (RC 39)  
 Truesight (RC 38)  
 Woodform (RC 52)

**Level 6**

Aerial Servant (RC 38)  
 Animate Objects (RC 38)  
 Anti Animal Shell (RC 43)  
 Anti Magic Shell (RC 53)  
 Barrier\* (RC 38)  
 Charm Plant (RC 54)  
 Cure Critical Wounds\* (RC 37)  
 Find the Path (RC 39)  
 Lower Water (RC 53)  
 Mass Charm (RC 57)  
 Speak with Monsters (RC 39)  
 Summon Weather (RC 43)  
 Transport through Plants (RC 43)  
 Turn Wood (RC 43)

## Level 7

---

Create Any Monsters (RC 59)  
Creeping Doom (RC 43)  
Cureall (RC 38)  
Earthquake (RC 38)  
Gate (RC 59)  
Immunity (RC 59)  
Metal to Wood (RC 43)  
Shapechange (RC 60)  
Survival (RC 39)  
Regenerate\* (See below)  
Restore\* (RC 39)  
Summon Elemental (RC 43)  
Weather Control (RC 43)  
Wish (RC 40)

## New Spells

### Level 1

---

#### *Animate Pet*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Permanent

**Effect:** Raises one small animal from the dead

This frankly disturbing spell animates one small animal that is dead. Any normal animal up to the size of a large dog can be raised, and all are treated as 1 HD creatures, with a movement rate of 90' (30'), whether walking as a dog or cat, flying as a parrot, swimming as a fish, etc. They will obey the caster to the best of their (limited) abilities, but having no greater intelligence than other zombies they are barely more than mindless automata. They can fight (inflicting half of the damage they could have in life), fetch, carry, etc. Any caster may have up to 3 dead pets controlled thus.

#### *Magical Stone*

**Range:** 0

**Duration:** Special

**Effect:** Imbues 1 or more stones with magic

This spell allows the medicine man to enchant up to 1 pebble per 5 levels of experience. They can be thrown up to 30' or can be used as sling stones and can hit creatures immune to attacks of up to +2 magical weapons, but attacks using it confer no bonus to attack or damage. Thrown or used in a sling unskilled, the stones inflict 1d4 damage, or 2d4 if the target is undead. Used with weapon mastery, the stones cause damage appropriate to the attacker's skill, and inflict double damage to undead creatures. The stones will remain magical until used or until 3 turns have passed.

## Level 2

### *Animate Dead Animals*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 1 hour per level of the caster

**Effect:** Up to four zombie animals

After casting this spell a caster can touch up to 4 dead mount or pack animals, and they will be animated as if zombies. While they cannot fight, they also don't require food or water to sustain them. They move at half the speed they did when alive, but can pull or carry the same loads. Each raised creature has 2 HD, and can be turned by a cleric as a zombie. While such raised animals have little practical worth, they can be the difference between a caravan making it to destination or being lost.

## Level 3

### *Dominate Lesser Undead*

**Range:** 60'

**Duration:** Special

**Effect:** Controls skeletons, zombies, ghouls and wights

This spell allows the caster to attempt to control skeletons, zombies, ghouls, or wights (or creatures turned at that level). The attempt to do so is as per the Undead Liege and Pawn rules in the Rules Cyclopeda, with the caster being treated as a liege of their own level in hit dice. All normal rules for controlling undead (maximum permitted HD of individual subject being half the level of the caster, total permitted HD being twice the level of the caster, undead are freed at the next full moon, turning releases the undead) are applied to dominated undead.

### *Stoneshape*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Permanent

**Area of Effect:** 1' cube per level of experience

The caster of this spell can crudely shape any normal, unworked stone (crafting idols, making a crude doorway, etc.). Without any skill in sculpture or engineering the work may be crude, but simple figures, openings, and constructions are possible. Any objects made with moving parts will probably (60% chance) not work.

### *Water Walk*

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 1 turn per level of the caster

**Effect:** Recipient can walk on water

For the duration of this spell, the recipient can walk on any liquid (water, mud, snow, lava, etc.), and cannot be forced under the surface. Footprints, around 2" deep, are left, and no immunity to the liquid if it is damaging (e.g. acid or lava) is imbued. An unwilling recipient (for example being pushed out of a flying ship into the sea) can make a saving throw vs. spells to avoid the effect.

## Level 4

### *Languages*

**Range:** Caster Only

**Duration:** 1 turn per 3 levels of the caster

**Effect:** Allows the caster to speak and understand 1 additional language per 5 levels of experience

Upon casting this spell the caster will immediately understand the next spoken language they hear, and can freely converse therein. One extra language can be thus gained per 5 levels of experience of the caster.

The reverse of this spell, gabble, makes a single victim unable to speak coherently or even comprehend any language for the duration of the spell. The target must be touched, and can save vs. spells to avoid the effect. Victims of this spell are still able to cast spells normally.

### Level 5

#### *Dominate Greater Undead*

**Range:** 60'

**Duration:** Special

**Effect:** Controls skeletons, zombies, ghouls and wights, wraiths and mummies

This spell allows the caster to attempt to control skeletons, zombies, ghouls, wights, wraiths, or mummies (or creatures turned at that level). The attempt to do so is as per the Undead Liege and Pawn rules in the Rules Cyclopeda, with the caster being treated as a liege of their own level in hit dice. All normal rules for controlling undead (maximum permitted HD of individual subject being half the level of the caster, total permitted HD being twice the level of the caster, undead are freed at the next full moon, turning releases the undead) are applied to dominated undead.

### Level 7

#### *Regenerate\**

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Permanent

**Effect:** 1 creature

This spell allows a cleric to restore lost limbs or organs, although not instantly. If the severed limb (or eye, organ, etc.) is present and held in place, then the spell works in a single round. If the severed material is not present, they will regrow within 2d4 turns. This spell will only work on living creatures, on body parts lost within 1 day per level of the caster.

The reverse of this spell, wither, causes the touched body part to wither and become useless. The body part must be touched and the target can save vs. spells to avoid the effect. However when wither is used on a willing undead target it can restore lost parts, and if the correct materials are used (costing 5,000 gp per HD + 5,000 gp per asterisk of the undead creature) can be used to graft extra parts to physical undead creatures. For example a 9 HD\*\* vampire could have wings removed from a red dragon grafted on, the materials necessary costing 55,000 gp per wing. The wings would subsequently be functional and useable. Likewise a skeleton (1 HD) could have an extra arm attached for 5,000 gp. While the attached body parts are functional, they can however be dispelled.

Modifying undead creatures in such a way is considered an evil, entropic act. It is not impossible that regenerate may work to modify living creatures in the same way as wither can with undead, but there are no records of any clerics of positive sphere Immortals having tried.



Tortle Medicine man, original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh  
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# Legends of the Known World part 1

by Irving Galvez

## THE CHORT

Deep in the heart of the dark and foreboding forests of Karameikos, there lurks a malevolent creature known as the Chort. This demonic being is known for its cunning and deceptive nature, often appearing in the guise of a lost traveler or a friendly stranger, only to reveal its true form and terrorize its victims in all manner of ways.

The Chort is a powerful demon with the ability to shape-shift and to summon lesser demons and spirits to do its bidding. It can cause natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms, or bring disease and famine to the land. Its powers of deception are legendary, and it is said that none can resist its trickery and guile.

Those who have encountered the Chort speak of its fearsome appearance, with its horns, glowing eyes, and leathery wings. It is said to be able to move with supernatural speed and agility, striking with razor-sharp claws and a gaping, fanged maw.



*Chort*

The Chort is a constant threat to the people of Karameikos, preying on travelers and villagers alike. It is said to be responsible for a rash of disappearances and mysterious deaths that have plagued the region in recent years. Those who have survived encounters with the Chort speak of its eerie laughter and mocking taunts, haunting them long after their brush with this malevolent creature.



**Name:** Chort

**Type:** Demon

**Hit Dice:** 8+1 (for a total of 9 HD)

**Armor Class:** -1 (due to its demonic nature)

**Attack:** 2 claws (1d6) and 1 bite (2d6)

**Special Attacks:** The Chort can use its powers of deception to trick characters into making deals or breaking taboos, leading them into traps or other dangerous situations. It can also cause natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms, or bring disease and famine to the land.

**Special Abilities:** The Chort is a shapeshifter, able to take on various forms and appearances to suit its purposes. It can also summon lesser demons and spirits to do its bidding.

**Weakness:** The Chort has a weakness to holy water and silver weapons.

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

**Movement:** 40 feet per round (on foot)

**Treasure:** The Chort may possess valuable treasures or magical items that it has acquired through trickery or deceit.

Despite its terrifying reputation, there are some who believe that the Chort can be defeated. Legends speak of holy water and of silver weapons that can weaken or banish the demon, or of brave heroes who have faced the Chort in mortal combat and emerged victorious. However, such tales are few and far between, and most people in Karameikos live in fear of the Chort and the havoc it can wreak upon their land.

As adventurers journey through the forests of Karameikos, they should be wary of the Chort and its many tricks and traps. They may encounter the demon disguised as a helpless traveler or an innocent animal, luring them into danger with its honeyed words and promises of aid. Or they may find themselves in the midst of a sudden and violent storm, summoned by the Chort to obscure their vision and hinder their progress.

Whether they seek to defeat the Chort once and for all, or simply to survive its wrath and continue on their quest, adventurers in Karameikos must be prepared to face one of the most powerful and malevolent creatures in all the land.

#### **Sample spell list for the Chort:**

**1st level:** *Charm person, detect magic, entangle, magic missile*

**2nd level:** *Alter self, detect invisibility, fog cloud, shatter*

**3rd level:** *Lightning bolt, suggestion, water breathing*

**4th level:** *Control weather, hallucinatory terrain, polymorph other*

**5th level:** *Animate dead, contact other plane, feeblemind*

## LA TARANTOLA

Long ago, in the bustling cities of the Republic of Darokin, there lived a powerful merchant prince named Caruso. Caruso was a shrewd businessman who had amassed great wealth and power through his trading ventures. However, despite his success, Caruso was known for his arrogance and greed, and many feared and despised him.

One day, while traveling through the countryside on business, Caruso encountered a group of villagers who were being terrorized by a giant spider known as the Tarantola. The spider had been attacking the villagers and their livestock, causing great fear and destruction.

Caruso, seeing an opportunity to further his own interests, offered to help the villagers defeat the Tarantola in exchange for their loyalty and support. The villagers, desperate for help, agreed to Caruso's terms, and the merchant prince set about devising a plan to defeat the spider.

Caruso gathered a group of adventurers and equipped them with the finest weapons and armor that money could buy. He then led them into the countryside to confront the Tarantola. The battle was long and grueling, but eventually, the adventurers were able to defeat the spider and drive it away.

The villagers were overjoyed at their victory, and they hailed Caruso as a hero. However, as time passed, they began to realize that Caruso had not helped them out of the goodness of his heart, but rather to further his own interests. They soon discovered that Caruso had been using the Tarantola as a means of manipulating the villagers and consolidating his power over them.



*La Tarantola*

Enraged by Caruso's deceit, the villagers rose up against him and drove him out of their village. Caruso, humiliated and defeated, fled back to the city, never to be seen again. Legend has it that the Tarantola, sensing Caruso's treachery, had cursed him before it was driven away, causing him to suffer misfortune and failure for the rest of his days.

To this day, the Tarantola is still feared and respected by the people of the Republic of Darokin. It is believed that the spider is a symbol of the dangers of greed and ambition, and that those who seek to use its power for their own gain will ultimately be brought low by their own hubris.

In combat, the Tarantola would likely use hit-and-run tactics, striking quickly with two of its legs during a jumping attack and then retreating to avoid taking damage. It may also use its web attack to immobilize a particularly dangerous opponent, or to distract a group of adventurers while it attacks from behind.

**Name:** Tarantola (Gargantuan)

**Armor Class:** 3

**Hit Dice:** 24

**Attacks:** Bite (4d8), Claws (4d6)

**Special Abilities:** Poison, Web, Hypnotic gaze (see below)

**Movement:** 120' (40')

**No. Appearing:** 1

**Save As:** Fighter 24

**Morale:** 11

**Size:** The Tarantola is 10 feet tall and 15 feet long, like almost 2 humans tall and 3 humans long.

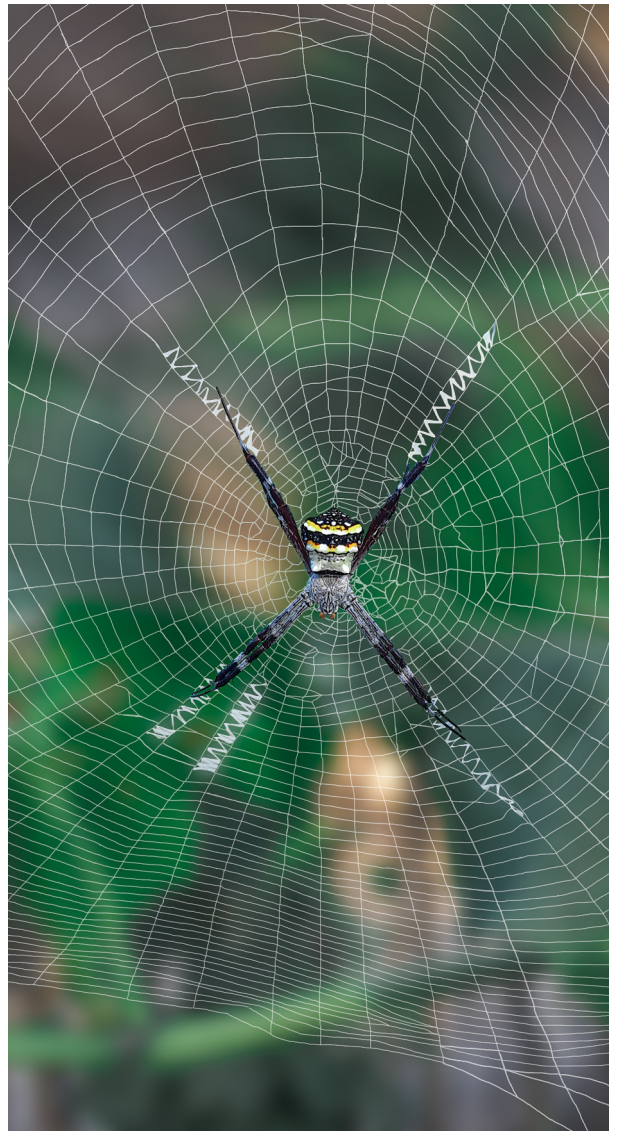
**Poison:** The Tarantola's bite is poisonous. Victims who fail their saving throw vs. poison take 12d6 points of damage.

**Web:** Once per day, the Tarantola can use its web to immobilize a single target within 60 feet. The target must make a saving throw or be trapped in the web for 1d6 rounds.

In combat, the Tarantola would likely use hit-and-run tactics, striking quickly with two of its legs during a jumping attack and then retreating to avoid taking damage. It may also use its web attack to immobilize a particularly dangerous opponent, or to distract a group of adventurers while it attacks from behind.

One weakness of the Tarantola is its susceptibility to fire. Adventurers who are able to set the Tarantola ablaze or use fire-based attacks against it may be able to deal extra damage or even incapacitate the creature.

Another possible weakness of the Tarantola is its hypnotic gaze. While the Tarantola may be able to use its gaze to paralyze its prey, it may also be susceptible to mesmerizing effects itself. Adventurers who are able to use spells or abilities that cause confusion or disorientation may be able to disrupt the Tarantola's focus and render it vulnerable to attack.



## THE BLACK SHUCK

In the Five Shires, Black Shuck is a spectral hound that is said to roam the countryside at night. It is described as being the size of a large pony, with shaggy black fur and glowing red eyes that pierce the darkness. Its howls can be heard from miles away, and its presence is said to be a bad omen, foretelling death and disaster.

According to local legends, Black Shuck is a cursed creature, bound to roam the earth until it can fulfill a task assigned to it by a powerful wizard. This task is said to be impossible, and Black Shuck is doomed to wander the land until the end of time. Some say that Black Shuck is a messenger of the dark powers that dwell beneath the earth, and that its howls are a call to arms for the forces of evil.

Despite its malevolent reputation, Black Shuck is sometimes said to be a protector of the innocent. It is said to have saved people from danger on occasion, and some legends suggest that it can be appeased with offerings of food or drink.

Players might encounter Black Shuck while traveling through the Five Shires, perhaps as they are passing through a haunted forest or crossing a desolate moor. The creature could be a harbinger of danger, warning the players of an impending threat, or leading them into a trap. Alternatively, it could be a powerful ally, aiding the players in their quest or providing valuable information about the dangers that lie ahead.

**Name:** Black Shuck (Spectral Hound)

**Armor Class:** -2

**Hit Dice:** 8

**Attacks:** Bite (2d6), Claw (1d6)

**Special Abilities:** Spectral Form, Fear Aura, Summon Hounds

**Movement:** 180' (60')

**No. Appearing:** 1

**Save As:** Fighter 8

**Morale:** 10

**Spectral Form:** Black Shuck is a spectral creature that is immune to non-magical weapons. It can move through solid objects and is unaffected by normal barriers such as doors or walls.

**Fear Aura:** Black Shuck radiates an aura of fear that affects all creatures within 60 feet. Victims who fail their saving throw vs. spell are paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds.

**Summon Hounds:** Once per day, Black Shuck can summon a pack of spectral hounds (1d6) to aid it in battle. The hounds are identical to Black Shuck, with the same immunities and spectral form but without the fear aura and summon abilities.



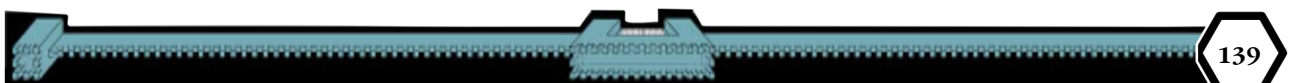
*Black Shuck*

Black Shuck would be a powerful opponent for adventurers, with its spectral form and fear aura making it difficult to defeat. Its ability to summon a pack of spectral hounds would also make it a formidable opponent, capable of overwhelming even a well-prepared party.

To defeat the Black Shuck, adventurers would need to use magical weapons or spells to damage it. They would also need to be prepared for its fear aura, which could leave them vulnerable to attack. Clever players might try to find a way to disrupt Black Shuck's summoning ability, or to use its spectral form against it by luring it into a place where it is unable to move through solid objects.

Defeating the Black Shuck may require adventurers to identify and disrupt the source of the creature's power. Legends and myths may provide clues about the creature's nature, and knowledgeable NPCs could offer insights into its origin. The creature could be bound to the physical world by a curse or some other supernatural force, which would need to be uncovered and disrupted in order to defeat it.

Adventurers may need to perform a ritual or spell, find and destroy a cursed object, or use their knowledge of the creature's weakness to weaken its hold on the world. By finding and disrupting the source of the creature's power, adventurers may be able to banish Black Shuck from the Five Shires and save the people from its malevolent influence. With bravery, cunning, and determination, they could triumph over the spectral hound and restore peace to the land.





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- Page 93: **[Image: Giant Lancer Shrimp]**  
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- Page 93: **[Image: Gripper Lobster]**  
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- Page 94: **[Image: Shark]**  
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- Pages 97-101: **[Maps: various]**  
Original work by Ricardo Matheus - all accessible on the Atlas of Mystara website at <https://mystara.thorfmmaps.com/appendix-m/darkblood/>
- Pages 103 & 122: **[Image: Forest]**  
photograph by Elimende Inagella - free for use via Unsplash.com  
<https://unsplash.com/photos/yTuZuR7c4T4>
- Page 105: **[Image: Changyi]**  
Done by DeepAi at Cab's prompting
- Page 106: **[Image: Gorira2]**  
Done by DeepAi at Cab's prompting
- Page 107: **[Image: Gorira]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 109: **[Image: Nobulele]**  
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- Page 110: **[Image: Phanatons]**  
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- Page 112: **[Image: Shaydaan]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 114: **[Image: Taer]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 116: **[Image: Wong Oranye]**  
Done by DeepAi at Cab's prompting
- Page 118: **[Image: Yazarian2]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 119: **[Image: Yazarian1]**  
Modified by Senarch from Midjourney <https://www.deviantart.com/senarch/gallery>

- Page 123: **[Image: Oranye Medicine Man]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 126: **[Image: Cay Man Medicine Man]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 126: **[Image: Chameleon Man Medicine Man]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 127: **[Image: Shaydaan Medicine Man]**  
Done by DeepAi at Cab's prompting
- Page 133: **[Image: Turtle Medicine Man]**  
Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)
- Page 134: **[Image: Chort]**  
Hand-coloured etching, 19th century, via Wikimedia commons  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Das\\_ist\\_mein\\_lieber\\_Sohn.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Das_ist_mein_lieber_Sohn.jpg)
- Page 136: **[Image: Tarantola]**  
Wolf Spider defending its egg sack, image from Fir0002 via Wikimedia commons  
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- Page 137: **[Image: Spider on web]**  
Photograph by demodot design - free for use from Pexels.com  
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- Page 139: **[Image: Black Shuck]**  
Artists Rendition of The Black Shuck of East Anglia based on the description by W.A. Dutt, by MattiasThatch via Wikimedia commons  
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- Back cover: **[Image: Underwater scene]**  
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## 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.

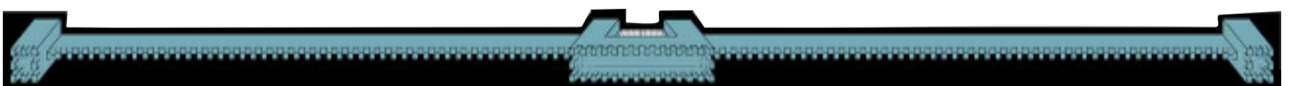
*Tables:* Tables should be numbered (Table X: Name of Table), and any references in the article should refer to that table number (and not to “the table below,” for example).

*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 9) for next issue deadline dates.

#Insert relevant issue number in place of ‘#’



# THRESHOLD

THE MYSTARA MAGAZINE



## Return to UNDERSEA

In this new issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine* we return to the regions under the waves and the peoples, and monsters, who inhabit them, also thanks to the lavish illustrations of so many creatures by Jeffrey and digital and AI art by Sebastien! So enjoy *Kingdoms and Empires of the Oceans part II* by Sturm, *To Build an Undersea Hex*, *On the Surface of the Sunlit Sea* and *Old Marine's Bluff* by Senarch, *Underwater Dangers: Sharks and Crustaceans* by Eliyah von Llaunas, *Mappers of Mystara: Ricardo Mateus* by Thorfinn Tait, *Primate Races of Mystara* and *Medicine Men of Mystara* by Cab, and *Legends of the Known World part I* by Irving Galvez; with this and previous issue, you will certainly not lack material for an underwater campaign! And stay tuned for the next issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine*, dedicated to Dungeons!

All this can be found only in this latest issue of our favorite magazine!

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